

Marvin Davidov

Youth 1-2

Macalester College 2-3

Radicalized by military service 5-8

Student activism at University of Minnesota, 1956- 8-
life in the 1960s 10-

Freedom Rides, Alabama 14-18

Aeloni, Zev 14

Student Peace Union 19-

Sibley/Rosen debate 19

SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee), 1964 22-

SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) 23-

Honeywell project 26-

Cambodia 31-

Moos, Malcolm 34-

reflections 36-

Interview with Marvin Davidov

**Interviewed by Professor Clarke A. Chambers
University of Minnesota**

**Interviewed on September 27, 1995
University of Minnesota Campus**

Marvin Davidov - MD
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: This is Clarke Chambers, your friendly interviewer. I'm conversing this morning with Marv Davidov, who has been an adjunct around the university for thirty years and more.

MD: More.

CAC: He knows a great deal about many things. It is September 27, 1995, a beautiful summer's day. The interview is being conducted in my office, 1152 Social Science Tower.

Marv, often, it's helpful, so that listeners to this twenty-five years from now can figure out who the hell you are and where you're coming from, to say something, just a little bit, not an hour but five or ten minutes of autobiography . . . how you got started, how you got to the University of Minnesota, what your relationships were in general, and then we'll talk about specifics.

MD: As you mention, I'm a teaching adjunct, at St. Thomas and St. Cloud State right now, trying to get in at Gustavus [Adolphus], Hamline, Carleton, St. Olaf, and Macalester. I sang to my students' opening class at St. Thomas, "Will you still love me? Will you still love me when I'm sixty-four?" . . . the Beatles song. I am sixty-four now, one of the elders.

CAC: Ahhh. I've got ten years on you.

MD: Ten years? You look younger, much younger

CAC: I sit under the banyan tree and act like an elder.

MD: Ahhh, banyan tree. It is a gorgeous fall morning in Minnesota, our beloved state. I walk around Lake of the Isles every morn. It's absolutely brilliant, pristine almost. The fish are jumping, and people are walking their babies and dogs, and running, and biking, and roller skating. It's such a joy to walk there in the morning. I'm what you might call an anarchist, pacifist—although, I've rarely been passive. I guess I'm a cross between a communitarian anarchist and a Democratic Socialist. I was a beatnik in Minnesota in the 1950s. I'm currently writing my autobiography.

CAC: Wonderful. I did that last year, just for the kids, the four children.

MD: Did you? It will go outside of the kids because you're one of the fine teachers at our university and have motivated and elevated your students, which is a precious gift and, I'm sure, learned from them.

CAC: In that case, I'll publish a book. [laughter] You're right.

MD: [laughter]

CAC: Did you go here as a student in the 1950s? Where did you go to high school?

MD: I went to high school at Detroit Central . . . Detroit, Michigan.

CAC: I hadn't known that.

MD: I graduated in 1949, came here. My uncles were running a department store in the Midway District, so I worked at the store and they paid my tuition. I took the entrance exams at Minnesota and was told I had flunked them . . . a very, very sad day. Then, a friend of my uncles came to town. He had just gotten out of the Army. He was a major, a tank commander in the Second World War. Arnie, a Jew, as I am, had gone to Macalester. He said, "Try Mac." I went to Mac, passed their entrance exams, which made me feel there was a mistake at Minnesota.

CAC: They make a few mistakes now and again.

MD: Now and again. So, I entered in 1950 . . . a liberal. I had never met a radical in my life. My parents were immigrants. My father came from Minsk and my mother from Iași, Romania, around the time of the First World War. They voted a straight Democratic ticket in Detroit. My mother worked in the house and my father worked at the Ford Plant during the Second World War.

CAC: Were you bilingual then as a kid?

MD: No, no, no.

CAC: They spoke English in the house?

MD: They spoke English.

CAC: That's too bad.

MD: Of course, it's too bad. I believe in bilingual education and the right wing attacking that is obscene.

CAC: Yes.

MD: Melting pot is obscene . . . We're all Americans, but to maintain that heritage with its culture, its traditions, its music, poetry is invaluable.

CAC: You went to Macalester as a Jewish kid from Detroit, a liberal?

