

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

PROFESSOR BEN ROBERTS

*Interviewed by: Morris Weisz
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not edited by Professor Roberts.]

Q: Okay, I think we can begin now. Today is the sixth of June—that's an interesting date, D-Day—1995. This is Morris Weisz with the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project, and we are recording this interview at the new headquarters of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. Being interviewed today is Professor Ben Roberts, B. C. Roberts, an old friend of American labor research work. Ben Roberts is retired from the London School of Economics, and we'll have a few minutes introduction of his career and his relationship with American programs over the years. We also have present here—you may hear them in the background occasionally—Don Kienzle, the current Director of the project, and Mrs. Veronica Roberts, who said she wanted to sit in on this to find out what her husband is doing. Ben, first, thanks very much for participating in this program. We'd like just a few minutes of the social, economic, political background that you brought to the labor field when you entered LSE. You don't have to give your age, but do tell us the sort of background you had from the earliest days.

ROBERTS: Yes, I got into the field by chance more than any other thing. I had left school quite early, at 14 as a matter of fact, partly because I had rheumatic fever and the doctor thought I was going to be permanently injured or something by that. Anyway, I did various jobs, and eventually I wound up quite actively connected with the Agricultural Workers' Union on the one hand and becoming very interested in the labor movement as a whole.

Q: This was before college or anything like that?

ROBERTS: This was before college, yes. At the end of the Second World War, a friend of mine, whom I met by chance in the street—I was connected with a socialist organization then which came originally from Germany, it was a German organization that was given refuge in Britain before the Second World War.

Q: The Noya Beginin group?

ROBERTS: No, it wasn't the Noya Beginin. It was the Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund, or they called it in Britain the Vanguard Socialist, Vanguard Group. They were right-wing labor in their position. They came into contact and very closely related to many senior people in the Labor Party, Hugh Gatesgill, for example, Jim Griffith, a number of names one could suggest.

Q: We haven't needed it so far, and in British we may not need it at all, but when you mention a name, it would be helpful to get the spelling. Now, you don't have to spell Gatesgill; we know that.

ROBERTS: Internationaler Sozialistischer—

Q: Well, we have a German expert here. He'll be able to get that in.

ROBERTS: Anyway, this friend of mine whom I met, who was a member of the organization, whom I met in the street, said to me, "Have you seen these trade union scholarships that are being given by the TUC [Trades Union Congress]? They've been advertised in the Daily Herald," which is a paper I should have read and did read from time to time but had no great respect for. Anyway, I said, "No." He said, "Well, they sound very good. The scholarships are for a year at the London School of Economics." I said, "Oh, that sounds extremely interesting." So he said, "I've got a form, and I'll send the form on to you." So he sent me this form, an entry to this, so I entered, and I was asked to write an essay on the future of the trade union movement, which I had studied a lot privately and with the ISK [*Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund*] and various other bodies. I'd been to lots of meetings and all that sort of thing.

Q: ISK?

ROBERTS: International—

Q: Oh, that's the Socialist, yeah.

ROBERTS: Well, it's now called the Socialist Vanguard Group, as a matter of fact. I thought I was in a good position to write this. Now the group I was with was very pro-America, pro-Europe and so forth, very anti-Soviet, extremely anti-Soviet. They had friends who they claimed had been handed over to the Nazis by Soviet officials in Germany and so on, and they had a lot of very detailed information about that. I was convinced they were right in their approach. They were very critical of the Labor Party. They thought the Labor Party was too under the influence of the old-fashioned Socialist viewpoint. It was too Marxist, and much more Marxist than its leaders were prepared to accept. Its leaders, who always attributed the main influence in the Labor Party to its Methodist influence on its beginnings and early stages, had not realized how much

control and how much influence the Communist Party had now gained in the Labor Party. We were well aware of the extent to which local groups all over the place were really controlled by the Labor Party.

Q: By the Labor Party?

ROBERTS: Sorry, by the Communist Party, and much of the discussions in policy making were influenced by that fact. But anyway, I took this exam, and to my astonishment I got a letter from the TUC saying that I had come out extremely well and they wanted to interview me for one of these scholarships. The theme of my essay had been effectively that the Labor Party had to modernize itself, and we had to get away from the classic matters, and we had to get away from the Communist control of the Labor Party, and that sort of thing. This appealed obviously to some people, but the man who was most influential in this was a guy named Evan Durbin, who had stood as a Labor candidate and was in fact elected in the '45 election, who was a senior lecturer at the London School of Economics. He read my essay, as he read all the others, and he placed it first in the list of people who had entered. Anyway, I went through the process of being interviewed. Most of the TUC came to it. It was the first time they had ever done anything like this, going to this meeting, and they decided in the end that they would give me a scholarship and five other people scholarships. There were six of us altogether. So I then went to the LSE when the LSE came back from its time in Cambridge back to London.

Q: During the war they were—

ROBERTS: Emigrated to Cambridge, yes. They came back in the middle of 1945. They were supposed to start up again at the end of 1945, but they didn't really get going until the end of the year that year, so I spent most of 1946 in there. Well, in the meantime Durbin wrote a book on the future of the Labor Party, and he asked me if I would write the chapter on trade unions and what sort of organizations they should be and what have you, which I was very surprised to be asked to do, but I did it anyway, and that's one of the chapters in the book. Afterwards there was a lot of criticism from regular labor stalwarts who thought I'd gone over the top in some of the things that I'd said. Well, then during the time I was at Cambridge, I was at the London School of Economics during that year. It was a new course they had started on the—

Q: Was there anything in your family background that led you to labor? Was your father middle class?

ROBERTS: No, my father was a skilled worker in engineering. He was a turner, fitter and turner. He was very keen politically, but he had no fixed alliance where he stood on this. No, this came mainly by an intellectual route, by way of the people I knew and my own reading in the subject, because I did an enormous amount of reading about these political and social political problems. But during that first year I was told by Evan

Durbin and others that I ought to stay on in college and take a proper degree, because this was that you got a paper saying you had been a member of this course but it didn't give you any real academic qualification. So he suggested I put in for one of the—Oxford gave scholarships to people who had not gone through the normal prior education. I came in, you see, without any proper qualifications to go into a university, didn't have a high school certificate or any of those things.

Q: You didn't take those 11's or whatever?

ROBERTS: They asked me to do the same thing as the other people had done, write an essay on where we were and some future policies situation, and I did an essay, a similar kind of essay covering much the same ground but rather more sophisticated now having had a year at the LSE and what have you. I got another scholarship to Oxford, so I went to Oxford then for two years, where I took the new short degree that Oxford introduced at the end of the Second World War, because people had been away during wartime and what have you, and you could take a degree over a two-year period instead of going through the full three-year period. I was advised to do that, and that's what I did, and I got through the degree fairly well. Then I got very interested in the TUC, and nobody had ever written a history of it, so I decided that would provide a good subject for a Ph.D., which I had been encouraged to go in for. So I started on that work, and at the same time I got a job at Ruskin College, which is the college of teaching labor people, which had been started as an ancillary of the Labor Party back in 1909, which existed in Oxford. I became a part-time lecturer there, and I had the fellowship at Nuffield College of Oxford doing this Ph.D. history of the TUC. At the end of that year, they created this lectureship under the School of Economics on trade union studies. Henry Phelps Brown, who had been appointed to the chair the year before, in 1948, wrote to me and said, "We're creating this chair at the LSE. Your interests and so on seem to fit right into the sort of subject we're setting up. Would you like to apply for it"? So, I wrote back and said, "Yes, I would," and went through the same procedure again. I was interviewed and eventually elected to this post, and so I got to the LSE in '49, October '49.

Q: And you've had a connection with them ever since?

ROBERTS: I've had a connection with them ever since. I never went anywhere else. I got my professorship in 1960, and then I stayed around there and got involved in administration and all the rest of the activities that go on in university. I wrote about 15 books and a lot of other things.

Q: Well, where did your association with the Americans begin, because that's what—?

ROBERTS: Well, I had become very interested in—

Q: When did you get married, by the way?

ROBERTS: We got married in 1945—

Q: Oh really?

ROBERTS: —when I went to LSE. My interest in America came. I had started reading about it and I had encountered various books which were available in Britain in the libraries. Of course, once I went to the LSE, I had access to a marvelous library, a very good library there.

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____.

Q: Now, Veronica, we welcome your participation, but you'll have to talk louder. He has the—

Mrs. ROBERTS: He met a number of American students too—

ROBERTS: —who were going to the LSE, yes. We started to get a lot of American students who had been in the Army abroad and wanted to stay abroad and what have you. So I met quite a few Americans. And then, the Americans had the labor attachés. They had appointed a guy whom I met whose name I'm trying to recall now, and I don't remember it for the moment, the chap who had some connection with the school. You mentioned Berger as his name.

Q: Oh, it was Berger.

ROBERTS: It was Berger, yes.

Q: Well, Berger was in the mission, the AID [U.S. Agency for International Development] mission, under Harriman there, and then he took over the labor job because he had been educated in Wisconsin.

ROBERTS: That's right. I knew him. They started holding various meetings of one sort or another, and I was on their mailing list and got invited to go to these and so on. And then Bill Gaussman came over. I can't remember the exact year. When I first met Bill Gaussman, it was in a meeting of ISK, the International Socialist Council organization. We were having a meeting there, and there was an American in a GI uniform who came in and sat in the back of the hall, and he started asking questions and sounded like a very interesting guy. So at the end of the meeting, I and Mary Saran, who was a member of the ISK—you might have heard of her—

Q: S-a-r-a-n, yes. Was she originally German?

ROBERTS: She's German, yes. She was German. She was born in Berlin. We went up to this guy—he was a very thin, tall looking character—and we talked with him, and he told

us he was a socialist and he was very interested in—

Q: The only paid employee of the Socialist Party in Washington, D.C., I would say.

ROBERTS: He asked for a program of meetings and Lord knows what, and from then on I had a close connection with him as well as with other people. He came earlier, and this other guy whose name I can't remember. They were in post. I think it was the following year he arrived in Britain. It must have been, I should have thought, about the end of '46 or something like that. He got himself posted to the UK as a sort of assistant. He was the number-two man.

Q: In Information in the Marshall Plan—no, in the economic, in the U.S. Information Service, I would think.

ROBERTS: Yes.

Q: Right.

ROBERTS: Something like that. Well, the next big move really was the Korean War, the _____ of the Marshall Plan. When the Marshall Plan was set up, the Americans sent over Marshall Plan administrators, they were called, one of whom was Jim Killen, who was the then Vice President of the International—

Q: Pulp and Sulfite Workers, right.

ROBERTS: Exactly. Well, Jim got my name off, I suppose, one of the lists around, and he rang me up and said he'd like to have lunch with me, so I went over to see him. We had a long talk about things, about the world situation, the United States, everything under the sun, and that was the beginning of a very close relationship we developed over the next two years he was in Britain. We saw a great deal of him.

Q: Let me interrupt for a moment and ask you this: From the very beginning you were one of the British intellectuals, if you'll pardon me for calling you one, who was sort of pro-American, whereas there's a whole other school who had some relations with America but we always felt that they were critical of us for not being socialist enough in our trade union movement, Harold Laskey. Now where was Laskey in this and what was your relationship with that tendency in British _____?

