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University of California
Berkeley, California

Bernard "Buddy" Stein
Free Speech Movement Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by
Lisa Rubens
in 1999

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It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Bernard “Buddy” Stein “Free Speech Movement Oral History Project: Bernard “Buddy” Stein” conducted by Lisa Rubens in 1999, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2014.

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INTERVIEW WITH BERNARD "BUDDY" STEIN

[Interview 1: October, 1999]

[Tape 1]

Rubens: I'm in Bernard Stein's office at the *Riverdale Press*. What is your official title?

Stein: I'm the editor and co-publisher of the *Riverdale Press*. My brother, Richard, and I publish the paper together.

Rubens: Was he at Berkeley?

Stein: No.

Rubens: Older brother, or younger?

Stein: Younger brother. He was at Cornell.

Rubens: How much younger?

Stein: Six years. He was active in the anti-war movement. My dear friend, Bob Starobin, who went to teach at Cornell--or at Binghamton, I guess, but related to Cornell--knew Richard. [Starobin was on the faculty at SUNY Binghamton but took part in Cornell's anti-war movement.]¹

Rubens: Well, hopefully, we'll get into the anti-war period and next cohort of activists. Let's begin with when you came to Berkeley. Why and how first.

Stein: I came to Berkeley to get away from this newspaper. Actually, I came to San Francisco in 1963.

Rubens: Had you just graduated?

Stein: I just graduated from college, just gotten married, and didn't have a special reason for San Francisco, except that it was far away from here, and Susie had a dear college friend who lived there.

Rubens: And where had you gone to college?

Stein: I went to Columbia; she went to Antioch.

Rubens: Did you major in journalism?

¹ Additions made after the interview are indicated by brackets.

- Stein: No, no. I majored in literature, and I was going to be an academic. Went out with no particular plans. I went out and started looking for work, and then the draft started, so I quickly enrolled in San Francisco State. And the day I enrolled, Kennedy signed an order exempting married men. I was so happy I walked into a glass door and took a couple of stitches. [chuckles] So then I just looked for work. I had a lot of trouble finding work. Eventually, we moved over to Berkeley from San Francisco. I started working at something called Continuing Education for the Bar as an editor.
- Rubens: I have just interviewed Siegfried Hesse.
- Stein: Yes, and Manny [Manuel] Nestle?
- Rubens: No, I don't know who that is. Ann Fagin Ginger, has also contributed her complete files to the Bancroft.
- Stein: Oh, that's great. That's great.
- Rubens: What year was it that you started working as an editor with the Continuing Ed for the Bar?
- Stein: By now it's probably the summer of '63. And then, I enrolled in the English department as a graduate student.
- Rubens: First-year grad?
- Stein: Yes.
- Rubens: Were you studying with anyone in particular?
- Stein: No.
- Rubens: Was it going to be English literature or British literature?
- Stein: It was probably going to be Renaissance literature.
- Rubens: Had you decided at some point you would be an academic?
- Stein: Yes.
- Rubens: Were you always known as "Buddy?"
- Stein: Yes.
- Rubens: And Susie was known as "Susie?"

- Stein: Yes, "Susie."
- Rubens: Okay. And she enrolled as well?
- Stein: Yes. She was in comparative literature.
- Rubens: Did you both begin at the same time?
- Stein: Yes.
- Rubens: And where did you live at the time, do you remember?
- Stein: 2210 Cedar Street.
- Rubens: That was an apartment?
- Stein: Yes. Cedar--just toward the hills from Spruce.
- Rubens: You used to walk to campus?
- Stein: Yes. I came out in the summer of '63, and for me, that's really when the story starts. I don't know if you want to start there.
- Rubens: Start it there.
- Stein: Unlike my friend Davy Wellman and other people you've interviewed, I had no left ties at all, no family ties to the Left. I had been briefly interested in the Civil Rights movement and civil liberties issues in college. *Operation Abolition* had really grabbed me. We had one of those traveling road shows, and I don't remember who the debaters were, but they showed the film; and there was a right-winger and a left-winger debating. I had, just on my own, walked to Harlem one day and gone into the CORE office and volunteered to go on a ride to sit in down in Maryland. The sit-in never came off, and they weren't especially interested in me. There was no real follow-up.
- Rubens: That's great. What motivated you?
- Stein: I honestly don't know where it came from. One day I just did it. And I'd gone on a few peace marches in Washington. But fundamentally, I was really, really cynical. I believed that these things were right, but I didn't believe that change was possible. And when we got to San Francisco, we got a call one day from an Antioch classmate of Susie's. He'd been sitting in at the Sheraton Palace Hotel.
- Rubens: Do you remember his name?

Stein: The name was Mike Folsom. And he said, "Look, we're really tired. We're dirty. Absolutely, there aren't going to be any arrests in the next several hours. We all are calling someone to just come down and be a body--take our place while we go home and shower and change clothes and stuff. Please." He had put it on the basis of friendship, and on the basis of friendship, I said, "Yes, let's go." But I remember saying to Susie, "But nothing's going to come of this."

We got to the hotel, and we're sitting in the lobby for a very brief period of time, and suddenly, this absolutely gorgeous woman, Tracy Sims, came running through the lobby of this posh hotel, yelling, "Victory! Victory! Victory!" with a piece of paper in her hand. I'll never forget it. And she proceeded to read off the agreement that had been reached to integrate the work staff at the hotel for the first time--all the hotels in San Francisco, for the first time. It was a transforming moment for me.

Rubens: How so?

Stein: Because I suddenly believed that this stuff could make a difference. Before, I thought it was right, but I didn't see the point of wasting one's time on it because nothing was going to change. And now I really believed that something could change. I started then--since I was unemployed--I started spending my afternoons on the picket lines at Auto Row. And again, an agreement was reached on Auto Row, so that kind of reinforced my sense.

And then we get to the Free Speech Movement. There was never a doubt in my mind that what the Free Speech Movement was really about was the Civil Rights movement. It wasn't an abstract question of allowing people to speak. I thought it absurd, but I didn't get my bowels in an uproar over the fact that the presidential candidates couldn't come and speak on the campus, which was something that got used a lot as an argument to persuade students to join. It was clear to me that what it was really about was stopping demonstrations, like the kinds I had been taking part in, from taking place. And so that's what really got me energized and involved.

Rubens: I haven't heard anyone say it quite like that. That's why it's so wonderful--all these different stories. At that point, before you became a graduate student, had you made some Berkeley friends?

Stein: Yes.

Rubens: I mean, you see student friends on these picket lines and in the--

- Stein: No, it was funny. On the picket lines, there was very little interchange, very little sense of friendship. It was one of the things I didn't like about the movement in San Francisco.
- Rubens: Say a little more about that. You were there, you held signs--
- Stein: I was there, I held the sign, I walked around. I was there day after day after day, in the same place. Sometimes the same people were there, sometimes different people were there, but it was all business. There was a leadership corps that included Willie Brown, who would kind of come out and tell people what to do. There was very little sense of community--a very big contrast to what was later to be the case, at least for me, in the movement at Berkeley. I didn't regard myself as anything more than cannon fodder, so I didn't put myself forward in any way, either. I was a little shy and really didn't know--
- Rubens: How old are you at that point, by the way?
- Stein: At that point, twenty-two.
- When we got to Berkeley, we immediately became friends with a number of people who lived in the same building and across the street. They were just really nice, outgoing people. A couple named Steve and Jean Zorn, who were--. They had a good friend, Eden Lipson? Do you know Eden?
- Rubens: I do. Not well. She was a good, good friend of my friend, Henry Mayer.
- Stein: Yes, and Henry's another good friend of mine. Henry and I have really rekindled our friendship in the prizes we've both been winning in the last couple of years.
- Rubens: We'll have to talk about that in a little bit, yes.
- Stein: So Eden, and then a couple named Peter and Nancy Madian were friends. The Zorns, in particular, were politically sophisticated people and were engaged in Berkeley. I'm not quite sure whether they were in SLATE or what, but they were part of that political scene in Berkeley.
- So the Free Speech Movement happens, and we were really interested and reading every leaflet. You know, eager. I would walk to work across the campus; I'd get the leaflets on the way to work. And going to the rallies--of course, the police car happens, and naturally we are among those who sit down around the police car. I said "we": I mean, Susie and I.