MD: A liberal. I studied very hard. I ran the two-mile on the track team my first year because I was always running to the movies, running to the store.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: I had never had any training. There are some very funny parts about that but I'll save it for my book. One thing . . . the track coach, Primrose, had been an Olympian . . . tall gangling. He reminded me of a Vermonter, a New Englander. I went to him and said, "Coach, I'd like to run." "Have you ever had any training?" "No." He says, "All right, line up with the 100-yard dash guys." I did that. He says, "That's not your race." Fifteen minutes later he says, "Do the 220." "That's not your race." A half hour later he says, "Try the mile." "That ain't it." Then, a half hour later he says, "Do the two mile." He says, "That's it." I was so totally exhausted, I could hardly move. [laughter] He says, "You're a two-miler."

CAC: I always knew you were a long distance runner.

MD: Thanks.

CAC: That's a hard race.

MD: Sure, it's hard. That was me.

CAC: Something got to you at Macalester?

MD: I studied with Dorothy Jacobson and Ted Mitau, local and federal government. They were both deeply involved. Ted was a magnificent lecturer, very exciting . . . an immigrant from Nazi

Germany, a Jewish immigrant. I found a home in Macalester. I studied very hard. I was always working.

CAC: You're working for your uncles to pay your way?

MD: That's right . . . generous men, pillars of the Jewish community in St. Paul, athletes and fishermen.

CAC: That's good company.

MD: I'm a fisherman to this day and I love sports. I started doing volunteer work at Macalester with the Red Cross. I gave a lot of pints of blood. I would take entertainers to the VA [Veteran's Administration Hospital] and to St. Peter [State Hospital] and drive in a bus. That felt good. When the Mississippi and Minnesota [Rivers] overflowed in either 1950 or 1952, I went with the Red Cross, rowing up to people's windows on the flats.

CAC: Down the Minnesota River?

MD: Yes. That was my first understanding of class-based analysis.

CAC: Ahhh.

MD: It was the poor who were flooded. The richer people lived up on the hills. They didn't get flooded and I noticed that. I said, "Put that in your hat as something significant." I came to my politics existentially.

CAC: Have you read [Albert] Camus' new book, *The First Man*?

MD: No.

CAC: Put it high on your list.

MD: All right.

CAC: This is just a magnificent thing about class and poverty, the poverty that he was locked into. The description of that is the most powerful thing I've ever read.

MD: I read Camus' essay *Neither Victims nor Executioners*. I use it in speeches because it's an ode to non-violent resistance. When I was a senior, I joined the military intelligence reserve at Fort Snelling. I passed the college qualification draft test. The Korean War was just ending and I got drafted my senior year. They needed replacements.

CAC: Sure.

MD: I went gladly as a liberal.

CAC: Good.

MD: Things happened to me in the service that made me a radical and an organizer and I didn't even know I was.

CAC: Did the Army know you were?

MD: Oh, yes.

CAC: They learned that.

MD: That's where my FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] file started, which is now 1200 pages that they've given me.

CAC: I see. [laughter]

MD: I've always been into non-violent but radical activity. They say frequently in the file, "non-violent . . . not violent, but in touch with revolutionary groups, Black Panthers, American Indian Movement . . . "

CAC: This is 1954, 1956?

MD: Yes, after I got out and started in. I got thrown out of the Army. My first prison stint was the Fort Campbell stockade at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, home of the Eleventh Airborne Division.

CAC: That's not a pleasant experience.

MD: No, but it was fascinating. I investigated who is in here and what have they done? Murders, check cashers, guys that got into trouble. I got set up. It's a long story but . . .

CAC: We'll wait for your memoir.

MD: Yes, right. I got thrown out with a general discharge under honorable conditions. I'd been radicalized without being fully conscious of it.

CAC: How long were you in?

MD: Nineteen months, including a month in a stockade.

CAC: I remember stockades from the Second World War. They were a terrible experience.

MD: Hellish . . . for gay and lesbian people, for the Japanese in concentration camps under the [Franklin D.] Roosevelt Administration, others and I was learning about this. Dorothy Jacobson talked about it in her class. That stuck with me. We were working-class Jews from Detroit. My mother tells me when I was twelve, I was baby sitting in the community and I charged on a scale according to income . . . at twelve.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: Race riots happened in Detroit when I was a kid. Roosevelt, Durfee, and Central High had a campus as big as a college campus. The National Guard was camped on our school grounds with their tanks, machine guns, and troops to put down poor southern whites and blacks who were fighting at Belle Isle and other places. Even though our high school was 98 percent Jewish and upper middle class, we were on the edges of it. There was some enlightenment there because I remember in eleventh grade, a teacher in history or social science gave us book reports to do and Bob Steinberger, who came from a wealthy family, was on the basketball team. He said, "I'm going to read Howard Fast's *Citizen Tom Paine*." The teacher said, "No, you're not. He's a communist."

