

Interview with Stephen I. Schlossberg

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

STEPHEN I. SCHLOSSBERG

Interviewed by: Morris Weisz

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Q: We are sitting here in the Office of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Washington, D.C. This is Morris Weisz and I am going to be interviewing the Director of the Office, Steve Schlossberg. Steve has had a long and varied career, all of which is relevant to the project that we are conducting, the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project, and I want to interview him, as I have other people, in terms of how their background in the trade union movement, and in the case of Mr. Schlossberg his background also in the ILO, has governed his understanding of international labor issues. We are particularly interested in his evaluation of the work and the objectives of the diplomats abroad in the labor field — the Labor Attach#s, the United States Information Agency (USIA) information people, and the Agency for International Development (AID) labor officers. Steve, please begin by describing your family background, that is, its social and political background, and how you came into the labor field.

SCHLOSSBERG: Okay. Well, I'll start by saying that I came from a middle-class to upper middle-class Jewish family in the retail business in Roanoke, Virginia. Middle class, not upper, but I had a couple of rich uncles. I went to the University of Virginia, and then I went to the war. I was in World War II for five years and ten months, and when I came back I

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didn't go right to professional school. I tried to “make it” in a family business, to get started in Roanoke, so I went to work for my rich uncle in a soft [goods] department store, more or less ladies' ready-to-wear and soft goods and that kind of thing. I was there for a while, but my natural allies in the city of Roanoke, Virginia, were NAACP people and labor union people. I was very much opposed to the Byrd Machine and the poll tax; I was for the anti-lynching proposition; and I belonged to the NAACP as well as being active in politics and so on..

Q: Democratic [Party] politics?

SCHLOSSBERG: Democratic politics. That's right, but left Democratic politics.

Q: Coming from that background, what made you interested in the left?

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, ever since I was a little kid, I had always been interested in the underdog, and I was always offended by racial prejudice. In high school, I had been an activist and interested in those days in the peace movement.

Q: This was the late 1930s that you are talking about?

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes, that's right. I graduated from high school in 1938. Senator Nye and Senator Wheeler were heroes of mine, because they didn't want any more wars, and they used to talk in terms of how many schools you could build for [the price of] a battleship and that kind of thing, but — It shows you how you grow in life. — when it came time to fighting Nazis in World War II, I stopped being a pacifist pretty quickly. I had been an early member of the Board of the NAACP in my hometown and worked very closely with them, and as I said, my political interests were. . . I had had religious training. Even though I wasn't religious, I was very much taken with the Old Testament prophets and the notions of social justice that Amos and Hosea and those people had in trying to tell the people to do right, to do justly and live decently. Those values were the values of unionism in

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the South and the values of [improved] race relations of the Civil Rights movement in the South.

So after four years and a few months in business, I couldn't stand it any more, so I had to move. I had two offers then. I had an offer from the NAACP, Inc. Fund to be a kind of organizer. I had no profession. I was just a college guy. . .

Q: In college what did you major in?

SCHLOSSBERG: Economics. I was going to be kind of a helper to the NAACP. I also had an offer from the ILG (International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union) to come to work for them as an organizer. I chose to become an organizer.

Q: Did you have any experience in the shop or did you go directly to organizing?

SCHLOSSBERG: Directly to organizing. It was very interesting. I went from \$16,000 a year, which was what I was paid to be a manager of my uncle's store, to \$65 a week with a \$10 car allowance and a gas card, and that was it. It was a pretty big shock. I worked for the Upper South Department, which was headed by Angela Bambacci. She was a very dear, dear friend of mine. She taught me to cook Italian, and we were really very, very close. I organized in Virginia, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, the Eastern Shore of Delaware, Delaware, and West Virginia.

The biggest strike I ever had was in West Virginia. I was arrested, I think, over the years 17 times, mostly for violating ordinances that were unconstitutional, and for disturbing the peace, and so on. But I organized a lot of people. It was interesting, because I was one of the few guys from the ILG in the South — I was in [what the union termed] the “Upper South.” — who didn't speak like a New Yorker and didn't have an Italian accent or Jewish inflections. I spoke like the natives. I remember one vicious campaign we were on, in which the boss had beaten back three previous attempts at organization by the ILG. He wrote a letter to all the people, and he said, “Ask the union organizer from New York

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where he was during the war and what his name was and so on.” Well, that gave me a wonderful opportunity to write a letter to everybody in the place and tell them my name, that I came from Roanoke, Virginia, and say that I was in the war and had four battle stars, and I wondered what they had.”

Q: Were you born in Roanoke?

SCHLOSSBERG: Born and raised in Roanoke, Virginia. I also wrote in the letter “that I had a term of service on the Community Fund.” At one time my uncle made me go on the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce from Roanoke, so I didn't sound exactly like a radical from New York. We organized that company. It was Perfection Garment Company in Martinsburg, West Virginia. I was very successful. I organized a lot of people that were ready for organization. After about two years, I was made Director of Organization of Angela's Department of the Upper South, and I stayed there until after about five years I decided I needed a “trade.” I just didn't want to be a union bureaucrat all my life, so I decided I would go back [to the university] and go to law school. By that time I had married a union organizer named Mary Coleman, who was a graduate of the University of Chicago and had her master's in economics. We met on the picket line, and it was a nice romance. In any event, I decided to go back to law school.

Q: Before you get into law school. . . By the way, Bill Gomberg takes credit for telling you that you should go to law school.

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes, he did tell me that, and my brother told me that too. My brother was a lawyer. Bill Gomberg was really a very, very close friend of mine. In those days I knew everybody in the ILG hierarchy. I knew Dubinsky; I knew Charley Kreindler, who was our supervising Vice President. Angela wasn't yet a Vice President in those days. And I knew Gus Tyler very well. Gus wasn't one of my favorite people, but Gomberg was.

Q: You know you are on tape?

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SCHLOSSBERG: I know. That's all right. Gus and I have become very good friends, I think, later in life. Anyway, . . .

Q: Before you get into that, I want to. . . Frequently in the Labor Attach# field, it becomes relevant to learn — as to your connections in the trade union movement — which side of the trade union movement you found yourself. How unpopular or popular were your views that led you to join the NAACP and become active in it with other trade unionists? As I recall, there were some trade unionists in Virginia who were not too kindly disposed to that kind of activity.

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, the only trade unionists who were in the Civil Rights movement in Roanoke, Virginia, during my time were the Textile Workers, the Steelworkers, and the Garment Workers. The building trades had nothing to do with it, though they were my friends politically. They were on the same side politically as we were and they were opposed to the Byrd Machine, because the Byrd Machine was considered death to union people.

I remember one story though, that I will tell you to give you an idea. One time when I was working in Roanoke, my brother was running for state senator against the chief lieutenant of the Byrd Machine. He was endorsed by all the progressive CIO-type unions including the ILG. Dan Powell, a CIO political guy, and I were making a tour of the precincts, and we went out to a precinct in Garden City, which is on the outskirts of Roanoke, where there was nothing but textile workers. We got out of my car and there was the president of the Textile Workers' local handing out leaflets for the other guy, the Byrd Machine candidate. So I pointed that out to Dan Powell, who went up to him and said, "Hey, what the hell is going on here? Don't you know that the Textile Workers endorsed Arnold Schlossberg?" He said, "Yeah, but I can't vote for no Jew!" Dan said, "Well, didn't you know that Jesus Christ was a Jew?" And he said, "Yeah, but he ain't running in this race." I never forgot that.

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Q: Steve, you mentioned the Byrd Machine so many times. Let's just mention to these young students who will be using these tapes that that was the Harry Byrd, Senior, Machine in Virginia (as distinguished from Robert Byrd of West Virginia).

SCHLOSSBERG: Would you like me to tell you how the Byrd Machine worked?

Q: You may, if you wish.

SCHLOSSBERG: All right. I'll tell you briefly how it worked. [Harry Byrd, Senior,] ran the court houses, and he ran the legislature, and he ran whoever was governor. It didn't matter who it was. It was always somebody from the Byrd Machine. They did not operate machines like big city people did, who gave baskets to the poor and that kind of thing. They worked another way. If you played ball and didn't make waves, you got taken care of in the court house, and you got taken care of by the tax collector, and you got taken care of in the city, but if you didn't [play ball], and you were a lawyer for instance, your papers would get lost, and you would have trouble finding things, and they would give you wrong room numbers, and you would be late for court and all kinds of things. It was a velvet glove kind of discrimination but as bitter as any discrimination I have ever seen. In addition voting by minorities and working class people was discouraged — there were poll taxes, difficult registration, and a climate which said, “voting is for middle and upper class whites.”

One time when I was organizing for the ILG, I had a case in Appomattox, Virginia, which was the site of the surrender [by General Lee to General Grant at the end of the Civil War]. From the early days when we had first called that strike, the boss had imported a bunch of thugs, who were supposed to kill us all and get rid of us. We got word of that, and I had come up from Roanoke that day with 150 union people. They were iron workers and laborers and plumbers and carpenters and some steelworkers and one or two textile workers, whatever we could get. They just lined the auditorium and didn't do anything which was violent or physical, but nobody else did either. All wore union hats and badges and so on.

