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The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

LEON WOFSY  
Professor Emeritus in Immunology  
Political Activist

Interviews conducted by  
Lisa Rubens  
in 1999

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Interview #1: November 8, 1999[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

Wofsy: This is Leon Wofsy speaking. WAHF-see is how I pronounce it.

Rubens: What does that name come from, by the way?

Wofsy: It's actually a biblical name. It's Vophsi, one of the sons of Naphtali. It's in Genesis. One of the sons of each of the tribes was sent by Moses on a scouting mission across the Jordan River. I didn't know that until I kept running into rabbis who called it to my attention.

Rubens: When you came to Berkeley in 1964, what was your status? Was this your first teaching job?

Wofsy: I came to Berkeley in '64 after a three-year post-doc at San Diego, UC San Diego. I had come to San Diego, to California and eventually to the university, after getting my Ph.D. at Yale. The unusual part of this story is that I didn't go for my Ph.D. until 1958, and I received it in 1961, even though I graduated from CCNY, City College of New York, in 1942. During that interval I had nothing to do with science. I was very much involved for many years with radical youth movements and was the national chairman of the Labor Youth League, which was a Marxist youth organization. This was from 1949 to 1956. This affected very much my eventual development of a career because it created obstacles to my getting employment.

Rubens: While your book [*Looking for the Future: A Personal Connection to Yesterday's Great Expectations, Today's Reality, and Tomorrow's Hope*, I.W. Rose Press, 1995] gives a lot of information about you and your family's background, and the whole text is available at our FSM website [<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/FSM/>], I'd like you to tell me about your role particularly in the Labor's Youth League, and how you became a scientist.

Wofsy: Well, my older brother Malcolm was a scientist. He was four years older than I. The reason his name is Malcolm Gordon is because he took my mother's name as his last name, since he graduated while there was still a Depression on and was told he couldn't get a job if he had a Jewish name. So he took the name Gordon. My mother had named him for Malcolm, in *Lady of the Lake*, so Malcolm Gordon had a much better chance at getting a job in industry, because at that time Jews and radicals had a rough time.

Rubens: I was going to say—he had a double whammy against him, right? Your parents were radicals; they were in the Communist Party?

Wofsy: Yes, that's right. The Depression really lasted until World War II. He graduated, I guess, in 1940, and had been active as a radical.

Rubens: Would you say that his interest in science shaped you?

Wofsy: Yes, in a way it did. When I went to college, what I would do in the long run professionally was the last thing in my mind. I was very much convinced that I would spend a lifetime working for social justice full-time. In a sense, it's a forerunner of some of the idealism of some of the young people in the sixties. It never occurred to me that a job or profession was anything but sort of a back-up, perhaps a necessary support system, for what I wanted to do with my life, which was to work in movements for social justice and particularly the Communist movement, which I grew up in.

Rubens: But of course you did go to college.

Wofsy: Well, I started out as an English major. This is all going to be irrelevant, but I started out as an English major. I was just as interested—perhaps more interested in literature than I was in science at that stage. I had no connection with science. My brother was deeply interested in science and eventually became a biochemist. I think I was persuaded to switch—not that anybody persuaded me—I persuaded myself to switch from English because it would be easier to get a job afterwards if I was in science. I didn't want to feel that the movement that I was working for had to support me. I felt that I wanted to have some kind of a support system for my work, and science seemed a lot more reasonable than English.

What you have to appreciate, looking back at that time, is my brother and I were the first of our family to go to college at all. We didn't dream of graduate education. That was very far removed from what our conception was at the time. My brother eventually went to graduate school after getting out of the army, on the G.I. Bill. But at that time, we didn't think in those terms. Nowadays, or at least in the sixties, a lot of people sort of naturally thought of their future in academia. That was absolutely absent from our conception at the time.

Rubens: Was it also important to your parents, both as social activists but also as immigrants, to have their children go to college? Was this part of, if not the American dream, at least a stepping stone to independence?

Wofsy: Yes. My father was a full-time organizer for the Communist Party in Connecticut. He was a rather unusual man, which is a separate story. He was about the farthest thing from an apparatchik that people conceive of as you can possibly imagine.

Rubens: Was he college educated?

Wofsy: He was not college educated. Neither of my parents graduated from high school. My father came here at age sixteen as an immigrant. He became involved in the socialist movement during World War I and [was] a supporter of Eugene V. Debs, and remained a socialist for the rest of his life. He became one of the founders of the Communist Party at the end of World War I.

- Rubens: Was he at that founding convention at Oakland?
- Wofsy: I know he was one of the founders. I don't know if he was at Oakland.
- Rubens: Did he want you to go to college?
- Wofsy: Yes, he did. He struggled very hard to educate himself. While he never lost his Yiddish accent completely, he tried successfully to "read and think in English" and became an effective public speaker and labor organizer.
- Rubens: And your mother?
- Wofsy: My mother actually came over here as a baby, so she was very conversant in English, and even though she didn't get past the ninth grade, she was a very cultured person. She read a lot, introduced us to music—much more culturally inclined than my father. But both of them had a high regard for education. They wanted us to be a success not in the terms that we think of today, but they wanted us to develop our minds and our interests—
- Rubens: When you decided to apply to Yale, was it to pursue graduate work or to finish your undergraduate studies?
- Wofsy: No, it was actually for a job. What happened is that I had left the Party and also had "graduated," in quotes, as we used to call it, from the youth movement in early 1956. I decided to go back to Connecticut, which was my home originally, and to look for a job. I hadn't worked in the private sector for all the years that I had been out of college except for a few months here and there. So I went back to New Haven, and I was looking for a job. For about a year, I worked in industry while I took night courses for a teaching credential. Then I got a job teaching, but I was fired after five weeks.
- Rubens: Because they found out about your background?
- Wofsy: Yes, though I had told them about my background. It was not kept secret. But it became an issue in a McCarthyite campaign during a local election for the board of education. So I was fired.
- Rubens: As a high school teacher?
- Wofsy: As a junior high school teacher. I was teaching junior high school math and science for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade. It was the hardest job in my life. But it only lasted for five weeks because I became an issue. It was sort of a late version of McCarthyism. It was a real McCarthyite campaign.
- So I was out of work for a couple of months. Had a wife who was supporting me and our two kids. I had to find a job. It looked rather hopeless. The head of the ACLU was also the head of the Chemistry Department at Yale. His name

was Julian Sturtevant. Anyway, I went to see him at someone's suggestion, for a technician's job, and we talked about everything under the sun. The upshot of it was that he couldn't hire me because he felt that I was too advanced intellectually for the kind of technician job they could hire, and for anything else they required a Ph.D. So I went home, figuring that that was a closed avenue.

A few days later, he called me up and had a proposition to offer me. He would get me a job as a technician if I would agree to take some advanced undergraduate classes and if I could make it, to qualify for graduate school. I could take my time. They wouldn't give me any deadline, but if I decided ultimately that I couldn't make it, or they decided that I couldn't make it, that would be the end of my job. So I had a powerful incentive to succeed. I did what they asked.

I became very interested in it. I fortunately worked with a couple of very outstanding people, in particular S. Jonathan Singer, with whom I worked for years and remained a colleague for many years afterwards. In fact, it was with him that I went to La Jolla when the UC campus started there. So I eventually became a graduate student in early 1958, and I got my Ph.D. in 1961. It was a chemical study of antibody molecules. That isn't the title of the thesis, but that's the essence of the subject.

Rubens: Was that immunology?

Wofsy: What was happening at that time was biology was still very fragmented. In recent years, as a result of the genetic revolution in particular, there [has been] a tremendous amount of interaction in various branches of science. At that time, Singer was a physical chemist, but he was a physical chemist studying antibody molecules, which are large protein molecules, and he was studying their chemical nature.

I became very interested in that. Ultimately, it led from an emphasis on chemistry per se to more and more an involvement with immunology, with the immune system, the nature of antibody molecules, of antibody specificity, and subsequently, in the years that I spent at Berkeley, the study of the cells that produce antibodies, their surfaces, and so on. That's the sort of the progression that took place.

Rubens: Chemistry, then would be the proper label or field?

Wofsy: Right, it was a degree in chemistry.

Rubens: You earned your Ph.D. in 1961. Then was it fairly natural to then do a post-doc because you were involved—



Wofsy: Well, what happened is that while I was a graduate student working on my thesis, I got an idea that I wanted to follow up, and Singer was anxious for me to follow it up. Since he had been invited as part of the cadre that formed the La Jolla campus of UC, he invited me to come with him and to work on that project. He was very much involved with other things at the time, so I had a lot of freedom.

Rubens: What was the project, in a nutshell?

Wofsy: The project was to try to identify those portions of this large antibody molecule which were critical to discriminating between what are called antigens or foreign entities. The nature of the immune system is that it recognizes things that are foreign and mounts a response by antibodies and by cells against that foreign antigen. Nobody knew how it was that this whole family of molecules, antibodies—which are part of the immunoglobulin family, which all look very much alike—how it was that one antibody was able to recognize one antigen, and another antibody is able to recognize another.

The portion of the molecule that makes up the active site wherein the specificity resides is a relatively small portion of the molecule. At that time, the thought was if we could identify that portion of the molecule, we might have a handle on what was the biggest issue in immunology at the time, and that is the nature of antibody specificity.

I thought of a scheme for doing that chemically. In La Jolla, working with Singer and later with Henry Metzger, it succeeded. At that time, it was a very, very big development because everybody was looking to be able to identify the active site. As it turns out, the antibody story is a family of molecules that are so complex that simply identifying the region of the molecule that was the active site didn't tell you anywhere near as much as we had hoped that it would. Ultimately, it was the genetic revolution—that is, the ability to study genes that code for the antibodies—that was instrumental in resolving the problem of antibody specificity.

Rubens: The history of science is something people are so interested in. Singer had been invited as a cadre to head up or initiate the campus. I'd love it if you could say anything more *you* knew. Particularly, who invited Singer?

Wofsy: Well, the campus at San Diego, La Jolla—they made a big point originally of wanting it to be called La Jolla rather than San Diego—the notion was that this would be a really elite campus of the university.

Rubens: Did they take over Scripps or anything like that?

Wofsy: They used the Scripps buildings as the first campus. What they did was gather a corps of really the most outstanding people first of all in science and in

biology—in chemistry and in biology. They recruited people from the University of Chicago and from Yale to form the basis. The first focus was on science. They had a remarkable collection of people they were able to get over there.