CAC: [laughter]

MD: Bob said, "Yes, I am." The teacher said, "Let's go to the principal." He was from an affluent, important family and he read it and reported on it. I got that book.

CAC: Of course, in the 1940s, Howard Fast was a great patriot because of his *All United and Common Arms*.

MD: I've read many of his novels. He can write.

CAC: You're out of the Army by the mid 1950s?

MD: Yes, and I went back to Macalester to register for the summer of 1956. There was a note on my file, "Hold, see the dean" . . . Dean Huntley Dupre.

CAC: I remember him.

MD: It's a dorm name. I think he was a Quaker, a World Federalist. I had studied, I believe, English history with him. He closes the door, and sits me down, and he says, "We understand you've had some difficulty in the service." When he used the editorial *we*, and there are only two of us in the room, and he ain't including me, I know the institution is speaking to me. He said, "Would you like to tell us about it." I took an hour and a half and gave him the story. I got beat up once when a sergeant at our platoon in basic training beat up a kid who jumped the boat and missed fighting the Gooks in Korea. I was the only one in the outfit who said, "Let's go down and ask him. He may have a good reason for missing the boat."

CAC: [laughter]

MD: I was the only one who didn't go downstairs and beat the shit out of this guy, Anderson. The next day, I said to the guys on my floor, "You're a bunch of stupid, fucking cowards. I'm ashamed of myself for not going down and having the courage to stand next to him. Don't you know what you've done to yourselves and to him?" I turned around to fix my bunk. There's a blanket on my head and I get the blanket party.

CAC: Oh, I see.

MD: Like Stanley Kubrick's film, *Full Metal Jacket*.

CAC: Yes, yes.

MD: I was totally alone.

CAC: This was a widely distributed strategy for beating up.

MD: Yes.

CAC: They got some kind of an idea that the blows don't show.

MD: Yes . . . a blanket. I stood up in the theater with the whole training division in 1954 when officers from the division would come down and do basic information courses . . . start off with sexist jokes. Then, he said, I remember, "Senator Joe McCarthy from Wisconsin is doing a marvelous job catching commies and queers in the state department." I raise my hand and stand up as a liberal and give a fifteen minute rap about the evils of McCarthyism.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: They don't like that. I had fifty-five days of KP [kitchen police duty] instead of seven . . . always in trouble. After they beat me, every time I would go into a class, Pentagon Indoctrination, an officer would say something I thought was a lie, my hand would go up and I'd say, "That's a fucking lie" and back it up.

CAC: So, the folks at Macalester had some general idea that you had not gotten along?

MD: The FBI came to them. It's in my files.

CAC: But they let you back anyhow?

MD: Dean Dupre said, after my story, "Don't you want to go the 'U' or Hamline or St. Thomas? They're very good schools you know." I said, "Why are you trying to farm me out? I thought

my education here taught me to be ethical wherever I went." "If you want to come back to Macalester, go to the VA and see a psychiatrist," he said.

CAC: Ahhh.

MD: The Quaker, World Federalist tells me that. I was learning. I was growing up. Again, I felt totally alone. I went to the VA and I met a psychiatrist who was a human being.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: He listened to my stories. He wrote a letter, "If Marv studies hard, he could become a lawyer or a teacher. If I'd been subjected to the same circumstances he was, I would hope I would have the courage to do exactly what he did." They let me back in and I never paid them for that summer session. I said, "You took that out of my soul . . . no money." When I'm invited to Mac to speak in classes, I begin with that story. I say Huntley's [Huntley Dupre] dead. He can't refute it. They named the dorm after him.

CAC: You get your baccalaureate from there?

MD: No. I transferred to the "U" in 1956.

CAC: I see. So, you did come here. Not much is happening in 1956?

MD: The first demonstrations against nuclear testing of Soviet and U.S. nukes [nuclear bombs] . . . my first demonstrations.

CAC: By a student group?

MD: Students, the Mulfords, the Quakers, and others.

CAC: At that time, who other than Mulford Sibley would have been part of that coalition? You found your way to Mulford pretty fast?