ROBERTS: I knew Laskey quite well for a short period of time. When I first went to LSE for the first year and I met him then, we didn't make much of a relationship, but when I came back to LSE in 1949, there was a bit of a contretemps. I thought I was going to be under Henry Phelps Brown in the Economics of Labor. I had taken PEP at Oxford—Politics, Economics and Philosophy—so I was sort of academically qualified to teach either area, in a rudimentary way, let me add. I thought I was going to the

Department of Government, but at the end of the interview when they told me they decided they would give me the job, Cararr Saunders called me to see him in his office. He was the director of the school. He said to me they changed their minds about where the post would be located. It was to be located in the Economics Department, but now they decided they really wanted to put it into Politics, Department of Government and Politics, which Harold Laskey was head of, and would I be prepared to accept this shift. I said yes, I would, but that meant that I was separated. Henry was in the Economics Department, and I was in the Department of Government and so on, and I came under Laskey. I would otherwise have come under him, so I got to know Laskey reasonably well. Now, where did we stand? Laskey was at this time clearly a Marxist. He was in the Marxist tradition though not a wholly enthusiastic one. He was very critical of the Communists in many ways. He thought they were totalitarian and so on. But he himself had come to believe that the Marxist way forward was the right way. He didn't believe necessarily by revolution, but when we had a government which would make it a socialist government, as he called it. Now, his interpretation of socialism was a curious mix of ideas which came in with his own. He grew up in a Manchester liberal Jewish family, and they were very intellectually interesting. The whole family was interested in politics, but it was politics in which freedom played the most important part as they saw it, much less than the system of organization, and they were liberals. They were strongly liberals, and some of them were conservative.

Q: You mean liberals with a capital L?

ROBERTS: In the British liberal sense, with a capital L, yes, and Laskey fell out with them, and he fell out with them twice, because he married a non-Jew, and they were very upset. They were a very kosher family, the Laskeys. So he split with them. He had split with them at that level, and he then began to split with them in his interpretation of the religion itself. He had been brought up strictly orthodox and moved right out of it into a non-orthodox situation, but he still had this very strong belief that the most important thing about a democratic system was the Marxist one. Now he never was able to reconcile that with his Marxism. He couldn't bring Marxism into the whole history of his upbringing as an individual and the values that he had been given in his own family and so on.

Q: Was he more of a Marxist in the economic sense rather than the political, although he was in the political faculty?

ROBERTS: He wasn't really an economist, wasn't Laskey. He was very much a political figure, and, of course, his heritage went back into the whole history of English political development right from the 17th century revolution in Britain, the overthrowing of the king, and so on. All that was part of a great evolution of society which he thought was absolutely right and necessary and so on. So he was a mixed-up figure, was Harold.

Q: But his attitude towards America?

ROBERTS: His attitude was very favorable towards America. He had a dual road. He spent a lot of time in America, and he had been a visiting professor at Harvard.

Q: Famous lecturer here, yes.

ROBERTS: Then he got himself into trouble with the Cambridge police strike in 1921, I think it was, when he was visiting professor at Cambridge. He came out in public, and he was greatly defended then by most of the leading figures in Harvard, but some didn't like him about it. I think, in fact, he had trouble with the president over his position on that. In fact, I think he—

Q: He was a visiting professor here in the United States at Harvard?

ROBERTS: Yes, at Harvard, yes.

KIENZLE: That was the Boston police strike with Calvin Coolidge as—

ROBERTS: That's right.

Q: By the way, Don, you have to speak louder too, and we welcome any questions you might want. We have the benefit of having our Director here, who has a background also.

ROBERTS: So Harold and I didn't quite get on. There was a little bit of friction. I don't think he took my views as terribly important and so on. He was a strange chap, was Harold. He had his romanticism about his ideas, and his attitude toward the truth was a very variable one. He told the most incredible stories, many of which were lies, which we all came to recognize afterwards.

Q: Embellishments of his career?

ROBERTS: Of his career in the sense of the role that he had played in a variety of subjects.

Q: I see.

ROBERTS: It went from his influence over the Conservative Party, which he claimed to have a great one, while Baldwin was Prime Minister, to what was going on. He thought he could influence the Soviets, and he told a lot of stories about the conversations he had had with the Soviets and so on. I don't think they were taken in at all, but he believed it. To build himself up, he told outrageous stories. For example, he told me one day, he came into a classroom to take a seminar and said, "I've had a most wonderful experience. I've just had lunch with the second most powerful man in the world." He didn't tell us who the first most powerful man in the world was, but he did say second, and we all

waited to say. He said, "Today I said to Senior Molotov," who was the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, "da da da," went on and then started analyzing the situation, being Russia and Britain and God knows what. I heard on the news that night when I went home that Molotov had been on a secret visit to Britain and it was just being announced that night. It had been announced that afternoon that Molotov had left London at eight o'clock that morning. Now Harold might have seen him, and he might have elaborated, you know. There might have been an element of truth in it. That was pretty typical.

Q: As far as his attitude towards America, was it American trade unions he was critical of?

ROBERTS: No, he never got into detail. He wrote a book on trade unions, and he had some references to the United States in that book, but the book was largely an attack on the British judiciary. He was very much in favor of the Wagner Act and of that episode. The Americans had come forward, and he thought there ought to be a complete change in the British law that would give them the same sort of freedoms as the United States. In that sense he was positive to the American unions.

Q: Did he have the same sort of relationship to the American Marshall Plan and American officials there, or were his contacts with America mostly when he visited America?

ROBERTS: Well, no, because he was always going to America, he was a very frequent visitor, and he wrote a lot. He had American left-wing newspapers he wrote for regularly, so he had a big following of socialist-minded people in the United States. He liked America. He liked the freedoms, so-called freedoms, here and all that sort of aspect of it, and that's what he made a lot of use of. But he attacked America. He gave lectures on American politics, in which he was highly critical of what he called the antisocial aspects of the American system. His criticisms were quite open in that respect.

Q: Well, it's that and listening to him here when he visited that gave me the impression that he really had some basic criticism of the American system. Well, getting back to your relationship—I guess it was in the Marshall Plan—with Jim Killen and what participation if any: You attended the American meetings. Before you came to America for the first time, were you on any list of people who would actually be invited to give lectures; and were you paid for those?

ROBERTS: In Britain, do you mean?

Q: In Britain.

ROBERTS: No, I don't think so, at that stage, no. I don't think there was anything much set up in Britain in that respect. If Americans came over—I don't remember many coming of that sort—

Q: Well, on the productivity thing we would run big meetings where we would had the—

ROBERTS: Ah, but that came later.

Q: But that came a little later, right. I want to get to the British productivity.

Mrs. ROBERTS: We did know a lot of Americans.

ROBERTS: We knew a lot of Americans, yes, but they—

Mrs. ROBERTS: We used to go to the American parties, and we knew the Killen family, all of them, very well. They did _____ to us.

Q: His wife died tragically. Well, so you then get to the United States in '51, as I recall.

ROBERTS: '51, yes. I was given a Smith Munt grant and came to the U.S., where a program was set up for me to visit everywhere. I suggested a whole lot of places I would like to go and see and people I would like to meet and what have you.

Q: How long were you here?

ROBERTS: I was here four months.

Q: Really?

ROBERTS: That really was the extent of the program. It was all very good, because we were treated as if we were American civil servants, and then you all had first class travel. I don't know whether you still do.

Q: No, we don't, far from it. Did Veronica come with you?

ROBERTS: No.

Mrs. Roberts: I had just had our first son.

Q: Oh, yes. Was that David?

Mrs. Roberts: Richard.

Q: Oh, Richard. David came along—

ROBERTS: You had David staying with you at one time.

Q: Yeah, David stayed, a very charming man. I'm a little shocked to find out he ended up as a banker or whatever he is.

Mrs. ROBERTS: Commercial banker.

Q: Great.

Mrs. ROBERTS: He was born in 1953. Richard was born in 1950.

ROBERTS: To me the experience of coming to the United States was a staggering experience. I learned afterwards the idea of the Smith Munt program was to give people who, I think—the people who drafted the act thought would be a true impression of the United States. They would see for themselves. And it was magnificently handled as a program. No pressures were exerted on me to do anything that I didn't want to do. I think it was clearly set out. I was given advice from the center and what have you. I met with officials here and among them was yourself.

Q: Oh, yes. That was our first connection. But did Bill Gaussman give you ideas as to where to go, what to see?

ROBERTS: Yes, yes. Now Bill, I think, had come back from the United States by then. But I knew a great deal about America by this time. I had read a lot about it. I was keen to know a lot more, and I was very interested in a number of things that were going on in the United States, like the Wage Stabilization Board, which had just been set up.

Q: Oh, yes, under the Korean.

ROBERTS: That's right. We got interested in that area. We were trying to set up a wage policy in Britain, which I was in two minds about. I was very doubtful about it, if it would ever work in Britain, but there was a strong support, first in the Labor Party and then in the Conservatives.

Q: Did you meet Jack Stieber at that time?

ROBERTS: Yes, I met Jack Stieber, yes.

Q: I just interviewed him the other day, and he found out an interesting experience. Was there any discussion of whether our wage stabilization system in the Korean War was applicable to your country? Did anybody try to tell you or oppose the idea of your adopting wage stabilization?

ROBERTS: I wrote a number of articles about it when I went back. My view of it was it was an extremely courageous attempt to deal with what was a fundamental problem. I had been in the problem for quite a long time now, because I had met Joan Robinson, the

Kanesdian group, and got into arguments with them about it. They were all effectively in favor of a wages policy in Britain, because, though Kanes himself said very little about it—he was much more involved in higher levels of politics at that time, before his death in 1946 or whenever it was—she thought we had to have a wages policy, because if we didn't have a wages policy, the unions would ruin us, because she said under full employment there's no restriction on union power. That was the essence of her theme, and there is nothing in union philosophy which will lead to—

Q: _____ their demands.

ROBERTS: Yes, _____ their demands down, so we'd always be running in a balance-of-payments crisis situation that we were in there. And she persuaded people in the TUC of that view and in the Labor Party too, but they were too afraid to really do anything about it, because they could see what problems were involved.

Q: We were talking about Joan Robinson.

ROBERTS: Yes, well, she assisted the TUC in giving them advice on their economic program. She was very concerned about the policy that the Labor Party was introducing straight after the end of the Second World War, which was the policy of full employment, and hopefully a policy of stabilization on the current account on our international monetary system, which was very much out of line by the huge debts that we developed during the war and so on. So she knew you had to bring the system into some kind of balance. And I was very interested in that. In fact, Allen Flanders, who was a very close friend of mine, who was also a member of ISK, he got a job at the TUC in its Economics Department, and he said to me one day, "I've been asked by Joan Robinson to go up to Cambridge"—it was in '46, 1946, beginning of '46—to talk to some students of hers and to her herself the trade union policy, what was going on in the TUC. You know, he had been partially an architect of that. He had written one part of it.

Q: Allen Flanders being an intellectual very close to the trade union movement.

ROBERTS: That's right, and he eventually got a post at Oxford, where he taught for some years before he died. So he said, "Would you like to come up. You might be interested in the arguments." So I went up to Cambridge with him. He gave his talk, and we had a long discussion, and then they invited us 'round to their rooms in one of the colleges.

Mrs. ROBERTS: Who's that? Joan?

ROBERTS: Joan Robinson and what's her name who was the chairman of the seminar. She was an agricultural economist but had the _____ as Joan actually. I don't remember her name, I've forgotten it.

Q: You'll put it in when you get the transcription.

ROBERTS: And we sat down then and talked. Oh, they had taken us out to dinner before, Joan had, before when the seminar started. We had the seminar. Then at eight o'clock we went back to her rooms for drinks and talked over the argument about this. So I was into wage stabilization theoretically in a significant way. I was dubious about it because of the difference in character between the British trade union movement and the American one, and to me the American trade union movement was fundamentally different from the British in that there was a curious degree of centralization which didn't exist in the British trade union movement, which was much more a decentralized trade union movement, whereas here you have this powerful group of union leaders who, though there had been a split in the trade union movement here, did exercise an enormous influence, and things could be discussed at their level and approved at their level and so on.

