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John Leggett
Free Speech Movement Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by
Lisa Rubens
in 2001

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[Interview 1: January 4, 2001]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

Rubens: Let's begin. We're conducting this interview in Palm Springs and today is the fourth of January, 2001. John, how do you identify yourself and where you live now?

Leggett: Well, I live in New Jersey, central Jersey. I live in New Brunswick, Highland Park. I teach at Rutgers University in sociology. So I guess that's about it. Basically greater New York, that's where I live. Greater Manhattan.

Rubens: And you have developed this fondness for Palm Springs and come here often with your wife. Well let's begin the he fall of 1964, you are a full professor in sociology?

Leggett: No.

Rubens: Describe what you were in '64 and then I'd like to hear how you got there.

Leggett: In the fall of 1964 I was an assistant professor in sociology on the Berkeley campus. I had picked up my PhD at Michigan, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in the spring of 1962. I had moved to Berkeley in the summer/fall of 1962. I came on board as an instructor and then after a year, or was it two, I forget, I became assistant professor and I remained such until I left Berkeley in the summer of 1966. I went from there to Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Rubens: As a professor in--

Leggett: As an assistant professor. I think I moved as an associate professor to Simon Fraser University. It might have been assistant, I think it was associate, in the PSA department, political science, sociology, anthropology department. It was lead by Tom Bottomore, really a fine English sociologist, historical sociologist. We put together a very good department and we tried to engineer some changes within the university. We tried to democratize the university and democratize our department and democratize the larger community. For details, see Kathleen Gough Aberle's article in *Monthly Review* plus a more extensive piece by Mordecai Brieniberg, an assistant professor at SFU and a UC Berkeley teaching assistant, who worked with Franz Schurman. Also at UCB, a very smart activist then known as "Mort Brown."

Rubens: Had you been recruited?

Leggett: I had been recruited by Bottomore, yes. I had written a good review, from his point of view, on his fine book called *Elites and Society*. I think that had something to do with it. He liked the review. I liked the book.

- Rubens: And similarly, when you graduated from Michigan, were you recruited or did you seek a job at Berkeley?
- Leggett: It came as a bit of a surprise to me that I might get a job there. I'd been interviewing elsewhere. Then I found out that somebody from Berkeley had approached two people at Michigan, Gerhard Lenski and another person. Gerhard Lenski was the crucial person. And a fellow Lutheran friend of his on the faculty at UC Berkeley had contacted Lenski within the "Lutheran circuit" and said that they were looking for folks and did he have anybody? Lenski passed my name and my resume on to Seymour Martin Lipset and the others in sociology at Berkeley. They looked over my vitae, my publication record and so forth, and they decided to hire me.
- Rubens: Was the competition pretty stiff?
- Leggett: It was stiff, sure. I mean, a lot of people wanted to go to Berkeley, then and now. Four of us, I think, were brought in that fall. Four new people brought in, all white males, as you might guess. So I journeyed from Ann Arbor to Berkeley. It was like traveling to the other side of the universe. The differences between Berkeley and Ann Arbor back in those days were huge, in every possible way. You would think that would not be the case because they're both premier universities. However, just the lifestyle of people--
- Rubens: I'd love for you to talk about that. I would have thought you would also say, not only are they premier universities, but after all, SDS had really gotten its start in--
- Leggett: I'd been one of the founders of SDS. It was actually a set up initially in November of 1959. Of the crucial organizers who were in Ann Arbor, in and around sociology--Al Haber was the guy who had gone to the League for Industrial Democracy people in New York. They'd gone to David Dubinsky of the ILGWU and they had gotten some money from Dubinsky, of all people, to set up SDS.
- Rubens: Why do you say "of all people?"
- Leggett: Because SDS, from the very beginning, had a kind of hang loose anarcho-quality and, by contrast, Dubinsky does not really stand for the principals of anarchism or anarcho-syndicalism. Hardly. Dubinsky, as you probably know, is a good man in the history of American labor, nonetheless a kind of authoritarian.
- Rubens: With the ladies' garments workers?
- Leggett: International Ladies' Garments Workers Union. But the people in ILGWU, nonetheless decided to go with Haber and do something modern and different.

So they gave Haber a fistful of money to do the initial organizing seeding, seed-organizing for what was to become SDS.

So Haber got the brainy idea of organizing a spring conference, spring 1960 conference in Ann Arbor, at the Michigan student center. We brought in--right away he was able to get people to come in. So this is like, December of 1959-- people like Robert Williams, author of *Negroes with Guns*; Haber also brought in the labor secretary of the NAACP, that was Herbert Hill. They brought in people of that caliber for a spring conference in May of 1960. It was a brainy idea, a great idea. He lined up all these people, and then he tried to get people to come but he couldn't sell any tickets. Each one cost, like, ten dollars, you had to pay ahead of time; the conference ticket included a big luncheon, this and that. By January, I was the only person to buy a ticket. What a shocker.

Rubens: No!

Leggett: Yes! Haber was stuck with all those tickets. This is November, December, early January, mid-January, 1960. However, events were to intervene so as to popularize the proceedings. What happened was in the spring, January of 1960, black students in North Carolina, led by SNCC or the forerunners of SNCC, set it up at their conference--no, as their sit-ins.

Rubens: Their sit-ins, the lunch counter--

Leggett: The lunch counter sit-ins. We had been involved in a very similar kind of battle in Ann Arbor. We had stores that were being less than fair to "customers of color." There was one store in State section of Ann Arbor-- that's a student section--where they did not allow black women or mulatto women to try on clothes before buying them. It was strictly thumbs down for the black ones. In the case of lighter skinned black women, mulattos, on occasion they would allow them to try on clothes, on other occasions they would just turn them down cold. That turned off a lot of people. Especially the whole business of on-again, off-again treatment.

So what we did was call the Cousins apparel store. What happened then was we decided to organize a test case treatment of the store. They began to send in young people to try on clothes. They used whites, they used non-whites, they used these blacks, mulattos and so forth. They tried all the different variations. They were able to make a very, very good case, an excellent case against Cousins. Cousins, nonetheless, would not relent. Part of the story was like, the Civil Rights Commission of Ann Arbor had made a case also against Cousins. So we had the goods on them. So we picketed Cousins. We were accused by some of anti-Semitism, but we persisted even though we were publicly assailed as being both Jews and anti-Semites as well as Beatniks and Communists.

- Rubens: When you say we, was there a specific student organization?
- Leggett: We--there's like individuals who had been active in the Socialist Party chapter there. So when I saw this racial discrimination, I brought it to the attention of members of the Socialist Party. Then there were those of us who were in the Socialist Party and in the Schachtmanite crew. Earlier I'd been a member of the Socialist Party and a group called the Socialist Youth League (Trotskyist, Schachtmanite)
- Rubens: YPSL, wasn't it?
- Leggett: No, but related to the YPSL. It was the Socialist Youth League of the Independent Socialist League (Trotskyist), basically a 1940s split-off of the Workers Party, in turn an outgrowth of the Socialist Workers Party, indeed a splinter group from it in 1940. I.S. people have the same roots: SWP and the ISL.
- Rubens: Oh, of I.S.
- Leggett: Yes, that's right. The I.S. people, like Jack, all those guys out of I.S. That's Hal Draper and Ann Draper, and lots of other revolutionary socialists of the Leon Trotsky genre.
- Rubens: When you said Jack, you mean Weinberg?
- Leggett: Yes. All of them came out of that tradition. So there we were. This is like mid-January, 1960. We had called a meeting, Socialists and Schachtmanites, like myself, and others who did not belong to any organization but who were active in civil rights stuff. We all made the decision to call a meeting at this person's home to see how many folks would come to do something active, e.g., to picket a store, the Cousins store. And also to support SNCC demonstrations there in North Carolina. The idea was to picket the Kresge stores, the Woolworth stores, maybe others. We wanted to sound people out, see if we had any support. Well, it turned out that we had a huge turnout. We had called the meeting, bought potato chips and pretzels and so forth for eight, ten, twelve people. The place was packed! Fifty or sixty turned out. It was a real shocker. People came from all over southeast Michigan, with the exception of Detroit. They had their own operation going. That's early spring 1960.
- Rubens: At the same time, Haber's trying to sell tickets for this event that's coming up later--
- Leggett: He's been trying to sell tickets--
- Rubens: And how was the meeting called literally? Word of mouth? Were there--

Leggett: Word of mouth. There were organizer people like Jack Ladinsky, Bob Yamada. Ladinsky later went to Madison to teach, Bob Yamada went to Berkeley to open and to run the Berkeley bookstore, and the local Ann Arbor-rooted socialists into a Socialist Party chapter, with meetings held at his home. This membership came largely from central Berkeley, like Cedar and Shattuck. However, the main impetus for the Socialist Party growth, the Berkeley SP chapter, was centered in south Berkeley, and headed by another superb organizer, Bogdan Denitch, another New Yorker, an able debater and a man whose police dog put one of his canines deep into my thumb. That stunner had taken the chapter battles well beyond the normal polemics.

Rubens: Ladinsky and the Yamadas had moved to Madison later.

Leggett: Yamada had moved to the coast shortly before I did. And as I recall, Jack moved to Madison about the same time I had followed the Yamadas to Berkeley. Mind you, these are but some of the people who were involved in setting up the AA demonstrations of spring 1960. Others included Judy Yesner, Bob Yesner, John Magney, and lots of others.

Rubens: So did some name evolve, or a plan of action?

Leggett: Well, we did not set up a--we did not name any groups because we were all acutely aware of the Joe McCarthy stuff that could come down on us. A lot of us had been hammered, myself included, during the Joe McCarthy period. So we decided not to set up an organization with officers, a treasury, and so forth—so it was called “John Leggett and the Group.” That’s how we got tagged in the local media, including the newspapers. It wasn’t intended that way but we did not want to set up an organization with a name for fear that we would be hauled before HUAC or a Michigan version of HUAC. We wanted to forgo that. We did not keep any notes. We did not keep any meeting records. Although, as it turns out, some people were surreptitiously taking notes and were giving them to the Michigan State Police. That we discovered later on. But there were no formal notes taken.

A lot of us had gone through the fifties and knew that we had to deal with the state police, that we were dealing with the state police and the local red squads and the FBI. So we didn’t want to maximize risks—we wanted to minimize the possibility of our being tagged, records being composed on us, our being hauled before committees and being hammered and lose our jobs, maybe blacklisted. We were acutely aware of what happened to the people in the CP and other organizations during the forties and fifties. A number of left-wing professors, CP professors at Michigan, three of them, had been driven from their jobs in 1954. A lot of us had been involved in trying to defend the three professors, one from pharmacology, a guy named Nickerson, Professor Nickerson, also a guy named Chandler Davis, I think from math, and then there was another guy from one of the hard sciences, you know, biochemistry, something like that. All three of them were fired, just like that, fired. They

moved to Canada—Saskatchewan (Nickerson) and Ontario (Davis). More about that later.

HUAC, federal HUAC, had come into town, Ann Arbor. Somebody from HUAC went to see the president, Harlan Hatcher. He gave Hatcher the names of the three professors about to be subpoenaed for hearings to be held in East Lansing. A professor took the names and announced the three of them had been fired by President Hatcher. That was it. They lost their professorships and they lost their jobs at Michigan. These were tenured professors with immense publication records and so on, just down the tubes. At least two of them went to Canada.

Rubens: To other universities.

Leggett: In Canada. Yes. They had to leave the country, or they felt they had to.

Rubens: One of them, their names--

Leggett: Chandler Davis--

Rubens: --became a--was a big test case, or was part of a test case, I think.

Leggett: Oh, yes. I think that both of them--

Rubens: That went to the Supreme Court.

Leggett: Yes. There was Davis, Nickerson, and the third one. If I heard the name, I'd recognize it.

Rubens: We can get that. Berkeley did have a conference on the Loyalty Oath, looking at people all throughout the--

Leggett: So we had to live through that. And we had tried to do something for them. But our hands were tied, in part because faculty in Ann Arbor didn't have the courage to stand up against HUAC.

Rubens: HUAC literally met in Lansing but reps would come into Ann Arbor and give the names to the president?

Leggett: Yes, that's right. HUAC hearings were scheduled to take place in East Lansing, not Ann Arbor. I think they were afraid to come into Ann Arbor because we had enough people to turn out sizable demonstrations against HUAC in Ann Arbor. It would have been more difficult to do that in East Lansing, the politically moderate site of Michigan State University.

Rubens: You know, John, there are so many threads I want to tie up here, but let have you focus on Berkeley. What ignites Berkeley, not just Berkeley, San

Francisco to the world as a political cauldron is the HUAC hearings. This really aroused the students--that's in May, 1960.

Leggett: Sure.

Rubens: There's a picture. There it is on the cover of Isserman's book. And of course, in January will be the sit-ins in North Carolina and then later will be Port Huron. [added by Leggett: Actually, the UAW summer camps in Port Sanitac, forty miles north of Port Huron, the smaller of the two cities.] But this is the kind of political activity in a local town that is earlier than I've heard of.

Leggett: Yes. It was 1960. We would bring out anywhere from twenty-five to seventy-five, a hundred people for demonstrations. In the downtown area of Ann Arbor. Also in the campus town area, approximately three tenths mile away. I wish I had a map, I could show you precisely where the campus is and where the campus shopping area is on State Street and then further west, maybe a quarter to a half a mile, downtown on Main Street.

Rubens: Maybe what I had better ask before I tighten some of these threads, is how did you get to Michigan? Let's just back up and get a shorter version of what must be a very interesting background already.

Leggett: Yes, well, earlier I--

Rubens: Where were you born, let's begin?

Leggett: I was born in Detroit. I'm a Detroiter. I was born at 99 Owen Street. That was my first address in Detroit. You know, East Grand Boulevard and, what would it be? Like, two blocks, three blocks east of Woodward Avenue, Detroit's main drag.

Rubens: Had your parents married there? Met and married there?

Leggett: Yes. My parents belonged to the Canada Club. Both of my parents came from Canada. My Irish-Scotch mother originally from Quebec, my Scotch-Irish father from Ontario. My Catholic mother had been born in a town called Portage du Fort on the Ottawa River and had moved at a fairly young age to a wool mill town called Renfrew, Ontario. It's on the main highway from Ottawa, Montreal-Ottawa, to the West Coast. Highway 1, it was called. I think it still is. Anyway, she went to Renfrew and then from Renfrew, as a young girl, she moved to Detroit to get training for nursing, to become a nurse in the 1920s.

Rubens: And your father?

Leggett: My Protestant father was born on a farm north, northwest of Toronto, and grew up on a family-owned, yeomanry, 180-acre farm. His father had died in

1916 and the three boys, the three sons sort of drifted, scattered. My dad at age thirteen became a hard-rock miner up in northern Ontario.

Rubens: Did he encounter the miner's union?

Leggett: Yes. That was a left-wing center up there in Kapuskasing and Hearst, places way up north, not too far, in fact, from Hudson Bay. He did hard-rock mining, deep-pit, hard-rock mining as a young kid. And then he got hurt. In fact, he got pneumonia and he picked up some physical injuries, too. The big thing was pneumonia. He went back to Toronto, where his mother had taken up residence in 1916. From there he moved to Alberta. In southwest Alberta, not too far from Lethbridge, he became a migratory farm worker and fell off a harvest wagon, broke his arm, and went back to Toronto. Then from Toronto he went to Detroit, looking for work in the auto industry. Couldn't find work, returned to Toronto, stayed for a couple years. Drove a cab. Then, back to Detroit. He found a job, a series of jobs. He worked for the Ford Motor Car Company in Highland Park. That's the original Ford plant.

Rubens: When is this about, when he gets the job in Detroit?

Leggett: Yes, that's about age twenty, twenty-one. Then he--

Rubens: In the twenties?

Leggett: In the early twenties. They gave him a hard time at the Ford plant and he gave them a hard time. My dad said, "I'm quitting," and the boss says, "You can't quit." So they penalty-transfer him over to the main plant, the Rouge plant, which was a hell-hole. And my dad said, "I'm not going." "You gotta go," said the foreman. "I'm not going," said my dad. So he just walked out of the plant and that was it. He didn't go back for his pay, nothing. He just--he left. But he got a job working for Chrysler Corporation. He got a job at the Dodge main plant in nearby Hamtramc. The Dodge car was made in Hamtramc--that's H-A-M-T-R-A-M-C, weird spelling. So he went from Highland Park, a mile or so west of Hamtramc, to the Dodge main plant, and he made good money. He was working, you know, piece work. Having a wonderful time, in the nineteen-twenties. Young, strong, and he quit there and he went over to a General Motors plant, a GM plant, located half a mile or so away. And that was the Chevrolet Gear and Axle plant. That was a tough plant. It's like hell burned over. But he had a pretty good blue-collar job.

Rubens: Now how do you know the character of these plants? Would he talk about them? They were written up later, of course.

Leggett: Oh, yes. He talked about them, too.

Rubens: And this was vivid?

- Leggett: Vivid stuff.
- Rubens: So you were raised, would you say, in a political household. Did he, had he become--was he trying to organize UAWs?
- Leggett: Well, my father was always pro-Soviet, pro-industrial unions as well, fan of John L. Lewis.
- Rubens: Where did that come from?
- Leggett: He got it from the miners and auto workers. By the late 1920s, he got it from fellow workers from the plant. They would drink beer after the shift at a local "beer garden" and they would talk about the plant, working conditions in Russia, and how workers had a better deal there. They would always debate politics, you know neighbors, relatives, and so on. In the mid-1930s, the UAW came in and it brought with it a publication called "Ammunition," edited by the Communist Lou Capliner, later a labor studies professor at Rutgers University. Also, my dad's union local had a president named Clayton Fountain, also a member of the Communist Party.
- Rubens: And is there a particular ethnicity? He's what? British derived?
- Leggett: We're not British. We're Celts, mainly. Scottish, and Scot-Irish. But in terms of nationality identity, even though he was a Protestant, in terms of derivation, he called himself Irish. So he said that we were Irish.
- Rubens: Was that also commensurate, I'm not sure if that's the right word, but did that also embrace a kind of class consciousness--
- Leggett: Oh, yes, absolutely. You never crossed picket lines. You never scabbed. You never "put down" a "workers' government," like Russia's. You'd back the Soviet Union, come hell or high water. The ethic was basically that of the miners, although he found it difficult to separate class consciousness from anti-Semitism. My dad, without sense, pre-judged Jews as a group, although he had plenty of Jewish friends. Also, he did not discriminate when it came to selecting a doctor, a dentist, a drinking partner, or a family "cousin" who happened to be Jewish. Lots of Irish, Scot-Irish, French people were part-Jewish. Like the Chapmans and the Leggetts!
- Not so much my mother as far as class consciousness was concerned, my mother was kind of passive. Passive like Irish, steady, smart. There are a lot of Irish in Quebec, tons of Irish up there. It's been that way since approximately 1850.
- Rubens: So there's a lot of talk going on in your household. You've had exciting stories--

- Leggett: 1936. My dad was a charter member of the UAW. That's a huge merit badge. For my dad, his family, hence me—the oldest son.
- Rubens: Really?
- Leggett: 1936. That was an incredible period. We're all pulling for the UAW, my dad's Chevrolet local, Russia, John L. Lewis, Roosevelt, socialism, and the New Deal. It was an incredible event. Anyways, they were able to put together the union. We learned a lot. I did, at an early age--how to organize picket lines. How to wear UAW buttons. In 1940, for example--
- Rubens: When were you born?
- Leggett: I was born in 1930, September 1930. In 1940 we organized a strike at our 300-person local school. We shut down the entire school. It was a high school, junior high, elementary, kindergarten school combination, all paid for by Edsel Ford, Henry's son. Isn't that wild?
- Rubens: The school was paid for--?
- Leggett: Yes. Two thirds, at least, paid for by Edsel Ford. He lived in our school district inherited from the French Metis township put in place by the French-Indian settlers during the 18th and 19th centuries.
- Rubens: But a public school?
- Leggett: Public school. His taxes, his gifts, his donations paid for the school, the whole works.
- Rubens: Now, "we shut it down"--who's we?
- Leggett: Well, the kids from the high school, the junior high and the elementary. They had fired somebody who was one of our favorites. They being the board of governors, board of education. We didn't like that. We said, "No, no. You can't do that." So we literally shut down the entire school. We allowed into the building some of the school teachers. They were Republicans, I remember that. Those picket-line crossers were not only allowed to go in. It was better that those "scabs" cross the line and be with one another. Students did not go in. So the scabs talked to themselves.
- [laughs] They were strange birds, so to speak. In our community there weren't that many Republicans. There were some. You could count them on two hands. You know, kind of conservative, really anti-union. And all of us were like barking CIO fighters. We were just full of union stuff.
- Rubens: The new generation?

- Leggett: The new generation. They're class conscious students and the teachers couldn't talk us out of it. They said preach against the union, against the CIO and so on. We stuck to our guns. We shut down that school. We used the old fashioned picket line, which you will see some times in documentaries on Flint and documentaries on Akron, Ohio and the big strikes: the GM plant strike, the Fisher body strike in Flint and the rubber strike, the United Rubber Workers Union in Akron. When they picketed, they would take their hands and put them on the hip of the person in front. So as the person walked, he walked behind like this. In effect, you created a chain to lock people out. People could not go through that line without going over you, going over your arms, which they weren't about to try to do.
- Rubens: Had they not done that, the bosses could have broken the line more easily? This was a strategy--?
- Leggett: Oh, yes. With a non-mass picket, say a token line of three or four, they could just walk through our thin line. In fact the 1947-8 Taft-Hartley Act outlawed our kind of "mass" picket line. Taft-Hartley allowed shadow-picket lines, wimpy lines.
- Rubens: Really?
- Leggett: Yes. Taft-Hartley said that you cannot use that kind of picket line. You have to create a separation amongst a paucity of pickets. Three to four foot distances between pickets. And sometimes, when pickets don't do that, the attorneys for the companies go to the court immediately to get relief, maintaining that people must stay a certain number of feet apart. And no holding on to each other as you picket.
- Rubens: But you kids knew these tactics--
- Leggett: Oh, we knew them cold, yes!
- Rubens: Did you have someone from the UAW, or any other political group, telling you what to do?
- Leggett: No. We used to "watch ourselves" in the movie theaters on the *March of Time*, you know the Henry Luce thing?
- Rubens: Say what the *March of Time* is just for the record.
- Leggett: *The March of Time* was owned by Henry Luce. He owned *Life* magazine. He owned *Time* magazine, and he owned the *March of Time*. The *March of Time* was like a weekly synopsis, a movie of important global news events. Every public theater showed *March of Time*. It was like "The Lone Ranger," every movie theater ran it, often on Saturday.

