

Interview with Milton Zatinsky

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

MILTON ZATINSKY

Interviewed by: Morris Weisz

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Q: This is Morris Weisz and the date is Wednesday, March 10, 1993. I am interviewing my old friend Milton Zatinsky on his work in the Marshall Plan. We are recording at his home in Miami, Florida, and I would like to ask Milton first to give a general description of his political and social background and his family, and then how he got into trade union work.

ZATINSKY: Yes. My family was a middle-class New York Jewish family. My father was a small businessman. I was shocked one day to find out that my father's business was on strike. I had already had leanings in the other [more leftist] direction. By the time I was 13 or 14, I was active in the student movement. There the Communists were very active. I decided that they were on the wrong side, and the bad side, of the future of the world and went with the Socialists and the other dissidents.

Q: What school was this?

ZATINSKY: This was DeWitt Clinton High School.

Q: In the western Bronx [in New York City].

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ZATINSKY: From there I became more active in the Yipsels [Young People's Socialist League, the youth group of the Socialist Party]. I became New York City Chairman and finally became National Chairman. I went to work after two years of college. My first full time job. . .

Q: Which college?

ZATINSKY: I was at the University of Wisconsin interestingly enough with Joe and Millie Glazer and my first wife, Clair Brandler. Joe left a little bit before I did.

Q: Milt, how did you get out to [the University of] Wisconsin?

ZATINSKY: It had a good labor studies program under Selig Perlman, whom I got to know pretty well. I got impatient. Joe, who is older, had graduated. He went to work with Larry Rogan in the Education Department in the CIO Textile Workers Union (TWU), now part of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and he let me know that there was an opening as an organizer with the New York Joint Board, TWU, which used a fancy title. I was an international representative or something like that.

Q: By the way, were those jobs elected or appointed?

ZATINSKY: Representatives, organizers, educational people were all appointed in most unions. There may have been one or two exceptions, but they were basically appointed jobs.

Q: I was an elected [official].

ZATINSKY: By and large [they were appointed.] My wife at that time went to work for the Retail Clerks International Union. She was appointed too. I was never a textile worker, and I didn't feel that I had too much of a future as an organizer.

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Q: You mean you quit school after two years?

ZATINSKY: That's right. And at that point in time, a friend of mine, Morris Milgram, who headed a group called, "The Workers Defense League," asked me if I would be interested in going to St. Louis. They wanted to set up an education department under a very interesting guy named Harold Gibbons for the Retail and Wholesale Union (RWDSU-CIO).

Q: Could you put an approximate date on that?

ZATINSKY: That was in 1945 and 1946. I set the department up and stayed with Harold for a year or two.

Q: That was before Harold Gibbons joined the Teamsters?

ZATINSKY: This was when he was a Vice President of the Retail Workers Union, CIO. This was basically a warehouse joint board in St. Louis. Years later he went independent. He tried to [affiliate with] the UAW (United Automobile Workers Union), but they felt it was too far afield in jurisdiction. He finally went with Jimmy Hoffa into the Teamsters Union, where he became a very important figure and Hoffa's sort of second in command. That's another story.

Anyway, getting back [to the story], I came back to New York and did some union public relations work with a friend of mine named Herman Singer. "Guild Associates," it was called. We represented several unions and the Histadrut (Israeli Federation of Labor) and others. We did some work for the Jewish Labor Committee. Then the job of setting up an education department at the American Newspaper Guild came up. I was not a newspaper man. A fellow named Sam Eubanks was head of the Guild at that time and had been head of the anti-Communist slate that took over the Guild from the left wing. He was something of a Social Democrat himself, and he was delighted [to have me]. I think Danny Bell recommended me strongly.

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Q: Danny Bell, Professor of . . . ZATINSKY: Danny Bell, Professor at Columbia University and author of the book, The End of Ideology, and one of the leading sociologists in the world today.

So there we were [at the Guild]. The program was a good program. We got out a lot of material. We had training programs. It was a little difficult [to do] education [programs for] the Guild. I would walk into a Guild group and they would say, "Educate us? Who educated you?" Here were people, many of whom have advanced degrees themselves. I had gone back at night and finished my Bachelor's [degree] at the New School, but I didn't have any advanced degrees at that time. So I had to explain that this was training and it wasn't education in the broader sense. It was training in labor relations and collective bargaining. (Pause)

Q: Okay, will you continue now?

ZATINSKY: Yes. The Guild had then its first national education program. We put out our publication, Guild Activities. We had conferences throughout the country, usually held in university settings: Wisconsin, Penn State. Those I remember. We occasionally brought in experts. There was some resentment, I have to tell you, about a non-newspaper man in this situation. Some felt that they would be more comfortable with somebody who had a newspaper background. Of course the Guild covered the newspaper editorial [staff], the back office, the commercial [staff], and what have you. After a while [the education program was] accepted and started showing some results and looked pretty good. But we had one happenstance that was just timing. Executive Vice President Sam Eubanks, who appointed me and was the one who pushed mostly for this program, resigned or decided not to run again, — It was an elected office. — and the group that took over, or was ready to take over, was not exactly too sympathetic with certain aspects of the program.

Q: With the education program?

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ZATINSKY: Yes. So I started looking around.

Q: Now all during this period, you were also developing political interests. Before you actually [discuss] your Marshall Plan employment, [please describe] those interests.

ZATINSKY: Yes. As a very young man, I was in the American Student Union (ASU). The first day at DeWitt Clinton High School, I said, "Where does the ASU meet?" I was 13. I went to the ASU and there was a meeting, which, it seemed to me, was run by a group that I didn't feel very comfortable with. They turned out to be Communists. There were other groups in opposition to them including the Young Socialists, the young Trotskyites, a few anarchists and what have you. I was young and not that sophisticated, but I realized that I couldn't [join] people who were talking about all the bad things that were happening in the United States, and they were supporting and apologizing for one of the worst dictatorships in the world. It seemed obvious to me then. I don't know why it didn't occur to too many other people. So I wound up working with a group of dissident left-socialists called "the Shermanites." They were loosely affiliated with the Shachtman group. The Shermanites were a group of people who had broken with Trotskyism and were finding their way to democratic socialism. Although they admired Trotsky as a great thinker and a courageous person, they realized that it was the system of Communism or Bolshevism that led to some of the worst things including the Stalinist dictatorship. So they were one of the early groups that moved away on this issue.

Q: Around a person named Sherman?

ZATINSKY: Philip Selznick is the name I most remember. He and a fellow named Irving Ferry, who I think writes today under the name Irving Kristol, . . .

Q: William Kristol?

ZATINSKY: No, Irving Kristol, his father. William Kristol I don't know at all. There were others: Seymour. Martin Lipset, who was head of the American Sociological Society the

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last time I looked, since I am a sociology professor now. In my retirement, I can say that Lipset has done an important job and he is an awfully good person. He has a great deal of integrity and brilliance. Anyway, from this group, which was really a transition group because it broke up, most of us went to the Socialists.

Q: Milt, spend a minute on this tendency to use other names. What was the basis for it?

ZATINSKY: The theory in those days in the late 1930s — I was 14 or 15 in 1938, so I can't say that I was sophisticated. — was that it was a needed subterfuge because America could go fascist and we would have to protect ourselves. There was criticism, for instance, of German Jewish agencies that did not take the precaution of destroying membership lists. When the Nazis took over in Germany, they just picked up Synagogue and organization lists that were left in tact. We felt that “the iron hand of Jack London” could happen here. Looking back, I think we were overly dramatic about it, but at that time it didn't look that far afield.

Q: So Kristol [used] the name Ferry.

ZATINSKY: Yes, he was Irving Ferry, and since he was somewhat on the outside looking in, the nickname we gave him was Perry Ferry or periphery.

Q: And similarly Selznick had [an assumed name]?

ZATINSKY: Sherman, and Lipset was Lewis, and I was Field.

Q: Okay, that's how I remember you first. Go head.

ZATINSKY: I was young enough to make the transition. I joined the Young Peoples Socialist League. I was 16 or so at the time. I was working with Robin Myers and Irwin Suall and the other leadership. Last I heard Robin Myers was working for the Voice of America. Suall was working for the Anti-Defamation League in charge of its department that checks on extremism and cultism. Within a period of time I became City

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Chairman, then in my twenties, National Chairman of the Young Socialists. My interests in international affairs and the threat of a Communist move towards world domination was always a problem for me. Some people think that I am a little bit of a nut, although I think that I am pretty balanced. Doesn't everybody?

Anyway, when I was asked by a fellow named Jerry Bishop from the Textile Workers at that time if I would be interested in setting up a work-study training program for emerging labor leadership from Western Europe, I said that it sounded very interesting, especially since the Communists had not too long before then taken over Czechoslovakia using the labor movement as a major vehicle in the destruction of a beautiful and democratic country. I thought that the rest of Europe could be in similar danger, and this would be one effort that could help create some cadres that could help the other side.