And what they wanted to do was to set up a campus that would really break the mold. I think there was a very strongly elitist conception at the time that this would be a *real* university, with a tremendous emphasis on excellence. Also, that they would build a medical school, and that the medical school would be a medical school that was very, very connected to the best academic science and to the new developments in science which were emerging at that time.

That campus was actually formed about the same time as the whole story about DNA was beginning to break, the Watson and Crick discoveries, so that there was a tremendous enthusiasm about creating a major center. Around the same time, the Salk Institute was developed there, the Scripps Institute was there, and the idea was that they would have a real network. In a sense, it was a forerunner of the kind of notion of complexes of science and medicine that have become the rage and much more a commercial enterprise now than they were at that time. At that time, the commercial element still was not a major factor.

Rubens: At that point had you met Clark Kerr?

Wofsy: No. The first thing that happened that you'll be interested in is that California had a loyalty oath at that time. This is a funny story.

One of the leaders of the Labor Youth League, along with me, was Robert Fogel, who's now a Nobel laureate in economics. He left the movement in a rather more dramatic way than I did. That is, he actually changed his thinking 180 degrees. He called me up—he heard I was considering Berkeley, when I was still at Yale—and told me that would be a very big mistake because California has the loyalty oath. At that time, it was the milder loyalty oath.

Rubens: Even vis-à-vis being a post-doc, is this right?

Wofsy: Yes. Well, as a post-doc—any employee had to sign the standard oath in California. And I became a post-doc and eventually I became a research assistant. The lines were not very sharply drawn. There was a research ladder, okay? You were an employee.

Anyway, I spoke to Singer about it. I was assured by Singer, who talked to Harold Urey and others who were there. The loyalty oath, in my opinion, was essentially like all loyalty oaths, but the content was fairly innocuous at that time. It wasn't the typical anti-Communist loyalty oath of the McCarthy period. I would sign it under protest. I was assured by Singer after discussing

with Urey and others that they would never allow anything to be done because I signed it under protest. In other words, I would not be discriminated against. They were certain that everything would be okay. And it was.

Rubens: Were you privy to any administrative machinations with the expansion of the university?

Wofsy: Certainly not at the top level, but there was a very strong lobbying going on for the medical school, and the people all around me, Singer included, were involved in that.

Rubens: Yes. So you're at UCSD for three years?

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: Is Herbert Marcuse there at the time?

Wofsy: No, he came later. And Angela Davis came later.

Rubens: All right. So, before you came to Berkeley, where else had you been hired after your post-doc?

Wofsy: What happened is that, to everybody's surprise, my own included, there came—well, the surprise was not that I got a flood of offers because, as I told you, the whole business of affinity labeling of antibody-active sites was a pretty hot subject. So I got lots of offers, which was expected. What was unexpected—since this was already 1963 and '64—was that I would run into loyalty oath problems of an extreme type.

First was the University of the State of New York, which still had the Feinberg Law at that time. What happened is I was offered a job as an associate professor at the Buffalo campus of the State University of New York. They were anxious to have me. I was anxious to go, and the job was accepted—everything went through—and then I was asked to simply send back with my signature a filled-out form connected with the Feinberg Law. The Feinberg Law—(this is all incidental to your story, I'm sorry to say, but I can't avoid talking about it)—was really, incredibly, even more obnoxious than the worst of the loyalty oaths of California. It required that you write to the president of the university if you were applying for a job, and tell him if you've ever been a member of any organization on the Attorney General's list, which [was] about 200 organizations at the time. Not only that, you agreed to be part of a set-up where your supervisor, your department chairman, had the job every year of reporting if there were any subversive words or deeds in the course of that year—I have it in the book—but actually, that's what it said. So you had to agree to annual reports on any subversive activities, including speech or anything.

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Rubens: So you had to be willing to sign that?

Wofsy: Yes. Well, I'll show you the letter that I sent. I said I considered it outrageous—since this was for all public employees of the school system of the State of New York, there must be a vast majority of them who agreed with me that it was outrageous that this was a condition for their job. But, like them, I would sign it, and that when I came to the University of the State of New York, like lots of other people, I would do everything in my power to get rid of the oath. Well, I didn't get any answer. That was an interesting question because how you handle loyalty oaths or how you handle appearing before a committee is not ever very simple. You know, you can decide not to sign, which is a heroic move, and that's fine. It's not necessarily less courageous to sign and to fight. I mean, you don't have the choices you would like. The choices are conditioned for you by the institution, by the system that you're dealing with.

Rubens: And also by your own specific needs.

Wofsy: Yes. I think it really was that I did not feel that—especially in a state as big as New York, where thousands and thousands of people were operating on this basis—that it was necessarily the wisest thing to say, “Well, screw you. Take your job—”

Rubens: I guess you thought, What difference was it going to make?

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: But they didn't hire you.

Wofsy: But they didn't hire me, nor did Pittsburgh. They already knew all about what had happened in New York and invited me because they were certain that it couldn't happen in Pittsburgh because Pittsburgh was a private institution. I went through the whole thing for the job. It was a formal offer of a job, and everything was completely set, including the amount of money I would get and a special grant and everything. And all of a sudden they were silent. I was waiting for the contract to come and had made two trips to Pittsburgh, and all of a sudden, in the middle of all this, I got an offer from Berkeley.

I would have loved to go to Berkeley, but I felt committed to Pittsburgh. Finally (which is in the book), Roger Stanier, who was the head of the department which made the offer to me—[the department of bacteriology and immunology]—he asked me if I would mind if he called Pittsburgh because his graduate student, Ellis Engelsberg was the chair of the department that was offering me the job there. And he called them up, and he found out that, to the

absolute chagrin of Ellis Engelsberg and everybody else involved at a faculty level, the university had overruled my appointment.

Pittsburgh was afraid of a lawsuit. What they were going to do was send me a letter from the dean, which would say that unfortunately, if I come to Pittsburgh, they don't give tenure the first year. And he feels that he owes me, to tell me that at the end of the first year the university would not give me tenure because they did not want their funding to be affected by a controversial appointment.

Rubens: Was Engelsberg dragging his heels, embarrassed to tell you he's got to carry out the mandate?

Wofsy: I don't know. What I do know, which is really quite remarkable—in fact, every time I say it, it seems so unreal that I wonder if people will believe it—but both Engelsberg and Bernard Baker from the State University of New York, who was head of the department there—both of them left. They didn't know each other, but they both happened to end up in Santa Barbara. But they both left in thorough disgust over the university's handling of my situation. They didn't fight it publicly.

The result was that we decided we were going to go to Pittsburgh because the dean wrote me this ambiguous letter, and we knew what it was because we had already been told by Engelsberg. He wrote me a letter, saying that I could come, but he wants me to know that I wouldn't get tenure at the end of the first year. So I wrote back, saying, "Well, we'll take our chances."

Rubens: Why?

Wofsy: Why? Because I wanted to call his bluff. And it worked. He sent me back a letter, "Sorry, you can't come."

So then I come to Berkeley. I was supposed to be appointed as of July, 1964, to the department of bacteriology and immunology.

Rubens: How old was that department at that point?

Wofsy: It's an old department, a very prestigious department, headed by Roger Stanier and Michael Duderoff. They were very outstanding people. At that time, a lot of these people were biochemists. They're studying the mechanisms, the biochemical pathways, and so on and so forth. That's sort of a separate story.

Anyway, what happens here that's more relevant is that we're already packed and ready to leave because, of course, Berkeley knew the whole story—everything. In fact, I had gotten a call from Eli Katz while I was in San Diego, telling me what had happened to him and—do you know that story? He

wasn't going to fight it. I introduced him to Howard Schachman, whom I knew at the time, and Howard got a hold of Eli, and that began the big fight against the firing of Eli Katz. Berkeley—that is UC—also had a policy against the hiring of Communists.

Rubens: Right. But you signed the oath when you were at San Diego.

Wofsy: So they shouldn't have had a problem. Nevertheless, the Regents refused to endorse my appointment. Now, this is a very interesting thing, which I hope Reggie Zelnik will deal with [in the upcoming anthology that he is editing, *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s*, UC Press, 2002], but I haven't seen it mentioned anywhere. At one point, the Regents kept the power of final approval or veto of appointments. In fact, they used it not only with me, but during the FSM period to hold up tenure of Reggie Zelnik from history and Jack Hirsch from biochemistry because they had been active in the FSM movement. Ultimately, the Regents gave up that power.

Rubens: It went from the department to the campus—

Wofsy: Through everything, through the chancellor, everything—and then it gets to the Regents, and the Regents say, “Wait a minute.” At that time Max Rafferty was a member of the Regents as the California State Superintendent of Schools. Anyway, what they agreed to do—what they asked—instead of me moving up here in July, they asked me to come up to meet with Chancellor Strong.

Rubens: In July?

Wofsy: Yes. I mean, the fiscal year, when the appointment was supposed to take place didn't take place, and they asked me to come up to meet with Strong.

Rubens: Did you fly up to meet with him?

Wofsy: Yes. I meet with Strong.

Rubens: And, by the way, why Strong? He's the chancellor of the campus. It's the whole system that's stopping you. Is he going to be their toady?

Wofsy: Right. So I meet with Strong.

Rubens: Was this your first meeting with Strong?

Wofsy: Right. And people were very concerned. That is, there was a tremendous reaction to the Regents refusal—by tremendous, I don't mean public, but among the scientists. Harold Urey and Singer and Howard Schachman on this end and Roger Stanier all ganged up on Kerr—

- Rubens: As president of the university?
- Wofsy: Right. In fact, Singer and Urey wrote a letter, which said that if, after going through all the academic channels, I was refused an appointment on political grounds, that they would leave. I got them to edit the letter. They changed it to say they would reconsider their position in the university.
- Rubens: Why did you ask them to change?
- Wofsy: I don't know.
- Rubens: But they offered to leave?
- Wofsy: Right. And so that was going on. So the Regents were caught in a box, especially since I had signed the loyalty oath. There was a lot of fear of suits, which, by the way, was the last thing in the world I would have done. So anyway, I met with Strong, who told me—he first pulled out an article from the *Daily Worker*, which had said that Leon Wofsy graduated from the youth movement for other work in the people's movement, and that was in 1956. This was 1964. They were concerned [whether this meant] that I was a member of the Communist Party and so on and so forth.
- So I said that, "As you know from the other places, Buffalo and Pittsburgh, I won't discuss my political opinions as a condition for a job. It's a matter of record that I'm not a member of the Communist Party, but beyond that what the *Daily Worker* wrote, that's their business, not my business" and that I wasn't going to discuss it.
- So he went through a whole business of trying to draw me out. He raised the Katz case. The discussion actually then developed much more on his part than on mine. He said that he doesn't agree with this stuff—
- Rubens: Did they pay for you to come out and talk to him?
- Wofsy: Oh, yes.
- Rubens: And then where does the meeting really take place, in his office?
- Wofsy: At the campus office, yes.
- Rubens: Had you been to the Berkeley campus before?
- Wofsy: Yes. I had—as part of the appointment process, I had given a series of seminars in the spring of '64.
- Rubens: Eli Katz knows you're considering Berkeley.