- Rubens: That was played before the main feature in movies.
- Leggett: That's right. Always with the comics and serials, like "The Three Stooges."
- Rubens: No one watched television then.
- Leggett: That's right.
- Rubens: Hard to believe. So in effect you could watch your parents and your friends and so on doing that kind of thing—like picket. When it came time to do it yourself, you just imitated what you had seen on the movie screens.
- [Tape 1, Side B]
- Rubens: --mean that was part of the culture, to go to the movies pretty regularly?
- Leggett: Oh, yes. It cost five cents for a movie until around 1940. Then the chains raised the admission to ten cents. We figured we could raise a nickel or two for a movie. You know, ten cents--
- Rubens: And, by the way, what was the ethnic makeup of your school? What was the name of your school?
- Leggett: It was called South Lake High School. It was located right at the border of Detroit and Grosse Pointe, at 9 Mile Road and Mack. So there's a big class differential between them and us.
- Rubens: And what would you say about the ethnicity?
- Leggett: Of the group? Let's see. Our group was heavily French-Canadian and heavily-- basically, people who are part Indian and part French (Métis), and on occasion part Irish. But almost always Metis and German. But French-Canadians--we had a number of French-Canadians. These were people sometimes called Métis or Métisse. In the Great Lakes and out west today they're called *Metis*, French-Indian or "half-breed." They were like the original non-white settlers.
- Rubens: Did you think of them as non-white?
- Leggett: No, I didn't. But we were. I just came across a photo of our hockey team recently. This uniformed pick-up team we had--pretty good team. Looked at the names and photos and it was a French-Indian team. I didn't realize it at all while I was playing with them, but that's what we were.
- Rubens: And then plenty of you fair-skinned Irish--

- Leggett: Yes. That's right. We were part French, too. And part Indian, like myself. I'm part Indian and part French. But, I'm not linguistically French. But a lot of them came from families where their grandmothers and grandfathers still spoke French.
- Rubens: Not particularly Italian or black or other Polish ethnic groups? Hamtramc was pretty Polish, wasn't it?
- Leggett: Metro Detroit in general is a very heavily Polish community, and Hamtramc in particular has been Polish. Was and remains. But the Poles were segregated. They were pretty much confined to certain parts of Detroit, and when they did get out into the suburbs, they were confined to certain suburbs, as opposed to others. It's still that way.
- Rubens: So, you're not particularly a part of an organization in high school, but you're politically--you come from a working class--from a family that has organized and knows about organizing.
- Leggett: That's right.
- Rubens: And you go to college right away?
- Leggett: Well, no. When I came out of high school in 1948, I worked in building construction. My dad was in building construction. By that time my dad had gone into building construction. He was a foreman, sometimes the union's chief steward. We worked for big outfits and did big projects, big buildings like hospitals and schools, stuff like that. So I learned how to do concrete work and how to build forms, clean concrete forms, how to do this and how to help the block layers, the brick layers, the folks involved in pouring streets, basements, foundations.
- Rubens: I imagine this is part of the expansion that was taking place after World War II, it had a really steamed up economy.
- Leggett: Yes, absolutely.
- Rubens: And making a decent living?
- Leggett: Yes. All that building was going on. My dad was in charge of the concrete work that went into the constructing of a hospital, a big hospital on Detroit's west side, the U.S. Veteran's Hospital, just off Michigan Avenue, at the border of Dearborn. The hospital is still there. It's a humongous hospital. So he was part of that kind of thing.
- Rubens: And were you in a union?

Leggett: Oh, yes. You had to belong to a union, all of us, just as a matter of course. It was called the International Hod Carriers and Laborers—a corrupt union. In fact, I think it was expelled from the AFL. There's always a lot of stealing going on. But despite all of that, there was a certain amount of militancy, walk-outs, class consciousness, stuff like that. But we--the place where I really learned a lot about class and the like, was when I worked at the Hudson Motor Car Company in Detroit, between 1948 and 1950.

Rubens: That's sort of the next big job?

Leggett: This is the 1940s and early, early fifties. Job record: February 1948-February 1949, worked at odd jobs, like building construction, mowing lawns for the Grosse Pointe rich, Hudson Motor Car body plant (Connor and Gratiot Avenues). February 1949-February 1950, joined the U.S. Navy, got basic training at Great Lakes Naval Station, northern Illinois. A plane pusher and clerk aboard the *U.S.S. Midway*. February 1950-September 1950, worked at the Hudson main plant (Connor and Jefferson Avenues) and did building construction. September 1950, went to college, Central Michigan College in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, where I also worked part-time serving food and washing dishes at a fraternity house.

Rubens: What do you mean that you really learned stuff at Hudson? What did you have in mind?

Leggett: Well, it was a Communist union. A lot of the stewards, chief stewards, had a class point of view. An example was my steward, Alice Lucas of the main plant, we elected her steward not because she was Communist but because she was smart and tough. She really impressed me.

Rubens: This was a local of the UAW?

Leggett: Oh, yes. I believe it was Local 154. They had like, twenty-four, twenty-five thousand members in my Hudson local. Of those, the body plant had about 6,000 of these workers, that was where I had worked in the fall of 1948, and then when I came out of the navy in the spring of 1950, I worked at the UAW Hudson plant on Connor and Jefferson Avenues. In the first plant I did the spot welding. That's what I did there at the Gratiot and Connor Avenues plant. Then I worked during the spring of 1950 at the Hudson main plant, Jefferson and Connor Avenues. The Hudson workers had so many strikes I quit and got a more steady income job elsewhere. I wanted to save money to go to college.

That's what I did. Work on sub-assembly lines feeding the merry-go-round. But the body plant was a hell-hole. It was just hell. The merry-go-round, the same as in the film *Work*. It was all there, all the torches, the noises, all the soldering, and no ventilation. I got sick. My lungs just couldn't take it. Yet I was able to recoup, return, and the moment I began to get back on my feet, I quit and I joined the navy in 1949. I joined the navy for one year and,

automatically, seven years reserve. See, you signed up ahead of time for the one year active duty, seven years inactive. I was a plane pusher on the flight deck of the *U.S.S. Midway* until I got a break and my air officer gave me a job typing in my V-1 division air office located directly below the flight deck and twelve inches of steel.

Rubens: Korea had not broken out?

Leggett: In 1951. They called me back into the navy during the Korean War, but I was able to defer the return. Still, they had called me back. They sent me my shipping papers, my train ticket, my food chits and everything to travel from Detroit to Philadelphia to board the *U.S.S. Kearsarge*, which was in the process of getting re-fitted to go to Korea. Since I had done plane-pushing in the navy earlier, as I mentioned, I was a plane-pusher on the flight deck of *U.S.S. Midway* and I'd seen a lot of people prop-chopped. I wanted nothing to do with it, going back on a carrier. In general, I wanted nothing to do with me going back into the military.

So I made the decision--I was at Central Michigan College at the time, this was like, 1951-52. I made the decision to do what the board of governors at the college wanted me to do. Namely, get out of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan and go to Ann Arbor.

Rubens: Now, did you have a navy stipend at Central Michigan? Or was there some kind of G.I. Bill that let you go to Central Michigan?

Leggett: No. Tuition was only \$90 per semester. And I worked for my meals. Plus I worked during the summers in building construction, and saved lots of money for tuition, books, board, and room.

Rubens: Okay. You just decided--

Leggett: Well, back in those days in Michigan, the schools were, for all intents and purposes, tuition-free.

Rubens: But what made you decide to go to college?

Leggett: All my friends urged me to go.

Rubens: And did many of your friends go straight out of high school?

Leggett: Most did. They had gone straight out of high school. But I sort of putzed around. I worked at construction stuff, I worked in the factories, auto factories, and then I went in the navy.

Rubens: Had you been a good student in high school?

- Leggett: Fair. I did well-- I did very well in the social sciences and I did well in biology and stuff like that. Not so well in chemistry and physics.
- Rubens: I guess I'm trying to ask, could you ever imagine, at that point, that you were going to be a sociologist? Was that on the agenda? College hadn't been--
- Leggett: No, no.
- Rubens: Your parents hadn't been pushing you, particularly?
- Leggett: Well, they told me to get out of the plant.
- Rubens: Okay. So what does it mean to go to Central Michigan? Is that a state college?
- Leggett: It's a state college.
- Rubens: Two years? Four years?
- Leggett: It's a four-year state college and now with a master's program. Central Michigan is in the same category as like, Northern Michigan, Western Michigan, Eastern Michigan--it's like the third tier of education in Michigan. Second tier would be like, Oakland University, Wayne University, Michigan State University, in Central Michigan. State was in Mt. Pleasant, approximately 180 miles northwest of Detroit.
- Rubens: Yes. So that's the third tier? I didn't--
- Leggett: Yes. Mt. Pleasant, Ypsilanti, and Kalamazoo plus the mining campus in Houghton are in the third tier. Central Michigan was in the third layer of Michigan higher education. Michigan State, Oakland University and Wayne University were the second tier. The University of Michigan was on the top tier all by itself.
- Rubens: So, now, you've been there, what? A year? Year and a half? You're drafted, as it were, into active duty.
- Leggett: Well, yes--
- Rubens: And do they now say, "You're a good student. You can get to Michigan, to the university"?
- Leggett: Well, what happened was that I'm there, I'm at Central Michigan in Mt. Pleasant. I'm doing well. I'm getting good grades. I get called up by the navy. I toy with the idea of going to Ann Arbor to do work in East Asian studies. I had already become a devotee of Mao Tse Tung and the Red Army, you know, third world liberation from imperialism and capitalism and all the rest. Still, I

had a kind of Trotskyist criticism of Stalinist organizational strategies, tactics—

Rubens: And where does that come from?

Leggett: That comes out of my anarchism. That comes out of something I picked up at an early age in Detroit, perhaps from my father. I don't know, maybe from school. I believe in revolutionary reconstruction and I also believe in the importance of democratic rights, including the right of self-determination, I guess that comes in part from being Irish.

Rubens: So these kind of words--

Leggett: They always had content for me. People used to fight this stuff out inside the unions. Local sub-sections inside the unions used to debate those things.

Rubens: Did they have you read Mao? Have you read his stuff, but was that available?

Leggett: We had a Detroit Public Library. We could go down to the Detroit Public Library on Woodward Avenue and Warren—a huge, beautiful library! And just go there and pull those books off the shelves!

Rubens: That wasn't particularly unusual, or exceptional, or--?

Leggett: I don't know. I was on top of my class in terms of history and so forth. I was number one. So I felt, as number one, I could do what I wanted to do.

Rubens: Once you were in college? That's where the bug kind of--?

Leggett: Well, no. In high school, too, I did well--

Rubens: In those subjects.

Leggett: In those subjects. And my teachers urged me to go on. Then my friends on the football team, or the hockey team--I was a jock star. I played baseball. I played hockey. I played football.

Rubens: You sound like the all-American boy, that you don't really hear about. The all-American boy can be all this and also have class consciousness and an--

Leggett: That's right. So I did all those things and, "Hey Leggett, what the hell? Why don't you go to college, man?"--a friend of mine--played left tackle on the high school team. Roy Peterson. "Go on to college. You're a pretty smart guy." I used to pass Roy Peterson, the entire class, the entire football team certainly.

Rubens: How are you using "pass," on the way to work?

- Leggett: No, no. Pass them. We'd all take the exam--
- Rubens: Oh! *Pass* them. I get--
- Leggett: Pass them. The teacher, Mr. Forney, would go up there and he'd say, "And the farararah..." "True or false?" I went like this with my pencil, "True." [gestures] "False" is like this. [gestures]
- Rubens: Hands straight up or horizontal--
- Leggett: So then, the football team just scored at the top. And the others, in between, at the bottom--and old man Forney could never figure that one out. But when the other students found out about it, they got pissed! We had moments of laughter around that kind of thing. It worked out so that many of us went on to college. They said "You passed me through my course of history and government and so forth. Why don't you go on and do it? Do what you do best." Social sciences. Okay. So I applied, went to Mt. Pleasant, two years-- then the navy called me up, I thought, Now it's all going down the sewer, 'cause if I go aboard that ship, the *Kearsarge*, God knows what's going to happen. Earlier, aboard the *Midway*--I got put on report, then got a deck court-martial plus five days in solitary confinement. They fed us "piss and punk," water and bread, with regular meals once every three days. I was arrested several times. And I was, in fact, given a court martial. For me that was a real honor badge.
- Rubens: Arrested for--?
- Leggett: Jumping ship. That's the anarchist side of me. I'm like, "I want to go ashore. I'm gonna go to the YMCA and listen to the football game between Notre Dame and Southern Methodist. You can't stop me from doing that. I'm gone! Good bye. I'm outta here!" And I went. But they caught me. And I got a court martial. So I thought to myself later on, "I'm not going to go back to that. No way." So I wrote the navy, up there in U.S. Ninth Naval District, a letter saying, "Look, I've been called up. Here's my call-back. I don't want to go back to the navy. I shouldn't have to go back. Because here I am, I'm a specialist on China. I'm training myself to become a specialist on China. I'm going down to Ann Arbor to further that kind of training. I'll be enrolled in all these courses, Mandarin Chinese, economics, political science. Give me a shot at that. Call me up later on. But for now, give me a break, let me continue my education." So I pleaded with these Ninth Naval District people there in Chicago.
- They wrote back and said, "We will." I was shocked. The navy gave--the Ninth Naval District--gave me a break. They gave me a break. So sure enough, in September 1952 I went down to Ann Arbor. In fact, I had been *told* to go there by the Michigan Board of Education for those four state colleges that I mentioned earlier, because they saw me as a Red troublemaker. They

said, "Go on down to Ann Arbor, that's where all the Reds are!" [laughs] That's what I remember. The four-member board actually said to me—we, the four "Reds," went to one of their meetings in Lansing in order to raise holy hell about their barring us from doing this and doing that on campus, passing out leaflets, stuff like that. In return I get, "Why don't you guys go down to Ann Arbor. That's where all the Reds are," and, "The other--you other three, the same thing." So I said, "What the hell? Why not?" So I went down to Ann Arbor--

Rubens: You finish your undergraduate--

Leggett: Altogether, two years Mt. Pleasant, two years Ann Arbor. I finished my undergraduate work by May 1954. Then I decide to go on and get a master's in poli sci. I got a B.A. in poli sci. A master's in poli sci (1956)--well, I combined it with work in East Asian studies. I'd gotten a Ford Foundation Fellowship (1954). Later, I got an SSRC [Social Sciences Research Council] grant to do my doctoral dissertation, 1960-1962. As a senior, I got the Ford fellowship. Began to apply myself systematically to East Asian studies during my first year in graduate work in Ann Arbor. So, this is like, 1954, '55--doing grad work, poli sci. But I thought poli sci--I learned how poli sci was really a fake field. A phony baloney field--that they had a misconception of how the world really operated and that they didn't have any kind of class analysis that I could see.

Rubens: What was the analysis they focused on, is that--pluralism, consensus--?

Leggett: Pluralism, consensus, yes. Plural as the model. I never came across a community that was organized around consensus. I had lived in corrupt communities where people were just bought and sold, right? I had lived in places like greater Detroit where consensus-making was anything but the basis for organizing politics in the community. Just like, you know, class struggle, man. Detroit, there's no messing around. So there are winners and losers. A kind of social Darwinist reality with a lot of Marxist day-to-day living and--

Rubens: So you couldn't--

Leggett: I couldn't. So I transferred over to sociology, which made a lot more sense. More and more sociologists were into varieties of materialism, sometimes like social Darwinist materialism, mixtures of social Darwinism and Marxism. I felt better.

Rubens: Could you just mention some of the names you might have read then?

Leggett: Oh, yes. The people I read were like, Leslie White, the anthropologist. His book on evolution of culture. Marshall Sahlins, Elman Service, David and Kathleen Aberle, plus Bad Sharp, Lionel Wishneff, Ronald Friedman, Guy Swanson, Amos Hawley, and my mentors, Garland Lenski and Werner

Landecker. Eric Wolfe. *Europe and the People without History*, Robert E. Ward and James K. Melsel of poli sci. And in my department, people like Guy Swanson and Harold Wilensky, they eventually went to Berkeley. I read Phillip Selznick's stuff and--

Rubens: So there's a language of--

Leggett: But mainly we read people like Marx, you know. On our own. In class, Bon Angel's and Harold Wilensky's classes, we read Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel's work, *The Inter-industry's Propensity to Strike*, which is basically a modification of Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, it sort of is. It's a smart piece of theory and data. Yes. Clark Kerr and Siegel. It can be found in a book called *Industrial Conflict* by Art Kornhauser, William Kornhauser's father.

Rubens: Do you drop out of the East Asian studies?

Leggett: Well, I still maintain an interest in East Asian stuff. But I got out of it like in 1956, '57, in part because people like myself were really getting hammered. You know, just could not get jobs. If you got jobs, you couldn't keep the jobs. You never knew when HUAC or some local Joe McCarthy Jr. was going to pass through town and call you up and read the Riot Act to you. Remember Owen Lattimore.

Rubens: So that kind of brings us back to where we started.

Leggett: So I shifted, in a way, from East Asian stuff over to statistical, sociological statistical work, which I'm good at (Oxford University Press published one such work, *Class, Race & Labor*). I'd become like a neo-Marxist logical positivist, if that makes any sense. [laughs]

Rubens: Stretch it out, explain it--because I think in the future--

Leggett: Okay, a neo-Marxist in the sense I was sufficiently, I am sufficiently broad in terms of what I entertain, what I read and what I use to work in ideas of people like Wilhelm Reich and people like Sigmund Freud—great antecedents for the materialist wing of the Frankfurt school: Adorno, Elsa Frankel-Brunswick, and the like.

Rubens: These are the logical positivists?

Leggett: No, these are people who have worked, themselves, with the logical positivists. But people like Gerhard Lenski, they did use logical positivist work--

Rubens: That's who you worked with, is that right?

- Leggett: That's right. He was my boss. Yes. And Ronald Friedman and Werner Landecker, and Bud Sharp, and Samuel Eldersveld, as well as Guy Swanson, Tad Blalock.
- Rubens: Yes. But would you just explain what logical positivism means.
- Leggett: What that means is you lean politically towards those who have power. You lean towards them, basically for them, number one. Number two, in doing so, you use mathematics. You use numbers, you use quantification. You quantify data. You quantify reality as a way to gather information that could be used in relation to your broader theoretical notions. The guy who did a lot of advocacy on this was August Conte, and see Herbert Marcuse on that one.
- Rubens: Now, was Marcuse--?
- Leggett: He was definitely not a logical positivist. Marcuse did a book called *Reason and Revolution* where he takes apart both Conte and logical positivism.
- Rubens: That was already out before he came?
- Leggett: Well, Marcuse's book *Reason and Revolution* came out about this time. So Marcuse, in fact, really spends a lot of time discussing what logical positivism means. In the process, he debunks it. In fact, it's the best explanation I've ever seen. *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse. See the section on the "culture" of logical positivism. Those two things. If you lean towards authority, you stop chewing it up, you stop criticizing authority, you stop bitching about authority. You stop treating it dialectically in some kind of Hegelian way, but always pointing toward the system, moving towards its own self-destruction. It's like trying to reconstruct reality in good, essentially good, positive scientific ways. You help it with the scientific method, with scientific data.
- Rubens: Isn't that the part that the New Left came to challenge?
- Leggett: Oh, yes. Sure did.
- Rubens: And you are saying that you had part of that but the Marxists went against the idea--Marxism would lead you against the idea of reconstructing it or making it better. Capitalism can't be restructured, for it is inherently self-destructive?
- Leggett: The Marxists would say that you should go with the dialectic, the destruction of the extant order with the intent of rebuilding--reconstructing reality into something much, much better than what we have--
- Rubens: I'm asking you because this is a discussion that we should drop pretty soon, but I think it's going to be important when you talk about coming to Berkeley and how you observe what is going on in the sociology department. Seems to me there were few departments that were as ravaged, as divided about

ideology and the meaning of academia. Although I know more about the political science department so I sort of understand those terms, not in sociological terms. That's why I'm just--

Leggett: Herbert Blumer was a part of the humanist left tradition. Herbert Blumer from Chicago.

Rubens: I don't know him.

Leggett: He became chair of sociology in the 1950s, early sixties. He tried to recruit people of socialist, you know, left-wing background, so as to escape those barren logical positivist department constructions of the sort that had become the case in places like University of Washington, Seattle in the 1930s, forties, fifties, places like the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Rubens: Maybe this is going the wrong direction and I'll leave it with this one question. In political science, there was going to be, by '62, the great split between the econometrician and the theory--

Leggett: Yes.

Rubens: --and it seemed that that also fell along political lines as well. Although Selznick was both sociology and political science. So that's why I wanted to just get a picture of why there were no political science people that drew you-- that somehow, in the field of sociology, may have--names you mentioned.

Leggett: Some did draw me, like James K. Meisel and Robert E. Ward. Also at Berkeley, there was James Petras. He really impressed me. James Petras was in poli sci at Berkeley. He was a grad student there. In fact, I was on his doctoral thesis committee. He graduated with his B.A., I think, in '61 or '62, and he was in the process of becoming a leading figure on Latin American studies. He thought in terms of class analysis, of actors, and as they went about trying to revolutionize places like Cuba, places like Chile. So the units of analyses were basically those of class and state, and the object of analysis was to point towards how the laboring classes were inventing social movements to dissolve the old order and to create something totally fresh and new. Conte would not have liked Petras' analysis.

Rubens: That's Sahlins, right?

Leggett: And that was also James Petras.

Rubens: All right, I get that. Now, at what point do you--do you literally join the International Socialists, the young--

Leggett: Oh, I joined them when I was--that was in 1951. I joined them when I was a sophomore in college. I was recruited by William Friedland, a Trotskyist shop

steward at the Detroit Chrysler Main Plant, right across from the Hudson Main Plant. Later he got his Ph.D. and taught at Cornell and UC Santa Cruz. He did a fabulous book on revolutionary theory called just that.

Rubens: Once you had gone to Central Michigan.

Leggett: I joined them one summer. I think it was the summer of 1951, '51 I joined them.

Rubens: And is there a story--we haven't gotten to Berkeley! Is there a story--

Leggett: In 1950-51 I joined the Student League for Industrial Democracy, SLID. James Farmer was then the secretary, the roving secretary, the roving organizer for SLID. And a good organizer, really a fine organizer.

Rubens: Now, how central or influential or important are these two organizations to you at that moment?

Leggett: Very important. From SLID I got some of the ideas of John Dewey and some of the ideas of the Democratic left out of New York, primarily. And at the same time, I got a lot of the ideas on Trotsky on the necessity for continuation of world revolution.

Rubens: And that's out of the Socialists Youth League?

Leggett: And its parent organization, the Independent Socialist League, people like Butch Miller, B.J. Widick, Al Nash, and our foremost fellow traveler, C. Wright Mills. Also, people like Hal Draper, who later went on to UC Berkeley, as a librarian. So Draper used to write for our publications, as did Ann Draper. Ann was--like Eleanor and Franklin, right? It's hard to separate the one from the other, in terms of their contributions.

Rubens: Where were they literally living? Were they in Michigan?

Leggett: Well, Hal and Ann came originally, I think, from New York City, pretty sure. And they set up shop in Berkeley.

Rubens: Okay, so not in Michigan. I knew they were in Berkeley but I didn't know if there had been a stopover. And would you--I mean, just to evoke what this is. The New Left is going to be a non-organizational movement. People aren't--

Leggett: The idea was to get away from those organizations--

Rubens: And so, I'm wondering if you could just illustrate. Did you go to a lot of meetings? Did you spend a lot of time? You're a student, you have obligations. I don't think you have your fellowship yet. Maybe you were

working some, but you're now part of two organizations. Did that occupy a lot of time?

Leggett: Oh, it sure did. Yes. But we felt that was important. In the 1950's, we did a lot of organizing around the rights of workers in Budapest, the rights of workers in Berlin--people who were being hammered by the Communist totalitarians. I hate to use that cliché, *totalitarian*, for a number of reasons--the Communists, cause I don't want to Red-bait them. I don't want to say that all Communists did bad work. A lot of Communists did excellent work and you can't take that away from them. In fact, you want to salute them for the good work that they have done over the decades. But a lot of us felt that the Communist movement had erred terribly in Budapest in 1956, and had done the same thing in Berlin in 1953. We organized a group called the Political Issues Club in Ann Arbor. Political Issues Club to address these and like fiascos.

Rubens: Now you're in Ann Arbor.

Leggett: This is earlier. This is 1955, '56, '57.

Rubens: So you remain in these organizations, SYL and SLID, when you go to--there's another chapter that you're part of?

Leggett: Well, see, these are like proto-New Left organizations. Especially the Political Issues Club, set up in 1955-56. Al Haber, for example, comes out of the Political Issues Club. I think that--what's his face? The guy from Ann Arbor who went on to become an assemblyman from Santa Monica.

Rubens: Yes, sure--who married Jane Fonda.

Leggett: Yes, yes.

Rubens: Tom--

Leggett: Tom Hayden. Yes. He was in the Political Issues Club. We had about seventy or eighty people, loosely defined as members. We were all in the Political Issues Club. And that was like a proto-New Left formation. It really was. What can you say? It didn't have any particular ideology. It was open. It had a wide-open membership.

Rubens: But you're talking about issues like Budapest, Berlin.

Leggett: Always. Always workers' issues.

Rubens: I'm trying to just get--so, okay, '55, '57.

Leggett: Events in Cuba, too, that were extremely important for us.

Rubens: Yes. Oh, I bet. Did you go to Cuba?