Q: But there was no possibility for some sort of discipline to be placed on the movement.

ROBERTS: Well, there was an effort to try that. If you went through the experience of labor stabilization, there was a big effort to build into it a form of discipline, of which John Dunlop was involved in doing that, who was on the board. And it was an attempt really to pin the rate of increase of pay, because they had fixed that at so much percent per annum, and that worked surprisingly well to a degree. It was not perfect by far. But there was a certain intellectual coherence about the policy which was worked out. There were some breakaways with some unions that wouldn't have very much to do with it, like the teamsters, for example.

Q: Mine workers.

ROBERTS: The mine workers and so on. And it didn't last. After a time they gave it up as impossible to carry, but it went on surprisingly long, in my view. It went on for about two years, I suppose.

Q: Yes, there was some conflict toward the end, but this would be a good time for you to comment on the current situation as you have observed it here, where we have this problem of balance-of-payment budget, etc., with no possibility of that sort of discipline being agreed on.

ROBERTS: Do you want me to comment on that, because that takes me into a much wider field of commenting on the current situation of the American labor movement?

Q: Well, since we're discussing the problems that trade unions have.

ROBERTS: There is something in common between the American situation and the British situation, although fundamentally there are great differences, and that is in both countries the membership of the unions has declined very significantly indeed, and it's

going on declining. In Britain it's still coming down. They lost about another two or three hundred thousand members last year.

Q: Well, we started up a little bit in the service sector in the United States.

ROBERTS: Now that's weakened the unions, and the unions are weakened in both countries, I think, considerably weakened. They can't get away with the kind of demands that they made in the past. Secondly, the whole climate of industrial relations has changed in a very significant way. The kind of left-wing influences that dominated British labor, although they still exist to some extent, they are very minor now. Their own influence over the Communist Party is dead, gone, and has no influence. So there is a sort of hangover from the past of militancy, of wanting to be militant, wanting to use force and power and what have you. All that's declining, and I think the same is true here. The American unions are really quite weak, in my judgment of them, and they're going to continue to stay weak. I see no evidence whatsoever, as I heard at the international conference from various people who have been doing research here, there is no evidence of a recovery. The kind of arguments I've had with John Dunlop, who is a great friend of mine and what's his name who came to Cornell, a supporter of the unions in America—

Q: Galenson.

ROBERTS: Galenson, Walter Galenson. Now Walter was over on one of your labor programs about two years ago in Britain, and I was invited by the embassy to a meeting there—it was a pretty good meeting actually—and Walter argued that the American unions had declined in numbers, they declined in their power, there were disorganizations that were still around that still _____ and so on. Then he said, "We've been through all this before, and the history of the labor organization is a history of ups and downs. The labor movement is on a down turn at the present time, but I'm absolutely sure it's going to overcome this and we're going to see a tremendous recovery." I challenged him on this in his discussion, and he got quite angry with me for doubting some of the things that he'd said as indicators of likely new development of a new power and what have you. I pointed out also changes in the behavior of management and so on, the new approach of the unions themselves where the reports that have come out on what they're doing. They're trying to come to terms with a trade union system which is not a militant system but is one where you get around on intellectual argument and you accept the arguments of the bosses that you have to make the business pay before you can pay workers and so on, which is very, very evident now. So you're taking much lower rates of pay increase, you've got weaker on the social protection side, although the government does more now, much more than it used to do on that side. But all this has changed the situation.

Q: The essential, though, factor in Britain is that it's easier for, I think—and I like your comment on it—it's easier for trade unions to accept a form of discipline, say in wage stabilization, if they have political power, and that you may be coming into now.

ROBERTS: They never have done in the past. They did it during the time of the first labor government and they turned it down—the Labor Party really killed the first labor government by, in fact, pushing up wages and creating a balance-of-payments problem far greater than could be handled. They wouldn't agree to it under the Conservatives. They wouldn't agree to it under Harold Wilson. They went into schemes and so on and so forth, and on the face of it it looked as though they were doing something, but in practice it wasn't, and they wrecked his government effectively. You can say that the unions have really broken all labor governments in Britain. They did it finally to Callahan, which brought Mrs. Thatcher in. They were unable to get support to kick her out of office for 13 years, and the Conservatives are still in power. In my judgment, the question of who wins the next election is still quite open. Although the polls show that the Labor Party is well in the lead, the Conservatives have fallen way down, and they ought to win hands down, but I think, like quite a number of very respectable writers in Britain are saying, it's too soon to make such a judgment. It's probably two years to go before the next election, and it's quite clear that Blair is, I think, the best leader the Labor Party has had in many, many years. You'd have to go back I don't know to whom, Atley or somebody, to find anybody as good as he is, very much in touch with how life has changed and how power is distributed in society and what have you, a much clearer sense of what you can do and what you can't do. He nevertheless has an enormous problem on his hands to carry—[end of Tape 1 Side A]

Q: You were saying the difficulties that Blair was having.

ROBERTS: Yes, let's go back a bit. Blair has got very considerable difficulties. He's carried through significant changes in the power relations between the unions and the Labor Party. He's reduced the union power in the Labor Party, so he's in a stronger position now to impose a policy upon them, but he has further to go in that respect. He's reduced the effective voting strength of the unions in the Labor Party from about 80 percent down to 50 percent. Fifty percent is usually a blocking number, and there probably is another set of opposition that could block him if he wants to do something radical like introduce a wages policy. Now, he's trying to do a trade-off there between, if he gets in power, being a much more enthusiastic member of the European Community and giving the trade unions in Britain more rights in the workplace in terms of representation which will be provided, going away from the British tradition where it's all been on a voluntary basis, will be provided by bringing laws in forcing the companies of a certain size to recognize the unions, to give them both bargaining facilities but, more importantly, to give them participating facilities in making decisions, managerial decisions, in the enterprise. Now, the employers are absolutely against that and will continue to fight it whatever happens, or else there'll be some really rather miserable compromise reached at which the unions will be given certain things and they won't get very much in practice. There are great divisions within the labor movement about what does it really mean. Nobody quite knows yet what sort of a man Blair is. They only know what he says in his speeches. Most people are attracted by him, and they believe he's an

honest man, but then realism always steps in, especially in the labor movement where they don't believe they're going to get it until it's on the table.

Q: Do they look upon him, the trade unionists, as an intellectual who's not—?

ROBERTS: Yes, they look on him as an intellectual, but they want to get back into power. They've been out of power now for 15 years. They want to get back into power. So they're saying, "Well, though we don't agree with his policy, we have to follow his policy in order to win the election. Somehow when we win the election, it will renationalize industries and do all sorts of things."

Q: But he hasn't said that?

ROBERTS: He hasn't said that. He's been very careful not to say that, because that would kill him straightaway, I think, politically. Now, if we go back in, we get into a very serious problem, because if he wants to hand over—we're not clear what his position is on this—if he wants to hand over more power to Europe, we get into extreme difficulties with that, because more power to Europe leads to more European intervention, and European intervention is not entirely beneficial to Britain. The cost of the Common Market is extremely expensive. It costs the average family about a thousand pounds a year for being in the Common Market. That's the outgoing cost to bill in a year in subsidies to God knows what and so on. And that would get worse, and what will get even more dangerous is, if in fact the total economic policy becomes shifted from the member states to Berlin, which will be the new capital of Germany, and if we get a common monetary system, this will mean that international monetary policy has to be concluded from some central point. Everybody accepts that, and that will mean the death of the city of London.

Q: In the exchange and financial sense?

ROBERTS: That's right. Many people fear the consequence of this is to create a greater Germany, and a lot of people have an underlying distrust of that, what that might mean, because we've seen the German problem in the past. Nobody raises this quite specifically except in private conversation, although the German president, chancellor, wants this as a means of defusing that danger quite frankly.

Q: Means of avoiding a new Hitler.

ROBERTS: But it may lead to that, and then you've got the problem with Eastern Europe coming into it, and we don't know what role that will play. We don't know what the future of Russia is likely to be, and so on, so my own view is that we should be very careful about Europe. We shouldn't go any further. We shouldn't go into those steps. They're very dangerous. I think also linked with this is an anti-American policy. You see, there's a lot of anti-Americanism in Britain, just as there's anti-Britishism, I suppose, in

the United States too. They fear that this will bring about a divorce, and when they see that in a sense it is also encouraged latently in Clinton's policy, there is a real problem there. It's a new kind of world with a transference of the balance of power within the world in a way that can be extremely dangerous. If we come back to Blair now, what his role will be in this connection we don't know. He may prove to turn out to be another Ernie Bevin. His position is quite open, and if he sees that going too far down the European line might lead to that consequence of _____ power and so on, he would reverse it, he would slow it down, he would do his best to change it. But with things in this area you've got to be very careful, because once you've given something away in the field and you've built up the strength of Europe, you have a great deal of problems. Now we have some assistance in this respect in a curious arrangement. On the one hand you have a close relationship between France and the Germans, France and Germany, and France is favored as certain centralization, because it's in harmony with their political philosophies in this respect, and they have the weakest trade union movement in the Western world. I think about ten percent of the working population is in unions in France. It doesn't count for anything. They have a spectacular strike for one day, and then they have to give it up and so on. But they have a strong government support for that. The government gives the government power, and they support it. Now if we go into close relationship with Germany, that will lead to real problems with the French in economic policy terms. The Germans carried an enormous burden with unification, and they desperately want to get past that and through it and out into the opportunity where they can really grow spectacularly.

Q: Well, maybe I shouldn't have gotten into the modern thing, because definitely that's why I asked you whether you have enough time. I definitely want to get into this American program business.

ROBERTS: Okay, well, I'm sorry about that.

Q: That's all right. I'm enjoying it.

ROBERTS: But that's the kind of situation, as I see it, that exists in Britain at the present time. It's a problematic one.

Q: Let me just finish this by asking you: In the last week at the International Industrial Relations Congress that we had, did your view on this issue of American trade unionism going downhill, etc., change in any way?

ROBERTS: No.

Q: That was my impression too. Well now, your relationship with the American programs then—you came back from your first visit to the United States, and what happened after that? What were your observations of American labor programs, both the embassy and the U.S. Information and the AID, because you went from Britain to other places?

ROBERTS: Oh, yes. Well, I was very impressed with the vigor of the American trade union movement and thought it would make further progress. The biggest obstacle at that time was the separation into two different—

Q: AFL and CIO, yeah.

ROBERTS: And I thought that might be coming together. After I came back from America, I was invited to a party at the American embassy to meet George Meany, and we had a long discussion. It was a small party actually. I had a long discussion with George Meany, and I was talking to him about this problem of getting together, and he said, "Well, we're going to do it. I think certainly we're going to do it, but we have a real problem with the teamsters. We have to clean them up. We're going to clean them up. It's going to be very difficult," and so on. It was a very impressive discussion, and I thought he had the character and the ability to carry it through.

Q: Was he president by that time? Was that after '52?

ROBERTS: It was after '52, yes. He was president, yes.

Q: When did they both die? It was in '55.

ROBERTS: '56, wasn't it?

Q: No, in '55 was the merger brought about by the accident of Green and Philip Murray died at the same time, so this would have been before. When Meany was secretary-treasurer, he said he was going to get together.

