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University of California
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Mike Rogin
Free Speech Movement Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by
Lisa Rubens
in 2000

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[Interview 1: February 23, 2000]

Tape 1

[Interview takes place in Mike Rogin's office in Barrows Hall on the UC Berkeley campus. As the tape begins he mentions that he has been working on some videos.]

- Rubens: Mike, why are you doing videos? Just for the course?
- Rogin: Well, for my course, yes--
- Rubens: Patching things together?
- Rogin: Now I'm doing a sort of popular culture seminar, a seminar on Left critiques on popular culture.
- Rubens: Do you like Denning's book a lot, *The Culture Front*? Or is it just that it's useful?
- Rogin: The Denning book's a great book. Just great.
- Rubens: Let's begin, then. It's the twenty-third of February, we're sitting in Mike Rogin's office, is it 788 Barrows Hall?
- Rogin: 788.
- Rubens: You have a great view of the Campanile and the old South Hall where poli sci was. I did talk to [Norman] Jacobson.
- Rogin: Oh you did, oh good.
- Rubens: He had not a lot of clear memories about the Free Speech Movement, although I do have some of the statements that he made--
- Rogin: Yes. Yes.
- Rubens: They were beautiful, notices posted on his door about why he wouldn't teach.
- Rogin: Yes. Yes. Right. Right.
- Rubens: But it was a lovely interview about what poli sci was like when it was at South Hall and what impact there was on the department when it moved to Barrows. Mike, when did you come to Berkeley?
- Rogin: I came here in '63. But I was never in South Hall because we got a whole bunch of assistant professors, nine who were hired the same year. There wasn't enough office space, so I was put into this temporary building.

Rubens: Where was that?

Rogin: It was one of those T buildings [some were quonset and some wooden housing left from World War II] that were over around where Evans Hall is now. Well, they were these wooden structures and small and far from South Hall, so it was quite sort of isolating, it was part of a general feeling of estrangement that I had my first year here.

Rubens: And would you just say briefly where you had come from?

Rogin: I'd done my degree at Chicago, and I taught in Africa for a year, and I got this job because my teacher, David Apter, had come from Chicago to Berkeley. I was doing this sort of American politics; I was kind of hired to do American politics.

Rubens: Who was here when you began, that you remember?

Rogin: Herb McClosky was here, David Apter was here, Sheldon Wolin was here. I think those people supported me. I don't know--

Rubens: --and Jacobson?

Rogin: Jacobson. Jacobson became my mentor. I just fell in love with him and I just admired him tremendously. When I came, I was seen as the American politics person. When the Free Speech Movement happened, Robert Scalapino was the chair; Scalapino was extremely ambitious. He had hopes of being chancellor. He tried to intervene and basically cool out the students by effecting some kind of, what he saw as some kind of compromise. It was basically a straight out support of the chancellor. He demanded a vote--he had a big meeting in the political science department of faculty and graduate students. At that time there were graduate students, including ones who became much more conservative later on, as graduate students. That is to say, they checked out like a lot of faculty did, between the Free Speech Movement and the Vietnam protests.

But at that time--I could tell you who they were, but maybe I won't because some of them became well known later--they were all supporting the Free Speech Movement. I mean, everyone was supporting it, except the faculty in political science, of course, which was very conservative. And so Scalapino actually demanded a vote, you raise your hand to say if you support his proposal. And I was terrified. I was a young assistant professor, I wasn't going to raise my hand to support it, but I didn't know if I had the courage to raise my hand to oppose it.

And then I look around the room and there are three faculty members who have raised their hands to oppose this. And they are [John] Schaar, [Sheldon] Wolin, and [Norman] Jacobson. I said to myself, Well, this is my company.

[laughs] So I raised my hand. And from that point on, I was kind of a pariah in the political science department.

Rubens: Really?

Rogin: Yes.

Rubens: Was this an extra special--

Rogin: It was a--he called this meeting of faculty and graduate students because he knew that a lot of graduate students were part of this movement, and he didn't like that. And he was trying to control it, and instead of that, it blew up in his face. So that was the beginning of this terrible war inside the political science department because basically Schaar, Wolin, and Jacobson were seen as the pied pipers of the student movement: They were very radical; they were very visible; they gave great speeches. They weren't, in fact, the pied pipers of the student movement, but that's always the view: there must be some grownup who's leading these children astray, right? So that was them.

Rubens: Four opposed, but nevertheless, are you saying they had the courage to raise their hand? Maybe others opposed but--

Rogin: Well, I don't think so, no. In my department, which was very conservative and which later on became heavily supportive of the Vietnam War, and we'd have people who were part of the--you know, who worked for CIA and so on--no, I think we were the only four.

Rubens: And when you said the meeting blew up in his face, what do you mean?

Rogin: Well, I meant that the department became very divided and there was tremendous conflict because most of the graduate students, and heavily throughout the sixties still, were on the Left. And then there were others, faculty, who tried to straddle, but they really couldn't. You couldn't straddle. You either supported this movement or you didn't. And in my department, some new people were hired, like Michael Leiserson, and they were very pro-student movement, but they weren't here in '64, and so there was just the four of us.