MD: Oh, yes. I took some classes with him and I learned. He was magnificent as a teacher and gentle and compassionate.

CAC: Very gentle, yes.

MD: He was humorous. I need role models in my life, especially men.

CAC: We all do.

MD: My father had it rough, always angry, hated the bosses. They had trouble in the family because of money.

CAC: There must have been more persons than Mulford Sibley who . . . ?

MD: Yes, David Noble.

CAC: Gene Mason that early? I know you pick up with him later.

MD: Yes. I took a class in political psychology . . . Byrd, was it? He gave a test to students that he'd given to avowed socialist students in the 1930s. I was the only one in day classes that scored almost 100 percent in line with the socialists of the 1930s and I didn't know I was a socialist. I found out. He said, "You must be a socialist."

CAC: Vote left.

MD: So, I joined the Socialist Club, Student Peace Union [SPU], Students for Integration.

CAC: These groups are all there in 1956, 1957, 1958?

MD: Yes.

CAC: That's interesting.

MD: In the early 1960s, they were there. I got a lot of incompletes. I was going through my own transformation . . . long periods of depression. I would drop out, come back . . . involved with the beat scene around the "U".

CAC: How did the beat scene differ from this subliminal kind of student radicalism you speak of?

MD: Much more into culture, poetry, films, [Ingmar] Bergman, [Vittorio] de Sica. We were always going to films.

CAC: Al Milgrom had his film series?

MD: Milgrom started the Film Society twenty-five years ago.

CAC: Twenty-five years ago would make it 1970.

MD: Right. I knew Al right away and he was talking about it and people were encouraging. We had the East Hennepin Bar on Fifth and East Hennepin . . . artists, writers, poets, people into politics . . . big booths. Ten people could sit in a booth and rap, and they were, and it was

terribly exciting. I met Dylan as the next generation. Bob Dylan, John Kerner, Tony Glover, Dave Ray came to our parties with their guitars.

CAC: How many from the university? Was the university connected in some . . . ?

MD: Oh, yes, there were all kinds of people from the "U". Frank Wise, writer, poet . . . Eddie Richer, Bob Golding . . .

CAC: These are kind of free floating students?

MD: Students and some of them became professors. Very exciting . . . and we had great parties on weekends, interracial, no trouble generally, no violence, dance, and rap. It was like the White Horse and the Village in New York City . . . people who were producing poetry, novels.

CAC: I'm sure that most of the people at the university had no idea this was going on.

MD: You had ninety people in the East End every night, nine to one sitting there rapping with each other and drinking. We were all into drinking and rapping.

CAC: How are you paying the rent in the meantime?

MD: I was modeling for art classes at the "U".

CAC: Ahhh.

MD: They paid a buck sixty-nine an hour. I went to [Bernard] Arnest who was head of the Department and to the other models, "A buck sixty-nine an hour?" I went in and talked with the other models and I said, "Let's get it raised." "You go on and do it." I said, "Sure." I said, "Mr. Arnest, you can't live on a buck sixty-nine an hour even modeling around town." He said, "That's all we can afford." I said, "Mr. Arnest, we're thinking of demonstrating and picketing the Art Department nude with signs."

CAC: [laughter]

MD: He said, "We can do \$2.50." Immediately, I got a raise for everybody by threatening to demonstrate nude. Men wore jock straps and women were completely nude . . . the double standard.

CAC: That sounds like a Saul Alinsky strategy?

MD: That's right. Give them a choice . . .

CAC: You were aware of him?

MD: I became aware. I heard him speak at UCLA.

CAC: He was always pulling tricks like that . . . the famous pissing at O'Hare Air Field.

MD: Shitting or pissing. I met Saul. I was reading and we were in this exciting alternative environment . . . stimulating. By 1961, we were still at the East Hennepin. I joined that crowd in 1956. I came about twenty credits short of a degree in political science and history, but I was reading, and I was thinking, and mixing it up with these people who were very bright, very articulate in the cultural . . . scene, poetry, music, novels, films, dance, theater. We were staying up all night rapping, living in McCosh's Rooming House for adults. Everybody else who rented rooms to students said, "Rooms for boys," Rooms for girls." Melvin's sign, the anarchist book dealer, said "Rooms for adults." I lived up there in his house in Dinkytown.

CAC: Say something for posterity about McCosh.