ROBERTS: Yes, yes. I thought this was absolutely essential, and it would be a great advantage. Of course, he brought it off and so on, but then everything else was changing in the world. Things don't stay where they are. The British trade union movement was growing. The American trade union movement was growing. They were all heading for record numbers of members, and my view then was the real problems were within the relationship between trade unions and employers and the government, and we had to find the answer in that sense. I didn't see the fall coming then. I did see it soon afterwards. I began to see it in Britain, and it had already been happening in the United States. I picked that up actually from the statistics that were coming out that the American labor movement was really a declining movement, which goes back to the early '70s actually. I thought what happens in the United States often happens before it happens in Britain, and we're going to see the same phenomenon here. I had a lot of arguments in Britain about what was happening in the British scene, but we were still rising and we went on rising till 1978–79, when things started to go down, but there was some evidence of it before turning over. Since then, of course, there have been such enormous changes that one wouldn't ask to go back to analyzing the situation as it is now really.

Q: Well, what about the American presence there in the productivity program, the councils and the joint councils on productivity, and what part did you play, and moreover what criticism did you have of either the policies we followed, the United States, the people we sent or what we didn't do that we might have done on the productivity program?

ROBERTS: Productivity was a factor I was very much involved in, and I was involved in an organization which had an American counterpart.

Q: Joint—?

ROBERTS: No, the thing which what's his name in New York set up—oh dear, I've got a bad memory for names.

Q: A trade unionist?

ROBERTS: Yes, a trade unionist.

Q: Sol Barkin?

ROBERTS: No, not Sol. Sol I knew very well, but it wasn't Sol. No, I'm talking about an American lawyer in the United States who was a great—

Mrs. ROBERTS: Ted.

ROBERTS: Ted Kheel.

Q: Ted Kheel, oh yes.

ROBERTS: Ted came to me in the early 1960s.

Q: And we have to introduce. Ted Keel was a lawyer who originally came from the NLRB [National Labor Relations Board], where he was very successful, and then went into private practice in which he became more of a political lawyer rather than a legal counsel.

ROBERTS: But he was very much in touch with a lot of leading figures.

Q: Oh yes, good trade union background.

ROBERTS: He came to me back in 1970 and said, "I've got some money out of an American company and they want me to set up—"

Q: Was this Mobil?

ROBERTS: No, it wasn't Mobil. It was a manufacturing company. They bought plants which had been making armaments in Britain, and they wanted to modernize the whole system of industrial relations. It was very old fashioned.

Mrs. ROBERTS: Ben, wasn't it called Foundation for—?

ROBERTS: Automation Employment.

Q: Ah yes, that was much later than the productivity program in the Marshall Plan.

ROBERTS: Yes, that was later than the productivity program. What I was saying was that I had always been interested in productivity, and I was giving this as one of the examples, because what we tried to do there was set up a much more responsible policy towards raising productivity. In productivity terms I suppose I had been on various things.

Q: Who were the people? On your side it was Fletcher.

ROBERTS: Ted Fletcher from the TUC. He was Economic Secretary of the TUC. And then there were a lot of employers who were interested in it too.

Mrs. ROBERTS: Ashley?

ROBERTS: No, Ashley was later. That's to do with the other thing, with the Foundation for Automation in Employment. There were a lot of British employers who were interested in this, and it was being pushed hard by Britain. It had been pushed hard for quite some time, and we had to increase productivity. The real problem as I saw it then was that we wouldn't recognize the extent to which we were really behind. We had fallen behind in the efficiency of the British economy, largely, I think, as a result of the war making big damage there. We had not reinvested enough, and we had to get reinvestment in. Reinvestment meant that we had to—this was always a problem I was running into in my analysis of the situation. We had run into the social aspects of this, because we were developing a huge social policy, the side of building up a great health service and God knows what, all of which were extremely expensive. The government itself hadn't got money to spare. Taxes were high in Britain, far higher than they ought to have been, and that was setting things back, so we couldn't get around that. I was always arguing this point with the trade unionists. How do we get more efficiency? How do we get higher output, especially with the AU [Amalgamated Engineering Union]. Bill Carron, who was the leader of the AU, was an old friend of mine, and he did a good deal of work.

Q: Do you want to spell his name?

ROBERTS: C-a-double r-o-n.

Mrs. ROBERTS: Amalgamated Engineering—

ROBERTS: Amalgamated Engineering Union, yes. He very much agreed privately with what I was saying. He said, "Well, you know, I can't say this in the open, but you're absolutely right. We've got to get more investment. That's the crucial thing. And how do we get it? We've got to make the employers make more money, and I can't tell my members employers are going to make more money in order to provide more investment to get more efficiency." The whole essence of Britain's future _____ in getting more efficiency out of the system. So I was in agreement with the policy of coming over and doing the best that we could, and I supported that wherever it was possible to do so.

Q: What was the impact of the Americans? Let me run a few names by you. Bud Paradise, Jim Silberman—

ROBERTS: Well, Bud, of course, left the trade union movement and went into business. He joined the Austin Motor Car Company. Bud Paradise was a name I was trying to remember. He was the first labor attaché after Berger.

Q: Really?

ROBERTS: He succeeded Berger.

Q: I thought he was an AID man. I may be wrong.

ROBERTS: No, but he came in for a short while as labor attaché. I don't think he got on altogether with Killen. I think they had some animosity between them.

Q: Bud Paradise was, I thought, AID. In any event, he was very active in the productivity program. He died a few years ago.

ROBERTS: Oh, did he?

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____.

Q: Yes, very intelligent guy.

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____ Porsche.

Q: Porsche is still living. I think she's up in Wisconsin. Sylvia Casalow has seen her recently.

ROBERTS: Oh, really? That's interesting.

Q: He was a remarkable person, and I was wondering if you had any comment on the validity of what he was advocating at the time when he was with the U.S. government and his effectiveness.

ROBERTS: I think his effectiveness was small. One couldn't see what the effectiveness was, because much of it was—if he did exercise an influence, it was an influence which was the way people reflected on what he had been saying, and whether they did anything serious after that I don't know. He may well have had some effect. I can't believe it was a large effect. I can't believe any of the efforts that you've made in that respect had large effects in really changing the fundamental problem, which was changing the attitudes in Britain, changing the unions' and management's attitudes.

Q: In other words, what you're saying is that an American of good will could suggest things but he couldn't change attitudes.

ROBERTS: That's right.

Q: What about Jim Silberman? Does that name sound familiar to you? He was a BLS [Bureau of Labor Statistics] productivity man.

ROBERTS: I don't remember him. When was he in Britain? Was he in Britain?

Q: He was very active with Fletcher.

ROBERTS: Well, I went to a lot of Fletcher's things that he invited me to lecture at on one thing or another.

Q: I just wanted to get your impression.

ROBERTS: Silberman, now the name rings a bell somehow, but I can't place it.

Q: He was never posted there, but he used to come over very frequently. We've interviewed him, and he had some things to say about that. What about the labor attachés, their impact, their personality?

ROBERTS: Well, I had a close relationship with most of them. I saw them often. They invited me to their parties and dinner parties, and we invited them, so there was a lot of discussion going on. Up to—what's his name? His wife was an Israeli.

Q: Gotson?

ROBERTS: Yes, Gotson. Gotson and I had a long relationship. He was, of course, very right-wing, was Gotson, and we often disagreed on policy issues and what you could do

and what you couldn't do.

Q: Right-wing labor?

ROBERTS: Yes, right-wing labor.

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____.

Q: Yes, he was there with Rose as the labor attaché when he used to come over to Paris frequently, and then he was there later in Edinburgh as our consul general just before he retired, but he spent an awful lot of time in London.

ROBERTS: Yes, I often saw him.

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____.

Q: You see, both Gotson and Gaussman have been criticized, one for siding so openly with the commentary group, the commentary group in the Labor Party, and Gotson for siding so much with the right wing of the Labor Party. As I say, within the American group there's been much criticism of both of them, incidentally. Is that appropriate for such identification?

ROBERTS: It is difficult. I heard a lot of criticism of Gotson. Gotson was far too right-wing for a hell of a lot of British people.

Q: But he was close to the people on top of the Labor Party?

ROBERTS: Yes, he was.

Q: Whereas Gaussman was actually on the editorial board. This woman—what was her name again, of commentary?

ROBERTS: Oh, commentary, socialist commentary?

Q: Yes. What was her name?

ROBERTS: Mary Sarran.

Q: Oh, yes, Mary Sarran was a good friend of ours, but then there was an English woman who was editor or something.

ROBERTS: Rita Hendon.

Q: Rita Hendon. Now, how come that same type of criticism did not occur, so far as I

know, with respect to Gaussman, that he was too close to one wing?

ROBERTS: Well, you see, this group of people in the Labor Party had very close relations with the leaders of the Labor Party at that time, and they were closer to—

Q: Gatesgill?

ROBERTS: Very close to Gatesgill, yes, and so on. That gave them a certain degree of protection, I think, in a way. I never heard much criticism of Gaussman. Gaussman didn't arouse the reaction that Gotson aroused. Gotson used to blame the British quite openly in discussions for being either weak or following the Communist Party line—

Q: Ah, it was the issue of Communism.

ROBERTS: That always came in, because Gotson was violently anti-Communist. I'm not objecting to that, because I agreed with him, and I mostly agreed with what his views were in this respect. He was right in his criticisms of some people in the British labor movement, who were selling in the Labor Party down the river or were going to Russia and siding with the Russians or were taking money from them and doing all those sorts of things. There's no question about that.

Q: Well, in that period or shortly thereafter too, there was the question of joining the WFTU [World Federation of Trade Unions], which the British did and the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] did and the AF of L [American Federation of Labor] did not. How did you feel about that?

ROBERTS: We were very critical, I and the ISK people were very critical of what we were doing in that respect, what the British were doing in that respect. That brings me back to America again. The first time I came to America in '51, they made an arrangement for me to see Florence Thong. I arrived in Florence Thong's office in the days when air conditioning had not yet entered buildings in the United States.

Q: She was in the old AF of L headquarters on Ninth Street?

ROBERTS: That's right.

Q: Terrible building.

ROBERTS: I went to see her there, and she was sitting in this large room with a wonderful dress buttoned right up here—

Q: Right down to her ankles, black usually.

ROBERTS: Lace around the wrists and so on, and some big pendant thing around her

neck. She greeted me with great dignity and what have you, and sat me down in a chair, and she proceeded then to let into me with the most violent attack on what were the British doing in this respect and doing in other respects and how we'd let the Americans down and we haven't stood up to the Communists, and God knows what. She gave me absolute hell in a dignified and firmly school-mistressish manner of putting me in my place. I knew her by that situation quite well. Anyway, to come back to that time—

Q: At that point you're visiting Florence Thong—I want to get into that. She is Green's assistant left over from _____, but she was not the chief economist of the AFL. That was Boris Shishkin.

ROBERTS: Yeah but I saw Boris Shishkin as well.

Q: I see.

ROBERTS: They did think I should see her. Why, I don't know.

Q: Oh, yes. Otherwise you would have been castigated by all means by everybody.

ROBERTS: So I went to see her.

Q: This is like going to visit the queen before you visit any of the ministers.

ROBERTS: That's right.

Q: She was a wonderful character.

ROBERTS: I was very impressed with the lady.

Q: But you met other AF of L-CIO people. But on the question of the WFTU, did you—

ROBERTS: On the question of WFTU—

Q: It was formed in '44 before the end of the war. Did you oppose entering the WFTU?