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In any event, that's what happened and I became director of that department after a while, but still I decided I had to go back and get a trade to work in that was more than just being an organizer and a politician. So I went back to law school.

Q: Which law school?

SCHLOSSBERG: The University of Virginia, mostly because I could go there very reasonably. The way we supported ourselves, my wife worked for the State of Virginia as an economist. She was a socialist, and she found it very hard to work for the State of Virginia, because her figures were misused and whatever, but she did it. And I worked for the labor law professor there, a fellow named Charlie Gregory, who at one time had been Solicitor of Labor [in the U.S. Department of Labor] and actually Acting Secretary for a while.

Q: [He was] the author of the textbook [I used in a course, I taught] .

SCHLOSSBERG: Right, Gregory and Katz, and he wrote a book called, Labor and the Law, by Charles O. Gregory. Anyway, he was a dear friend.

Q: To give you an idea of my age, Steve, the book I used was by just Gregory. Later on, he got somebody to help him.

SCHLOSSBERG: Right. Anyway, he was such a good friend of mine, and he not only used me as a student assistant in the college, but I helped him with his arbitration decisions. So I learned something about arbitration, because I had not handled any arbitration decisions as an organizer. It's different than being a business agent.

I think that I have fairly well brought you up to date. I went to law school, and I graduated. I did very well. I did better than I did in college, because I was more serious. I was married, and I knew what it was to earn a living and all that. I think I finished third in my class.

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Q: What sort of a practice did you have?

SCHLOSSBERG: I went from law school to work for [the law firm] Van Arkel and Kaiser in Washington. Gerhard Van Arkel had been the General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, and he resigned when the Taft-Hartley Act was passed over Truman's veto.

Q: I was there [at the National Labor Relations Board] when he resigned with a big fanfare. For those of us who stayed on — I stayed on a year — it always used to annoy us a little that he could afford to quit. He came from a [wealthy family].

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. There are two kinds of independent people in the world, independently wealthy and independently poor. If you don't have anything, you can afford to do whatever you want. You don't have anybody you are responsible to. You are not responsible for any kids or spouse or anything. He was a wealthy man. He came from a good family and he was a wonderful guy. Henry Kaiser was also a wonderful guy. He had been born and raised in Brooklyn, one of eleven children, I believe. He was Phil Kaiser's brother. He was brilliant. He had worked for Judge Padway [from Wisconsin] and had worked on the famous John L. Lewis contempt case, Judge Goldborough's case, and he told me a lot of interesting stories about that happening. The firm had regular union clients. Gary Van Arkel represented the ITU (International Typographical Union) and Henry Kaiser represented. . .

Q: The printing trades?

SCHLOSSBERG: Gary Van Arkel represented the printing trades and Henry Kaiser represented the Musicians' Union. Those were the two big unions they had when I came in, but Henry was working with the rebel bakers who were trying to clean up the old union and get rid of Jim Cross, who had a prostitute on the payroll and was accused of other bad conduct. They had been exposed by the McClellan Committee. I became an associate of

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the firm and worked very hard on the bakers' case. We managed to form a new union of bakers, and eventually those two unions merged after the corruption was cleaned up. That was a good thing.

Q: Steve, let me ask you about something that is relevant to the work of labor attach#s, that is, the relationship between trade unions and government. The old Gomper's view was to keep the government out of everything and that labor standards could be established by union agreements, etc. The new view that came into force with the Wagner Act in 1935 was that unions depend on government, especially since Roosevelt was giving unions all these advantages of labor law. Gary Van Arkel and Henry Kaiser, in my experience, turned from a view that the Wagner Act was a good thing to one that, on balance, the Wagner Act may have had a negative effect on trade unions.

SCHLOSSBERG: That is true.

Q: [The question arises] whether, especially in the case of Van Arkel, that [shift] was because their responsibility changed from representing the Federal Government to employment by the trade unions, or did they genuinely believe that there is a long term disadvantage to too much reliance on government? I mention this because of its relevance to the work of labor attach#s serving abroad; they are looked upon as being experts on the utilization of government for labor relations functions, whereas many people express doubts [as to whether government should be involved at all] .

SCHLOSSBERG: That's a very interesting question. I would say that Gary Van Arkel was a great independent person, and he worked for a union that was very [democratic and] independent. The Typographical Union, the ITU, had a two-party system, and they never complied with the Taft-Hartley Act. They never [submitted] non-Communist affidavits or complied with any of the [other] filing requirements of the Taft-Hartley Act, [which were a condition of utilizing the protection of the terms of the Act]. They organized and operated completely without any government help. So even though Gary had been the General

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Counsel of the NLRB, when he went to work for the Typographical Union, whom he got to know quite well, the union had a great effect on him. He started with an independent bent, but the union was actually defiant. The ITU believed, for instance, that it was an insult to ask a trade unionist to [file] a non-Communist affidavit, and this was a non-Communist union, if ever there was one.

Q: Both of their intra-union parties were anti-Communist.

SCHLOSSBERG: Right. Now, let me talk to you about Henry [Kaiser]. Henry of course was a student of Selig Perlman's [at the University of Wisconsin], and he really believed in his own heart in the old AFL craft union concept of independence from government and reliance on self-help. He also represented unions just like that, the Musicians Union, which believed in self-help. These were not industrial unions. They were very, very ancient craft unions, and they operated from an independent status. And as far as the government was concerned, it was nothing but trouble. The trouble the Musicians Union had was that they would always sign up the band leader, and the band leader was the boss. So they had a lot of problems with that. They had anti-trust problems; they had Taft-Hartley problems; they were sued by people like Godfrey Schmidt and the "right to work" people. When I first came they had a terrible spate of litigation growing out of the split that started in Southern California in the Hollywood local but which involved the Musicians Performance Trust Fund.

Henry always put it this way, "The musicians are like a tree. The woodsman always comes in and says, 'I want to use you. Just one of your limbs. Not you. I don't want to hurt you. Just one of your limbs.' [The tree] says, 'All right, go ahead, take the limb.' And [the woodsman] takes the limb, and he makes an ax out of it and levels the whole forest. " Well, that's what they thought about recordings and records and tapes and that kind of thing, which killed live music in restaurants, hotels, and night clubs everywhere, and again the government was on the wrong side. Anti-trust, and the Government put big taxes on live music and so on. I think that Henry and Gary both thought that the last good labor law

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was the Norris-La Guardia Act, which prevented courts from issuing injunctions at the drop of a hat. All they wanted was to be left alone.

I came, on the other hand, from a background of [organizing in] the South, and the way that I organized was to tell people, "President Roosevelt wants you to join a union. This is a patriotic thing to do. We are legal now and we have a [National Labor Relations] Board and you don't have to take a chance at getting killed to join. We'll have an election supervised by the government." So the government was how I grew up in the labor movement. There were craft unions in the South. There were carpenters, the building trades, musicians unions and typographical unions, but they were very small. Mass organization in the South came later.

This dichotomy of government and self-help, and government and union, and freedom from government and dependence on government, I can explain it to you best if you understand the different position I was in. The government that was my enemy [as an organizer in the South] was the state and the locality. The Taft-Hartley may have been a "slave labor act" to Gary Van Arkel and to Henry Kaiser, but to me it was manna from heaven, because it meant preemption, and that Alabama, Mississippi, and Virginia and these terrible places [like that] didn't decide whether you could organize or not, because the national labor law prevailed. Now that was very significant to me.

Q: Except for [Section] 14 B [of the Act].

SCHLOSSBERG: Except for 14 B, but it prevailed in all other categories. You couldn't register union organizers; you couldn't require them to get permits and licenses and so on. (Telephone interruption.) So the preemption thing [is something] I point out in my book. I wrote a book called, *Organizing and the Law*. I wrote the first edition in 1966.

Q: This was in your UAW (United Automobile Workers Union) days?

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SCHLOSSBERG: Yes, I wrote the first edition in 1966. It first actually came out in 1967. Then I wrote another edition some time later with Fred Sherman, a young professor from [the University of] Wisconsin, who did a clerkship with the UAW and then became a lawyer. While he was trying to earn a living, he worked with me on a [revision]. Then the last two revisions — It is now in a fourth edition at BNA [Bureau of National Affairs] — I have done with Judy Scott. She is Executive Assistant to Carey [the President of the International Brotherhood], of Teamsters. She used to work in the UAW Legal Department. She is Don Stillman's wife and my good friend. I have given the book to her. From now on, it is going to be Organizing and the Law by Judy Scott or Schlossberg's Organizing and the Law by Judy Scott or whatever. She can do whatever she chooses to do.

Q: Steve, let me just say that I hope you make some of these points when you come to the F.S.I. (Foreign Service Institute) training program.