Rubens: Amazing.

Rogin: Yes.

Rubens: Off tape we had talked a little about how this movement shaped you and your career here.

Rogin: What else to say? I mean it changed my life. I mean I was transformed by it. I occasionally spoke at mass meetings; I spoke at a Sproul Hall meeting against

the invasion of the Dominican Republic--was that it? The one that Bausch and [de la Guerre?]-you know, when Johnson sends troops down to--

Rubens: Yes. Sure. The Dominican Republic.

Rogin: There was that. I spoke there. I spoke at one of the anti-Dow Chemical recruiting rallies. But basically I was a rank and filer, I wasn't a leader. I was a little bit of an activist, I was very supportive, but I was not in any way an important faculty person. I was very young. But Schaar, Wolin, and Jacobson were. But for me, it was absolutely transformative. I'd been active in the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago. I had actually sat in at the University of Chicago over their housing policy, but, so I was an activist in a way, but--

Rubens: What years were you at Chicago?

Rogin: '58 to '62. But you know, it hadn't really--the Civil Rights Movement was beginning to transform me, but it was really coming here, and the intellectual life around the student movement, that had the greatest effect. Because Schaar, Wolin, and Jacobson were all political theorists whose work was centrally relevant to social movements and student movements, to the revival of politics, to participatory democracy. They were all theorists of this stuff. So theory and practice absolutely came together, all my work changed and I became--. And for a long time I was very embattled in my department; I would not have gotten tenure if my book hadn't won a prize, it's very clear.

Rubens: And what was your first book?

Rogin: A book on McCarthyism [*The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter*, Cambridge, M.I.T. Press, 1967], which was kind of a critique of theories of McCarthyism, which saw it as a radical populist movement because this was the way that certain pluralist intellectuals saw it, including people who were here on this campus at the time, [Nathan] Glazer and [Seymour Martin] Lipset who were trying to delegitimize radical protest. That was mainly what they wanted to do. So they played a really dubious role in the Free Speech Movement. I mean, McClosky was much better, who was one of them really--

Rubens: And when you say them--

Rogin: I mean Cold War liberals. New York intellectuals. You know, the social science wing of them. Well, they kind of split over this. I mean, [William] Kornhauser and [Philip] Selznick--

Rubens: Over FSM?

Rogin: Over FSM. Kornhauser and Selznick, who were targets of mine in my book that I wrote--I mean, I came here, and all the guys who I had attacked in my

dissertation were teaching here. And Wolin, Schaar, and Jacobson, about whom I knew nothing, turned out to be my intellectual heroes when I discovered them. But I didn't know exactly who they were when I got here.

Rubens: Is your presumption that the department had read the book?

Rogin: The dissertation. Well, we hired nine people that year. This was a different era. Nine assistant professors were hired, so somebody read this dissertation. McClosky read it. Schaar read it, that would be my guess. And maybe nobody else. So they hired me. What happened was that this Cold War liberal, anti-mass movement people--and you couldn't necessarily predict this was going to happen, I don't think, beforehand--they split. Selznick and Kornhauser became tremendously articulate supporters of the student movement, including all the way through the Vietnam War.

Selznick gave an amazingly wonderful speech at the one of the rallies, when this guy during the so-called Filthy Speech Movement--which didn't exist--when one guy got up and said some dirty words and so then he was disciplined. And Selznick got up and make a wonderful defense of him in the Academic Senate. So Kornhauser and Selznick were great.

Lipset and Glazer were horrible and they were horrible from the beginning. They pretended to be sympathetic. Lipset would say things like, "Well, so, okay in the South to have civil rights protests because that's a dictatorship, but now we're in a democracy." What was he talking about? The regents? The chancellor ran the place? You know, they couldn't tolerate mass protest in the North. They were supportive of the Civil Rights Movement although they certainly opposed it by the mid-sixties. And you can watch Glazer's evolution. But Glazer was a friend of mine when this happened and--

Rubens: So, when you said in his writings--

Rogin: In his writings, and you can see, and you can watch him become a neocon, well, I mean that sort of process happened importantly through what was going on on the Berkeley campus.

Rubens: But he was a friend of yours, you said?

Rogin: He was a friend of mine, and I kind of liked him, and that was the first year I was here. But when the Free Speech Movement happened, his position was much more dubious. He wasn't an open opponent, he was a moderate. McClosky, who later on became very--like Searle. There were some people who supported the Free Speech Movement, but when the Vietnam--but once they thought they'd won, they got very hostile to student militants. Extremely hostile. And that was true of McClosky, it was true of Searle, and it was true of--but Lipset and Glazer were never as good as McClosky and Searle. They were always trimmers and then they became, in their kind of Olympian way,

very negative, and so Lipset and Wolin edited this book right away, I remember.

Rubens: I'm assuming they were asked to do it?

