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The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Stephen Maizlish  
Free Speech Movement Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by  
Lisa Rubens  
in 2006

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## Interview with Stephen Maizlish

Interview 1: February 24, 2006

### Audio File 1

01-00:00:00

Rubens: Where were you Steve, that fateful fall of '64, how do you characterize your status at Berkeley?

01-00:00:24

Maizlish: I was a sophomore, a student; I was living in a dormitory complex not far from the campus. In fact, the day the arrests took place or the student went in, we were battling an issue in favor the maids. And our dorm room had a poster on it saying "Save the Maids," and that poster, the picture was on the front cover of the student newspaper, the day people went in for the arrests—

Rubens: When they went into Sproul Hall?

01-00:00:56

Maizlish: yes

Rubens: That was December 8<sup>th</sup>?

01-00:00:58

Maizlish: In December, whatever day.

Rubens: So now, you've jumped to the end--

01-00:01:06

Maizlish: Well, I was a student, I was a founding member of the campus chapter of CORE [Congress on Racial Equality], and involved in a lot of the actions in favor of civil rights in the Bay Area, the Lucky Market shop ins.

Rubens: This was the year before?

01-00:01:27

Maizlish: I don't remember, I guess probably the spring. We went to Stanford to hear King speak, the Sheraton Palace demonstrations, the Auto Row demonstrations. Not yet in the restaurant demonstrations downtown, but those were happening around then

Rubens: How did you know King was speaking at Stanford?

01-00:01:47

Maizlish: Well with members of CORE, Jack Weinberg drove us to Stanford, to hear him speak. So I was very much involved in those organizations, and had already been involved in direct actions, especially the Shop-In at Lucky's.

Rubens: Steve, I remember being with you at the Shop-In. Had you literally sat in at the Sheraton Palace?

01-00:02:20

Maizlish: I believe I sat in for some time, I left before any arrests took place. I know I remember marching outside at the Sheraton Palace. I don't remember the dates and how that coordinated with the Free Speech Movement, but in any case was involved in a lot of activity. At that time, they had tables and put the tables out where they were now being banned.

Rubens: And what had you done that summer of '64?

01-00:02:45

Maizlish: Well that summer I had been a camp counselor in Southern California. And I had actually snuck in illegally into the Republican National Convention in San Francisco on my day off from camp. Claiming to be a press reporter. And they were very uneasy about restricting press because they had just arrested John Chancellor [NBC Correspondent] on the floor that day or the day before, so it was easy enough to get in.

Rubens: Why was John Chancellor arrested?

01-00:03:16

Maizlish: I don't know, but it created quite a stir, when he had done that.

Rubens: When you snuck in did you do it with other CORE people?

01-00:03:23

Maizlish: No, this was not a CORE activity. It was just fun to be there.

Rubens: And, anything more to say about that? Did you see Goldwater nominated?

01-00:03:37

Maizlish: I must have. I remember seeing Claire Luce Booth give a speech in his favor. It was a little difficult because I had to move from seat to seat as people would come in. For a while in the beginning, before it started I hid in the bathroom but that got a little tiring. Eventually I just went on to the floor and there was a Rockefeller demonstration so I joined in that and then left.

Rubens: There was a group of students from Berkeley who were protesting against Goldwater, who were for—couldn't have been Romney. Who was it Scranton, not Rockefeller?

01-00:04:17

Maizlish: No, Rockefeller was one of the main opponents, but I didn't really have much to do, I mean, we were just there.

Rubens: You weren't particularly with other Berkeley students?

01-00:04:26

Maizlish: Not at all; it wasn't political it was just a chance to get in.

Rubens: Did your father give you press credentials?

01-00:04:31

Maizlish: Yeah, I had some press pass. It wasn't very significant, but that day was significant enough to get in.

Rubens: So you come back to school in September. Where did you live? In the dorms still?

01-00:04:45

Maizlish: Yes. Well it was Priestly Hall I remember.

Rubens: And, were you aware that there had been a ban, to do with a ban on tables?

01-00:04:58

Maizlish: Yeah, well because I was part of the organization, I was aware of that and knew Jack Weinberg and had worked with him in CORE the year before. And so, sat around the police car and talked to him and listened to the speeches.

Rubens: Do you know how you came upon? Well let me back up and say, had you been assigned at any point to sit at the CORE table?

01-00:05:28

Maizlish: I must've been; I don't remember that particularly. I wasn't one of the people who was cited or anything.

Rubens: And how would you talk about with your relationship—it was a little strong. But did you have pretty free access to Jack Weinberg? You drove with him Stanford. What did you--

01-00:05:47

Maizlish: Well we were friends; he knew I was part of the organization. I'd give him encouragement while he was inside the police car. We were talking to him, giving him Coke bottles and stuff. But, he was very supportive. I don't know how prominent a member I was. It wasn't a very large group but, you know, we were—he was involved in other things too, and CORE was the main thing that I was involved in.

Rubens: Yeah, but you had access to him? What kind of person did you find him before this catapulted into more--

01-00:06:22

Maizlish: He was a very friendly, very—you didn't get the sense that somebody was that militant. He was clearly an organizer but he was a very caring and friendly guy.

Rubens: But he was the one spearheading the sit-ins at the--

01-00:06:46  
Maizlish:

Yeah, I'm sure he was one of the leaders.

Rubens: And so some of those other people? Tracy Sims did you ever meet her?

01-00:06:52  
Maizlish:

Just remember the name.

Rubens: Ok. So is there anything that you remember being involved in prior to the sitting in around the car, you just were aware of what was going on? Maybe had been asked to defend the table? Where are you, that you come upon this sit-in?

01-00:07:11  
Maizlish:

I think we knew what was happening, we knew that it was gonna happen and we were organizing around it. So many major events happened that I don't remember the details of how it started.

Rubens: So did you find yourself wandering through this—what'd you think of this?

01-00:07:23  
Maizlish:

Well we immediately gathered around the police car. And whether it was spontaneous or not, you know, we did that. Jack was encouraging us to do that, I think. That's what I remember, he certainly was happy it was happening. Happy, but satisfied, that's what should have been done.

Rubens: Well the provocative thing, what you must have known what was happening was that he took the table into Sproul Plaza and set it up in front of the--

01-00:07:49  
Maizlish:

Yes of course.

Rubens: But then that the university would send a police car as the Campanile is striking twelve. And the mass of students would come out, I just don't know if you have an image of yourself coming from a class or maybe being there, or--

01-00:08:05  
Maizlish:

I don't know whether I knew about it ahead of time or whatever. But once it was there I stayed there.

Rubens: And how long did you stay?

01-00:08:12  
Maizlish:

Well all the time it was going on, I don't know how many it did go on for.

Rubens: Thirty one hours?

01-00:08:16  
Maizlish:

I must have gone back at some point but I was there most of the time. It was very close to where I was living. I remember all the speeches and the conclusion. And I went through it all.

Rubens:

And you remember the content of the speeches?

01-00:08:32  
Maizlish:

Well I don't remember word for word. I remember who spoke and how everybody was down on 'cause he put his shoes on Nathan Glazer when he got on the car. And [John] Leggett, wasn't he a sociology professor. And then was it Charlie Brown? And then that guy, Rusty something, who was so—really captured the spirit which was very conservative and very constitutional, first and Tenth Amendment. And that's what generated, I think, the most enthusiasm. And he did in particular because he wasn't anybody who had been attached to any kind of organization. And he was just moved by this basic, traditional American right that he was defending. And so that had a powerful impact on a lot of people who weren't as concerned as I was with the specifics: organizations that were being banned.