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes, that is a very good point. You are right. I will do that. Anyway, so in my organizing I used the NLRB very heavily; I used the labor law and I did also with the Bakers' Union, when we ran that [campaign]. We didn't lose any cases in the United States. The theory we operated on was that if you could throw unions out and the courts and the Labor Board were willing to treat them differently because they were Communist — and they did with the Farm Equipment Workers, UE (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America), the Furniture Workers and so on — you could also make a special case for corruption. If those unions could lose their assets to the reformers who were taking over, then so could the crooks lose them to reformers. We didn't lose a case in either the NLRB or the courts over physical assets, over membership, [or] over who held the contracts. The important issue was not the money really, because we wanted the members. We wanted the union. But we won all the moneys too. In every case, we won the money. Of course we had a lot of help on that. Marty Segal, the insurance broker, said, "We are not going to have a fight over the funds. Whoever has got them will get the funds, and they will get the back credit." He was a great statesman in that thing, and he saved

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our ass, because workers are very loath to go out on strike and lose their pension funds if they are 55-years old. If they are striking against a crook somewhere in Cincinnati, who keeps a whore on the payroll, they care about that, but mostly they don't want to lose their pensions.

Anyway, I practiced law with Gary and Henry. We were very close. We got along beautifully. There were some difficulties later after about five or six years. Henry was the man I worked with much more closely than Gary. We represented the Musicians' [Union] together and also the Bakers' [Union]. Well, a couple of things happened. Once a union was having a split and a fight and so on, and they came to me and asked if I could help them. Henry said, "No," we couldn't do it, that the President was an old, dear friend of his and so on. Well, I am not going to tell you the name of the union, but I said, "No," because Henry said, "No." Somebody else handled them, and they did split. The reformers did take over the union, and, not knowing that background, the first general counsel they hired was Henry, and of course I never told them the background.

Then the second thing that happened was that the Laborers' Union came to me because I represented a big, black Laborers' Local in Washington, the one that used to be on New Jersey Avenue.

Q: I think our records should show that of all the construction unions, the one that had a very strong black membership was the Laborers' Union.

SCHLOSSBERG: Between 70 and 80 percent black, and in Washington it was about 85 percent black. They were my friends, and I loved them, and we worked together. I picked the local up as a client, and everybody thought that was fine. I serviced them for a few years. Then I got to know some of the people in the International, and the International came to me one day and said, "Look, you seem to get along so well with these guys who do this digging and the piping and so on, would you like to be our '10 K Lawyer' all over the United States and try these Labor Board cases? We will give you a guarantee, and we will

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pay you by the hour.” It was going to make me a very rich man. “All you have to do is to fight the Plumbers' Union over jurisdiction.”

Q: You should describe 10 K.

SCHLOSSBERG: 10 K is [the section of the law covering] the jurisdictional dispute. You have a jurisdictional dispute hearing, and I knew that in the jurisdictional disputes what the employer wants is very important. So I would have won most of those cases, I can tell you, because the employer would rather pay nine dollars an hour rather than twenty dollars an hour to lay pipe.

Q: He would rather pay nine dollars to the Laborers' [Union] than twenty dollars to the Plumbers' [Union].

SCHLOSSBERG: Than twenty dollars to the Plumbers and Pipefitters'. So anyway I was about to take that case, when I went to Henry and said, “I'm going to take this case.” He said, “Wait a minute. Are you are going to represent these guys nationwide against the Plumbers' Union?” He said, “I have always been a craft lawyer. The Laborers' are not a craft. They are something else.” He said, “You know, Lou Sherman is not well and I may become the General Counsel of the Building Trades [Department of the AFL-CIO], and if my partner” — I was then a partner — “is representing the Laborers', it would be almost impossible for me to become General Counsel of the Building Trades.”

Q: As a matter of curiosity, did he point to the type of leadership there was at the national level that had all this trouble with the law?

SCHLOSSBERG: No, he didn't. We both knew that, but that was beside the point. I wasn't going to represent them in any capacity but the NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] in the 10 K matters. The people I represented were really hard-working laboring people, and they had nothing to do with any alleged gangsters. In any event, I said, “Okay, I understand.” And I immediately made plans to leave the firm. It presented a very serious

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problem to me, because even though we had had a falling out, I loved Henry very much, and I loved Gary, and they were dear friends. I had been to Europe with Henry. I used to go to his home for a Seder every Passover. [His wife] Paula was a good friend. Phil was a good friend. I knew all his brothers and sisters and his children. Anyway, I didn't want to have a fight with him, and I certainly didn't want to try to take any of the business away. I think I could have taken some of the business because I had serviced many local clients, and I was very close to the Bakers' Union and Dan Conway, the President.

Q: Dan [Conway] was head of what we called, "The Clean Bakers."

SCHLOSSBERG: Right. The reformers. But I didn't want to do any of that, so I didn't know what the hell I was going to do. I just knew that I had to get out. I had no dream that I would ever get with the UAW (United Automobile Workers). The UAW was a union that I always admired. [Walter] Reuther was one of my heroes. I remember a book that Murray Kempton wrote, *Actions and Passions*, in which he talked about Walter Reuther. Do you remember that book?

Q: Yes.

SCHLOSSBERG: Murray became a good friend of mine. I had gotten to know him [while working] in the ILG. Anyway, at about that time [President] Kennedy got elected. That was in 1960. In 1961 I was offered the chance to become the Special Assistant to the Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, who was Bill Simkin. A wonderful guy. He became a dear friend of mine. The fellow who set up the appointment for me was the then-liberal and a friend of mine and a great friend of Bobby and Jack Kennedy's, a guy named Herb Schmertz, who is today a great fund-raiser for such conservatives as [Senator] Jesse Helms and other reactionary politicians. He used to work for Mobil Oil, and now he is in business for himself telling corporate people how to tell their story to the world. Herb and I were very good friends. I'll tell you how good friends we were. I was an usher at his wedding, when he married Ita. He has had a couple of marriages since then.

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Q: That goes with his change in territory.

SCHLOSSBERG: Right. So I became Special Assistant to the Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. I went there in January or February of 1961, and I left to go to the UAW in October 1963. I had gotten to know [Walter] Reuther slightly.

Q: Excuse me. Let me ask at this point whether you have any knowledge of Simkin's activities in 1971 or 1972 as a functionary in the State Department's labor relations policy.

SCHLOSSBERG: George Taylor must have put him there.

Q: Yes, he was a good friend of Taylor.

SCHLOSSBERG: He was a prot#g# of George Taylor.

Q: Do you have anything about that?

SCHLOSSBERG: No, I didn't know anything about that. Simkin was a dear friend of mine. He is dead now. He was a decent, hard-working Quaker.

Q: Yes. He was a wonderful guy.

SCHLOSSBERG: He and [his wife] Ruth became very close friends of mine. I loved them very much. I became his Special Assistant, and I learned a lot from Simkin. I did a lot of mediating. Once Simkin charged me with trying to make peace between state mediators and Federal mediators. Another guy, who is now dead, Howard Gamser, gave me the idea I needed. I was supposed to make the main speech at the State Mediators Convention, and Simkin had said, "See if you can say something that we have never said before, and see if you can encourage these mediators to play a little better and act a little more professionally — especially in multi-mediator disputes. Let's see if we can do something that's useful." So I had lunch with Howard. I said, "You used to be in the state apparatus in New York; you were [Congressman Adam Clayton] Powell's Chief Counsel in the [House]

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Labor Committee; and you taught at NYU.” I said, “What can I say to these guys?” He said, “Tell them that they need a code of ethics between mediators, and outline it. It is unseemly for mediators to be fighting for jurisdiction and over cases, and they should work together rather than trying to undercut each other.” I said, “Jesus, Howard, that is my speech.” And I gave that speech, which was very well received. Bill Simkin was very pleased. We adopted a code of ethics. It took us about six months, but it was a terrific code of ethics. I’m sure that there are still fights between mediators, but at least there are ethics. There was a set of principles, a standard, a benchmark to live by after that.

Q: In giving Howard's background, you didn't mention the fact that he was a long time NLRB employee.

SCHLOSSBERG: Oh, yes, but his most fun was in running that Powell Committee. He was a wonderful guy.

Q: He died very young.

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes. He caught some kind of strain of pneumonia on a trip to England, came home very sick, and died the next day.

Q: Well, you then went to work for the UAW.

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes. How that came about was that even though I slightly knew Walter Reuther from ADA, the Americans for Democratic Action, I was very close to Joe Rauh at the time. When he ended his life, we were not friends, but we were very close at that time. Joe was the General Counsel of the UAW, but he lived in Washington and Walter [Reuther] wanted a General Counsel in Detroit. Joe said [to Walter Reuther], “I’ll look for one, and then I’ll be your Washington Counsel.” I was at the Mediation Service. Joe called me up one day and he said, “I have mentioned your name to Walter. He wants to see you, because you would go in there as Associate General Counsel — if you like each other

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at the interview, that is — and if you work out, in five or six years you will be the General Counsel.”

Q: Wasn't the General Counsel at that time this fellow from the NLRB, whom I knew?

SCHLOSSBERG: Howard Cranefield. He had retired and Joe was asked to replace him. Anyway I came in as Associate General Counsel and ran the Legal Department just like I was the General Counsel in Detroit. Joe was in Washington. He rarely came in. Once every three or six months or something, or I would come to Washington, or he would come to Detroit. In about three years I became the General Counsel, and Joe became the Washington Counsel.

Q: In that capacity, did you begin to have anything to do with the International Department, which was then under Victor Reuther.