Q: Who was Jerry Bishop?

ZATINSKY: He was the engineer for the Textile Workers Union, and Gomberg was in the I.L.G.

Q: This was William Gomberg, the engineer, who was setting up the Engineering Department of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

ZATINSKY: It was really at Jerry's suggestion [that I went to work for the Marshall Plan.] In fact, I looked for a copy of Marion Hedges' newsletter at that time, where he announced Jerry's appointment and my appointment with our pictures on the next pages. I couldn't find it though. Maybe I'll come across it later and send it to you, Murray. In the meantime, we went to Washington.

Q: We just used the name of Marion Hedges, who was in charge of labor information programs in the Washington headquarters of the Marshall Plan. Go ahead.

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ZATINSKY: That's right. This has nothing to do with the later phase when I edited the newsletter for the agency both here and abroad.

Q: But at this stage the question was whether you were going to Europe.

ZATINSKY: No, that came a little later. What I did [at the Marshall Plan Headquarters in Washington] was to set up this work-study training program. Basically it was something that a good program person could have done. I dealt with the universities to get them to house the participants and provide some technical assistance to the project.

Q: At the United States level?

ZATINSKY: Yes

Q: Oh, this is the foreigners coming over [here} ?

ZATINSKY: Yes. Then we would work with the local unions to get union support and input into the project: speakers, union know-how, etc. We had to set up the program and bring the people over. They were screened overseas by people who I am sure Murray knows better than I do. The idea was to get emerging leadership, not staid leadership, not old time leadership. We were trying to get people in their twenties and thirties who had the potential of eventually replacing people who had been worn out and were not able to do this alone. They needed some help. This [program] gave them a background in American trade union methods, some of which were applicable [to their situation] and some weren't. We understood that. We made that quite clear. We weren't telling them to do it our way. We were just showing them ways that they might pick and choose certain things that would be helpful. But we also showed them American productive methods. Some of this we may have taught too well to the Germans and others, because now they have outstripped us. But at the time, the whole continent of Europe looked like it could easily fall under [Communist influence]. They say that Stalin could have taken Europe by a telephone call in 1946. We were quite concerned with the maintenance of free labor

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movements and their ability to stand behind democratic countries and to build the strength that would help us.

Q: Let me ask you to comment on a problem which occurred during the Marshall Plan period and which has been raised in some of our interviews. [Marshall Plan] officials tried to identify and bring over [to the United States] the possible emerging leadership of unions in Europe. The problem was that these trips to the United States — and this happens many years later in the developing areas too — were a wonderful opportunity for the top leadership of unions. To what degree did you have to take into account, or do you take into account, the fact that by selecting a so-called “emerging” trade unionist you might be offending the person in charge of the union who was certainly not necessarily interested in giving [away] this benefit of a trip to the United States or creating or building up a possible alternative leadership as it were? Did that ever occur to you?

ZATINSKY: Yes, that occurred to us. We didn't go down and tell the head of the Lyon Garment Workers' [Union] that “we are taking Joe Forseille, because we think he will be an excellent replacement for you, before you are ready to be replaced.” It wouldn't have been too wise. Whether we told them or not, there were many who felt that this was a needed ingredient, and that it had to be done somewhat on an informal basis. There is no way you could tell who the emerging leaders were. You could only tell who had the potential abilities and the interests and the potential knowledge and dedication, but whether they would emerge in [the union] or whether they would use that knowledge to go into business and set up a perfume company, I didn't know. There was no way we could tie that down nor were we interested in doing that. What we were doing was bringing over [large enough] numbers where we felt that the ferment and the educational dispersment and the interchange of ideas and populations would lead to a better reservoir of potential [leaders]. Would it work out in each situation? Not necessarily, but in the overall it would strengthen our situation for free unionism.

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Q: I understand your good purpose in all this, but I was wondering whether you had any feedback from the top leadership? Was this, by the way, only for France or for other [countries as well]?

ZATINSKY: 16 countries. Then as one of my goodies, I got a tour with a team of Norwegian trade union women, six of whom somehow could not [be programmed] in the community they wanted. They were given a terrific six week tour, and guess who guided them around the country for six weeks? Hey! (laughter) Somehow I lucked into that situation.

Q: These were Norwegian trade unionists.

ZATINSKY: Yes, mostly garment workers. I have some stuff on that. Anyway, this work-study program was there for several years at which time Victor Reuther. . .

Q: Excuse me. Were you under a contract to do this? Or were you an employee?

ZATINSKY: I was an employee of the Marshall Plan, E.C.A., MSA, FOA, and AID. It was all the same organization. It changed its name every time Congress took a look at it.

Q: You were on their payroll? You were not a contract employee?

ZATINSKY: I was a GS-13, a permanent employee with "status". After three years, I had status. I was all set to go on to further work in the agency, when two things happened. First, I got a letter saying that I was going to be let go most regrettably, and they hated to do it, but a Mr. Spector, head of personnel, said that "the necessity for this action is sincerely regretted. However, the requirements facing us leave us no alternative. Your past service time at the Mutual Security Agency is deeply appreciated."

Q: Put a date on that.

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ZATINSKY: That was August 4, 1953.

Q: What was the relationship between that time and when you were doing this publications work for the organization?

ZATINSKY: I don't really remember the date [of that]. I think that was later. That was really a job they gave me during a period when they really did not give me any jobs. That was something to keep me out of mischief.

Q: But so far you had only done these work-study groups?

ZATINSKY: And I did a certain amount of programming for teams, but that was really not considered to be high-level stuff. You did that to help when somebody was out sick.

Q: So you were then at a point where there was a change in the administrations. Stassen came in as head of what was renamed the "Foreign Operations Agency" (FOA), and his Personnel Director was Mel Spector, who is one the people directing the Marshall Plan Oral History Project at the present time. Go ahead.

ZATINSKY: Well, Spector sent me this letter. He said that he was sorry but that he had no choice and he mentioned Section 706A of the Mutual Security Act of 1953, which provided that the number of civilian employees [paid] from administrative expense appropriations shall be cut at least 10 percent. I had the honor of being selected as one of these. I understood from the memo that I saw — but I am not sure that the other two saw that same memo — that Philip Heller and Bill Gausmann, both of whom were close friends of mine from the Socialist movement, received similar type letters. They were overseas; one was in Austria; and one was in England to my recollection.

Q: Wasn't Heller in Germany?

ZATINSKY: It could have been Germany. He was in both countries.

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Q: And Gausmann was an information officer at the Embassy in London?

ZATINSKY: Yes. Since I wasn't aware of anything that brought the three of us together aside from our Socialist background, and there was never any lack of appreciation of my work and performance, I went and looked up the [relevant] section of the Mutual Security Act and it turned out that it was very specific about administrative funds.

Q: You said that the only other two people you knew to whom this applied. . .

ZATINSKY: In that one memo.

Q: . . . were Heller and Gausmann. But as a matter of fact, did you know whether you three were the only ones who got this letter.

ZATINSKY: No, it could be [there were others].

Q: Because there were many others

ZATINSKY: There had to be many others. I think we were the first; I think we were famous in that we were the first. But if you take 10 percent of an agency that size, there had to be a lot.

Q: Right.

ZATINSKY: The memo I saw specifically mentioned us three. So I read it over and this administrative funds thing hit a bell, because I was paid by program funds. I was working with program people from these various countries and setting up programs.

Q: We have to clarify this by saying that there were two forms of funding for the work done under the Marshall Plan. One was for the hiring of civil servants and for supervising the conduct of work that was done in the international field and the other was for payment of purchases of various things. You have said — and you are correct of course — that

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the reference in the letter that you received [from Mr. Spector] was to a requirement that [employees paid with] only one type of funds should be [cut], and you actually were being paid from the other type of funds.

ZATINSKY: That's true. Well, I checked it with Arthur Goldberg, who was the CIO General Counsel, and he said, "You are 100 percent right." We sat down and prepared a letter to Mr. Spector outlining what we thought [were my legal rights in this case. The letter concluded,] "Therefore, I request immediate restoration to full pay status and immediate rescinding of this action. As cited in the first paragraph, my last day is such and such; therefore, I would appreciate a reply within the next three days, so that I may seek further advice from counsel, if it is necessary to institute appropriate action."

Q: You are now reading from a letter that you sent to Mr. Spector in reply to his other letter. And these letters will be in the files of our project and they are dated respectively. . .

ZATINSKY: They are dated in September 1953. There are several letters back and forth. There is a September 21st brief addendum. I won't go into the details of that. They are not important. One said they were going to make sure that I was going to be terminated right away. The other said they would give me thirty days. It wound up that they rescinded the action completely. No discussion of the issues.

So there I was ready to go back to work. Unfortunately, Mr. Thomas Holleran told me. . .

Q: Thomas Holleran was the Branch Chief in the Marshall Plan Headquarters in Washington.