Leggett: No, I didn't go to Cuba. But a lot of people in the Political Issues Club belonged to a group called Fair Play for Cuba. They went. People like John Erfurt, plus his militant black buddy, Will Gurley. I liked both of them. They became followers of Bert Cochran, another independent "Trot." Editor of *The American Socialist*, a pretty good socialist journal. Then there was Marty Glaberman and his wife, plus Seymour Faber, both Trots and followers of the great black West Indian revolutionary, C.L.R. James, and that Detroit-centered revolutionary contingent involved in west side Black club organizing. You can see how I lived in a sea of Trots! That included James Boggs and Grace Lee, but most importantly, Seymour and Marty and Marty's neighbors, James and Grace.

Tape 2

Leggett: --in Ann Arbor, in the middle fifties, we could picket and we did picket. We knew how to do all those things because of the training a lot of us had gotten between 1935 and 1950.

Rubens: Now, were you older than some of these people?

Leggett: I'd say two to five years older.

Rubens: Yes. Not much. I would love to spend more time on this but, actually, that's where we started, about '59. Where Al Haber is trying to set up this speaking event about "the Negro issue" and--

Leggett: Yes, yes--Robert Williams--

Rubens: And then in the meantime, what takes hold? Is it some of these Political Issues Club people who are interested in picketing against the discriminated hiring-- not hiring, the, really for women, changing--

Leggett: Yes. That kind of stuff. The question became one of tactics. Do we hammer the local liberals when they don't show any courage or do we sort of ignore some of the things that are happening. For example, the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission should have really gone after the Cousin's store. But they, the Human Rights Commission, did not because on that commission was a guy who was a manager from the campus Kresge store. The Kresge store people were saying, "Look, we're doing our thing. We made a contribution. Our manager is giving our company time to the Human Rights Commission here in Ann Arbor, doing valuable work for black people. And you want to put up bigger picket lines at this place around the corner from the Cousins store? You want to picket us, you say? How could you picket us when our manager is on the Human Rights Commission?" So we got caught up in all that kind of stuff.

- Rubens: So the Human Rights Commission wasn't a product of Kennedy?
- Leggett: No, this is before Kennedy. The Human Rights Commission comes out of the late forties, early fifties--comes out of the "Soapy Williams as governor" period in Michigan history.
- Rubens: I guess it's true in California, too. It comes out of Brown's era. So it's a state phenomenon and a liberal Democrat--
- Leggett: So we, in Ann Arbor, we split on the whole question of how far should we go? Should we begin to hammer the local liberals? Say, "To hell with it, we're supporting SNCC." SNCC says we should picket all the Niesner, Kresge, Woolworth's stores and so forth. Where was SNCC? But then some of the locals were saying, "No"--our people saying, "No, you can't do it." The assemblyman from southern California, who just stepped down--I just forgot his name that we said a few seconds ago--Jane Fonda's husband--
- Rubens: Oh,--Hayden. Tom Hayden.
- Leggett: One reason why I have a hard time with Tom Hayden's name is Hayden played a somewhat negative role during this period.
- Rubens: Well, why don't we do that. Because you've said he's always a--he and there's one other guy who's name now I can't say, was thought to be the leading force behind--
- Leggett: Yes. He, Al Haber, was much more important.
- Rubens: Yes, and one other one. Who was the sociologist? He was at Berkeley for many years, and he wrote *The Whole World is Watching*. He's now at NYU.
- Leggett: Oh, I know who you're talking about.
- Rubens: Todd Gitlin?
- Leggett: Todd Gitlin, yes. Well, Todd Gitlin was not that big. The big guy was always Al.
- Rubens: And so you know these people. You're--
- Leggett: Oh, yes. Okay, Hayden was like a fraternity boy, like a moderate, informed, intelligent fraternity person. He was the editor of the *Michigan Daily* and he was editorially in favor of progress and change on human rights and civil rights. Those are his categories or their categories, progress, change, human rights and so forth, fine. When we really began to go after "the chains" in the spring of 1960, Hayden came to us and he said, "If you guys decide tonight (it was a Friday night, a big meeting) to continue your picketing of the stores (the

chain stores—I think it was one Woolworth store, two Kresges, plus the Cousins store) the *Michigan Daily* is going to have to withdraw it's support for you guys." So--

Rubens: Why?

Leggett: Why? Because he thought that we were being unfair. We were being unjust. We were going too far.

Rubens: And reiterating the line that you had just mentioned earlier, what the human rights people had said.

Leggett: Yes, exactly. So we talked about it that night. We said, "We're going to go ahead with the picketing anyways. That's it." So we stuck with it and we went out and like, ten or eleven people were arrested. Those people were steady, quiet, but militant. We would have been sunk without them. At the time, the cops came down on us and they began to arrest people who were picketing outside the stores. That caused quite a controversy. A lot of parents flew to Ann Arbor to get their kids out of the action. The parents had known too many people burned by activism, then deserted when the police and Joe McCarthyism came down on them. In Ann Arbor, when the police arrest students it causes deep concerns amongst administrators, amongst the faculty, amongst leading members of churches, parents, and so forth. They began—"What the hell's happening?" Still it turned out that the media were basically either neutral or with us during this period. They did not favor the notion of harassing us for our passing out leaflets. As I recall, too, we were able to get a court order that made it quite legal to pass out leaflets but illegal for the cops to bust us for passing out leaflets.

Rubens: One more clarity--why did the media support you?

Leggett: Why did they support us? I think because we were--I say, support us in the sense that they did not really hammer us, did not really come down on us, as had been going on during the Joe McCarthy period. I think police and the media had changed somewhat. They believed they blew it. This was kind of like a post-Joe McCarthy thing. They did not see us as Reds. They defined us as people who wore suits, white shirts and ties.

Rubens: Which you did.

Leggett: Which we did, yes.--that we were basically okay. That was what we tried to say. And often that is how many media people and some police saw us.

Rubens: This had nothing to do with what would become the great Detroit paper strike?

Leggett: No, that's different, much later (1995-96).

- Rubens: I just wondered.
- Leggett: So, anyways, we got this powerful lawyer in Detroit. I remember him coming into Ann Arbor from the American Civil Liberties Union centered in nearby Detroit. He drove into Ann Arbor, joined us, and then he got into the basement of the police station, jumped up on top of a table, and gave this marvelous speech for freedom of expression, freedom of First Amendment rights--just blew people away, the police and the reporters included. And, talk about a charismatic figure sort of carrying the day. He did. He was very tell, articulate, and forceful.
- Rubens: Do you know his name?
- Leggett: I could find out.
- Rubens: It will probably come to us.
- Leggett: His name is in the *Michigan Daily*--I'm sorry, in the *Ann Arbor News*. We should use its archives—spring 1960.
- Rubens: Did you know Dave Wellman, too, by the way?
- Leggett: Oh, yes. I knew Dave.
- Rubens: He's one of the people I've interviewed. So, between the two of you we can--
- Leggett: So, in the *Ann Arbor News*, it had his name.
- Rubens: But, you said so, here this was really a successful picket and Hayden was willing to--
- Leggett: Hayden backed away. However, the moment eight or nine people got busted, within hours, he reversed himself, within hours of the arrest. Friday night, he said, "If you guys decide to have those demonstrations, the *Daily*, the *Michigan Daily* is going to withdraw its support." Saturday, the arrests occur. By Sunday night, two things have happened. One, the *Michigan Daily* had opted in favor of the administration, in favor of the owners and against us. And then, shortly thereafter, hours thereafter, he reversed himself again. So, first of all, he's with us, then he's against us, and then he came back for us, all happening within seventy-two hours. Wild.
- Rubens: Do you end up seeing this as characteristic--you didn't hold just this against him, was this characteristic of his politics? Or did--?
- Leggett: With this--
- Rubens: --particular--?

- Leggett: --“Wow, who is this dude?” You know. Those of us in the Socialist groups never saw much of him before. Still people have the right to change. I think he changed afterwards.
- Rubens: What I was going to get to--I’m looking for the date of when SDS-- the Port Huron statement is written—
- Leggett: Port Huron, it’s in the summer of 1962. But the precursors were already in motion in November, December of 1959, with Al Haber in charge.
- Rubens: You’re talking about this--the reason I’m getting to this Port Huron statement is that there are some very specific statements about, “We are non-ideological, we are non- I don’t know if they say sectarian, but-- we’re not organizationally oriented.” There’s something there where they really are rejecting David Dubinsky and the LID as their sponsor.
- Leggett: Yes.
- Rubens: And I thought, that’s again where Hayden played in. But maybe you’re telling me that Hayden really isn’t that important by ‘62. Haber is the one who is really--
- Leggett: I think a lot of us were afraid of being tagged by the FBI, by the attorney general, and so forth, as Reds, and being hauled before committees and being driven up against the wall, as it happened to people like Wellman’s father, for example. I mean we--
- Rubens: Sure. A known Communist party organizer was jailed.
- Leggett: That’s right. A lot of people like that from Michigan. We just didn’t want to go that route.
- Rubens: David Wellman’s case is clear, he never joined an organization, didn’t join the left groups until much later.
- Leggett: Yes.
- Rubens: Well, should we then--so you, when Port Huron takes place you’re literally out in Berkeley. But you’re in these precursors. These kind of splits are going on. What is SLID doing at this point? ‘59, ‘60, when you left--
- Leggett: Student League for Industrial Democracy. I joined SLID in 1951.
- Rubens: Yes. I have this.
- Leggett: I joined the SYL at almost the same time. And SLID is--we’re organizing chapters of SLID, we organized a chapter of SLID at Central Michigan

College in the very early 1950s when James Farmer was the field secretary. And we organized a chapter of SLID in Ann Arbor, too, again when Farmer was the field secretary of SLID and a member of LID. He would just jump in his Kaiser-Fraser vehicle back to Manhattan, then move out to campuses like Mt. Pleasant and Ann Arbor, stop for four or five days, speak before classes, then jump in the same car, and off he'd go to the next town, e.g. Chicago; wherever he went, he'd sleep on the couch, a vacant bed, sometimes the floor. He was a charismatic organizer, a fantastic speaker, and a friend of the FSM. Once he even quit what he had been doing in St. Louis and flew at my telephone request to Bancroft and Telegraph to defend the FSM people who had just been arrested. Clark Kerr then tried to get Farmer to cancel his speech and address everyone at the Greek Theatre. Farmer replied he would rather speak directly to the issue: the violation of FSM First Amendment rights and that he did not want to use the majestic Hearst stage, but from planks mounted atop garbage cans set up next to the rear end of our truck parked at Bancroft and Telegraph. People could not say enough kind words about James Farmer for doing what he did when he did it. Back in those days there were few people with his stature willing to defend the FSM.

SLID is working with Students for Democratic Action in Ann Arbor, 1953, '54, '55.

- Rubens: Did you ever go to any international conferences? Peace conferences, or--?
- Leggett: No. I was hesitant to do any of that stuff because, at the time, you know, people like Paul Robeson, who had gone to international conferences--
- Rubens: --weren't let back in.
- Leggett: --back in the country. And people in the unions, left-wing union people, e.g. from the Ford Rouge plant, they were--they had gone to the Soviet Union and couldn't get back in the country, couldn't get their jobs back as a consequence. So I thought, "This is crazy!" Why should I go run off to wherever it is and attend a conference out of the country for four or five days and then suffer all those terrible consequences afterwards?
- Rubens: Sure. Some of the FSMers, Jackie Goldberg, I'm thinking of, and maybe Carey McWilliams, their belonging--they're, I guess, enough younger, a little bit younger, that they are joining National Student Association, and Jackie is part of a--like, the Women's League for International Peace and Freedom. So they do go to some student, youth organizations. But of course, they do not have the kind of background that you do. There's no tinge--I'm wondering if we should say anything more about the immediate political activities that you're engaged in in '60, '61. Do those speakers come? Does Robert Williams come up?

Leggett: Oh, they come up! And the conference is an immense success. An immense success! I'd seen Herbert Hill speak a number of times. Maybe you've seen him? He can be so--he's still around. He and Robert Williams can be so effective, brilliant, marvelous.

Rubens: And was the focus of this--?

Leggett: Around civil rights in the South. And the difference was between the approach calling for nonviolent, civil disobedience, as opposed to the right to engage in armed self-defense. That was the crux of the debate that weekend. With Robert Williams taking the podium and pointing out in his book *Negroes with Guns*, that people have the right to engage in armed self-defense, that protecting yourself from whoever when the law will not protect you. Armed self-defense is as American as apple pie. That's what he said, and he's absolutely right.

Rubens: He was. But no one heard that until the Black Panthers came along (1965).

Leggett: Well, the Deacons for Self-Defense, there in Louisiana, were also talking about that, too (1963). And they were black. They were black militants engaged in armed defense of, basically, white civil rights workers and James Farmer in Louisiana in 1963, '64.

I have a great story on that one. Farmer had been in Louisiana organizing, speaking. And at the moment, he was in an all-black church, when Klan people broke into the church and insisted that the blacks point out Farmer to the Klan members. The black crowd remained quiet. Nobody would point out Farmer, who was standing there in the midst of the black/white crowd. So the Klan left. The question then became, how would Farmer get out of the church and then escape to the airport to catch the next flight to New York City? The answer was to use "casket delivery." The black activists got a casket, Farmer got in the casket, a hearse arrived at the church, Farmer, now in the casket and a little shaken, was then carried to the hearse, it then proceeded to the airport, arrangements were made for the flight of casket/Farmer to wing it to New York City, and freedom. And that's how Farmer got out of Louisiana, either in 1963 or '64.

He told me this story, and I told it to my classes at Berkeley, whereupon several dozen of my Berkeley students—right in the middle of the semester—from one class, flew to Louisiana, did approximately what Farmer had done, then winged it back to Berkeley and lectured my class (the same one) on their story there in Louisiana. How's that for student participation in a social movement? Off the wall! They--that's before the Panthers. That's like, two years before.

Rubens: And Williams is a--even before then. Yes. So there's a huge debate. I didn't really realize it.

- Leggett: Oh, yes. There was a big debate and Robert Williams is the guy who led the battle within the ranks of the NAACP. He had been the secretary of the Monroe County, North Carolina chapter of the NAACP. When he began to say those kinds of things and above all, the time he picked up the gun out of the trunk of his car and turned to this white lynch mob and said, out on this North Carolina highway, they pulled him over and so on, "You guys can get me, but I'll take four, five, ten of you with me!" He was a former marine and he had this carbine in the trunk of his car. He takes out the carbine and says, "Okay, go ahead. Come and get me, you guys. But your arms won't be able to protect the lot of you." And that was it. He recalls the confrontation in a trade textbook I used at UC Berkeley, *Negroes with Guns*, published in New York City by Marzani and Munsell.
- Rubens: Now, he's the losing voice for that period, though, isn't he? I mean, King-- well, of course there were all these controversies about King's march on Washington in '63.
- Leggett: Yes, that's right. And by '65--
- Rubens: --him usurping, what I mean is him usurping local community plans--
- Leggett: Stokely Carmichael, by 1965, Stokely Carmichael is advancing a position not too different from Robert Williams'.
- Rubens: Is he talking about guns?
- Leggett: Oh, yes. Sure. Armed self-defense. And also by '63, '64, Malcolm X is advancing a position very similar to that of Robert Williams.
- Rubens: Does Williams become a nationalist?
- Leggett: I guess you could say that he was. But he stressed more the importance of people internationally pulling together to fight--stop racism and carry on the anti-colonial struggle by whatever means are necessary at the moment, which is a position not too different from that taken by W.E.B. Du Bois. Although, Du Bois does not get into the whole question of armed struggle as necessity. He stays away from that. Du Bois position, however, is not too different from that of Robert Williams, from that of Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X.
- Rubens: I see that lineage.
- Leggett: They're all together, basically, and their points of view are being used to question the dominant position, which is that of Martin Luther King. King's position, however, comes under close scrutiny within the broader movement, especially after 1965, the summer of '65 in Chicago, where it's quite obvious that the nonviolent approach favored by King would not carry the northern cities--would not carry Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee and so on--Cleveland.

- Rubens: It's not particularly in step with the wild times.
- Leggett: King had no chance in hell of carrying the day in those big northern cities like Chicago and Detroit. People are fed up, too. So many blacks being killed and the U.S. Department of Justice doing less than what it might have done to protect them or to punish their Klan-like assassins, the--
- Rubens: --the perpetrators.
- Leggett: --the ones responsible, the perpetrators.
- Rubens: This background and lateral information is so fascinating. It's hard to move on with that. But I am going to by saying, so that convention, that meeting is a success.
- Leggett: It's a huge success. It's a marvelous success. A massive turnout. Al's strategy had triumphed. And in the fall of 1960 we get back to picketing in Ann Arbor and Detroit. And then in the fall of 1960 and in the spring of '61, we continue to picket and demonstrate, moving some of our activities into a somewhat broader confine. That was southeastern Michigan. We began to see ourselves as a southeast Michigan social movement for change.
- Rubens: What does southeast--?
- Leggett: Campus activities at Albion College, at Eastern Michigan, for example, as well as Ann Arbor.
- Rubens: But looking to the universities, seeing them as sites for organizing--
- Leggett: Seeing the University of Michigan as a center, the centerpiece. And also bringing in the Committee on Racial Equality, CORE comes in.
- Rubens: I wanted to ask you--
- Leggett: CORE is coming in. Fall, 1960. All of us favored CORE coming in. CORE came in little by little in the spring, summer of 1960. By the summer of 1961, CORE is the big group, the big group in Ann Arbor, big group in Detroit. The summer of 1961.
- Rubens: Do you also belong to CORE?
- Leggett: Oh, yes.
- Rubens: Everyone joined CORE, really.
- Leggett: Everyone, all the Ann Arbor civil rights people, joined CORE. We all joined CORE. Although nobody had any records. You paid dues idiosyncratically.

Still, the formal structure of the organization, insofar as we had one, the organization was that of CORE. There was a southern CORE person named Ann Holden, an activist, a sociologist, a good organizer, and a student of U of M. She became like, the head honcho of Ann Arbor regional CORE. Holden. She came from the South. I think she came from Tennessee. She and a guy, a political sidekick, named Jack Ladinsky, a Michigan grad student, later a sociology faculty person at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Jack was a steady person, a good organizer, a conscientious person.

Rubens: Yes, I saw that name.

Leggett: University of Wisconsin. Ladinsky and Ann Holden and Robert Yamada, and Masako Yamada--

Rubens: The ones you mentioned earlier?

Leggett: Yes. Bob and Masako and their two baby children went to Berkeley and organized the Berkeley Bookstore co-ops here at Cedar Avenue and Shattuck.

Rubens: These were the CORE people?

Leggett: Yes. They had moved over into CORE. All of us did. But by the--and in the fall of '61, I had to pull back. I was doing my Ph.D. dissertation.

Rubens: Well, that's what I wanted to get to, because you're going to go to Berkeley in the fall of '62.

Leggett: Yes. I'm working like mad. I had gotten a grant from the SSRC. Social Science Research Council gave me a big wad of money to take off a year to gather data and to write my dissertation.

Rubens: And your dissertation was--?

Leggett: Working-class consciousness in Detroit. So we did a study of 375 blue collar workers in Detroit. Out of it came my dissertation and a professionally well reviewed book called *Class, Race and Labor*, published by Oxford University Press. So we did that as well in the spring of 1961--I'm sorry, fall of '61, spring of '62. The project's directors included Karel Cibulka, a Czech, Prague political activist, and his wife, Marge Beth, a U of M student. Her father was a West Dearborn M.D.

Rubens: You had talked about that sort of networks that probably recruited you to Berkeley, mainly through Lenski.

Leggett: Lenski, yes, the north German, Lutheran, network. A good bunch.

- Rubens: Which I now know, you're not Lutheran. But at the time I was going to ask you.
- Leggett: When young, my sister had been a Lutheran, and I had played hardball—catcher—for a Lutheran church team back during the late 1940s and I was to discover that there were lots of good Lutherans. [laughs] I used to laugh at Lenski for being a Lutheran, but he was a good enough guy. Lenski was one hell of a sociologist. he wrote *Power and Privilege*, a classic, published in 1966 by McGraw-Hill. It's a powerhouse book used by a lot of us since it first came out.
- Rubens: Now why were you hired as an instructor?
- Leggett: Well, that was Lenski's idea, and a good one. The idea was to get more time to fit in at Berkeley, more time to do my publications, more time before being considered for tenure. So that was worked out pretty much between Lenski and this guy who taught at Berkeley, before I went to Berkeley.
- Rubens: Did we say who the Berkeley person was?
- Leggett: No, but I will think of his name in a while. And also, Lipset wanted to recruit me because Lipset had found out about my ties with the Socialist Party, the Schachtmanites and so forth. That was a big plus for Lipset.
- Rubens: Why is that?
- Leggett: Well, Lipset had belonged to the Socialist Party. He did Socialist research. His research on Saskatchewan, for example, and the co-ops up there in the Canadian Commonwealth Federation, the CCF--his book on that, classic on that. Came out of his attachment, identification with the Socialist movement.
- Rubens: And you, of course, you knew his work?
- Leggett: I knew his major work, yes. And I was glad to be able to go there. And Herbert Blumer, of course, Blumer was not only a lefty in many ways, but he was a professional football player. He had played for the Chicago Cardinals while he was teaching at the University of Chicago. Hard to believe, but he wore two hats. He wore the helmet and the hat! Blumer was the chair of Berkeley sociology, and the premier writer on social movements at that time. I still use his stuff, as I do Lipset's, Lenski's, and Selznick's, and Shurmann's.
- Rubens: Blumer was of Chicago?
- Leggett: Blumer was a Socialist. Yes, Chicago.
- Rubens: So he wanted you? What was--?

- Leggett: He was brought to Berkeley to build a department, a progressive department. He brought in Lipset. He brought in Selznick. He brought in a whole bunch of good people.
- Rubens: I see. That's right, okay. So, a few years before '59, fifty-something like that?
- Leggett: I'd say like, the mid-fifties.
- Rubens: Okay. I have to look that up. What happened to him?
- Leggett: Well, when the shit hit the fan at Berkeley, in the like, 1963, there was some question as to what faculty should do. How--what they should do, if anything, to defend the students. And the faculty who were up front, carrying on the struggle, the civil rights struggle--and Blumer felt that people should do more, that faculty should be doing more. They did quite a bit. I mean, Selznick did quite a bit.
- Rubens: He will change later, but--
- Leggett: He begins to change from being a conservative in '64, and how, did he change, and wonderfully. He supported the FSM, raising money for the jailed FSM students, speaking on their behalf, debating for student rights, the right for the FSM to exist. And Lowenthal, same thing. Leo Lowenthal.
- Rubens: You're saying that Blumer feels that the faculty should do more?
- Leggett: Yes. He felt the faculty should be doing more to--I don't know, to back the students, especially undergrads, who were being hammered, were being fined, were being kicked out of school, you know, threats and all the rest.
- Rubens: And so, was Blumer basically fired or did he transfer out?
- Leggett: Oh, no. They couldn't fire Blumer, the old man in the field, the former president of the American Sociological Association, international, dominant figure. No, he gets old. Blumer just grows old and I think that's the key thing, and tired.
- Rubens: --just stays but fades away?
- Leggett: Fades away.
- Rubens: When we began, you mentioned that life was so different." Did you mean life, culture, or simply Berkeley is so different than Michigan?
- Leggett: Well, Ann Arbor was like a staid, German community, German Catholic, German Protestant. Those two groups were the main cultural community streams for the non-university community. And people were hesitant to step

out of line on anything for fear that if they did, they would get caught and they would get fired. That stream affected students. The dominant belief was: never disregard with the cultural geist.

For example, there was a guy in Ann Arbor, a young instructor. I think he was in philosophy. He worked in a gas station, as well as for the university as a T.A., or a lecturer. He had forgotten to bring his change of clothes to work. He went directly from the gas station, pumping gas, to the university lecture hall. He lectured in his blue, soiled blue-collar clothing. They fired him immediately. That kind of thing.