But my sense through the beginning of the movement was that, again, we were cannon fodder. It was important for us to be there, to add our bodies, to sign the petitions.

Rubens: Were you still going to classes?

Stein: Still going to classes, still thinking that that was really the important--

Rubens: Trying to do your work.

Stein: Go to classes, and had a job.

Rubens: Oh, you were also working?

Stein: Working at Continuing Education for the Bar part time. That was the primary thing. But this was important. I don't exactly know why I was doing it. I did have a real sense of risk in signing the petitions. As I say, I did not come from a family or a background or a place where people did these things. And so signing a petition and saying, "I'm complicit in this"--I remember thinking this while we were sitting at this table--I had a real sense that there might be consequences.

Rubens: I don't mean this in a personal way as much, but it would seem that being in a relationship would make political participation more difficult. Bob Price, in the political science department, talked about how his wife was just more hesitant, was worried for him and didn't quite know the scene. She was not a student. He was involved less than he might have been because of this. He didn't hold it against her. That's how it was.

Stein: We were very together on this, very together. Susie had more politics than I had, but I don't think there was a dime's worth of difference in our outlook about this. So that was our role. Again, I can remember saying to her that I really felt the FSM leadership was doing a terrific job and, "We don't need to go to this meeting or that meeting. They're doing fine. They need us to rally at noon. They need us to be here. They need us to hand out this leaflet. So that's what we'll do. And there's no point in doing the other stuff--thrusting ourselves onto other careers or paths."

And then came the abortive sit-in, and I said to her, "They need us."

Rubens: Do you remember more what went through your mind? Did you think it was a mistake to do that [participate in the sit-in]?

Stein: I think I did think so. I'm not sure. I think I thought--. Well, I know I thought it was a mistake to do it.

- Rubens: That it was premature?
- Stein: No, given that there was a real division. I'm not sure I would have thought that militancy was wrong if there had been unity, but I thought that unity was tremendously important. One of the things that always has impressed me so much about the FSM was the span of the spectrum.
- Rubens: So you know about the division, and you're not a party to it because you're not in that position to see--
- Stein: The bickering was pretty open, you know. I don't think that anybody who walked into that building that day or attended those rallies could have failed to know that there was a difference of opinion.
- Rubens: In your mind, how did you identify what the division was? Along radical-conservative, persuasive--
- Stein: No, it wasn't radical-conservative, as I recall. It was a question of when was the right time for militancy and when was the right time for lying-back negotiation--letting the administration show everyone what it was really about. What was the right time for unmasking the administration by letting things play themselves out, and when was the right time for militant action?
- Rubens: Pertaining to that, at that point--that's in October, I believe, end of October.
- Stein: I think that's right.
- Rubens: Had you encountered Weissman? Had Steve Weissman come to you? Had there been meetings in the English department?
- Stein: Yes, I think the GCC [Graduate Coordinating Committee] was already in it. If I remember correctly, I think the GCC was being--. We went to those meetings in the Life Sciences building, LSB, as it was called then. Susie at some point was the delegate from comparative literature. But I don't remember what the time frame was.
- Rubens: And you didn't become the identified representative from the English department?
- Stein: No. I think Myra Jehlin was. In any case, it was somebody farther along in their graduate career.
- Rubens: Right. All right, so here's the turning point, you're saying, for you.

- Stein: Yes. And what happened, too, was that Bobby Starobin came down the campus--this big bear of a man--swept the two of us up. We didn't really know him that well then, but he just swept us up and said, "Come with me." We wound up sitting at an FSM Executive Committee meeting with the sense that what we had to say could be useful--as useful as anybody else since everybody else seemed to be screwing up. We started to participate. And that was the way we became more closely involved in the day-to-day FSM activities.
- Rubens: Now, of course, there was Press Central.
- Stein: Yes. I had nothing whatsoever to do with that.
- Rubens: Then, David Goines started setting up Press Central because they were trying to get reports out to the campus.
- Stein: No, the only role I played, as far as press was concerned, is actually using it. I had worked as a clerk in the classified advertising department of *The New York Times* in the summers when I was in college. There was a guy there named Jack Shepherd, who also worked as a clerk. He was a year or two older than I. Jack had gone to work as a reporter for the magazine. After--or at some point around December--maybe it was November--some of the leaders of the FSM went East in an effort to raise money. And I called Jack and pitched the story about the FSM to him. He came back to me after, I guess, talking to his editor and said no, he really didn't think there was anything there.
- A couple of months later, Jack called up immensely chagrined. His editors had assigned him to: "Get out to Berkeley and find out what this thing was all about!" And he ate a lot of crow, and asked would we introduce him around? And so, the price I exacted was dinner at the Blue Fox, in San Francisco, a very in restaurant at the time. I assumed the tab would be on *Look* magazine. We introduced Jack around, and he did a piece on the FSM.
- Rubens: Let's take one little, just, diversion over there. Firstly, it's so interesting that you say Blue Fox because this is really before the era of the great fancy, high class Berkeley restaurants.
- Stein: Oh, sure.
- Rubens: My own personal desire is to do a little social history of those restaurants. I love it. The Blue Fox was a very well-known restaurant.
- Stein: Fancy place.

- Rubens: The second thing, though, about this *Look* article is that Brad Cleaveland-- I don't know if that name means anything to you?
- Stein: Yes, sure.
- Rubens: All right. We might comment on him later. His was one of the first oral histories that I did. The *Look* reporter came out and wanted to talk to him and follow him around for a day. And Brad Cleaveland said, "No, no, no. Don't take me, take him." And he points to Michael Rossman, who is this sprite and quotes [Garcia] Lorca. And then Cleaveland claims that--
- Stein: "I made Rossman a star?"
- Rubens: Yes, and that he hadn't had much standing--
- Stein: Perfectly conceivable. All I did was introduce Jack around. I have his e-mail address if you want to find out the truth of it.
- Rubens: I do want his e-mail address.
- Stein: But I don't even remember his piece, to tell you the truth.
- Rubens: And you don't remember spending time with him or shaping the story?
- Stein: No, I didn't. I didn't. I know that.
- Rubens: You have the dinner.
- Stein: I remember I ate there. I had the dinner. I have a picture that his photographer took of me sitting on the steps, and--
- Rubens: Where is that picture?
- Stein: At home. I remember introducing him around, but he chose the way he wanted to do the story; I had nothing to do with that.
- Rubens: And now the last thing about press. That's another story I am particularly interested in: how the press followed, picked up the story.
- Stein: What I really remember about the press coverage is learning that the press lied. I think that is something I have in common with hundreds and hundreds of other idealistic young students at Berkeley: reading the *Chronicle*, reading the *Berkeley Gazette*, and just seeing lie after lie, inaccuracy after inaccuracy, slant after slant, and being furious.

- Rubens: I'd like to talk more about your background. You say you hadn't been political. We simply mentioned that you went to Berkeley to get away from your family, and this--
- Stein: From the newspaper, really, and not my family so much. I grew up here in Riverdale. I was born in Cleveland, grew up here in Riverdale.
- Rubens: When were you were born?
- Stein: It's July 18, 1941. And I went to local public schools and to Columbia. My father founded *The Riverdale Press* in 1950, and I was always groomed to do the job I'm doing now. I began resisting that probably by my last year at high school--certainly, as soon as I got to college. Got to college, and Columbia was just a wonderful place to suddenly get in touch with ideas. It was bursting with intellectual energy. That absolutely enchanted me. I was swept away by it. So I didn't want to do this. I didn't want to live in a suburban community, and I didn't want to run a weekly newspaper. My dad pressed very, very hard, to the point of buying a little paper in the next town up, Hastings, which I was supposed to then take over when I could graduate from college. He found it very hard to take no for an answer. And as I say, one of the reasons we went to California was to get as far away as one can be from *The Riverdale Press* and that pressure.
- And the other things were just kind of general youthful--you know--
- Rubens: Expansion and intellectual--
- Stein: You want to go someplace new, want to see new sights, "I hear this is an interesting town," all of that kind of stuff. And we had this friend out there, and so--
- Rubens: Was your father and family particularly political?
- Stein: Oh, no. My father was--
- Rubens: At a community level?
- Stein: Even on a community level, he was very conservative. He founded the Riverdale Kiwanis Club. I mean, he was a very small-town business person. He's one of those people who would never say how he voted, but I suspect he voted for Eisenhower and probably voted for Kennedy when he ran against Nixon. But, you know, he was very conservative in his politics and argued with me throughout my activist years that activism was a bad thing per se.