SCHLOSSBERG: I had very little to do with Victor Reuther or with international labor affairs. Victor and I were not great friends even in those days. I had a lot to do with Roy [Reuther], who was the CAP or “Community Action Program” (UAW “Cope” director.” At that time all of the Reuthers were friends but Roy and Walter were closer to me. My two best friends in the U.A.W. were Doug Fraser and Leonard Woodcock, and as you know they were both [potential] contenders [for the UAW Presidency] before Walter's death; then Woodcock had his turn; and then Fraser had his turn. That wouldn't have happened if Walter had not been killed [before retiring]. Woodcock probably would have been too old, Doug Fraser would have succeeded Walter.

Q: Your interview is about the third or fourth interview that we have had in which there was recognition of Victor's contributions, but everybody said, “But Roy was my favorite.”

SCHLOSSBERG: Roy was a prince of a man. Victor had some problems.

Q: But you did nothing in the international area? You didn't go on ILO delegations?

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SCHLOSSBERG: No.

Q: Did you advise them about the legal problems involved in their disagreements with the AFL-CIO?

SCHLOSSBERG: No, not in connection with international affairs. The only thing I remember in that vein was when Walter [Reuther] invited the executive committee of a small metal workers local [union] from Finland. There were four Christian Democrats and six Social Democrats and two Communists on the executive committee. The State Department would not let them in, because George Meany opposed letting any Communist in who said he was a trade unionist. I went to see somebody about that. I don't remember who, but I came down to Washington and went with Joe [Rauh] to the State Department and saw some people. It was made clear (but not in explicit words) that Meany was calling the shots, and they weren't going to change because of the UAW.

Q: Or wasn't there any possible solution, as there was in some other cases, of putting them on some political delegation?

SCHLOSSBERG: We didn't want to do that. We were having a labor union exchange. We wanted to have this union committee come, and they were very brave people, because they were in Finland standing up to the Soviet Union on their border. That kind of thing drove Walter absolutely nuts.

Q: This is where I felt that Victor [Reuther] could have drawn a distinction between a union that has a problem that requires them to give recognition to the Communists and a union that doesn't have to do so but throws a bone to a group, as if they were genuine.

SCHLOSSBERG: Exactly. Exactly. Or even where they have elections and the guys just get elected. That's what happened in Finland, I think. Or maybe they needed to have two Communists.

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Q: They were in a terrible spot there facing the Soviets, and you have to choose what fights you make.

SCHLOSSBERG: Exactly. Later, I remember, we objected to dropping out of the ILO. We objected to that very strenuously, but it didn't mean anything. Again, somebody, Leonard, I think, went to Ray Marshall, and we went to Jimmy Carter, and they said, "Sorry." It was again apparent that George Meany called these shots.

Q: Now, I want to get into your other work, unless you have something to say about any international aspects of your work with the UAW.

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, the only thing I did was. . . You see, I didn't have anything to do with the Cuban tractor thing when Pat Greathouse did that. He didn't need any lawyers. It was a political move and I think it really was brought about by the agricultural implement manufacturers rather than the UAW. (End of Side A, Tape One.)

Walter Reuther had a great distrust of lawyers. That stemmed from the fact that lawyers, in his experience, usually impeded rather than helped progress, but it also stemmed from the fact that there was a Michigan lawyer who was very active in the Communist Party and a great enemy of Walter's.

Q: Sugar. How did I remember the name?

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. Morris Sugar. He was an official of the Communist Party and he gave Walter hell when Walter had won the [UAW] Presidency but didn't yet have control of the union's [Executive Board]. The Communists were there, and they had Morris Sugar as General Counsel. It was a terrible situation.

Q: For about a year and a half.

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SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. Walter [Reuther] never got over that, so when I came there, he said, "Look, I want a lawyer to be a lawyer and to stick to the lawyering and that was all." However, he quickly understood that I was a union person, and after I was there two years, I was in the "big three negotiations" on the top committee, and I met with the officers. I was the only lawyer who ever met regularly with the officers. The officers [constituted] the informal executive committee.

Q: It was the big three Chrysler, Ford, and GM Directors?

SCHLOSSBERG: All of the Vice Presidents and the Treasurer Emil Mazey and Reuther and two top administrative assistants — Bluestone and one other — and myself.

Q: I thought Cranefield did that also..

SCHLOSSBERG: No. I don't believe he ever did.

Q: He once told me he did.

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, no, he didn't. It is one thing to call you in for a legal opinion and another to call you in. . .

Q: No, I meant he was a member of . . .

SCHLOSSBERG: I was a regular member of the group, but I was told that no other lawyer had ever been so.

Anyway, I learned a lot about negotiations in the UAW, and I read a lot about it. So after I retired from the UAW and came to practice law with Abe Zwerdling here, I taught negotiations in two places. I gave public lectures and private lectures for the Negotiation Institute and ran workshops for them. But I was in the practice of law here. I also taught a course at Georgetown University as an Adjunct Professor in generic negotiations — not just labor negotiations, but how to negotiate for the buying of a house, how to negotiate

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a plea bargain, how to negotiate the kinds of things that lawyers and real human beings have to negotiate. So I began to think of myself as a kind of expert in negotiations, which has always stood me in good stead.

Changing the subject, I was kind of an oddity when I was at the Labor Department, because I was the only practicing, real Democrat in the whole Reagan Administration at a policy-making position. There was just no question about that. I remember that when I did my “New York Times” interview, Ken Noble said to me, “Look, you are so pro-labor! How could you be here?” I said, “Having somebody who is pro-labor in the Labor Department is not exactly like having a Communist in the CIA. It is a little different.”

Q: Now we are moving into your work in the Labor Department, but before we go any further, what you are saying is — just to put it in the context of where it is useful to our project — is that your bargaining, negotiating, and mediation abilities were then useful in the job you did in the Labor Department and presumably here [in the Washington Office of the International Labor Organization].

SCHLOSSBERG: Here too. Everywhere. Talking about overseas, before I went to the Labor Department, while I was still with the UAW, I became the Co-Chairman of the International Law Committee of the Labor Law Section. This was employers and workers. . .

Q: Here in the United States?

SCHLOSSBERG: Here in the United States. The American Bar Association.

Q: This is not the international organization which Dave Ziskind is the. . .

SCHLOSSBERG: No, I belong to that too, but that's different. But I was the Co-Chair of this with a guy named Thayer Drake, who was the labor counsel of CBS at the time. We met in Geneva. That was the first time I ever went to the ILO [International Labor

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Organization]. Irving Brown was there, and, of course, Irving brought Irina Kirkland's sister Elena to the meetings, and I met her there. We went to the ILO, and I got to know some of the people, having no idea in the world that I would some day be a part of the ILO.

Q: You haven't discussed the shift from the UAW to the Labor Department.

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, it wasn't a shift from the UAW to the Labor Department. I retired [from the UAW]. First I moved here [to the Washington, D.C. area]. It was my idea to move here. I said, "We [the UAW] need a bigger presence in Washington, and I would like to go and be Director of the Washington Office and General Counsel, and then we will have another General Counsel in Detroit." The reason I had to say that was because [UAW President Leonard] Woodcock did not want anybody else to be his General Counsel. He was my pal, and he said, "Well, I'm not going to ask 'X' to be my General Counsel." I said, "Well, so you'll have two. Let other people ask him. He'll be in Detroit, and when negotiations come, I promise you I'll fly back in. Whenever you need me, I'll fly in, but I want to go to Washington, because I think I can. . ." Really what I had in mind was to increase the stature of the UAW in Washington and to help bring the UAW back into the AFL-CIO, because while I don't sympathize with everything that the AFL-CIO stands for, it is the "House of Labor," and I do believe in labor centers, and I believe that we all ought to be part of it.

Q: This would have been about when in terms of years?

SCHLOSSBERG: I'm trying to remember. I think I moved here in about 1971 or 1972. I had been working with [AFL-CIO General Counsel] Larry Gold, off the record, before, and Woodcock and I had been talking about getting back in [the AFL-CIO]. At that time my dear friend [UAW Vice President] Irv Bluestone and other good friends of mine were very much opposed to it. They were still emotionally keyed up from Walter's battles. In any event, I also wanted to get the union better exposure here and get to know the executive departments. I didn't feel that our lobbyists were in a position to do that. I wasn't going to

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displace the lobbyists. I was going to be one who would help the lobbyists, and it was a good thing. I think that Woodcock liked it and so on. So I stayed. . .

Q: Who was the Head of the Washington Office?

SCHLOSSBERG: I don't remember.

Q: Was it Victor [Reuther]?