ROBERTS: Well, I don't know where I stood at that particular moment, but the politics of it were, I thought, dangerous. I think they were underestimated by the British. They thought they could persuade the AF of L to come in, because they had close relations with the AF of L, formally speaking, then. When the AF of L didn't come in and when the AF of L took a much tougher line, I think the British felt they were caught between what appeared to be popular public sentiment in favor of the Soviet Union, which appeared to be doing a great deal to win the Second World War, and the need to come together. Now, the British, I think, were rather ignorant in this matter. They went into a relationship which gave complete power to the administration of the WFTU in Paris and

into the hands of the Communist Party, so the Communist Party was effectively running it. We saw this, and we tried to point out to people like Deacon and company that this was a dangerous policy, and Deacon did fairly quickly get 'round to tradition, but he was caught in a situation where there were many other people in the British labor movement who favored this, who felt the future should be with Russia and not with America. Although America had given us great help during the war, America was an exploiting nation—

Q: And Russia was the wave of the future.

ROBERTS: —the way of the future. So that was difficult, though that didn't last too long. We got out of that, and we got into a new world movement.

Q: '49. I think the formation conference was in London, wasn't it?

ROBERTS: That's right. It was in London. I went to that conference.

Q: Oh, you did?

ROBERTS: Yes, I was present at it.

Q: I'm going to show you a picture later of that conference to identify a few of the people in the picture, which you may find interesting.

ROBERTS: Well, I'll do my best, but I'm not sure I can remember people as well as I used to. Yeah, I was at that conference. We were delighted, my friends were delighted with that development. That was really the way that we thought things ought to go. It wasn't inevitably the popular opinion, though I think Deacon and company carried it, that the whole behavior of—I'm trying to remember his name, the Secretary General in Paris—was absolutely selling the whole thing out to the Communists. There's no question or doubt about that.

Q: Oh, yes, the CGT [Confédération Générale du Travail] man, whose name I don't remember.

ROBERTS: Yeah.

Q: Well, they had their headquarters they put in the East later on and all the characteristics of Communist tactics. The secretaries were always—

ROBERTS: _____.

Q: And I don't remember any British having a high position in the organization—the French, because they could depend on the CGT. So you were critical of that and happy

when they got together. Any comments about any of the American programs in continental Europe? Did you have much to do with that?

ROBERTS: No, I didn't really. I really don't know about that. I knew Paris, of course. I used to go to Paris regularly, and then when Fletcher was in Paris, he went over. He was released by the TUC to—

Q: To go to the OEEC [Organization for European Economic Co-operation], I believe, the OEEC before the OECD [?]. How do you feel about American aid to trade unions as such, either the open aid in the form of the programs we had with the OEEC where Fletcher was there and Hans Motthofer and all these people from all over, which was sort of open aid but unusual in the United States of giving help to a trade union movement, and what you had heard, which I'd like to know about, about the covert aid.

ROBERTS: Well, I had no objection to the open aid, as you put it. That seemed to me to be a sensible policy. It seemed to be well directed, and it was very useful. How effective it was as far as Europe was concerned and the trade unions there, I couldn't measure. It didn't seem to have much effect, and you had the strong Communist unions in Italy and strong Communist movements in France, and it didn't seem to have much effect in that respect. What it did to other groups, minority groups who were around, it might have strengthened their position somewhat. I don't really know. It's difficult to know that. We need some more studies on this.

Q: Oh, yes. Well, that's one thing that we hope will be accomplished by this series of interviews, and, therefore, I'm going to ask you about a few people. One was Victor Reuther. You got to know him, did you?

ROBERTS: Well, I met him. I didn't get to know him well.

Q: Irving Brown?

ROBERTS: Irving Brown I met several times, yes.

Q: See, there is a person as to whom we get so many different opinions.

ROBERTS: Well, Irving was obviously a very powerful figure. He had a lot of influence. He was influential all over the world and particularly got into the colonial territories later on in his life.

Q: In Africa, yes.

ROBERTS: In Africa. He was clearly very, very able. What his effect was, I don't know. I think it's very difficult to judge. He certainly knew his stuff. He certainly had a lot of information, was well informed, much better informed than most British trade unionists

except probably one or two of the inside in the TUC who were doing work on the colonials. There were some rows and arguments developed there about the speed of withdrawing from the British Empire as it were and all that sort of thing. We had a big colonial policy, and we did a great deal to help unions there. I wrote a book on this.

Q: When you mention your books, you've got to give the names so we can at least refer students to them. Yes, on this question of colonial policy, I remember that. What was the name of the book?

ROBERTS: Oh, it's got a terrible title.

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____.

ROBERTS: I can't remember the title.

Q: I'll tell you, if I wrote as many books as you, I'd remember the names. Please send us. You have two things that you have to send us soon to attach. One is the curriculum vitae and a list of publications including your articles, and I want to get to your editorial work on the Industrial Relations magazine/journal later on. You see the problem. You say Irving Brown had much influence and knowledge. You stressed the colonial—

ROBERTS: But also he was vigorously attacked by a lot of other people. That happened in the British press.

Q: Right. What was he attacked for, and how did you feel about it?

ROBERTS: He was attacked for being too, they would say, right-wing, too—

Q: Anti-Communist?

ROBERTS: —anti-Communist in a way. That was partly behind him. That was where a lot of the attack was coming from.

Q: In 1966 or '67 there was a publication of an article written by a former CIA man which claimed that he had given money, quite a bit of it, to Irving, quite a bit less to—

ROBERTS: Who gave him the money?

Q: CIA. Did you hear about that or have any reactions to that? Before commenting on it, I should tell you that some academics generally feel that it was a bad idea for the U.S. to engage in covert activity of that sort, and operationally people in the government generally say, "Well, what are you going to do if there are a bunch of ships off the coast of Marseilles and the Communist unions are preventing them from landing?" Our friend, Jack Barbege, thought theoretically it was a bad thing ultimately, because we should not

be involved in helping good or bad trade unions. It was their problem. On the other hand, he said to me personally—and we don't seem to find a reference to it but I assure you it was so—that operationally once you're in that problem of these ships being stopped from giving aid in a crucial period to a country that had to fight whether or not to remain outside the Russian, how do you weight these operational as against academic issues.

ROBERTS: I agree. I think it's very difficult. I don't know in detail what money Irving Brown did distribute or where he got it from, but on balance he seemed to be supporting issues which I would have been on the same side if I had been asked to support those. That's about as far as I could go on that.

Q: One of the reasons that this project was going to get into that is because there has been so much, what I call, infantile leftist criticism of the United States and some of it at Manchester that I described to you. You should read that book. You've been making little notes occasionally. Don, did you want to raise some questions?

KIENZLE: There are two areas, but I think we've covered them. The list of books would be useful, and the other was the impact of covert aid, whether it discredited the work of the AF of L-CIO because there was a covert channel, discredited the work in other areas.

ROBERTS: My suspicion would be that it didn't, that it would be known to relatively few people. There was some attempt to make use of it. I've heard criticisms made, but the question would be whether that aid did produce organizationally beneficial results. Did it really help in the places where it was given to stop further decay or to promote a decent system and so on?

Q: Well, there we have a bimodal distribution of effect; namely, obviously during the war the work in the underground was very useful and necessary. In the German field even Victor Reuther gives credit to Irving for having accomplished things within the German situation that helped save the German trade unions from Russian domination. Of course, he's critical of the French and Italian, and he has voiced that criticism in many other places. Does the name Lovestone mean anything to you?

ROBERTS: Yes, I met him—

Q: Oh, you did meet him?

ROBERTS: Yes. He was a very good analyst, was Jay, I thought, and he exercised a lot of influence. The bit that I came in contact with very directly was the bit when Cox was fired by the International Labor Organization in 1970–71, when the ILO had promoted a conference in Latin America on trade unions in the Americas. Of course, the AF of L-CIO was very much concerned with that. The report was drafted by a guy named Spiropolos, a Greek Marxist employed in fact in the International Labor. He was very much an intellectual in the International Labor Organization, and the report favored the

growth of peasant revolt movements among other things which he thought the ILO should be putting money into. Here, the view was in America was all these movements were Communist dominated, and they wrote—

Q: They?

ROBERTS: The AF of L-CIO, Lovestone presumably, advised Meany or whoever was Secretary General at the time to ring up the ILO and tell them that report had to go out, and they blocked it and it didn't go out. It was revised. He withdrew the report, did Jenks, and it was revised.

Q: Was it Jenks who was—

ROBERTS: Jenks, yes. Morris had gone in when—

Q: Oh, I see. Then it would have been '66–7–8, something like that.

ROBERTS: No, it was '71, '70 or '71. I personally disagreed with that report. I thought it was a stupid thing to do and it was silly. It didn't really make much sense whatsoever. Whether the Americans were right or wrong in their views about it, it wasn't a sensible thing to do. I thought Jenks was right to get that report withdrawn and rewritten, but it had _____ about it.

Q: We haven't even gone into your work at the ILO and then the observations you had had on the basis of that of U.S. programs in the ILO, leaving the ILO, etc. Were you at the ILO for some period of time?

ROBERTS: Well, I first went to the ILO in 1952, I think it was, and they asked me if I'd come and be a lecturer there, some of the schools which they had then in trade unions. From then on, I went quite frequently to all sorts of things, meetings, God knows what. When they set the International Institute for Labor Studies up, Amir Ali came from Geneva to see me in London to ask me my views about how it should be set up and what grounds it should be covering and what sorts of—

Q: Let's get that: Amir Ali?

ROBERTS: A-m-i-r—

Q: —the author of a very famous book on Geneva. Did you ever read that?

ROBERTS: I can't remember that.

Q: Oh, hilarious. Amir Ali, an Indian, yeah.

ROBERTS: That's right. He's a very bright man.

Q: Oh, yes. High up in the administrative side of the ILO, right.

ROBERTS: Well, he was put in charge by Morris of the inquiry that they carried out before they sent me to the Institute, and that's why he came to see me, because I was running this LSE course and he thought I'd be a useful person to talk with about the kind of problems he had. I think I exercised quite a bit of influence on it, but I don't know whether they always appreciated the benefits of what I did. The things I argued was that if he was going to set up an institute of this kind, it ought to be in a way quasi-independent of the ILO. They ought to be able to sit back and look at what the ILO was doing as well as just making propaganda talks about this, and evaluate it. My view was the ILO didn't have that kind of situation. I argued it would be a very good idea, and I told Morris this, as a matter of fact. Morris said, "Well, it's going to be very difficult, but I can see your point." There is a point of having somebody who can sit back here, get some good people in, _____ and what have you, and you give them the opportunity to study the organization and write about in that context. Now this is when Cox, with whom I had a very close relationship and given strong support to, fell out with the ILO. He thought the ILO was becoming too rigid, too narrow and, we come back to the productivity thing, going down the productivity line in one sense. There was a jury that was set up and what have you. He thought it ought to be broader, it ought to be going outside the existing trade union organizations it was advising, and so on. I had feelings about that, but I didn't get much into the argument about it, as he was. He decided to write a book on all this. When the Secretary General got to know he was writing—

Q: Morris, yeah.

ROBERTS: No, it was Primo. He was after Morris.

Q: Oh, Jenks.

ROBERTS: It was Jenks. When he got to know that he was writing this book, he told Cox he couldn't do it. He would impose a—what's the Latin term?

Q: He would stop him.

ROBERTS: He'd stop him. [end of Tape 1 Side B]

Q: —after lunch today, and it's still June 6th. Where were we when we stopped at the other recording? Anybody remember?

ROBERTS: Gosh, no. We were talking about contemporary issues, weren't we? I think so.

Q: Some of the things we wanted to get you into was just to mention the name of that book of yours which you say you had an extra copy of. We'll get Turnquist and you together so you can give him that as well as a curriculum vitae and a list of all your publications.

ROBERTS: And he can send it over to you.

Q: Yes, he can pouch it, so you don't have to pay for it. If you're anything like retired people nowadays, you have to worry about paying your own postage.

ROBERTS: Oh, absolutely.