- Rubens: But he didn't shut the door to you, and you weren't disowned.
- Stein: He was actually quite wonderful about it--now that I'm a father--through a lot of *mishugas* [yiddish for craziness], never ever letting the ties entirely break.
- Rubens: And at the same time, didn't have connections with newspaper people at the *Chronicle*.
- Stein: No, no, because he had worked for the wire services, but it had been a long, long time since. And frankly, it never occurred to me to apply. At the time I was job hunting, it never occurred to me to apply for a job at a newspaper. I probably could have gotten one.
- Rubens: But you were getting away from that, as you said.
- Stein: It literally didn't enter my head. I did use my journalism background to get a job as a proofreader and editor and that kind of stuff. I mean, I knew how to do that as a result of the paper.
- Rubens: I did this diversion just when you said it was such an eye opener--learning that the press lies. And so, I'm just wondering about your relationship to the kind of news your father printed. What was your attitude towards it? On the one hand, you were distancing yourself from the newspaper, you said, in high school and college.
- Stein: Right.
- Rubens: So you made that kind of revelation about newspapers, but you probably didn't hold your father accountable for one position or another.
- Stein: No, I don't think I even connected that kind of journalism with the kind of journalism that *The Riverdale Press* does.
- Rubens: And then similarly, *The New York Times*--that was what--? The voice of record--?
- Stein: Yes, sure. But at the same time, the *Times* wasn't really covering the FSM. But later on, I quickly found the same thing to be true.
- [tape interruption]
- Rubens: I think I had so many people mention the lesson that they learned: that the press lies, and then, of course, learning later on that the regents and the president and the chancellor lied.

- Stein: Yes. Oh, absolutely.
- Rubens: That was absolutely shocking to them. It is like a veil pulled back.
- All right, we left the narrative of your involvement in the Free Speech Movement when you became more directly politically active. You really wanted to be in a position to bring about unity. That's partly what you were saying, is that right?
- Stein: Well, no. I don't know if I felt that I was in a position to bring about unity. I felt that if militant action was going to be taken, it had to be taken with consensus among people. I started to feel that the leadership, which I had thought infallible, did nothing wrong. Everything they did touch turned to gold, you know. I began to realize that they were just folks like us. And that occasionally something I had to say, or Susie had to say, was worthwhile, and that we should start going to these meetings and contributing our mite. So that's what we did.
- Rubens: So the next big moment, I think--as Susie talked about in Goines' book--is when the regents rejected the Heyman report.
- Stein: Right.
- Rubens: Now there's talk of strike again and strategizing on how to more effectively organize and really push the movement forward. There is some claim that the graduate students themselves--the GCC--was moving more militantly and more aggressively than the Steering Committee.
- Stein: That's my recollection. The GCC really began organizing to strike; and it did that--not entirely independently of the Steering Committee--but certainly the organizational part was independent of the Steering Committee.
- Rubens: Can you speak about what you remember doing? Did you write leaflets? Did you call people in other departments?
- Stein: What I remember is just a lot of talk, constant talk.
- Rubens: With professors? With students?
- Stein: Mostly with students.
- Rubens: And mostly grad students?
- Stein: Yes, yes. I mean, one of the things--

- Rubens: You weren't a TA.
- Stein: I wasn't a TA that semester. It was my first semester. To this day, one of the best things about the movement to me is the way in which graduate students from different departments came to know one another, and came to know one another politically, came to know one another as friends, came to be interested in one another's intellectual lives. I know things about math and science that I would never have known had it not been for the Free Speech Movement. And so, sitting on the Terrace [Café] hour after hour after hour at these enormous round tables, where the cast of characters kept changing, but there would be people just coming and leaving--coming in, coming back--twenty people, thirty people--animated conversation about what we should do and then about the world at large. That's my most vivid memory of that whole period of the FSM.
- Rubens: "World at large--" what do you mean by that? So you must have been talking about the ins and outs, literally, of who's dismissed from the university, what the regents were saying?
- Stein: Well, we're talking about that, but we're also talking about what's happening in the South, and there are some people who are going South and coming back in this period. I'm trying to remember when Gene and Nancy Turitz went to Mississippi. I can't remember whether they went right after the FSM or in the midst of the FSM.
- Rubens: I will ask.
- Stein: Anyhow, so that's going on.
- Rubens: She's a physical therapist, I think.
- Stein: I don't know. She was in comparative literature at the time.
- Rubens: Okay, so you were aware of the movement happening in the South. People were talking about that.
- Stein: Yes. We were talking about the South, we were talking a little bit about Vietnam. My first Vietnam demonstration was in 1963 at the Sheraton Palace, when Madame Nhu came to town. So there's a little bit of that going on. By then, we are talking about--. Oh, there's a presidential election in there, right?
- Rubens: Absolutely. That was theoretically one of the reasons that the tables were shut down because Republican students were lobbying for [George] Romney.

- Stein: I don't remember anybody ever saying that at the time. [chuckles]
- Rubens: Oh, no, they were trying to bring Scranton, not Romney. Yes, he was more liberal than Goldwater.
- Stein: Anyhow, so there's a presidential election; there's talk about that. There's Mona Hutchin integrating the cable cars, which is still--. I think there ought to be a statue of her at Powell and Market. You know, I think that was a direct result of the Free Speech Movement. I really do. I think, here's this sort of right-wing libertarian who comes into this organization and meets these people--that cross-fertilization--and she says, [to the cable car driver who tries to prevent her from standing on the outside step] "Show me the rule." And that comes right from the movement.
- Rubens: Did you know her?
- Stein: Yes, a little bit, a little bit. I knew Mario much better.
- Rubens: I'm trying to find her. I do want to interview her.
- Stein: So, you know, all of that's going on.
- Rubens: It's a whirl.
- Stein: Just this ferment--this intellectual ferment, political ferment--is going on, and that's what I remember most. And then, meeting after meeting after meeting after meeting after meeting. But the first leaflet I wrote was about the arrests. [The leaflet was about agreeing to and arrangement to be tried in groups.]
- Rubens: The sit-in arrests from December 3?
- Stein: Yes.
- [tape interruption]
- Stein: [I put on a suit and tie to go into Sproul Hall and get busted. I may have mentioned that when I was bailed out, the Sheriff who returned my stuff returned the tie with the comment, "Here's your cop choker." What must precede the part where the tape picks up is my talking about how I started out walking, then went limp on the landing of the stairway. That got the cops really mad, and they bounced me down the stairs from the second floor on, with one of them hauling me by my hair and beard.]

And then being taken. They were really pissed off and I was being bounced out, taken out by my hair and thrown--literally thrown--onto the bus, which was pretty full by the time I was thrown onto it. I think there had been a lot of other arrests.

Rubens: So by the time you get on the bus, is it “Aw, gee” or “Hey, so-and-so” or just people checking you out? Do you have any image of that?

Stein: Oh, no, everything is sort of friendly [laughs] on the bus.

Rubens: No, but I mean, not licking wounds or checking out?

Stein: Oh, I mean, it hurt a little bit for a little while, but--

Rubens: I don't think anyone was particularly hurt.

Stein: It wasn't terrible. I mean, you know, all of us nice, middle-class kids thought this was horrible police brutality, but I think we all learned later on that this was nothing.

Rubens: And how do you call Manny [Manuel Nestle]?

Stein: I didn't call anybody.

Rubens: He was just there.

Stein: There was just this melee, and I don't know how Manny knew that I had been arrested. I'm really not sure how he knew specifically to ask for me. He wasn't there. He put up the bail for me; and a professor of German, whose name I don't remember, came down and took us home.

This was a woman. I'm pretty sure she was in the German department. I remember she had black hair and a bun, and she drove us home. I didn't know until, like, the next day that he specifically put up the bail for me.

Rubens: So it seems to me that one of the important stories you have to tell is the debate over the trial, and the legal story is a story that we're pursuing. We have Hesse; we have Burnstein. I wanted to get Golde, Crittenden's law partner.

Stein: Yes. He died, didn't he?

Rubens: He did die. I talked to him the week before he died. For this project I identified who was sick, who we should interview first.