ZATINSKY: He said, "I will deny it, if you quote me. . ." But I think after forty years, there's not too much problem [in quoting him now]. He's been gone a long time. "I've been told not to give you any assignment." I had a fairly decent job by standards in those days. \$8,660 was the [annual salary for a] GS-13 grade level. I had nothing to do. So that was

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a problem. Finally I convinced them to let me put out a newsletter about [labor] events around the world. That was Labor Affairs. (I have found three copies and given them to Mr. Weisz.) I looked around in Washington [for things to do and worked on] different projects in the various countries. It wasn't exactly a job, but it did keep me out of mischief to some extent.

Q: Well, I was in the Paris office [of the Marshall Plan] at that time. We used Labor News abroad to publicize to foreign readers and those involved in the Marshall Plan operations in Europe the interest of the United States Government in improving labor conditions, improving productivity and in the rebirth of European trade unions and economic development generally.

ZATINSKY: Well, I thought we did a pretty fair job. Then Victor Reuther nominated me for an opening with the OEEC in Europe.

Q: That's the Organization for European Economic Cooperation.

ZATINSKY: Vic and I had been friendly. We worked together in some projects to create [labor] centers to counterbalance a right wing development within foreign labor affairs led by the AFL Coordinator of International Affairs Jay Lovestone, a former Communist, who was very effective organizationally but had gone to the point of involving American trade unions in cooperation with Government agencies, particularly with the CIA We felt this was bad for [labor's] effectiveness, because these things have a way of getting out. Even without getting out, they can undermine the independence of a free labor approach. So we had been in contact and worked on that. (I have a couple of memos that I gave to Murray [Weisz for the project's records]).

Well, Victor Reuther recommended me for this [OEEC position]. I [would have] worked directly with Gunnar Myrdal, and I was pretty much all set to go. It was approved by. . . I forget the initials in Paris.

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Q: U.S.R.O., the U.S. Representation for Regional Organizations.

ZATINSKY: I would be located in Brussels. This was the OEEC Headquarters, I believe at the time.

Q: OEEC Headquarters were in Paris. Brussels was the ICFTU Headquarters.

ZATINSKY: I'm not sure. This goes back almost forty years now. I would have been quite happy in Paris. I made the decision not to take the job. I was offered a job working for an international union with an old friend Harold J. Gibbons to head up a state organizing program for a couple years with the understanding that I would then become the International Affairs Director of the international union, and he was close enough to the international union leadership to do that. I mean I had no question. For reasons that are too personal to go into, it did not work out and the work in St. Louis unfortunately took me away from, rather than into, international labor affairs.

Q: Well, this is very interesting. I am leafing through the three copies of Labor Affairs that you have given me for our project. Let me ask you to comment on a few things. One of them is the whole business of the radical background of many of the people involved in the Marshall Plan labor work.

By the way I see here in Volume 2, Number 2, of March 1955, some very important comments made by Stassen at the Senate Appropriations Committee in which he points to the need for technical assistance programs, part of which was run in the labor program. I gather that this division between the trade unions and Stassen was never stressed in the statements made by Stassen or by the trade union movement, since each of them was using the other in conjunction with supporting excellent work in the Marshall Plan.

ZATINSKY: You were in Europe during this period and I was in Washington. I was very envious. You had all the fleshpots of Europe on your doorstep, and I had to worry about snow. Stassen came in with an interesting program. Here was a fellow, who was

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very bright. He was Governor of Minnesota as a young man. They called him "The Boy Governor." That's how young he was. He was appointed by Eisenhower. He had political ambitions and in fact he kept running for President for ten, fifteen, twenty years with no success at all, but during this time he was head of the Marshall Plan program. He came in with the idea that there was somehow a profusion of "no-goodniks" in the program on the staff. He used a term that they were "New Deal hangers-on." I don't know if he used the term "bleeding hearts," but the idea was that they had no serious commitment or organizational experience; they just got appointed on a party basis through the Truman Administration. So what Stassen was going to do was purge them, and he had this "ten percent authorization" in the Act that gave employees no recourse to Civil Service protection. So he started in doing it, and the press got a hold of it, and said, "Hey, wait a second. How do you know who's good and who isn't?" He said, "Well, I am preparing one of the most detailed testing programs known to man." And he did develop a series of very exacting tests, which everybody GS-11 and above [had to take]. That's my recollection. So we took the test.

Q: Including Mr. Stassen, who took it himself.

ZATINSKY: No, that was a step later. First we took it, and then the press got it and said, "Hey, wait a second. You mean to say that you are not ready to subject yourself to the same criteria as your staff?" He said, "Oh, I'll take the test." So he took it too. I did quite well, by the way, and Stassen did pretty well, but not as well as I did. It turned out that the "New Deal hangers-on," if there was such a thing as Truman appointees, did pretty well. Who did the best of all on the exam? It turned out interestingly enough that people who were used to taking exams recently, people who just gotten out of graduate school in the last couple of years with their Ph.D.'s and MA's in hand, they had been used to taking exams, and they did very well on that. They did better than the chiefs of the divisions taking the exam even though the division chiefs might have been very competent people.

Q: Any relationship between political activity and the level of the [test result].

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ZATINSKY: To the extent that we could figure it out — and we couldn't do it [scientifically] because the results were confidential and we didn't have access to the results. You know, people were put on the spot to tell their scores. — we found that those who had a liberal or left background held their own to say the least. Better than average. As for the people who were being fired or dismissed, their grades were given out, and they were among the highest, mine included.

Q: Let me go into this now that so much time has passed. Perhaps we both can lean back and be a little bit more dispassionate in our analysis of the criticism leveled against the old New Dealers and radicals, etc. On page 24 of your March 1955 copy of Labor Affairs, is a letter to Mr. Barney Taylor, the top trade union guy at the American Embassy, Paris, France, USRO. He was the head of the European program. Your letter covers the question of human relations experts suggested for technical assistance teams with labor-relations interests. Let me go down the names a bit and try to come to some conclusion with you as to the type of people you were recommending, and frankly I was also.

Here's Dr. Erich Fromm, excellent person, whom we all knew and have heard of, a psychiatrist — Wasn't he a psychiatrist among other things? — but he happened to be a Socialist. Right?

Next one is Seymour M. Lipset. Whatever he is now, he was then an Associate Professor of Sociology, and also a Socialist of sorts.

ZATINSKY: He considers himself a Social Democrat as does Danny Bell and a lot of the others. He is active in the American Friends of Peace Now. He's in the most liberal wing of the Jewish groupings.

Q: Let's go down this list a little more. Professor C. Wright Mills, who was the author of White Collar and a very well known sociologically oriented [academic].

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ZATINSKY: I don't know what happened to Mills, but at the time he and Hans Gerth, who was his co-author, were probably the leading figures in the new "sociology of work" and work problems.

Q: Right. The next person is Dr. Joel Seidman, a Professor of Industrial Relations at [the University of] Chicago, who was also a Socialist. Dr. Harold Sheppard, then teaching at Wayne University, who at that time certainly was left-oriented and still is quite liberal. Professor Philip Selznick, Professor of Sociology, also had a Social Democratic background. Donald Rogue worked with Gunner Myrdal. I don't know what his political orientation was.

ZATINSKY: If they weren't at least Socialists, I don't think I put them in.

Q: That's what I wanted to know. Dan Bell. Dr. Aaron Levenstein, even though you identify him as the Labor Director of the Research Institute of America, where he was making a good salary, certainly was a Socialist. Now here you give the names of nine people. Is it accurate for these conservatives to say, "Look at what this [list] is! A bunch of left-wingers far to the left of the government in power who are being recommended as human relations experts to teach the Europeans." I want you to comment on two things: One, could you have recommended a better mix in terms of political orientation? And secondly, would you assess the value of having people of that orientation do this type of work for a conservative American government? What impact does that have on the European human relations experts?

ZATINSKY: What you have to realize, Murray, [is that] in Europe you are dealing with countries which have deep Socialist and Social Democratic traditions and in many cases Socialist governments or soon to be Socialist governments. You have trade unions which have grown up with an ideological framework and background. I give a class in classical political theory at a local Catholic university, and I can't believe that [the students] have never heard of Lenin. They have never heard of Karl Marx and Willy Brandt. Names don't

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mean anything to them. In Europe names mean something. Traditions mean something. I'm not saying to everybody, but I'm talking about seniors in college. I felt I was just in virgin territory. Now it seems to me that we were suggesting a balance between the "know-nothings" that often come through ordinary civil service channels and [people with] the type of sophistication who are needed to deal with European labor with its rich ideological background. I felt that these people [could do the job]. I was not testing them for ideological purity. I certainly would not recommend anybody who had any pro-Russian, pro-Stalinist orientation. I obviously wouldn't do that. But Social Democrats and independent leftists had knowledge of the ideologies and of the [various political] movements of Europe. They could do a much better job than a person who was not trained, even if he was well-meaning.