Rubens:

Any other speakers that you specifically recall?

01-00:09:27  
Maizlish:

Well I always remember Art Goldberg because he was the most caring of people throughout the crisis. It was always, always, had an understanding from him. That he was sensitive to the pain that people would be going through in their lives and futures and in the present. He wasn't, he was never so swept up with the events that he forgot that.

Rubens:

Had you known him or seen him before?

01-00:09:58  
Maizlish:

Yeah, I mean, he was in groups that I wouldn't be part of that were extreme left wing or even old left groups. He was much more open to compromise, always those groups seemed to be open to popular coalitions.

Rubens:

But are you speaking before this sit-in?

01-00:10:18  
Maizlish:

He was clearly visible there when he came and talked to us about the compromise that was being made. And very, very obvious the night of the arrests as well.

Rubens:

Ok, We'll get to that. But you're talking about, there was a contingent of people that were negotiating with [UC President Clark] Kerr while the--

01-00:10:40  
Maizlish:

I don't remember what his role—he was certainly part of it—I don't remember what precise role he had or. But it was clear that in all of it, he was

very concerned that there not be a confrontation. Because he understood the human cost that would involve.

Rubens: And in fact, were you there that night the fraternity boys came down?

01-00:10:59

Maizlish: Yes, sure.

Rubens: What do you remember about that?

01-00:11:02

Maizlish: They were throwing stuff. Lit cigarettes or something. And also there seemed to be some Oakland Police on the fringes that were adding to the pressure.

Rubens: Were you scared?

01-00:11:18

Maizlish: I don't remember that, but very likely, (laughs) concerned. Seemed that there were a lot of us that we knew what was happening but there was a strong feeling of unity that we'd been there for a while. So that moderated whatever fear we might have had.

Rubens: How about the opposite? If not opposite, another range of emotion—exhilaration, a sense of momentousness.

01-00:11:46

Maizlish: Yeah, there was an excitement to it. And especially, that it was getting dark. You know, that added to the drama of it.

Rubens: So you think you did stay there all night? Went home a bit? Came back?

01-00:11:58

Maizlish: I think I might have gone home for a bit.

Rubens: And, periodically go up to jack and say "how you doing?"

01-00:12:03

Maizlish: Well I remember doing that a number of times, I mean, I wasn't the only one but sure.

Rubens: Did you have to wade through?

01-00:12:11

Maizlish: I don't remember, you know, it was not that difficult. I mean, towards the end it would've been difficult, I think, to get up to him.

Rubens: And how did he seem when you did that?

- 01-00:12:23  
Maizlish: He was bearing up ok, I mean (laughs) he was sort of fatalistic about it.
- Rubens: Well would he say, “Thanks for stopping by.”?
- 01-00:12:31  
Maizlish: Oh sure, he engaged in some discussions. And he, appreciated the coke bottles and the comfort—the empty coke bottles.
- Rubens: So that he didn’t have to get out of the car for physical relief. So anything else that you remember about that night? About speakers?
- 01-00:12:51  
Maizlish: Well the main thing I do remember is that feeling of relief that Art Goldberg had, that everybody had. I think there was a real concern, that they had responsibility for this group of people who was in danger. And that clearly had something to do with their support for the compromise. I don’t remember if there were people that were upset with the compromise or whatever, but they had to sell it.
- Rubens: And so, in the next few days, what do you remember?
- 01-00:13:30  
Maizlish: I can just remember everything up until the last one. There was another sit-in in the building and I remember sitting down with one of the history professors who was an assistant dean.
- Rubens: Who was there?
- 01-00:13:40  
Maizlish: Tom Barnes, and debating some of the issues he came in. You know, there was just a series of events back and forth between students and administration and I don’t have any distinct memory of.
- Rubens: Well that’s what I want to get clear, if you, organizationally, were involved.
- 01-00:14:00  
Maizlish: Well, I was always involved. I don’t know that I was a leader, I wasn’t in any representative function, but I was always involved because I wanted to be in it, because it affected this organization that I was in.
- Rubens: Do you remember having CORE meetings and picking a representative from CORE to be on the steering committee?
- 01-00:14:17  
Maizlish: Could’ve happened, but I don’t remember that. If we would have it would have been Jack.
- Rubens: See, that’s a funny little ground ‘cause Jack wasn’t a student at the time.

01-00:14:26

Maizlish: Right, oh that's true. I don't remember if the organization was--

Rubens:

I don't have my notes right here so I can't remember. And the other question I have is did you know Michael Lerner at this point?

01-00:14:38

Maizlish: The first I remember of him was in the sit-in in December.

Rubens:

You don't remember him 'till then?

01-00:14:46

Maizlish: Well I remember seeing him. I mean, he was one of the few who was always wearing a coat and tie. Seemed to be self-promoter from the start.

Rubens:

This was not when you formed an organization to get representation on the steering committee.

01-00:15:00

Maizlish: That was in January, or the next semester.

Rubens:

So in terms of you representing any organization—do you remember going to any steering committee meeting just to watch what was happening?

01-00:15:15

Maizlish: I don't think so; I might have seen a meeting or two. But I clearly was helping to organize my room-mate and others into getting involved.

Rubens:

Who was your room-mate at the time?

01-00:15:24

Maizlish: Harvey Lehtman, who has pictures of him being squeezed and twisted by police. He was arrested that night.

Rubens:

Had you known him before?

01-00:15:37

Maizlish: I guess he was friends of friends and you know, he was my room-mate.

Rubens:

Alright, to you there's a series of events. What I think you're referring to when you talk about remembering a sit-in is that Steve Weissman had—things had settled down there were cat-and-mouse games going back and forth. There was a faculty-student organization formed, negotiations, more citations, then a kind of quiescence. This is before Thanksgiving. And Steve Weisman is organizing the graduate students. And he has an argument with Mario and he decides that, (the words weren't used then) "the contradictions had to be heightened." And he said the time was for a sit-in. And so I think this is what you referred to.

- 01-00:16:27  
Maizlish: Could be.
- Rubens: So your memory is that somehow you go into the administration building?
- 01-00:16:31  
Maizlish: Yeah we sat in there for a while and then left.
- Rubens: That's basically what happened. Tom Barnes was, at the time?
- 01-00:16:39  
Maizlish: He was some sort of assistant dean or provost or something like that.
- Rubens: The history professor? The British history scholar?
- 01-00:16:46  
Maizlish: Yes, who I'd had as a freshman.
- Rubens: How come you had him?
- 01-00:16:52  
Maizlish: Just introductory European history.
- Rubens: That Thanksgiving, you and I go back to L.A. When we come back to school, more students had been cited. Just as it seemed that this pre-incident had taken place and didn't work, and schools getting back to normal and, no one's that interested in it. And the university steps into the muck again and now has escalated the controversy. And now there really is a buildup of charges against the University, bad faith—that leads up to more and more demonstrations and then finally the famous December 8<sup>th</sup> demonstration where Mario makes his famous speech and Joan Baez is there. And the students, more than 800 walk into the administration and occupy it. Where are you in that post-Thanksgiving time; are you aware of this?
- 01-00:18:52  
Maizlish: Yeah, aware of it. And I must have been trying to convince people that the issues were still there and they shouldn't go away and organizing friends that I had to go to that demonstration, and to sit in.
- Rubens: And by the way, had you talked to your parents? Were your parents concerned about you, even prior to--
- 01-00:19:11  
Maizlish: Yea I'm sure they were concerned.
- Rubens: Do you remember being in L.A. talking to people about it.
- 01-00:19:15  
Maizlish: Oh yeah, yah. They were always concerned and sympathetic and concerned about me at the same time.