At the time, that was in about the late fifties, early sixties, I don't think that would have happened in Berkeley. They might warn the person, say, you know, "Next time, please," just this once. You would explain what had happened, they would say, "Okay." In Ann Arbor, on race, matters of race, if a white woman dated a black guy, even the co-ops, semi-bohemian, bohemian co-ops, the Dean of Women, Dean Bacon would get on the phone and call the mother of the student and tell the mother that her daughter was dating this black guy. Then the mother would jump on a plane, fly to Ann Arbor--

Rubens: --whisk her daughter--

Leggett: --whisk her daughter away. That could have happened but did not happen one time to a close friend of mine, Judy Yesner. She was dating a black guy, but the mother was a lefty, Marxist, *Monthly Review* person living in Boston. When she got the word, she jumped on a plane, flew to Ann Arbor and she raised hell, not with Judy, but with the Dean of Women. And she raised hell with the university for allowing the Dean of Women, Dean Bacon, to do that kind of thing. That was the beginning of the end for her. She retreated to the English department and recommenced teaching. The important point is the mores, the racial mores were really restrictive. They stifled us, although occasionally they were beaten.

Rubens: Were there many blacks at the university?

Leggett: There were approximately two hundred black students out of twenty-five thousand, when I was there, in 1962.

Rubens: A few more than Berkeley at that time. But Berkeley had a black community--

Leggett: A black community, a fairly sizable one there in south Berkeley, west Berkeley.

Rubens: Yes. And there had been activities.

- Leggett: Activities, progressive parties, the Longshoremen's Union and so forth. There was a smaller black community in Ann Arbor, less active politically than in Berkeley.
- Rubens: Detroit's pretty far away. I mean, an hour.
- Leggett: Yes, right, with its 600,000 black persons. Ann Arbor's black community, it's really like the black community of say, Jackson, Michigan, Milan, Michigan, Mt. Clemens, Michigan--separate, smaller, more conservative than southwest Berkeley and west Oakland.
- Rubens: Had you been to California before, when you started at--?
- Leggett: No.
- Rubens: Did you have certain images or fantasies?
- Leggett: Yes! My image of California was that it was just like this!
- Rubens: You mean like here in Palm Springs? Sunny all the time and--
- Leggett: I thought, sunny all the time and warm. The desert, man, it was just like, "I can't wait to get there!" I schlepped in like Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*. But I was living in cool, rainy, damp San Francisco Bay Area. And I'd had bronchitis before. I'd had trouble with my lungs. I was looking forward to desert air. We'd all heard about people moving to southern California and Arizona to get that desert air. I arrive in northern California and it's raining. And it rains and rains and rains, cool, cold, damp. It's often moldy, and so that came as a bit of a shock and a health-threatening surprise. In fact, it came as quite a downer. But still, I love the northern California redwoods. I love the ocean.
- Rubens: And did you have a feeling of--liberality isn't really the word, but the lid was much tighter--
- Leggett: The lid was much tighter, yes.
- [tape interruption]
- Rubens: --those numbers. I mean, you hadn't seen--
- Leggett: No, no. No crowds like that, not at civil rights stuff. Earlier, in strike situations in Detroit, yes, I'd seen numbers like that.
- Rubens: See, it strikes me, when I listen to you about what you were engaged in, in Ann Arbor, that the students were more active there in terms of community

civil rights issues than they were at Berkeley, until Berkeley CORE came in '61, '62.

Leggett: That's right, yes.

Rubens: Here's another example, something that I came across in my interviewing. There was a fellow named Tom DeVries, who you may know. He had been a news reporter on KQED when they used to have *Newsroom* and they'd talk about the news on air amongst themselves. He had been hired because he had a background in news--where he started was with the Collegiate Press News Service. It was actually funded by the National Student Association, but before they knew that it was a CIA-backed organization. The purpose of this news service was to collect all the news that was going on at university campuses--primarily, what they were doing vis-a-vis civil rights. So, in '62 and '63, when he was the editor, he would travel to all the different universities. And, of course, he went to the south; and he thought of Berkeley as a kind of backwater, their newspaper wasn't a member of this, and they didn't have a particular presence in the south, and didn't have coverage of integrationist activities in the San Francisco Bay Area. Then [Harow?] and finally--

Leggett: Sure, Alice.

Rubens: And then, finally FSM. And Berkeley would become a kind of catalyst for campus rebellion--so I was wondering if you had a different sense, too--that there was a kind of political development that was advanced. You're saying these CORE people seemed so--

Leggett: CORE people plus people who fought in the 1960 anti-HUAC demonstrations in San Francisco--

Rubens: You must have known about that? Did you meet people who--?

Leggett: Yes. When I arrived on campus, I met people from SLATE, and the SLATE people had been involved in the demonstrations against HUAC in 1960, '61. And so--

Rubens: Well, if you're willing to go on, why don't we just talk about your arrival in Berkeley? At '62 are you--do you come alone, or do you come with--?

Leggett: I bring my family. My wife, Iris. And my daughter.

Rubens: How old was your daughter?

Leggett: My daughter by this time is one year old.

Rubens: You accomplish a lot by then.

- Leggett: Yes. I'm publishing my dissertation materials now, in journals like *The American Sociological Review*, *The American Journal of Sociology*--so I'm bringing all this stuff out and I'm looking for a--
- Rubens: Plus Oxford is--
- Leggett: Oxford Press comes in a bit later. I get the contract in like, '65, '66, and the book comes out in '68.
- Rubens: So '62, fall of '62 you have a wife and a daughter and so--
- Leggett: So there we are. We're set up in Berkeley.
- Rubens: Did you know other people? Did people help you?
- Leggett: Well, yes. I knew Bob and Masako Yamada from the bookstore.
- Rubens: He had already come?
- Leggett: He and his wife, Masako. They have two kids. And there was a woman who had been active in CORE, in Ann Arbor-- Rosalie Lonergan, she has this stereotypic Irish name.
- Rubens: Bob was with what bookstore?
- Leggett: The Co-op Bookstore on Shattuck Avenue, Shattuck and Cedar.
- Rubens: That was part of the store, wasn't it? The market?
- Leggett: That was it. That's right. It was part of the store.
- Rubens: What about Haber? Had Haber come out?
- Leggett: Haber arrived, I think Haber arrived a bit later.
- Rubens: I didn't ask you, were you particularly close to Haber?
- Leggett: Oh, yes, I knew Haber. Haber had attended U of M sociology seminars that I had joined--eight, ten people in a seminar, Haber would be one of them.
- Rubens: He was a bona fide graduate student?
- Leggett: I think he was an undergraduate student. But he was so smart. He did so well. In fact, when he wanted to take a seminar in sociology, he would simply ask the professor if he could and the prof almost always said yes. So he'd take the seminar. Yes, I knew Haber. But he did not arrive until a little bit later.
- Rubens: Where did you live? Do you remember?

- Leggett: I lived on Holly Street, Holly and Cedar. 1414 Holly, Berkeley, California, below Grove [now Martin Luther King] and about two blocks east of Sacramento.
- Rubens: And where was the Berkeley sociology department?
- Leggett: It was in an old building, still standing, next to the main library.
- Rubens: I think that was called South Hall.
- Leggett: South Hall! That was it. South Hall. And I remember, among other members, the chairman of sociology.
- Rubens: And so that's Herbert Blumer?
- Leggett: I recall Herbert Blumer, the sophisticate, chatting with Malcolm X! [chuckles] We arranged to have--my head T.A. and I, arranged to have Malcolm X come and do an interview for our classes, to be videotaped and then piped out to twenty-one different classrooms. We made a great tape of Malcolm X.
- Rubens: Where is that tape?
- Leggett: It's--you can buy it on the Berkeley campus. You can buy it in the basement of Dwinelle Hall. Costs like forty-five dollars.
- Rubens: Tell me how this came about.
- Leggett: This is the fall of 1963 when Malcolm X came to the campus. The ASUC [Associated Students of the University of California] invited Malcolm X to come in and deliver three lectures from the steps of Dwinelle Hall, right across from where I had my office--this old, old building. And I actually looked out the window one day and I saw Malcolm and said, "Jesus! Is that Malcolm X?" And he gave three lectures and they gave him something like, \$1,500 for all three. A three-for-one deal. Fifteen hundred dollars was a lot of money back in those days. So Malcolm X delivered the three lectures and he was in Berkeley four, five, six days. He could have stayed forever, he was so "west Oakland," so beloved.
- And during that time, he met with a guy who was my head T.A., a guy named Herman Blake--a black grad student, sociology, a guy from Los Angeles. Blake knew, or got to know him, better--got to know Malcolm X better and the two of them were there. I said, "Jesus, our canned tape lectures have not gone over that well (for a number of good reasons)," I said, "but this is one event that will allow us to regain some turf with our students. Let's do an interview with Malcolm X." And I said, "We don't have any money but we do have this studio. We could just go ahead and do it," there in the basement of Dwinelle Hall. So Herman asked Malcolm X. Malcolm X said, "Sure," just

“Sure,” [chuckles]. Well, it’s two o’clock in the afternoon, let’s just go have an interview. We’re going to talk with Malcolm X. So we walk into the studio cold, totally cold. We’d done no pre-planning at all. I open the door and Herman and I had been doing the interviewing and like formats anyways--we’d been doing work for this televised class, “Introduction to Sociology.” And, by God, so there we are: the guy with the camera, Herman Blake and Malcolm X and myself and we just rip right into it. Within five to six minutes, we’re having these hot exchanges with Malcolm X. Pretty amazing! It lasts for, you know, forty-five minutes, forty-seven minutes, forty-eight, something like that. It became a kind of underground classic--so far underground that a lot of people have never seen it.

Rubens: Was it simultaneously piped to these twenty-one classes or a little bit later?

Leggett: Oh, almost simultaneously--like, some classes would meet nine o’clock in the morning, a day after the taped session, some at eleven o’clock, some at two, but basically at the same time, same day, same everything.

Rubens: Do you remember the content of the interview--?

Leggett: Oh, yes. We raised the whole question of “is to be black intrinsically something that is politically progressive?” I mean, aren’t there a lot of running dogs within the black community? For example, on the Chicago City Council, there were like, seven blacks who were hopelessly in the pocket of the white racist mayor of the city--how about those guys? At the same time, there was this white guy from this district in Chicago who was very progressive. In fact, the only progressive guy on the City Council was a white guy. How about that? “Malcolm X, what do you say about that?”

Rubens: He just took off?

Leggett: No, he kind of dodged that one. He said, “Well, I really don’t know too much about Mayor Daley and the Democratic party machine in Chicago.” And our reaction was, “What?!” The Muslims were hemispherically centered in Chicago, and Malcolm was a Muslim? How could he not know about their battles with Daley and the Cook County Democratic party machine?

But see, I didn’t want to push--I didn’t want him to terminate the interview. I wanted the thing to go on--these total strangers--diplomacy was the best choice, I think, in that situation. Also, we did debate the whole question of whites, in many cases, risking their lives, giving their lives, for black people--how about that? He kind of hemmed and hawed and then I said, “and, you know there are a lot of really decent white fighters for black rights within the NAACP like Herbert Hill.” “Ah,” he said, “Herbert Hill.” So then you’ve got these two New Yorkers. Malcolm and Herbert Hill (both originally from southern Michigan). Malcolm X is basically a New Yorker, right?

- Rubens: Was he a New Yorker? I mean, he came from Detroit. But, yes--
- Leggett: Basically. These guys were headquartered in New York after a certain date. So basically Malcolm comes out of Harlem. And Herbert Hill out of the NAACP office in New York. And, "Oh, yes--my friend Herbert Hill. Ha ha!" You've got to see the tape because he just sits back because he knows, then, at this point, he's really got me--that he's got a major debating point. And, if nothing else, Malcolm X was a superb debater. I mean, he was a champ. He used to debate for a prison team in Massachusetts against the best and the brightest debaters from the student bodies at MIT and Harvard.
- Rubens: That's not in the autobiography--[laughs]
- Leggett: [laughs] I know. But he did.
- Rubens: So, what do you mean, he--
- Leggett: So anyways, he--
- Rubens: Why doesn't he have you, what is it that—
- Leggett: He told the story of how Herbert Hill was perfectly willing to have the NAACP-picket certain job sites in New York City when it meant that the completion of a hospital or a school, I think it was a hospital, for that meant blacks would not go forward. But when it came to construction sites meant for the white community, then Herbert Hill would hold back the picketers, hold back the forces, the troops, the ammunition of the NAACP. He would not get involved in intense confrontational stuff against the city, against the state when the stakes involved were to be soon used for the white community. Herbert Hill would go after the city and the state only when the black community members were the losers, in a sense--you know, the hospital would not be completed, the school would not be constructed. There would be all these delays, delays, delays. Then Herbert Hill would move, as Labor Secretary of the NAACP he carried a lot of weight. That's what Malcolm X said. God knows what the reality has been. I'm dying to talk to Herbert Hill about this. I happen to know him.
- Rubens: It just never--all these years, you didn't do it.
- Leggett: I didn't want to do it. I didn't want to--
- Rubens: Did you ever have a copy of this interview?
- Leggett: Oh, yes. I've got a copy.
- Rubens: Now this was a sound tape, though?

- Leggett: A sound tape.
- Rubens: Not a videotape.
- Leggett: It was an old fashioned videotape. They weren't even called videotapes in 1963. They just did tapes for taped TV--
- Rubens: Oh! To broadcast the classics?
- Leggett: To broadcast "the classics," yes. That's what they did. And then they converted that over to tapes that might be played in the classroom. And that took a number of years and a number of adjustments to realize.
- Rubens: So this was Malcolm X for "Sociology 101"?
- Leggett: "Introductory Sociology," yes.
- Rubens: I didn't ask what your classes were when you first started teaching. Is that what you taught?
- Leggett: Yes. My first assignment at Berkeley was to share the lecture with Phil Selznick to approximately eight to nine hundred students. We would stand up there in this big, old hall, this big old barn of a lecture hall that the students actually gutted and burned out in the sixties. What the hell's the name of that hall?
- Rubens: Oh, you mean Wheeler Hall?
- Leggett: Wheeler Hall. The Wheeler lecture hall.
- Rubens: It was gorgeous and a monster --meaning huge.
- Leggett: It was a monster to try to lecture there, because it--the acoustics were all wrong and the microphones didn't work right. So you had to lay aside the microphone and just shout. You had to shout into the microphone, above the microphone, without the microphone--there were times I thought I was in Harlem, preaching. And after about half an hour you would start to lose your voice. So Selznick would say, "Here are these pills that I pop, man, before I do my lecture." I had no idea what he was popping, I just took them and throw them in there--lozenges of some kind to keep your esophagus going.
- Rubens: Oh, I thought you were going to talk about a little speed--
- Leggett: Maybe it was, I'm not sure what the hell it was. I tried it. It helped. [laughs]
- Rubens: But you were--both of you on the stage? That must have been--

- Leggett: Yes, that was kind of intimidating because, you know, Selznick is like, a wonderful lecturer. A-plus-plus. And he was politically progressive in many ways. But, you know, he really came down hard against Bolshevism, especially the Bolshevik conception of the vanguard party--I think it was the Communist use of the vanguard party. At the time, I remember I was still partially identified with Lenin, Leninism, Mao Tse Tung, Uncle Ho, the Chinese Revolution, the Indochinese Revolution, the revolutions in Guiana, over Africa, South Africa and so forth. How the hell can you make a revolution, unless you have a vanguard party? Or something like a vanguard party--perhaps to go with a mass party, too. You know, the mass party and the vanguard party, maybe even a parliamentary party, as well. So I was unwilling to write off the vanguard party ipso facto, as was Selznick.
- Rubens: Selznick was unwilling, too?
- Leggett: Selznick was unwilling to write off the vanguard party. He saw it as intrinsically totalitarian, which, in many ways, it has been. Selznick was more right than wrong. I was more of a pragmatist. The Communists do good work, you work with the Communists--
- Rubens: Well you were young, also. Doesn't that have something to do with it?
- Leggett: Yes, sure.
- Rubens: What were your students like?
- Leggett: I thought that the Michigan students would be the best students that I'd ever have come across because they were so good, especially the ones who were involved politically. They were so smart. But I've never come across students like the Berkeley students.
- Rubens: Really?
- Leggett: The Berkeley students were the best students I'd ever had.
- Rubens: These were undergraduates?
- Leggett: Undergrads and grads. They were the best, man. They were just so, so smart. And that comes through in the interview schedule that we used for the arrestees, the 710 arrestees whom we interviewed--the quality of the architecture of their statements, the quality of the intuition, the quality of use of illustrations, the quality of their commitment to go with all those things. Theoretically together and politically sharp, and at the same time they saw themselves as involved, or potentially involved. That potentially involved thing came across in 1964 when so many joined the Free Speech Movement--so many people who were not ideologically together, but nonetheless committed and quite intelligent. They joined the Free Speech Movement.

Another person who makes that point is--what the hell is his name? The Schactmanite who was a librarian--

Rubens: Oh, you mean Draper?

Leggett: Hal Draper. He did a book on the Free Speech Movement?

Rubens: Oh, yes.

Leggett: And in the book he talks about how there was like, a hard core of maybe three hundred, two hundred and fifty, three hundred hard core politically solid folks, and there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of other people who were less together, ideologically, who nonetheless were with the movement. You could count on them. Push comes to shove there on Telegraph Avenue, they'd be there.

Rubens: By 1964 you had grad students?

Leggett: Yes, I'd have grad students. I'd serve on graduate committees and stuff like that, dissertation committees. The best grad student I had was Jim Petras from poli sci.

Rubens: Who you mentioned earlier.

Leggett: Yes. Wow!

Rubens: Was he involved in the Free Speech, particularly?

Leggett: Oh, yes. He was, Petras was. But Petras was more involved in the international struggles being waged in Cuba and Chile, all over Latin America. He was into writing about those things--research. On occasion he would come out for demonstrations but generally, no. He wouldn't. I talked to him one time about that and I--in fact, he sort of brought the subject up. He said, "John, you know, I don't take part in these demonstrations. I've not been arrested and my students want to know why I have not been arrested." "Look, I tell them, if I get involved in one of those demonstrations, will you get me a job when I get fired?" And the student said, "No." "Well, that's it then. I'm a scholar. I do research. This is my life. If I become an activist, on top of everything else, I will be fired and, in all likelihood, I will be blacklisted. And then what? Will you be able to break that blacklist and get me work? Will I working with you be able to do that? I doubt it." So he made the choice. I'm glad he did because he's--he's done such fine work on Latin America. Oh, yes.

Rubens: But John, you were young and your book had not come out yet. You were doing articles. You made the choice to be visibly active. How did that start? How did you literally hear about, know about the Free Speech Movement?

- Leggett: It wasn't--it was a continuation of battles, the battles of the thirties for me-- went back to my high school, where we shut down the entire school--a free speech issue. The principal had said something that the board did not like. They fired him. And we fought for him, even though he was a Republican. [laughs] I remember that.
- Rubens: Yes. So I see your name very early in the movement. I mean, it's not even called a movement yet. I don't think it's going to be called a movement until the day the car is surrounded. But aren't you trying to negotiate and defend the people who have been cited prior to that?
- Leggett: I think my name was on that list, yes. I think that Blumer was on there, too. I think a number of faculty had agreed to come together to try to negotiate for the students, with the students--for the students against the administration. But for me, it was just like a continuation of what I'd been doing in Ann Arbor. I had told myself earlier, however, that when I went to Berkeley that I would try to stay out of trouble. But I'm kind of compulsive. So I go out there. The crowd is there. It's a wild collective behavioral thing and I find myself attracted to those kinds of settings.
- Rubens: Plus you had a chairman who you wouldn't be so fearful of.
- Leggett: That's right. In fact, he was supportive, as had been the case for Amos Hawley at Michigan.
- Rubens: Selznick must have already been impressed with your teaching, too? You demonstrated yourself as a--
- Leggett: Yes, yes. Selznick was supportive. Earlier and later.
- Rubens: And Lipset, what about--?
- Leggett: Lipset was basically okay. In fact, I had a part-time post in Lipset's international politics institute. It was called like, the International--the Institute of International Studies--yes. And I had an appointment in that institute in like, 1965, '66. It's in my vitae, which I'll send to you. So I got along okay with Lipset and his family. I remember going to parties at Lipset's place, Selznick's, and--
- Rubens: Yes, tell me about that culture a little bit. Was that largely faculty or were there graduate students?
- Leggett: Well, actually faculty. I found it to be rather strange. I found it to be intimidating. It was hard to relax with these big shots, right? Except for Blumer.
- Rubens: Did they relax? Or why Blumer?

- Leggett: Well, because Blumer's just Blumer. Well, he used to be a football player, right? Yes, and I used to be a football player--
- Rubens: So Blumer was easy-going.
- Leggett: Yes. And to play baseball with, too.
- Rubens: There was a--
- Leggett: Sociology softball team. We used to have these sociology picnics in the fall, every year. I would go to the picnic, and I had been a baseball player in Detroit.
- Rubens: A mixer to get --?
- Leggett: Yes, I'd drive the ball great distances into the treetops and so forth. That's something I can't do anymore but I used to do it a lot, because I used to play baseball in Detroit. So Blumer liked that.
- Rubens: So you could talk about baseball, stuff like that? But otherwise, what was--
- Leggett: --talk about Chicago baseball teams. I was afraid to talk politically and honestly with Selznick and Lipset because my views were much more to the left and they weren't as anti-Communist. At least, they weren't, you know, capital "C" Communists. They were like anarcho-syndicalists. I've always been a bit of an anarchist.
- Rubens: By the way, why did you call yourself a Schachtmanite? Where does that--?
- Leggett: That comes out of the Independent Socialist League, the Socialist Youth League, SYL.
- Rubens: Do a little genealogy here.
- Leggett: Schachtman had led a section of--I've got to go back. The Communist Party, which was split in 1927--it involved the expulsion of Trotskyists, the people who identified with Leon Trotsky. They went on during the mid-1930s to organize, eventually, the Socialist Workers Party. Now, that took about seven, eight, nine years to set up. And there are all kinds of alliances, transitions. In 1939, 1940, there was another split. And that one involved Max Schachtman and a number of other people leaving the Socialist Workers Party and setting up a group called the Workers Party. Much of this was in New York City but it was elsewhere, too.
- The Workers Party goes through a series of elections in New York, loses badly time and again. Someone has the brains to say, "We're not really a party. We're a league, a league at best." So someone else says, "Let's call

ourselves the Independent Socialist League. The ISL.” And later on the I.S. so--

Rubens: And “League” meaning, we are not trying to--

Leggett: We are not a party, we’re like a pre-party formation, is what we are.

Rubens: And Schachtman’s the--?

Leggett: Schachtman’s the head honcho. He’s the charismatic leader of the whole thing. So, that’s how we got to be known as the Schachtmanites.

Rubens: I lose those threads.

Leggett: Yes. It’s like, James P. Cannon and Max Schachtman splitting in 1927 from the Communist Party--some being thrown out, some splitting on their own. They formed a Socialist Workers Party by 1935, ‘36. By 1940 there’s another split. The people like Schachtman say that the Soviet Union is not a workers’ state. Cannon says, “It’s a deformed workers’ state.”

Leggett: James P. Cannon--

Tape 3

Leggett: --like the Drapers and others go with Schachtman out of the Socialist Workers Party, into the Workers Party like, 1943, ‘44. They’re running people for public office for like, city council of New York, things like that, but doing badly--[tape interruption] The Earl Browder period, the height of popularity of American Communism in places like New York. That’s ‘44, ‘45. The height of the Earl Browder period. I’m lucky I grew up during this period so I was able to--

Rubens: --because you can keep it straight. I can’t. I know about the Popular Front. The Popular Front comes to California a little earlier.

Leggett: That too. Two Pop Fronts. One starts in 1934 and--it’s ‘34 until September ‘39, followed by the Stalin/Hitler Pact of September ‘39 until June ‘41. With Hitler’s invasion of Russia, the pact ends, and a second Pop Front begins in June ‘41, only to end in 1947-48.

Rubens: Yes. Well, there’s the second Pop Front, June ‘41 until the Wallace campaign in 1948.

Leggett: From June ‘41 until December 1948.