Q: What you are saying then is that to accomplish the purposes of a government like our government facing a continent which had a mixture of Socialists, semi-Socialists, and conservative governments, a competent way of directing their economic program towards something that would be successful in terms of economic development was to use people from our society who [had a left-wing orientation].

I was making the point that it was in the interest of our government that did not necessarily agree with the orientation of the people who were speaking for it. It was our government that used appropriately people of that orientation to speak to groups in Europe who would accept the judgement of a group of left-wingers in the United States, whom they would have felt closer to in intellectual and political orientation.

ZATINSKY: I always think that it is helpful when they speak the "same language." They have heard of the same people. They read the same books. Also they were not trying to indoctrinate the Europeans with any special theory. The Europeans had their own theories. We were trying to give them the ability work more effectively for free trade unionism. I always think it was by happenstance that we had people with a good social-democratic, free trade union background in that situation in Germany. George Silver and Bill Kemsley

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were in Germany right after the war. It was by accident. For some reason right after the war General Eisenhower, our Chief of Staff in the European Theater, was given information that a destructive element had evolved in Germany under the occupation, where the Social Democrats (SPD) were insisting on maintaining the separation of their union from the pro-Communist trade union group. Eisenhower said, "Well, this is where we have to try to all work together." It seemed good to him. It was 1945, and things had not broken down yet. So he called in the person who he understood was behind all this mess, a fellow named Kurt Schumacher, who was head of the Social Democratic Party, and who had been in a concentration camp for 12 years and almost died. Eisenhower got to a point where in a good-natured way he said, "You know, we could put you in jail too." Schumacher said, "You can't do anything to me that hasn't been done already, so go ahead and try."

Fortunately there were people like Silver and Kemsley, who were close enough to the situation and knew enough about it, so that people started checking with them and sent information back to the Eisenhower camp that it might be better if Eisenhower left this situation alone. There was no way that the Social Democrats were going to let the Communists come in and take over the union. So Eisenhower backed off. By happenstance Silver and Kemsley were there. Now if you get people of that sophistication on projects, it isn't a question of what their particular political bent is. There is a whole range in the free trade union movement. It is a question that they can probably deal more effectively ideologically against the totalitarians and their friends than they can over in this country.

Q: Let me interrupt to make a cross reference to an earlier interview with Paul Porter, who [described] the two camps within the military occupation of Germany. One group took a simplistic view that Germany had been defeated and therefore [should] suffer the consequences of defeat. Siding with them were [those who] pushed the Morgenthau Plan for the destruction of the German economy, so that Germany could never again threaten the United States or the rest of Europe. Those two groups were supported by the

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underground Communist movement which had its own objective of destroying Germany for the purposes of the Soviet Union. It was only through the [opposing] influence of people from Wisconsin and the trade union movement and Irving Brown of the AFL and, as Porter says, "some of the CIO people" that our policies were turned around and the Communist effort defeated. Please comment on that, especially on Paul Porter's emphasis on the old AFL crowd from Wisconsin, Biemiller, Henry Rutz, who was a trade unionist himself, and the intellectuals like Saposs and those who had studied under Perlman and Commons.

ZATINSKY: Well, every group, every tendency, every milieu has a feeling that its influence and impact on history was a decisive one. And the others' [influence] was more or less peripheral. I think they both have a good case that they contributed and neither contributed as much as they had thought they contributed but a hell of a lot more than was known or accepted by general society, because they did make an important impact. They didn't change the world, but they were one important factor in keeping Europe free and putting a rein on Soviet aggrandizement and forward marching.

Q: Good. Milt, with that experience and with what you have done since in social service work and in teaching, etc., could you lean back and tell us what conclusions you come to about the validity of the Marshall Plan program on balance: the good, the bad, and more importantly, in the context of today's situation in Europe, what relevance, if any, did any of our experience have and how would you suggest that that experience be used in the present situation?

ZATINSKY: I think we were an important factor in the salvation and reconstruction of Western Europe. Did we do it by ourselves? No way! They did it. Basically the people of these countries did it. We gave them some tools to work with and some help. Now it is always in retrospect that you try to figure out how things had their impact. Was it the Marshall Plan alone? Or was it the Marshall Plan in combination with the energies of entrepreneurialism, of independent unionism, and of other factors that are yet to be

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analyzed? It usually takes some time to figure that out. I have been working now on a study of the WPA and the CCC That gives us a [longer] period of time, another 15 years to look at the accomplishments. The more [research] I do, the better they look. At the time they looked very mixed. The more you look back at them ,the better they look.

Q: At the time we weren't too enthusiastic.

ZATINSKY: That's right. You look at all the manpower programs since and not one of them holds a candle to CCC or WPNot that everything they did was right. You are dealing with human beings. I think the Marshall Plan program had an important impact and it helped, but it wasn't the only factor.

Q: What about today's problems? Any comments on that since I am dipping into your valued experience?

ZATINSKY: Well, I have been out of international affairs as an occupation for a long while, almost a lifetime. To the extent that I have any knowledge, it seems to me that [during] these last few years we have for the first time an opportunity to salvage what used to be the Soviet Union from complete destruction, chaos and God knows what will take over under these circumstances. All our predictions turned out to be right. We never expected them to turn out within our lifetime. [I thought] Communism would erode, but I never thought it would disappear. They used to say that the inner contradictions of capitalism would kill us. That was part of the Marxist philosophy. The inner contradictions of Communism under Stalin's leadership killed it. And here we have this opportunity! They are in such desperate straights. They have none of the tools nor the abilities as a country — they do as individuals here and there — to rebuild that economy and to [create] an entrepreneurial economy. They are weighted down by bureaucracies with their old methods. They are torn apart by ethnic and national tensions. If we don't come to their help and things get much worse, for the few dollars that it would cost us — and I mean a few hundred million dollars it would cost us — it is just a small fraction of what we were

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paying for the military build-up during the Cold War. Just ten percent of that put into the insurance of keeping Russia safe and democratic would be the best investment we could possibly make.

Q: Any other comments or wisdom you want to give our project about your experiences?

ZATINSKY: I don't know how much wisdom I have given so far, but if I can think of any wisdom, I'll send it on to you. That's all I got.

Q: Okay, thanks very much not only for the interview but the material you have given me, which I will copy and send back to you to the extent that you want it back and the other materials I will retain for the use of students and academics. Thank you very much.

ZATINSKY: Thank you, Murray.

Continuation of interview: Tuesday, April 13, 1993

Q: This is Morris Weisz and date is Tuesday, April 13, 1993. I am sitting in Joe Glazer's house with a house guest of his Milton Zatinsky, an old friend of mine, whom I interviewed a month ago in Miami. I am taking advantage of his visit to get some background information on some observations he made in his interview last month about various radical groups in the American political movements and in the American trade union movement. It occurred to Don Kienzle, the Executive Secretary of our project — the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project — that students using the project materials [would benefit from having more] background information on the various radical movements referred to in the various interviews. This applies especially to the Marshall Plan period, when Americans dealt with Europeans who frequently had some background and experience in radical political movements and related trade union organizations. When our labor attach#s would refer to work they did in various foreign countries, they often commented on the trade union and political people they dealt with abroad in terms of their own backgrounds in the American [trade union movement]. Were they for the AFL? What was

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the basis for their support of AFL practices and AFL personnel like Irving Brown? Were they in favor of Victor Reuther because of shared political and trade union activities with Victor, the CIO representative in the Marshall Plan period?

So Milt, on the basis of your long background in politics and in trade union work, please give us your views [on various radical movements of the 1930s how they influenced subsequent international labor diplomacy.] You have cautioned me that, of course, it will not be an objective view, because you have a certain background, but that doesn't bother us so much, because we hope to get the views of other people as well, so that future students will be able to come to conclusions based not on some second-hand academic analysis but on hearing the views of people like yourself with first-hand political experience.

ZATINSKY: Let's start at the approach of the popular front period in the mid-1930's. As you know the first popular front government was established in France in 1936 with Communist support under Leon Blum, who was a socialist. In the early 1930's the Communists had a theory called the "third period." The third period in Communist ideology, which was espoused by Stalin from the top, was that capitalism is entering its third and final period of decay and collapse. Moreover, since people could see that the capitalists were up to no good, the only serious obstacle to this [transformation] to a great new world of the communist dictatorship was the Socialist International (SI), which was still listened to by workers and which prevented workers from getting into the struggle. That was the theory of the third period.

They had a song in America that started out, "In the needle trades' unions the socialist party is a no good party. It's the third capitalist party of the bosses." This was their [line]. When Hitler came to power and destroyed the Communist movement in Germany, Stalin saw that a new force [— fascism — had emerged]. It wasn't so-called "British and American imperialism" that was the main threat but a new force that could be a danger to his power in Russia. He changed gears real quickly [and adopted the concept of the]

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popular front. “We will join together with Socialists and those that we can get to fuse into [a popular front] and anybody else.” He worked at setting up independent unions in the United States. There was not only the regular AFL garment workers union but also a Needle Trades Industrial Union set up by the Communists as their opposition to it.