SCHLOSSBERG: Victor was at one time, but I don't think there was a head at that moment. I became Director of Government Affairs and General Counsel in Washington. Later I persuaded [U.A.W. President] Doug [Fraser] to drop the General Counsel, because he was comfortable with my colleague in Detroit. I didn't have to go to Detroit as much. In any event, after Woodcock retired. . . There's a funny story I'll tell you about Woodcock, which ties together the whole labor stuff, and you will get a picture of it. It might be good for your people. When Woodcock picked Doug Fraser to be his successor. . . He didn't just pick him. Doug was the successor, and Doug had the votes, and Woodcock agreed with that. The only thing Woodcock wanted to be sure of was that Doug would follow through with the affiliation with the AFL-CIO. There was no question that Doug would do that, and I had assured Woodcock of that. So the Convention was in May or in June, something like that, and about January I said to Woodcock, "Why don't you send Doug down here for about a week and let me show him around. I want to have him meet the Editorial Board of the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post and some of the union people that he doesn't know." All he knew were Steelworkers and Rubber Workers and people like that. I said, "I want him to meet some of the characters here in Washington, that I think will be good for him. . ."

Q: Roughly the AFL side?

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SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. So Leonard said, "That's a good idea." I had a marvelous week with Doug. He's a great man — a lot of fun and we had just a great time together. The last dinner was what I wanted to tell you about. The last dinner was with Paul Hall.

Q: You've got to describe Paul Hall.

SCHLOSSBERG: Paul Hall was the President of the Seafarers' Union, and he had been Meany's point man in the struggles not only with Walter Reuther but with Jimmy Hoffa and everything else. He was a man who evoked tremendous loyalties in the labor movement, because over the years when various unions like the AFSCME, ILG and the Office Workers in Wall Street were being beaten up or attacked, seamen would come in white caps, and believe me, these guys looked like Charles Addams' characters, and nobody would pick fights with them.

Q: And of course his influence in the international field was great because the Seamen's Union was an international union.

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. Of course. So he not only carried the Meany ax against Walter [Reuther] internationally every chance he got, but he also would rap Walter on occasion, and he ran the organizing campaigns [when the Seamen's Union tried] to organize the taxi drivers in Chicago to keep Hoffa [out], because Meany didn't like Hoffa. In any event, Paul Hall was a very good friend of mine. I had good reason to love him, because when I was an ILG organizer, I was about to be killed one time and I asked for five "educational directors" to help me educate these people that it was not healthy to try to kill union organizers, and I got them. I'll never forget those guys, if I live to be a million. They came into Martinsburg, West Virginia, in a big car and made their presence felt and left. Paul and I became great friends. He was a literate man. He had read everything there was to read. He could be the most silver-tongued orator in the world and he could be charming, but he had a mouth like a toilet, when he wanted to. I mean I heard him [when]

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the words that came out of his mouth were unbelievable. He made Bill Gomberg sound like a choir boy or an alter boy. (laughter)

In any event, we had a very nice time at dinner, then Doug started asking Paul about his troubles with Reuther. He said, "Doug, you've got to understand. I was Meany's man. That is what Meany wanted. I had nothing against Walter. He was a lot smarter than Meany, but that was my job, and besides I'm a little more conservative than Walter, and Meany was my man. I can best explain it if I tell you a story." He said, "You know, at one time Meany came to me and he said, 'Paul, it's time to get off Nixon.' And I said to him, 'Well, I'll tell you, George. I always did what you asked me to do, because I was your man and you trusted me, and I did what you wanted me to whenever I could, and I never asked you any questions. But I got to tell you something, Nixon always did what I wanted him to do, and a sailor always pays his whores and Nixon was my whore.' " And that was an education that Doug got that night, that he will never forget. He reminds me of it from time to time. He says, "A sailor always pays his whores, and Nixon was my whore." And he had the same feeling about Dirksen. Everett Dirksen was his whore.

Q: Well, he had close connections. . .

SCHLOSSBERG: But that was kind of funny.

Q: Somebody has got to write up this guy Paul Hall. I think there is a biography. . .

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, you know who has been working on a biography of him for years and has never come out [with it] is a wonderful guy from Cornell, who is a dear friend of mine. He's in New York. He came out of the Hatters' Union. Phil Ross. Do you know Phil Ross? Wonderful young, sweet, lovely guy.

Q: Sure, a professorial type.

SCHLOSSBERG: He was at Buffalo.

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Q: Yes, before that he was a Ph.D. student of Phil Taft's at the University of Wisconsin.

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. He and Phil Taft were such great friends. Phil Ross was a good friend of mine, but we haven't seen each other much lately. He has been working on a biography of Paul Hall for years.

Q: Well, it takes time.

SCHLOSSBERG: Boy, it sure does. I mean like [it has been] 12 to 15 years since Paul Hall died. I'm going to ask Ross what ever happened to it. So where are we now [in the interview]? Another story I wanted to tell you [involved Leonard] Woodcock. [President] Carter wanted to appoint Woodcock, who was his close, close friend, to this very prestigious board that he had set up to pick non-career, non-Foreign Service ambassadors. It was headed by Reubin Askew and had Averell Harriman, John Hope Franklin, the great black historian, as well as Ben Wattenburg. So Carter asked Woodcock if he wanted to be on it, and Woodcock said to me, "What should I do?" I said, "Leonard, you can't do that." He said, "Why not?" I said, "Well, there might be a time when you'll want to be an ambassador. You would be a wonderful ambassador. You are the most profound and thoughtful person I have ever met in my life. You are a deep, profound person and you would make a marvelous ambassador. You think before you speak, except when you're loaded, and you would be a marvelous ambassador." So he said, "Well, maybe you're right." So he called the Carter people and said, "I would rather have Steve Schlossberg go on that board." And they said, "Fine."

So I went on that board to select ambassadors, and it was a very wonderful experience. One day towards the end of February, Dick Holbrooke, who was the Assistant Secretary Designate for the Far East came to us. I was on a subcommittee headed by Governor Scranton of Pennsylvania, and there was a church woman on it and two or three other lovely people. It was a really nice subcommittee. Holbrooke came to this subcommittee, [which covered] the East Asia and the Pacific, and said, "The President wants one name

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for China, and it has to be somebody very special because he wanted a person who would send to the Chinese a signal that he was very close to the President and a very important person in American life to negotiate the opening to China.” So after Holbrooke made that speech to us, he went upstairs and we started to talk, and Scranton said, “Well, you know, Hugh Scott, who was a great China scholar and a good friend of mine, . . . “

Q: A retired Congressman

SCHLOSSBERG: Right, a retired Congressman from Pennsylvania, but a very great leader and a very remarkable man. “[Hugh Scott] has always told me that Mike Mansfield knows more about China and is a real Sinophile. He's the guy who should go.” Well, that sounded great to me. I had great admiration for Mike Mansfield, because of a previous foreign thing which I will tell you about in connection with Woodcock in a moment. I said, “Okay, that's great.” So we all agreed, and we sent for Holbrooke, and he said, “That's great!” So we sent over the name [to the White House]. The name bounced in 24 hours. We were there working Saturday and Sunday in the State Department until about 11 o'clock each night, and on Sunday morning the name came back. President Carter said, “We cannot have this man be Ambassador to China, because he has made innumerable speeches saying that only a fool would not recognize the People's Republic of China. There are hundreds of millions of people, almost a billion people and its a stable society in many ways.” He said, “He has nothing to trade with. He can't negotiate. He's already inside.”

Q: He's pregnant.

SCHLOSSBERG: “He's pregnant. He should represent them to us.” [President] Carter did later appoint Mansfield to Japan.

Q: Where he was wonderful.

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SCHLOSSBERG: He was perfect. So Holbrooke said, "We can't have him. We need another name, and we need it very soon." So we started to think. Holbrooke went back upstairs, and I said to Governor Scranton, "What would you think of Leonard Woodcock?" I said, "Let me tell you a little bit about him." He said, "I met him once. He is a very impressive man." I said, "Let me tell you that he is a profound thinker and a decent person, and he has the courtesy to listen to people, and he is a wonderful fellow, and a hard worker, well-motivated." He said, "He sounds good to me." So we ran it by this crowd, and everybody thought it was wonderful, so I called Dick Holbrooke and I said, "Come down, please." And he said, "I've got something to tell you." And it just hit me that he had probably thought the same thing. So he walked into the room and I said, "Before you tell me, our choice is Leonard Woodcock." He said, "God damn it. That's what I wanted to propose." See, Woodcock had written three very, very brilliant papers in the transition on foreign policy: on North-South and other issues. Some of us had worked with him on those papers, but he really had a great deal to do with every one of them. Holbrooke knew that, and he was impressed. He also knew that the Chinese would be smart enough to know that Woodcock was a close friend of Jimmy Carter's, because he was the first major union figure to come out for Jimmy Carter in the primaries, and he took on Henry Jackson and all that in Florida. Anyway, Woodcock's name went to the White House.

Now, I'll tell you how I knew that Mansfield would have been a good guy. [Sometime] during the first two weeks of January 1977 [before President Carter was inaugurated], Woodcock called me in Washington and said, "The MIA people have come to me and they want me to pose for pictures with them." He said, "Look. I don't see anything wrong with my doing that. I am against the war, but these people are entitled to get their [loved-one's] bodies back, and if the [Vietnamese] have them, why shouldn't we get them?" I said, "Well, Leonard, I agree with you. There is nothing wrong in posing. But if you really feel you want to help these people, you can do something better than that." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, Carter has just said yesterday that he is going to grant amnesty to the people who ran to Canada and went to Sweden. So you tell him through me that

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you want to balance that by having him find the MIA's and by sending a group to Hanoi to negotiate for it." So I said, "If you want to do something smart, you will say to Jimmy Carter, 'You should appoint a commission, a very important, high level commission, to go over and negotiate,' and that way you will be a hero to these people, but you will also do the President a favor, because that is a great political gesture. On the one hand, he gives amnesty; on the other hand, he wants the bodies back." He said, "That's a marvelous idea. Go ahead." So I called Joe Duffey, who was then briefly an Assistant Secretary of State Designate.