Rogin: Yes, they were asked by Doubleday--they didn't get along at all while they were doing it, but it's a pretty good collection. [*The Berkeley Student Revolt: Facts and Interpretation*. New York, Vintage, 1970]

Rubens: Trimmers means--

Rogin: Trimmers means that they didn't want to be publicly identified as opponents because they wanted to keep their liberal Left credentials, but they really were. And then by the late sixties there was no--I mean, Nixon, they were supporting--I think Glazer as well, but Lipset was certainly a Nixon supporter. Lipset thought McGovern was much more dangerous to the country than Nixon was, he wrote this thing in *Commentary*. They became--but this was all--the sixties had this incredible impact on intellectual as well as political life, including for this generation of New York intellectuals, and some of them went one way and some of them went another.

Rubens: Right. So back to the transformation of you--it sort of made your book come alive, I would think.

Rogin: Yes. Well, I was in the middle of revising my dissertation, and out here was—and already the Civil Rights Movement had happened. So it wasn't like I discovered mass politics for the first time at Berkeley, but it was different. It was, and it just--and I was rewriting the dissertation into a book during the first couple of years I was here, so the Free Speech Movement--there it was, right in the middle of it.

Rubens: And that's a bold thing to do, you looked around and saw three others and you joined them--

Rogin: Well, it was in a way bold and in a way not. I said to myself, Whose respect do I want? You know, I wanted their respect, so I don't exactly consider it courageous. I mean, I was afraid that they would see that I wasn't on their side and they wouldn't respect me. And I mean it was--I don't think it was—okay?

Rubens: Okay. There was a clear--

Rogin: It was just I knew whose respect I wanted, and I knew it would have consequences--

Rubens: But you weren't that much a careerist that--?

- Rogin: I just couldn't imagine, I would have been too ashamed to face them, it was just like that. So, I mean it was also the right thing to do, but I'm not--I mean, I don't know what I would've done if I'd been alone, because I had not gotten a job at Chicago because of my sit-in. The dean of the social sciences had opposed me after the department offered me a job there. And that was because I was an activist. You know, anyhow, I don't know what to say.
- Rubens: Sure. Sure.
- Rogin: I just don't consider it so much courage. And once I had done that, it was all over, everybody knew what side I was on, and I was on it. [laughs]
- Rubens: A couple more things just to keep there, and then I would love to flash forward. I assume you didn't have graduate students the first year?
- Rogin: Well, by the second year I knew a lot of grad--first of all, I was very young when I came here. I was twenty-five or twenty-six; my friends were graduate students.
- Rubens: Fall of--
- Rogin: I came in the fall of '63.
- Rubens: '63, yes.
- Rogin: So I was twenty-six, and you know, my friends were graduate students. Bob Price, the chair of the department [1995-1999] now, that was my student and friend. Ken Jowitt was my student and not so much a friend, but I knew him. Jack Citrin--these guys who are teaching here were my friends, I mean Bob especially was a friend. The others were people—but I knew them, I was their age, close to their age. Other people who have gone on.
- Rubens: Is John Schaar significantly older?
- Rogin: Schaar's maybe seven, eight, nine, ten years older than me.
- Rubens: At that point. Yes.
- Rogin: So I didn't consider him my generation. I mean, Jacobson and Schaar, even though Jacobson was like fifteen years older than me, as far I was concerned he was my father, so they had a different generational experience. Jacobson was in World War II--well, Schaar is younger than that. But they were definitely, they published books, they were tremendous teachers, they had tremendous reputations, so I was not--I was their disciple.
- Rubens: By the way, you came because of David Apter? He had been your professor. I'm trying to get at what was your relationship with him?

- Rogin: He was one of my professors. I actually didn't work in African politics but he was a theorist--
- Rubens: Modernization.
- Rogin: --and I took his courses and I liked him a lot better than his work. I liked him. He was a very stimulating guy. He was also somebody that was a trimmer in the sixties. He didn't want to really be, he was also warning me that I was getting myself in trouble. He was trying to take care of me. I was very close to him and he was somebody that I--and his family, I really liked them. But we had a kind of breach over this because he was not--and he was never really-- he was cautious, I guess that is what I would say. And in the end, once he went to Yale, he left here because--and a lot of people--. He went to Yale, and he became politically I think much better again. But in the crisis of the sixties, he wasn't--you know, when there was a question of choosing sides, he didn't want to do that, and that's what I would have to say.
- Rubens: Did you find that the movement and these activities influenced your teaching immediately as well?
- Rogin: How would I say that? I mean, everything was different. I mean, it was just-- for me, I taught American politics. You know, you couldn't avoid it. I don't know if it--. There was much more vitality, there were lots of strikes, lots of times you wouldn't have your class. Mostly I would teach off campus. So the atmosphere was very charged and very electric, and there was a lot of student--. But I already felt when I came here, even before the Free Speech Movement, that students were just tremendous.
- Rubens: Well, say something about that.
- Rogin: I mean, graduate students and the undergraduates--especially then the graduate students--partly I think that was because of Schaar, Wolin, and Jacobson, they just had attracted some or were teaching or creating some generation of graduate students that I was just learning so much from. So I don't--
- Rubens: A clear distinction from who you had encountered in Chicago?
- Rogin: Well, yes, I think they were more interesting and creative. It was just a new perspective for me. I don't know what to say. I thought there were a lot of good graduate students in Chicago, but there was just something about a new perspective, a really radical perspective on the United States, and for me--. And as I say, civil rights had really started it, it's impossible to overemphasize the importance of the Civil Rights Movement for everything that came after that. And there was--people who try to write about the sixties as if it didn't start in the South, it's so absurd. Absurd. So for me that was already the case--