Q: Milt, I'll have to ask you to speak a little. . . No, no, you are not going too far. I asked you to go back further to Leninism, if you will. I am going to ask you to speak a little bit more slowly, because in listening to your other tape. . .

ZATINSKY: I go too fast. All right. I'll slow down. Now [the Communists'] positions [during] those days were devastating, because there was a split in the working class movement in Germany as Hitler was taking his road to power with his storm troopers. The Socialists were trying to keep constitutional liberties alive in some sort of framework in the Weimar Republic. The Communists, instead of supporting legality and law, set up “red storm troopers.” The more that lawlessness and violence increased, the worse it got, and this gave the Nazis their opportunities So the Communists changed [their position]. They didn't admit they were wrong, but they changed gears and in the mid-1930's started a new “we love you” period with the Socialists.

One of the first groups in this country that the Communists were able to get to experiment with this [new cooperation] — warily and against the advice of their elders — was the Student League for Industrial Democracy, which represented young Social Democrats and their allies on campus. The Student League for Industrial Democracy went into a united organization with the National Students League, which [represented] the Communists and was tightly knit and well financed. It was surprising [at that time] how well financed these Communists groups were. We know now where the money came from. It came from the Soviet Union. This is all documented now. In a few years a small group [of Communists] took over the combined American Student Union (ASU) and turned the ASU to their own purposes to the point where the ASU was supporting the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939, when [the Soviet Union] turned against the West.

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Q: The new organization was [called] the American Students Union?

ZATINSKY: Yes, the American Students Union. The young Socialists, the young Trotskyites, and the other non-Stalinist leftists soon became so discouraged by these shifts and turns that they left. The middle-of-the-road liberal types, Socialists like Joseph Lash, a friend of the First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and his group [including] Molly Yard, who is now head the National Organization of Women, all left. The American Students Union was [then] left completely in the hands of the Communists, who finally buried it when it no longer served any purpose to them. Now the Communist movement had two main dissident spin-offs. It also had many smaller ones. There is a difference between the. . .

Q: The Communist political movement, not the student movement.

ZATINSKY: Yes, the Communist political movement. The student movement just followed along. The student arm, the trade union arm, and their other arms just followed along with the overall policy which was decided not in this country but by their bosses in Moscow. There were two groups that spun off, both of which are interesting for the purpose [of this discussion]. The first group was the Trotskyites. In 1927 when Trotsky was expelled from Russia, he went to Turkey and Norway. He wound up in Mexico as a guest of Diego Rivera and President Cardenas. There were very few havens for a dissident Communist in those days.

Trotsky set up his own [international political organization] and in the mid-1930's came to the conclusion that the Socialist movements of the world were ready for a major turn to the left, so he had his small Trotskyite organizations join the overall socialist parties. This did not last too long, and it was not too successful. In America you had the spin off of the young Trotskyites and the Trotskyites' party. They called [the new group] the Socialist Workers' Party, and for the youth group, [as a counterpart] of the Young Peoples' Socialist League of the Socialist Party, they set up the Young People's Socialist League

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Fourth, because Trotsky at that time believed he had to set up a new “Fourth” Communist International to replace the Third International, the Comintern of the Communists, and the too conservative for him Socialist Second International or Labor and Socialist International. So the new [Trotskyite youth] group was the “YPSL Fourth”.

Now let me just put that movement aside and discuss the other [major Communist] splinter [group] which came a couple of years later, and that was the “Lovestone group.” They were followers to a certain extent of the Russian leader Nikolai Bukharin. Trotsky was a left opposition leader. Bukharin was a more moderate leader. The Bukharin movement was interesting. Bukharin was the darling of the Communist Party under Lenin. He was young, very bright, and articulate. In Lenin's last will and testament, Lenin talked of Bukharin as the darling of the party, and as the person in whom he had so much hope, but Bukharin was something of a moderate. His group [included] people like Rykov and others.

Q: People like who?

ZATINSKY: Rykov. Rykov eventually became President of the Soviet Union, but of course with Stalin's gun to his head. [He and others in the group] were executed in 1938 after a trial which denounced them for being everything from Nazi agents to agents of the imperialist warmongers. God knows what!

Bukharin was a rather solid person, who had some serious second thoughts about early Communist theory. He went abroad in 1937. His friends and people not that close said, “Why in the world go back? That S.o.b. [Stalin] is going to kill you.” He had one reason to go back. He had a young wife and a very young child, and he had no guarantee that they wouldn't be murdered by Stalin in retribution to his not coming back. His wife, who is still alive, has just recently written a book of her memoirs of her husband, Bukharin. It is a very interesting book and was reviewed in the [New York] Times Book Section a few weeks ago. Yevtushenko wrote a long poem honoring Bukharin's life. Even before Gorbachev, they were beginning to try to rehabilitate Bukharin.

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Bukharin wrote an article or memo while in Paris. He couldn't put his name to it, because he didn't want to sign his wife's death warrant. He met with a fellow named Boris Nikolevsky, who was head of the Research Bureau of the Mensheviks, the moderate Social Democratic opposition to the Communists, and he gave him this long document called "Memoirs of an Old Bolshevik." He said, "Please publish it, but my name cannot go on it." But it was pretty obvious, if you read it, who had written it. Nikolevsky after Bukharin's death had no trouble identifying [Bukharin as the author. In the document,] Bukharin talked about the terrible mistake the Communists had made in doing away with multi-party democracy and in concentrating all power in the hands of the state apparatus.

Q: Which they called "democratic centralism."

ZATINSKY: They called it "democratic centralism," the curtailing an independent press and of access to information, etc. All the aspects of dictatorship. Bukharin said, "We have made such a terrible mistake." Arthur Koestler's book, *Darkness at Noon*, is based more or less, according to Koestler, on Bukharin. Rubischev is the name given to the hero in that book.

Q: Before you proceed, did his article refer to errors in Stalin's economic program?

ZATINSKY: I hate to say this, Murray, but I haven't read the book in about forty-five years. I couldn't give you very good answer.

Q: Because there were some criticisms of the whole effort to do away with the class of the agricultural people [Kulaks].

ZATINSKY: He opposed that openly. His public break with Stalin was on the liquidation of the Kulaks as a class and the ending of independent farming. There is no question that Bukharin fought against that and he fought against the mass murder of the Ukrainian farmers through starvation when they were shipping foodstuffs out of the country and their own people were literally starving because Stalin wanted them to go "under heel."

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Bukharin opposed all that and that was his real initial sharp break with the Stalinist machine.

In this country, the pro-Bukharin group was headed by the then General Secretary of the Communist Party, a young man in those days, named Jay Lovestone. He had a group of very sophisticated, capable people [working with him].

Q: We are now talking about the late 1920s.

ZATINSKY: 1929 was the break. We are talking about 1928, 1929, and 1930. People were coming into the movement like Irving Brown; another was the writer Bertram Wolfe, who was one of the leading figures; and in the trade union movement, a fellow named Charles "Sasha" Zimmerman in the Garment Workers' Union. He left the Communist Needle Trades Industrial Union when he broke with these people and went back to work for the Garment Workers' Union, where I believe he rose to be the first vice president. In addition, they had younger people at that time: Harry Goldberg and some very capable and committed people. Lovestone himself never married. He was a very young Secretary of the Party. [He won] reelection to this job over Earl Browder and William Z. Foster by 85 percent of the vote of the American Communist Party when the party still had votes. He went to the Soviet Union to say, "Why did you override my election?" He brought his top leadership with him.

Q: You have to go into your reference to "overriding" this election. What are you referring to?

ZATINSKY: The Soviet Union negated the election. They simply refused [to accept the results of the election] and said, "This is our organization. We don't want these people. We don't recognize you. We recognize the [ticket] which got 15 percent of vote headed by William Z. Foster and Earl Browder."

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Q: But the nature of discipline [in the world Communist movement] was that the Communist Party of the United States and Communist parties elsewhere were members of the Comintern, and Stalin, in his capacity as the real director of the Comintern, exerted discipline over the Communist Party of the United States, so that it was not an American party but the American branch of the Comintern.

ZATINSKY: That's a good description. The Comintern was the international body that had complete control, and I mean complete control [over member parties]. I am not talking about the control of some international bodies over subordinate groups. I am talking, "You say, 'yes'. We say, 'no'. We win. We're in charge." [Lovestone and his adherents] said, "Oh, you can't do that. You're wrong. It would be better for the American party. . ."

The Lovestone developed a theory in those days which was called "American Exceptionalism." What was that? It was that "while what you are doing may be fine in the Soviet Union," — I don't know how fine it was, but they said it was fine. — "America is exceptional in that we in America have a well-organized working class, self-conscious to a great extent in that workers are joining trade unions, and we have [a high] standard of living where we can provide [basic needs] without a violent revolution or some of the other things [needed] in other Communist [assumptions of power]."