Rubens: Ok. So any specific meetings or any specific leaders or things that were compelling you?

01-00:19:42

Maizlish: No, I mean, we were always concerned about the maids and how they were being treated.

Rubens: Tell me about how that--

01-00:19:46

Maizlish: I don't remember whether it was a pay issue or something like that. They were, of course, our friends and they cleaned up. I don't think they wanted to directly be involved in this but we were urging some sort of improvement of treatment for them.

Rubens: And when you say we, were there--

01-00:20:04

Maizlish: Well, you know, a lot of the students in the dormitory.

Rubens: Had that been ongoing that semester?

01-00:20:11

Maizlish: It wasn't over night, but yes.

Rubens: It wasn't generated by the Free Speech Movement?

01-00:20:17

Maizlish: No, not at all. Although maybe our activism and concern and involvement was enhanced.

Rubens: So, December 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, any meetings you remember particularly or people saying to you something has to be done or rallies?

01-00:20:42

Maizlish: I don't remember specifics except for that one. And by the time of the sit in, it was very much that it was another sit-in. I didn't see it as distinct from any that had gone before.

Rubens: Do you remember Mario's speech?

01-00:21:08

Maizlish: I remember his speech, I really remember—what was his name? Reading Kennedy's inaugural and that seemed to capture, really for me the spirit of the movement more than anything else. How traditional it was, how patriotic it was. He also, he was a short guy with a tie, Antonio or something or another like that.

Rubens: Anastasi, Ron Anastasi

01-00:21:33  
Maizlish:

Yeah, Ron Anastasi. So he wanted to read that, and I thought that really captured the patriotism and the kind of the spirit that Kennedy had a responsibility for generating in people. I guess patriotism, but concern for involvement and activism in the country, because that movement, looking back on it, was so very conservative in so many ways.

The Free Speech Movement was so conservative and its real power and passion came from that conservatism, and he captured that. It wasn't seen as being distinct or in opposition to Mario, but it was very much a part of that. But my attitude going in was 'Ok, this is another one, I've been through a few of these' and that's why I left. In fact I remember saying to Art Goldberg, 'you know I got a midterm the next day—there's got to be more of this.' He said, 'yeah sure' he urged me to go and not worry about it. Which left me a little disappointed. Some of the friends I had gotten to go in there were still there and were arrested. Including a friend who climbed a rope to get in.

Rubens: So you hear Mario's speech and you remember Joan Baez and you remember people going in?

01-00:23:00  
Maizlish:

Oh yeah, well, I remember myself going in. I went and stayed for a long time, but sometime late at night I said, 'you know, what's the point, I've been through these before, I've done my part.'

Rubens: As did Art Goldberg

01-00:23:16  
Maizlish:

Well I don't know. I know I talked to him and maybe he made that decision after I did, but he certainly--

Rubens: Were you talking that over with other people too?

01-00:23:25  
Maizlish:

Yeah, well of course we were wondering what was gonna happen. It really was the case where I was, not in the large scheme of things, but in the people I knew I was the veteran, I had been through all these things and I said, 'Well I need to do this.'

Rubens: And anything in particular you want to mention about the—where were you? What floor were you on? Do you remember?

01-00:23:48  
Maizlish:

I'm not sure at that time we were on a floor, we were moving around. I remember Michael's Hanukah thing.

Rubens: What is this?

01-00:23:58  
Maizlish: You know, he lit the Hanukah candles--

Rubens: He had brought in the menorah?

01-00:24:05  
Maizlish: I guess so. I'm not sure if he stayed there that night or not. I don't think he did. But uh--

Rubens: Were you a part of that ceremony?

01-00:24:16  
Maizlish: I suppose. I'm not sure that I thought it was all that meaningful but I noticed it and was probably, at least witnessed it.

Rubens: Anything else you witnessed?

01-00:24:30  
Maizlish: No, that's what I remember. I remember leaving and going back to my dorm and then when the word came, I came early in the morning. There's a picture of me in one of these books finger-painting signs, protest signs. It was really a very different day because the police were continuing to arrest people, we knew that.

Rubens: Did you see them being hauled out?

01-00:24:52  
Maizlish: Well it was in the back or the side. But you could see where it was happening it was a cordoned off area.

Rubens: How did you know to paint signs? And what were the signs about?

01-00:25:04  
Maizlish: Well, whatever they were saying, you know? "Stop the Police" "Free Speech"

Rubens: Who had you organized to get into the--

01-00:25:13  
Maizlish: Well my room-mate for one, and probably some other people. His girlfriend.

Rubens: And who climbed up the rope?

01-00:25:25  
Maizlish: Keith Simons was a friend of mine then and he climbed up the rope.

Rubens: To get in?

01-00:25:29  
Maizlish: Yes, he might've not been the only one.

Rubens: No there were others. And you learned of this later? Or saw pictures of it?

01-00:25:38  
Maizlish:

Yeah I might have seen him do it. There was no way I could climb the rope. I had never succeeded in high school (laughs) I don't see how I could begin to do it there.

Rubens: Then what are your memories of the –Were you shocked that the police had come in? You're saying you had left thinking you had been through this before.

01-00:25:54  
Maizlish:

Yeah, I was very surprised that that had happened. But the whole mood on the campus had changed. There were so many many people who were suddenly very very involved and concerned. I remember it as a calm but it was a sort of emptiness in a way, a stillness on the campus. By comparison with the normal routine of activity. I was taking Litwack's [Professor Leon Litwack] history class, and I remember him canceling it.

Rubens: There was a strike? I mean, some of the signs were taken by people to different entrances of the university which asked Teamsters not to enter the campus and students not to go to class.

01-00:26:45  
Maizlish:

Yeah, sure, that was what we were doing.

Rubens: Where were you?

01-00:26:46  
Maizlish:

I don't remember where, somewhere on campus. I don't think I went to Litwack's class to hear it. I heard about it after words 'I can't teach while my students are being arrested or some statement like that. But he'd been sympathetic before. There was some day I remember we were wearing black arm bands and he pointed out some historical moment where people had done the same to protest. He was always very sly about bringing in comparative examples.

Rubens: Do you remember, specifically, any other response from teachers?

01-00:27:25  
Maizlish:

Well there were always teachers that we thought, who spoke to us. Leggett in sociology and John Searle in philosophy. I wasn't in any of those classes but they had spoken on the police cars and they spoke at rallies. And the picture of me finger-painting the signs is right next to Leggett, John Leggett who was doing the same. So that there was that feeling. I remember being very surprised in recent years hearing about the history faculty and Levine and Zelnik being concerned about all this. I don't remember it and what I remember so strongly is the history department faculty and eventually me being somewhat disenchanted with the directions the movement was going.

So that might of colored or blocked out—maybe I never knew how concerned they were. Until of course the Academic Senate meeting, and that was fine, but that was seen as some sort of coming together. I didn't realize there had been a whole history to that that Levine was involved in.