MD: Melvin had a long beard.

CAC: His bookstore was over in Dinkytown.

MD: Right next to Bridgeman's in Dinkytown.

MD: Melvin was a scholar and a humorist, a satirist. He had a family. His wife, Marie, was a nurse. Elsbeth, Delcy, and David were the children. Little Elsbeth would carry a hot plate for Melvin's lunch two blocks, when she was eight, down to the corner, covered with a napkin so it was hot, and Melvin would eat. I would frequently be in there to catch his proverbs and allegories so I heard, for example, the little's girl's voice after he was through, "Daddy, you're standing on my foot." I hear Melvin say, "I know," like Charles Adams. [laughter] Homecoming . . . everybody would have the balloons. The cheerleaders would give balloons to everybody at the Gopher homecoming at old Memorial Stadium. Melvin had a big horse prophylactic, somehow, that they use to catch semen from horses.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: He would tape it to the window under a sign that said, "Home comers go home." People would be passing by and they'd look in the window and recognize . . . and either laugh or be absolutely astonished. [laughter] He had a demonstration that the Marlboro crushproof cigarette box wasn't crushproof. He rolled his car over it and had people take pictures.

CAC: Right. [laughter]

MD: He met [Walter] Fritz Mondale. Fritz, and [Hubert H.] Humphrey, Orville Freeman, and others used to come in to buy books sometimes and he knew them all. They knew him. During the presidential election when [Jimmy] Carter and Mondale ran, Melvin was downtown. It was

rather cool. He was wearing his long, brown khaki overcoat that reached to his ankles and a Chinese commissar's hat with a red star on it . . . full beard. Fritz stops to speak, "How you doing, Melvin? How's it going? Selling any books?" Melvin says to Fritz, "Yes, and what are you doing these days?"

CAC: [laughter]

MD: So, as Fritz was leaving, Melvin shouts out, "Say Fritz, do ya still work for the highway department?" [laughter] Clarke, he would have a sign in his shop, "We give no discounts to clergy, university administrators, and all other lower forms of life."

CAC: For all of that, he had the best damned bookstore.

MD: Yes.

CAC: You could find things there that no one else had.

MD: Absolutely. I went to a lunch out at his Wayzata estate. He bought a rooming house or a nursing home, something big, a mansion, and all his books were in there. Melvin was writing his autobiography, and he reads to the assembled crowd, and everybody had a glass of bourbon or wine . . . and a great big pig roast there and he reads. A guy comes into the bookstore one day and says, "McCosh, do you have an 1890 Lakota Sioux dictionary?" Melvin says, "Yes, I think I do." He goes downstairs. He finds it. He gives it to the guy. The guy says, "How much?" Melvin says, "Twenty-five dollars." The guy says, "Do you have it in paperback?" [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

MD: He had a million of those stories. So, I would hang around to catch the irony.

CAC: The stories I've learned are chiefly through—I'm sure you knew him—Norman Sherman.

MD: I know Norman.

CAC: He hung around there, too.

MD: That's right. Melvin did his lawn parties at the house. He'd make a big pot of stew and dozens of people would come around . . . the beat scene, hippies.

CAC: Where is he now?

MD: Wayzata . . . out there.

CAC: Your education is going on informally in this Dinkytown community?

MD: That's right. Saul Bellow was teaching here in the English Department. Reporters came to Saul and said, "Are there beats in Minneapolis?" "Yes, go to the Ten O'clock Scholar." Dylan would be playing in there. I was a resident art dealer, sitting and drinking coffee, trying to sell works by students at the "U", etchings, pottery, whatever . . . make my way. I was an art dealer.

CAC: This is a real bridge into the hippie scene later, as we came to know it.

MD: That's right.

CAC: But, I think, also, you did some really earnest work in civil rights and black rights early on in the 1960s?

MD: Yes, yes, yes. I belonged to Students for Integration, Student Peace Union. The sit-ins began in Greensboro, North Carolina on February 1, 1960. I had watched the Montgomery bus boycott and bought [Martin Luther] King's books. I was later to meet King in small rooms twice and have extended dialog with him.

CAC: I'm going to interrupt a minute. Do you know that the American Studies program had Martin Luther King here in 1957? He was brought because of the centennial of the attack upon the arsenal by our friend from Kansas. We were celebrating 100 years . . . [John] Brown.

MD: Really?