- Wofsy: Yes.
- Rubens: How had you known him before?
- Wofsy: First of all, I had known him in the youth movement back in New York. He was actually in a Jewish youth movement that was also left. And incidental to that—another coincidence—he had been married to a cousin of my wife, Roz's.
- Rubens: These coincidences are absolutely amazing.
- Wofsy: They're really funny, huh? So he called me up to tell me his trouble, and also to say that it was hopeless and he was leaving.
- Rubens: What was his position at Berkeley?
- Wofsy: He was an assistant professor of German, teaching courses in Yiddish studies.
- What happened is the Un-American Committee had come to Los Angeles when he was in Los Angeles and had subpoenaed him, and he had refused to answer questions at the Un-American Committee, which was interpreted by the university that he was probably a member of the Communist Party. There was no evidence of it, but it was part of the university's policy that they don't hire Communists, and they used that he refused to answer questions at the Un-American Committee—which, of course, was the standard method that operated throughout the McCarthy period. One has to appreciate, though, because most people don't, that this was very late in the game. McCarthy had already had his comeuppance, and all of this was still operating.
- Rubens: So this is operating that academic year, '63-'64.
- Wofsy: Right.
- Rubens: It seems late for that to be going on. He called and told you that maybe you shouldn't come here?
- Wofsy: Right, right. And not only that, but he [said he was] going to leave, too, and that it's hopeless. Well, based on my experiences—which started back with the original thing while I was still at Yale about the loyalty oath and so on, and the support I had from Singer and from Urey and from Schachman and Stanier on this campus—I told him that that's foolish, that he should fight; that I was coming up to Berkeley at that time. [I told him] that I would speak to Schachman—which I did, and Schachman spoke to [Jacobus] ten Broek, and that's how the Katz case got started.
- Rubens: Very interesting.



Now, let's get you back. There you are with Chancellor Strong. And how does the Katz case come up in this discussion?

Wofsy: It comes up in a very interesting way. I had been told by my advisors, which were Stanier and others, not to mention Katz. Strong brought it up: Did I know about the Katz case? He raised that, I'm sure, as an example of the university's policy. And I said, "Yes, as a matter of fact, I do know about the Katz case, and I disagree with it completely." So from that point on, the discussion went in the direction that well, he disagrees with it also, but it's university policy, that he personally testified for Stanley Moore when he was being fired at Reed College, and that this is not something that he supports, but it's university policy and I should understand that they have to go through this procedure.

Rubens: And including the procedure of grilling you?

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: Did you have a sense, at some point, that you will or will not be approved?

Wofsy: I didn't know. What I did have the sense of—frankly, between you and me—is that he was completely on the defensive, and that I didn't feel any pressure to go beyond what was the position I had taken with New York and Pittsburgh, which was consistent all the way through.

In other words, Strong was implying that he's on my side. He didn't say it in so many words, but what then happened was another Regents meeting, which I know about second-hand, where Lincoln Constance was the chancellor's representative who presented my case. What he said I don't know, except I gather from what later appeared in the State Un-American Committee report on FSM [June 1965] that he got their approval probably in ways that I wouldn't particularly have cared for if I was present at the meeting.

Rubens: How is Lincoln Constance involved?

Wofsy: Lincoln Constance was a prominent member of this campus. He's retired now. He was in botany. He comes into the story again—to give you another secret that I don't think you'll come up with—when the Free Speech Movement broke out and really exploded around December. Chancellor Strong was still ostensibly the chancellor, but he was replaced by a secret acting chancellor, at the orders of Kerr. And that was Lincoln Constance. He was a prominent professor in the botany department. He represents the chancellor, argues my case before the Regents, the appointment is approved, and I get up here in August.

Rubens: It's all moving pretty quickly, then?

Wofsy: Right. I got up here—their summer meeting passed on it. At the point where they held the thing up, I figured it was finished. That was my thought. But anyway, apparently there was enough pressure so that it went through. So we get to Berkeley in August of '64.

Rubens: Right. Did you have housing?

Wofsy: We rented; at that time it wasn't that hard.

Rubens: And you knew some people in the department?

Wofsy: Yes. I mean, the campus was extremely welcoming.

Rubens: So of course your first teaching is that fateful fall. What were you assigned to teach? Was it graduate or was it undergraduate?

Wofsy: I taught immunology, which at that time was regarded as a graduate discipline. It later changed. For the years that I was in that department, I taught Immunology first as a graduate course and later as an undergraduate course.

##

Rubens: I'm interested in '64-'65, those first few years.

Wofsy: During that year it was a graduate course.

Rubens: And how many students, about, are in that?

Wofsy: I don't remember precisely. It was pretty large. It was a course attended not just within the department but open to biochemistry students and molecular biology students. I would say it averaged, over the years—and I don't remember which year was which—anywhere from 60 to 125.

Rubens: Was it one of those big lecture halls in the zoology building?

Wofsy: No. Well, some of it was there. Actually, our classes took place in the Biochemistry building and in the Molecular Biology and Virus Laboratory [MBVL] auditorium, both auditoriums. You know the Biochemistry building that's on the corner—now a big complex—but it's on the corner of Oxford and Hearst, that corner of the campus—the Biochemistry building, which is the opposite end of the campus from MBVL. That's how I know I'm getting old, because when I used to run from one end to the other, it was very easy; now it's gotten very hard.

Rubens: How did you get students?

- Wofsy: Your graduate students come to you.
- Rubens: Had the graduate students heard you speak in the year before, when you were being tried out?
- Wofsy: Right.
- Rubens: Did these students know your reputation? Probably they read things.
- Wofsy: Yes, there was never a shortage.
- Rubens: Were you given a lab and time to continue your research?
- Wofsy: Yes. In fact, the way things were in those days, I didn't teach at all the first semester. Were we on semester or quarter? I don't remember.
- Rubens: In '64, it was a semester system.
- Wofsy: Anyway, I didn't teach the first term—and that wasn't unusual. In the sciences, if you've got an appointment at that time, your first responsibility was to set up a lab, get your grants, and you weren't burdened with formal teaching responsibilities for your first semester. So I was primarily involved in setting up the lab. It was an old building—[it's] since been remodeled—and the labs were very old, and it was a major overhaul job. I had plenty of space, but I had to set up a lab, hire technicians, get grants. That's basically what I was doing that first semester.
- Rubens: Where were the grants coming from, in general, that first year?
- Wofsy: From the National Institutes of Health [NIH]. The entire time I was there, my support was from NIH—some of it from NSF [the National Science Foundation] but mostly from NIH.
- Rubens: Certainly it had been discussed already in '63 and '64 by students that the university did the bidding of corporations. The ag [agriculture] department, for instance, was at the beck and call of Giannini, the banker, and the big growers. In your field, were there concerns about private benefit from public institutions?
- Wofsy: No, that's a whole subject of great interest in its own right that has nothing to do with your interview here. When I came to La Jolla and then to Berkeley, it was a time of biological science which was exciting, enthusiastic and uninfluenced by petty commercial interests. I mean, the pettiness was in terms of what always is true in academia, and that is people were very anxious to establish their reputations and to win prizes and to publish and so on, but these are sort of the traditional drives in academia.

There wasn't yet a drive for patents, for commercialism, for corporate sponsors. In fact, the atmosphere in basic health sciences and biology and biochemistry was to look down very, very much at any effort of an individual to get a patent. The whole culture changed. It was a very, very different culture, which took a certain pride in the fact that they weren't in areas which were based on personal aggrandizement.

In fact, they looked down their noses at things like people who went into medicine where they can get more money, or stuff like that—pharmaceuticals for example. The predominant culture—you know, people who are farsighted saw where it was going to head, but by and large the fascination [of the faculty] was with the great intellectual achievements that were taking place.

- Rubens: Are you saying this was a dramatic period in terms of scientific discovery?
- Wofsy: The DNA structure was identified in that period, and the whole foundation of the genetic revolution was being laid. It was bursting out.
- Rubens: Just in that field at Berkeley, when you're coming there—a couple of years before and a couple of years after—who are the great highlights? Calvin had already been awarded a Nobel? There were others.
- Wofsy: Right.
- Rubens: So, just in terms of all the stuff that you're particularly interested in—whether it's genes or bacteriology—who are really the outstanding people at the time?
- Wofsy: Oh, the outstanding people—there were quite a few of them. Stanier, Snell, Stern, Schachman, Stent and many more.
- Rubens: How would you have rated Berkeley's immunology—bacteriology, immunology departments?
- Wofsy: When I came in, immunology itself was weak. It became stronger. Bacteriology had the most eminent people in the field.
- Roger Stanier, Michael Dudoroff had written the classic textbooks which were used everywhere. They were also very much connected—even though their own work was somewhat traditional, they were very much connected intellectually with the people who were making the big changes in genetics; that is, with Monod and Jacob—you know, the French group that played such an important role in developing modern molecular biology.
- Rubens: I'd like to know what was the status of genetic research at Berkeley, in your opinion?

Wofsy: They had some very prominent people, but genetics was not yet what it soon became.

Rubens: At Berkeley?

Wofsy: Anywhere, really.

Rubens: Okay, except for Britain and France.

Wofsy: Yes, right. But this campus was very much connected with the institutions in which this work was going on, and it influenced, in turn, the work that was going on here. Stanier, Gunther Stent were very much a part of that whole environment. There were some very outstanding chemists, some of whom I know now. I don't know—who became more and more famous subsequently: Howard Schachman became very prominent, not just in genetics but in science in general. There was Snell in biochemistry. Biology in general in Berkeley was very prominent. Zoology was number one. Generally, most of the departments were one, two or three.