Rubens: Were you at the convocation that was held at the Greek Theatre?

01-00:29:02

Maizlish: Yeah, I was right there, I was right in front when they pulled Mario away.

Rubens: How come you were right in front?

01-00:29:08

Maizlish: Must of gotten there early to get good seats.

Rubens: What do you remember about that? Do you remember Scalapino and Kerr? Do you remember Kerr's statement?

01-00:29:16

Maizlish: Yeah, I remember whatever he said was not really encouraging and then Mario. I mean, I always had the feeling that I was more than a participant and I kind of understood the tactics and what they were doing, but I wasn't in any kind of leadership position.

Rubens: So people were aware that Mario was standing down below the stage and wanted to say something, and he had been told no, and then he just slowly walks up on stage. What do you remember?

01-00:29:51

Maizlish: Well he was pulled back. Of course I remember that, but the pictures probably remember more.

Rubens: And Goldberg comes in and says something to the effect that what Mario was going to say was that we're having a rally down in Sproul Plaza. So the Academic Senate meets on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Do you remember that?

01-00:30:42

Maizlish: Yeah sure, I was outside of, Wheeler was it? It was piped out. I don't remember how—I don't know, I just don't remember, because right now I don't remember if I was a little cynical about this sudden conversion of the faculty or not. I just don't remember. And it could well be that whatever views I had after that or coloring that. But it was a big deal, and [Jacobus] tenBroek and various speeches that were especially good on the issue. I just was always aware of how the majority of people who joined this were conservative in the sense that they were conserving the Constitution. And there really wasn't any other issue that they were gonna carry forward after that was secured. And of course the tactics were very non-violent and looked quaint. And very ancient only a few years later. I remember that in '69 there was a group—where was it, the Black Studies or whatever? Which had a lot

of violence, and there was this group who were still protesting, self-consciously in the style of the Free Speech Movement. There were picket signs and coats and ties—it just seems like another world that they were expressing compared to what had happened. I certainly was involved with people who had issues that they wanted to project and weren't just concerned with the basic rights. But that—was it Rusty? I never cared about this until it affected my rights of speech. That's the kind of attitude, that my sense was, really generated the support in the faculty and generally in the extent it got campus support.

Rubens: Back to the actual issue of free speech?

01-00:33:09

Maizlish: The Constitutional issue, put as a Constitutional issue.

Rubens: And the right to organize?

01-00:33:13

Maizlish: Yeah, rather than anyone really interested in the organization. The historical analogy seemed very clear to me of the gag rule—'aw well people don't necessarily care about slavery, their care about their liberties being infringed upon.' That really was what generated—now it wouldn't have happened, there were all those people that never exercised those liberties much, but the Kennedy-esque atmosphere that Kennedy generated, I think, made them feel these were very important and worthier preserving, even though they didn't engage in them—that this was part of the country they were trying to preserve and the country seemed to be in the verge of being transformed in a different direction. Civil Liberties, we see it as transformed. And Civil Rights and eventually the end of the war. But I think people sensed it was moving in the other direction, and here was one example of it.

Rubens: Would you say, or is it hard to separate out now, you're looking back, that there was any sense of larger agenda at the time?

01-00:34:31

Maizlish: I think that'd be impossible to say because there was so many people. And there were clearly those who had different agendas who saw this as a great organizing tool. And thought it genuinely, they really didn't feel that a limitation on free speech had anything to do—that was separate from people who felt threatened from that speech. They saw a direct connection between the issues they wanted to raise.

Rubens: Is there anyone you can point to?

01-00:35:02

Maizlish: Well people talked about [William] Knowland, his concern about the on-campus organizing, and that's the issue. And there were people who said "well I never did that organizing but they should have the right." That was

more of that kind of division. It's hard to say within the whole group and within individuals--

Rubens: Did you feel that with Jack Weinberg?

01-00:35:28

Maizlish: That he saw the larger issues? Yeah oh, sure, well of course he did. And then there was—why shouldn't people see that? I mean, how could they possibly separate what they were doing from the right to do it? It was hard for them to—those who were involved to see that distinction or want to see that distinction.

Rubens: But I'm asking, because I want to get back to the narrative of what happens and then your reflection on it. This seeing it as a more conservative movement.

01-00:36:01

Maizlish: Well it is true, just to follow what you're saying, it is true that: however clear that was at the time, it certainly intensified, as I saw in retrospect how very conservative it was in tactics and goals to what came after. But really what I remembered very much at the time was Anastasi and Rusty and all those kinds of ideas. And it was celebrated by people in the organized part of the movement that they were getting allies. But it was clear what the issue was for those people who were joining. And it was very unclear with how much further they would go. I'm sure some of them did join organized movements as a result of that. But not a lot of them lasted and of course very few of the organizers lasted anyway in their commitments beyond—

Rubens: Well then let's speak specifically of what happens the next January.

01-00:37:09

Maizlish: Again, this isn't all that clear. But--

Rubens: You come back in January.

01-00:37:14

Maizlish: Yea and whatever was going on it wasn't-- Didn't have the intensity and then filthy speech and--

Rubens: There's certainly the issue if an organization should be created to maintain an effort to push on fronts of free speech. And it was called the Free Speech Union.

01-00:37:40

Maizlish: I guess I was in that, I mean, I was on the board.

Rubens: AND do we go back to our separate organizations and continue the kinds of thing that we're engaged in.

- 01-00:37:52  
Maizlish: Well they weren't in contradiction because the organization I was in then was represented on the, whatever it was—steering committee or executive committee.
- Rubens: Of the FSU so talk about that.
- 01-00:38:03  
Maizlish: That was almost self-consciously a vehicle. Now I was involved; I'd be happy to have been involved. It wasn't an organization at all it was a vehicle for Mike Lerner to get on to the Steering Committee.
- Rubens: Of the FSU?
- 01-00:38:13  
Maizlish: Yeah and I joined him because I believed in the cause of the organization: Students Against Nazi Amnesty. And I was sort of a friend of his, and it was clear what was happening.
- Rubens: Say how this comes about, you haven't said what this--
- 01-00:38:30  
Maizlish: Well there's a movement, an organization of students, a hand-full at best, opposed to what was going on in Germany then. There were Nazis being given amnesty. And they—the German history professor the Rabbi, the synagogue where I taught. All these people were very upset about this.
- Rubens: Who was the German history professor?
- 01-00:38:52  
Maizlish: Gerald Feldman
- Rubens: What was the name of the Rabbi?
- 01-00:38:54  
Maizlish: Harold Schulweis who went on to become one of the leaders of the [Jewish] Conservative movement in L.A. now.
- Rubens: Where was he at the time?
- 01-00:39:03  
Maizlish: He was a rabbi at Beth Abraham I guess, the Conservative synagogue in Oakland.
- Rubens: Where you taught Sunday school.
- 01-00:39:10  
Maizlish: Yeah, and Mike Lerner did as well.
- Rubens: And that's how you met Mike?