- Stein: Yes. He was the guy who those of us who were the more militant people on the trial side thought was selling us out.
- Rubens: Oh, you thought he was the one.
- Stein: Yes.
- Rubens: So let's just start there. Why don't you start there?
- Stein: Well, what they did in the trial was they really split us up. What we had all along held as an article of faith was that we ought not allow ourselves to be divided. Don't allow them to suspend twelve people and everybody else go about their business. We felt we should say, "We did it too." Put yourself in some sort of jeopardy--the same sort of jeopardy--and insist that they not be allowed to make those differentiations among us--the degrees of complicity.
- So came the trial, and there were those of us who wanted to maintain that same posture, whatever the consequences.
- Rubens: And the issue, I believe, also was to not have just a trial group, but to also have a mass trial.
- Stein: What we wanted was a mass trial. What the lawyers kept on holding up to us was the specter of the hanging judges from Orange County, who were going to come and give us a year.
- Rubens: How did you hear that? In defendant meetings?
- Stein: Yes, there were defendant meetings, and we kept on getting talked off. There had been counter examples. There had been--I think in the Auto Row cases--maybe it was the Mel's Drive-In case--instances where everybody had gone to trial, and most people had been acquitted, or they had dropped the charges because it was such a strain on the court system. And so a lot of us said, "Let's do that. Let's take the risk. We think they're probably going to drop the charges. If they don't drop the charges, let's go to trial. Let's make our case." And what the lawyers finally came up with was what they presented as this way of our getting our wishes, yet avoiding the hanging judges from Orange County. It was to have this stalking horse group and then the rest of us would plead no contest--you know, do whatever happened to the stalking horse group.
- And, of course, the trial itself, which I attended--you know, the rules of evidence, which I now know a lot more about than I did then, precluded so much of what we really wanted to say in that courtroom. My recollection

is that Bettina was an advocate of that strategy and that that's a place where I really disagreed with her.

- Rubens: The strategy of "Let's not break--"
- Stein: Of the stalking horse trial--that actually happened. I remember she's one of the witnesses, but I believe she was also one of the advocates. I can't swear to it.
- Rubens: We can double check.
- Stein: Just because you asked me--
- Rubens: No, no. I think that's important. But you have a vivid memory of Golde, and I'd love to hear about that because I didn't get to interview him. I have two understandings: that any lawyer who had any kind of sensibility came down to help--whether they were Communist or liberal or Democrat. There were tons of lawyers.
- Stein: Oh, yes. There was a guy who had been Kenneth Keating's law partner. [Richard] Buxbaum was his name. He was a professor, I think, and had been the law partner of Ken Keating, the Republican senator from New York.
- Rubens: Oh, is that right?
- Stein: So, yes. I mean, absolutely. And I will cut these people a lot more slack now than I did as an arrogant twenty-three-year-old. I think it was decent of them, good of them to do all of this work and help out of conviction. But at the time, we really did feel sold out.
- Rubens: Well, Dave talked about [Mal] "Malpractice" Burnstein.
- Stein: "Malpractice" Burnstein. He always called him "Malpractice" Burnstein, to this day. [chuckles]
- Rubens: Yes!
- Stein: As does our friend, Joe Blum.
- Rubens: But I think Norm Leonard didn't take that position. Norm Leonard was the ILWU lawyer, and his own son had been arrested. I don't think he was in the Party by then, but he had been in the Party. Then Golde?
- Stein: He was not in touch with those people. His reputation was as a liberal judge, and again--I mean, this is part of my education as a radical, as

someone disdaining liberals and coming to feel that there was little lower than a liberal. The liberal president of the University of California and the liberal governor of the state of California and the liberal judge, who were betraying what I thought of as the most important kinds of principles and ideals.

Rubens: Could you attach more then, or even now, in retrospect, to what it meant then to be a liberal? You're saying distrust liberals, but what was it about a liberal who seemed to be in that position of breeding distrust?

Stein: My sense was that they were unprincipled, that there was nothing that they wouldn't compromise, nothing that they wouldn't be "realists" about. Ultimately, they were willing to make any deal with the devil. I don't know if I would have thought then, "in order to stay in power." I don't think I would have added that.

Rubens: Is that what you think now?

Stein: Yes, I think it is. And that that was contemptible. I still think that.

Rubens: Were these phases that liberal seemed to go through?

Stein: Oh, yes. And there's more than that, though, because, remember, you've got the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. That was another real life-changing event for me. And the whole experience of--

Rubens: For the record: that they wouldn't seat--

Stein: That they wouldn't seat the Mississippi delegation, which had been reformed to have black members.

Rubens: It was a challenge to integrate the Democratic National Convention.

Stein: Not only that they wouldn't seat them, but the way in which they treated them--like pulling the plug on the TV. You know, Johnson pulling the plug on the TV, sending [Hubert H.] Humphrey in--

Rubens: To do the mop-up and dirty work.

Stein: Yes. And it was Humphrey and [Walter F.] Mondale who were his guys to do that. And then more generally, the fact that the government was on the side, as we saw it, of the South, in the South. That not only were they not affirmatively fighting for the rights of black people, but they were in cahoots with the cops.

- Rubens: And then, of course, you were saying that you had gone to your first anti-war demonstration.
- Stein: The first anti-Vietnam demonstration.
- Rubens: And that, of course, was the final seal for anyone who still didn't believe that our press, our leaders could lie to us
- Stein: Absolutely. Although, I think at that time, I was more motivated by the Buddhists who were immolating themselves, and I didn't see it as much as an American venture, but more as this awful tyrant, Vietnamese tyrant, who was coming here to be feted.
- Rubens: Did you see yourselves as ideological? Did you have a whole interpretation of--
- Stein: No, but that's what started to happen in 1964, is I began to put all of these pieces together in '64 and '65 and began to develop what might be called the New Left outlook.
- Rubens: That's what I'd like to follow up with.
- [Tape 2]
- Rubens: So you're saying you are seeing yourself in the context of '64--both what's happening at Berkeley and all the other things going on in the world to develop a New Left sensibility, a more coherent picture that these aren't isolated incidents, but that they relate to other things.
- Stein: I think that's right. And I think that I'm beginning to identify liberalism as the enemy and to differentiate myself from those who would call themselves liberals. But I didn't really have anything else to call myself. I wouldn't have called myself a Socialist.
- Rubens: Certainly not a Marxist.
- Stein: I was aggressively not a Marxist.
- Rubens: Why do you say that? What did that mean to you, "aggressively not a Marxist"?
- Stein: Insofar as I had read Marx--I had read a little bit by then--and Lenin, I really thought of Marxist ideology as a Leninist ideology, and I rejected it. I thought it was hierarchical. I identified it with sort of Leninist discipline. I never had any infatuation with the Soviet Union or any illusions about

the Soviet Union. That's part of just growing up a regular, apolitical, middle-class kid. I didn't have any of that baggage. I think Davy [Dave Wellman] was probably the first--. I went to high school with Gene Dennis, who's a year behind me--

Rubens: I know him very well.

Stein: But I think Davy was the first person I really knew who came as a red diaper baby--Davy and Bob Starobin.

Rubens: Right. But you were talking about Bettina; you became friends with her. And I assume when you said "Jack," you meant Jack Kurtzweil, who became Bettina's husband.

Stein: Right.

Rubens: But she didn't put a heavy push on you or heavy education?

Stein: No, on the contrary. No, I never had the sense of being recruited. One of the things I liked about Bettina and Jack was I think they respected where I was coming from. I think I was generally seen by people as somebody who stood outside of all of those factions. That's why they asked me to chair that big Free Speech Union meeting--3,000 people in the gym.

Rubens: All right. So is there anything more we should be saying about the trial? We have your political position on it. We then have the editorial that you write.

Stein: The leaflet.

Rubens: Leaflet. It's not an editorial, it's a leaflet. What do you mean by "leaflet?"

Stein: This was actually something that was handed out on campus, but the *Berkeley Gazette* picked it up on the campus and made it an above-the-flag story. The story was the leaflet, from beginning to end, with a one-paragraph introduction, which shows what a lousy newspaper it was. I don't have a copy of the leaflet, but for some--I was looking through my files yesterday after you called, and I came across this, which I preserved, I guess, because it is the first leaflet I ever wrote! [chuckles]

Rubens: So I'm going to make a note here. If we have the leaflet, I'll copy it for you and make sure you get it.