Rubens: --the U.S. alliance was--

- Leggett: It's the U.S. alliance with the Soviet Union, June '41 until fall 1945, and it becomes the Browder moment in the American Communist Party.
- Rubens: That's called the Browder moment--?
- Leggett: The Browder moment, yes. '41 until like, '46.
- Rubens: So why are you using the term Pop Front?
- Leggett: Pop Front was basically--
- Rubens: I thought Popular Front was when there--it was the end of the underground, and the separate, dual unionism, and--
- Leggett: No. That's '33, '34? Yes. That's the effort to bring together the Socialists, the left wing liberals, the left wing Catholics, of course the Communists, into one, popular alliance, a "united front," sometimes called a "pop front."
- Rubens: There's a claim that California does that earlier because Darcy facilitates that with the Upton Sinclair campaign.
- Leggett: Sure. The EPIC [End Poverty in California] campaign in '34--
- Rubens: So, when are you referring to the second Popular Front?
- Leggett: The second Pop Front, sometimes called United Front begins in June of 1941 till November-December of 1948 -with Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941. Then, the Communists revert, basically, to the old Pop Front and you get the Communist Party dissolving itself formally in 1943. It becomes, at least on paper, an "association. And the Progressive League, so to speak, working with Socialists and working with left wing labor people who are not in the CP and not in the Socialist Party. And that goes on until like, 1946, '47 when Jacques Duclos, a French Communist—
- Rubens: The Duclos letter.
- Leggett: --denounces Browder (spring '47), denounces his kind of left-wing politics in favor of a more militant brand of communism. It's a moment when, supposedly, there would be like, an internationalization and deepening of the class struggle--the "Zhadanov line" is adopted globally. What that means is that the French Communist Party, and the Italians, and so forth get behind the great uprisings of the peasants and the workers in India and Indochina, China, and around the world--Latin America, the Caribbean. Basically it fails and these spirited workers movements, uprisings, just get knocked down over, and over, and over again.
- Rubens: Wasn't that primarily because U.S.--

- Leggett: Yes.
- Rubens: Marshall--
- Leggett: The Marshall Plan, NATO, and the like, yes. The U.S. actually rearms the imperial powers, the French and so forth. In 1948 the French, for example, were able to go back in Indochina, big time, and take on the Viet Minh.
- Rubens: Right. De Gaulle.
- Leggett: Yes. So, we're all part of this. We're all thinking about it and it's--in the discussions of all these things people are pretty sophisticated. And their views are coming out in publications like *Labor Action*, and *The New International*. Hal Draper used to write for *Labor Action*. People, like Hal Draper, were smart. They would write about the revolution in Bolivia, the revolutionary pockets in Brazil, revolutionary movements in the Caribbean.
- Rubens: Now, you're talking about in the early fifties, mid-fifties, when this is starting to come out?
- Leggett: I'm talking about the early fifties, yes. Yes, early fifties--*Labor Action*. We also had a publication called *Anvil and Student Partisan*. It was like a coming together of Trotsky's, Schachtmanites and pacifists, of the A.J. Muste variety.
- Rubens: Did you ever--you weren't writing for these groups?
- Leggett: I wasn't writing.
- Rubens: You were reading them, and--?
- Leggett: Yes. And distributing them. One of our principal writers was C. Wright Mills. We were selling loads of copies, person to person, in the classroom, and by way of the bookstores, such as Bob Marshall's in Ann Arbor and an equivalent store in Mt. Pleasant. Mills was our most popular writers. He was one of our heroes. Mills is very important to us.
- Rubens: Because--? Do you want to say something--?
- Leggett: Well, his class analysis was so cool, so together. It comes through in his book, *White Collar*. You have probably read it, no doubt.
- Rubens: I have read, and I've read reviews of a new book about C. Wright Mills
- Leggett: Oh, well there's a book--
- Rubens: It's supposed to be quite a wonderful book.

- Leggett: Yes. There have been two waves of books on Mills. One about eight, ten years ago and some of those books are questionable. His daughter was involved, I remember, in pumping up criticisms of some of the books that were done on Mills.
- Rubens: She was critical, or part of the wave?
- Leggett: Yes, she was critical. And I think she was coming up with like, counter-statements as well in the form of articles, perhaps even a book. I think--stop for a moment--I think she did write a book on Mills.
- Rubens: And then the second wave is now?
- Leggett: Later on, Mills gains a lot of popularity in the 1960's. People are using his work, *The Power Elite*. It contains his analysis--
- Rubens: *White Collar* comes out earlier?
- Leggett: 1950. I remember it came out with one of the--what they called Great Books. The Great Books Club. Something like that. I used to belong to the Great Books Club and I got that one. I joined when I'm in the process of becoming a student and I've been rubbing elbows with my Trotskyist buddies, Schachtmanite buddies, who were really splitting from orthodox Marxism--smartly enough--they were. So they went for Mills, big time.
- Rubens: Now, '62 to '64, when you're out in Berkeley, do you still consider yourself--are you a member of the--
- Leggett: Socialist Party? Until 1964. I quit formally in 1955 at the time of the passage of the Trucks Act in Michigan, which made it illegal for me to continue to belong in Michigan to any organization on the U.S. Attorney General's list. And our organization, the ISL, was on the U.S. Attorney General's list. It was either quit or face prison terms, maybe. So, the ISL leadership in Michigan made the decision to dissolve the ISL in Michigan. We left, organizationally. But ideologically, we didn't. And, to have some kind of day-to-day attachment to some kind of surface organization that's doing something, all of us in California who had been Schachtmanites went into the Socialist Party. That was no great leap because we knew most people in the SP and we had good relations with them.
- Rubens: So, formally--
- Leggett: Formally, we ISLers are dead--
- Rubens: You are in the Socialist Party in Berkeley in sixty--

- Leggett: 1962-64. And informally we're still Schachtmanites. And the people who are not Schachtmanites, but old right-wing SPers, saw us as potential dangers. But, we basically agreed on things like the nature of the Soviet Union, the need to work together to help build unions, build union caucuses, and stuff like that, co-ops.
- Rubens: So when you come to Berkeley, do you look up the Socialist Party? Do you have connections through them?
- Leggett: Oh, yes. They look me up. I look them up and we go into it. But I found them to be pretty conservative. I found that they did not want to do anything to upset Seymour Martin Lipset. They wanted to recruit Lipset into the local Berkeley chapter of the SP. And they might even have done so. So they didn't want anybody to do anything that might upset Marty. Joining or being up-front in your support of the FSM definitely would annoy Lipset because Lipset, unlike Selznick, was really down on, very much against, the FSM.
- Rubens: That's exactly where we'll pick up the FSM story. He just seems to be incredulous--
- Leggett: It's hard to believe. There's no logical reason--
- Rubens: I think he just--sounds like he just made a wrong step and had to defend himself.
- Leggett: He made a wrong step and he couldn't back away from it.
- Rubens: So, in terms of when '64 starts, when we're--that's exactly what we're going to pick up, your analysis of charismatic leaders and the role of the university in what happens to your colleagues. Are you not identified as a Socialist, a member of the Socialist Party. You may have--
- Leggett: Well, by that time I had--by '64 I was sort of moving away from the Socialist Party. I was still paying dues but I didn't like the line taken by some of them, some of the Socialists, towards the Free Speech Movement and towards CORE, toward direct action, including the direct action episodes in San Francisco at the Sheraton Palace Hotel on Market Street, and the city's major hotel, and on Auto Row on Van Ness Avenue, and demonstrations at Jack London Square in Oakland--
- Rubens: Maybe the shop-ins?
- Leggett: The shop-ins. All that stuff. I liked that. I thought it was great. So, my commitment to CORE, CORE tactics, CORE ideology, plus notions of worker's ownership, worker's control, worker's direction of events from below--that kind of anarcho-syndicalist stuff which I've always been attracted to, somewhat, at least. That took hold. And I left the SP.

Rubens: And then what a movement that it will take hold in--

Leggett: What a wonderful, grassroots movement, boy!

[tape interruption]

Those great fighters, for example, John Brown, and like strugglers of the 1850s, there in Kansas. Even though John Brown and those guys were fully violent and something else, they were just committed to the movement and the liberation of blacks from slavery and oppression and, by God, if that meant picking up the gun and blowing away your opponents, "Let's go ahead and do it." In a way, John Brown was a lot like Robert Williams. Robert Williams was a lot like John Brown. And I saw the movement, basically, as going in the direction of John Brown and the likes of Robert Williams--

Rubens: Well, it did.

Leggett: Yes, it did go in that direction. Take the Black Panthers, for example.

Rubens: The FSM has sort of a moment of pure--

Leggett: Yes, then--

Rubens: But some of us that thought the struggle on campus was not as important as other issues. I didn't quite understand the broader implications of it. I was tutoring black kids in Oakland and, I was organizing for, supporting farm workers--there seemed to me things that were more important. But I was an undergraduate and did understand how the University's action was a threat to organizing.

Leggett: That farm worker thing was very important. For people like Ann Draper, an organizer for farm worker support, it was very, very significant. Ann Draper organized a group that went down, went to Delano in September of 1965. God, that was a powerhouse group. She was a fine organizer, with a smashing sense of humor. Ann Draper was from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union. You can read about her, complete with photos that capture her personality, in Sue Cobbles' brand-new book, *The Other Women's Movement*, Princeton University Press, 2004. Cobble is another splendid Berkeley Ph.D., and 1960s-1970s activist.

Rubens: Is Amalgamated where Ann Draper came from?

Leggett: Yes, in San Francisco. She was a member of the I.S. She was a Schachtmanite, a small "c" communist. But no, she wasn't CP, or--

Other: She wasn't one of the CPers that left in '57?

- Leggett: No, no. Ann Draper, her Trotskyist roots go way back.
- Rubens: Her husband--
- Other: Hal Draper? Oh, okay. Fine.
- Leggett: They're like brother and sister. They were more like brother and sister than husband and wife. I say that with the best possible denotation, connotation.
- Rubens: There was another Trot who came to the Bay Area, he had been so hated by the Teamsters—Paul Jacobs.
- Leggett: Paul Jacobs, yes. Paul Jacobs was the guy who was with those soldiers when they went to the--the atomic bomb testing on the flats of either western Nevada or Utah.
- Rubens: Yes, yes. They say that's what--
- Leggett: Killed him with cancer. Yes, yes. Paul Jacobs. Marvelous guy.
- Rubens: So I'm asking you about when you first got involved.
- Leggett: Okay, mind you now, this, or that, was what? Like thirty-six or thirty-seven years ago.
- Rubens: Yes, I know.
- Leggett: Hard to believe. My memory would have been a lot better two years ago. And now, after you get past the age of sixty, sixty-five, there's an exponential relationship between aging and deterioration of memory, some forms of memory.
- Rubens: The precision of the dates and we--
- Leggett: The chronology--
- Rubens: --don't need that. That's not--it's more your observation.
- Leggett: So, yes. I would say like, early October. A lot of us, in the spring of '64, had taken part in Auto Row and Sheraton Palace demonstrations in San Francisco about that time, too. So one cup, for me, kind of blends over into the other, and the biggest event for all of us was the Republican party convention in San Francisco, I think it was August of 1964. That was the biggie.
- Rubens: Why did you say that? Why was that so big to you?

- Leggett: Well, I had been the faculty sponsor of Students for Scranton. So--of course Scranton was the key challenger, as it were, to Goldwater over there in San Francisco. Second thing was that of--
- Rubens: Faculty sponsor--
- Leggett: Of Students for Scranton. They had asked me. A lot of these kids that were active, by the way, in the Free Speech Movement--there were Republican kids active in the FSM, hard to believe--
- Rubens: Indeed there were and I have not been able to track down some of them. Those are who I want to interview. So this wasn't a ploy? This wasn't that it would be better to have Scranton than Goldwater? The Democrat would be more--
- Leggett: No, no. There were some Republican kids also involved in the state drug program being set up around the Vacaville prison facility, a lot of Students for Scranton people were involved in the drug rehab program for artistic people who were locked up there in Vacaville. And these were Republican kids, a lot of them were members of churches and stuff like that. You wouldn't expect them to be active in something like the FSM or a precursor of the FSM because these were people who were, in no way, rowdies. Some of the people in the FSM, like David Goines and myself, we were like rowdies, you know. That's our personality structures. They--
- Rubens: The students had come to you, presumably, the spring before and said, "Would you be the sponsor of--?"
- Leggett: That's right. Kids would take my course, my courses in race relations, especially. So, I taught formal sociology on race relations and they liked it. And they were active in this thing and that thing--like we would call them today, "do-good" projects. They wound up, in the summer of '64, going over to the GOP convention--at the Cow Palace, was it?
- Rubens: Yes.
- Leggett: And they went over there as, often times, in pairs: a black guy, a white woman, a black woman, a white guy. In many cases those kids came out of that kind of Scranton, Students for Scranton, background. These were kids who are not radicals. You might say that they were culturally radicals for the time, but they were not Marxists, Leninists. They were not Trots and so on, I.S.
- Rubens: What was that idea? What was a black, white pair supposed to show or demonstrate?

- Leggett: Black and white together meant, could mean--young black male and young white female being together, for whatever purpose, whatever reason, and that it's okay to do that. You can't call the dean of women and report us, "'cause that kind of shit won't work anymore."
- Rubens: Oh, like Bacon—.
- Leggett: Like Dean Bacon back in Ann Arbor. So there was that element within the movement and often times we lost sight of them. All I'm saying is we should put them back in.
- Rubens: Indeed there were Republicans who wanted to make the Republican party progressive, who thought that the Republican party should also take a stand against racism and segregation--
- Leggett: That's right. All forms of racism.
- Rubens: --whereas it had seemed as if it was the lily-white redeemer of governments--so the "biggie" meant--? Why are you calling it the biggie? That's where all the energies were focused?
- Leggett: Yes. So many energies had gone into the GOP convention in August, whether you were in the Bay Area or whether you were beyond--you were watching it and wondering about Goldwater. Remember, Goldwater was a real threat because Goldwater was a guy who favored the use of the atomic bomb, if necessary, to stop the Communists in Indochina.
- Rubens: He had that book on treason.
- Leggett: *None Call it Treason*, was it that? His statements came down just after the Bay of Pigs operation '61, just after Khrushchev made the decision (October of '62) to turn those ships around outside Havana, sail them back to the Soviet Union--even though he must have known it would mean the end of his career, politically. He did do it. He did not want to risk World War III. He and we were so close to World War III. But we were also dancing around that one in '61, '62, '63, when the issue of atomic war came up again in the Goldwater campaigns. Later on we came to sort of define Goldwater as a pretty decent old man, grandfather. He got that kind of late peace patina. But before that, man, he was a hawk and he was a danger. There were student organizations on campus that were pushing his line. I can think of the name of one of them--
- Rubens: Young Americans for Freedom?
- Leggett: Yes, exactly. YAF. So they were dangerous. Their slogan was "Drop It," and by that they meant the U.S. should drop the H-bomb on the Soviet Union.

- Rubens: Was there some thought that Johnson would more easily beat Scranton? Or was this simply, "We want the Republican party to move to the center," not be so far out?
- Leggett: Well, the right-center group among the Republican liberals--yes. These are like moderate Republican kids who were not crazies of the right.
- Rubens: California had that tradition, didn't it? Goodwin Knight, Clair Engel, Thomas Kuchel.
- Leggett: Yes, the guy who was head or the secretary--he was the Secretary of Education, Department of--
- Rubens: Well, he was the right-winger. You mean Max Rafferty?
- Leggett: Yes. California had a lot of people like that. By contrast, Scranton came from Pennsylvania, of course--and, you know, moderate politics, big city, big, wealthy family. Henry Cabot Lodge kind of background--Connecticut--
- Rubens: Do you remember being at the convention, then?
- Leggett: I didn't go to the convention.
- Rubens: Oh, you were just the--
- Leggett: In '64, in fact, I'd taken my family east to the Thousand Islands in Ontario, Canada. We were up in the Thousand Islands, canoeing and visiting friends in Detroit, stuff like that. So, it was like a time off from the craziness.
- Rubens: So you come back--
- Leggett: Come back, get set up--
- Rubens: This stuff is starting?
- Leggett: This stuff is starting. What happened was that Clark Kerr and the others, by September '64, have come down with these campus rulings on, "You cannot use tables any more to dispense literature. You cannot organize on-campus demonstrations that might eventuate in off-campus arrests and at the same time use university facilities." Now all those giant restrictions come down, and so we were focusing on that, and how the students were going to deal with that. You know, intellectually we're just organizing our school classes, hoping just to keep going, trying to recover from the summer stuff. Then suddenly, bang!--the police car episode, with Jack Weinberg and the police. I think a lot of us were caught by surprise--first that the administration would do something so dumb.

Rubens: So idiotic, yes.

Leggett: So idiotic--secondly, that the reaction of the students should be so firm, and that there should be so many of them. Not ten, fifteen, twenty but maybe a couple thousand at the height of the protest. Suddenly we were asked to get up and on top of the collapsing police car roof and say something about free speech. How about the roof further collapsing and wrecking Jack's neck? Nobody talked about that. The big question was, can Jack take a piss or a dump under these circumstances?

Rubens: So did you get up on the--do you remember getting on the car?

Leggett: Oh, yes. I'd get up on top of the car, yes. I sure did.

Rubens: And do you remember where you came in the order?

Leggett: It was around the time of Lipset. I recall Lipset speaking and I recall my saying to myself, "Well, I want it to be clear that he doesn't represent all of sociology." Not just him, but Nathan Glazer--I think Glazer may have spoken, too, from the top of the car. But Glazer and Lipset together were like, bad news for the Free Speech Movement, for free speech, bad news for the use of militant tactics on the part of the black movement, the black liberation movement--

Rubens: Later on?

Leggett: Well, that was becoming the whole thing. That was black liberation movement, '63, '64, with the beginnings of black protests about racist hiring practices in Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco, including places like the Sheraton Palace Hotel, plus the car dealers on Van Ness.

Rubens: In terms of the shop-ins--

Leggett: In terms of the shop-ins--the global thing, the global struggles in Africa and around the world. It was like the fights over the right to engage in armed self-defense. Speeches by Robert Williams and by the others, by Malcolm X and so on. So, Malcolm X had already given his lecture to my class, to my students, and so we were all sort of gung ho for more involvement in these universal struggles.

Rubens: Did you know--had you seen these students before? These students who are emerging: Weinberg--Weissman will emerge a little later--

Leggett: I'd seen Weinberg at CORE meetings. He was active then with the thing called, Berkeley-Oakland CORE. And he was active effectively in setting up protests, picketing in Jack London Square in Oakland. We CORE people were

there. So were the police, there and at Senator Knowland's Oakland *Tribune* publishing plant.

Rubens: Do you have an opinion? I mean maybe that's what we should--

Leggett: I thought Jack was a great organizer. I thought he had a great, fine sense of humor.

Rubens: Really?

Leggett: Oh, yes. And I thought that tactically, he was brilliant. Tactically, personally, interpersonally, he knew how to interlace serious commentary with humor, sort of blew people out with energizing laughter.

Rubens: And, just since we're doing observations, what about Mario? Had you known him? Or--?

Leggett: I had not known Mario Savio. I'd heard that he'd just come back from Mississippi Summer of '64. He'd come back from there and he had some great ideas of how to put--what to do on campus, how to organize the campus. I could tell that he had a good relationship with Jack Weinberg and a fine relationship with Jackie Goldberg. And I had great respect for all three of them--one, their humor, two, their not just knowing what to say but how to say it, so as to bring over everybody from right to left, the student body, especially Jackie Goldberg and the Greeks. Sometimes, you know--

Rubens: You think Jackie Goldberg really had a--

Leggett: Jackie Goldberg was a sensation. She belonged to a sorority, which, there's nothing wrong with that--

Rubens: And she had been politically active vis-a-vis the sororities, trying to get them to be--

Leggett: Yes, yes. Because if she was a sorority girl herself--she was a bona fide, legit, dyed in the wool sorority girl. And at the same time, she had all this progressivism, plus Bucharest contacts—an off-the-wall combo, and--

Rubens: Of course, they are--they the inner steering committee is going to see Goldbergs as too--what? too accomodationist. And they certainly weren't. But, you know, there was some--

Leggett: They were flexible. They knew how to talk to people, anyone, everyone, to win them over.

Rubens: But they were out of the--

- Leggett: They were out of the circle, but they were in the circle. When it came time to organize something big--
- Rubens: --they had to.
- Leggett: They had to and they would--and they were in there, the middle of it, Jackie and her brother, Jack. The two of them together were just priceless at the Hearst Amphitheater thing on December 7, 1964.
- Rubens: You had been through such a long history of student organizations that had a much more hierarchical and formal organizational structure.
- Leggett: To say the least.
- Rubens: Were you interested just as a sociologist, let alone someone who had been an activist, was an activist, had strong beliefs about things. I mean, do you get a sense, early on, that this is different?
- Leggett: --like a revival of the John Brown thing from, you know, 1859 Kansas.
- Rubens: What does that mean?
- Leggett: I've just read W.E.B. Du Bois' biography of John Brown—it was inspiring.
- Rubens: It just touched something?
- Leggett: Oh, yes. People in motion, momentum--people on horses, Red Army, the battalions moving against Chiang Kai Chek's fascists, John Brown and his horsemen driving out the slave owners from Kansas, arming the blacks, breaking into the West Virginia Harper's Ferry arsenals, taking the guns from the federal arsenal, more horses and heading south into Virginia to liberate-- help liberate the blacks, arm the blacks so they can liberate themselves, and bring slavery to an end in Virginia and beyond. Justice realized. A free Ireland obtained. I mean, that's--there was that global Maoism--that real gutsy Maoism that I saw as a possibility within the Free Speech Movement. I know that sounds wild--
- Rubens: I think I get what you're saying. Did you ever observe any meetings, the steering committee meetings, or--?
- Leggett: I did go to some of those meetings. Ah, they were deadly! You know how meetings are, you know. I'd rather go to situations where the people are on the streets--people are marching riding down the streets on "paints" and "Palominos" and they're making smart decisions while in motion on brick streets sullied with horse and "moose dung" (the nickname given to Mao by FDR's Ambassador Hurley at the Chunking Airport in 1944...unreal).

- Rubens: We were talking about consensus. I mean, these groups apparently were just determined that they were going to come to a consensus.
- Leggett: And they did! It's amazing how they would be able to--while in motion--for example, we were marching one time. We were marching from campus, right down from Bancroft down Telegraph, into Oakland--a big anti-war demonstration. We're supposed to march into Oakland and confront the Oakland police. People got there, the border between Berkeley and Oakland. They took one look--the Oakland cops had weapons, man. These cops were nearly parked, standing up all the way across Telegraph. They were ready just to kill people, or seriously injure a lot of people. It was like people marching, "brmp, brmp, brmp," and then, "Whoa!"--like, sort of came to a halt, looked at each other and said, "We're going right turn!" We did it. We then went down the boundary street between Berkeley and Oakland, then over to the Berkeley Free Speech Park over on Grove. That's the example of that kind of quick shift--a quick manufacturing of consensus that can go on and did go on. It was marvelous to see.
- Rubens: They were so moral, that was such a--a driving force, the moral position that these people had taken on Free Speech. And they were so--
- Leggett: Oh, absolutely.
- Rubens: -- committed to it that there was a way in which there was a kind of a temper, that they didn't understand--temper meaning a sensibility that this was, of all things, one of the most liberal universities. I'm not saying it was right to ban Communists—but they had overcome that--and to ban Free Speech. But, you know, the issue of guns, or--had never come up. Nevertheless, it is true. You're talking about an event that took place after the Sproul Hall sit-in, where they did--sleep-in--
- Leggett: Yes.
- Rubens: --where they did bring in thousands of sheriffs, and policemen, and dragged kids down the street.
- Leggett: Yes, yes. I was there for that.
- Rubens: Yes, yes. Let's--
- Leggett: Anyway--go ahead.
- Rubens: Well, no. You go. You were saying that's an example of consensus--
- Leggett: Consensus manufacturing on the move. And moving down Telegraph, like, north to south, and the question is, do we plow ahead, through the police lines and get really badly hurt?--thousands of us would have been terribly hurt--or

do we do the sensible thing and turn to the right ninety degrees, and march down the edge of the city and party line? Get good photo copy for the newspapers, get the good story to the journalists--over to Grove then march up for a mass meeting, and then afterwards get a glass of beer. I think that there are times when it makes most sense to go for the glass of beer, and the decision to go for that glass of beer, rather than getting killed; that can be a smart one, and was done through consensus on the spot. It was wild, collective behavior, as Herbert Blumer would have seen it.