- Rubens: The absurdness is if they say it didn't start in the South?
- Rogin: Yes. They think it started in New York, or they do it some odd ways in terms of intellectual stuff. It's entirely about the Civil Rights Movement.
- Rubens: Right. Exactly. I just want to hear from you--you and I share a certain sensibility in history, if we use this. What was that new radical perspective on America? What seemed to be--
- Rogin: Well, I mean the radical perspective was, and it was in some ways civil rights and Vietnam, there are three things you have to say. First of all, that the history of the United States was fundamentally a history of racial white supremacy and colonialism, who knew that? I wasn't taught that. So that became the orienting principle of my work, like many other people. And then some notion of democratic politics. That was what the Free Speech Movement contributed. But the Free Speech Movement so quickly turned in the anti-war movement. So you go civil rights, free speech, anti-war, three years we're talking about, so who can separate out the Free Speech Movement?
- Rubens: And the anti-war is the third thing you have to keep in mind, yes. Yes. Absolutely. In one other question particularly related to radical democratic politics, the Port Huron Statement--
- Rogin: Right.
- Rubens: --is such a statement, I think--
- Rogin: It's pretty good, isn't it? [laughs]
- Rubens: --that informed--it's amazing, and I think that's where that word authenticity comes from.
- Rogin: Oh, yes. Yes. That's right and that's, by the way, very important. The notion that you could actually--the whole attack on instrumental politics, on means-ends thinking, on the whole notion of what some people call pre-figurative politics, that you actually try to live in your politics the future that you want to bring about rather than--. And that was a transformative way to do politics which was sort of expressive in some way, rather than calculating. That was sort of freed from these sort of ideological rules that in the name of being against ideology, these Cold War liberals or New York intellectuals, who had such prescriptions about what you could and could not do. The dangerousness of mass protest, the fear of antagonizing elites, everything became fascism, that was always the threat. So all of that was just so called into question by the Free Speech Movement, whereas it was clear that the real problem was the authoritarianism from the top, not from the bottom.

- Rubens: And of course here that struggle was literally being acted out. The authoritarianism of Kerr and Strong--
- Rogin: That's right. Exactly. Exactly. The multiversity. I mean, Kerr was such beautiful target because of his notion of the university as basically a factory that was producing products for industry.
- Rubens: And also because he was a liberal.
- Rogin: Yes. Yes. But they were all liberals. I mean, all the people who became really important opponents of the student movement in the sixties were Cold War liberals.
- Rubens: And would you just make a statement about what that meant? What did that mean to identify them as liberals?
- Rogin: Well, they were in favor of the welfare state, they were often oriented toward the trade unions. I mean, Kerr himself was a labor economist, I guess, or industrial relations person, so they saw themselves as coming out of the New Deal, of a new welfare state, plus the warfare state. Don't forget that the New Deal turned into the Cold War. So these people were a bit younger. They came into this, their anti-communism was very strong, but they saw this as liberal anti-communism, you know, the fight for the third world. And they saw themselves as supporting these third forces in the third world, not just reactionary dictators, although that was, I think, a charade. But that's the way they thought about it. So they were Kennedy Democrats, they were New Deal Democrats.
- Rubens: I suppose opponents of HUAC as well?
- Rogin: I think that these people, many of them did not get upset about the blacklist, did not get upset about HUAC, because they so hated Communists.
- Rubens: But were upset about the Loyalty Oath, that the campus--?
- Rogin: I'm not so sure about that. I don't know. See, Berkeley literally built itself up after the Loyalty Oath. So the people I'm thinking of weren't here during the Loyalty Oath. You know, you go back and read what people are writing, these Cold War liberals, about the Loyalty--some of them were--they wanted a sort of "plague on both your houses." Well, maybe the Loyalty Oath is bad, but why didn't these Communists admit what they were? That was sort of their position. But they were certainly not McCarthyites, they were certainly anti-McCarthy, that's sure. But they were not opposed to the Truman national security state, those procedures, all the stuff that was coming down from Truman: the government, the security program, they were not critics of as far as I know.