Now in Marxist theory, Marx too had said that society polarizes into a small group of very rich, militant, tough nasty bosses, the petit bourgeoisie, and a very large group of completely disenfranchised, down-in-the-mouth "proletariat." Complete polarization made the revolution simple, because you had 95 percent of the people getting rid of the two or three percent with a few clerical people in-between. The Communists believed that religion was the opiate of the people. However, society didn't [actually] develop the way the Communists predicted. The big group developed in the service, technical and new industrial class, and the industrial working class actually shrank somewhat and is still shrinking yet, because of [the nature of] technological change. So society didn't develop quite the way Marx thought it would, but he did say that in the United States and Great

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Britain, the process [of social transformation] might come about through natural resources and political organization rather than through violent revolution.

The Comintern did not accept Lovestone's interpretation. Lovestone and his leadership went to the Soviet Union to plead their case before the Comintern. Instead of listening to them, [Stalin and the Comintern] kept them there. It was one of the few mistakes in strategy that Lovestone is guilty of in terms of smart realpolitik. They weren't exactly kidnapped, because they weren't put in jail, but they were kept there [in Moscow] almost indefinitely until they were able through the Comintern officials to turn the American Communist Party over to the small minority that had lost the election. The Lovestone group then set themselves up first as the "Communist Party, Majority." That name didn't seem to catch on too well, and they finally formed the Independent Labor League of America, which is the name they used more or less throughout the 1930s.

The literature on all this is rather sparse. Ben Gitlow, who was involved in a lot of this happening, wrote about it. Theodore Draper wrote a book, *American Communism [and the Soviet Union]*, and some other works, which are quite good. Irv Howe and Lou Coser have a book on the history of American Communism. It doesn't go far enough, but, as far as it goes, it is quite accurate and detailed in its references and cross-references. There is also a book called *The Divided Left*. I wish I could remember who wrote it, Kantor or Kantis, somebody like that, who had a lot of rather good information. But generally this is not a well-researched period.

Now the interesting thing about the Lovestone and the Trotsky groups is that they went in two different directions. In the Soviet Union the supporters of Trotsky and the supporters of Bukharin tried to join together to fight against Stalinist terror. They waited too long, because all the guns were in one hand. In this country the [respective groups] went in different directions. The Trotskyite movement, as I indicated, set up their Fourth International. Trotsky was assassinated by a Russian agent in 1940; Mark Kahn and (?) Jackson were among the names he used. He was the son of an old time secret police

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leader. After the murder, he served his time [in jail] and then went to live in a Communist country. He denied that he was a paid assassin. He was an “ideological assassin.”

The [Trotskyite] movement itself came on very bad times. This started with the invasion of Finland by the Soviet Union. At first, everybody in the Trotskyite movement was shocked. Then Trotsky and some of his trusted leaders said, “Well, while an invasion is not a nice thing, it still may bring a better form of society through the end of private enterprise and [the establishment of] nationalized industry. That in the long run will lead to good things.

Q: As I recall, Trotsky said, “It is still a workers' state.”

ZATINSKY: Yes. He also kept to the theory that it was a workers' state, [albeit] a “bureaucratized” workers' state and one that had “degenerated.” These were the terms that he used. But still, the workers, in essence, have control. The workers didn't know they had this control, because they were in jail, but Trotsky, [based on] his understanding of Marxist-Leninist theory, still felt it was [”a workers' state.” Trotsky's followers] in this country were led by two people, James P. Cannon and Max Shachtman. Cannon, leading the majority, went along with the leader. Shachtman, who had been General Secretary of the Young Communists, the Communist youth movement, when Lovestone was head of the Communist Party, felt that Russia was no longer a progressive society per se, and wrote a book called Bureaucratic Collectivism. [The Soviet Union was presented] as sort of a neutral society with bad aspects to it. [As for] the war with Finland, the Soviet Union was a bad neighbor and [presented] the danger of starting another world war, but even more interesting, [the war against Finland] “was nothing that we could support the Soviet Union on.” In fact Shachtman more or less had a position of a plague on both your houses. “We cannot fight or support either of you.”

Within the Shachtman group there were others who said, “Wait a minute. Finland is a democratic country with a large Socialist Party and free elections. The workers are doing fine. They are getting good trade union conditions and they are being attacked by

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an outside dictatorship. We're supporting Finland. The Soviet is not only not a neutral state, it is a vicious enemy and we oppose it, and we oppose the movement's support of Communist ideology, Bolshevism and Leninism." A group of about 30 people, all in the youth movement, resigned and left. I was part of that group. I was one of the youngest, and we put out a document called "Defining a tendency," which we wrote together. I think a fellow named Phil Selznick, who was "Sherman" [of the Shermanites], was the principal editor [of the document].

Q: This document is in the files of our Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project.

ZATINSKY: Some of the other signers of the document were Marty Lewis or Seymour Martin Lipset, who is now head of the American Sociological Society.

Q: We have to note that the names you are giving are the real names as well as the so-called party names.

ZATINSKY: Yes, that's right. Mine was Pete Fields. I was asked when I joined — I was about 14 or 15. — "What's your party name?" I said, "What's that?" And they said, "Okay, you're this." Seymour Martin Lipset was Marty Lewis; Martin Diamond, the well-known philosopher in the political science area, used the name Martin Needen; Irving Kristol, who later evolved in a more conservative direction (and his son, Bill Kristol, even more conservative), was Irving Ferry and so on. I don't remember each one's name. I'm surprised that I remember any of these. This was over 55 years ago.

Q: Can you put a date to this?

ZATINSKY: This is 1940, I believe. I was 16 years old.

Q: You started early.

ZATINSKY: I was a "young-un." I don't think Lipset was more than 19 and Selznick and Kristol were probably no more than 22. When Phil Selznick stood up before the

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organization in an open debate with Max Shachtman, who was one of the most brilliant debaters I have ever heard, it was sort of sad. Although Phil did his best and did a fairly good job, he was no match for Max Shachtman, who had a tremendous sense of humor and was a very remarkable person.

Q: We might at this point refer to the [Shachtman group] in case anybody wants to look into it further, because so many people who later became active in the foreign field originally came from the Shachtman group.

ZATINSKY: Or the Lovestone group.

Q: Or the Lovestone group. You might refer to the title of Shachtman's book.

ZATINSKY: Bureaucratic Collectivism.

Q: That was his first book, but his later analysis was much more conservative. Do you recall the name of that later book?

ZATINSKY: No, I don't recall it.

Q: Okay.

ZATINSKY: We'll find it. Anyway, the Selznick group had interesting roots. They were mostly academics. I now teach at a university in semi-retirement, but as I said, Marty Lipset is head of the American Sociological Society. Selznick was a leading professor of sociology on the West Coast, the last I heard, and many others were academics. Most of us joined the Young Socialists. Years later when I eventually grew up to be 20 or 21, I became the National Chairman of the Young Socialists and a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Party. Some of the others stayed on and worked in other groups. I had a little group with Martin Lipset and Nathan Glazer, who wasn't exactly a

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member of the group but was sort of friendly with us, and we worked together in a group called "The Group of Student Action." But these were side issues.

The Lovestone group had an even more intriguing history at this juncture. The leader, Jay Lovestone, who never married and was very focused and determined, became the Advisor on International Affairs to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) and its leader David Dubinsky. Up until that point Dubinsky relied on a fellow named Raphael Abramovich, who was ILGWU consultant on international affairs. Abramovich had been one of the top leaders of Menshevik Russian Social Democratic movement and the assistant to a fellow named Julian Martov, who was the leader of the Democratic Socialist Movement in Russia. He was a very close personal friend of Lenin. Abramovich left [the country.] The others couldn't get out so easily. He felt very badly about Martov. Martov wrote his answer to Lenin in a book called. . . Lenin's book was *The State and Revolution* and Martov's answer was something similar. I forget the full name of Martov's book, but it was an answer to Lenin's book, which Martov felt would lead to a dictatorship.

*Q: The title wasn't this but it can be described as *The State Against the Revolution*.*

ZATINSKY: Something like that. Anyway, Abramovich was an old-timer. The Communists were very negative toward Abramovich. When the Communists found out his son was serving in Spain in the Republican forces, they murdered the son, not because of him particularly, but because his father was Abramovich. The Communists had a long memory. I knew Abramovich fairly well. I worked with him on a magazine. We still got support from the Garment Workers' Union, but Jay Lovestone had the ear of the top man, and Jay brought his group with him: Irving Brown, Harry Goldberg, and the others, who were part of their whole group. You think you buy one person, and you are buying a family.

Q: Lovestone came in to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union when Sasha Zimmerman returned to the ILGWU.

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ZATINSKY: It could very well be, yes.