Rubens: And I suppose that was true, you know, the philosophy that underlay that decision was probably true of Sproul Hall. I mean, I don't think anyone thought, the troops will come in. What had happened in the past was, alright, they'll let--they'll wait out the sit-in, the--they had not had a sleep-in--well, they had stayed up all night the car in October. And the--what my understanding was--is that Kerr and Brown had an agreement that they were going to come together the next day, and ask the kids to disperse, and then start some orderly process of getting the students out of there. But, in fact the cops come in, in the middle of the night.

Leggett: When the cops came in --

Rubens: Where were you?

Leggett: I was at home, on Holly Street in central Berkeley. Asleep. And I got a phone call from Bettina Aptheker, who was in Sproul Hall. And Bettina Aptheker said, "John--" I said, "Yes." She said, "The police are coming in, and they are arresting people, and people are being dragged down the steps, and so forth. They're really being hurt." She said, "We want you to organize," she said either, "a strike," or "a demonstration involving signs," like a sign-based protest that's a fair designation--a sign-based protest. She might have said strike. I don't think so. And she knew that I had had the training skills to do one or the other. So I got in my car. I drove to campus--made some phone calls first. We all got there rubbing our eyes. This is like, in the very early morning.

Rubens: Can you say who you called?

Leggett: Oh, gee. I called people--I called a guy who was a Teamster, and a student. I forget his name. He showed up. And I called some other people who brought paint and paint brushes.

Rubens: So you didn't call your fellow faculty.

Leggett: No, no, no. Some of them were students. Some of them were non-students and I knew some, and there were tasks for which few faculty are prepared, who

had the skills. And they, in turn, called other people. So we put together these labor gangs very quickly, and we began to knock out signs, trying to tell people what had happened. We contacted the reporters and so on. But mainly, we tried to bring in people to do the necessary artwork--got little hammers, little nails, tiny slats, and put together posters, signs of various kinds, and used them to put up pickets.

And we tried to get Teamsters, driving cement trucks, to respect our picket lines. We wanted to disrupt the normal flow of day-to-day operation. In other words, we succeeded. We had a guy who was actually a member of the Teamsters union, and also a student, who was there--tall, thin dude--I mean, he would jump up on the cement truck--this was like, seven, eight o'clock in the morning--and he would flash his Teamsters card in the faces of the drivers. And he would ask them not to violate the picket line. It worked. This guy looked like a teamster. The Teamsters overwhelmingly refused to cross the line. And, wow! That just--that began to sort of--at least to move us to redouble our efforts and work that much harder--

Rubens: I think once the arrests took place and by the morning, then the discussion was about a strike. --I know that Weissman and some of the graduate students had wanted to strike earlier in the year. In fact, there had been just a very brief, sort of, failed strike.

Leggett: Yes, but we had to work out the mechanics. You have to have the song, you've got the pickets--

Rubens: And the time had to be right. Here you had national news--

Leggett: We'd been watching *March of Time* in the 1940s. So we knew, from the thirties and forties, what to do in the sixties. Detroit blue-collar socialization.

So, anyways, then, around six thirty, seven o'clock, these pick-up trucks are beginning to arrive from thirty miles away, Santa Rita prison, Alameda County's key lockup. It's the just-arrested students who are being returned from Santa Rita county prison and being released. It had become perfect timing for Selznick with the bail money which was something like fifty dollars. The students had been arrested earlier, as I said, then they arrived back on campus in the pickup trucks, all standing up and looking around--and, God, their clothes are torn, they're really--physically, they weren't so beaten up--you know, bumped here and there, bruised, but basically--their clothes were torn, which could only mean one thing. When the police had busted them, they tore their clothes. They threw them around. And then--we got them released in time to join the picket line, some to join the picket line, you know, Mario, and Jack, and so forth, are standing there, all beaten up again. And they then joined the picket line. Well, that made the picket line that much more effective. The Teamsters and the like could see, not just the union card of this one guy, and the police, and so forth, but people could see people who

were beaten up by the police. "Christ, it's Savio and Weinberg once again with their clothes shredded." You could see why you were there, and no abstractions needed. You could reach out and touch Mario.

And that combination--that kind of synergistic connection between the observation of the expected union stuff, plus the rawness of kids being beaten up, moved a lot of Teamsters, younger Teamsters, to say, "Screw them, then. We're not going to cross this picket line. To hell with it." And that was a real victory. So, what I'm saying is that the arrival of these kids from prison, which went on all day---began around eight o'clock, eight-thirty in the morning, just energized the pickets. People were being hauled off to Santa Rita, eight-thirty, nine, ten o'clock in the morning, as I recall.

Rubens: They were still--I think to up to about nine, nine-thirty, they were still being hauled--

Leggett: Yes. They were being hauled off as others were returning. The damndest thing. People were returning and joining the picket lines before the cessation of the arrests of the last group taken to prison. It was off the wall! It was a case of combined and uneven development. It was pure poetry.

Rubens: Now, do you remember talking to any of your fellow faculty, by then, you know? Did they come out to see what was going on, Lipset, or Glaser, or Blumer? And, this is not my assertion of a truth, obviously, I'm just wondering.

Leggett: Well, there were some people who'd come out and they'd watched. And they were interested. And they indicated their concern, like Jerry Skolnick and David Matza.

Rubens: Criminology? I think his wife was in criminology and soc, and he was criminology and soc--and David Matza in sociology. He'd come out. He was obviously interested, and he was concerned, and basically with the students, Matza. And his then wife. And Skolnick and his then wife.

Rubens: The next big--

Leggett: Do you know who else came out at about that time? Maybe a bit earlier--yes, with Selznick. That was important. It was when all the kids got busted, and they were released, and they were given like, trial dates, fines. It all happened very quickly, very fast. The question is, how the hell can we raise \$1.8 million, some crazy sum, or \$7.8 million, immediately, to get them out? And I talked to the office, the sociology office, and I got Selznick on the phone, and I told him. And he contacted Leo Lowenthal. So he and Leo Lowenthal, and William Kornhauser, but especially Selznick, got the authorities to scale down the bail enormously, and also, then, to raise the money from other faculty. So

the faculty came up with several hundred thousand dollars immediately to post bond. How about that?!

- Rubens: Bettina talks about Ken Stamp posting bond for her, specifically.
- Leggett: Yes, I can imagine that. Sure.
- Rubens: Now you're right, it all comes very closely, because I think the kids are going to be arraigned two days later, and it's a Friday. And they go up to the Greek Theatre, where now the university is going to present its point of view, which all of us thought would have been some enlightened kind of statement, or apology, or resolution, and you're laughing--, can you see yourself there?
- Leggett: Two things--earlier, we had asked James Farmer to come to campus and to speak for the Free Speech Movement. I knew him personally--a good friend of mine--because I had worked with him in Michigan, both at Central Michigan and at the U of M. And he was--had a speaking engagement in St. Louis. It might have been Kansas City, but I'm pretty sure it was St. Louis. And he said, "Yes." I said, "Would you come to campus and speak for the FSM and free speech--free advocacy around civil rights?" He said, "Absolutely." He canceled immediately what he was doing in St. Louis--very few people know this--and he went down and he jumped on a plane, and he flew into San Francisco. I got him, and I brought him directly to Telegraph and Bancroft, where the students had like, a big truck, a big dump truck, and microphone, and so forth. And we got a garbage can--put a garbage can up there. We boosted Farmer up on the garbage can, put him on the garbage can up on to the back of the truck, the dump truck. And Farmer spoke there—he gave a brilliant speech for the civil liberties, the First Amendment rights of the Free Speech Movement, FSM, and did not mince his words. And also, there was this blind professor--
- Rubens: Jacobus tenBroek.
- Leggett: tenBroek, a specialist on minorities and civil liberties. He spoke as well. We got him to speak. So at one point we had tenBroek, we had Farmer—what a catch! Now speaking to a crowd from the back of a stake-truck.
- Rubens: And when is this happening?
- Leggett: This is around the time--this is just before the big December 7th debacle at the Greek amphitheater.
- Rubens: But things were heating up. You're absolutely right--
- Leggett: Oh, you'd better believe it.

- Rubens: --because they had just come back from Thanksgiving, and more students had been expelled, and--
- Leggett: Just before the arrival of Farmer, when Kerr found out that we had successfully gotten Farmer to come and speak for the FSM, Kerr's response was to also invite Farmer, and then to ask Farmer to speak before the entire university body at the Hearst Amphitheater. You know, all fifteen, sixteen thousand people would be there to hear a co-opted Farmer address on the key campus issue. But then Farmer refused! Unbelievable. What integrity. Farmer--God bless Farmer. Yes, he's been maligned for a couple of things, and on occasion he was wrong. I don't think anybody knows--
- Rubens: I've never heard this.
- Leggett: I don't think anybody knows the story of--we all would have died in the FSM had Farmer backed away from his acceptance to come speak for us, and then to speak, in effect, for Kerr in a "cooling-out" process.
- Rubens: So Kerr, explicitly, is trying to co-opt--
- Leggett: Co-opt Farmer. I'm sure that Farmer, had he spoken for the university administration, and had, you know, dinner with the president afterwards, and so forth, Farmer probably would have gotten a good job offer from somebody within the university. I can tell you right now. Yes.
- Rubens: Say something more about that.
- Leggett: Well, you know, that's what happens oftentimes. When you do a favor for someone as big and powerful as Clark Kerr, on the cooling out of a movement which is seen as a threat by Kerr, then the administration—people, like Kerr, are in a position to subsequently reward the person for having done it. Maybe not immediately, and obviously--but six months to a year.
- Rubens: And what was Farmer right at that time? He was still the secretary of the Student League for Industrial Democracy, SLID. Although he might have also been secretary of the LID--although by that time, the LID was not that big.
- Rubens: But wasn't he associated specifically with civil rights?
- Leggett: He was with CORE, yes. But CORE—again, a nickel-and-dimer in terms of pay status and power.
- Rubens: Well, no one thought of him as--later on he was accused of some kind of--
- Leggett: He took the federal position of assistant secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under Richard Nixon in '68, '69.

- Rubens: Oh, that's it.
- Leggett: That's it. That's the tie. But his defense would be, "Look. It was my chance to be in a power position, to allocate resources and the like in a way so I could benefit concrete groups in need of money. I mean, what the hell's wrong with that?"
- Rubens: Okay. So that's what I mean--there was no sort of cloud over him at this point. In fact, that's why--that's your point, why Kerr would try to co-opt him.
- Leggett: Yes.
- Rubens: Did he stay with you?
- Leggett: I think he stayed at my house. He always slept on my couch.
- Rubens: This is a great story. So this is before, then--it was the reminder of the Greek Theatre, that you told this story.
- Leggett: That was it. And then, subsequently, we had the Greek Theatre episode with Mario Savio, and Scalapino, and Jack Goldberg, and all the rest--
- Rubens: Now, it turns out that Scalapino runs the meeting and--
- Leggett: By the way, people forget that Scalapino had been the great hero. He led the faculty in the early 1950s in opposition to the loyalty oaths. He led the faculty, too, in opposition to Joe McCarthy's effort to smash the Institute of Pacific Relations, the IPR. Scalapino was a real hero on the UC Berkeley campus in the very early fifties. He sure was. It was--
- Rubens: He's not yet identified with the war in Vietnam? Is that--for most students? I don't think so until the spring.
- Leggett: No.
- Rubens: 'Til the war heats up. So are you--
- Leggett: But the institute, the IPR purge of the early fifties was a terrible thing. And the loyalty oaths And he led the opposition.
- Rubens: Was there some expectation that in chairing the meeting at the Greek Theater he would have, --not be a hero again, but at least do the right thing.
- Leggett: Well, no. We didn't have that expectation. We--I remember--
- Rubens: I know that within Poli Sci department meetings, he had condemned FSM, saying "We cannot support this. This is too disruptive," something like that

- Leggett: Yes. But the man played a good role at one time. We had this meeting with Scalapino next to the stage, north side, right there with 15,000 people buzzing in anticipation, but none seeing Scalapino, Mario, and myself arguing over the meeting agenda—hopefully reconstructed to include Mario. What a scene! Mario Savio and I met with Scalapino for fifteen, twenty minutes. No progress. Bob wouldn't budge, this was minutes before the beginning of the meeting, the Greek Theatre episode. Mario had come to me and said, "John, let's go talk to Scalapino. I've asked Scalapino to allow me to make a slight, a short introductory statement. I want to ask people to join us after this mass meeting, to come over to the steps of Sproul Hall for our meeting. And I want you to back me up." Yes. And I said, "Sure, anytime." So he and I, Mario and I, walked over to Scalapino, who was located on the north end of the great stage, the Shakespearean stage, and we walked over to the edge. And there we were. Mario said, "I just--I'm going to ask for just one thing, that's the right to announce our meeting at the conclusion of this meeting." Scalapino said, "No way. You can't have that." So we said, "That's nuts. That's crazy." Obviously you're one of us. But your guy, Clark Kerr, has a monopoly of this meeting and that's not right. University's--"
- Rubens: I think he said it's a faculty meeting. He was alleged to have said, "This in a faculty meeting." and then you said, "So, I'm a faculty member. Can I speak on behalf--or give my view?"
- Leggett: I think I did say something like that. I might well have said it.
- Rubens: But he said no. I mean this was--
- Leggett: That was, it was--he said, "No." And so we all took our positions out in the audience and up on the stage--all these faculty leaders, these deans and so forth, and vice presidents. They're all sitting around in their chairs on stage when Kerr came out and made his presentation--sort of a 'B', 'B+' presentation, from the point of view of conservatives and moderates. All in all, it was a pretty good statement. Kerr's no dummy. And he did a good job, I thought, from his point of view. And as he was walking off the stage, speech made, when who came walking on the stage--it was a magnificent moment of heroism, personal heroism--Mario Savio, all by himself! To my knowledge, he had told nobody about his plan. It was beyond Georges Sorel.
- Rubens: Slowly--
- Leggett: Just slowly came across that stage, and then he got to the microphone. He had a slight stammer, and I remember he leaned over like this, and he was about to say something. And he was trying to get a grip on his voice and so forth--getting ready to state it when these two cops scurry up from the back of the stage--and I guess you were there--they grabbed him--
- Rubens: I don't remember.

Leggett: --and they pulled him over. And Savio's legs sort of went straight up--

Rubens: That's what I remember, yes.

Leggett: And, like this [gestures]. And they pulled him, in his new suit. Mario was wearing a suit, tie, and shirt. They pulled him right through this--all these guys who are sitting in their chairs and so forth. And right through the chairs to the center back door of this Shakespearean stage. So they pull him right through there, whereupon a bunch of us just jumped up from the lawn and said, "What kind of shit is this, man?" And we take off for the stage, and we jump up on the stage, and there's like, chairs flying, bodies flying. And then there's a *New York Times* photo--which my Berkeley-grad daughter later mailed me—it came out in December 1994—my daughter said. I'm standing there next to Mario, like a foot away from him, as these two cops are dragging him past me, through the center door. It was too much. It came out the same time as the thirtieth anniversary of the Free Speech Movement.

Rubens: Somebody said--I've never confirmed this, that he was locked in a closet. He was put in a room.

Leggett: Oh, yes. I remember. I was there for that.

Rubens: Were you--was that true? When they dragged him past you--

Leggett: Past me, and I had the impulse to grab one of the cops that held him. Thank God I squelched it. But you could tell. I'd forgotten the detail until my daughter mailed me the photo--front page either of the first or second section of the *New York Times*, December, 1994.

And so--Savio goes through the middle door, cops carrying, pulling Savio. We jump up, in seconds we were on the stage. We run through that middle door, Savio preceding us, and who'd we come across but Goldberg, Suzanne Goldberg, the girlfriend of Mario, now tailing him through that middle door. And she's pointing down, and there's this body. And it's sort of moving back and forth, with the guy's hands covering his face, and there's a big cop on top of him, really working him over with a club, you know, fists and so forth. And there's another cop like, kicking him. We thought it was Mario. And, I don't know, four, five, six, seven of us—we're yelling, "Get off Mario! Let go! Get off Mario!" Finally the top cop backs away. Who gets up but some guy who is not Mario! [laughs]

Rubens: [laughs] They thought this guy getting pounded was Mario?

Leggett: All of us thought it was Mario. And Suzanne Goldberg was no exception. She was just yelling at the cops. She had called them every name in the book. Oh, did she--a whole litany of curse words. And this big fat cop stopped beating this student and looked up and said to her, "And you call yourself a lady!"

And looked back to reach that beatnik kid when the kid squirmed away at that moment of exchange between the cop and Suzanne. And the kid jumps up and away he went. Obviously, it wasn't Mario--in other words, another nearby guy the police had pounced on seconds earlier--and in all of this you had these photographers up on this mound both above and behind us. [gestures] Here's a mound, here's the wall, here's the concrete flooring. Here's the back of the stage, here's the front of the stage. And they're taking photographs from the behind-the-stage area while this--and the light bulbs, the bulbs from the cameras are being used, then flung, they're coming up and over us, bouncing off the concrete. You can hear it down below, where we had been standing looking at these bulbs that looked something like lobbed grenades being tossed in our direction. And they broke when they hit the concrete floor—"Pop! Pop! Pop!" Some cacophony.

Rubens: Oh, I see.

Leggett: Incredible moment. And then we all--then say, "Where the hell is Mario? We can't find him." They said, "He's in the change room." It's a room used by these theater kids who perform plays and do the Shakespeare thing and so forth. They go back there between scenes and they change their clothes. And, someone says, "He's in there." And I said, "And the police are there with him?" He said, "Yes, the cops got him in there." So I yelled, "The cops are beating the shit out of Mario. He's over here!" Alarmist.

So there were these like, senior professors from geology and so forth, old timers who had been sitting on the stage in support of Clark Kerr. They're all standing around, and they are really pissed off at me for saying the police were beating up on Mario. And then we walk over amidst drivel that came down from one of the radio networks, of all things. They were interviewing this chairman of geology, "He's not being hurt. A police officer would never hurt one of our students." And I said, "Obviously Mario's getting the shit kicked out of him by those cops back there." So, in the midst of this exchange, on live radio, we can hear the radio-covered event as we watch it, who comes up but Dr. Tussman, who's chairman of Mario's department. Mario had been teaching philosophy or math, or both, I forget. And Joseph Tussman was chairman of philosophy or math—maybe both!

Rubens: Philosophy.

Leggett: Philosophy. Tussman comes through, and he walks right up to the cops. Walks through the door of a trailer--it's an old-fashioned, 1938 trailer attached to a wreck of a car. That's where they changed their clothes for their plays. "I am Professor Tussman," and he goes into the change room, then out he comes from the trailer with Mario. And Mario is really disheveled. He's had another suit ripped off of him, you know--another shirt ripped all to hell. So Mario comes out and Tussman's leading him. And the guy from geology says, says over the radio, he says, "Professor Leggett said that Savio was badly beaten

up. Look at him, he's not beaten up." Can you see that on radio? Truth was, Savio did not look beaten. He didn't have a bloody nose, didn't have a black eye, nothing like that. But his clothes are ripped all to hell.

So we follow Tussman and Jack Goldberg, who had arrived. Goldberg, you know, he's such an actor. Goldberg comes out there and he leads Tussman, and Mario, and the others back out on to the stage, in front of these like, fifteen thousand people. And Jack tries to get the microphone away from Scalapino, who won't give it up, to give to Mario. So here's Scalapino clutching the microphone. Here's this tall, lanky Jack Goldberg trying to grab it, take it away from him. And how this whole thing—fiasco is greeted by the clapping, hooting, and crying of 15,000 people there packed like sardines into this Strawberry Canyon arroyo.

Rubens: And then there's a flank of you--?

Leggett: There's a gang of us coming back to the stage, taking over the right flank. Can you dig it? A flank of us coming onto the stage and meanwhile, the support group, the honor guard for Kerr, had pretty much dissolved away to the side. And the chairs are being occupied by the new ruling class. These are like, secondary, tertiary leadership people from the FSM. They're there by the dozens, occupying all of the seats, sitting out there, looking at the audience, which is hooting, and hollering, and yelling, and screaming, crying.

Rubens: You mean secondary, tertiary of the university?

Leggett: No, no. The FSM. The new university has just been born again.

Rubens: They've just filled in?

Leggett: The emerging--

Rubens: They have taken over?

Leggett: They've taken over! I recognize the picket leaders and so forth. They'd taken over and now they're in charge. It's their university. And there were practically no vacant chairs, even though the people who had been there originally had left, had gotten the hell out of there. Their places were taken by the new leadership. And the kids refuse to give back their chairs to these pro-Kerr officials who wanted their chairs back.

Rubens: Oh, what a great story!

Leggett: What a wild historical move! The whole thing should be shot, should be redone. And off to the right were all the fraternity and sorority people. There were just hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of them. They stayed for this

action and they, above all, loved it. They were clapping, they were hollering “Jackie!”

Rubens: They had been converted by then, I think.

Leggett: By Jackie. By Jackie doing a great job to convert them. Off to Bucharest! And so, at that point, Jack and her brother were able to wrestle the microphone away from Scalapino. And delivered it to Tussman, who delivered it to Mario. It was like a hockey game, or a basketball game, or serious soccer passes. Whatever--I said I just couldn't believe it! [chuckling]

Tape 4

--and people silenced. You could hear a pin drop. You know, thousands--nobody had left. People were still there. Twelve, fifteen thousand people out there in this Greek amphitheater--he we are up on this Shakespearian stage. It was like fifteenth-century comedy. Large and archival, times and issues of the mid-late twentieth century and Mario takes the microphone with his disheveled, torn shirt and so forth, and he leans forward and he says, “I just wanted to tell people--I just wanted to tell people that there will be a short meeting after this meeting and the meeting will be sponsored by us, the Free Speech Movement, and all of you are invited! And all of you can speak! And so, come on over and join us on the steps of Sproul Hall!” That was it.

Rubens: And, indeed, that's what happened.

Leggett: That's what happened.

Rubens: People got up and--

Leggett: People went, “Who?”--the wild animal. The wondrously delighted reaction of the crowd was just amazing. I can still hear that collective voice go up like, “Whoo!” [laughs] And away we went, you know, down the hill, plunk, plunk, plunk, to the Sproul Hall steps. And it was like the beginning of a new era. The sun was approaching the Golden Gate Bridge, which you can still see, you know, from Sproul Hall. Three California assemblymen got up there and made little speeches to greet the new era, the new epoch was launched. We were launched. And a lot of us have yet to land.

Rubens: And assemblymen, meaning--?

Leggett: A California assemblyman from San Jose,--

Rubens: Oh, really? You didn't mean ASUC reps?

Leggett: Yes, regular assemblymen from Sacramento. There were three of them. But one guy in particular stood out--this guy who was in the lower house from San

Jose. He spoke. It was wonderful. They all sounded like Golden Age revolutionaries. Their speeches just sparked of victory, finally, over the forces of reaction, for the voices of equality. Justice. Finally, we are entering the golden moment. We had vanquished all our enemies of class and race fairness.

Rubens: This kind of language was used?

Leggett: Yes, yes. It's all there. And we all took turns at the microphone, but I think, perhaps, the most articulate was this guy from San Jose. This guy had been like, you know, a good liberal democrat for many years, had done his share of compromising, and this and that to win nickels and dimes. But in this case, he did not have to compromise. We'd won the whole fuckin' thing, man. It was ours. And people then were swarming down Telegraph Avenue. They were carrying flags, a lot of farm worker flags--they were carrying red flags, black flags--This is before the Maoist moment of '67, '68 when there was much more of that kind of presentation of self wrapped around black flags, red flags--it was like a moment of great victory and there were the flags. We thought we'd won everything, including a great song on San Jose, composed some say on the Sproul Hall steps that very late afternoon, "Do You Know the Way to San Jose?"

Rubens: What a great story. No I don't. But I want to lead you from that just to then where the victory was sealed with the great faculty--overwhelming faculty vote.

Leggett: Yes, faculty vote.

Rubens: But just before that, I have not gotten corroboration of this, but I interviewed Bob Price, who was a graduate student in political science and is now the chairman of the political science department. He said what he remembered distinctly overhearing a conversation, as they walked away from the Greek Theater, a conversation between Clark Kerr, I believe, Scalapino, and Herb McClosky who was going to be the chair of the poli sci department. They went up to the top of Barrows, where there was this beautiful room with a view of Sproul Plaza and the Bay, and they're discussing the fiasco at the Greek Theater, and McClosky says to Kerr, "There's your public." And he's pointing to this rally that you said Savio had announced.

