I find myself in the unhappy position of being a member of this Board, when the ECA by its rules would not even hire me as a messenger. Perhaps other members of this Board are in the same position.

I raise the question of ECA hiring policies because the kind of staff we are going to get to represent us here and in Europe will determine the kind of approach we make to European democracy. It is also fundamental to something even more important. This ECA law has in it a most vicious step backward as far as civil liberties is concerned. If ECA is going to interpret it the way it is now doing it is setting a precedent that can do incalculable harm to our whole nation. I do not want to be a party to any such thing. Nor can I remain silent.

If we want people who are simply political innocents, in dealing with the complex problem of European labor, and especially Communism, we are not going to succeed in our objective. Yet time after time, people who are personally loyal and who would make a valuable contribution to ECA, are either held up or rejected for employment because of the rules made by ECA. I refer to the rule that if a person was ever a member of any of the front organizations on the Attorney General's list he is ineligible for ECA employment.

I find it difficult in terms of my sense of duty to ECA, as well as my responsibility to labor, to even appear to subscribe to this situation. I want to tell you now I was a member of several of those very groups.

Let me cite a specific case, not only because the man involved is one I've known for more than ten years, not only because he is needed and can make a valuable contribution to ECA, but also because his loyalty is unquestioned. I refer to David Lasser.
Here are the facts about him:

1. He was President of the Workers Alliance of America during the depression, but when he found the organization coming under the control of the Communists he fought them and then resigned, making clear that Communist domination was the reason.

2. He thereupon formed another organization, American Security Union, which forbade membership by Communists and conducted a campaign exposing Communist policies among the unemployed.

3. When he was removed from his government job with WPA because some Congressman thought he was subversive, he got a hearing before the House Appropriations Committee and they unanimously cleared him and the Congress reversed its action against him.

4. During the war years after again being cleared, he served with distinction in the labor office of WPB. When the Harriman Committee was formed, he served as its labor consultant, and Mr. Harriman was so impressed with his work that he asked Mr. Lasser to remain on his staff. When Mr. Harriman went to Europe, both he and the labor organizations wanted Mr. Lasser to go over with ECA and put his knowledge to the benefit of the program.

But Mr. Lasser has been rejected, after months of waiting, by ECA simply because of that membership in the Workers Alliance, no question being raised as to his personal loyalty. How does ECA justify this? It cites Section 110 C of the law which forbids employment to people who are not loyal or who ever belonged to organizations advocating contrary views "to the United States, its Constitution and form of government."

I have studied this law, the debate on it, and interpretations by distinguished lawyers and find nowhere justification for the rigid stand being taken by ECA.

The conclusion I have come to on this is the following:

1. The law was intended to bar people who are disloyal or grave security risks.

2. It also bars people who belonged to organizations (a) advocating overthrow of the government by force and violence; (b) at the time such organizations advocated those views. Certainly if by some chance the CED were to get under the control of people who advocated those views, and Mr. Hoffman resigned, he should not be penalized because he once belonged when it was a loyal organization. The Conference Report of Congress clearly indicated they had in mind organizations advocating "overthrow by force or violence."
3. There is no reason why the ECA had to accept the Attorney General's list as a bible for rejecting people. The Attorney General himself said when the list was issued to use it carefully as only one piece of evidence.

4. In my judgment if a person is personally loyal and if he was not a member of an organization advocating overthrow by force and violence, at the time it advocated those views, he is eligible for employment.

5. If we are going to try to operate a law on the basis of "guilt by past association", we are not only violating every rule of American justice but starting a vicious precedent. Even in our trial of the Nazi criminals, the Nuremberg judges refused to accept "guilt by past association."

On this basis, David Lasser and people like him are eligible and should not be denied employment. In Lasser's case:

A. No one can properly claim that Section 110 C bars Lasser. He is not barred for two reasons: (1) The Workers Alliance never advocated the overthrow of the Government by force or violence; (2) The Workers Alliance, during Lasser's leadership, was simply a labor organization with loyal, liberal views.

B. He is personally and unquestionably loyal.

C. He can make a big contribution to ECA and I understand Mr. Harriman wants him.

I think it is time for us to stop worrying what some individual may say or think, and think of our program and how we justify ourselves to the American people. I should like some assurance that unless I am wrong in my views, a change in the hiring practices will be made by ECA, starting with Mr. Lasser.