- Rubens: I agree with you, I shouldn't be introducing this stuff here. But I think the fundamental difference after the Loyalty Oath is the Loyalty Oath is still about the old view of Communists infiltrating labor organizing. What happens afterwards is a new security administration state which takes on a different character. But I did want to just get back to--I think the way you've just described what was in the air, the attack on instrumental politics and the notion of pre-figurative--were people talking about that? Were those words used at all at the time?
- Rogin: Well, pre-figurative wasn't used. That comes out of maybe some Europeans, I mean, there was a whole Frankfurt school kind of from the East influence, but that was totally absent in Berkeley through the middle sixties. It was much more civil rights, "Beloved Community" was used, Thoreau was used. You know, "sometimes the operations of the machine become so odious you have to press—" that's what Mario Savio said. So the notion that you lived your politics and that there was a community being formed in these political relations, that it was educational and that somehow you were learning and experiencing at the same time, and then all later on, the critique of authenticity--but this period definitely was about a politics of authenticity. And Marshall Berman wrote that book about Rousseau, so he also comes out of this, the politics of authenticity—so all the critiques of authenticity that appeared later, that was later.
- Rubens: Well, maybe this is a good segue. In fact, you were becoming a part of the community.
- Rogin: Right. That's right.
- Rubens: You had some kind of more of a--
- Rogin: It was definitely an embattled political theory; it was mostly within the political science department. There were very radical graduate students: Frank Bardecke was here, Jeff Lustig--you know, these people who are very important intellectuals and activists now were students of Schaar, Wolin, and Jacobson and mine, and so you had this absolute--Doug Lummis, another one.
- Rubens: Who?
- Rogin: Doug Lummis, who teaches in Japan now.
- Rubens: Okay. Okay.
- Rogin: Anyhow, so these people--
- Rubens: Do you remember discussions with these people, too?
- Rogin: Yes. Sure. I mean, I couldn't reproduce them, but that's what we did.

- Rubens: Where were you by then? When did you move into Barrows?
- Rogin: Well, I was becoming--oh yes, we all moved into Barrows. The Free Speech Movement happened--
- Rubens: The spring of--
- Rogin: No, it was the fall, it started in the fall of '64, and I think we were in Barrows already.
- Rubens: I think you were, that's why I said, I think you went in by the spring of 1964--
- Rogin: Yes. Spring of '64.
- Rubens: And are you all up here on the--
- Rogin: I'm in the very office that I'm in now.
- Rubens: It would be funny to look at what you were teaching.
- Rogin: Well, I was teaching American politics, and I was teaching what was called group politics, which included--the group politics, the old rubric, you know, you had labor, agriculture, business. You never talked about the military-industrial complex, you never talked about civil rights. I transformed that course, did it a different way. I should also say undergraduates. I was teaching an undergraduate honors course, very small course, jointly with history and English. We had forty-five students, and half my class sat in. I was teaching that class in the fall of '64--I mean, I was nervous for them, I was worried for them. I didn't advocate they do this, and not all of them did, but a lot of them did. I mean, in fact, I had a student a couple years ago who was the son of two kids who met in my class, both of whom, I forget if they sat in originally, but they became supporters of the movement during the sixties. Isn't that amazing?
- Rubens: It is amazing. Do you remember the name? It would be fun to get that--it'll come back.
- Rogin: I wish I could.
- Rubens: Was it a man or a woman? Child.
- Rogin: Well, it was a boy, a young man--
- Rubens: Because Jessica--there's another girl who just got her Ph.D. whose parents are--you can see the father jumping over the--all right.

- Rogin: Yes. Well, they were both in my class, and I know their names very well, but I'm just too old to remember names. So there was a very important undergraduate--I was learning a lot from undergraduates, and there were very intense discussions, especially in these small seminars.
- Rubens: Who were the English and history teachers in the sense that--what I'm asking is did you also make alliances with other faculty departments? There was Larry Levine and the Committee of 200.
- Rogin: Yes. Well, Levine. Alpers was actually in the beginning, Paul Alpers.
- Rubens: What department was Paul?
- Rogin: English department. The people who were teaching with me that first year were--
- Rubens: I could look that up--
- Rogin: --Larry Zeff--
- Rubens: Oh he was there!
- Rogin: --who was a good supporter of the FSM, and who was in the history department? Who was I thinking? I can't actually remember who it would have been.
- Rubens: Was it Sellers? Could it have been him?
- Rogin: No. He didn't teach, might have been somebody--they would have people who didn't get--
- Rubens: Right, we'll look that up--Greil Marcus was in that class.
- Rogin: Greil was in my class.
- Rubens: Yes.
- Rogin: He was in my class.
- Rubens: Exactly.
- Rogin: He was in my class. Exactly. He was in my class. Greil was in my class. I know other people were.
- Rubens: Yes. All right. We can definitely come back to that. So in terms of also just having a sense of meeting a larger faculty of like-minded people--