- 01-00:39:09  
Maizlish: Yes and that's how I met him and that's why we joined the organization.
- Rubens: I think he claims he created this organization the previous fall.
- 01-00:39:19  
Maizlish: It could be, but it wasn't any mass organization by any means.
- Rubens: Are you saying you remember joining it in January?
- 01-00:39:27  
Maizlish: I don't remember when I joined it. I'm sure I joined it in the very beginning but it didn't have much of a profile ever. We had a rally and Feldman talked, we might have had a rally in San Francisco.
- Rubens: And you understood it as a vehicle—state that again.
- 01-00:39:42  
Maizlish: Yeah, well, I believed in it. But partly it was vehicle to get Mike Lerner a basis for being on the steering committee at the Free Student Union.
- Rubens: Do you remember attending meetings at the FSU?
- 01-00:39:54  
Maizlish: Yeah, oh yeah.
- Rubens: What is your memory about that?
- 01-00:39:59  
Maizlish: Well you know, the techy with the mimeograph machine and the various things. I don't remember, there were sort of issues and long debates. I don't remember much about it really.
- Rubens: Do you remember seeing Goldberg or Mario or Weinberg at these things?
- 01-00:40:15  
Maizlish: Yeah, probably, but I don't have any specific—you know, it was a pattern--
- Rubens: Somewhere in February/March is the Filthy Speech Movement which is considered (inaudible), did you have an opinion of it? Do remember it?
- 01-00:40:30  
Maizlish: Yeah, it was sad, it was detracting from whatever positive had been developed.
- Rubens: And then Mario officially steps down, Mario says, "I don't want to be a part of any of this"--

01-00:40:45  
Maizlish:

Well of course, my memory of this is years later, sitting in the library when the tear gas is going. And that was '69 or whatever.

Rubens: '68

01-00:40:55  
Maizlish:

Maybe, I wasn't there for—well I was there in the fall of '68 so maybe. He was across from me in the library and we were trying to get some work done and the gas was coming in. I think that's how I remember it ending. Or seeing him sweep up the sidewalk in front of Cody's [Cody's Books]. Those images seem to be the period at the end of that aspect of the movement. It just seems to be the beginning of a pattern that—I remember when I went to Ann Arbor that people would say, describing Berkeley, is that: Berkeley demonstrations would have these big, kind of, finales. And in some respects, the point of everything was to have those demonstrations and to have those big conclusions and there was very little follow through afterwards. And that was especially true as the movement, the demonstrations moved to the spring where it wasn't—you know, nice weather and more of a celebration. And that seemed to be what—there really wasn't the follow-through. And other universities, in Michigan they'd talk about all the committees—student/faculty committees they'd set up and all this stuff. That, they were really following in the wake of what Berkeley started, but Berkeley never followed through with that kind of organization at any level and certainly not on this aspect, which was student rights. I don't remember any of that. But, it was almost a Hollywood production in that way. That was the victory, that was the achievement. I think. Looking back on it.

Rubens: That being?

01-00:42:54  
Maizlish:

That being, mobilizing the big demonstration or whatever, march. I don't know if others see it that way, do you see Berkeley in that way? Really? Ok.

Rubens: One claim is that Mario became such an icon of that particular movement that when he wasn't there, it fell away.

01-00:43:24  
Maizlish:

Well I never thought that because I was part of a movement before him. And he was a genuine person, and he really felt uncomfortable if all that he was getting—and you could see, too, I remember the faculty when they'd stand around. And this might've reinforced my view of the faculty not having done much. But I remember standing around at rally after rally and I knew what was going on. And here was Mario Savio who really, genuinely cared about people and these issues. And there was Steve Weisman who had a tie on and wasn't making these speeches, and was far more radical. But he was the graduate student the faculty to relate to. Because he appeared—I don't remember what issues he had, but he was far more radical in his concept of

the University then Mario was—much more of a humanist kind of thing. And maybe that's why he himself didn't have the intellectual tools or desire to do any much more organizing. That wasn't gonna be part of that. And of course, I never felt, I mean, I really—and looking back on it and especially because of the job I have. I really never felt this whole issue of students being numbers. That never said anything to me, I mean, as a student I could have the close attention, find close attention that I wanted. I thought some of these big lectures were exciting. I never really—and I gather people see that as one of the—people always talk about as the real underlying current and all this stuff. And I just didn't see that. And of course I was looking at it from a more political view as well, because of the organizations I was in. So all of that kind of frustration, which Mario expressed, was fine but it wasn't really what was generating any concern on my part. It was the ability to do the organizing we were doing.

Rubens: Well I think, also in addition to these, the fact that there never was unanimity among the leadership—it crystallizes a movement for a particular set of regulations that were considered oppressive and offensive. Then there's a splintering of interests and goals and needs and abilities. There's also clear escalation in the war in Vietnam. And people become very very attentive to that--.

01-00:46:13  
Maizlish:

In 1965 there's the teach-in about the war in Vietnam which was a big deal. But I always felt, and I wrote this report for Carl Schorske who was going to go to Washington. Schorske was an intellectual historian. And he had some tie to Chuck Percy, who was a senator for Illinois. It was sort of pathetic when you think about it. Here's this wonderful intellectual historian whose dream was to make some appearance in front of the Senate Foreign Relations committee. And he wanted to do that with the aide of some student papers that he could then draw on and be some sort of expert witness, I guess, something like that. And what I wrote was not what they wanted to see, I think, and--

Rubens: Do you have that report?

01-00:47:01  
Maizlish:

No, but it was called the Berkeley Consensus and it was just--

Rubens: Well did you write it by yourself?

01-00:47:06  
Maizlish:

Yeah, it was just, I mean: the argument was that there really wasn't much debate at all about the war. This was by '67, any debate about the war at all. And that there was a consensus. In other words, that's how everybody felt. But it also indicated there was no more interchange. That subject had ended. And there was no intellectual life to it. I don't think they wanted to say that, exactly. But that's sort of, part of, what happened at Berkeley: everybody had

this thing and everybody saw that we agreed and that was the victory and that was the end of it. And I don't know that I was that critical of it at the time because that's what it was, I mean, we were all part of that. Nobody thought of implementation or anything beyond of just being able to set up the table.

Rubens: Well, or integrate the hiring of the various organizations or raise the wages of the maids.

01-00:48:13  
Maizlish:

But I mean, these are people who aren't directly impacted by these things, they aren't getting those wages or whatever, so making the statement is the radical act.

Rubens: The statement?

01-00:48:26  
Maizlish:

Being part of the demonstration or the petition or the rally or whatever.

Rubens: So, your sense about the Free Speech Movement or the FSU. Do you have any recall of it coming to an end? You know, it's just not a factor, or there was a closing meeting.

01-00:48:51  
Maizlish:

No, I mean—it wasn't my main organization to begin with.

Rubens: Were CORE meetings going that spring?

01-00:48:57  
Maizlish:

Yeah, you went to one, didn't you, I remember--

Rubens: Well I want to get back to that in a minute, but yeah.

01-00:49:02  
Maizlish:

There must have been, I remember James Farmer coming and talking to us. I don't remember when it was, could've been the year before. But I remember that was really dramatic, it was a really powerful experience. Then there were the big speakers, Malcolm X would come eventually, Martin Luther King came. And then some much focus began to focus on the War after that.

Rubens: So let's stop for a minute to get a new tape. I think this is great.