Stein: That would be great.

- Rubens: Anything more, then, you want to say? You did attend the trial.
- Stein: I did attend the trial. I once was really fascinated with trials. I probably, in one of my alternative lives, would have been a litigator. So I went to the trial, and I enjoyed it.
- Rubens: The trial was at the Alameda County Courthouse?
- Stein: No, I thought it was in the Berkeley Courthouse? Would they have it actually in the Berkeley--
- Rubens: Supervisors'--
- Stein: I may be getting mixed up between where we had our meetings and where the trial was held, but I remember a room with a lot of folding chairs. It was a Berkeley municipal building, but I think they actually held the trial somewhere where they could accommodate more people since all of us had a right to be there.
- Rubens: I think so. Yes. I should be able to say this, and I can't. But you just religiously went there?
- Stein: I don't know if I went there every single day, but I was there a lot.
- Rubens: And did you wear your suit and tie there?
- Stein: No. I stopped wearing my suit and tie.
- Rubens: Really?
- Stein: I probably wore it to sentencing.
- Rubens: Of course, but "don't chew gum, don't talk, be sure to show up." I mean, it got to the point almost where it was like pleading people to come because I think people--
- Stein: Oh, I think people--by no means did 800 people attend that trial.
- Rubens: Or even the trial group. But you went quite a bit.
- Stein: Yes, quite a bit. And I found it very interesting.
- Rubens: What about it particularly was interesting? Just the arguments?
- Stein: Yes, the arguments, the ways in which the lawyers maneuvered--

- Rubens: How did Crittenden strike you?
- Stein: Crittenden struck me as somebody who had really made up his mind what was going to happen at this trial and saw to it that it did.
- Rubens: Could you elaborate on that? What was the evidence?
- Stein: I guess the evidence to me was, first of all, the stuff he excluded and the stuff he allowed to be included. Well, as I say, I didn't have a sense then of the rules of procedure that I have from covering a lot of trials now. I think he was really being pretty arbitrary. He was letting things in that probably ought not to have been in, when it was cosmetically good for him to do that; and he was being sure that certain things never got said.
- The other thing that was striking about this trial was how utterly incompetent Ed Meese was. At one point, our lawyers argued that the trespassing statute under which we had been arrested could not apply in our case since it was a statute that was written against homeless people in public buildings. It said that a custodian had to tell you to go, and if you refused to go after the custodian told you to go, you were guilty of violating Section 602(o) of the [California] Penal Code.
- Rubens: Literally, the custodian?
- Stein: The word in the statute is "custodian." So our lawyer said, "Well, there was no custodian," and Meese did not know how to meet that argument. I mean, I found that the most profoundly idiotic thing. And they had to bring in Lowell Jensen, who I think is an absolutely first-rate lawyer. I thought it at the time. I didn't like him much, but I thought at the time he really knew his work, and it was my perception that they needed to bring this guy in to bail Ed Meese out because he didn't know what he was doing in the courtroom.
- Later on I had the great pleasure of covering Ed Meese. These pictures here, on my wall, are from the Wedtech trial. Ed Meese almost was indicted in the Wedtech scandal and had to testify at one of the trials.
- Rubens: Remind us, just for the record, what the Wedtech scandal was.
- Stein: Wedtech was a minority-owned defense contractor in the South Bronx that literally made up its bills and stole millions and millions of dollars from the Pentagon, with the help of the Bronx Democratic machine and some of the people closest to Ronald Reagan, including Meese and E. Robert Wallach.

- Rubens: And none of these guys were ever charged with anything, were they?
- Stein: But the Bronx guys went down.
- Rubens: Yes, but not Meese.
- Stein: No. Meese was never indicted, but I did have the pleasure of watching him squirm on the witness stand and then go to the john with him and making a little crack about--.
- Rubens: Do we know the year off hand? We know it was under Nixon, right?
- Stein: No, it was under Reagan.
- Rubens: That's very interesting what you're saying about Jensen. I'd love to get him. I'd love to see if Jensen talked with some of these first-rate lawyers that are still around.
- Stein: But, you know, of course, about Jensen? His job was to exclude as much as possible of the real issues and to make the case that this was simply an issue of some people who went into a building where they shouldn't have been and wouldn't leave when they were told to. And that was it. And why they went in was irrelevant. That was his job, and he did it pretty well. I really thought he was a good practitioner. Even at the time, I admired his craft, although I didn't admire him.
- Rubens: Is there anything else you'd like to mention: observances about Burnstein or meetings or--
- Stein: No. You know, there was a lot of upset and a lot of division. It was the first time that we began a little bit to come apart as a group.
- Rubens: We're talking about February and March. And, of course, this was building up to the day--March 15th, I think--when Mario stands up and says, "I'm going to step down."
- Stein: Right.
- Rubens: Of the Steering Committee or the Executive Committee?
- Stein: Who knows what it actually meant? [chuckling] It meant he wasn't going to be the guy standing and being the last speaker at the rallies.
- Rubens: Right. It was the media who had identified him, but it wasn't a designation he had bestowed on himself. So where are you at that point?

Stein: I don't remember when that meeting was, but certainly what's happening is that people are beginning to realize, partly as a result of these divisions in the trial, that the Free Speech Movement is over, and it's not an organization. And all of a sudden, we're saying to each other, "Gee, this thing that we thought was going to continue in some form isn't; and if we believe all the things that we've been saying--." This is something we haven't talked about, but we should have: one of the threads that's running through the Free Speech Movement is our education and our sense that we are being channeled and controlled in ways that are anti-intellectual and that don't meet our real educational needs and that we ought to have a substantial say in running the university. That is a thread that runs all the way through the Free Speech Movement and also then comes to fruition with the Free Student Union and the hope that by organizing this force--. Because the other thing that's going on is they're writing rules.

Rubens: "They," meaning?

Stein: "They," meaning John Searle and a law professor named Robert Coles. Both of whom were, for a time, very close friends and by whom Susie and I both feel betrayed.

Rubens: Really? How did they become close friends?

Stein: Because for some reason they singled us out as people who they could talk to. Again, I think because we weren't ideological, a lot of people identified us--on all sides of the picture--as people who could be either persuaded or who could deliver a message accurately or who would listen. So when these rules are getting written--the time, place and manner rules, some of which were--. I mean, there were a lot of efforts made to kind of roll back the gains of the FSM through the wording of these rules. We're among those who were being consulted--informally and formally, but a lot informally.

And in the course of that, I had really come to like--. Also, I knew Reggie Zelnick pretty well. Reggie grew up here [Riverdale, New York], and so I think Reggie brings us to John Searle; and then Cole comes in as the lawyer who's going to really draft these things. So all of those things come together. We really became friends, and it was kind of flattering too, you know. And they're smart people, and they treated us as smart people, and so, you know, that's going on.

Rubens: There's still this potential that you were going to continue as an academic. Did you finish the academic year?

Stein: Oh, yes. Yes, I think I did finish the academic year.

- Rubens: And then did you begin the next academic year as well?
- Stein: Good question. I bounced in and out a couple of times, but I don't remember specifically how that went.
- Rubens: All right. Now we're talking February, March. Are you aware that Mario is thinking about stepping down?
- Stein: No, I didn't know beforehand that he was going to do that. But, as I say, it didn't surprise me in the sense that this rejection of the leadership role, and especially the leadership role placed on one from outside, was something that was part of the New Left consciousness.
- Rubens: Before he makes that statement, had there been some discussions about whether or not an organization should be formed and the work continued?
- Stein: Oh, I'm sure there had. Yes, yes, absolutely.
- Rubens: All right. So Mario makes the statement, and there's this general discussion about forming an organization and dealing with this thread. As you said, the issue now to follow is how to reform education.
- Stein: Right, how to reform education--
- Rubens: That's why I asked you about Brad Cleaveland.
- Stein: --is one thread. The rules is another thread. Yes, Brad is one of the people who was most vocal about, the most visionary about, students taking control of their own education.
- Rubens: Did you know him?
- Stein: I knew him, but not intimately.
- Rubens: You had probably picked up his pamphlet on an occasion.
- Stein: I'd read his pamphlets, we'd sat on the terrace together, we'd been at meetings together; but we were never intimate.
- Rubens: How does the Free Speech Union come about?
- Stein: I wish I could remember that exactly. I mean, it comes about out of this sense of an organizational imperative. I remember Jack Weinberg being very involved, Bettina being very involved. I figured out that there were a lot of back room discussions--but I don't know among whom--because

then they come to me. Bettina specifically came to me and said, “We want you to chair this meeting. You’re the only one all of us can trust.”