Leggett: Yes, yes. It was a black and red republic.

Rubens: I haven't gotten a corroboration on that story. But do you remember, then, the faculty meeting? Or is there anything that jogs your memory between--I think it's just a couple of days, between that event and then the December 8th faculty meeting, when they support of the FSM demands.

- Leggett: Yes, the faculty vote. Well, I thought we'd won the whole thing with the Greek amphitheater. That Mario had just finished them off—no vote needed. And the faculty vote of the next day, the finishing touch.
- Rubens: Had you particularly been in faculty--gone to faculty senate meetings?
- Leggett: No, I didn't trust them. I didn't trust them. I didn't like them. And I felt they were going nowhere. History was on our side.
- Rubens: The Academic Senate had established a committee to determine the proper discipline action for the students who were cited.
- Leggett: I got involved in that thing in early October, as you mentioned to me, and so forth. And it was like, partially painful--I really criticized myself for having gotten involved with some of the manipulations--I had been used. People like myself were used by folks who had a wholly different kind of agenda from what I had--people who wanted to cool out the movement, shut it down, and--
- Rubens: Now, who are you referring to when you say that? Or--you don't have to say names, but--
- Leggett: Oh, people like the vice president. I think, too, that--well, there were some faculty in sociology who were in that boat. I don't want to use names.
- Rubens: No, you don't have to--but who are saying to you, you're close with the students, use your influence to--
- Leggett: Yes. There was an element of that. "Bring him along—he has some influence over the students, and he took part in the demonstrations in San Francisco, took part in the Jack London Square stuff, let's bring him along." There was that nickel and dime kind of thing and I thought to myself, "Stay away from them."
- Rubens: "Nickel and dime" meaning petty--
- Leggett: Petty bullshit. Yes. The way to get things done is to manipulate A around B to achieve C amongst faculty--when the important thing was to, you know, meet the president head on. Beat him. And that's what we did.
- Rubens: Now, I just want to go in two directions here. One is, how did it come that you did that set of interview questions for the attorneys? That was the fifteen-page set of questions. Was that--? That was for once you have the arrestees. How did that get generated, that you would do a survey of--?
- Leggett: Well, I've had contact with some of the attorneys. What the hell are their names again?

- Rubens: Well, one was Burnstein, Mal Burnstein--
- Leggett: Mal Burnstein had been my attorney in various cases, mine included.
- Rubens: Oh. He was with Bob Treuhافت's firm, but Treuhافت, I think, had been arrested and so couldn't serve as attorney.
- Leggett: Yes. I knew Treuhافت through the Berkeley Co-op. But I didn't know him as well as I knew Burnstein, and I truly like Burnstein. He has been a real people's attorney.
- Rubens: Did he ask you--?
- Leggett: I had an assistant, a reading assistant, Donna Haber, who knew both Treuhافت and Burnstein. As I recall, it was my assistant who introduced me to Burnstein.
- Rubens: So that was drawn up, basically as a tool, I don't mean it in any derogatory way, to learn who you are dealing with.
- Leggett: Oh, absolutely. It was drawn up for the attorneys.
- Rubens: And then, so in looking at this paper that you gave at the 1966 American Sociological Society meeting--but this is such a badly xeroxed copy that I can't quite get what the *Natural History of an Institutional Arrest and the Lessons of the Sproul Hall Sit-In* is about.
- Leggett: What I'm going to do is xerox a copy of the printed paper. Later this was published in a book that I did called *Taking State Power* published by Harper and Row Publishers, 1973 or 1974.
- It was a black and red book. It was a real anarcho-syndicalist book, perhaps one of the most radical political sociology texts ever to hit the market.
- Rubens: And was that how it was used, as a text?
- Leggett: Oh, yes.
- Rubens: What was that essay was about? Was it based on what you learned from that questionnaire you had developed?
- Leggett: Number one, the book was called *Taking State Power* and it's all about the different roads to power. It was--
- Rubens: International?

Leggett: International, yes--but international revolutionary movements and how they were grounded, how they originated amongst people that had been organized at the pre-private level of social organization, nonetheless, dynamited from their positions by the fierce forces of imperialism and colonialism. Rosa Luxemburg writes about them in her great work on the accumulation of capital, especially chapter 27. So, it's a--in many ways it's a Rosa Luxemburg book. But also, it has a lot of anthropology, a lot of materialist cultural anthropology. So, it's part that and--but it is concerned with the ongoing global struggle against the forces of the military and the forces of the police. In the case of the forces of the police, the battle can take place in Tokyo, can take place in Bombay, can take place in Johannesburg, Montreal, Vancouver, Berkeley. When those clashes between the police and the demonstrators take place, you can observe a natural history, a kind of recurrent sequence--

Rubens: That's what you mean by the natural history, I see. Okay.

Leggett: Yes, recurrent sequence. It's like when you hit the key of C on a keyboard piano, you get a certain kind of sound. You put your foot down on a pedal, you get a resonance of that sound that's predictable and it's real--the real material is causal sequential stuff. Sure enough, in the case of the arrest process, this is what happens. You get stage A, gets followed by B, C, D, E, F, G. Initially, as I recall, the police send in a warning, people ignore the warning. The warning, in fact, upsets them even more. Then the police wade in. There's a struggle. Then the police grab people, beat the hell out of them. Throw them down the steps, out the windows, and so on and so forth, if need be. And the police then pull back, once they've broken the collective elan of the ones who are defending their new found turf. Once they've beaten them up and hurt them and so on, they then go to work on the fragmented individuals here and there.

There's a shift in police strategy away from dissolution of ties amongst the collective entities and there's a focus on the single person fragments. Then they go to work on them, too. They work them over and in the process they dissolve the collective opposition. But that is only momentary. There are battles being waged elsewhere and the battle may well be waged at that particular site again, if not in the short haul, in the long haul. It's a permanent revolution. It's a microcosm of a moment within the permanent revolution, Trotsky's term; that's what it is.

Rubens: I see. And it is, speaking of that moment, it's taking a look at a very condensed time, but unpacking it in a way. Seeing it in a sequence of stages and really--

Leggett: That's right. You unpack it. It's been condensed. You unpack it and see the sequence.

- Rubens: Firstly, you include just amazing quotes about how brutal this was. The students, it's their own voices. And then you're talking about pre-transfer, non-face-to-face encounters--These must be the words of the disciplinary letter of the time, tertiary transfer.
- Leggett: Oh, those are the terms that we invented. Those are like, the analytical categories that we invented.
- Rubens: Why are they so, to my way of thinking, non-descriptive, so--?
- Leggett: Antiseptic?
- Rubens: Yes, yes. And also behavioral science-y?
- Leggett: Well, they're really rooted, I think, in the language of Georg Simmel, great German sociologist. Did you ever read Simmel on dyads and triads?
- Rubens: I haven't.
- Leggett: That's how he goes about describing things. A lot of us had read him and a book by Wolfe--I forget his first name--
- Rubens: You had mentioned him as one of your heroes.
- Leggett: Yes. Simmel's one of my heroes. And Wolfe. That's a different—There's Eric Wolfe, who did the monumental work on *Europe and the People Without History*. And then there's another Wolf, who's a famous German sociologist, an armchair sociologist. But an anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist who analyzed the British wars against the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs.
- Rubens: Okay, so let me just restate this. There's a book by, not Eric Wolfe, but another Wolf who analyzes Simmel and, in fact, your terms come from Simmel?
- Leggett: Yes. That's the sociology of Georg Simmel. It deals with space, time, and motion and transfer.
- Rubens: Well, that leads me exactly to another question I had for you. I'm wondering if there would be any chance you'd have a syllabus from your "Introductory Sociology" or "Race Relations"?
- Leggett: From that period?
- Rubens: Yes. And if not--I mean, maybe look in your papers and see, but my--
- Leggett: I'll try to find them. See, I moved around, back and forth, so much back in those days.

- Rubens: You were teaching your politics, though.
- Leggett: I was teaching my politics and we were being fired and moving from campus to campus, school to school. I think certain things just got lost. But, who knows? My ex-wife may have some of that stuff.
- Rubens: I didn't quite understand the way in which a social scientific look at sociology can also have--does not exclude or preclude a materialist, socialist based consciousness.
- Leggett: That's right.
- Rubens: This point is made in the interview I did with Bill Sewell, who was studying French history at Berkeley during the FSM.
- Leggett: There's a famous Bolshevik, named Bukharin. I used to use Bukharin in my classes in 1967, '68, when I taught at Simon Fraser University. Bukharin has a book called *Historical Materialism*, as opposed to dialectical materialism. It's called *Historical Materialism* and I used it in my classes. The book--I mean the categories, you know "on transfer" and so forth, come out of Simmel but, in a way, out of the imperialism essays by Bukharin.
- But a lot of us had been really Simmel and Bukharin and that's where many of our ideas came from. The ideas didn't come from Trotsky, didn't come from Lenin, didn't come from Rosa Luxemburg.
- Rubens: There's always a sort of history to these things that--
- Leggett: You better believe it.
- Rubens: I'd like to get back to the politics of space at Berkeley. In an interview I did with Norman Jacobson in the political science department, he talked about how lively the space, and therefore the disciplines, were when political science and sociology--before Barrows Hall, when they were in South Hall. He said the great tragedy of Barrows was that sociology was all on one floor, political science was all on one floor, business--and there was no longer that kind of integration and lively thought that had taken place before. And he was suggesting that it allowed for the political divisions within some of these department to harden because you didn't work it out in your hall.
- Leggett: That's right.
- Rubens: I would think also that the times, how fast everything was moving and how much the bar was being raised also, that went into that.
- Leggett: That's it, yes. I sometimes compare Barrows Hall with--what the hell was it called?--South Angel Hall at the University of Michigan. They built a brand

new set up, offices, floor by floor, at Michigan. Superficially, the overall structure was like Barrows Hall--on top was this department, then this one, then this one, then that one. However, there were--there was a lot of interaction vertically, from floor to floor. People who had positions in psychology often times had positions in social psych and people in social psych had positions in sociology. People in sociology had ties to people in poli sci. So, all the time you had this horizontal division of fragmentation of departments. Yet you had vertical intercommunication going on across floors. I don't think that Barrows Hall allowed for that.

Rubens: Now, probably, it's going to do a lot of injustice to condense what happens to you after the Free Speech Movement. But there was an implication that you start moving a lot. Was there a political repercussion for you after the Free Speech Movement?

Leggett: I got my--when I got my FBI dossier in the mid-seventies, mid-late seventies, under the Carter administration, I wrote away, I got a copy--I got an ACLU format to fill out to mail to the FBI to get my FBI record.

Rubens: Under the Freedom of Information--

Leggett: Number one, what they had. Number two, I got it. Number three, a bunch of materials were penciled out by the federal police. You couldn't sometimes comprehend what was left, a bunch of fragments. But, what came through was that, in 1965, they had zeroed in on me--in '65, that early. They had said that I was one of those persons who should be picked up, in the event of a national emergency--only they didn't use the phrase national emergency; in the event of like, a massive national contention, something like that--it was national emergency from their point of view, this person "should be detained by any means necessary."

Rubens: That phrase was there--"any means necessary"?

Leggett: Yes, "by any means necessary"--"should be detained by any means necessary." 1965.

Rubens: Now, we know you'd become involved in the anti-war movement and I assume you had become involved, with the Faculty Peace Committee--

Leggett: And the farm worker movement, too. In all of '65.

Rubens: So how do you come to move to Simon Fraser University? What prompts that?

Leggett: Well, I had gotten the word like, in 1963, '64 that I would not be getting tenure at UC Berkeley.

Rubens: Oh, really.

Leggett: I knew that early, maybe that late, that I would not be getting tenure, that a committee of senior faculty had met unbeknownst to me and had made the decision not to even discuss the possibility of tenure for--

Rubens: Did someone kindly tell you that?

Leggett: I think I got a letter. But ordinarily, what happens is that when you go up for tenure, when you are considered for tenure, you go up for tenure--

Rubens: You present a case?

Leggett: --case for tenure, you fill out forms. You forward to them all your publications, you know, letters of recommendation and so on and so forth. In our case, there were like, three faculty persons there, to my knowledge, none of us got that option. We were brought in by Lipset like, spontaneously, according to the former chairman, according to my buddy, the football player from the University of Chicago, Blumer. Lipset had gotten the impulse to bring us in from the outside. They brought us in and then Lipset got the impulse to get rid of us. That's what Blumer said.

Rubens: Did you literally experience a falling out with Lipset, or was it just obvious, over the politics?

Leggett: I think it was obvious. We had no arguments, nothing like that. He invited me to his son's bar mitzvah, which he didn't have to do, right? And parties, and stuff like that. We had cordial relations. After he moved to Stanford, he'd send me the stuff he'd written and I'd send him some of the stuff I'd been writing. I probably could have gotten on there, at Stanford, had I wanted to go there.

Rubens: Really?

Leggett: Of course, I didn't. I did not want to go to Stanford, not in a million years.

Rubens: I just want to ask you, too--and this sounds so reductionist, I'm just not quite phrasing it the way I wish to--knowing that you were not going to get tenure, that could have influenced your participation in the FSM either way. You could have become more conservative to be able to get a job somewhere else, or you could be more--

Leggett: Precisely. Precisely. My reaction was, "Fuck them all. Fuck them all, man."

Rubens: You had two more years on your contract, "what the hell?" sort of?

Leggett: I'm going to go for a book contract with *Class, Race, and Labor*. I'm going to get it. I'm going to get a job somewhere else. Lots of other faculty were being

fired from their jobs by that time, '64, '65. People were being fired from their jobs but getting jobs elsewhere. We had friends amongst the faculty. We had friends amongst administrators--administrators across the country who were dying to hire us.

Rubens: So you were--what? Recruited, or it was mutual--Simon Fraser?

Leggett: I was recruited by one of the leading sociologists of class in the world, T.B. Bottomore, kind of a conservative guy in many ways, but a guy with a real lot of power. Bottomore said, "I want this guy," and that was it.

Rubens: And how long were you at Simon Fraser?

Leggett: Yes. I was there for four years.

Rubens: And then, from there to Rutgers?

Leggett: No. I led a--helped lead--a strike.

Rubens: [laughs] Getting in trouble everywhere!

Leggett: Yes. That's true. That's what people say. But I didn't make the trouble. The trouble was in motion, I just joined it. So--

Rubens: We'll do that another time. So you're four years—it's about 1970 is when you go to Rutgers?

Leggett: 1971 I go to Rutgers. I was unemployed for a while, in the winter of 1970. I was unemployed for about four months, couldn't get work. But then, a buddy of mine, a guy with whom I had worked in the Civil Rights Movement in the Bay Area and in Sacramento— He had gotten a job with the Sacramento State University and UC Davis and they got me on to a job at UC Davis in Black Studies.

Rubens: That could be done still, then.

Leggett: Could be done, and the president had said, at UC Davis, "You can have anybody you want. But not John Leggett."

Rubens: Well, I don't even mean that you could be hired so easily, but that a white could be teaching Black Studies.

Leggett: That was an issue. This nine-member student committee for Black Studies went to the president. The president said, "You know, you can have any black guy you want. You can even have so-and-so," who was like a firebrand. I forget what the hell his name was--eat 'em up, burn 'em up, burn 'em down kind of guy. A real black militant. "You can have him, you can't have

Leggett.” So the student leader of UC Davis Black Studies said--this guy was a basketball player, a basketball star--says to the president, “Black power means the right to hire anybody, even John Leggett.” And, so that was it.

Rubens: And you did--so you taught at Davis?

Leggett: They got me on. I had there a number of friends. There was this guy who was--even these people who don't know you, but intervene for you?

Rubens: Yes.

Leggett: That's this one guy was like, a vice president, or he was a dean, dean or vice president just intervened and he ran the whole thing for me. Like throwing blocks this way and that way to help me, making phone calls. I didn't even know it. I didn't know him. I found out about it only later on.

Rubens: Now, speaking of finding to return to your FBI file, which said of you “he's the kind of person who should be rounded up in the case of a national emergency”

Leggett: Oh, yes. That--1965, my FBI file. Don't forget it. And what it meant for people like him who defended me.

Rubens: And why? So was there an indication of why? Do you think it's because of anti-war activity?

Leggett: I don't know, I'm not sure who the hell did it. But this is like, as I recall, late '65, and they had not only that statement but a statement about things I had said to the press on the war in Vietnam. We were shifting over to the war thing and the Vietnam Day Committee demonstrations in San Francisco and elsewhere against the war. We took turns speaking against the war.

Rubens: Did you speak at the teach-in against the war at Cal? It was the second teach-in in the country. Michigan had the first, but--

Leggett: It was a big--yes, Michigan had the first one. I was--I remember, I was there at the Berkeley teach-in. But there were just giants there, like Isaac Deutscher--what, they had--He did the biography of Trotsky, three-volume biography of Trotsky--

Rubens: Well, that's Draper, isn't it?

Leggett: No. He did a book called, *Russia: What's Next?* Isaac Deutscher was an old Trot and famous scholar. I think he came from England, originally. Anyway, so he spoke, and it's like, national luminaries, such as Norman Mailer, one after another just knocking the socks off all of us. I may have spoken, like as an afterthought.

- Rubens: Somehow, things you said to the press had--
- Leggett: And in my classes. Those police snoop folks were in our classes, they still are.
- Rubens: Well, that's what I wanted to ask you.
- Leggett: They still are in our classes.
- Rubens: Really? You had said earlier that in your student activities that you had a fear, but here at Berkeley, were you aware of, and did you think about CIA, FBI presence?
- Leggett: All the time. Like, our phones didn't work right, and so you were always aware of the fact--then I caught the UC Berkeley head janitor for Barrows Hall going through my papers.
- Rubens: No, no!
- Leggett: Yes, yes!
- Rubens: When do you think this was?
- Leggett: I called my attorney, Mal Burnstein! I said, "Mal," I said, "I just caught the head janitor of Barrows Hall (this was eleven o'clock at night), the light's on in my office, I go up in there--"
- And he said, "Oh, John, not again." Burnstein's just buried in work. All the people getting arrested, and busted, and this and that.
- Rubens: Sure, yes. Oh and this trial, the eight hundred, seven hundred, went on forever.
- Leggett: Eight hundred, whatever. A nightmare!
- Rubens: Yes.
- Leggett: And I said, "Let's go after the sons of bitches." And he said, "Okay."
- Rubens: How could you prove this?
- Leggett: He admitted to it. The janitor admitted to having gone through my papers. The janitor actually begged me not to turn him in. I said, "Fuck you."
- Rubens: Did he say why he had gone through--?
- Leggett: I don't know. The light was on over my desk and the papers were all over my desk--and, I just caught him, cold. What the hell?

- Rubens: But he never said why? There was no--?
- Leggett: They had purchased for him a brand-new very expensive motorcycle and a new motorcycle jacket--
- Rubens: Oh, no!
- Leggett: Where was this money coming from? My reaction was, this guy could be a stool pigeon, could be an informer. Sure enough, he was. Fuck him. So, what happened was, he got relieved from that position. He became an ordinary janitor for a while, at least for a while.
- Rubens: Because he's a black guy?
- Leggett: No, no. He's an Italian guy. Italian or Greek, I forget--southern European type, and in many ways, a nice guy. And openly sympathetic to the anti-war movement--
- Rubens: But it's a job!
- Leggett: But it's a job! Then I should have said, "Okay, give me a break!" Anyways, so, the case sits there in the court, my case against him, and against the university for allowing him to do this--the university for saying it's okay for him to go through my papers. That was the judge's position. The judge's position was that because the guy, a university employee, had gone through the papers within a university office, within a university building, ergo the case was not one of civil liberties but rather the right of the employer to go through the written materials of the person employed from and at that site. That was their position. We thought the judgment was crazy. But the university would not back away from that position. And then one summer, the summer of 1972, when I had gone to Europe for two months, would you believe the moment I got out of the country [smacks his hands] they called up the case, they told me to show up. Of course, I didn't get the announcement of the need for me to appear in court there in San Francisco, that's where it was. And the court ruled against me, and for the university administration. And that was it. But there was a settlement, like two dollars, or three dollars. And Burnstein had--he said, "Leggett, I want you to sign this goddamned thing because I'm going to put this in my account." I said, "Sure, Mal." I signed the thing--like a two- or three-dollar settlement.
- Rubens: But who do you literally--was this a university agent? I mean, were they acting on behalf of the university as opposed to the FBI, CIA?
- Leggett: They could have been working for all of them. By that time, you just don't know. By that time I was very advanced on their list. You had no idea, however, about who was calling the shots.

Rubens: Did you see it anywhere else on campus? Were you aware of it in '64, '65

[tape interruption]

Leggett: Yes. I got a phone call from someone at the Livermore Lab. I didn't know who the hell they were. They said come on over and just tell us about the Free Speech Movement and the Sproul Hall sit-in. I drove over to Livermore and made my presentation. We had dinner, drinks. They liked my visit, quite the occasion. I didn't know who they were, didn't care. I just did it for nothing, went over and talked to them.

Rubens: Yes, spread the word.

Leggett: Spread the word.

Rubens: Yes. Up at LBL, there was also someone named [Charles West] Churchman. He had come out of the business school and he was very iconoclastic. Brad Cleaveland I think claimed that he knew Churchman was a government informant.. And I don't know what he was doing. What could he have learned. But, anyway--

Leggett: There was a lot of that.

Rubens: There was a lot of that. People were just aware of it, and phones didn't work, and--

Leggett: But that time, you just keep moving. They were all over the phones, offices. You just had to be careful, make as few mistakes as possible, and keep you eye on the important thing, which was bringing the war in Indochina to a successful ending.

Rubens: By the way, do you remember working with any faculty, particularly Reggie Zelnick, Peter Dale Scott? Those are the two that I know.

Leggett: No, I worked pretty much by myself, except with--

Rubens: Franz Schurmann. Was he in sociology? I keep forgetting.

Leggett: Yes. I'd talk to Schurmann. Good guy, yes. Schurmann is a brilliant sociologist. A student of Chinese class relations and a good person.