Q: Cultural

SCHLOSSBERG: Cultural or whatever. I said, "Should you be the guy I talk to?" And he says, "No, call Jordan." So I called Ham Jordan, and I told the whole story to Jordan, and he said, "That's a wonderful idea. We are going to do something on it. I'll get back to you." So days went by, and then I got a call from Jody Powell or Landon Butler or somebody in the White House office. He said, "Well, we got a problem. Would Woodcock be willing to go as member of this commission and not as the Chairman, because we want Mansfield on the Commission and he will doubtless want to be Chairman?" I said that Woodcock would not be willing to go as a mere member. I had never even thought of him going, but if they were going to ask me that, I said, "Well, hell, he thought up the idea. Why shouldn't he be the Chairman? You will see what a great diplomat this guy is and how well he can handle himself." I said, "No, I think he would take umbrage, if you didn't send him as the Chairman." He said, "We'll get back to you." So an hour went by, and before I even called Woodcock, I got another call, "We just talked to Mansfield, whom we wanted to be the Chairman, and he said that he would love to serve with Woodcock. He loves Woodcock." They really were very good friends. So I said, "Fine." Woodcock went on the Hanoi Commission as Chairman with Sonny Montgomery and an assortment of people from all over the spectrum.

Q: And Mansfield was a member. . .

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SCHLOSSBERG: He was a member, and Woodcock was the Chairman. They did very well in Hanoi, so that was one of the reasons that I knew about Mansfield, and how good he was, and what a decent guy he was. That's another reason that I thought Woodcock would be such a good choice for China. Now this is the wonderful story that I was building up to all the way. I called Woodcock, because they said at the White House, "Yes, we are very excited. We would love to have him be the Ambassador to China. Call him and see if he will do it." So I called him. First I called him at home and they said he was at the Bluestones' for dinner. So I called the Bluestones, and I said, "Are you sitting down, Leonard?" [He replied], "Yes, I'm sitting down." I said, "I think the President is going to ask you to be the Ambassador to China. It's a very important opportunity, Leonard." He said, "China? I can't do that. I got to stay here and help Doug [Fraser]." I said, "Leonard, if you want to help Doug, you'll go to China. If you can't get into China, you'll go to the moon, but you don't help Doug by staying here." After a moment's thought, he said, "You are absolutely right." He said, "Ask Averell [Harriman] what he thinks." I said, "Okay." Averell was very close and liked Leonard a lot. So I went to Averell, and I said, "Leonard has this chance, and what do you think?" I said, "I think Leonard thinks he would like to go to the Soviet Union." He said, "For Christ sake, he's crazy." He said, "They hate American union leaders. They like businessmen, rich people like me. Tell him to go to China. It would be wonderful for him." So I called Woodcock back, and I said, "Averell says you should go to China. He says you should forget about the Soviet Union." "Okay," he said, "I'll do it." So he started right away to study Chinese. In the two and a half months it took from that moment until [his nomination] was announced and confirmed, and he visited the Hill and everything, he mastered spoken and written Mandarin Chinese.

Q: Really?

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. He [studied Chinese] eight hours a day, so he went there knowing the language, and he was marvelous at that job.

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Q: He is one example that Labor Attach#s and labor officers who don't come from the labor movement find it difficult to grasp. That is, that there are a whole lot of people, especially those who were disadvantaged during the Depression, who became great scholars on the basis of reading.

SCHLOSSBERG: But Leonard had also gone to college.

Q: Had he gone?

SCHLOSSBERG: Oh, yes. At night.

Q: Was he a college graduate?

SCHLOSSBERG: No, he didn't graduate, but he had three and a half years while he was working in a factory. His father was an English socialist, and he was an educated man. What your people have got to understand is that Woodcock had negotiated with some of the greatest brains in the world. He negotiated with General Motors and Ford and Chrysler in good and bad times. He had negotiated with Presidents. So he was a man who knew how to deal with people, and in addition to that, he was thoughtful, serious, well-motivated, open minded. That's a big secret: to be open. I like to think that I am very open. People usually know exactly how I feel about things, and it has always stood me in good stead.

Q: What is he doing now?

SCHLOSSBERG: For three years he taught Chinese studies at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and now he is emeritus there, but he leads trips to China for business interests and others and educational people. His wife, who was the nurse in the mission when he got there and is exactly the age of his daughter Leslie, — She was 39 and Woodcock was 67 or 68, and they were married, and she is a wonderful gal. — also leads trips to China. They both speak [Chinese] well. He was very close to Deng Xiaoping.

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An interesting story is that when Reagan was President, Reagan had the Chinese over and he had a big dinner for them. Reagan hated Woodcock, and he had good reason to. I remember the only thing that Woodcock ever did that Averell criticized to me was when Reagan was running for President, Woodcock was still in China. And Reagan said, "We should cut off all relations with Mainland China and recognize [the successors of] Chiang Kai-shek or whatever. Woodcock just couldn't brook that, and so he went crazy. He called a press conference at the American Embassy and said that some fool was saying these crazy things in American politics but "don't pay any attention to that. This is the march of history and we have recognized this country, and that's where we will be."

Q: He was an employee of the State Department. One doesn't normally do that.

SCHLOSSBERG: So Averell Harriman called me up and said, "Can you get a hold of Leonard." I said, "I think he knows that was a mistake, Averell." That was the only big mistake he ever made, but that was a corker. That was really a beauty. Then when Reagan was elected. . .

Q: Then he wasn't reappointed as Reagan reappointed Mansfield [as Ambassador to Japan].

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. Reagan certainly didn't reappoint Woodcock, but later when he had the Chinese over, he called Woodcock on the phone and said, "Look, we have had our differences, but the Chinese said they want you at the White House, and I would like you to come." Woodcock said he would be glad to, and he went. When Reagan greeted him, Reagan gave him a long spiel about how they ought to be friends and how important it was. Leonard said that his eyes welled up with tears. He was so overcome by it. It is very interesting.

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Q: Well, we now have you back to Washington. I was out of the country at the time, but others described you to me as the local big shot on the UAW staff. How did you get to the Labor Department?

SCHLOSSBERG: What happened was that when I was working for the UAW here, I got to know [William E.] Brock because he was Special Trade Representative, and we really liked each other.

Q: Secretary of Labor Brock.

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes, but he was then Special Trade Representative. And he said to me, "If I do something about imports of Japanese automobiles, how do I know that the UAW won't just raise wages, and the [American automobile manufacturers] won't just raise their prices and so on?" I said, "Well, that's up to you, but if I were in your shoes, if I were the Special Trade Representative, I would have individual meetings with these people — people in Government don't usually bother with them, but you are a different kind of person. I would say, 'We are going to have a picnic, but everybody has to bring a basket to this picnic. If I bring a basket, you've got to bring a basket and every player will bring a basket. I think they will understand that.'" And he did. He is the guy who gave us the voluntary restraints [on the importation of Japanese automobiles into the United States], and with the voluntary restraints came an understanding that they wouldn't go crazy on prices and that the union and the company would try to improve procedures and getting along and try to make better quality and so on. All of those things. Brock and I became very good friends. So we were good friends. This was while I was with the UAW.

In 1980 [Doug] Fraser was President of the UAW, and we had just lost the election to Reagan. In the spring of 1981, I said to Doug, "You have a little time to go, but I want to retire now at age 60. I want to retire now, because it will be easier for me to find something else to do now than at age 65. I can't just sit on a beach and fish. You only have a year or two to go, and Owen Bieber is going to be taking over, and I just don't want to work under

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another president [of the UAW]. I have nothing against Owen, but you and Leonard are my friends. I have had the best, and that is enough." So he said, "Okay, retire early." He was going to go the next year. So I retired as soon as I hit age 60, which was May 1981.

Then immediately I joined Abe Zwerdling's law firm. Abe had been General Counsel of AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) and he was an old friend. He was from Detroit. Thelma was his wife. They were very good friends of mine. So I joined that law firm, and it was called, "Zwerdling, Schlossberg, Leibig and Kahn." We practiced law from 1981 until [Secretary of Labor] Brock asked me to come over [to the Department of Labor].

Q: That was then about 1983?

SCHLOSSBERG: About 1985. What happened was. . . Do you remember we went through that terrible business with [Secretary of Labor Raymond J.] Donovan and everything and the Labor Department was in siege? It was about 1985. [White House] Chief of Staff [Donald] Regan announced that the President was replacing Donovan with Brock. And Brock was my friend, so I called him up, and I said, "I couldn't be happier, because the Labor Department has been out of business." I said, "With that God-damned President you [Republicans] gave us and with this Donovan, there's no Labor Department. We need a Labor Department. The union people won't go there; the women won't go there; the blacks won't go there; the Hispanics won't go there. It's a dead palace." I said, "Maybe you can bring it to life." He said, "I want you to come over here. I want to talk to you." I said, "Okay."