Q: Zimmerman told me that when he came back into the ILG he introduced Lovestone, his theoretician in his Communist days, to Dubinsky, who then proceeded to see the value of this wholly-directed person, Lovestone.

ZATINSKY: Lovestone then somehow moved up to be the head of the AFL's International Affairs Committee and started a whole new era in labor-international work overseas, bringing in his old team of Brown and Goldberg and many others.

Q: Let me mention the fact that Harry Goldberg remained a member of the Socialist Party, at least a nominal one, for many, many years. In that capacity he wrote excellent musical criticism under the name of Jim Cork. He was given the name Jim Cork. He was a wonderful pianist. Although he claimed never to have been a Communist or a member of Lovestone's group, I never knew of any case in which he disagreed with Jay Lovestone.

ZATINSKY: I knew him very well and my feeling was that he was under a Communist-type discipline.

Q: Right.

ZATINSKY: Whether he paid dues or not, I don't know.

Q: The other thing I want to mention, which is not a correction of what you said but an amplification, is that Lovestone came into the International Department as a representative of an organization called the "Free Trade Union Committee" and did not become Director of the International Department of the AFL-CIO until much later. A characteristic of Communists [is that they strive to become the secretary [of an organization], the function in Communist and labor movements in which people process paper and therefore really determine the policies [of the organization].

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ZATINSKY: Well, now that Lovestone was no longer a Communist but a bitter anti-Communist, he [nevertheless] still carried with him many of the tactical and organizational methods of the Communists in terms of a very sharp delineation of goals, keeping a group tightly knit and working together when the other [groups] are amorphous and being able to take advantage of many of those [characteristics]. Anyway, he has had a great deal of influence on labor [movement's international policies], the most controversial one of which was the fact that he dealt with movements in the Middle East that he thought had a chance but wound up to be [some of] the worst movements of all. That was bad judgment, but that [kind of judgment] has been made by other people too.

Q: You mean his association or willingness to work with extremist Arab groups in North Africa?

ZATINSKY: Well, they became a lot more extremist afterwards. He was under the impression that with some warmth and human understanding he could bring them around. It didn't quite work out that way. That was a bad judgment. That wasn't anything that others weren't doing every day. In the Middle East it is very easy to make bad judgments. But interesting new thing that he did was [to establish] a type of intimate cooperation with American intelligence which labor had previously avoided. Labor felt [up until that time that] it would undermine the independence of a private trade union movement to be part of a governmental operation. There are [other] places that require close cooperation, of course, but [cooperation with the CIA] was felt to be undermining union independence.

Now going back a few steps, I have already alluded to the work of the Second International, which was the old Socialist and Labor International. The Third International was the Comintern, which was organized by the Communists in 1919 to destroy the Socialist International and build a world movement which they thought would take over the world.

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The smaller Fourth International was set up by Trotsky when he saw that his strategy of working with the Socialists was not going to come to fruition. [I have mentioned] the Second, Third, and Fourth [Internationals]. There was, of course, a First [International]. Otherwise we couldn't have started [this discussion] with the Second. The First was organized by Karl Marx in the last century as the International Workermen's Association. It brought together various nascent labor and socialist and radical groups throughout the world into the formation of an international movement, which, as Marx saw it, would lead to the empowerment of the working class to take over and move the next step — the historical economic change to his plan of communism. Now Marx was not too specific as to how the new society would look. He was very critical on his analysis of the shortcomings of existing society. The early Marx had a fairly open and free concept. Everybody would work at what they felt most suited them and a year or two later they would do something else. Later Marx was a little more rigid and with more emphasis on state control. This attitude rubbed many of the European socialist or anarchist leaders the wrong way including a fellow named Mikhail Bakunin, a Russian anarchist leader, who headed up a more libertarian segment in the First International. His idea was that a socialist regime after the revolution that Marx was talking about could become just as repressive or even more so to the workers than the capitalists. At least the capitalists are diverse. Marx was going to centralize everything, and if the state was dictatorial, then the workers would have any chance at all. Their verse in the International Song of the Workers was “We want not condescending saviors to rule us from the judgment hall. We workers ask not for their favors. We will all decide for all.”

Bakunin was a very heroic but somewhat strange figure. He was in and out of jails. He nonetheless became so powerful in the International that Marx did not know what to do. He was going to take over at the next few conventions. To prevent this, Marx, with no authorization, bureaucratically moved the headquarters [of the International] to New York and then quietly had it buried when he felt he could no longer control it. Bakunin, who was in and out of jails, was not really in a position to do much with it. He had a

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follower in Russia, whose name was Dissheiv (?), the hero [Stepan Verhovensky] of Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, actually the villain, who acting upon the orders of Bakunin and the central anarchist organization, set about its murderous program. If anybody wants to read an interesting story by one of the best writers of all time, I would strongly recommend *The Possessed*. Anyway what happened was the decline in the Second, Socialist International and the decline of the First with two tendencies, the anarchist tendencies in the Mediterranean and southern European area. Some in South America. Spain. A large anarchist group movement in Italy, Greece, and other Mediterranean countries had a strong strain of anarcho-syndicalism. In the northern countries (end of side A, tape 2)

Q: I would like to draw some analogies between the types of persons who were in the leadership in these movements [as found in] the Marx-Bakunin fight and the Stalin-Bukharin [fight]. In a sense you had a charismatic figure like Bakunin fighting a person who was essentially, whatever other qualities he had, a bureaucrat, a manager, the type of person who would think up the idea of moving the headquarters of an international organization to the United States in order to defeat his charismatic [opponent]. It [helps] you understand Stalin's success as against many of these other people because as General Secretary of the Communist Party he had the [capacity] to change the course of a large organization through his handle on the [organizational] machinery rather than [through] his ability to be a better orator. Comment on that if you will.

ZATINSKY: Well, personality types are hard to [compare]. You have some crossing over. But it is true that Marx had bureaucratic as well as research and organizational and writing skills. Bakunin didn't have too much time to write. He was out with the people. He was charismatic. Marx wasn't.

Q: Wasn't Bakunin's theory "the something of the deed"?

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ZATINSKY: He believed in the “propaganda of the deed” rather than in the “propaganda of the written document.” To make the easy transition from Marx to Stalin, I think, is a little too jumpy, because Marx was a leading figure with many different movements. He was [a model for] the dissident Communists who opposed terror and for many Socialists.

Q: You are now talking about the 1870's?

ZATINSKY: No, I am talking about the Communists of our day. Marx was one of the inspirations for many other tendencies than Communism and Stalinism. Stalin like Hitler was a unique figure. Sidney Hook wrote an interesting book called *The Role of the Hero in History*. Marx didn't appreciate [the role of the hero] in his theory that things are inevitable and that the individual vagaries of personality and interrelations are just questions of coloration and mood that change things just a few iotas.

Q: Economic determinism.

ZATINSKY: Economic determinism is the way Marx put it. Now Hook's book is a very interesting book. He takes the Russian Revolution and shows how it could have gone six different ways. If Lenin had decided to do one other thing or if the train through Germany had run into trouble, lots of different things could have happened. The ascent of Stalin showed a complete blind spot on the part of the other Communist leaders, many of whom disliked Stalin intensely. [Stalin was] a person with absolute and complete bureaucratic control [combined] with a ruthlessness. There is lots of material, and hopefully we will find more out as documents become available to the West, that Stalin hastened the death of Lenin through murder. We know that some others [including] Dzerzhinsky were probably murdered medically by Stalin. He had one of his operatives do it.

Q: Dzerzhinsky?

ZATINSKY: Dzerzhinsky. Dzerzhinsky was the original head of the Cheka, the Russian Secret Police. Stalin was only involved in power. The fact was that that was the flag that

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he had to wave and the words that he had to say to get control of power and increase it and hold it. He was an obsessed power maniac.

Q: Well, I may have done Marx an injustice by not agreeing from the very beginning that he was a intellectual giant who was a theoretician of the first order, which certainly Stalin wasn't, but this bureaucratic capability is what interests me and the tendency in all my ex-Trotskyite friends to refer to Stalinism as the evil rather than say Leninism.

ZATINSKY: Well, the reason for that is not that Lenin was a good guy and Stalin was a bad guy. Lenin did a lot of bad things, everything from the murders at Kronstadt to doing away with the Social Democratic political parties, to the banning of the free press, even to his murder of the entourage around the monarchy. They murdered the Czar; they murdered the nurse and the maid and the cook and the doctor and seven year old kids. I mean that ain't the nicest way to do business, but compared to Stalin, Lenin was just a beginner.

Q: Lenin was also an intellectual leader and an academician and a serious thinker in the field.

ZATINSKY: Stalin wrote one book on the national question and it is very doubtful that he [actually] wrote the book [himself]. He had it written for him by somebody who was probably shot later so he could say, "I wrote the book." Also, Lenin and Trotsky had one thing in common, however bad what they did may have turned out. In everything they did, they put their own lives and reputations and activities on the line 24 hours a day. They thought they were working to improve the condition of humanity. Stalin did everything [including] murder because he wanted power. He didn't give a shit for the good or the bad. He was concerned with one thing and he was a brutal and later psychopathic — to the point that he went off his rocker — mass murderer. He was in a class with Hitler. In fact he murdered more civilians than Hitler. That wasn't easy!