Rubens: I want to conclude with your assessment of Lipset and the sociology department, and what happens to sociology. Could you as a sociologist, let alone a participant, make an observation that there seemed to be more New York, Jewish kids who were prominent in the movement? It's not exactly true, because the Goldbergs came out of L.A., and, but--

- Leggett: I think that a lot of the kids in the FSM, and equivalent movements in southern California, were like, first, second generation kids--that a lot of them had their roots in the old American Labor Party, the ALP, and if not in the ALP, had some roots in the Communist movement, and some in the Socialist Party thing, some in the Social Democratic movements. They, their parents, their grandparents, had made the great trek from New York to L.A. and the Bay Area in the late thirties, forties, and above all, during the Joe McCarthy period, the Smith Act, Joe McCarthy period, 1941 to, you know, 1955. Yes. I think that that's speculation, but there was a lot of that. And I think that on the West Coast, people definitely benefited as a consequence. The West Coast has benefited from this immigration of Jewish intellectuals from greater New York, greater London--that Charlie Chaplin song and so forth--Paulette Goddard, a lower east side Manhattan person by origin. People like Brecht and Kurt Weil, wasn't it that they wind up going to Los Angeles, and L.A., and they have a momentary but deep impact on the culture of films.
- Rubens: Well, I don't know. I think you look at any social movement and you do see a lot of Jews. It's just the civil rights movement, originally--so I don't think it would be so. But I just wondered if you had some kind of sense--you were coming from Detroit, aware of--
- Leggett: Oh, yes. There were a lot of Jewish intellectuals in Detroit who were involved in the movement, who were involved in the American Civil Liberties Union, involved in the National Guardian--support the National--what's his name? Wellman--
- Rubens: Well, gee. Sol Wellman of course. But then, of course, Schneiderman, who was the head of the Communist Party in California, that's where they came from--
- Leggett: Yes, that's where they came from, Detroit.
- Rubens: Well, a lot of Communists had gone there because it was the industrial center.
- Leggett: Illustrative was Marty Glaberman. He went from New York City to Flint, then from Flint to Detroit. He shared a Trot perspective with a lot of people in greater Detroit. In Detroit he first worked in the shop, then taught at Wayne State University. So, yes. Sure. Tons of Jewish intellectuals came out of the East Coast, came out of the Midwest, wind up in Los Angeles and San Francisco. In some cases, the Party sends them there. I had a lot of buddies who were Trots, and they originated in New York, and they were sent to Detroit. Then some of them were sent to Los Angeles; of these some were sent to San Francisco. Wherever the Party sent them, they went.
- Rubens: Well, did your FBI record at least have some evidence or comment on that you had been in YSL and the Socialist Party? Or were they more concerned with your contemporary—

- Leggett: Yes--my shit-kicking activities, than they were with affiliations. They tended to downplay the affiliation thing and they went after me for, "This man helped organize," you know, "farm workers in Delano, California, and picket lines in San Francisco and Oakland. This man was threatened by Harry Bridges for having gotten the longshoremen to refuse to handle the grapes in San Francisco," et cetera, just on and on and on.
- Rubens: Was threatened by Harry Bridges?
- Leggett: I was threatened by Harry Bridges.
- Rubens: Oh, tell me about that.
- Leggett: I love Harry. Bridges was always--Bridges had a speech writer from the Blue Network, I think, the old Blue Network, or the Green Network, whatever it was called.
- Rubens: Oh, one of those radio--?
- Leggett: Yes, yes. And I got to know him in Berkeley. And this guy sort of came in and attached himself to the Free Speech Movement.
- Rubens: Not the anarchist longshoreman?
- Leggett: This guy worked for Pacifica Radio. KPFA.
- Rubens: Yes, I know who you mean. I think it's Sid Roger.
- Leggett: And--Sid Roger! Yes! So I "got down" with Sid Roger. And I liked him very much and he liked me--you know, like two personalities just sort of harmonized right away? That was us. What happened was that we had gotten the longshoremen in Oakland to refuse to handle grapes, to put in warehouses and trans-ship to boats to places overseas. And the company took this fact to some federal agency which fined the International Longshoremen's Union \$100,000.
- Rubens: Whoa!
- Leggett: Whoa! Then, when that happened, Sid Roger came to me and said, "Hey, Leggett. We understand you were involved in that." I was. I can't say I did it for money. He said, "Harry's asking me to ask you," (he used to write speeches for Harry), "Harry's asked me to ask you, to tell you, don't do it again. Don't do it again." He didn't say, "Or else," you know--"Don't do it again." That was enough for me. But, in December of 1965, when we get a phone call from these organizers in the Bay Area to come to Pier 37, in San Francisco, to prevail upon the longshoremen to refuse to handle the grapes being trans-shipped from these trucks to warehouses to ships. We cooperated. These were very expensive grapes. And so I said, "Fine. I'll show up." So I go over to San Francisco and David Goines is there, the author of this

new book on the Free Speech Movement. Goines is there and Goines' buddy Bennett is there. So, we're there and this attorney for DiGiorgio Corporation comes on to us, and he's passing out these bonded paper statements that say that if you go to the longshoremen, and you ask the longshoremen to refuse to handle the grapes, then you're covered by, you are enjoined, by this court order issued in the southern San Joaquin Valley--you're enjoined to cease and desist what you are doing. Otherwise, the attorney for DiGiorgio will arrest you--it will be a citizen's arrest and that he will prevail upon the police to honor that citizen's arrest. And you can be certain that you will go to jail. So--

Rubens: Is this the round robin? Is this where--I mean, we come back to you when you were arrested and were late for Petras' dissertation meeting?

Leggett: Yes! This is the round robin!

Rubens: This is going to tie up the interview. Yes.

Leggett: So, I give the ILWU longshoremen the leaflet and said, "Holy shit, what am I going to do?" And so I said, "Fuck it." That is, I'm not going to obey this court order. I'm not going to obey this company attorney. And there's these two Irish cops looking at me, sort of wondering, "Is that guy Leggett a real chicken shit Irishman, or is he Irish," said the two Irish cops. Thing about the Irish, they look at each other and they figure out, is this guy worth anything or is he a piece of shit, you know? You want to know. And, I'm not going to honor this court order, especially in front of these two Irish cops! By that time the whole business had become a nationality question, not Joe's but mine! So, he says--so the attorney for DiGiorgio, this huge attorney says, "Okay, I place you under arrest." And he puts his hand out toward the two police officers. "Come get this guy. Put him in the wagon." So I turned, and there's Goines. Goines is looking at me, and his buddy Bennett is looking at me. I went like this, "Come on!"

So Goines says, "Okay, I'll come." Goines is going to join me no matter what I said, because we'd come across together in the demonstrations. We're like "comrades of the trenches." And Goines comes in, his buddy Bennett comes in. They bust all three of us. They take us and they put us in the San Francisco jail. And on the way to the police pound, the two police officers are feeling awfully guilty about this. They turn to me and they said, "Oh, do you have an attorney ready to bail you out once you get there?" And I said, "I don't think so." And the cop said, "Well, you know, ordinarily, you guys have a police officer contact, an attorney to bail you out once you get there." I said, "Well, not this time." And he said, "Too bad. Would you care for a cigarette?" Would you care for a cigarette! So I said, "Sure." The guy gets me a cigarette. I light up. Goines lights up. Bennett lights up. I don't think any of us smoked, but we're smoking cigarettes in the back of a police car, and off we go to jail. They book us and put us in a cell.

And along the lines there, along the way, I made a phone call to Malcolm, to Mal Burnstein. Burnstein's secretary said he had gone over to San Francisco to bail us out, could not find us and was now returning to his office in Berkeley. I said, "Oh, Christ. We need him." So then, Burnstein had to go back to Berkeley, turn around and return to San Francisco. By the time he'd got there, I'd found my checkbook and I'd written a check to get Goines and Bennett and me out of jail. And we had time only to--but I contacted my wife, as I recall, and she'd put us in the van. I guess we passed Mal on the bridge. It was the third or fourth time going back and forth across the bridge. He was pissed. But we--they rushed me to the--James Petras' doctoral exam, about to begin at Cal, his doctoral thesis exam. I figured it'd be all over, I would have missed it and so forth. No--

- Rubens: They waited for you! [laughs]
- Leggett: [laughs] They waited for me to show up from jail, from the San Francisco jail!
- Rubens: That's a great story.
- Leggett: Great story.
- Rubens: And that is where we started. There's no question.
- Leggett: That's where we started.
- Rubens: We've covered so much. I have a trivial question. Do you remember seeing Bob Dylan and Joan Baez on Sproul Hall steps?
- Leggett: I was standing right next to Joan Baez, I was that close to her. In fact, I was supposed to speak—
- Rubens: There must be a picture of it--let's see if you're in my picture.
- Leggett: I'm right next to her.
- Rubens: Oh, great. I've written to her for an interview.
- Leggett: Yes, right. I was on her left-hand side, her left arm.
- Rubens: Well, she was there a couple times. But you mean before they went into the Sproul Hall, the big time?
- Leggett: Yes. And I was supposed to speak. And they'd asked me to come to speak. I had quickly scribbled down something to say when someone already grabbed the microphone to speak. And someone walked up and said, "Hey, John. Mario's ready." Mario's on. I was upstaged by Mario and his great speech.

- Rubens: And his greatest speech in his life.
- Leggett: His greatest speech ever, of his life--he just--and that was it. He was just ready to go.
- Rubens: I have something in my notes is from Maurice Isserman's *Toward a New Left* and he's talking about once SDS was formed and then people went of into ERAP, the Educational Research and Action Project. It said, "most of the group's founding generation joined the projects. Haber and Max Heirich were among the holdouts and thus removed themselves from close involvement with the very campus-based movement they had done so much to bring into existence." I didn't realize that in Port Huron it was so university-based.
- Leggett: Yes, it was. But it split by '66. It split. You had at least two or three or four important factions within SDS for that time. The one being your Progressive Labor section of SDS (Maoist).
- But there was like, a worker's caucus. There was like, the original caucus, which was university senate and called for new university thought. And then you had another one, a worker's faction and it was to go and organize the workers at the point of production and within their neighborhoods. And people did things like go to Chicago, north side of Chicago, and they did that in places other than Newark. Some went to Newark.
- Rubens: My husband went into--worked at the Fremont GM plant.
- Leggett: There you go. And then, the third one was like the progressive labor, the PL thing, which stressed the importance of going and working with the blue collar population, the laboring class. But it also had a kind of internationalist flair, and called for revolutionary politics of the Maoist genre in many parts of the world, perhaps someday in the U.S. Then there was the fourth group, the Weather Underground people. That was separate from the PL--separate from the worker's group, and, as you say, a little bit later. So there are four different groups. People like Haber basically remained university-centered. Although, he got in--he went into becoming a skilled craftsman, furniture--
- Rubens: By the time he comes out to California.
- Leggett: Out to California--skilled craft work, less into the university thing. I know him very, very well. He and his second wife always come to my house, two or three times a year, they're at my house. His wife is a French Parisian. She's a Parisian Trotskyist with the name Huguenot, which, that's my family background, Huguenot (father), Catholic (mother), Irish (both sides), Scot (both sides), black (father's side), Native American (father), and native Canadian (father). German (father), and Jewish and English (father). But especially Huguenot, the French Protestant.

And time and again I've had Al and his wife, Huguenot, to the sessions, to the meetings and so forth. They always do splendidly. Yes. (Most recently, the Association for Humanist Sociology meeting, November 2003, Burlington, Vermont. He and she did quite well, tops.) They spend a lot of time in France and a lot of time in Israel. They have friends there, in both places, and they go visit.

Rubens: Now, John, you then started to mind your p's and q's a bit more at Rutgers, or would Rutgers tolerate more room, or the times had changed? You wrote a book on Allende, published in 1978.

Leggett: Yes. It's called *Allende: His Exit and Our Times*, and it's all about the *New York Times* and it's maltreatment of Allende and its endorsement of Pinochet. It's a wild book. We really go after *The Times* in that volume. We brought out a couple thousand copies. They sold. But, we could not get a major publisher to bring it out. No one like Harper and Row, no one like Oxford--

Rubens: So who did publish it?

Leggett: Well, just a small co-op outfit in New Brunswick. We did get another outfit, about a year ago, with money. And they took it, and they actually set it up. And they took my new concluding chapter, they grafted it on to the end of it. It looked quite good and they were making all kinds of plans on distribution. And they showed it to *The Times*--and *The Times*--"you touch this and I'm going to haul your ass over the coals." You know, like, "It's going to cost you \$385 per quotation and he's got two hundred quotation quotes, quotation elements in the fucking book. So don't fuck with that stuff." That was the message. And that's probably the reality.

A friend of mine, Dr. John Pollock from Stanford University, a guy in poli sci, he had been a professor at Rutgers, did some critical stuff in *The Nation*, *The Nation* magazine, on *The New York Times*. I mean he really took them to task for their reporting on Chile and Allende. Son of a bitch, *The New York Times* called Pollock into New York and they sat him down in an all-day seminar kind of context. They quizzed him for hours. And Pollock, though, a student from Stanford University, a Latin American specialist and so forth, a guy who really knows his stuff, he hung in there. He didn't back away at all. Two years later, he's up for tenure, and he gets shot down. There was absolutely no reason why he should have been shut down for tenure at Rutgers, or anywhere else. He had the teaching thing down, he had good—excellent--course evaluations. He had two books, he had a number of articles, he was convivial, he was this, he was that. And they just fucking--they fucked him. And he then had to go off and organize his own little business, consulting business. And then he was able to worm his way into a state college campus and there he got tenure and so on. So it was downward mobility but it was survival for John, John Pollock. *The Times* went after him.

- Rubens: Yes, don't mess with *The Times*.
- Leggett: Don't mess with *The Times*. That's the message.
- Rubens: Now, also--then, do you do some anthologies on race with Hardy Fry?
- Leggett: Oh, yes.
- Rubens: Are those published under John C. Leggett?
- Leggett: I'm not sure.
- Rubens: What is C.? Do you have a middle name C.?
- Leggett: Carl.
- Rubens: Do you ever use that? I think these books--
- Leggett: That's the German side of the family. That was a thing we did on the Caribbean. Stuff on race in the Caribbean. Maybe you've read Herskovitz?
- Rubens: Yes, sure.
- Leggett: Mel Herskovitz, the stuff on race and the survival of Africanisms in the Caribbean, and in the American south--Africanisms in religion, Africanisms in the family, Africanisms within many areas of the social space and culture. And, so--
- Rubens: That's the kind of stuff my major professor, Larry Levine, was always interested in.
- Leggett: Yes. Chuck Irby, Charles Irby from UC Davis, and Hardy and I did that together. Irby died ten years ago.
- Rubens: Did you know Dick Flacks?
- Leggett: Richard Flacks was, I think, maybe for a moment, at Michigan. We did not overlap. He was definitely at Chicago. A wonderful guy. I haven't seen him for ages. I just don't know what's happened to him.
- Rubens: I think he retired from Santa Barbara.
- Leggett: He was badly hurt in his Chicago office. Some kid came into his office and hit him on the head. I don't know, the assault made his arm limp. And I think it just weakened him in a physical sense.
- Rubens: He has a couple of books on student activism and--

- Leggett: Yes.
- Tape 5
- Rubens: --Lipset left Berkeley—
- Leggett: I see him on television once in a while. Yes. The last I heard, he was at George Mason. He may be somewhere else on the East Coast. But, once he left Berkeley and went to Stanford, he used to send me his publications from Stanford.
- Rubens: Yes, that's right. You said that. I don't mean to make it psychological, but how does one identify his sociology?
- Leggett: It's like a very, very moderate kind of social democratic politics.
- Rubens: That remained anti-Communist, Red-baiting--
- Leggett: And, I think, unable to make distinctions between honest revolutionaries and people who are CP representatives. I think that he just could not make that kind of distinction—one, between people who are rank and file members of the Communist movement, and, two, then those who are apparatchniks, within a structure of the kind that Stalin would set up. There's a distinction between a hard-working, grassroots member of a Communist movement, like a guy organizing longshoremen in Havana in the early 1950s, that kind of person, and then, some guy who's waiting with the G.P.U, conducting the Moscow trials, involved in the execution of the people that we've been talking about, in terms of the Soviet mass trial period, right? There's an elementary distinction there. And you've got to make it.
- Rubens: They could never make that distinction. No--those--that generation, or some of those sociologists and political scientists could not see the Free Speech Movement as a sui generis moment of really moral, forceful leaders who were not, in any way, controlled or--
- Leggett: They were--
- Rubens: --influenced by the Party. All of the older generation of SLATE--they all went. This was a new generation of people. Maybe Weinberg was the only one who had some kind of--
- Leggett: I see them as the John Brown people.
- Rubens: Yes, you said that.

- Leggett: You know, on your horses. Look out. Get out of our way, man! We're going to slay fucking racism. We're going to knock it down. If we have to organize a global revolution to do it, we're doing it.
- Rubens: Well, and there is some way in which this was the spark heard around the world.
- Leggett: Yes! It came at the right moment. That fire, that revolutionary fire is still there. Thank God.
- Rubens: All right. So--you must be a little drained here. What are you working on now?
- Leggett: I am doing several things. One thing that I'm doing is gathering data on the number of Afro-Americans who have joined the white-collar world in the United States. And the numbers are truly amazing. The ones who have joined--the black white-collar population has grown from 20 percent, approximately, in 1960, to a figure well over 50 percent by the mid-, late-1990s, and--
- Rubens: Fifty percent of the black population?
- Leggett: Yes, in the labor force, in the United States, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, are white collar.
- Rubens: Wow.
- Leggett: We got the data on that. We're waiting for the U.S. census stuff to come out in spring, summer of the year 2001. Mind you, the U.S. census suffers from a slow-moving ability to come up with very good statistics to say the least. So we try to correct for that by working in numbers of Afro-Americans who have become white collar to build our statistics. And nonetheless, it's pretty evident that there are some grand changes. And they have political implications. If Afro-Americans, in the process to become an employee group, turn out to be over 50 percent white collar, that has implications for the notion of Blacks at the center of the progressive proletariat. Yes.
- Rubens: In that--?
- Leggett: In that the numbers, in that the numbers, the gross numbers of black proletariat just aren't there anymore. They aren't there.
- Rubens: Of being the--?
- Leggett: Being in the progressive forefront in large numbers.
- Rubens: Like DRUM [Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, at the Detroit/Hamtramac Dodge car plant in 1967]?

Leggett: DRUM and so forth. You won't find them in the hundreds, and hundreds and hundreds of thousands in places like Detroit. Rather, you'll find them by the tens and tens of thousands, perhaps several hundred thousands in places like Detroit, and Cleveland, and Chicago.

Rubens: Of course, all that industrial mass base is sort of eroding, isn't it? The industry?

Leggett: Well, yes and no. You'll find, for every blue-collar worker in Detroit, and there are still lots of them, every blue-collar industrial worker in Detroit, you're going to find a lot of white-collar engineers, white-collar medical technicians, white-collar this, white-collar that. And so the whole change, by way of absolute numbers and by way of proportions, forces us to redefine just which group is the vanguard population of the working class. And, it's my position that the vanguard of the working classes must be seen, not city by city or state by state, but, you know, hemisphere by hemisphere. And if you do it that way, you can see that the non-white population is still that vanguard, but it is divided by country and by nationality, divided by geography, divided by language and so forth. And that what we have to do is put together some "new international" that will string together a Mexican proletariat with the ones from Costa Rica and the ones from Panama, Columbia, Venezuela. And that will allow us, statistically and conceptually, to come up with a modification of the notion of U.S. workers as black vanguard.

Rubens: That's so interesting. One of the, I think, most inspiring youth movements, or even university-based movements that's taking place is the "anti-sweatshop"--

Leggett: Yes.

Rubens: --and the, kind of coalesced with, now, looking at unions in this country.

Leggett: Yes.

Rubens: My husband always stayed with the union movement--I mean, first worked for Harry Bridges--

Leggett: Yes. Bridges and John L. Lewis were my dad's two favorite labor people. He often spoke of Bridges and the 1934 San Francisco general strike, and his coming to Detroit in 1934 to address this huge Labor Day demonstration at Cadillac Square.

Rubens: Then Sid Rodgers hired my husband. And now he does it basically on his own, and he was representing a set of Mexican American workers who worked for a big--it's called Basic Foods, and they manufacture 90 percent of the dried onions and potatoes in the country. And they were able to hook up with these anti-sweatshop people and get cities, and universities, and all sorts of people to not buy the product. And it was a nice, kind of--

Leggett: That's a great idea.

Rubens: --collaboration.

Leggett: That's one way to--

Rubens: But it's scary. It's scary, the power of global capitalism, really.

Leggett: Because they kill off organizers. They don't fuck with you. You can contract, but they have organizations to murder some poor guy who's out there in the boonies of northwestern Mexico with three other people like himself. They disappear them all the time.

I mean, the Basic Foods effort is a wonderful idea, it's a great idea--and people are doing it, but the casualties are numerous and scary. Like, it's one thing to organize in Detroit or Philadelphia and, anyway, in the context of a surrounding labor movement that basically supports what you're doing, and where the police are, time and again, basically with you, or at least won't murder you to remove you. But it's something else to be in someplace like Palm Springs, or someplace like the Imperial Valley, or someplace fifty times worse down there in Sonora, Mexico.

Rubens: What do you teach these days?

Leggett: I teach race relations. I teach social class. But, I'll tell you what I do. I've cut back enormously on the amount of printed words I put into a syllabus because I have learned that my enemies use everything I put on a printed form to malign me. They take what I say and then they twist it, as if--as if what--as if I'm doing something that subverts the university. So I just--I limit.

[irrelevant discussion about looking for old course syllabi removed]

Leggett: I enjoyed talking to you.

Rubens: I'm sure that I'm going to have a few more questions.

Leggett: Yes. Well feel free to contact me.

[tape interruption]

Rubens: Well I didn't ask you where you were during the occupation of Sproul Hall. You had been next to Mario when he made his call to "stop the machine."

Leggett: Yes. I did take part in the sit-in. However, earlier, before the demonstration of speech and the sit-in, I had promised this guy who was teaching an extension course in sociology, Horace Cayton. I had promised Horace Cayton--

- Rubens: Horace Cayton? The Horace Cayton who wrote *Black Metropolis*?
- Leggett: The Horace Cayton, who was teaching in the university extension program. I promised him that--I promised the Berkeley sociology department--to teach his course for him. He'd become ill and they didn't have anybody to teach his course that particular evening. He'd just been re-hospitalized and so if I had stayed in Sproul Hall, which was what I wanted to do, I would have missed my obligation. I would have missed the Dwinelle Hall lecture and would have screwed up Cayton altogether. So I left Sproul and went and taught Horace Cayton's class. Yes.
- Rubens: So, you missed two opportunities to give your talk, because they said that Mario was ready--
- Leggett: Yes.
- Rubens: --and then to be part of the--you know I have one professor who says that he went down to Sproul Hall and found his students, or tried to find them, and said, "Get out of here! Get out of here! I don't want you--"
- Leggett: There were like, twelve hundred people who took part in the sit-in, but they arrested like, 779, 780. So over four hundred people left before they got booked.
- Rubens: I'm still reeling from the information about Cayton being at Berkeley. I know that Leon Litwack bought a lot of his books--that Cayton sold off his library, which, apparently was quite amazing, to Moe's bookstore. Maybe he sold it in piecemeal? I don't know—
- Leggett: But he was very poor at the end.
- [irrelevant discussion excised]
- Rubens: Did you see an impact of the Free Speech Movement, in terms of teaching and grading around you? And did it have an impact on you?
- Leggett: Well, I think students just did better work. Absolutely.
- Rubens: Because you've already said they were good students.
- Leggett: Good students and they became even that much better during the course of the FSM. And there was like, a decade long impact of the movement on their thinking, on their writing. Yes.
- Rubens: Do you have any students, also, besides Petras that you're particularly proud of, or want to just acknowledge? It's not always--there's not always the occasion to do that.

- Leggett: Well, you know, there are some. One was a student named Gill, G-i-l-l. She was my assistant. She was my reading assistant for my first semesters--she was so smart and just a good person. And there was a student named Gunilla Martin. She changed her name from Martin to Napier There Joyce Bailey.
- Rubens: Did these women go on to be academics?
- Leggett: No. Many remained "fierce activists," like Sally Shaw. She moved from Davis/Berkeley to the Northwest, where she is still active. Gunilla Martin-Napier went on to become a fierce activist in the Black Panther Party. Napier--that was the name of her husband. And he was the circulation director for the major Black Panther publication. And Sam was murdered in New York, in a big factional fight between Huey Newton, on the West Coast, and what's his name, the guy who ran for president--
- Rubens: Yes, Cleaver.
- Leggett: Cleaver, on the East Coast, yes. So, she lost her husband. He was killed--tortured and then killed. And Sam was a--Samuel Napier was a very sweet guy, and a good guy, I guess. And they blew him away, you know, killed him. And Gunilla was a San Francisco Black Panther Party activist, with black and German associates. I can't think of this one other guy's name, but he was special. He was a student of Tom Bottomore's. He died in England about twenty years ago.
- Rubens: Oh, you mentioned that before, and we were going to look him up because you said there was this luminary. Was he the fellow who spoke at the Vietnam teach-in?
- Leggett: He may have.
- Rubens: I'm never going to stop asking you questions, but this, maybe this will be one of the last ones. There's a book by Steve Jacoby that argues in the thirties intellectuals and politicians went into labor unions; today they go to the universities and colleges.
- Leggett: Yes, well--a lot of them went into the labor movement. You know, like Jack Weinberg? He went to Chicago-South Bend and went into the shop for several years, then he got a job with Greenpeace. A lot of them went into the labor movement and environmental justice organizations.
- Rubens: I meant to tell you earlier that Harry Bridges is alleged to have been both for and against the students. Apparently he said to one of the UC administrators "If you need thugs, I can get them out for you and squash those hooligans!"
- Leggett: Isn't that wild? Well, he saw us as like, thugs. He saw us as thugs. He saw us as ultra-left.

Infantile leftists. Infantile leftists--that's the term that he would use. We loved him a lot more than he loved us.

[End of Interview]