Immunology wasn't a separate department, but they were part of a department that was rated very high. Immunology traditionally was considered sort of a sister or a child of bacteriology, of microbiology, and eventually it became an enormously significant field in its own right.

Rubens: Roughly when?

Wofsy: Well, around that time.

Rubens: Mid-sixties?

Wofsy: Mid-sixties. See, when people began to do the first work identifying genes coding for particular proteins, the first mammalian system that came under active study was the immunoglobulin antibody system. The first really major applications of the breakthroughs in molecular and cell biology that took place at least in mammalian cells—going beyond microorganisms—was in immunology. So very rapidly in that period—in the sixties, seventies, eighties—immunology became a front-line discipline in the whole molecular biology/genetics revolution.

Rubens: I'd also like to know about the Lawrence Berkeley Lab. Did your department have any relationship to that?

Wofsy: Not that I know of. Part of our department was connected to the Naval Biological Laboratory [NBL]. I refer to that in my book. But one of the problems when I came in was there was a big gulf between immunologists and the bacteriologists. I don't know if you read that part. But the bacteriologists were very outstanding—Roger Stanier and the others—and

they were on the frontiers of molecular and cell biology. The immunologists had been very much involved with the government during the war and were involved in bacteriological research. In fact, they ran what ultimately became tests done on the spreading of bacteria from Catalina Island to this area.

You know, there were a number of experiments run that had to do with germ warfare. What happened is that Roger Stanier, before he ever even took a job here—he was very prominent in his field—attacked that whole development of germ warfare, and then found himself here, in the very same department that was connected with the Navy Biological Lab. Immunology was very strongly connected with the Naval Biological Lab, where these experiments were going on.

Rubens: Was there literally a presence? I mean, was there a Navy Biological Lab in Berkeley?

Wofsy: Yes, yes.

Rubens: And where was that? Was it was on campus?

Wofsy: The labs themselves were mainly off campus, but NBL was really run by the immunologists.

Rubens: Stanier had attacked that development in what form?

Wofsy: He was very much opposed to germ warfare.

Rubens: Would that kind of debate have been in the professional magazines?

Wofsy: Yes, it was public. It was a period of time when people were fighting the nuclear—atomic bomb and germ warfare research and everything else. It was part of essentially a post-war consciousness that developed into the peace movement in that period.

Anyway, this led to incredible antagonisms within our department. I was privy to this when I came in. The paradox is the immunologists had hired me, and the bacteriologists supported me very much because they saw that as a shift from the old status of immunology. They saw that as a way to change immunology.

Rubens: Put it in more line with the scientific revolution that was taking place?

Wofsy: Right, right. But they didn't even talk to each other. They hated each other. So the first job I got when I was here, that first term, when I was setting up my lab, was I became sort of a liaison between the two halves of the department and involved in reorganizing the department. Soon some of the old-line

immunologists left the department and set up a separate entity in the School of Public Health.

Wofsy: There are so many—

Rubens: Little eddies and cross-currents.

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: But they're important. They are really important. In other words, there are these academic divisions which also speak to political backgrounds and current applications, general cultural issues. All this is brewing, and then of course they're exacerbated by student idealism and inquiry.

Wofsy: Right.

Rubens: Was there bad blood left from the loyalty oath controversy? FSM must have been like salt on a wound.

Wofsy: A lot of these people in molecular biology and biochemistry were opponents of the loyalty oath. Schachman and the people at the recent loyalty oath symposium you mentioned, for instance Howard Bern in Zoology. In general, Stanier, who wasn't here during that time—all of these people regarded themselves as, at the very least, strong liberals.

Rubens: Do you have an opinion about the nature of science and the free inquiry of the mind at the university? Was there something that was maybe coterminous with what the discipline is?

Wofsy: There was actually—if you go back over it, particularly as the Vietnam War developed—a lot of the scientists in that period, their culture, the culture that was operative in science at the time, lent itself to a lot of participation in social issues and causes. Prominent biologists, including future Nobel laureates, were very active and outspoken opponents of the Vietnam War.

Rubens: They're doing the science?

Wofsy: —they are people involved in the science, but the general milieu was a progressive milieu.

Rubens: I'm wondering if there's something about the nature of the discipline that allows for free inquiry?

Wofsy: I think so.

Rubens: Is it that they can't have the university telling them what to study?

Wofsy: Absolutely. There's no question that that was the atmosphere. In fact,—you know, it's a separate story entirely, which I get into in my book [pp 142-3], of what happened to this culture and how it changed. But that didn't take place till much later. At this time, I would say the culture was a free speech culture in terms of scientific inquiry.

Rubens: Okay. Now we'll switch gears. You're talking about what you were doing professionally and the state of the department. When do you start observing that some contest is going on between students and the chancellor?

Wofsy: I got there in August, and all hell broke loose in October. If I hadn't made this clear beforehand, whatever changes I went through in my thinking and associations, evaluation of my past and so on, I remained a socialist in my thinking and a radical in my thinking. So I was supportive from the beginning of what I saw—certainly of the Civil Rights movement but also the students' support of the Civil Rights movement. And when the university collision took place around the car with Weinberg and so on, I was completely supportive of the students from the beginning.

On the other hand, what you have to appreciate is that in that whole first year, I was very active with faculty, but not with students. In fact, I didn't really connect with the students except those in my own department who knew me very well—people like Brian O'Brien whom you probably don't know. Ringo Hallinan and Brian O'Brien were the organizers of the teaching assistants' union.

Rubens: Brian was in your department?

Wofsy: Yes, he was in my department. So, you know, in that sense I hooked up with these students very quickly. I had never kept anything secret, and so I had very close associations with them. But that was within the department and their immediate friends, okay? But I deliberately tried not to get involved in things where I would be public because very soon after I got there, I was a target of the ultra-conservative journal, *Tocsin*—that came out with pictures of me and so on. And I tried very hard to express my sympathies and support by what I could with the faculty but avoided public notoriety.

Rubens: How did *Tocsin* get a hold of you?

Wofsy: When I came to the University of California, one of the things that happened—there was a fire in 1991, so I lost all my files, unfortunately. Among them were my FBI files. The FBI files included a letter that the FBI sent to Governor Edmund Brown when I first came to La Jolla as a post-doc, warning him of my arrival and presenting my whole radical background. It was about a two- or three-page letter. I didn't see this until I got my FBI records which was probably not until the late seventies, I would guess. That's



why when I had my run-in with Reagan [then governor], he immediately said he knew who I was and so on.

They knew all about me. Not only that, if you really want to go that far, when I first came to—I later found out from my FBI files—it’s really funny. It is in the book, but I found out that I was on a list of people that were supposed to be arrested if the McCarran Act was sustained—I was one of twenty-two. Maybe you read this, but when I came to San Diego, the San Diego office of the FBI wrote to J. Edgar Hoover saying that it didn’t seem to make sense that I should be on that list anymore. And he wrote back, “Okay, get somebody else to take his place.” [laughs]

So anyway, there were a lot of crazy things in that file. *Tocsin* actually focused on me issue after issue after issue, and on Bettina of course, because of her open involvement with the Party and FSM.

Well, there were a lot of things. I don’t know the timing anymore. For example, I don’t know when the campaign took place, the primary campaign, where Patrick, the perfume millionaire, ran against Reagan from the Right when Reagan was running for governor.

Rubens: 1966?

Wofsy: Must have been. Anyway, he took out ads on all of the NBC radio stations throughout the state, which showed these big demonstrations in Berkeley and then had the camera collapsing and focusing in on me.

Rubens: You had demonstrations—

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: Whether it’s Vietnam Day or—

Wofsy: Whatever. Patrick was the owner of a big conglomerate of perfume, and he was ultra-right. Anyway, the point is that I was operating from the very beginning in an atmosphere where I didn’t want to become an issue, you know? On the other hand, I was sympathetic to the students from the beginning, and I was very much involved with faculty, increasingly, more than I specified in the book. I met members of the faculty. Some of the people in my department were very close at that time—in fact, I probably met Larry Levine and Reggie through people in my department. But I didn’t go out on the car or anything.

Rubens: Sure, yes.

Wofsy: But they introduced me, and I knew them, and we became friends at a very early period. Again, I don’t remember exactly.

- Rubens: Yes. Well, I imagine most faculty did not have to get too involved until October.
- Wofsy: Yes. From October it became increasingly clear, who and where was the support. The real break with the faculty, although a lot went on before, was in December. From October to December, it was mostly a handful of faculty that was out front—you know, John Searle, Reggie, Larry, and there was a guy in my department who later went to Israel, David Weiss, who met with them. I wasn't at those meetings, but he would sort of keep me posted and introduced me to some of the people.
- Rubens: Was he in bacteriology?
- Wofsy: Yes, he was an immunologist. He later went to Israel.
- Anyway, so I had some indirect contact at that time. But the big change that took place was with the sit-in.
- Rubens: Do you mean into Sproul?
- Wofsy: Yes.
- Rubens: Let me just make sure we cover all that you did between October and December. Did you keep abreast of what your colleagues are doing?
- Wofsy: Right.
- Rubens: But you're trying to keep a low profile because you're starting your lab?
- Wofsy: Right, right. And I'd, you know, discuss the issues with them. I was supportive, but I didn't play a major role.
- Rubens: And in terms of just your department per se, what's the talk until December?
- Wofsy: In my department, I had a great deal of influence from day one. They respected very much what I had done—
- Rubens: As a scientist?
- Wofsy: As a scientist, but also the position that I had taken when I took my job. So I had very warm support from the very beginning. The students knew me, and—
- Rubens: Even though they don't speak to bacteriology, you're a liaison?
- Wofsy: Right. In fact, it's a paradox because Sandy Elberg—who later became dean of graduate studies and was very supportive of me—was one of the key

people that the bacteriologists were feuding against. And he, by the way, was the mentor of Brian O'Brien, who got his degree with Elberg . So there was a contradiction.

Rubens: What is the paradox there?

Wofsy: The paradox is that Elberg was very supportive of me. He was also very supportive of Brian O'Brien, even though he came out of that whole group that had been very much involved with the government's programs on germ warfare and the like.

So that when I came in, I didn't come in as an antagonist of Elberg. The issues that were present were not germ warfare. If they were, I would have become an antagonist, but that was not the issue at that time. So what was mainly the issue was that these people weren't talking to each other and that they couldn't get along in the same department. So I was sort of designated as the person to try to work out an arrangement.