Q: Don't you have an office at the university?

ROBERTS: Oh, we do, yes. No, I get some post from the school, but not very much.

Q: Anyhow, the name of the book.

Mrs. ROBERTS: Labor—

ROBERTS: —in the Tropical Territories of the Commonwealth.

Q: Now that did not record at all.

ROBERTS: Labor in the Tropical Territories of the Commonwealth.

Q: Right. That will be an important addition, I think. Now you had something you wanted to ask specifically, Don. What was that?

KIENZLE: I wanted to ask whether the TUC had any direct training program with the future leaders of the colonies and whether there was an ongoing effort to keep in contact with those people.

ROBERTS: There were two sides to that: one, people they brought to Britain, and they brought a great many leaders of colonial trade unions to Britain for courses, sometimes short courses, sometimes longer courses, and so on, so that they got some sort of training. They also tried to get them into other courses where they would come for a period of time, such as Rustine College and other places like that. Secondly, we sent out quite a lot of delegations to the colonial territories, which they would go and lecture to people and that sort of thing, so it was a two-way operation. Not that we did enough, by any means.

Q: When you say "we" you don't mean the trade union movement, you mean the British government.

ROBERTS: No, I mean the British government, yes.

Q: And that leads to another question that I would want to ask. The British government had a whole lot of those activities through the British Council and others, and yet what we find, what the U.S. finds abroad, is that somehow or other—take a former colony like India: The Indian government did not object to that type of activity or the activity of the Friedrich Eberch system in India, which carried on programs—the Swedes did also, and the Soviets, of course, did—whereas there always is an uneasiness about the United States doing anything like that overtly, because we shifted from covert to overt activities with our institutes as a corps, where the U.S. government finances directly activities through the institutes set up by the AFL-CIO, financed by the government, and that is looked upon with some suspicion. Any explanation of that?

ROBERTS: I don't think there's any explanation of it, but I have to go back into the sort of attitudes that America has to how it should relate to, if it's colonial territories, to colonial territories of other countries in this respect.

Q: Oh, I'm talking about non-colonial. India was not a colonial territory, and yet we tried to have activities of the Asian Free Labor Institute.

ROBERTS: Are you distinguishing India from other countries?

Q: No, because that's true also in other countries, in the developing world especially; Latin America is another.

ROBERTS: Well, I'm not clear what the question is then, because—

Q: The question is: Why is there a separate distinct attitude towards the U.S. government financing activities of trade union institutes, say, as against the German government through the Friedrich Eberch system doing the same thing for the British Council?

ROBERTS: Is this because of the attitudes in the United States or the attitudes in the recipient countries?

Q: The recipient country.

ROBERTS: The recipient country.

Q: Somehow or other, the recipient country, especially while the Soviets were there—I don't know whether that's changed now. I understand it has not. But I was wondering if you had any explanation for that suspicion?

ROBERTS: No, I don't have an explanation.

Q: And that reminds me of where we were when we finished, and that was you explaining about Cox and the ILO and Latin America, and that was the instance in which you said Lovestone had railed against—

ROBERTS: We think Lovestone was the man behind the response to the Latin American article.

Q: What made you think so?

ROBERTS: I don't know. This is what people said around the ILO, that it was Jay Lovestone's response to that. I think he was right to respond in the way that he did, because I didn't agree with the thing, but Lovestone was said to be behind a lot of things that happened. I have no means of judging whether that's right or wrong.

Q: You never had anything to do with him except meeting him that time?

ROBERTS: I met him, yes.

Q: Fascinating guy.

ROBERTS: Yes, and a very intelligent guy. He knew the Community Party, because he had been a member of it or a member of—

Q: That's the thing, and he seemed to be driven by that, people said, as against the basic objectives of the trade union movement, and yet he had trade union support.

ROBERTS: Also because he got great support within the AF of L-CIO. That was the main thing. He had Meany absolutely behind him, and people who criticized him there were seen not to come up to _____.

Q: His correspondence is being opened up now—

ROBERTS: Is it?

Q: Oh, yes, at the Meany Center. Have you been to the Meany Center?

ROBERTS: No, I never have.

Q: It's a shame, because—

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____.

Q: It's right outside Washington. It's a very good research center. They're opening up the archives on the 15th of June, another thing that's happening on the 15th of June. Did you

know that?

KIENZLE: No I didn't.

Q: Yes, definitely by July 5th they're opening up their archives of the collection of materials, so it's too bad, but I don't know if you'd be interested in going out there. If you're interested in going out there, then on Wednesday mornings they have a group of people meeting there who are former trade unionists, some of them in the international field, who get together once a month, just retired people. But I don't know how you would get out there. It's totally in the other direction.

ROBERTS: Sure.

Q: Would you be interested in going there if I could get somebody to lift you up there?

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____.

ROBERTS: I don't know. I think not actually. I think I've got too many things.

Q: I take it, with both those opinions, it's yours that governs or Veronica's?

ROBERTS: If she wants to go, I'll go with her.

Q: Veronica, you were saying—

KIENZLE: Don't interfere in the internal affairs of marriages.

Mrs. ROBERTS: If he wants to _____.

ROBERTS: I doubt if I'd meet anybody I knew, would I?

Q: I don't know. Can you think of anyone? I don't know. You might be interested in their campus, but that's—

ROBERTS: Yeah, well, you know, one campus is—

Q: Is like another. The only person you might know there is Rebhan. Do you remember him?

ROBERTS: Rebhan, the name rings a bell. Where was he?

Q: He was the head of the Metal Workers International, International Metal Workers Federation.

ROBERTS: Oh, yes, I don't know that I've ever met him. I know the guy you're talking about now.

Q: Other than that, I can't think of anybody you might know. The thing about Lovestone is somehow or other his reputation—first of all, uniformly when I ask an American, and I ask you now: Do you know of any instance in which Lovestone's or Brown's activities were guided by the government of the United States as an agent of the United States rather than the trade union movement, or was it a case of where the trade union movement and the government had a common line and he was still able to push that line? So far, I tell you, no one to whom I raised the question has said on this issue the United States line was X and the trade unions opposed that line, and he followed the government. He was an agent of the government, as it were. Most people have said no.

ROBERTS: I don't have an answer to that.

Q: And on the question of imperialism and African policy, the government of the United States did not support the AFL-CIO policy of creating problems in Northern Africa, whereas the AFL-CIO went along in the fashion Irving did. Veronica raised a question at lunch, which is the value of these exchanges in terms of Britishers and many others who would never have gone abroad, you said, if it weren't for the opportunities given. They wouldn't have gone to the United States. They might have gone elsewhere. That is true, I suppose.

ROBERTS: Yes, well, certainly I would have never gone to the United States at that stage. I might subsequently have arranged the programs, and I subsequently did, because I arranged a program in 1958–59 with Princeton and MIT, where I went as a visiting professor for a year, and in 1964 again I came to America for half a year at Berkeley and so on, and I've done trips otherwise than that to the United States.

Mrs. ROBERTS: But you'd never have met all those people—

ROBERTS: No, I would never have had the opportunity I got in that first visit, which was quite a fantastic opportunity.

Q: Well, you had extraordinary experience afterwards which gave you the opportunity to go to universities, but trade unionists, as Veronica pointed out, never would have gotten abroad, and was that good or bad?

ROBERTS: Well, since I believe in an open world and I believe in traveling around and what have you, but I think there we come into a great problem, which you're into now. I see you're going to reduce the number of immigrants into the United States, according to this morning's paper. It doesn't surprise me. I think we have great difficulties in the world in accommodating. The world has grown fantastically. We have this huge growth, and the potential for even further, absolutely massive growth. Puts an enormous pressure on

countries who become favorite spots for immigration as to how far it's reasonable for them to be pressured to go in that respect. I think there's a lot to be said for the nation states. Nation states are what really brought a great deal to civilization in the past. If we were all to merge in such a way so we created one universal state with some centralized authority somewhere, I can't believe it would be better. I believe in diversification, in other words, then the diversification we've got. I think on the whole the diversification, though it's brought evil things like Nazism and what have you, it's brought over the long haul of history more good than bad. We wouldn't be where we are today, and I think a lot of people are better off today than they've ever been in the whole possibility of their lives, as a result of the developments that have taken place, I would say, largely through diversity. Nations have stimulated nations, and people have stimulated people in this respect. So I'm not for a universally similar world. I think we gain more from a dissimilar world with all the differences of religion and—

Q: What about the problems of East Indians in Great Britain?

ROBERTS: Oh, well, they have a very good problem. What's the problem with them? They're all doing very well in school.

Q: They're doing well, but what about the rest of society? Does it bring up—

ROBERTS: Oh, it does bring up in the rest of society problems, exactly so. That's why there's an issue about what you can take, and I think you are bound to set limits of tolerability. Otherwise the whole thing gets distorted. If you went on allowing people to come in massively, all experience shows it takes a long time to accommodate to that. Sometimes you never accommodate. Look at Bosnia and lots of other places.

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____ scholarships.

Q: No we've gone beyond that to the question of—. Now let me challenge you with respect to your views on Europe. One of the advantages that we, the United States, saw in the Marshall Plan was the fact that it unified Europe. It forced the European countries to get together in the OEC and determine how they would use the funds that we were making available for European integration. Now you tell me that from the current point of view, from your current point of view, there's too much of that.

ROBERTS: Yeah, that's right, because at the time when we did it with the Marshall Plan, there was a clear and definite need. We had the stresses of six years of war, huge costs. We were in enormous deficits and so on, and we had to stabilize the situation. It was advantageous. We saw it, Bevin saw it, other people who were involved saw it, and they talked with Americans of a similar mind. There would be an advantage in doing something in some organized form that would pass benefits back to Britain, but it was supposed to cut both ways, remember. I don't know how far it _____.

Q: It never cut the other way. We didn't learn the lesson.

ROBERTS: But that was the theory of the thing.

Q: Where did that begin to tip over on the other side of the balance?

ROBERTS: Well, I think it did right from the very beginning, because it wasn't institutionally arranged to tip the other way. The kind of benefits America expected to see was greater trade and so forth, which you probably did see, but that wasn't direct, of course. There's no direct link there, but that led on, I suppose, to GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] and to the world trade order now as it is, and so on and so forth, all of which, I think it would be argued by a lot of people in the United States, has been to the benefit of the United States.

Q: In long term, but the immediate impact on people who were unemployed who don't see the benefit.

ROBERTS: Oh, sure, that's true in all countries. That's what they say in Mexico about the North American trade treaty.

Q: Any ideas on how that could be corrected?

ROBERTS: It can only be corrected by the development that we get. Now, you've got a major problem there. Mexico has a rapidly expanding population. Every new job you create, you have five other dependents to look after, or whatever is the ratio, I don't know. That's the problem. You've got to get stability in a situation. Stability is the sort of thing that will bring an answer to that when standards of living really rise. If standards of living don't rise, people will stay discontented. A lot of standards of living are not going to rise. The Indian standard of living, where they've had tremendous success in productivity, remarkable success in productivity, is being held back by a huge population increase. That's all over. Take East India, and you go down to the South Pacific, and you've got huge, huge population growth down there and so on.

Q: Even greater than Africa?

ROBERTS: No, it's the same sort of thing though.

Q: Well, the last thing I want to get to you, and I want to make sure to get to you, is what comments you have on the type of representation that is good for the United States to have abroad in the labor field. To what degree are they dependent upon trade union contacts, other government—like I came from the Labor Department—diplomatic officers like Don Kienzle who go from "normal" diplomacy to labor field and academics, plus one other, and that is all these are immaterial if the personality aspects don't fit in. What sort of people should be trained for this work, what type of training should they have, and

what success has there been for one group rather than another?