## Audio File 2

Rubens: I just want to revisit Steve, one more time, if you can make a distinction between what you said to me, actually off tape: that there was a sense that Ron Anastasi was allowed to make a speech as opposed to--

02-00:00:32

Maizlish: I feel that very strongly and I'm trying to figure out where that comes from. And I guess it's because, you know, I was a freshman, a sophomore. I wasn't a big leader, at all, but I was—I knew the people and I was part of those organizations. And I think there was—I mean, I sensed an almost patronizing kind of feeling of “well, now he's got to do his thing. And that's part of what we're doing and we're an alliance so we'll let him do it.” I don't think that many of the leaders really saw—although I think they were inspired by the atmosphere Kennedy created—I don't think they would want to admit that they were inspired by a mainline politician. And so there might have been that kind of sense that we're gonna give our speeches and that this is a coalition, “we'll let this guy do his.” But it was a very sincere reading of the inaugural address.

Rubens: Had you been there at the convention in Los Angeles in 1960?

02-00:01:34

Maizlish: I was there, I was at the inauguration of Kennedy, but I was also at the convention in 1960. I don't know with time how inspirational I continued to believe he had been. But I really believed that that atmosphere that he created and that his death created had a lot to do with people looking beyond themselves a little bit, and also caring about the country. That's what the constitution and free speech represented.

Rubens: Why were you at the inaugural?

02-00:02:11

Maizlish: Well my parents got tickets to go there. And I was very much a fan of his and demonstrated for him at the—in 1960.

Rubens: Now after the Free Speech Movement—

02-00:02:54

Maizlish: I remember what I remember of course is the focus shifting on the campus to the war.

Rubens: But did your own focus shift as well?

02-00:03:02

Maizlish: Yeah, I mean, that teach-in. With Norman Mailer and Isaac Deutscher and Norman Thomas, and you know that was a very powerful, very powerful experience. It really really was. And that was very difficult. Because you need to understand, that was different. That was in a sense, organizing against

the country. I mean, sure, it was for the ideals of the country but it was clearly different than what had happened before and after that. Civil Rights was enacting the vision of the Founding Fathers or whatever it was. This was more in opposition to a policy of the government and it was a harder decision and it really was transforming in a lot of ways. And that's why the Free Speech Movement looks to be very distant, I think, in my mind it really does.

Rubens: Also, do you remember Stokely Carmichael coming to campus and Black Power was now the phrase of the time and that whites were supposed to organize their own communities?

02-00:04:20

Maizlish: Well either I'd got that message before or I was much more into the war and CORE wasn't as significant. I mean, CORE had done what it could within the community, I didn't know that it had—I wasn't interested in it as an organization that was dealing with things somewhere else anyways, so it wasn't as immediate. But the war was clearly the issue.

Rubens: What did you do, actually, that summer of '65? Do you remember?

02-00:04:53

Maizlish: It was my second summer of required work in the camp.

Rubens: Was that Camp Ramah?

02-00:04:59

Maizlish: Yes, it was the last one, last summer.

Rubens: So in just in terms of how the campus becomes in Reggie Zelnik's phrase in his collection of essays he did with Robbie Cohen—

02-00:05:25

Maizlish: Yeah, I'm sure that's what happened that's a good recollection.

Rubens: But you used this wonderful discussion of writing a paper called "The Berkeley Consensus." Was this for an intellectual history class?

02-00:05:41

Maizlish: I don't remember it was for a class. I think it was for Schorske's project to get himself material from the students that he could then present. I don't remember how I got involved in that.

Rubens: As an undergraduate though, not a graduate?

02-00:05:57

Maizlish: Yes, yes, and I'm sure he wanted undergraduate views. And he got one that I felt very strongly, because I really did have this feeling that Berkeley wasn't the place where these issues were debated much anymore. And you could look at that in different ways. You could say "look, what's happened to the

student community! See how distant it is from support that it's not even an issue." Support of the war. That's it's not even an issue anymore, there's a consensus. But of course, the word consensus was used by me in some ironic way but it didn't have a good connotation. [President] Lyndon Johnson used it a lot. There are consensus historians that deny conflict in American history and it may not have had the best associations. I remember it wasn't articulated to me but it was not one of the papers he used. Maybe it wasn't written very well, I don't know.

Rubens: When did the attack on the consensus argument start?

02-00:07:10

Maizlish: John Higham, the historian at the University of Michigan. He identifies the interpretive school.

Rubens: When is that?

02-00:07:20

Maizlish: Gosh, I don't remember when the article is but it's clearly before the mid '60's when he starts talking.

Rubens: When did you decide that you were going to be an historian?

02-00:07:44

Maizlish: Well there are a couple formative experiences in my freshman year. One, I discovered something I hadn't realized, that math was actually required to be a medical doctor, that ended that, whatever seriousness I had. And I was really impressed with Gene Brucker. He'd walk across the stage (and in those days you needed wires connected to the microphone) and whenever he was deep in thought he'd whip the chord to straighten it out in a certain way that showed how profound his thoughts were. That was very attractive to me (laughs). But you know, then the upper division classes I had were diplomatic history and sectional conflict. That was exciting, reading those books were exciting, I mean all of that was very exciting.

Rubens: Ken Stampp and—

02-00:08:30

Maizlish: Armand Rappaport, the diplomatic historian. And I'd always liked history. And there I saw people making a living doing it so--

Rubens: And why did you apply to Michigan for graduate school?

02-00:08:52

Maizlish: One of the people I studied with, Stampp, told me that it was always a good idea to go somewhere else and then come back. I think it was very good advice. So I applied to a number of schools and I got in to a number of schools, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois.

Rubens: Illinois, Urbana?

02-00:09:20

Maizlish: Yes. That clearly wasn't as good a school but with a good library. I got a letter, they were real anxious to have me there, focusing on the library. And that didn't seem to be enough. Wisconsin I'm not sure; Wisconsin had a method of separating people and putting them by field. And I wasn't sure I was ready to do that and Ann Arbor because one of Ken Stamp's students was teaching there or something.

Rubens: You mean William Freeling?

02-00:09:46

Maizlish: Yes. So I chose to go there. It was a one year MA; maybe that had something to do with it.

Rubens: And then you decided to stay.

02-00:09:56

Maizlish: I didn't apply to Yale because they asked me to write an essay (laughs).

Rubens: So you were going to do a one year MA?

02-00:10:03

Maizlish: Well, I'd always planned to come back, I mean, it's not--

Rubens: Ken Stamp is who you wanted to work with, you thought?

02-00:10:09

Maizlish: Yes, but it wasn't certain. Well, I was sort of interested in diplomatic history but not impressed with working with Brad Burkins. I was really going there in a sense to study with him as well.

Rubens: And did you study with Higham?

02-00:10:26

Maizlish: I took class with him.

Rubens: So how did you find Berkeley after a hiatus of one year?

02-00:10:37

Maizlish: Well, of course I'd gotten this dose of reaction to perspective on Berkeley in Michigan. That Berkeley was more of a show place. And soon after my parents became ill and died, so I was focused on that. But I also was not really impressed with the violent movements that I began to see. That didn't bear any relations--

Rubens: What were those that you saw there?