Rubens: Did you call meetings to talk about what was going on in the FSM, in October, once it had gotten bigger?

Wofsy: Yes, we talked about it all the time, and the atmosphere was one of sympathy. People like Brian were participating. There were others in the department you wouldn't know who were participating. It was informal. A lot was informal at that time. But the atmosphere was supportive.

##

Interview 2; November 15, 1999

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

Rubens: Our second meeting with Leon Wofsy, and we're in his home again. Today is November 15th. And we're looking at set of documents and copies, and you were going to explain these to me.

Wofsy: Okay. Last time I think I told you a little bit about the circumstances surrounding my appointment, including the fact that the Regents held it up and required that I meet first with Chancellor Strong.

Well, when the California Senate Un-American Committee, the Burns Committee, came out with its report on the FSM, I believe in June of 1965, there was included a chapter devoted to me, in which they said a number of things: number one, that I had come to Berkeley, that it was no coincidence that I had come there by way of San Diego, where I met with other "subversives," so-called, and came to Berkeley to make trouble, which eventually developed into the FSM.

They made a number of claims which were rather absurd, including that I had been a founder of the Communist Party two years before I was born.

Rubens: The Burns Report?

Wofsy: Yes, mixing me up with my father, I suppose. Then they also said that I was the most successful Communist youth organizer in history and so on. Well, all of that I could have taken with a smile, but they also included the claim that I got my job in the university by claiming to be disenchanted with Communism and misleading the university into feeling that I had given up a Communist affiliation when I really was still active. This obviously disturbed me because that false report got a lot of publicity. Just by way of underlining what the situation was, the report actually resulted in the firing of a number of people who were employees and didn't have the protection of tenure that I had, from various posts in the university, including, as you know, Marge Frantz.

So I was disturbed under these circumstances, and I wrote a letter to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, correcting some of the mistakes in the report, which had been of course repeated in the media.

Rubens: And why did you choose the *Chronicle*?

Wofsy: I didn't only choose the *Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* was the main paper in this area. But it was carried all over the state. And I also wrote to the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Examiner*, and so on.

Rubens: Did you also at the same time send to the university and the Burns Committee?

Wofsy: I didn't send to the Burns Committee because I didn't see the point, but I did write to President Kerr. And there's a letter—what these documents are, are the various letters to the press, in which I outline my position and made it very clear that I had not claimed either enchantments or disenchantments or otherwise discussed my political views as a condition for my employment by my university.

Rubens: These are good to have. These will be in the appendix, June 20th, to the *Chronicle*, the 23rd—

Wofsy: This is what I wrote to them; this is what they published.

The letter to Kerr was prompted by the fact that the university, including Kerr, were under terrific fire at that point from both sides, essentially. It would have been convenient for the university to claim that they hired me under false pretenses, and I was afraid that that would be the case. Actually, they didn't do that, and the reason that they didn't do it, I don't know. But it may have been because on advice of Lincoln Constance—who, as you'll see later became an acting chancellor, replacing Strong—I wrote a letter to Kerr, reminding him of what the actual events were that preceded my appointment: making clear that my appointment took place under circumstances in which I *refused* to make my political views a basis for any decision. So that's essentially what these documents are.

Rubens: The Burns Committee—you have to remind me—is an investigation. Did it call for a certain action? Did it specifically call that these professors so named be fired?

Wofsy: The way in which most of these committees worked, of course, in that period was to single out the targets and then let somebody else do the dirty work of firing you from a job. Most universities cooperated in that type of thing during the McCarthy period.

Rubens: The amount of shame and persecution.

Wofsy: Right. So actually what happened in the aftermath of this, is that people who had no protection, as I did, of tenure and a somewhat prestigious position on the faculty—people who were not in that position were simply quietly dispensed with—either asked to resign or were fired, but were effectively made victims of the Burns Committee report.

Rubens: Did your chair that summer say he'll stand by you?

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: Was there any discussion in your department?

Wofsy: The faculty stood by me—the faculty that had anything to do with me—stood my me very solidly. Sanford Elberg, who had been one of the people who was responsible for my appointment and later went on to become dean of graduate studies, also wrote a letter to the *Chronicle*.

Rubens: And did you get a direct response from Kerr, by the way?

Wofsy: No, never got—I think I would remember it because he always wrote notes in green ink, I'm told. I never received anything. However, in answer to the question you asked before, what I see in looking over these documents myself is that the newspapers said that the Regents were scheduled to discuss the Burns Report at their next meeting. I wrote to Kerr because, as you'll see in the letter I wrote to him, I expected that I would come up before the Regents and I wanted to clarify my position. Now, I have no idea what happened at the Regents meeting. I don't believe it was a public meeting at that time. But in any case, I don't recall. But I wanted to forestall any further misrepresentation at the Regents meeting.

So to the best of my knowledge, the university at the very least played dumb or, put in a better light, stuck to its guns. While there was no official statement corroborating what I had to say, there certainly was no effort to exploit the Burns Committee report to cover their own—

Rubens: Vis-a-vis you.

Wofsy: Yes, which would have been to cover their own quote mistake.

Rubens: And, of course, you'd pointed out last time that Brown himself, the governor, had been warned by the FBI when you first became a post-doc—

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: Did you become involved in any defense actions around those who were fired?

Wofsy: Actually, aside from attacking the Burns Committee report and the university, there were no specific actions, to the best of my knowledge. Most of these people stepped aside. I can't speak for Marge, who became a very close friend of mine—

Rubens: At that point you were not friends particularly?

Wofsy: No. I can't speak for her, but I have a feeling that a number of these people felt they were in a very ambivalent position. For example, Marge was working for Earl Cheit. And since the university itself was under attack, I think they were sort of reluctant to do anything to add to the university's problems vis-à-vis the Un-American Committee, so although they would have, I think, under

other circumstances, put up a big fuss, they found themselves in a rather difficult position between the university on the one hand and the Burns Committee on the other. As I say, this is my general recollection. To the best of my knowledge, there was no public protest.

Rubens: Marge, of course, remained at the university and then she was very active in educational reform.

Wofsy: Yes, she remained very active. She was befriended, actually, by John Schaar and Shel Wollin, who played a very important role in the Committee of 200. And she later worked very closely with me. I think the two of us were most instrumental in the development of the Faculty Peace Committee in the fight against the Vietnam War.

Rubens: Was there any other way that if not the FSM, which had formally disbanded about March and April, and the FSSU, Free Speech Student Union, never really got off the ground—was there any other way the faculty met, you met with students, discussing some of the continuities of the issues, the issues raised by the FSM? Of course, the antiwar movement had already been launched, and you may have found yourself drawn into that by then—

Wofsy: You mean at that stage? Because already, of course, the Burns Committee really came out, as you pointed out, pretty much near the end of that first chapter, which was the formal period of the FSM.

Of course, by that time there had been a lot of involvement of faculty on the issues and a lot of discussion, including my own. Since we talked last, I tried to remember more specifically how I got involved. In the early stage, while I was not an active participant, I did become involved, getting acquainted with the really handful of faculty who responded initially to the precipitating events: the arrest on the car, that sort of thing. But that is the period in which I met and began to be very friendly with Reggie Zelnik and Larry Levine. While I wasn't directly participating in whatever meetings they were holding, I was introduced to them by David Weiss, whom I mentioned to you, from our department, who *was* participating in the meetings. Informally, we began to develop a friendship and a discussion of what was going on at that early stage.

As far as any more formal involvement, that didn't take place, of course, until all hell broke loose around the occupation of Sproul Hall. And at that point, I did take initiative, first of all on approaching people who had been close to me already around my own problems, and particularly Howard Schachman and Roger Stanier. I think we were together instrumental in the convening of the two meetings that took place that day, one the large faculty meeting at which Roger Stanier of my department introduced the resolution that was I guess the first time the faculty went on record overwhelmingly in protest of the administration's actions. And then later that night, the meeting that led to the formation of what was informally called the Committee of 200. In those

meetings and subsequent Academic Senate meetings, I felt the urge and the necessity to participate and to speak, so in a sense that marked a turning point. Not the beginning of my involvement, but a turning point in the nature of my involvement.

I was trying to take initiative and to influence the course of the faculty action. Now, I don't know if we discussed what became a pivotal event right after that and which I described in the article you've read in my book; namely, that is the events that took place right after the Greek Theater.

The administration already knew that I was participating actively by that point. I got a call the day after the Greek Theater fiasco from Sanford Elberg. He said to me that someone wanted to meet with me at President Kerr's request, and the someone was Lincoln Constance, who, he said, was actually acting chancellor. It had not been announced publicly and to the best of my knowledge never was announced publicly—but at that point, Chancellor Strong was already pushed aside, and Lincoln Constance was acting chancellor on the campus. At least this is what I was told by Sandy Elberg. And I met with Lincoln—

Rubens: Did you query Elberg a little bit about this?

Wofsy: No, I felt that this was a good sign because they knew what my sympathies were, and if they were calling me in to consult, I thought that after the Greek Theater it indicated that they were looking for a way to more or less get out of the morass that they found themselves in.

So I went with a lot of interest and willingness to see if I could be of help. And I met with Lincoln Constance, who took notes and made very little comment on his own—

Rubens: Had you known him particularly well before?

Wofsy: No, not very well. I knew him—he was another biology faculty member. I knew him as a colleague, but not as a friend.

I was on the Biology Council at that point, which he was also a member of. So I knew him. And my advice was very simple. He told me that Kerr had asked for my opinion on what they should do. My advice was very simple. I said, taking it very seriously, that I felt that a real turning point had come and that they could really best change the situation by supporting the resolution of the Committee of 200 which was coming up before the Academic Senate on the following day. That discussion ended. I don't remember exactly how, but there was no back-and-forth.

Now, the aftermath of this is very interesting in two respects. Number one, as I said, I was very happy about the outcome, and my wife and I went to the



home of Sandy Elberg that night to tell him how well the discussion had gone. I found Sandy in a very somber mood. He said, "Leon, you've disappointed us," that "we're at a loss. We don't know how to deal with people like Mario Savio who talk the language of the gutter"—was his expression—"and we thought that you, with your background, would be able to help us by knowing how to deal with them."

Of course, I was infuriated, and I walked out. My phone rang for twenty-four hours afterwards from Sandy, trying to apologize and to make amends.