ROBERTS: Well, this is, I think, a very difficult question, because I don't see why it should be confined just to trade unionists if trade unionists are a diminishing element in the community, as seems to be the case. There are millions of people outside the trade unions who ought to be in a position where they get some benefit from these kinds of interchanges, so it has to be—

Q: Excuse me, I'm not talking about interchanges, I'm talking of labor diplomacy, the people to enter the government to do AID work, information work, or diplomacy in your normal sense.

ROBERTS: What are you asking about that?

Mrs. Roberts: Labor officers?

ROBERTS: Yes, we're talking about labor issues.

Q: This is an examination, this whole project, of the labor officers in the Foreign Service, all aspects of the Foreign Service.

ROBERTS: To assess that, if you ask of a specific country what advantage has it been to the British trade unions, the British public, the British government to have labor attachés in Britain, say, the answer to that is they brought a certain level of expertise to the diplomatic process there in the sense that they've been able to advise their other fellow officers who were in the American embassy, or in the British case in the British embassy, and what have you. That seems to me a good thing in a sense. You need some specialist knowledge in this field if the institutions you're concerned with are vitally important in the political, social, economic progress of a country. As the unions decline in membership, I think that diminishes. That's the problem. You still need somebody to have expertise in the order of what's happening to employment and to all those aspects of it around, who will want to brief, and especially since that has other consequences, political consequences, for example, who will want to brief other ministers, other people in the embassy, about how they should report on this and what they should look out for and what they should see and so forth. That seems to be a natural part of the benefit. We do that right across the embassy with our specialist officers in trade, our specialist officers in the Navy, Army and God knows what and so on and so forth.

Q: In your case, like in our case, over the last half century, these specializations have broadened out quite a bit. You used to have just the diplomatic. But I put this to you: Suppose the American trade union movement and the American labor economy goes down much more seriously than it has so far. What is the type of expertise necessary in the embassy or in the AID mission, etc., that will see to it that the objectives, the purpose, of the U.S. government overall policy is followed adequately, no matter what happens in

the United States, in the country to which a person is posted? This has come to my attention.

ROBERTS: Well, they should have a view of what's going on in other countries and decide how much experience and so on they require there to do this job of observing and reporting on. Now, the real critical point, I think, from this thing is that in the past procedures America has used this activity to promote, for example, trade unionism, to support it, to support it in principle as giving practical support to that on a limited basis, but nevertheless it has identified with it and facilitated all these exchange arrangements and Lord knows what. That depends really on what the validity of the trade unions carry. Where trade unions completely disappear or largely disappear, I think you have to do more than simply supply people who are expert on that function. They have to look at the whole process of management going on and to be able to report about that as well. That might become, I don't know, more important. It depends what happens to the trade union movement. I don't personally see the trade union movement as a fixed event. It may only be a passing event in historical time. Trade unions have only been in existence since the beginning of the 19th century. They started in Britain and America more or less together, as a matter of fact. That's an interesting thing. We've had a dominant interest in them in spite of the fact that they were developed contrary to the laws in the country concerned, and that shows something of their characteristic. But if as a result of that development we've passed through that time and we're getting to a time where we develop new kinds of administration of enterprises of one sort or another where we don't need that kind of representation, because we _____ other forms to take its place. I was saying to Don here that if this whole idea of human relations in industry works, as now many, many people in the academic world in Britain and in America and elsewhere believe is likely to be the case, you say, well, what the hell is the use of the unions, do we really need them, do the people themselves respond in that way. It's no good trying to prop something up, if you take it from a political point of view, to prop something up that's proving a failure. There's no base for it. That might be the case. I'm pessimistic about the unions, because I don't see they're developing. All the attempts that they've made so far, including the American ones, to introduce credit cards, you name it and God knows what, as a way of stimulating membership have had relatively little effect. The competition in all those fields where they've come in and tried to provide new services, the impact has been so little it's not worth having. So you're still back to the main problem, and you're back to the main problem of a relationship which is basically antagonistic, which was the classic position of the American trade unions. They were antagonistic to management, they had a different interest. This whole theory of labor organization developed in the United States and in Britain and elsewhere. But if you go to the Marxist position where they're developing as part of a political movement which is designed to overthrow management and substitute another form, then if all that ceases to work, that's no longer the case. We break down. If it is the case and the unions are strong and powerful and so on, then there's a good case for developing along similar lines to what you developed after the Second World War. The question is: Is it, in terms of operational validity, the correct way to continue to go? I don't know the answer to that question. At the moment

there's a lot of trade union activity around. I think you do need specialists. You do need people who can advise on that. Whether you should go out, though, in a politically dynamic way to try and organize the rest of the world when it's deorganizing itself is a very dubious proposition. I don't know whether one could hold to that.

Q: Well, I don't think one of the diplomatic objectives of the U.S. government is to build trade unions except insofar as that's part of building democracy.

ROBERTS: Sure, exactly so.

Q: So you're pointing to the possibility that we should have broader objectives than simply building trade unions.

ROBERTS: Sure, exactly so. That is a crucial point, I think.

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____ attaché have connections also with _____ management people and the CBI [Confederation of British Industry] and—

ROBERTS: Yes, they do.

Q: They are supposed to, and that's the burden of one of my questions, which I'm coming to and I might reach now. Veronica was raising the question of whether our labor attachés have a function with respect to government agencies and the British industry, etc. Yes, they're supposed to, and that is the burden of what I want here, what sorts of people with this new development, and, while you're at it, with the breakdown of the Soviet Union we're having new embassies there. What sort of people should we have who would be able to operate in these general human resources areas, not only trade unions?

ROBERTS: I think they've got to report on the whole aspect of society and what is going on in that society, and they need specialists who can do that. And there is the critical question, I think in the past, of labor attachés in America. It was associated with an ideological approval of the existence of trade unions. And I think that's fair enough. I don't quarrel with that at all. And they did a very good job in that respect. The question is the continuity of it. Does it make good sense in terms of the continuity? If not, what alternatives, is the proper question that you're asking, and I think they have to look at what is happening. I think they could have done much more in industry than they have done in the past.

Q: By "in this" you mean in management?

ROBERTS: With the management side. Really, as far as I know, the labor attachés have done very little in that respect. I may be wrong about this. I may not have information. But I guess they've seen their concern mainly with management.

Q: With labor?

ROBERTS: With labor.

Q: That is something that you really have to make as a point, why you feel that way about it. What is the evidence for that?

ROBERTS: Oh, the evidence for that is, I think, very clear.

Q: For the British?

ROBERTS: For the British. I can't speak generally because I don't know what happens in other countries. But in the British case, I can give you lots of instances. The labor attachés, for example, would organize, in conjunction with other people, a Christmas party and invite the labor people and what have you and all the rest of it and that sort of thing. But it was a social as well as a straight functional political thing about it.

Q: Labor Day functions without a management day function?

ROBERTS: That's right. There were no management day functions.

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____.

ROBERTS: Well, they tried to find out sometimes, but I don't know how good—

Q: I always made it a practice, because I couldn't understand the labor thing without going to the management conferences, but management is so much better institutionalized; whereas I wouldn't have done that in Paris.

ROBERTS: I agree. It's better institutionalized. I think there's a problem here. I have not thought about it enough to think about a series of answers that would make good logical sense both from—

Q: Well, you've given some insights, and I encourage you to think about it more and amend your remarks.

ROBERTS: —the recipient countries and the country making the activity. But I think in the end it's got to come back to benefit the United States, because that is absolutely essential. You're working for the United States and for the government, and it must come back in an important sense to that. I think if you get into a position of—you've already mentioned cases—where labor attachés took a very strong political interest in a particular direction and identified very closely with that, it creates embarrassments and creates difficulties. One doesn't know who they're really representing or what the reason is.

Q: And you don't know who the next person is.

ROBERTS: Exactly.

Q: This was what Berger did in effect in Great Britain. He had been having all these contacts because of the AID program under Harriman, and then he was the person who knew these. Donny, you must have some—

KIENZLE: I wanted to ask; In this day of human relations substituting for industrial relations, it seems to me that the democratic issues have to be addressed somehow. The democratic voice is lost when management is really setting the terms of the human relations system. How do you see voice being provided for in the post-union environment, or doesn't it matter, or is efficiency the only real goal?

ROBERTS: Well, that's a difficult question, this one, and I'm not sure what the absolute answer is, but I think, if in fact, as I was arguing, work people are not particularly less interested in unions, and they develop different forms of relationship with management through worker representation of some other form than purely the union one, then that may be an adequate replacement. I wouldn't say that for certain, but it could well be. Some of the best industrial relations in Britain are in non-union companies where the activity of the management is better, but then you have the problem which you raised with me earlier. If the management changes its mind or you get a new management which has a different view and it wants to change all that, I would like to see that to some extent reinforced in the legal process. Now I don't know how far I want to go in that respect. I don't want to go as far as some of the proposals. I don't want to make Britain simply a copy of the German model, which is what the British TUC is intending to move towards. Let us, effectively they're saying, go into Europe, let us have the German model, and we'll do it their way, which also has other implications. I have no objection to independent professional associations, whatever they are, providing that they observe the restraints which are necessary for the system to work reasonably within the economic and social environment. If they go beyond that, if they become, like they have been in the past, societies to change society fundamentally in a different kind of way, then that raises a whole set of new issues which we have to attend to, whether we want to or whatever our views are at the present moment. I think we're moving away from the concept as far as trade unions are concerned. That seems to be the evidence anyway. In every country, with the exception perhaps of Scandinavia, that I know of, trade unions are declining in membership, and that means you have to provide alternatives. I've mentioned some alternatives that are there. It doesn't fully satisfy your problem. If you see society as two aspects, the management side and the employee side, the employees have lost a form of strength that they had before. That can only be answered, I suppose, by the fact that, if management returns to its old model of authoritarian management, then the unions will return to theirs. I think it's because we've largely to a large extent departed from that model that management has become much better management than it was in the past. It is more cooperative. It is more participant. I've seen this very closely. I did a study of

representation of white collar workers in Britain in the advanced industries, computer industries. There's practically no trade unionism there. Those guys are not interested in trade unionism, and they're not interested in it because they think they can stand on their own feet. If management gets tough, they can get tough. And they carry such a considerable power in terms of control of the instruments of production in this respect—

Q: Plus the fact that there's more employment in that area. If there were unemployment, then suddenly they find their problems were ones of labor management.

ROBERTS: But even when there's unemployment, they don't seem really to join the unions. That's one of the interesting things so far.

Q: Have you had unemployment in these advanced areas?

ROBERTS: Yes, some where you get industries closing down and other ones coming in.

Mrs. ROBERTS: _____.

ROBERTS: There is a point here.

Q: If she said I was right, I want to get back on the right. What you say is very interesting, and I think it would be advantageous not necessarily to our project but to organizations like the IRRA [Industrial Relations Research Association] here in the United States to get an exchange of information.

ROBERTS: Well, I think they are. There's a big debate this weekend on this issue.

Q: Yes, but I don't think we get the benefits of British research on that.

ROBERTS: Well, we haven't got far enough yet. There's a lot further to go, but I'm hopeful this will happen.

KIENZLE: I'd like to try one other question. Going back to the issue of sovereign states and the diversity that sovereign states promote, which is, I think, a positive thing as well—I'm not challenging _____—with the globalization of the world's economy, one important area is increasingly outside the control of the governments of these sovereign states. So I guess the question I'd like to ask you is: How do you see the balance between promoting cultural and social diversity on the one hand and the problems that are created by globalization and shipping jobs offshore? Wouldn't there be some pressure to go back to the more protectionist areas in the economic sphere in order to protect these other political goals of diversity—?