I went over to his office, and he said, "I want you to help me." I said, "Well, I'm here helping you. I'll tell you anything you want." He said, "No, I want you to come to the Labor Department." I said, "You must have been dropped on your head when you were a baby." I said, "I hate the President." He said, "I know that. I have got one free appointment. That was the only way I would take this job. Anybody I want and I want it to be you." I said,

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“My God!” He said, “I could appoint Joe Stalin.” I said, “That’s who they will think you appointed, if you appoint me.” He said, “No, I want you. What job do you want? Do you want to be Under Secretary?” He said, “Take this black book home with you tonight.” That was the briefing book of the Labor Department. “And tell me what you want.”

So I took the [briefing book] home, and I was smart enough to realize that the only thing I would like to do in that Department was one that didn't require any confirmation, because I could just see myself standing in the Senate, and they would say, “Are you going to defend the President's policies?” and I would say, “No!” So I didn't want to be confirmed. I didn't want to have to go through that. So I called him up and I said, “I would like to be the Deputy Under Secretary for Labor-Management Relations.” He said, “Why in the world do you want to do that?” I said, “Well, there are a couple of reasons: Number one, I don't have to be confirmed.” He said, “Oh, I see what you mean.” And I said, “And the other one is that that is what I am interested in, labor-management relations. That's how I spent my whole life, and you know, I am interested in seeing them cooperate. I'm interested in seeing things work, and that means cooperating on an equitable basis.” He said, “I understand that. You've got it.”

Then somebody leaked it to the Wall Street Journal “Labor Letter.” That must have struck fear in the hearts of the Reaganites. It was just a one line thing. It said in essence: Shock of shocks! Steve Schlossberg is going to join the Labor Department in charge of labor-management relations. That must have given more heart attacks than anything else that came out.

Q: Did you change the title to “and Cooperative Programs”?

SCHLOSSBERG: No, it was already there.

So that's how I went over [to the Labor Department]. I will never forget Reed Larson from the “right to work” [group] was raising all this money selling “\$50 petitions” to the President that he should get rid of Brock and me, because Brock had brought this traitor

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into the Reagan Administration. So [Senator] Jesse Helms was raising hell and all these guys, and they were writing letters to the White House. There was no confirmation. See, there was nothing they could do about it except petition. Dennis Whitfield, who was then [Brock's] Chief of Staff and was later named Deputy Secretary, said, "Don't you know any Republicans who could write to the White House?" I said, "Sure." He said, "Who are they?" I said, " Well, Mac Mathias, Hatfield, . . . " He said, "Please, forget it. Those kind of Republicans don't count as Republicans anymore."

Q: They sure were yesterday.

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. They sure were. Anyway, that's what happened, and that's how I got over there [to the Department of Labor] .

Q: I now remember that we met through a theater subscription arrangement [which afforded me the opportunity] to butt into your business, because I wanted to make sure that you became interested, which you were, in international affairs. Now how did you get into international affairs? What were the issues?

SCHLOSSBERG: Right. What happened was that the only things that somebody thought that the British and other Europeans might be interested in were some of the experiments like the Nummi [New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc.] Plant in [Fremont], California, and the Saturn plant in Tennessee.

Q: I have to interrupt you to tell you that before then, the first time I met Bill Usery was when I was going to the OECD and he was a member of the Labor-Management Advisory Committee to my Division, the Industrial Relations Division there in Paris. He did very well and was interested in it and retained that membership, when he went over to Mediation, and then when he came back as Secretary. Now they started certain things which would have been logical as I told you at the time in 1983 or 1984 whenever it was. . . It would

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have been logical for you to become active in it, because the person there before — I don't know who it was. — was not too active in it. Did you join the Committee?

SCHLOSSBERG: No, I started making some trips over.

Q: To the OECD or to the ILO or both?

SCHLOSSBERG: No. I made two trips to London, where I met with all the labor leaders and with the Embassy, and I did a speech for the American Chamber of Commerce in London, and I did newspaper interviews.

Q: On labor-management cooperation?

SCHLOSSBERG: On labor-management cooperation and on the American labor movement. I never minced any words. I never said this was paradise. I said that we have a lot of problems here, and I told them that. Then we gave some money to the ILO for a program at Turin on labor-management cooperation and adjustment to new technology and training and so on. So since we gave the money, we were one of the countries invited to participate in a week and a half seminar at Turin. I picked the Nummi plant in California as our example and I got UAW and Nummi management people and Bill Usery, who was consultant to that plant, to come with me. We went to Turin and knocked them dead. We were absolutely dynamite — the American team including the UAW. Also [represented] there were Japan, Australia, Sweden, Italy, and a lot of countries, but we stole the show. While I was there, they had a big ceremony. It was some kind of anniversary of Turin or something, so I was the main speaker being the highest-ranking American there. The Mayor received us for dinner in the City Hall. We had a wonderful time, and it was a big success. I enjoyed the Turin Center and that experience. I got to know Allen Gladstone much better — he was running the thing for the ILO. He brought with him a Mr. Gin, who was a Chinese ADG (ILO Assistant Director General) at the time. I remember this cute interchange: a Swedish employer said to Mr. Gin, “You know what we need in Stockholm?”

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We need some more Chinese restaurants.” He said, “Would you like 4,000 Chinese cooks next week?” (laughter) It was a lot of fun.

Q: Mr. Gin was a Chinese named by which government?

SCHLOSSBERG: Named by the People's Republic of China, and appointed an ADG.

Q: That was part of the deal, and how did the Taiwanese take that?

SCHLOSSBERG: They don't belong to the ILO,

Q: Didn't they raise any issue about that?

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, they had no right to.

Q: They have a little influence with the American delegation.

SCHLOSSBERG: Maybe. But that didn't amount to anything. So anyway, that was that.

Q: But then you had a whole lot of staff participation too. Members of your staff did papers for international groups.

SCHLOSSBERG: John Stepp did that after I left [the Department of Labor].

Q: Oh, after you left. I see. I should get John in [for an interview] on this too.

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes, you should. Oh, while I was there [at the Department of Labor], Dick Shore went to Sweden and did an ergonomics conference with the Swedish unions. Dick Shore went two times to Sweden, and then the Swedes came over. When visitors would come to the United States, we put them through the traces and they liked that very much. They liked seeing us. Some of our staff did occasional stints with the OECD.

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Q: Let me ask you about your relations with the Labor Attach#s. Let me tell you that in Secretary Reich's appearance before the Senate Committee for confirmation, Senator Pell, who should have known better, because he used to be a Foreign Service Officer, said something to the effect, "Are you getting information from the field from the Labor Attach#s? They are employees of yours, and you should be getting information about what's going on in these foreign areas that you are so interested in." Reich, in his then ignorance, which I hope has been corrected by now, did not challenge Pell on whether the Labor Attach#s were working for him, but what is essential is to understand that although administratively they are not under the Labor Department, the Labor Department has some important functions with respect to them. One is its general membership on the Board of the Foreign Service, where they are supposed to help direct foreign policy in all its aspects, but also the fact that the Labor Attach#s functionally have to meet certain demands of the Labor Department. Now, to what degree did you get information in your field of expertise? Did you demand it? Were your demands met? Or did it just depend on your own relations?

SCHLOSSBERG: I didn't demand anything, but I often requested information and help from Labor Attach#s, especially in Japan and in Great Britain, and I always got immediate responses, and very courteous and helpful responses. Also I want to tell you that I cut I don't know how many tapes for USIA and the Voice of America. I don't think that I did any for Radio Free Europe, which was a different kind of animal, but I did do a lot of USIA stuff on labor-management cooperation and on the labor movement and so on. Also the Labor Attach# in London, Les Slezak, was very helpful to me and very nice and very cooperative. In addition to that, I had a good relationship with Paul Hilburn at the ILO and also with Dick Booth, who is there now and just about to leave.

Q: That's part of your ILO experience.

SCHLOSSBERG: Right.

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Q: But as for your experience in the Labor Department, your specific requests for information were generally met. Did they initiate anything? One of the problems, which I have noted, is that sometimes the Labor Attach#s are not well enough aware of what the issues are in the Labor Department, so that they can initiate inquiries.

SCHLOSSBERG: I think that they did initiate [requests]. I think that Les Slezak initiated both my trips to London and asked about what we were doing. He read about it. He heard about it. I don't know how he did, but he did.

Q: This is a good report for us.

SCHLOSSBERG: The other contact that I had with the Labor Attach#s was that I started teaching in that course [for new Labor Attach#s] that you used to run over in Rosslyn.

Q: The Foreign Service Institute training program.

SCHLOSSBERG: I started doing that while I was in the Labor Department, and I have been doing it ever since. I am doing it again this summer.

Q: Then your general reaction [to the Labor Attach#s] was favorable?

SCHLOSSBERG: Absolutely.