Rubens: Were you also surprised at Elberg's response?

Wofsy: I was surprised at the whole thing. Elberg was very close to the Administration, soon was to become graduate dean, and so, I didn't know him well enough to assume—well, let me put it this way: He had defended my appointment, and pushed it. This was before the letter that he wrote subsequently to the *Chronicle* because the Un-American Committee report hadn't come out yet. But he was very supportive, very friendly. In fact, that was the first time I ever heard a sour note from him in our relationship.

Rubens: Did he ever explain that to you?

Wofsy: He called. He apologized. He didn't mean to insult me. In fact, what I said to him there, with Roz present, was that, "You people are never going to learn. You're looking for gimmicks and ways around, when actually you should be listening to the real essence of what the issues are and not how you can outmaneuver, how you can isolate or defeat". That was appalling because by that time already, most of the faculty didn't look at the FSM in that spirit.

Most of the faculty, even though they were disturbed by what was going on, were beginning to have real respect, particularly for Mario, but not only for Mario, because each of them had in their own departments members of this new generation that clearly couldn't be categorized as loudmouths, troublemakers, old left ideologues. They were a fresh, young generation that was asking some very tough questions and articulating them remarkably well.

Rubens: When Elberg said "you disappointed us," he's already declared himself as having moved to the more conservative, defending the administration—

Wofsy: Right. He voted against the resolutions, which passed overwhelmingly, as you know. But he didn't play an active vocal role in opposition, and he tried very hard—Sandy's an interesting guy—he was very anxious to maintain collegial, friendly relations. He had among his own students Brian O'Brien and others who were already very active with the FSM, and Sandy, despite his alignment with the administration at that point, was personally a very decent individual and very supportive. In no way did he threaten them or try to discriminate

against the people for their participation. So it was sort of a mixed kind of situation.

But anyway, there's an aftermath of that discussion, which of course I also reported to the people on the Committee of 200. Probably misled them into thinking they were going to get more support from the administration, whereas they got none.

The other thing that is a sidelight is that subsequently I got my files, under the Freedom of Information Act, from the FBI. This is the Federal Bureau of Investigation. And even though the discussion I had had with Lincoln Constance was with him alone, with no other person present, the report of that meeting and of my very unwelcome advice to the administration was in my FBI files. Which means that that had to come—I would imagine—straight from Kerr, but that's—in any case, it came from the university, obviously.

- Rubens: In other words, Lincoln reported it to somebody, who reported to Kerr, and that's how it moved up.
- Wofsy: My guess is Lincoln reported it directly to Kerr, since he was the chief person on the Berkeley campus at the time.
- Rubens: And how was it translated into the report?
- Wofsy: It was simply that I had met with them and expressed my support for the troublemakers and the students and so on. That was just part of what they considered pertinent information.
- Rubens: And do we know if the Burns Report didn't have access to that report by the time? This is December.
- Wofsy: I've been thinking since our last discussion—I know I've made these points before. For whatever it's worth, a couple of things are important. Number one is that there was this undercurrent which stemmed from the Regents' position, which was essentially—never really changed from the time of the loyalty oath. There was and is a formal UC ban against Communists on the faculty.

I think it's important to note that there was this second theme that ran through the whole attack on FSM. There wasn't just an attack on the FSM as such, but it sort of blended with a John Birch Society, traditional McCarthyite undercurrent that ran through the whole thing. And the main attack on FSM—even though the FSM itself was clearly as different from old left as you could possibly imagine, nevertheless the attack on the FSM still had that McCarthyite core of regarding it as a Communist conspiracy basically. It seems to me that to properly understand what was happening, you have to see this McCarthyite sub-theme that was running right along with it. So that's one thing.

The other thing is that if you properly understand the FSM, of all movements that took place in that period, it seems to me that the whole essence of what took place is almost impossible to evaluate if you confine it to that eight months or whatever that period was. Why? Because actually the most important part about FSM was its aftermath. It set in motion a number of things which influenced very much developments on the UC campus for years to come but also influenced events nationally and internationally.

For example, to take it in its narrowest light, it set in motion a series of changes in the faculty which actually influenced the whole atmosphere and flavor of the Academic Senate at least through the early seventies, through Cambodia, which was the last big student event of that period. During the Vietnam War, during Watergate — the general atmosphere it set in motion was that not only the students but faculty also were largely influenced by what I would call—I suppose that's my own bias—a progressive tendency. And it was only years later that in a sense the counter-revolution took place with regard to faculty, and the Academic Senate pulled back from a position where you could almost count on every issue that the left or progressive or liberal element of faculty would win virtually every vote — for a period of about, I would say, almost ten years.

Rubens: Is there one thing that marks the end of that period?

Wofsy: Yes. Well, first of all, there were a lot of pulls and tears in the course of that period because the movements became more and more dramatic, traumatic in many respects, and there were a lot of spinoffs of faculty who sort of turned against some of the excesses which they saw happening. But by and large, the voice of faculty against the Vietnam War was far stronger than the voice of faculty who supported the Vietnam War.

[End Tape 3, Side A. Begin Tape 3, Side B.]

Rubens: —against the war.

Wofsy: — that was rather surprising, considering the high connections of faculty members, particularly in political—

Rubens: Science, like [Robert] Scalapino and—

Wofsy: others, right, who had high connections with the war department. And there were a lot of events that took place in that period, in which the faculty was very outspoken against the war. It never was the majority of the faculty per se because it never presented itself in that fashion, but clearly the overwhelmingly strongest voice of faculty that was expressed in that period was anti-war.

Rubens: So the voice, not necessarily the majority—

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: Surprisingly, the opposition—

Wofsy: —was very, very soft.

Rubens: And not as influential. I want to interrupt you to ask you one question particularly here. You know, when you're starting to describe the direct impact of the FSM on the faculty—and particularly you're talking about in the atmosphere and flavor of the Academic Senate meetings—you're characterizing it as progressive. I'm wondering if one could also say, until there were those spinoffs and tears and holes, if it also was an acknowledgement that the students were right and that academics can't simply live in an ivory tower, that the world outside is directly related to what students are learning, or what students learn should have a relationship to what goes on outside, and so the natural discussion of events and positions on events—

Wofsy: I think that's so. You know, the point you have to appreciate is that there was more than one reaction, not necessarily each reaction representing a camp, but even among individual faculty members, more than one reaction to what was going on. I would say that if you asked were faculty disturbed, did they feel that the students were going too far, did they feel that the students were making a target of the liberals when they should have been making a target of the conservatives—well, by and large, a lot of faculty were critical—a lot of the faculty members were critical of the FSM, and came into collision [claps his hands once] with them on those issues.

On the other hand, there was a growing admiration for the frankness, the honesty, the integrity of the students, and certainly an opposition to the high-handedness of the administration in its dealing with it, so that the general atmosphere of civil rights, civil liberties, academic freedom—there became a very heightened consciousness of those issues in their own right. So you're absolutely correct on that.

So these things were going side by side. I would say the sympathy of the faculty members who supported FSM, sometimes in overwhelming votes, was always mixed with reservations, with doubts, with some kind of hope that they would go away or that things would be resolved because it certainly was a disruption.

Rubens: Right, and it certainly was being discussed. That's the other point. This was not the traditional culture of Academic Senate—

Wofsy: That's correct. This was a real departure from the norm. In fact, the way I see it is essentially it was a departure from the norm for about ten years, and then it went back to the norm.

Rubens: I want to get back to when it goes back to the norm, but you're talking about this atmosphere—is that what you're speaking about in the narrowest light, the direct impact that the FSM had?

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: But you said they were also on the UC campuses in general and then in the nation?

Wofsy: So I would say there were impacts on the university, on the faculty itself that were very important, including setting in motion, incidentally, a very hostile group of faculty, who eventually became much more important in years to come. But, I mean, you know, if you look at departments, if you look at Sociology and a variety of departments—Political Science—there are all sorts of struggles within departments that took place. Probably in History as well.

For lack of a better word, the right-wing faculty was not by any means defeated. They were clearly a minority on every important issue for a period of close to ten years, but the more determined they became, and they fought very hard for control of departments and ultimately for control of the Academic Senate. And I think that dynamic actually continues up to the present day. I want to get to that, too. A lot of this is stuff you may not take under the heading of FSM, but I think there is a real continuity in these developments.

Anyway, internationally—well, first of all the anti-war movement I think was the first real affirmation of FSM. I mean, it's very clear that the biggest start of the anti-war movement was in Berkeley, and in my opinion, just as the civil rights movement in a sense was a launching pad for FSM, the FSM was a launching pad for the anti-war movement. I don't think that was at all accidental. I think that was very much a part of the atmosphere that was generated at that time.

I suppose you could also say that the impact of the FSM was to anger and arouse the right and probably played a role in the attack on the university which went on for years by Ronald Reagan. So it had mixed—but it just sent out these ripples that were extremely important if you want to evaluate what its impact was.

And then, of course, Berkeley became the symbol all over the world—in Prague, in Paris—you know, east and west—for dissident activity which played such an enormous role in the following decades, actually: a major role in world politics. It would be silly to have a romanticized view which looks at

the FSM as the sort of mother and father of all these events, but on the other hand, it certainly was a pioneering element which—you talk to people—you talk to Jerry Adams, when he came to the Berkeley campus. You talk to—oh, what's her name, who just spoke at the annual Mario Savio Lecture

Rubens: Lani Guineer.

Wofsy: A lot of these people say their first inspirations in a serious sense came from Berkeley and from the FSM, so that you have to take into account that quality that spread everywhere.

I already talked about one sort of parallel theme that went through the whole thing in terms of McCarthyism. Another parallel theme that went through the whole thing was the whole issue of diversity. It's very interesting to me that the last years of Mario's life, what he was devoting his main efforts to, was anti-187 and anti-209. In a sense, it was like the circle which started with civil rights came back to that, and one of the consequences of essentially the defeat of the FSM and post-FSM influence was giving up the concept of the university as probably the most diverse university in the world, which has come with the attacks on affirmative action.

I view all these things as connected. Incidentally, it's not only I view it this way. It may seem far-fetched or stretching points to some, but when Neil from Sociology—

Rubens: Smelser?

Wofsy: Smelser spoke at the fiftieth anniversary of the loyalty oath, he made the same point, with a different flavor than I would give to it. He said that he felt that there was a real continuity from the loyalty oath fight on, that essentially what developed was sort of a mood among faculty that went through and explained a lot of things that happened in FSM, during Vietnam and everything else.