CAC: A few of us, four or five of us, had lunch with Martin Luther King. I kind of knew what he was up to. That was very early on, 1957. Marv, I remember only that the faculty were a little bit uneasy by this fellow because he didn't say anything after he'd given his address that morning. This was at the Campus Club. We kind of moved our plates around and we said, *ha ha* things, and tried to be earnest, and liberal, and so forth. But, he said nothing. When we'd finished our soup and salad or whatever, a cup of coffee, he pushed these things aside, and he went around the table, and he picked up what everyone there had been saying, and brought it into a general discussion. This is the failure of oral history or of our minds, I cannot remember the substance of it at all. All I remember was the skill . . .

MD: The synthesis.

CAC: . . . and the authenticity with which he brought that group together.

MD: [A.J.] Muste did that.

CAC: Yes.

MD: He was famous for it and I knew A.J. We were friends. He gave me some very wise advice and he counseled Martin as Dave Dillinger and Bayard Rustin had done.

CAC: I'll tell you, not many people learn it though.

MD: I teach it to my kids.

CAC: It's a remarkable skill to have that capacity to shut up and listen . . . teach by listening. That's my only memory of that.

MD: It happens existentially to me always and I believe to many of others if you're not a red diaper baby and I wasn't. It happened June 1961 . . . I was watching the Freedom Riders getting beaten in Alabama, in Montgomery, Birmingham, on the tube and saying, "What the hell is wrong with [President John F.] Kennedy? Why doesn't he send FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agents who are sitting there taking notes while everybody's getting beaten up? They're in the southern offices, racists. Never thinking of going myself . . . so it happens by accident. I had gone to dinner at my parents in St. Paul and stayed overnight. I'm hitchhiking. When I had beard or a mustache, I'd stand in front of St. Luke's. I looked like Jesus and would get quicker rides. Jesus was Jewish and a non-violent revolutionary.

CAC: We don't know that he had a mustache though.

MD: Right. He might have been a woman—we don't know—a black woman, Fanny Lou Hamer. I get a ride. They let me off by the River Road and I'm wandering through the campus to Dinkytown and I see David Morton sitting on the steps of the temporary building. The first hippie in Minnesota was David . . . into music and poetry. His father, Phil, taught sculpture at the "U" Art Department.

CAC: So, he's a young kid? He's a drifter?

MD: Yes, he's about nineteen or twenty. I said to him, "David, what are you doing?" "Going to a meeting on the Freedom Rides. There's a group being organized." One hundred people by then had been busted in Jackson and the Kennedys had finally acted with the beatings. They federalized Mississippi National Guard to escort the buses from Montgomery into Jackson to protect the people on them . . . John Lewis, Stokely Carmichael, Jim Farmer of CORE [Congress on Racial Equality], and others, I met there. So, I went into the meeting. There's a police guard at the "U" outside the door. I said, "How come there's a police guard?" There had been a notice in the *Daily* and a bomb threat sent in. I said, "They're just discussing going. I just wandered by." Zev Aeloni was head organizer.

CAC: Ahhh.

MD: He had worked with CORE [Congress on Racial Equality] in Georgia.

CAC: He was a student here in political science?

MD: That's right.

CAC: He was working with Mulford Sibley?

MD: That's right. Zev was up on a capital crime in Georgia.

CAC: At that time?

MD: At that time. When he got jailed, he got out of that one with the help of the president of the black college complex down there in Atlanta. To Don Fraser's credit . . . family and friends came to Don as U.S. Congressmen, and said, "Zev's alone in a southern jail. They beat the shit out of agitators. They pay cons with their freedom. He's in trouble." Don went to Florida. When Don showed up to visit Zev, he got protected. The U.S. Congressman . . . I'll never forget that. We disagree on this or that, but I love him and Arvonne. That took courage and commitment for him to take his valuable time and go put a screen around Zev.

CAC: Zev was into this before he came to the university?

MD: Yes. He was a left wing Zionist, a pacifist.

CAC: Was he from the south or where was he from?

MD: No, no . . . from North Minneapolis.

CAC: He's a local boy.