- 02-00:11:06  
Maizlish: Well, African-American, whatever it was called then, Black Studies, Black College, that was one that I remember in particular being—and seeing how very different that was.
- Rubens: It was a nine week strike.
- 02-00:11:20  
Maizlish: Yes, whatever. Those were the issues that concerned me, I mean; I was involved in all the anti-war marches and demonstrations--
- Rubens: You also, I remember you telling me because I was away during Peoples' Park. I mean, that was really--
- 02-00:11:44  
Maizlish: Yes, well I observed Peoples' Park, I lived right near it.
- Rubens: Isn't that what you are referring to when you said you were with Mario in the library when the--
- 02-00:11:50  
Maizlish: Could be that, it was one of them, I just remember that. It might have been the Black Studies strike, there might have been something attached with that, I don't know.
- Rubens: You were living right on telegraph, what across the street from where Rector was killed?
- 02-00:12:05  
Maizlish: Down the street, yes. And he was just observing he wasn't involved in anything.
- Rubens: Is that what you're referring to in terms of seeing the violence?
- 02-00:12:17  
Maizlish: Yes, I think it was before that. Wasn't that '70 or something? Was it earlier? Or was it '68, '68 is when I came back and there was all the street culture in Berkeley in the summer, in Chicago. And all these places we looked down upon as sort of copying us, Prague, and--
- Rubens: Were you ever attracted to SDS [Students for a Democratic Society]?
- 02-00:12:44  
Maizlish: I did go to a meeting, and remember Reggie Zelnik there. But, I don't know, it was this organization. Maybe it was too complex (laughs) kind of a group.
- Rubens: Well, as you said, by now you're a graduate student, and your parents are ill and your brothers in jail for war resistance, so you were quite preoccupied. Is there anything else that you think you should say? One thing you referred to, and I just want to go back to it, is you had not been aware of—I guess

particularly Reggie Zelnik and Sellers and Larry Levine constituting a—a force in the faculty. That the history department was really serving as a nucleus to try and get the faculty as a whole to support FSM. They were instrumental in the Committee of Two Hundred.

02-00:13:42

Maizlish:

I remember how very conservative the faculty became after that. The history faculty and I don't remember if it was before Michigan or after, but I'd go to meetings. Of course Barnes was there and there was a point where they felt that academic freedom was being interfered with. The history faculty was always generally very conservative but also very protective of basic rights. I think everybody was talking about how sociology was much more likely to be more radical than history. But that's after the Free Speech Movement.

Rubens:

The political theory people too—

02-00:14:28

Maizlish:

Well those were special people. Sheldon Wolin and Jack Scharr.

Rubens:

And Norman Jacobsen.

02-00:14:37

Maizlish:

Michael Rogin.

Rubens:

Such a loss, the death of Mike Rogin! I did get to interview him.

How did you come into their orbit?

02-00:14:46

Maizlish:

Well not the way people really did. Well Scharr yes, might have been the most influential person I've ever studied with, I really think.

Rubens:

Why?

02-00:14:55

Maizlish:

Oh just the constructions he had of individualism and community. He was just such an intellectually powerful force. And {Wollen?} I took, but it a little frightened me all this European intellectual history. And Rogan, I think I took a course with him. I knew friends in Political Science who were really just swept up with him. I worked with him. He was my third reader and was just a very helpful guy, a very warm guy.

Rubens:

Third reader on your dissertation?

02-00:15:31

Maizlish:

Yes

Rubens:

Did he sit on your orals as well?

02-00:15:33  
Maizlish:

No, that was—English was my outside field for that.

Rubens:

How did you—why did you want Rogin and how did you persuade him to do it.

02-00:15:40  
Maizlish:

Well he knew, I don't know I persuaded him, there might have been something about what I was doing that that was of interest--

Rubens:

Well he must have been writing about Hawthorne and those people then, that middle period.

02-00:15:49  
Maizlish:

Could be that was it. But he—and he didn't particularly—he'd just say things. He was very deferential to everybody else. But I remember in certain ways as an outsider he could make comments, that's what he was supposed to do. They probably rejected him, he didn't care he said "I don't know, I'm just saying things." We really only had one reader, and my second reader was always deferred.

Rubens:

Who was that?

02-00:16:17  
Maizlish:

Robert Middlekauff

Rubens:

Is there anything else you think, you know, vivid memories of transformation of student protests, the role of the faculty, the role of the administration, in reflecting back?

02-00:16:35  
Maizlish:

Well to be honest, I guess, and I don't know how much this colors what I say. But looking back, the real question is: Why are we here today? And where is the movement now? And what happened to that generation? That's the question. And whether that—I really don't believe that makes me focus on the conservatism and the Free Speech Movement. 'Cause I really felt it there. And I felt it as someone who kind of shared in it but could look at it and was more into a political organization than most of the people. But I really think it's to understand that that movement and when it caught fire, it was not over some major transformation, it was really over holding on to things. And certainly it was carried further by the drug culture, I guess eventually, and by the political culture, by the war. But that seems to be its basic identity in a lot of ways. And certainly there were people who were transformed but a lot of people's basic commitments remained.

Rubens:

When you're referring to, I'd assume you're referring to people who held this view of conserving, holding on to cherished values: free speech, believing in equality, fighting for civil rights, are you raising the question of whether that generation--

02-00:18:11

Maizlish:

I think there are a lot of things. I think that that's an indicator that they're not going to go very far.

Rubens:

What is an indicator?

02-00:18:19

Maizlish:

That their basic concern was very traditional, that drew them to the Free Speech Movement was not a radical one. Well it wasn't unproductive at all, but it hasn't really transformed the country in the way that we dreamt it would be. I mean, we really saw some major transformation and it wasn't based on that transformative and image, a vision. And the culture is very powerful. The real debate that I always thought was so powerful at Berkeley, it must have been around '67 between the political people and the drug people.

Rubens:

The meeting of the tribes?

02-00:19:14

Maizlish:

Well that was the real serious division. I mean, I still tell people that I don't drink, because it was seen as a real evil. It was the drug of the establishment, and deadened your mind. I didn't know anybody who did, or know anybody who knew anybody who did. Am I right Lisa? And there was a suspicion, I guess, initially, that the other drugs were more of the same, among the political people. And then suspicious of the drugs on the left or in the movement.

Rubens:

In the counterculture?

02-00:20:22

Maizlish:

In the counterculture. And there was a real division. I remember Ramparts Magazine had a big cover about it. And then there was some meeting of the minds or whatever.

Rubens:

It was called "The Human Be-In" it was in the--

02-00:20:38

Maizlish:

I remember all that.

Rubens:

Did you go?

02-00:20:40

Maizlish:

No, no, no, I didn't

Rubens:

It's where Leary [Dr. Timothy Leary] said "tune in, turn on, drop out."

02-00:20:45

Maizlish:

Yeah well that has to bear a lot of the responsibility I think, because the people were turning into themselves, and that's not gonna lead to, ultimately did not lead to a lot of political progress and it was easily co-opted. And

um—right? So that's how I saw another major trend in the movement, once it became cultural it was easily co-opted by the dominant culture. And the drugs--

Rubens: What's being co-opted by the dominant culture?

02-00:21:24  
Maizlish:

Well, if there's a political and a cultural divide and once those come together then there's a real entry by the culture of the dominant part of society to co-opt the movement because people are into more cultural parts of their lives. And that's not necessarily political and it's easy to make money off of and that's what happens. I think, that seems to be a lot of what goes on. And there's basically a lot of inaction and you know, in counter groups and communes and things that are individual oriented.

Rubens: It's something that does happen, I don't think it's a sufficient explanation in my--

02-00:22:18  
Maizlish:

No but it's one of the way in which the movement dies out, I think, as a political force.