Rubens: Those were her words?

Stein: Sum and substance, yes.

Rubens: “You are the only one all of us can trust?”

Stein: I can’t sit here thirty-five years later and tell you that those are the exact words she uttered, but it was pretty close.

Rubens: Did “trust” also mean respect?

Stein: I hope so. You have to ask her.

Rubens: I think, it did.

Stein: There really clearly were a lot of different points of view. There were a lot of sectarian organizations that had reputations for stacking meetings, for controlling agendas, for all that kind of stuff. So none of them wanted anyone from any of the other of them to chair this gathering. By now, I think, we’ve got SDS [Students for Democratic Society] rolling.

Rubens: I was trying to think. We’ve got to just triangulate that. It’s probably just getting rolling. There’s not a known quantity.

Stein: But insofar as it is a known quantity, it is a known nonsectarian organization.

Rubens: Okay. So you say, “Sure.”

Stein: And I say, “Sure.”

Rubens: Are you told what to do? Are you given instructions?

Stein: No. No, no. I think there were some written proposals beforehand, and for the rest of it, I really was winging it.

Rubens: Do you remember where the meetings were held?

Stein: It was in the gym.

Rubens: Harmon Gym, it was called?

Stein: Yes. 3,000 people. Chairing a meeting of 3,000 people!

- Rubens: What does that say? People were interested in seeing this continue?
- Stein: Yes. They really, really were. At the same time, Jerry Rubin is saying, "Forget this Free Student Union business," and he's right. "Forget this Free Student Union business. Vietnam is next."
- Rubens: He is right?
- Stein: I believe eventually he was right. [chuckles]
- Rubens: He stands up there and says it?
- Stein: No. Jerry was coming to us as we were organizing this meeting, saying, "The agenda for this meeting should be Vietnam." And we're saying, "No, no, no, no, no. Your position on Vietnam is right, but that's not what this is about. This is about taking control of our education. This is about buttressing our victory so that they can't take it away from us as they constantly try to do--"you know, nibble, nibble, nibble. "This is about going forward on that front and Vietnam is a different front."
- And so we had this big meeting, great enthusiasm.
- Rubens: 3,000 people. Do you remember a leaflet building for the meeting?
- Stein: Oh, sure. Oh, absolutely, yes. Leafleting, and there were meetings in departments.
- Rubens: GCC is alive and well?
- Stein: GCC is alive and well, but there were also meetings in undergraduate departments. We had some crazy kind of affinity group structure in the end. I don't remember what it was any more. There were all sorts of arguments about do we organize by department or do we organize graduates and undergraduates separately or together--you know, all that kind of stuff. And that's what this was a meeting for: what's the agenda, what's the sort of founding document, what's the organizational structure of this organization going to be?
- Rubens: How long did that meeting go on?
- Stein: Must have been two or three hours. It seemed like a lot longer.
- Rubens: What is your memory of what comes out of that?

- Stein: We founded the organization. The program was essentially, as I said, educational and in defense of the gains of the Free Speech Movement. And it set up a--
- Rubens: Was this written out?
- Stein: There's got to be documents. I don't have them at home, but there have got to be. And there was a structure. The structure--you know, there were sort of chapters or affinity groups. My recollection is that it was a very arcane structure.
- Rubens: David Goines doesn't do much of that at all.
- Stein: No. No, because, you see, David left. He ceased to be a student.
- Rubens: But it's a really good book, basically. Maybe the interpretation gets one-sided.
- Stein: It's a wonderful book. I think that only somebody who was there would read it cover to cover.
- Rubens: So I must get these papers. Do you have an official position? Are there elections?
- Stein: We must have elected someone. Did we elect officers? We might not have. I really don't remember. It might have been our notion that there would be a delegate body--
- Rubens: I think that's what I remember.
- Stein: --from this. That's probably what we would have done, that there would have been a delegate body from this. So I'm an informal leader, but I don't have a title.
- Rubens: And what happened after that?
- Stein: Vietnam!
- Rubens: Were there any other meetings that you remember?
- Stein: The organization kind of slowly deteriorated. It never found a thing to do. That's the sense, too, in which Jerry was right.
- Rubens: This is March, April when it's formed. School is out basically in May.
- Stein: In a couple of months, yes.

- Rubens: And then, it's a long summer, and you come back again in October. I think that's when the Filthy Speech Movement emerges. Of course, that's labeled that by Kerr. There are some others--Art Goldberg and some others--but I don't think the FSU has much--
- Stein: I don't think it had any presence. I think by then it had just vanished into thin air. And there's the Filthy Speech thing, and then Vietnam.
- Rubens: Absolutely. That's what people were getting involved in. So in terms of actually your time with the FSU, you have that big meeting, of course, that's memorable.
- Stein: That's memorable, and nothing else about it lingers in my memory.
- Rubens: Right, right. Anyone else you'd like to mention specifically regarding that? Bettina I should talk to, I know.
- Stein: Bettina, Jack Weinberg, I think.
- Rubens: Yes, Weinberg we're going to get to. No one else in particular that strikes you.
- Stein: I think that Davy was involved in it. I think that Hal Jacobs was involved.
- Rubens: Really? Hal Jacobs is who I have to call. Wellman said specifically, "Call Hal Jacobs."
- Stein: Nigel Young? But he's in England now. Those were my running buddies. I was running with the sociology people. Brian Maloney. Brian Maloney might have been involved with FSU. Brian became a friend during FSM, and we stayed friends. But within SDS, it is David, Joe Blum, Hal, Susie for a while. SDS national sent Carolyn Craven and then Kenny McEldowney here. Susie and I were very good friends with them. And, in fact, after Susie and I broke up, she was living with Carolyn. But those were my really close friends. And a guy named Carter Bancroft. He's here in New York now. He's a molecular biologist.
- Rubens: But this is again SDS?
- Stein: Well, Carter wasn't SDS. Carter and Brian weren't SDS. They were all FSM pals.
- Rubens: Do you remember Carter with the FSU?
- Stein: No, I don't think so, but Brian, I think.

- Rubens: Well, I need to go back and take a look at that now. And so maybe we should--
- Stein: I guess the one thing I probably did wearing the FSU hat: there was a meeting with Marty Meyerson, who had replaced Strong as chancellor, that I remember leading a walk-out from. I don't remember now what it was. It was one of those that was trying to chip away at the FSM gains.
- And there was a meeting with Earl Cheit. That was a great story.
- Rubens: Do tell it.
- Stein: That was a kind of story David Goines would love. Going to negotiate with Cheit--
- Rubens: But it's not in David Goines's book?
- Stein: No, I don't think so.
- We go in to negotiate with Cheit--
- Rubens: Dean of students.
- Stein: Yes. And many of us thought [Cheit was] chancellor apparent.
- Rubens: Meyerson had been the backup, the replacement chancellor for Strong.
- Stein: Right. And here's this guy who is a professional negotiator whose field is labor relations, and he has been a mediator and an arbitrator and a negotiator. One of the secretaries tips us to the fact that he's an absolute neat freak. So they bring us into his office, and he's playing the "let them wait" game. We're sitting there in his office. If this were his desk--you see the picture behind me? It's got a picture of some sort on his wall that he would be looking at as he was negotiating. We tilted it. It drove him bananas. You could see him wanting to get up out of his chair and go and fix the picture. You could see him being distracted--
- Rubens: He couldn't take his eyes off it. He was focused elsewhere and was magnetized.
- Stein: Absolutely couldn't. And I don't remember what we were negotiating--probably the rules. But we came away feeling that we'd won.
- Rubens: Cheit and Meyerson together, or Cheit alone?