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Q: The reason for going into this is that any student in the field should have some of this background because of the manifestations of these disagreements, policies, tactics in current issues, say in the question of anarcho-syndicalism. It still has some relevance in the fights in Italy in the trade union movement and in Spain.

ZATINSKY: One sad part is that before the Second World War the anarchist movement still was a major factor in the radical movements in many countries. Spain, in particular, had the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., which were the largest trade union federations in the country. Their leaders were men of great stature. Their dreams for a free society were beautiful dreams. The war crushed everything. Hitler and Stalin took over most of Europe. This left so little hope, that anarchism has been relegated today to a very small role. It is interesting that in this country, which at one time had a lively anarchist movement, not large but lively, Emma Goldman, who was one of our [anarchists], is becoming a cultural hero. Now, she isn't here to enjoy it. They used to spit in our day when she walked by. Today she is a hero. I see kids in college with Emma Goldman's picture on their shirts. I ask them, "How did you get Emma Goldman?" They say, "She's our hero." She should have had a chance to see herself as a hero!

Q: Just like nowadays in college Trotskyism is supposed to be something great, whereas there is no relation to what we have understood about Trotsky. Now that you mention the strength of anarchism and syndicalism in Spanish history, I should mention that the trade union aspects of this are described very well in the writings of Victor Alba.

ZATINSKY: That is true, and on Spain other works include the Franz Borkenau book and [one by] Arthur Koestler and George Orwell's Homage to Catalonia. These are very telling and interesting books of how the Communists undermined the fight against fascism through their complete subservience to Russian aims. Getting closer to the current situation, the Lovestone group, which had its heyday during the Cold War following World War II, was very influential and the only serious countervailing force within the labor movement was led by Victor Reuther and the United Automobile Workers. He tried to keep

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the independence of labor's thought and not to make it an instrument of American foreign policy but really a trade union policy. By the way after Lovestone died in 1989 or 1990, the Lovestone group as a group seemed to have lost its focus. Some day it may reestablish itself.

Now the Trotskyite group moved in a different direction. The Shachtman group, which we discussed earlier, became a workers' party then merged in the 1960's, I believe, with the Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Federation. One would naturally think that they would become the left wing of this movement like the last time the Trotskyites entered the Socialist Party in the 1930's. Au contraire, they became their most conservative wing calling themselves "Social Democrats, U.S.A.," which is the national group today headed by a fellow named Donald Slaiman and Rachelle Horowitz of the Teachers' Union.

The other group, the Democratic Socialists of America, which was headed until his death by Mike Harrington, is a more traditional socialist movement. Both groups are small, but they have a group of dedicated people who work very hard in support of their policies. The main factors today in labor work overseas are something that Murray Weisz is in a better position to describe than I am, since I have been sort of out of things the last few years living in Florida.

Q: Let me mention one characteristic of the Democratic Socialists of America, the group that was led by Harrington until his death, which parallels with what happened in the 1930s and 1940s, namely there is today an unwillingness to stress anti-Communism. They are willing to admit into their group people like Dorothy Healey.

ZATINSKY: Yes, I saw the Healey thing. She is an unreconstructed communist.

Q: I don't know if she is unreconstructed, but she will criticize little things in terms of "It may be true that. . .", but if any political group wants my support, it must clarify its position as against the position of the Communists.

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ZATINSKY: This is a very interesting thing. It has really nothing to do particularly with the Democratic Socialist of America or the Social Democrats, U.S.A. In the liberal left movement as a whole, if you read the letters to the editor in the [English-language] weekly issue of the Jewish Forward, you get both sides of this. I saw a letter by Kopilow in one issue. Seymour Kopilow teaches actors in New York and is an old friend of mine. Now, what is the issue? Koppie says that there really is very little difference between somebody who went to the Hitler movement and was a Hitler supporter and somebody who went to the Stalin movement and was a Stalin supporter. Now it is true that neither one of them may have actually thrown people into concentration camps or gas chambers. They may have just supported it. They may have said it was an unfortunate historical necessity. "You can't make an omelet without breaking the eggs" was their best line.

Now, if you take a former Stalinist, who comes out and says, "I'm a socialist now. Nobody in here but us Social Democrats." I have to say to myself, "Are you ready to repudiate and condemn the murder of 20 million people in Russia by Stalin, the planned murder of Russia's entire Jewish community, the works of Slansky, the murder of the Jewish poets, and all these things?" He said, "No, what I say is that these probably could have been mistakes of judgment. He may have felt that he was surrounded by imperialist forces and he had to be too rough."

Now you have others who left the Communist movement, like Jay Lovestone and Max Shachtman, who became anti-Communists. There was a very interesting book called *The God that Failed*. It was written in the late 1930s or early 1940s about people who went through the Communist experience including the columnist Fisher, the black novelist Richard Wright, and Arthur Koestler.

Q: George Orwell?

ZATINSKY: Orwell was never a Communist. Even with all the pressures that they put on him on the left, he never had anything to do with them. They assigned a book to Orwell to

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write, *The Road to Wigan Pier*. He went to Wigan Pier, which was a depressed working class area with high unemployment, and he wrote this story about what's wrong with the left. He asked, "What's this talk about Russia? The Russian commissar is half gangster and half megaphone." What a beautiful description in 1936!

Q: I thought that for a brief period Orwell was a Communist. No?

ZATINSKY: Not for second.

Q: Well, that's interesting. Then Lovestone would have never agreed with him, because Lovestone's real complaint about many people was that they hadn't gone through the fire of being a Communist, and therefore you can't trust them in their anti-Communism.

ZATINSKY: Orwell's closest friend was Arthur Koestler and together they were against the entire left establishment. Koestler was, of course, an agent of Willy Muntenberg, who headed up the International Workers' Aid, a group which propagandized for the popular front with the Communists. Stalin later had him murdered in France. Koestler was in Spain as a Communist writer, jailed by Franco, and sentenced to die. However, he was one of these guys who lived a charmed life, and he somehow survived and got to England. He and Orwell were sort of blood brothers. One sought understanding through experience and the other through understanding in his heart. There's something wrong with guys who go around murdering and killing a pillaging and saying that they are doing it for a good cause.

Q: Well, fine. Any other observations you want to make about the background of radicalism and its influence on current situations or anything about the underdeveloped world, now called the developing third world?

ZATINSKY: Well, I think we should be hesitant in assessing populist charismatic leaders who have little concern for democratic processes. They say, "We've had such a hard time; we have to do these things." We should not hold them to a standard of how much they have been able to accomplish very quickly, because we know they cannot accomplish

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too much too quickly in these countries, but a standard of a humanistic approach to the country, to its press, to the free media, to justice, to equal access to the law and stuff like that. If you see these things are in place, the other things will follow. Without these things, there is nothing else.

Q: Let me comment on that. Take a person like Irving Brown, who moved from the European experience, where his opposition was the Communists, to the developing world of Africa, where he could not identify the enemy and could not select friends. There he did a much more sophisticate job in trying to establish trade union leadership. In some cases, he succeeded in encouraging trade union leaders to develop democratic structures. In many other cases, he was unsuccessful to a large degree because of economic constraints.

ZATINSKY: Irving Brown was not somebody I knew well personally. [He had the] role of almost jet-setting around and attempting to build basically credibly good forces. Sometimes he was fairly successful; other times he did miserably. [He believed] that his own perceptions were better than those of the people on the spot and that he knew more about what a legitimate socialist party is than the Socialist International, which has its committees sifting these things out and investigating them. I don't know! Do the international trade union organizations have some methods? Does the individual freelancer [like Irving Brown know more about these things?] His half-kidding, half serious title in the labor movement in my day was the "scholar-pumpnickel," a take-off on the scarlet Pimpernel of old who was supposed to be straightening things out. I'm not taking anything away from him. He was a man of complete dedication. [But take for example] his work with the Baath parties in the Middle East. Now it is true that the Baath parties looked at one time when they were founded as though they were secular social democratic parties. Today they are fascist parties. Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Hafez al-Assad in Syria - they are as close to Middle East fascism as you are going to find. Does that mean that they had to go that way? I don't know the answer to that, and I am not going to undermine Irving Brown's sophistication in making his judgments at the time he made them, because he

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certainly had as many tools [at his disposal] as any of the people in our Embassies had, if not more. But some place there has to be a process of gathering information, of sifting this stuff out, setting certain standards, and analyzing the thing in a good way. I am sure we do some of it through our Embassy people. We are knowledgeable but not enough of them are knowledgeable

Q: Thank you. Any other words of wisdom?

ZATINSKY: That's all.

Q: Thank you very much, Milt.

End of interview