MD: Zev says, "We collected money from professors at the "U", labor unions, and others. We have enough money to take a group, round trip, on the bus to Jackson." The call had gone out from Jackson by SNCC [Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee], SCLC [Southern Christian Leadership Conference] and CORE, "Put a focus on Jackson. The world's beginning to look at this. We're having a jail-in in Jackson, Mississippi." I'm sitting there listening and Zev, after an hour of talking about it, says, "Who's interested in going?" It Wednesday, June 7. He said, "We should leave on Friday. We'll go to Nashville for an orientation—SNCC national headquarters are there—and then on to Jackson on Greyhounds [buses]." Twelve men and women were in that room.

CAC: All of them students?

MD: Yes, all of them students at the "U".

CAC: That's interesting that that comes that early . . . this is 1961?

MD: Yes. Ten of the twelve were thinking seriously on it. I didn't say anything. Zev looks at me and says, "How about you, Marv?" I was twenty-nine. I said, "I'll tell you by midnight." I walked out of there. I called my friend, Bob Golding, and I said, "I'm thinking of going to Mississippi as a Freedom Rider with a little group." He says, "Go, man. You'll make history." I was scared, petrified of the violence I'd seen on the tube.

CAC: Of course.

MD: I said, "Bob, let's go to the East End and talk with our pals down there. So, I went around talking with people, "What do you think?" Everybody said, "One of us should go. It should probably be you, Marv. One of us in our group should go." I called Zev a midnight, "All right, I'll be there" . . . the old bus depot, which is now a music place downtown. The next day, I told McCosh, "Can you save my room? We're going to get busted in Jackson, Mississippi. Melvin said, "Sure, you're far enough behind in rent, it doesn't make any difference."

CAC: [laughter]

MD: "I'll save it. It's a good thing. I'll support you." That day, I had a lot to do and I overslept because I was scared. There were seven of us, six white people . . . six men and a white woman: Clare O'Connor . . . Clare's mother was a Communist . . . she's a red diaper baby; Bob Balm had never done anything like this . . . he was a nineteen year old innocent; David, the hippie, who had been around; Gene Alpaugh from the Alpaugh family. His father taught here. I had met Bayard Rustin through them who came through speaking. He'd stayed at their house and I got to know Bayard quite well . . . watched his transformations. I've got some stuff. David Dillinger, a dear pal for thirty some years, told me stuff about Bayard—they worked together—and about King that people didn't know, which Dave put in his book. SNCC people used to call Martin "deh Lord," a derisive term, and then went to his funeral, and cried their hearts out. That was common. I tell black students, "Dave's right on." Jim Bevel, who became a King aid and worked with SNCC also . . . when they were trying to get Martin to come out against the Vietnam War and he was late in it because of pressure from the White House and liberals funding SCLC . . . don't connect peace and freedom. Stay with civil rights. Get them into the Democratic Party. I was learning stuff about that whole scene that blew my mind. Jim Bevel says to Dave, "Mother fucking Martin is getting co-opped by the goddamned fucking White House," and Jim's black and was really courageous . . . our organizer with King. David said to me when I read his manuscript for his autobiography, *From Yale to Jail*, "Should I put this stuff in about Martin?" I said, "It's the truth. Put it in." He did. Black kids reading this say, "What do you mean white people criticizing Martin?" I said, "SNCC kids used to call him 'deh Lord, deh Lord' and some of it went to head. He got more radical the older he grew. Why do you think the "I have a dream" speech is the one everybody remembers rather than the Riverside Church speech which is a critique of capitalism and imperialism? We know why.

CAC: He brought them together.

MD: We know why. Nobody knows that talk. They don't want people to know. It makes me goddamned furious.

CAC: You nine or ten young people—you were the oldest of the bunch—went to Nashville . . .

MD: Seven of us.

CAC: . . . got oriented and then went on to . . . ?

MD: John Lewis is now a U.S. Congressman from Atlanta and Diane Nash, who later married Jim Bevel and divorced—a lot of that going on in the movement—had an orientation with us. Then, we went on to Jackson, got busted, six of us. One of our people got off the bus in Madison. He told his Jewish mother, and she laid a guilt trip on him, and Harvey came back. It changed his life. It changed ours.

CAC: The six of you, remaining, got busted?

MD: In Jackson, in the black section of the Greyhound terminal.

CAC: Did you get to stick together, the six of you?

MD: No, they separated by gender and race. We were in the Jackson city jail for a week, tried and convicted by an all white, male . . . ten Baptists, one Methodist, one Presbyterian . . . all male. Blacks did not sit on juries. Women did not sit on juries. Catholics and Jews were knocked off. Baptists were on it. They convicted us in fifteen minutes.