Q: I must say that in some case we found posts which had Labor Attach#s where the job of the Labor Attach# was so diffused because of the cutback in staff that the embassies had to give them so many other things to do that, frankly, the Labor Department I don't think got enough help.

SCHLOSSBERG: I know that when the British Embassy stopped having Labor Attach#s, I wrote a letter to the Foreign Ministry and told them that they were making a big mistake. Then when I was in England on one of my trips, I went to see Ken Clark, the Employment Minister, and told him that it was a terrible mistake and that Labor Attach#s were not

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[adequately] replaced by a 26 year old economist from New York City, who was doing the reporting [for the British Government]. I don't think that I made much of an impression on him, because he didn't change it. I also told the same thing to two American Ambassadors in England, and I told it to British Ambassadors here, and I told it to the Employment Ministers, who would come through here like Norman Fowler, who is now the head of the Conservative Party. I recognize the importance of Labor Attach#s, because I recognize the importance of labor.

Q: Why did you leave that Labor Department job?

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, we were getting near the "silly season," that is an election campaign, and I did not want to be in a Republican Administration when the President was running for election or when the Republicans were running against Democrats. I wanted to be free for an election, so that's why I wanted to leave. Once I decided to leave, I found out about this job [Director of the Washington Office of the International Labor Organization], and I went to Brock, and I said that I would like to have this job. He said, "Well, I don't see why you can't have it. If you want it, that's fine." He called Lane [Kirkland], and Lane okayed it. So all we had to do was to convince Abe Katz, who was, to say the least, unenthusiastic.

Q: This was before the 1984 election?

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes, so what happened was that Brock had Dennis Whitfield, who was the Deputy Secretary, call Abe Katz and he told Abe Katz that there wasn't going to be any other names. Abe Katz told Brock that 40 percent of his Board opposed. . .

Q: You had better identify Abe Katz.

SCHLOSSBERG: He is the President of the U.S. Council on International Business. He was the head of the employers.

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Q: Was he the [U.S.] Employer Delegate to the ILO?

SCHLOSSBERG: No, the Employer Delegate was always either Charlie Smith or now this guy [James D.] Burge [of Motorola], but Katz is a member of the ILO Governing Body and he is the President of the U.S. Council, which [names] the ILO Employer Delegate. So it was Katz they had to go to, and he said that 40 percent of his Board didn't want me. Brock said, "What about the other 60 percent?" He said, "Well, they like him okay." Abe Katz always played to the toughest, most reactionary guys. Finally, Dennis called him and said, "Look, that's it. Brock said to tell you that we are either going to appoint this guy or there ain't going to be any guy. This is our choice."

Q: Or there ain't going to be any American. That would leave it free for the ILO to select the person.

SCHLOSSBERG: Exactly. "There ain't going to be an American." So Abe Katz finally said, "Okay." So, I was appointed. I left the Labor Department on August 30th and started here on September 1st.

Q: What do your duties consist of here and what, if any, other relations [do you have] with the work of the Labor Attach#s?

SCHLOSSBERG: The initial challenge was tremendous, because the ILO was "sleepy hollow." Nobody knew what the hell it was. Nobody knew anything about it. It didn't mean anything. So the first three or four years I was here, I had to build it up in terms of the employers and the unions and the government. I had to make them know that we were here and that we stood for something. My job here is to deal with the Labor Department, the State Department, occasionally with the White House, and with the Congress 1) to try to get Conventions ratified, which we have done a few of, and [2)] to try to get our money [the U.S. contribution to the ILO] paid and so on. My job also is to liaison very carefully with the [American] labor movement, and I have done that very well. I speak at four or five

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conventions of big unions every year at least and at joint labor-management meetings and at employer groups. I liaise with the NAM [National Association of Manufacturers] and the Chamber of [Commerce] as well as the U.S. Council and others. In addition to that, I had to let the universities know that we were here, and I had to carry a message to Geneva about how the U.S. felt about things, and to try to tailor policies to meet national goals and interests here. Tony Freeman [Special Assistant to the Secretary and Coordinator International Labor Affairs, Department of State] was a great help to me, and in the early days Muffie [Marion F. Houstoun, Director, Office of International Organizations, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Department of Labor] was a big help to me. I also do most of the recruiting here for the ILO. We sell the books here.

Q: You publish that excellent. . .

SCHLOSSBERG: We publish an excellent newspaper, "Focus."

Q: That is so valuable! By the way do you put it into the packet that goes out from the Labor Department to the Labor Attach#s?

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes, Harold Davey does it.

Q: I'm glad it gets in there. I found it very useful, and that is the thing that means a whole lot to the academic community here.

SCHLOSSBERG: It's the nearest thing we have in the whole ILO to a journal of record of what goes on other than the daily proceedings at meetings..

Q: What about the publication they used to get out, Industry and Labor, or something like that?

SCHLOSSBERG: I don't know that one. There is a Social and Labor Bulletin and there is The International Labor Review.

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Q: That is so out of date. By the time something comes out. . .

SCHLOSSBERG: They are not like our paper. Our paper tells you what is going on of interest, and it aims it at the United States. It's tailored.

Q: It also identifies Americans who are doing interesting work for international groups.

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right.

Q: Do you have any relations with Labor Attach#s other than the one in Geneva?

SCHLOSSBERG: Not really. We get a lot of foreign visitors, and we also get over 100 fellows every year from the ILO for whom we have to arrange programs.

Q: In my day, part of the preparation of a Labor Attach# was to come here to the ILO office and learn about ILO's relations [with the Labor Attach#'s future country of assignment], in my case with India. Do you do that at all?

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, that's a very good idea. No, what we do is just that we teach a course at the Foreign Service Institute.

Q: The purpose of your talking to that course in my day was to expose you as a personality because of your wide background. I wanted them to get an appreciation of a person with a trade union background who has gone forward to other responsibilities. Frankly they don't know much about people with labor backgrounds. Beyond that, I wish I had known before I went to India in 1965 what the problems were of the ILO office in India and what difficulties we had in dealing with it.

SCHLOSSBERG: That's a very good idea.

Q: Well, I would say that before anybody goes abroad he should get a briefing from someone here who has collected the last few articles in the International Labor Review

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and knows about ILO problems. In India I had difficulty explaining the American complaint about a double standard, whereby India accepts ILO conventions but doesn't follow them, whereas the United States follows the conventions but doesn't ratify them.

SCHLOSSBERG: Of course that's not really true.

Q: *Not fully true.*

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right. Americans don't follow them so well.

Q: *That's right. We don't follow them or our state-federal relationship is such that we can't. There are explanations. I was just talking with David Waugh [Deputy Director of the ILO Washington Office] about the fact that in Indian factories with heavy machinery, workers walk around barefoot and don't wear [protective] glasses or hard hats. Civil servants in India [used to say] to us, "Don't worry so much about the double standard. By all means continue to press us on the double standard issue, but explain to your people that there is a value in our adopting a convention even though we have a double standard and don't enforce the ILO standard, because this gives the civil servant in India the opportunity to say, 'We have adopted this convention, yet we disobey it. We had better correct our policies.' That's a weapon." I was in India for years before I was able to understand that.*

SCHLOSSBERG: Well, I think the problems that the State Department trainees would hear about. . . First of all they [ILO personnel at other posts] won't level with us as to what the problems are in these posts, and so as I think about it, I don't think it would be as valuable as we think it would. What I think might be valuable is that I am going to ask David [Waugh] to take the names [of the Labor Attach# designates], because we know where they are all going this time, and see if there is anything unusual in those areas that we ought to tell them about.

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Q: Or give them sets of papers — if there is an article, for instance, or a discussion at an ILO conference that affects that country seriously. But I think it is part of their research that they should do really. I don't know how much time you can spend on it.

SCHLOSSBERG: We can't do a lot of research.

Q: What I want them to do is become aware of what the status was. Now many countries don't have an ILO office.

SCHLOSSBERG: See, what that guy told you in India, that's what General Motors told Ed Meese and Brad Reynolds when they said, "We are not going to enforce affirmative action. We can't do it." They said, "We need to say, 'Hey, we are required by the Government to do this.' If you don't hold up that light up there, you make it very hard for us." But they didn't care. It was a political matter with them.

Q: Well, any other thoughts you have about our international work at the State Department?

SCHLOSSBERG: I wish there were Labor Attach#s at every post, because I think that Labor Attach#s have a [special] training and orientation and they contact people that are very important to report on to the United States.

Q: Well, this is the purpose of our Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project. To indicate what the limitations are and what the positive possibilities are in learning more about the labor situation in order to further the interests of the United States, not to further the interests of a particular trade union. That's what we are trying to do. It's [unrealistic], though, to hope for a Labor Attach# at each post, but the least that should be required is that every post should have a responsibility in the labor field.

SCHLOSSBERG: To a point, yes.

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Q: Now if they can afford to have a full time Labor Attach#, great, but if not, there should be somebody there who is telling them, "If you want to invest in this, you can't do it, because of this labor condition, or you will be able to invest, if you know about this."

SCHLOSSBERG: That's right.

Q: Well, we have convinced each other.

SCHLOSSBERG: Yes. That's good.

Q: Thank you.

SCHLOSSBERG: Thank you.

End of interview