- Stein: This was a meeting just with Cheit. The Meyerson meeting was a different meeting.
- Rubens: Just a great story. You don't know who that secretary is--Cheit's secretary? I am interviewing one. So far, I only have this one person's name, but she'll give me the name of several other staff people. That hasn't been done. I mean, they were forming AFSCME [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees], and some other union organizing was taking place.
- Stein: Well, you know, there was so much of that. David tells some of the stories, but there was a lot of support on the staff, and there were people who were themselves students but also were research people, administrative assistants and secretaries. There were people who were just secretaries, and there were mostly, I think, at that time, wives of students who were working in administrative--you know, lower-down administrative posts. And they were constantly feeding us information. We had an elaborate spy network. We knew what was going on in the higher reaches of the administration, when they talked about us quite a bit as a result of that. But David talks about that in the book.
- Rubens: Did you know Lee Felsenstein?
- Stein: Sure, sure. I mean, again, not somebody I knew real well, but absolutely.
- Rubens: Just because someone said he was really talking about computers and linking people up.
- Stein: Yes. Oh, he was. You know, we thought he was nutty at the time. One of the big mistakes of the Free Speech Movement was that "do not spindle, fold, or mutilate" slogan. The sense it expressed--that we were being treated as objects, not people--was right. But the sense that the computer was a bad thing, that it was on "their" side, was a major mistake.
- Rubens: Was that a weighted valance that that statement had?
- Stein: Well, insofar as we knew about them, we thought of them as a tool of the enemy, except for people like Lee, who would try to persuade people that this was a tool that we could use, and everybody thought he was nuts.
- Rubens: That's interesting. I need to pursue that. That's a great statement. I'm glad I asked you that. This is not justice at all, but just so we make sure we get this record: When you look back now, do you have a clear sense of mistakes versus victories and sensibilities? You've spoken to this, but I want to give you an opportunity to wrap up. One of the things I think you

said very articulately is how unified it was--“unified” is the wrong word--but in the sense of almost consensual. Participatory. That it was really participatory.

Stein: Yes.

Rubens: It was open. That there was no hidden agenda.

Stein: I think that’s so. I don’t know what you mean by--

[tape interruption]

Rubens: We’ve done an hour and a half, a little more. I want to just find out how long you were in Berkeley.

Stein: I was in Berkeley for fourteen years.

Rubens: Did you get a Ph.D.?

Stein: Never got the Ph.D.

Rubens: Were you in Berkeley all those years as a student?

Stein: No, I was a student on and off. I kicked around in various ways. My marriage broke up, I didn’t know whether I wanted to stay in school, I was in one of those what-are-we-going-to-do-with-my-life phases, and I heard about a proofreading job that I thought I’d take for six months while I figured things out. It was a job at something called the Mark Twain Papers, and I wound up becoming a principal editor of the Mark Twain Papers, working on nineteen volumes of what’s going to be--I don’t know--a hundred and fifty volumes someday, if it ever gets finished.

Rubens: You worked on nineteen volumes?

Stein: Yes. I was the principal editor of a volume of notebooks on *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, a book of unpublished literary works.

Rubens: And so twelve years with--

Stein: Twelve years or so with the Papers, and I stayed active in the movement for much of that time.

Rubens: Initially SDS.

Stein: SDS and just, you know, the Berkeley movement. In Berkeley, something has a monopoly on morality each semester, right?

- Rubens: Something has a monopoly on morality. That's a wonderful take, yes. You saw the Vietnam Day Committee come.
- Stein: Oh, yes. My proud boast is I was Stokely Carmichael's bodyguard--
- Rubens: Oh, this is a good boast.
- Stein: --on the stage of the Greek Theater, standing like this [demonstrates] as though I were some tough guy, and I pushed the *New York Times* reporter off the stage! He said [imitates outrage], "I'm from *The New York Times*!" I said, "I don't care!" Boom!
- Rubens: How did that come to be?
- Stein: Well, Jerry [Rubin] and I were pals, and at one point we were very close, in fact. I don't know, he just went around to various people and said, "We need a bodyguard." One of the things that distinguished the Black Panthers, in my experience, is that they were open to communication with white folks.
- Rubens: Communication indeed, yes.
- Stein: On campus there were lots of fissures, but by then I wasn't really participating in the academic wars. You know, I walked the picket line at the Third World Strike. It wasn't really my bag. In, I guess, '64 and '65, Davy and I founded a freedom school in West Oakland as part of an SDS community organizing project.
- Rubens: I didn't know that.
- Stein: And we got run out by nationalists.
- Rubens: Where was that?
- Stein: Oh, I don't remember the street.
- Rubens: Did it get going?
- Stein: Yes, it got going, and we worked with these kids for probably about nine, ten months, a year. Ultimately, one of the kids who was the leader of the pack got arrested in a riot in Oakland, pouring kerosene through the mail slot or somehow into this building and dumping a match in, and went away for a long time.
- Rubens: Do you remember his name?

- Stein: Johnson? Lawson? Bob Johnson, I think it was.
- So I was doing stuff like that. I ran the strike in '66. I was the guy. Somewhere in an archive there's an opening of the "Huntley-Brinkley Show" with a guy in a yellow slicker and a bullhorn, saying, "This campus is on strike." They led the news that night with that. The guy in the yellow slicker is I.
- Rubens: Great. I know we've got that. This is where the work should go.
- Stein: That's, of course, when Mario came back.
- Rubens: And that's the period of the Third World Strike?
- Stein: No. The strike of '66. It was the strike over the navy recruiting table, and that's when Mario came back. The *Yellow Submarine* is how that ended.
- Rubens: I don't know this story. I should know this story. Mario comes back, and are you friends with him then?
- Stein: Yes. Not as close as we were, but yes. The navy set up a recruiting table, and the administration said that a counter table could not be set up. Ultimately, this provokes a failed campus-wide strike. It was the rainy season, and it was one of the rainiest of the rainy seasons. It was unbelievable. It just didn't stop raining. And I stood in Sproul Plaza for three or four days in the rain, being the kind of main nuts-and-bolts organizer of that effort.
- Rubens: This, to some extent, is a product of the development of a New Left culture.
- Stein: Absolutely, absolutely.
- My deepest regret is that I never went South.
- Rubens: In '63, '64? Or do you mean--
- Stein: Or any other time. There really wasn't--by '65, '66, it's Black Power and it wasn't feasible to go south.
- Rubens: That's what I thought too. Did you go to that convention for New Politics in Chicago?
- Stein: No, I went to very little national kind of stuff. I went to a convention for New Politics in Los Angeles once and found it an absolute bore and went off to Disneyland with a girl.

- Rubens: So '66 is the *Yellow Submarine*.
- Stein: Right. And then I was real active in anti-draft stuff; and Jeff Lustig and Frank Bardacke and a couple of other people and I founded a magazine called *Steps*, which was published by the Free University of Berkeley--two issues.
- Rubens: Only two issues?
- Stein: Yes. But it included the first publication of Bob Hass, who later became a poet laureate of the United States.
- Rubens: Yes. A wonderful poet.
- Stein: Oh, he's marvelous.
- Rubens: It was the first publication that he--
- Stein: Of a poem of his, yes. I had two good friends from Columbia at Stanford, and Bob was one of the main group of people at Stanford, and my friends were also involved, so I got to know Bob through them. And I solicited this poem called, "Book Buying in the Tenderloin." It's a wonderful poem.
- Rubens: I'll look it up. I'll look it up.
- Stein: So that was in *Steps*, and--
- Rubens: Did you teach at the Free U.?
- Stein: No.
- Rubens: Okay, but you did the magazine.
- Stein: Yes. So we did the magazine together, and then I was an editor of the [New American] Movement newspaper with Davy, Joe, and Hardy Fry.
- Rubens: You know, Hardy is--
- Stein: I do. He's the head of the Peace Corps or VISTA, in Guyana. Guinea or Guyana--I forgot which. And his daughter was Al Gore's daughter's roommate at Harvard.
- Rubens: We tell that story over and over again.
- Stein: Isn't that unbelievable?