- Rogin: Right. Right. I got to know Kornhauser that way. Yes, there was definitely-- we would have these meetings. I was mostly just a listener. I didn't say much, but there I was. I was sort of--so it was more, who did I get to know? Mainly I really got to know, closely, the people of my own department, but I also-- somewhat, some English department people.
- Rubens: And any repercussions on you that you were aware of that year, '64-'65?
- Rogin: Well, not in the years--certainly I was aware that I was in trouble in my department and that I was like--and you know, and it had never actually occurred to me. I thought, I'd always been a star as a graduate student, as an undergraduate. I came here, I was actually having a lot of trouble getting my book published--I had it rejected by the first seven publishers that looked at it; it was too radical. Already, for various reasons. But eventually, so I was a little bit--I was more worried about getting the book published, and I assumed if I had got the book published I'd get tenure. It never--and then I found out that there were a lot of people in my department that were going to--who were opposed to me. And I was a little bit--it was kind of actually in my naivete, I didn't really realize that this fight would have those kinds of repercussions.
- Rubens: Scalapino never particularly called you in and said--
- Rogin: No. Nobody--the only time I ever got called in was when Rosberg was chair and I was teaching American politics during the Vietnam War, and I gave a lecture on the military and a student complained. And so then Rosberg called me to his office, and I objected to even being asked what I was saying in class and so on, but that was the only time. So it was not like that.
- Rubens: Well, why don't we flash forward then a bit, because you were saying, when we were talking earlier, about the legitimacy of a symposium that would focus on key years. You said it was really all over on this campus by Cambodia.
- Rogin: My memory is that the biggest and the most amazing thing was this entire shutdown of the university over the Cambodian Spring, and it got one of my young colleagues fired by my department, unprecedentedly, at his, what we call a mid-career review--
- Rubens: Who was that?
- Rogin: Michael Leiserson, because--
- [telephone, tape interruption]
- Rubens: We had to pause, Michael Leiserson.
- Rogin: I think he teaches at Gonzaga now, and he was an extremely--

- Rubens: At where?
- Rogin: Gonzaga in Washington, little Jesuit school, it's a good school. But he was extremely talented, he did international relations and he had tremendous brilliance, and there was no way, absolutely no way this guy could be fired. It wasn't even his tenure, it was his mid-career review, but he had been so prominent a supporter. There was a lot of educational reform happened in my department, and after, I have to say, it was pretty good on that. They tried to open up the Ph.D. fields and do a lot more—give students a lot more room to do what they wanted, and there was a real educational reform.
- Rubens: And was that coming from the bottom too?
- Rogin: That was coming from the students. It was all part of this--you remember there had been this thing, the Muscatine report. There was all--whole questions, basically the Kerr model was under real assault and there was effort to make--and the relevance here really had to do with great books, it did not have to do with self-help or the nonsense that passes for relevance now. It had to do with how these great books mattered in the world, they weren't just, you know--
- Rubens: And great books meant--?
- Rogin: Well, it meant for us, political theory, you know, the canon of political theory. It was really yet a challenge to the canon. It was a question of making the canon meaningful and teaching in a way that mattered, and maybe some new, maybe we do some R. D. Laing, you know, maybe we do some Marcuse, so it was like that.
- Rubens: But the canon is?
- Rogin: Canon is the history of political thought. It's Plato and Hobbes and Machiavelli and all those--
- Rubens: And Marx and Rousseau--
- Rogin: And Marx and Rousseau--that's what we did. So it was serious education but done in a more participatory way and relevant way. And the critique was much more of the kind--what passed for social science, that is, the flight of social science, especially political science from an actual engagement of the real issues in American politics and the real structures of power.
- Rubens: That was the direction it had been going until--
- Rogin: Yes. That's right. And a lot of people who had supported the Free Speech Movement stopped right there. That was the end for them. It was okay to have

free speech on the campus, but to think about restructuring the university or the curriculum was much too radical and sort of--

Rubens: Or taking on the government in its role--

Rogin: Or taking on the government, the war—yes. I mean, the Free Speech Movement, at least, it was hard to be against students being able to get engaged in politics on the campus. It was an absurd position that the regents and Strong and Kerr went along with, absurd. It was really indefensible, whereas--. So that a lot of liberal faculty were on our side at that point, and then later they weren't.

Rubens: And so you see Lieserson's firing--

Rogin: No question about it. No question about it.

Rubens: --as just as--

Rogin: No, it's absolutely open and shut.

Rubens: --and unprecedented. And after that?

Rogin: Well, I think after that, I think the other person who didn't get tenure here was Dan Lev. He was a Southeast Asia specialist who was very opposed to the war and very visibly opposed to the war. He never got fired. He basically left; he got offered a job at Washington and he wasn't brought up for tenure. He wasn't offered tenure as a counter, and I think if he had been a supporter--if he hadn't been an opponent of the war, that wouldn't have happened, so he was the other casualty. A lot of this war came over the backs of students who were being punished, but it was faculty--the conflict in the faculty was so tremendous, and sometimes students got caught up in it.

Rubens: And can you say something about that?

Rogin: Well, I mean, if you had a radical critique of American politics, that was seen as methodologically illegitimate. They claimed that it wasn't a matter of the politics, it was a matter of the methods. So people who were trying to work on American politics in historical and theoretical ways were running into trouble from--I don't particularly feel like naming names, but they would run into trouble from more--

Rubens: Powerful--

Rogin: --influential and more powerful people in the field.

Rubens: Yes. Yes.