Rubens: Let me zero in on just a couple of things about this. Your department—it had surprised me so much when you talked about both the general climate in your department in the fall of '64; their support of you and also then it seemed that they didn't have dramatic opposition. They were supportive—

Wofsy: I would say that nobody in my department, nobody, none of the faculty was against the students.

Rubens: And the other part that I found so interesting is that the charge against science being dominated by the corporations or serving the corporations—that was not the tenor or the culture. You explained that I think quite well, and I think it's illuminating in the session we did before. But in terms of the next ten years, you said—in History and Sociology and et cetera that were progressive.

Wofsy: My department was, generally speaking, quite progressive. Of course, some of them got very discouraged, and when I gave a period of ten years, it was probably a little short of ten years because—

Rubens: —because my question is: Is there just one defining—it's buildup, but where do you see the turnaround around?

Wofsy: I think the big turnaround was the protest on Cambodia. That led to another stoppage, which by that time the faculty was getting pretty sick of, and an effort to remake the university and to highlight the whole issue of educational reform. And that was something that was really led by the same core of faculty that was dominant in a certain sense in its influence for that period of time that I'm describing. But it was particularly led by Shel Wollin.

Rubens: He was really trying to come up with something called reconstitution.

Wofsy: Right, reconstituting the university. And I think that was the final straw in a long chain of disruptions of the norms of academia, and finally turned the tide the other way. At the moment that it took place, however, it played a very important role in opposition to the bombing of Cambodia and the final period of the fight against the Vietnam War.

Rubens: So you think around '71, '72 is when this last push is taking place. Kent State, of course, was '71.

Wofsy: Right. So the change wasn't obvious, but in my opinion it was already there, the point at which things began to turn. Now, there had already been increasing concern with some of the directions that had taken place around Third World Strike, People's Park, a lot of those things. The campus got very weary of all those things. There was hardly a year in which there wasn't a major disruption through that whole period. And that took its toll. There's no question about it. And there was a real urge to return to something like normalcy. I guess that was inevitable. I imagine before the country returned to something like normalcy.

Rubens: Seventy-five—

Wofsy: Yes, the campus was going to. It was part of a whole change in the country that took place. I think people had high hopes that after Watergate that normalcy would be good, that normalcy wouldn't be a swing to the right but that normalcy would be a recognition of a lot of the values and the changing culture and the desire for openness that the previous ten years had been part of.

And in a certain sense, movements became less important after Watergate, and more or less the wheels of the machine started to find their pace again and to proceed in a normal fashion.

- Rubens: The other thing I want to continue here is that you also said a second theme was the drive to make the university a multicultural institution. In terms of the actual fight of the FSM, a charge against the university for having few, quote, "minority" faculty, for not having an affirmative action program, was not on the agenda.
- Wofsy: That's right. A lot of these things I talked about can't be validated in any simple fashion. You have to sort of look at them over a period of time because FSM didn't, for example, elevate the fight on civil rights as far as diversity is concerned in a direct way. You're absolutely right. It didn't elevate the fight that became eventually the reemergence of a women's movement. Yet, in my opinion, the atmosphere that it generated and the spirit of challenge to authority, of being willing to challenge conformity, the cultural rebellion that FSM sparked obviously played an indirect but very important role in all of these things.
- But you're right. The consciousness of these things didn't suddenly come down from Sproul Hall, from the occupation of Sproul. It developed through experience.
- Rubens: I know a little about the Third World Strike. I can see what you are talking about in terms of the atmosphere and the movement for change leading to that, and that had a dramatic impact in terms of—
- Wofsy: There's no question that the Third World movement became much more vocal as a result of the general movement set in motion by the FSM. But it's also clear that when this movement began to develop and to fight for its place in the sun, that it didn't arouse sympathy of the majority either of faculty or students. It was pretty much an isolated group.
- Rubens: How do you account for that?
- Wofsy: Well, it sort of coincided with the emergence of a much greater resort to militant tactics on campus, which also took place during the People's Park movement, the emergence of the Black Panthers and so on. And I think a lot of this began to be seen as a major disruption of the university, which we've already talked about. There was some trashing going on. To get attention, these movements actually spawned, at least the segment that engaged in very militant—
- Rubens: Well, what I always say is there's two other things that have to be said. The CoIntelPro program, though, was started under [President Richard M.] Nixon and [FBI Director J. Edgar] Hoover.
- Wofsy: Provocation.



Rubens: The provocation is just so clear. It's so clear that some of the craziest of claims and demands and, you know, let's go bomb this came from agent provocateurs.

Wofsy: Right.

Rubens: And then also the unintended attraction to marginal crazies coming to Berkeley because what they see as the center of—

Wofsy: Right, that's correct. The other thing, though, that happened was that the Third World movement and strike did in a certain sense what the FSM had done with the university as a whole; that is, attack the liberal establishment. Suddenly, the liberal faculty, which had distinguished itself from the administration and considered itself a major enlightened group in terms of civil liberties and academic freedom—it came under attack because once the failure of the university began to be an issue, the failure with regard to diversity and minority involvement, what happened is a lot of these militant tactics began to be directed without fear or favor. For example, in Social Welfare, where they regarded themselves as way ahead of the rest of the country in terms of their attitudes toward racism and civil liberties—

Rubens: The department of social work.

Wofsy: Yes. Harry Specht—he's dead now—he was the head of it. But the Third World students went into their classrooms and accused them directly of racism. That happened all over campus. Even in the History Department, you know, here you had a History Department of outstanding scholars—

Rubens: Yes, Ken Stampp had written one of the first real revisionist histories on slavery—

Wofsy: Right, right. And all of a sudden they're being asked, "How come you haven't done anything about including blacks and Chicanos and so on in the university?" Well, academics don't take to that very well. It's hard to take. And some of them turned very hostile. I think that was part of the feeling that things had gone too far.

In addition to that, even though the Third World Strike came late, you had things like Eldridge Cleaver coming on campus before a large demonstration and leading thousands of people in a chant of "Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck." You know, a lot of this antagonized faculty.

Now, there's another interesting point. I'm sorry this is going back and forth. But you made the point before about Mario—that Mario wasn't particularly concerned with the university. At least that's what I gathered. That they turned to the university because they weren't allowed—I remember now. You made the point that the university became a target because it interfered in a sense

with their effort to work on civil rights and the like. And I think that's so. But I think that a very important thing to understand about Mario and one of the things that was the source of his appeal to people like John Searle and to others was that he *was* very concerned with the university. He had very deep intellectual feelings about the university. I mean, the last thing you could ever say about Mario is that he was a lightweight. Mario used to talk about the university sometimes in terms that seemed extreme. Well, you could never mistake the fact that he had a tremendous feeling for the importance of the university. When he said that administrators should sweep the floors, he was not saying that the faculty should sweep the floors. He had a tremendous feeling for the importance of faculty and students as the heart of the university, and the administrators should get out of the way.

And if you look at his talks and his speeches through that time, I think that's very important, and I think that was seen by people on the faculty, and it sort of was the thread that went through the whole idea of what ultimately became the campus slogan of reconstituting the university. He wanted a real university.

And in fact, during the FSM period, one of the things that happened alongside a lot of the disruption that took place of the university, which is unmistakable—another thing that happened is that you had a breakdown of what were negative barriers between disciplines that had an anti-intellectual or anti-cultural character; that is, people in History knew history, people in science knew science, and there was virtually no interaction. Previously. And what happened is that in certain respects there developed an intellectual intermingling, a cultural intermingling that just wasn't the norm in academic life, and that really was the spirit of what a university should be.

Rubens: Well, of course, there was then the Tussman program—

Wofsy: Right. So, you know, you keep looking for more and more ripples. It will be wrong to say that they were the product of the FSM, but on the other hand, without the FSM, if they emerged at all, it would have been in a very pale way in contrast to what actually took place.

Rubens: I'd like to stay with Mario just a little bit here. If you could reflect just a little more on—what was the nature of that love for the university then?

Wofsy: Well, Mario had a tremendous love for culture and for intellect, for philosophy, for learning. If you ever talked to Mario, aside from listening to his speeches, he was very well read. He was fascinated by religion, he was fascinated by Marx, he was always asking questions, always digging beneath the surface. That's why people like Reggie loved him, too. He was unpredictable. You know, if political correctness became so to speak the brush that progressive movements were tarred with for years, Mario was the opposite. He didn't talk in cliches. He was unpredictable—you could always

predict where he would stand in terms of social justice, but in terms of any particular issue, he always had a way of looking at it that was different, creative—

Rubens: Humane. He was a very humane.

Wofsy: Very humane.

Rubens: When did you sort of become close to him?

Wofsy: Let me say that, if I haven't said this already, that I became friendly with students who were active in the FSM outside my own department only after the Burns Committee report. They read my letter in the *Chronicle*, and I was approached I think by [Jack Kurzweil and others, and I was introduced to students. They liked what they saw, and they were surprised to see it from a faculty member. That sort of was the beginning of my friendship.

With Mario, it was fairly casual until one major event. That is, we knew each other and were in contact with each other in groups and so on, but a personal friendship really began to develop when Searle called out the police over the navy recruiting thing. And a meeting was held in which Searle explained his position. I spoke at it and challenged Searle's position, not in an abstract way but as one colleague who had supported FSM to another, one friend to another. And Mario was very moved by it, and he came up to me afterwards with tears in his eyes and said, "Are you Italian?"

That was really the beginning of the personal character of our friendship. Mario went through a very difficult period afterwards of adjustment in his own life and also was very interested in another thing. As you probably know, Mario and Suzanne had a child who was developmentally disabled, and Roz's work was with developmentally disabled in Contra Costa County, where she was the chief person and worked with all sorts of groups working with developmentally disabled for a period of twenty years.

So when our personal friendship developed, Mario also consulted—Mario and Suzanne—Roz.

Rubens: It was comforting for them.

Wofsy: —about what was going on in general. This was a period where in a sense the struggle was first really developing to change public attitudes and government responsibilities toward developmentally disabled people. So that was a very important early link.

Rubens: Was it clear from the birth of that child that he was developmentally disabled?