- Rubens: Yes. So you're an editor of the Movement [newspaper]--
- Stein: Of the Movement. And I was involved in Stop the Draft Week. You know, whatever was going on, I was involved in.
- Rubens: And so, then you leave when?
- Stein: Leave Berkeley in '78.
- Rubens: Nineteen seventy-eight. So the Stop the Draft Week--we've got a few more years.
- Stein: Yes, we've got a few more years.
- Rubens: Yes. All right. Well, we'll get it another time.
- In '78 you come back?
- Stein: I came back to--
- Rubens: To Riverdale?
- Stein: Yes.
- Rubens: And that's it?
- Stein: Yes. Don't look so sad.
- Rubens: No, no! I think that I'm not looking so sad.
- Stein: I came back on my own terms, and I like what I'm doing, and I think that the Free Speech Movement really did change my life. I carry so much of what I learned and what I came to believe fervently into my life now and into my work now. I think this newspaper—it's a funny place, where my father and I intersect, because this is a newspaper that--what makes this newspaper different from a big newspaper, a daily newspaper--the *New York Times*--isn't its size and it isn't its frequency of publication. The *Times* writes about the famous and the powerful and the notorious; and a paper like this one writes about the daily lives of ordinary people. That's something my father and I really--we had the same enterprise, the same thing in mind. But it's also, I think, something that is very true to who I was in the sixties.
- Rubens: But you're covering somewhat of the different ordinary people than your father would have covered, I would assume. Does that mean more teachers and community people?

- Stein: There may be some other voices in the paper than there would have been in his time, but fundamentally it's the same enterprise. We're writing about where people choose to live their lives: church groups and synagogues and PTAs and Kiwanis clubs and so on, and also about--
- Rubens: Wedtech stuff and--
- Stein: Well, I mean, the politics and the--I mean, this was the trial of the Bronx borough president who lived in Riverdale, of Congressman Mario Biaggi who lived in Riverdale. The key witness from the Wedtech company lived in Kingsbridge Heights--part of our coverage area. Witness after witness after witness was a local person. And so, yes, we wrote more about the Wedtech case than any publication in the world, at the same time, though, that we're covering what's happening in P.S. 81 or the Bronx High School of Science or John F. Kennedy High School.
- Rubens: What award eventually came to you for your journalism?
- Stein: I won the Pulitzer in 1998 for ten editorials written in 1997.
- Rubens: And what was the subject of those editorials?
- Stein: They were on a variety of topics.
- Rubens: I was wondering about the process. You submit entries?
- Stein: Yes.
- Rubens: That's very impressive. Were you surprised?
- Stein: I was flabbergasted. I didn't think it was utterly out of the question because I had been a finalist twice before. They announce who the finalists are each year, along with the--
- Rubens: Sure, just like Henry. I know that from Henry.
- Stein: Yes, and that's how Henry and I rekindled our friendship. He e-mailed me his congratulations, and we corresponded a little bit; and then when he was a finalist, [for the National Book Award] I e-mailed him. He came to New York, we got together, et cetera.
- Rubens: That is really impressive. And it's not limited to category, is it?
- Stein: Well, it's for editorial writing. No, there's no size category. I competed against--

- Rubens: *Washington Post?*
- Stein: Yes, the *Post*, the *Times*, the [*Wall Street*] *Journal*.
- Rubens: What's the circulation of your newspaper?
- Stein: 14,000. It's a weekly, and it covers two zip codes in the northwest Bronx.
- Rubens: What you said about your experience with FSM and the making of a New Left feeding directly into the work you do for the *Riverdale Press* was the kind of summary statement I was asking for earlier.
- This is a very compelling story. It's wonderful to say, "I kick around for another fourteen years"--well, you do a lot. You do a lot. I mean, your livelihood basically came from the Mark Twain Papers.
- Stein: Yes.
- Rubens: And you're productive. I mean, you're doing something important there and literary and keeping your chops up in terms of writing. But you're politically active throughout.
- Stein: Oh, yes. I stayed active personally throughout. I was part of that strike, the AFSCME strike. Remember that strike?
- Rubens: Yes, yes.
- Stein: And, you know, I rioted at every riot. By the end, it was beginning to get harder. You know, the war had ended--
- Rubens: "End" means--?
- Stein: By '77, '78. Yes, the war had ended. So by the time I left Berkeley, there was much less going on politically that I could relate to.
- Rubens: And just another elaboration on that. Relate to in what sense? Big national issues?
- Stein: SDS is gone. The war is over. I had the disillusioning experience of seeing people I thought of as friends or who I respected going underground and planting bombs and hurting people. I mean, I know some stories that I don't want to tell about how badly people were hurt: being told that they weren't human beings if they wouldn't give up their children, or giving up their children. And, you know, you've got to reexamine things in the light of that.

- Rubens: And I suppose--just as you said--that the FSU didn't have a cause to latch onto; maybe there wasn't a cause right then.
- Stein: Yes. It's much harder to find a center, so I was less active by the end than I had been previously. I was still very connected and concerned.
- Rubens: What I'm trying to say is not so hard then. I'm referring to when you said to me, "Well, don't look so sad." What it seems like to me is that it wasn't so hard to come back here because you were now a new person in a certain sense.
- Stein: Well, no. That didn't have anything to do with it. It was hard to come back here. But it was a good choice.
- Rubens: Okay.
- Stein: The only other real connection between the FSM and my life now--the absolutely remarkable connection, I think, is when I said this to the *Times* reporter in 1989, after we were firebombed—that I was arrested for free speech in 1964 and firebombed for free speech in 1989. This building was destroyed. In February 1989 I wrote what I thought was a motherhood editorial, saying that we ought to have the right to read Salman Rushdie's novel [*The Satanic Verses*], and that the big bookstores were wrong in pulling it off the shelves. My local peg was a little local, independent bookstore that said it was going to continue to sell. They said, "We're scared to death, but we're going to continue to sell the book." And four days after the editorial appeared, this building was destroyed by firebombs.
- Rubens: Was anyone hurt?
- Stein: No, it was 5:30 in the morning.
- Rubens: Did they found out who did it?
- Stein: Never found out who did it. That's my FBI file up there, next to the green-
- Rubens: The boxes.
- Stein: Yes. My personal FBI file is someplace else. That's the FBI file of the bombing--just the FBI's investigation of the bombing. They never found anybody.
- Rubens: Were there any suspects?

- Stein: Well, there was a call to 911 claiming responsibility and saying it was because of the Rushdie editorial. The FBI was convinced that that's what it was about. So there's a pretty direct connection. And the *Times* did a profile of the paper at the time. I said to the reporter, knowing he was going to lead with it, that I'd been arrested for free speech back in 1964 and bombed for free speech in 1989.
- Rubens: Whoo. It gives me chills. And did anything happen to the bookstore?
- Stein: The bookstore was unscathed. They got threatening phone calls, but nobody ever did anything.
- Rubens: It must have been horrifying.
- Stein: It was absolutely awful. We did not miss an issue.
- Rubens: I'm assuming you were able to get some help in keeping the paper going. And also, your presses were elsewhere, right?
- Stein: Yes, we don't have our own presses. We were printing at that time in Queens and now print in Connecticut. We contract that out, so to speak. That wasn't a problem. The problem was tearing up the front page and getting the paper out in another location. And then we rented quarters. We were bombed in February; we opened here in September.
- Rubens: What a story! I didn't know that at all. That's really a direct link.
- Stein: Yes.
- Rubens: Arrested and then bombed. Boy, the world is scarier.
- Stein: Of course, when I wrote this thing, I didn't think I was taking a risk, but I wrote about Rushdie for ten years thereafter on the anniversary as a way of saying, "You can't intimidate us or tell us what to write." And in 1997, the Rushdie editorial was in the Pulitzer [portfolio].
- Rubens: Ah. Is there something that's particularly drawing you, compelling you, getting your attention that you're writing about now?
- Stein: Now? Well, it's pretty local issues right now. I'm writing about the Hudson River a lot.
- Rubens: Did you know Abbie Hoffman?
- Stein: No, I never really knew Abbie.

- Rubens: The river he fought to clean up was called--
- Stein: He was upstate. The St. Lawrence River, I think it was. Abbie--our paths never crossed.
- I'm writing a lot about local schools.
- Rubens: Are your children interested in the sixties particularly?
- Stein: On the contrary. My daughter has no interest whatsoever. And every time it gets mentioned, it's, "Oh, Daddy! That sixties stuff again?!"
- Rubens: How old is she?
- Stein: She's twenty.
- Rubens: In college?
- Stein: She's in college, yes. She's at the New School. She's not interested in the least. And when she was little, she used to get home from school complaining about something or other, and I would say, "Hey, Annie, if you don't like what your teacher is doing, get a couple of your friends together, paint some stuff on a sign, and go walk around your classroom." [imitates high-pitched young woman's voice] "Oh, Daddy!"
- Rubens: "That sixties stuff again."

[End of Interview]