- Rogin: Same thing in international relations. So you can imagine—or in area studies. You can imagine what it would be like. We had the leading China specialist in the country here as a supporter of the war in Vietnam, and his former chair of the department, the chair of the department during that--. You can imagine what that would be like. I could mention actually another guy who, I think, who actually got fired as a result of his opposition of the war. That's John Starr, who was a young China specialist who was a very visible activist against the war and didn't get tenure, I'm pretty sure, I'm morally sure, for that reason. I may have forgotten others.
- Rubens: Did it ever cross your mind to leave? Did you ever feel--?
- Rogin: I mean, I couldn't imagine leaving. I was insecure about going anywhere; I liked it here.
- Rubens: And as you said, you weren't threatened per se.
- Rogin: Well, I almost didn't get tenure. I mean, the department actually was very badly split over my tenure, and I was saved by--
- Rubens: The award was--?
- Rogin: The American Historical Association. They gave me this [Albert J.] Beveridge Award for my book. It turned out the one I could never get published. They gave it to me. That's because I used all the statistics in there. I was combining the statistics with a kind of radical critique of an orthodoxy, but the statistics and history looked very innovative; that was like a wave of the future. So it was in a weird combination, and it got me this prize. And I also think the chair of the department at the time, who was himself becoming very conservative, was a friend of mine and a supporter of mine, and a kind of very fair guy who often supported--his name was Aaron Wildavsky. He died of--he became the most horrendous Reaganite. I mean, shocking, but he always had radical or Left students working with him, he was much more tolerant personally. And he was anyhow--we had come here together, we were friends, and so he supported me. And then up above, I understand Leo Lowenthal played a crucial role in saving my job because he was on the Budget Committee [of the Academic Senate], so I could have easily been fired. Easily, easily. But I wasn't.
- Rubens: Good. Just because we have ten minutes and I wanted to just get in a few more things. Are there any graduate students who you particularly picked out that you thought, Boy, they are really articulate, saying stuff—now back to Free Speech, just sort of right in those couple of years, '63 through '65. People I should talk to?
- Rogin: Oh, who you should talk to?

Rubens: Or people that you also--anything you want to say about?

Rogin: Oh, you know the ones that--

Rubens: Lustig I can't get hold of, but I will talk to him--

Rogin: Well, you've got to talk to him. Lustig wasn't--was he here then?

Rubens: I think he was here. I know he was here.

Rogin: Bardecke was not here until later. I didn't know Jeff [Lustig] in the '64.

Rubens: Did you know, by the way, McWilliams? Carey McWilliams, Jr.?

Rogin: Well, I know him, sure, yes. He had gone by then.

Rubens: He had just left. Yes.

Rogin: Yes, see, I didn't know him when he was here. I came just as he was leaving.

Rubens: Okay. Okay.

Rogin: I don't even think we overlapped a year. Some people I think have actually dropped out, and then some of them--you know, I don't know what perspective you would get from somebody like Price or Jowitt--

Rubens: I did do Price, and it was nice. Just because he had come after too, and also what it was like to be married--

Rogin: Yes. That's right. That's right.

Rubens: --and to be a little more cautious. Nice. He talked about the level of political rhetoric also that was just astounding to him and how he was drawn into it, but he was trying to do his work and--

Rogin: I can't remember who the political science--

Rubens: I just wanted--you don't need to stretch yourself--

Rogin: I just can't remember. I mean, Bob Jervis was somebody that I knew. He teaches to Columbia International Relations.

Rubens: My daughter has his class right there.

Rogin: Oh really? Well, he was very good in the Free Speech Movement. Plus he's very visibly supportive.

Rubens: Yes, I should talk to him.

- Rogin: And I think, he sort of dropped out of--
- Rubens: And [Jack] Citrin too, I thought I'd interview him. I think I'd do a little model of students and--
- Rogin: Citrin is a good idea to interview because, I mean, he was also--he was [Herbert] McClosky's protege and McClosky was for the Free Speech--
- Rubens: And I must interview McClosky.
- Rogin: You got to get McClosky. I mean, McClosky was a very important in my department supporter of the movement, of ultimately--he was an operator, he was powerful, and then his students supported it. Within a year, like [John] Searle, the minute they had these procedures in place, they said, "No," and they became very militant opponents, and that was true of their students also.
- Rubens: Price told a wonderful story also of McClosky. We have to just make sure it was true, but after the debacle of the convocation up at--
- Rogin: Oh yes. Greek Theatre.
- Rubens: --of the stadium, McClosky, and I forget who else--he wasn't actually sure--bring Clark Kerr back to this building, take him up the rooftop, and point to the plaza and say, "That is your public. That's who you should be addressing."
- Rogin: [laughs] Wow.
- Rubens: If it's true, it's quite amazing.
- Rogin: Right.
- Rubens: So I think McClosky was--that's interesting--being supportive.
- Rogin: It's the last gasp of his old radicalism.
- Rubens: People are very upset about Citrin's position on opposing the--
- Rogin: Oh yes! Oh yes. I think he's just so embittered and violent.
- Rubens: And of course, we all know what happened to Jowitt, and I mean I've always talked to you about it. Because he was my roommate's, you know, and so--but now I don't even talk to him. You know, and that's another thing, and maybe that's where I'll just unwind.

I think this has been terrific because no one has really just given that political perspective of what liberalism-- And I want to come back to this now. Thirty years later, finally there's a body of work that's beginning to come out about

the sixties, and it's as contentious as the sixties were. I've had a lot of trouble reviewing a book by friends of mine, Esherman and Kaisen--

Rogin: I mean—Engelhardt? I think it was Tom Engelhardt, yes.