ROBERTS: Yes, this is a very difficult question, and it's a question that's, I think, much debated now, and it's a question which raises its head very specifically in something like

the European Community. If you take the French as compared with other people, they want to reserve a large area where they can pursue policies of benefit to their interests, the interests of the French. One reason why we have very high airfares in Europe is because the French will not give up the right that they have to set their own airfares; and if the French won't give up, nobody else will give up to that. That is one of the major, major issues. They want to keep that, because though Air France is an airline that makes vast losses, they just transfer huge funds from the state, from the French government, to keep it alive, Air France, against the onset of British Airways, which is a highly profitable and successful country. So we have real problems here, and I think the only answer you get is—if you centralized in the European Community, at the moment the battle might go against the French, because the Germans have got relatively or nearly profitable, if not profitable, and if we'd really threw our weight about in this respect, we'd have a hell of a problem, which I think would almost compel France to leave the Community, they feel so strongly about this issue. I think you've got to make some compromises in this respect. That comes back to globalization, as you put it. There is globalization in trade now, and globalization, I think, has worked best where trade has been relatively free. Where it's been set within closed contours, you inevitably get the growth of prosecuting self interest, so you get back to more vigorous competition between countries at that kind of level. I would prefer to go for the maximum degree of free trade that one could have, recognizing there are some cases where it's legitimate to break with that, but it would have to be, I think, to the whole development of GATT, which I approve of, has been to widen trade at the expense of protecting self interests. Now you go on with that to what does this mean for jobs if this means that some countries are very successful at that and others are not. You then get the demand for immigration and people moving to get jobs, because they can't do it any other way. And we know there are limits to that, because I've already pointed them out. You come to a series of compromises. Where exactly they lie at any particular time, I don't know, but if you ask me in principle what do I support, I support a relatively free world, free movement, but on the other hand I recognize there are limits. That's the position that I would put on this, and it's a compromise position.

KIENZLE: Maybe one last follow-up question, if I may: What kinds of information do you think government decision makers should have on these global trends in order to—

ROBERTS: Well, they need a lot of information, and they're getting a lot of information, and this is enhanced by the development of world trade organizations of various kinds. These are very important, and we should keep those and we should be in touch. One of the problems here, of course, is you've got a global system here. You've got a global system of government in one sense, you've got a global system of trade, you've got lots of global systems, but the managing power is decentralized to the nation state. It's the congress that makes decisions in the center, or the government in Britain or whatever it is. They have wide knowledge. They also have limited knowledge, and also different objectives in the programs that they're following. They want to be reelected next time, and there are also some issues of that sort, which brings the subject down to the

practicalities of politics in the situation, which will limit what you're doing or which will _____ to take steps which are probably damaging in some respects to get the ends that you want by funding particular things or not funding them or whatever it may be. Again, it's a balancing thing, but I think as policymakers in this field, if you were deciding should we have a labor attaché or not have a labor attaché, you get to the business of deciding, in terms of the United States or in terms of Britain or whatever it is, is it a good idea to have this despecialism. It's proved to be a good idea up to a point in the past, and you could make a very strong case for it. How long is it relevant now? We have to take into account a lot of the things that I've mentioned today and which have come up in either discussion, to say whether we should continue and how we should continue and, if we change, where should we change toward and on what basis. I think we can see the problems, we can outline them, we can see where we're going, and we have to decide how we can relate more effectively, the Congress or the House of Commons or what have you, to knowing enough about the situation so they can legislate properly and not legislate out of a fit of purely narrow political policy which may appear to suit them and does in important respects suit them. The guy who's looking after the interests of Virginia knows what Virginians want, and he's going to try and do things that help them. But we're only one step above that really. We're trying to coordinate what Virginia wants, what the United States wants, what Great Britain wants, what people want all over the place, and that's the balance that you have to come out of this.

Q: Let me ask one question, which may also be the last one. I was pointing to your explanation of your personal fears or qualms about Europe and becoming too much a part of Europe, but you didn't mention one thing that's very important in what they call social affairs, that we call labor affairs or labor and social affairs, and that is the difference between, say, the ILO, which develops standards, which are disobeyed by many countries, even those that agree to the adoption of the standards, as against Europe, which is adopting standards that have teeth in them. Now, in all your objections or fears or qualms about Europe, you didn't mention to what degree you feel that adoption of those social standards. Does it force you into _____ or something like that? The way they're developing it seems to me to raise some of those concerns.

ROBERTS: It doesn't force me into that, because I think there are different ways of doing the same thing. Again, we come back to diversity. I believe the diverse system can work equally well. I don't see why we should go down a particular model. There's no doubt about it. What the European Community has wanted is one particular model. They wanted a German model; that's what they wanted, and that's raised a lot of issues. A lot of other countries have liked the German model too. The British TUC now wants the German model. It doesn't come out and say it like that, but effectively that's what it's doing, having used all the examples, the German examples, to show, that's what they want. Now, if we had the German model, I think it would have a lot of, I would say, adverse effects on the TUC. The decline of trade unions would become even more rapid and different from what it is, but the bureaucrats who are making those decisions in the TUC would find a place in that, a new role and perhaps a more powerful place than they

had before. I don't know.

Q: Well, what is there in the German system that endangers the British trade union movement? For instance, the whole issue of workers' participation or the various forms in different countries are set in terms of that economy or that social situation, which may not apply. Why should the British trade union movement favor the German solution when the German solution developed out of their peculiar social and economic—

ROBERTS: Sure. That is the case, that is the case of what is happening. It would force alterations in the British pattern of arrangements beyond that, and it would inspire new loyalties and new preferences and so on. If you start there with uniformity, why not go across the rest of the world and have everything uniform in this respect?

Q: And that is impossible because the conditions—

ROBERTS: It's ridiculous.

Mrs. Roberts: _____. The TUC changed _____ very much against Europe until Delaw came to the TUC _____. If they took on the European model, they would have all sorts of legal improvements in their situation, and overnight they would change their point of view.

ROBERTS: Well, it didn't change because Delaw came, but Delaw—

Q: Delaw made them amenable.

ROBERTS: That's right, made them advantageous in that respect.

Q: This is one of the problems we have in Australia with different groups of labor and management trying to adopt different parts of the American system without realizing the implications.

ROBERTS: It's quite interesting what different policies will do. You probably didn't hear in the paper the other day about this guy from the national university in Australia who showed that policies being pursued by the Australian government in this respect have led to different distribution of equities in the system. You have a much higher degree of unemployed women in Australia, because the cost of employing a woman is so much higher there than it is somewhere else, and the market situation has altered out, so they employ less. So there are large numbers of women looking for jobs in Australia, much larger than anywhere else, and so on. We always get these situations when you make these changes, in Europe or anywhere else for that matter, so I don't want to go down the common model the output of which I'm uncertain or unsure of, and I don't want to be changing everything in order just to be on the common model. That takes equity further than it ought to go, it seems to me. It isn't equitable then; it's disequitable.

Q: Any other final comments, judgments, suggestions about our project?

ROBERTS: Well, your project's a jolly good idea. I'm glad you're doing it, and I certainly look forward at some stage to reading it when you've passed the parts that are publishable.

Q: Well, I don't know. That's another problem.

ROBERTS: That's exactly right. It is a problem, yeah.

Q: I'm afraid neither nor I and possibly not even Don Kienzle will be available when the project is completed, but it's an ongoing thing.

ROBERTS: How far is this done elsewhere in the diplomatic services? Are you doing this across the board in other countries?

Q: This Association for Diplomatic Studies is conducting a number of oral histories, and as interests develop they just take them on. We have one, which is very interesting but hasn't gotten far, on Vietnam, which is going to be very important. What did people think who were there? We have so many different views. We have one on the Marshall Plan which unfortunately has stopped. There's a long interview with me on my Marshall Plan experience. They haven't been active lately. We have one of the USIA, U.S. Information Agency, which, by the way, we exchange these things with. We have an interesting one that Gay is working on, and that's the spousal one. What are the problems of the spouses of these people who come there? How do they bring up children? And the recent changes which—as distinguished from the original form, where women went out without any rights at all except to be the head of the family while their husband is working—now develop to the point where a professional woman is encouraged to continue engaging in her career. We have many areas in which both the man and the woman, the husband and the wife or the significant other, are engaged professionally, and what impact does that have on the family? That means almost that women are encouraged to engage in professional activities. It has some impact on the children, and it also has impact on where you can be posted with both of them engaged. So we have a spousal project that looks into really the change that's taken place where in effect in the old days the wife, or spouse but mostly wife rather than male spouse, was thought of as an appendage of the husband's operations and had no rights of her own. Those people, Esther Peterson being an example and my wife Yetta to some degree, did not object to this status of being, as we put it in those days, two for the price of one, a husband and a wife, whereas nowadays it's gone to the other extreme where a spouse will not consider doing anything, not even running a cocktail party for her husband, because she's got other things to do. So we have a spousal project.

KIENZLE: Ambassadorial, also the agricultural attachés have a program, and they're

trying to get an AID.

Q: Oh, they got the funds for the AID program. So there are various others, and it will be an interesting thing and may help, but it will certainly put into place a body of experiences.

Mrs. Roberts: _____.

Q: Veronica, you will either have to talk louder, or I will repeat it, or Don will pass this to you.

Mrs. ROBERTS: I had the impression that you were asking Ben why he thought that it was easier for Britain than other countries to get programs going in, say, India than the United States because of a certain sort of intolerance towards the United States. I used to work for an employers' federation that had many overseas employers in former colonial territories on its membership, and I think the Americans perhaps overestimated the amount of hostility there was towards Britain because of the colonial background. I think, in fact, in many of these countries there was terrific continuing friendship, and that explained why we have _____ countries. As for the German *stiftung* [?], I can't explain that. I don't know, except that I don't think they were tremendously noticeable except in certain limited fields. I think the fear of the Americans, as distinct from that, was simply of their energy and powerfulness. That's all I was meaning about that. But you did seem to be a bit puzzled, so I thought I'd put that in.

Q: Oh, not puzzled. It just frankly annoyed me, and here my Indian experience comes out, not that they were friendly to the British, because they were friendly to some of the British and unfriendly to others because of the different experiences they had, but the fact that they would raise a question about the U.S. institute for Asian affairs, AAFLI, Asian American Free Labor Institute, conducting a trade union education program and not objecting—not to the British—not objecting to the Soviets with the Soviet friendship society. The only answer I came up with was it didn't cost them politically anything to be favorable to the Soviets, whereas in our case it did because of the large element of suspicion of American capitalism without a concurrent suspicion of Soviet—

ROBERTS: Absolutely, but this was a fact of the extent to which the Soviets had success at that time. They convinced people, like they convinced Harold Laskey and thousands of others who were intelligent people, that to go down this road was the better road to go down, that it would produce better results, produce more social happiness, more stable societies, and God knows what, and they really believed that, whereas they saw America as a vast anarchy where everybody pursued his own interest and, by pursuing his own interest, maximized the profitability of the whole. They didn't believe that. They thought that was vastly wrong, and masses of them, not only in India but everywhere across the Western world that element fell into place. But the defeat of the Soviet Union is the really serious and most significant fact that this policy collapsed in the Soviet Union, really

wholly and totally collapsed. There are many Soviets now living in the Soviet Union who would like to have it back, because it gave them securities which they've lost in the meantime or have been diminished or God knows what.

Q: For that small proportion that had those things.

ROBERTS: Absolutely, yes.

Q: Interesting. Well, thank you very much. This has been enjoyable, not only profitable, for us.

ROBERTS: I'll sign it.

End of interview