Wofsy: Yes, I think from the earliest. So that was a traumatic thing and—

Rubens: Of course. And that kept him for a long time—

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: And then finally—

Wofsy: Right. You know, that's a great—I mean, people with that kind of concern really band together. Harry Rubin (Molecular Biology) had such a child—

[End Tape 3, Side B. Begin Tape 4, Side A.]

Wofsy: —in terms of directly what should or shouldn't be done with respect to their child, which was obviously the mutual interest in what was happening in the field, which they wanted to know about and so on.

The other thing that strengthened the personal relationship is that for a time Mario was considering coming back to Berkeley as a graduate student. Partly through his contact with me, he thought of coming back in biology. We actually got him accepted. Fred Wilt, a biology professor, agreed to take Mario into his lab and to see, to give him an opportunity to decide whether that's the career he would like to pursue.

So we got him, so to speak, connected to biology as a student, but I think Mario eventually, when he went back to become a scholar again, was apparently much more turned on by physics. So I don't know whether that didn't succeed because of the general problems he was having—I don't know what the nature of them would be—or whether it was that ultimately it was physics and philosophy and poetry that turned him on, where he was so extremely successful later on at San Francisco State.

But anyway, the combination of these things—I know when he graduated from San Francisco State, which was simultaneous with Bettina's getting of her Ph.D., then we ran a small party for both of them in our house.

So in the course of it, the friendship sometimes was—it never was as absolutely even-flowing as it was with Reggie. I mean, Reggie was always in touch with the Savios. There were times when we were close and times when we weren't. But I'll tell you other things—I don't know if you'll want to use it—but the last couple of years of Mario's life he approached me again about the need to try to recreate a left faculty and student movement on campus, largely because of the fight that was going on in the Regents against affirmative action—I don't remember the dates exactly—but 187 and what ultimately became 209—it was before that—were bothering him very much, and he wanted to see something happen.

And we worked together to form something that was called Campus Coalition for Human Rights and Social Justice—something like that; I don't remember the exact name.

And we worked very closely together for a period, a number of people. This was his passion in the final couple of years of his life. He spoke at public meetings, as you know, and so on. So we saw a lot of each other in that time. I'm embarrassed to say this, but about a year or so before he died, he asked me something which in terms of my background was very hard to understand. He asked me if I would be his godfather.

I guess the reason I'm hesitant about that, and probably will exclude it, is on the one hand I'm very moved by it and very proud of it; on the other hand, it's so personal that I hesitate—

Rubens: What do you think this was about in him?

Wofsy: He had read my book, and he was moved by it. We had many talks together, and I guess he saw me as a father figure. I don't know. How can I say? I really don't know.

Rubens: But it's a comment on him and his passionate nature, really—

Wofsy: Right. Probably the thing that I represented to him most was the fact that it was a life of political action and adherence to values, I suppose.

Rubens: At the same time being a man of science, and intellect.

Wofsy: Whatever. So I don't know. I can't explain that, and I'll probably delete this altogether. We'll see. It always generates mixed feelings. I wish everybody knew because I loved Mario so much, and on the other hand, I don't want anybody to know it because it's like a violation of personal confidence. And I also never knew for the life of me what a godfather is.

Rubens: Yes, yes, that's what I was wondering because he said—I mean, he's a Catholic—

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: He must have had a godfather for his child. It's more of a measure of the man, that personal relationships were so important to him.

Wofsy: Very. He's a very warm, a very—as you said—humane. Both emotionally and intellectually, he was one of the most genuine and deepest people that I knew. My guess is that, while the words might be different, Reggie had exactly the same feeling.

Rubens: It's such a measure of Mario also that he didn't want to become the continuing symbol of the Free Speech Movement. I don't think he eschewed leadership. I mean, he rose to it, and he took it. But there came a time when he makes the statement that he wants to step down, and follows in the wake is the FSU. There were three thousand people; it was just amazing what it drew. And then, at the same time, it completely unraveled. I mean, it never got off the ground. There were these elaborate principles—his calculation is that it really had to do with the war, that it was activism per se that people wanted to be involved in, not some organization to carry on a narrow struggle.

Wofsy: E. P. Thompson, when he was here, gave a talk which impressed me very much, in which he said that all movements have a finite lifetime. He said maybe five years or so. And he said that they don't sustain that height for longer. I think that's true.

Rubens: That's what I'm asking. Do you remember discussions about [...]?

Wofsy: No. You know, in a certain sense, my whole relationship to this thing is a peculiar one because, unlike other faculty who were very close to the students, I never actually participated in FSM meetings or things of that type.

Rubens: Right. You didn't have students in the same sense, you had mentioned, because you didn't have introductory courses.

Wofsy: Well, what I mean is I never took part in steering committee or other FSM meetings, and so was never on the inside of what was going on. I always knew pretty much, but I wasn't actually a presence, so in a sense it's hard for me to discuss the problems of the movement. What I do know from listening to other people, so you'll hear it from me second-hand, is that the thing that was striking about Mario, even when he *was* the leader, is that he would stop everything to talk to anybody who had something to say. More than anybody they felt that it was sort of a natural characteristic of Mario to respect people, regardless of rank, status etc. In that sense, he was almost unique because that's not characteristic of people who get into leadership unless they're doing it for purposes of electoral—of getting supporters.

I mean, I think part of what I was saying before was about Mario's attitude toward faculty and toward the university. While on the one hand he would challenge, on the other hand it was always a deep respect—

Rubens: Did you ever meet Mario's family?

Wofsy: Yes.

Rubens: Do you have just an observation or comment on them?

- Wofsy: Well, I met them under circumstances where I was at this small memorial in their home. Were you there?
- Rubens: No, no.
- Wofsy: And the family was there.
- Rubens: Were his parents still alive when—
- Wofsy: Yes. His father was there. It was a very moving day, but it was difficult. I got to talk to the brother more.
- Rubens: Then Lincoln Constance. Did you ever have any relationship with him particularly, or was there—
- Wofsy: Actually, I had a friendly relationship with both Lincoln Constance and Elberg, particularly with Elberg. You know, so much was happening that it eventually—

Actually, there's one thing which I didn't mention at all because it came later, but I think a large part of my connection both with faculty and with students also revolved around the encounter that I had with Reagan. It was during People's Park. What happened was that the People's Park situation was very ominous after Rector was killed—

Well, at that point I was not involved in the People's Park thing. I wasn't opposed to it, but somehow I wasn't caught up in the wave of counterculture that developed in the late sixties, early seventies. But what was happening, of course, was the campus was getting more and more tense. Reagan had called out the National Guard, Rector had been killed, and we were very, very close to the situation which a year later became Kent State. So under the circumstances, a number of us initiated—a few faculty got together and decided to go up to Sacramento, not in a public demonstration of any kind and not to see Reagan, but to try to talk to Republican and Democratic legislators to see if we could possibly bring some sense into the situation and try to cool it off.

And we were doing very well, meeting with them, getting a very good response because everybody at that point was anxious for things not to go any further in terms of violence. Reagan had heard we were there, and we got a message that the governor wanted to see us. It was his request, not ours. And we went in, and we got into an anteroom, an auditorium outside his office, and it was loaded with television cameras from all over the world, the usual big press conference thing.

We had chosen Owen Chamberlain as our spokesperson, but he never got one sentence out before Reagan began shaking his finger, with the cameras

rolling, and saying, "It's you people, the faculty, who are responsible for everything that happened. You told your students they can violate the law. In general, you supported civil disobedience, and that's what's led to this. So it's your responsibility."

Anyway, I was sitting in the back, sort of a hangover of my old concerns not to be up front in this situation. What was happening was very alarming because quite clearly our whole effort was going to simply lead to a report in the press the next day of how Reagan had told off the eggheads from the Berkeley faculty. So I interrupted him. I said, "That's a fine political speech, but we came here to try to see if we could do something to cool off the violence."

It led to a very sharp exchange. It's hard to recognize now—I mean, to sort of reproduce how electric the moment was because it was so unusual for anybody to challenge the governor—

Rubens: I can imagine.

Wofsy: —that it was—all of the cameras turned, and it was really a very dramatic time. He and I went back and forth at it a while. He asked who I was. I said, "Would you let me finish?" And he said, "No, tell me who you are." Then he said he knew who I was, and he wouldn't believe anything I said, and it became, you know—and I went on to say that you can't run a campus this way, under bayonet, any more here than you can in Prague.

And then everybody else spoke up. It really turned into a very important back-and-forth discussion, the like of which hadn't taken place before, and it got a lot of publicity,

It was all over the place. It was a major news story. All my colleagues in science for the next year were asking me to talk about it because they had read about it in *Newsweek* and *The New York Times*, and Cronkite—what was the other one? [NBC-TV News anchormen] Huntley and Brinkley—

I got calls early in the morning from the East to turn on the radio. Then they sent out reporters to interview me and so on. Anyway, immediately afterwards, because we got a very good press. I mean, the press was—

Rubens: About Reagan, the aggressor.

Wofsy: Yes. And we got a very favorable press. But immediately, a day or two later, the papers got reports of who I was, and all the other stuff, an attempt to try to discredit the whole thing based on the attack on me. That's when McCabe wrote his column supporting what I said to Reagan.



Rubens: It's good you said this. You said a lot more than you say in the book. Kitchell, in the film *Berkeley in the Sixties* had a scene. He doesn't have that.

Wofsy: Well, he had that, and I wish he had used it.

Rubens: Because that would have been wonderful.

Wofsy: I have it on tape, by the way. Because what happened is that PBS did an hour's tape on the whole development. I don't know if you've ever seen it.

Rubens: I'd love to see it.

Wofsy: You probably should see it. I have it here. It included our faculty visit to Reagan. You know, it showed the campus and the National Guard and what was going on.

That's where Kitchell got the scene because they had it, and they had me starting it, and the back and forth between me and Reagan; and then eventually Owen Chamberlain gets into it, subsequently. They had that in there, and he cut out my part. In all the preliminary showings it was there, and when the final cut was made, that was eliminated.

Rubens: Because in fact they *do* show him—

Wofsy: They show Owen Chamberlain walking out at the statehouse. He was already a Nobel Prize winner, and Reagan treated him like something the cat dragged in.

Rubens: Just a lackey, yes. Was he particularly active in the Free Speech Movement?

Wofsy: He was supportive but not—

Rubens: Doesn't have a particular story to tell.

Wofsy: Maybe not. But he would be interesting to talk to.

Rubens: Well, we'll see what the history of science is doing about that.

[End of Interview]