Rubens: Engelhardt. He does raise the question of liberalism, and I think that's it, but that is one of the discussions that is going on: how people view liberalism, and I don't quite have the polls.

Rogin: Well, look, it's really simple. These people--

Rubens: This is in the critique of the sixties--

Rogin: Yes. I mean, these people were the sort of organic intellectuals of the national security welfare state.

Rubens: These people meaning---

Rogin: Meaning the Cold War liberals, and they were--you know, a lot of them were social scientists. A lot of them were second-generation immigrant Jews, and this was their regime. And this was the regime that came apart because of the sixties. You know, the rise and fall of the New Deal order. So this was a war inside the Left, of the liberal Left. And now you're getting a lot of people trying to recuperate that. People like Rorty, who was not an opponent of the war really. You know this philosopher Rorty, and he's—they're trying to rewrite the history, they're trying to bring this coalition back together again. But it came apart, and Reagan was the beneficiary of the coming apart.

But at the same time it was the liberal state that was prosecuting the Vietnam War, killing millions of people. So you can't--that was there. It was liberal, and you can say a lot about the nature of liberal expansionism, and it's liberal imperialism. And you can go back through the whole history of the United States, is one of the things that the movement taught me, is to look back at these liberal, progressive presidents and their relations to racism and imperialism and all kinds of--

Rubens: So that your next book after McCarthy was--

Rogin: Was the Jackson--

Rubens: It was the Jackson--

Rogin: That's right. Well, that was--

Rubens: And that's exactly what you mean--

- Rogin: Yes. It was entirely a product of Vietnam War, and that was what brought me to that--I went back and looked at the history of American--of Williams [Appleman?]. Williams was an important influence, but the movement was a more important influence, to figure out where is this coming from?
- Rubens: And after Jackson was Melville.
- Rogin: I did the Melville. Which is a kind of continuation--
- Rubens: Exactly, and then we can talk about the others. But I thought it important to say that right here, because that was what you were trying to do. But when the jargon is, now, the question is liberalism, that's what they're referring to? Are they referring to then--?
- Rogin: No. The "L" word--I guess it was Bush that introduced the "L" word, though that's something different. I mean, that's an attack on welfare state, on efforts to do anything on questions of race and poverty, on women. You know, "L" means that you have a limp organ, that's what--I mean, in other words, it's an attack on the manhood of these people. That's what that's about. And that's because the Cold War liberals were defeated.
- But Clinton is a kind of inheritor of Cold War liberalism, as far as I'm concerned. Look what he's doing with the military, in other words, so the effort to put back. You think somebody like Michael Lind--the effort is to recreate a kind of liberal nationalism. Schlesinger's part of that too. That's--and I think Clinton is--that's one of the legacies of--that's the effort to put back together that coalition. But you know, you can be for it or against it, but the sixties was the blowing up of it. So liberalism really meant something different to us who were opponents of it in 1968 than it means to Bush or Reagan who are opponents of it in 1988. I mean, it doesn't mean the same thing--
- Rubens: And liberalism to you as opponents meant the critique of that--
- Rogin: It meant the critique of the war; it meant timidity and a refusal to really face up to the depth of racial oppression in the United States, and it also meant something else--this is more complicated--it meant statism. We were much bigger critics of the welfare state from the Left than it's really possible to be any more, because that critique is now on the Right. So you know, we were--
- Rubens: But it had to do with the valence of the state that was dependent on corporations.
- Rogin: Yes. It was the corporate state; it was the military state. But also we never sort of quite--we were critics of the War on Poverty from the Left because very little money was really being spent, but also because of the bureaucratic apparatus. You know, we really favored a much more participatory politics,

and now the welfare state--and so things like national health insurance wasn't a big issue for us, right? Well, that's a pretty big issue. So it was--and I think now, and Mike Davis has sort of written and talked about this too, I think it's much harder to be a critic of statist interventions than it was in the sixties. We had prosperity; the economic issues weren't big. So things have changed.

Rubens: All right, I promised you I'd stop, so the last thing I just wanted to say about liberalism is in my mind also, I'm always wondering if it's the classic definition--if we let business alone--

Rogin: But that wasn't the sixties liberals.

Rubens: No. No, and I don't think that it is now. I'm just trying to get at what this Engelhardt is---

Rogin: Oh no, Engelhardt is talking about--Engelhardt is the product of the sixties, like me--

Rubens: I don't know who he is--

Rogin: He's a great, great writer. Oh, he's really important. He's written two wonderful books, one, he edited the book on the history wars I think you should read--really full of good articles.

Rubens: Oh, the history wars!

Rogin: Yes. He edited it with somebody else. And he's written a book called *The End of Victory Culture*.

Rubens: Oh, I have that!

Rogin: Oh, it's wonderful.

Rubens: Yes, it is!

Rogin: He writes great stuff for *The Nation*. He was an Asian scholar and he was part of the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*. He wrote great stuff against the Vietnam War.

Rubens: Okay. Okay.

Rogin: And he means Cold War liberals when he's attacking liberals.

Rubens: Yes. Okay. Good.

[End of Interview]