Rubens: What did you understand--

02-00:22:24  
Maizlish:

That's how I saw it, I mean, that's how I felt it. That's what I saw happening to people and individuals and it very much coincides, of course, with the big—the Berkeley style, which is the big rally, big march, the big demonstration as the end. It's kind of the experience, and it doesn't lead anywhere. So that culture feeds into that.

Rubens: And when you say you experienced it, that's what you saw. Did you see people who dropped out of school? Became druggies?

02-00:23:01  
Maizlish:

Yeah, sure I guess. Most of the people I was with were more goal driven and continued to be in school, but I could see some of that among colleagues in classes. But it wasn't so much that, I just—it isn't—it's hard to maintain a political perspective when it's not succeeding as you'd like. And you get older and you have other responsibilities.

Rubens: Michael Lerner tried to create political party.

02-00:23:38  
Maizlish:

Well there are political parties, I mean, there's all of that. It's not like everything died. But there's a lot of that going on. And when you can feel you're participating in the movement by smoking pot, then the pressure to do more is somewhat lessened. You know, if that's your, you have this personal-

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Rubens: Do you think people felt that?

02-00:23:55  
Maizlish:

I think that part of the movement was the change in me. Which is nice, but it doesn't go much further than that. It doesn't have to, it can be the end in itself and it can become that and it can become very commercialized.

Rubens: Some people attack the women's movement as being the beginning of identity politics fragmenting the movement

02-00:24:16  
Maizlish:

Sure there were people in it that used it that way, potentially it wasn't at all.

Rubens: Are there any--

02-00:24:25  
Maizlish:

That seemed to be the major movement, the major change that I saw happening, and that—you know and there's alienation from the type of politics. Politics become more and more radical and more violent and that turns people off. So a lot of it dies for all those reasons I guess.

Rubens: Well, simultaneously, people become very alienated from electoral politics as well, by Watergate time. Oh the election of--

02-00:24:58  
Maizlish:

Well that's what I would say is the real end. And was talking to this guy writing the book who sees Watergate as the end of the movement, because of the repression or something. I didn't think that at all. What I s—this is the most powerful image I have, is of all these people who should've known better than to focus on individuals and personality and instead think about policy and systems of government, and sucked into this incredible fascination with Watergate. Which, you know, was a crime but more or less serious compared to the others that were going on. But the fascination with whatever—what did Mitchell says to McGrudder or something. That's what really possessed people. And of course, some of them went into law but basically I think that really destroyed the movement. I mean, I really believe very strongly. I remember talking to Danny about it, and I meant it in this, I guess, radical perspective. And we would always talk about it, and he saw it, quite justifiably, the very serious event. I don't mean to diminish its seriousness but he could really see that happening to individuals. I mean, really saw this incredible—and it was so tragic to me, cause I'd been to the—hear Jack Weinberg talk to us about “it's not the individuals don't get hung up in them.” I remember being so depressed, sad after Nixon was elected because the air came out of the movement. It was so focused on the personality of this poor guy, Johnson, who I didn't vehemently hate, he wasn't the point. And then they got into Nixon. But it's really amazing to think how long it took, whatever, nine months a year before people could begin

organizing against the war again because it was so personality driven. And then Watergate really focused that.

Rubens: Who'd you vote for in '68?

02-00:27:01

Maizlish: Eldridge Cleaver.

Rubens: See I voted for Hubert Humphrey. Do you feel guilty now for bringing in Nixon for voting for Eldridge Cleaver?

02-00:27:24

Maizlish: I don't know, no. Well I feel bad about the vote, yes. I wouldn't call it a mistake but at the time Hubert was, maybe because he came from Minnesota was defending the war and on an Anglo-Saxon basis and using that language.

Rubens: He was awful, he was terrible. Yes, but—particularly his role of being Johnson's messenger at the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

02-00:29:20

Maizlish: It helps to have a non-Berkeley perspective, because when you're in there, there are all these things going on but if you take it from a distance that's clearly the direction things took in a lot of people's lives.

Rubens: Steve when did you leave Berkeley?

02-00:29:35

Maizlish: In '78

Rubens: To begin your job as a Professor of History at University of Texas, Arlington.

02-00:29:43

Maizlish: You asked me at some point, maybe off tape, where is the movement now. There's another very important reason people—that gives the answer to the question everybody asks about that — and people in my daughter Rivka's generation can't understand how absent any opposition was within the government. Within the Congress in particular to what was going on for so long. For a long long time in the Vietnam War. And now--

Rubens: Despite Fulbright and—

02-00:30:28

Maizlish: Well that came and developed. But you know, they're just, people whereas now it's such a huge part of the critique of the Iraq war is various aspects of the Democratic Party, that you really are part—it really is hard to stand outside the political mainstream.

Rubens: Because that's where the debate--

02-00:30:50  
Maizlish:

Because I can see Rivka and everybody into this congressional race and that congressional race. And you can understand that there's hope. There are people saying things you agree with. And so it's just a totally different world. I don't remember. It was exciting when one Senator would stand up and say something. But it was certainly a minority. And that happens when you have a Democratic administration running a war. And then Nixon, and you know, it took a while for the Democratic Party, and there was a debate within the Democratic Party before it could mobilize against the war. And by then it wasn't really trusted. I think that's the big difference between now and the Sixties, that you can't begin to think about having a radical perspective when major parts of the mainstream are saying what you're saying about the main issue that's troubling people. Today you can hear your views on that specific issue echoed all the time.

Rubens: Now? Now you can have your views echoed?

02-00:31:54  
Maizlish:

Yes, yes

Rubens: Yes, and not only can they be echoed but you can know it instantaneously. I mean, the kind of movement or community that's been created through the internet that you that you can mobilize campaigns.

02-00:32:11  
Maizlish:

You see Congress—

Rubens: Well and you can turn people out. I mean, MoveOn [Moveon.org] turned out people before the war started. There were a million people on the streets. That was higher than the anti-war protests than the 70's had ever been. It started out at a higher level proportionately.

02-00:32:34  
Maizlish:

Yeah but it died off.

Rubens: It did die off, because it's not effective.

02-00:32:39  
Maizlish:

It's also hard, and whether there was 9/11 in all that.

Rubens: So wrapping up here, are there any other people you have reflections on from the FSM era. I think you mentioned Michael Rossman.

02-00:32:53  
Maizlish:

Well he was obviously the intellectual of the movement, everybody understood that. And he was the, I could come up to talk in those ways and tie it all sort of cultural and intellectual trends.

Rubens: Did you have any particular observation about women as leaders?

02-00:33:15

Maizlish:

Well, it certainly—the critique of the role they had began in the Seventies and whatever, certainly rang true. I mean, I could see how that was the case. They had some subordinate role. And they really were not, they were sort of the helpers.

Rubens:

Did you think of Suzanne, and Jackie,--Bettina.

02-00:33:37

Maizlish:

Yes, but beyond them that seemed to be the case. Those people were different. (inaudible) I didn't know Suzanne Goldberg, I knew her, but I didn't know if she spoke or was that active a person.

Rubens:

How did you know her?

02-00:33:52

Maizlish:

No, I mean I just knew who she was.

Rubens:

She was my philosophy TA.

02-00:33:58

Maizlish:

Yeah, and Jackie Goldberg, Bettina Aptheker was—but you know she was so clearly tagged in her politics that I don't know what impact she had.

Rubens:

Should we stop?

02-00:34:15

Maizlish:

I think so.

[End of Interview]