CAC: Convicted you of what?

MD: Breach of the peace . . . a great charge. Four months and a \$200 fine . . . a week later, everybody, except the women, the black and white men were taken to Parchman Farm, the Mississippi state prison, where we did the rest of it. The first night—I always tell media . . . everybody—I was lying in my cell listening to people sing the freedom songs:

Keep your eyes on the prize.
Hold on, oh, freedom, oh, freedom.
Before I'll be a slave,
I'll be buried in my grave,
Go home to my Lord, and be free.

I was lying there crying, not because they were punishing us but because of the nobility of everybody in there and I said to myself, "There's no other place I should be but right here with these people taking . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

MD: . . . I love it. We came back. Six hundred black and white people, at the old Wold Chamberlain Airport, greeted us . . . a car cavalcade to Arthur Naftalin's reception room—he was mayor—for a press conference in Arthur's reception room. I said something funny, people laughed. I said something sad, they cried. I said, "I'm a goddamned speaker."

CAC: [laughter]

MD: I didn't know it. They laughed and cried. I thought I'd better get into this. I'm just reporting. We started doing speeches around the state. I was on a panel with David Noble at the "U" and the black fraternity came. That's where I first met Carl Eller. Carl came up to me.

CAC: Ahhh.

MD: He was studying here . . . All American on the Gopher football team with Sandy Stevens, Judge Dixon, and others. Carl said, "Man, I like what you were singing." I said, "The SNCC Freedom singers are coming in to sing. Should I give you a call?" He said, "Call me, brother." So, I took him over to hear them at the Campus "Y" and then every time I see Carl . . . big move and a handshake, "Man, I saw you in the paper." "You're doing well with the Vikings, Carl." I invited he and Allan Page to hear Jane Fonda. They'd didn't come, but Carl's always very encouraging . . . big grin, big hug. It was fun. I didn't have the money to go Vikings games, but I watched them on the tube. I made dozens of speeches all over the state about it.

CAC: How on earth are you supporting yourself doing all of this?

MD: Modeling.

CAC: Still?

MD: Yes.

CAC: You must have been a beautiful model?

MD: People remember. Bernard Arnest in the Art Department did two portraits of me. When he got a job at Colorado Springs, Colorado State, he sold my portrait to the museum there. It's a beautiful portrait.

CAC: I'll check it out.

MD: And I knew Walter Quirt. I modeled for all of them . . . friends.

CAC: For my money, Quirt was one of the best of that group. There are some really fine artists in that group, but Quirt was really just magnificent.

MD: Yes. I was an art dealer and a model, and I knew all of those people, and I began to read about art. I gave a sermon in the penitentiary. Dell Mahoney, a black kid, in the cell next to mine in maximum security, said, "Marv, there ain't any priests or rabbis, clergy in with us" who usually did the devotionals [unclear] political [unclear]. "Why don't you do it, today? I said, "I'm a Jewish agnostic art dealer." "Talk about art." So, I did. In his book, *Freedom Ride*, [by James Peck] who was a student at Howard says, "In the cell next to mine was a middle-aged art dealer named Marv who gave a sermon on art." He was eighteen. I was twenty-nine. I was middle-aged to eighteen year old Bill—who later committed suicide, unfortunately . . . tragically.

CAC: Was there a reception at the university with these various student, active groups [unclear]?

MD: We spoke, but no . . .

CAC: That wasn't the same, the main focus of your work?

MD: I was into peace, and justice and freedom, picketing Woolworth when the kids sat in from Greensboro College. Mulford was always out there.

CAC: Yes. There was a Student Peace Union that early?

MD: Yes.

CAC: These overlap . . . these two things?

MD: Yes.

CAC: Say something about that then.

MD: I belonged to the Student Peace Union. Somebody writes a letter to the *Daily* which sparked off the [Mulford] Sibley/[Milton] Rosen debates. Mulford is criticizing SPU for having a communist and I knew John, the young kid who belonged to the Communist Party. I didn't give a shit, none of us did—so what. Why not? So, Mulford writes what he calls "an ordinary, academic freedom letter" to the *Daily*. "There should be," Mulford says, "communist teaching at our wonderful university. There should be a nudist club. There should be a society for the overthrow of the U.S. government through Jeffersonian violence." Everything went nuts. I went up to see Mulford and I said, "How you doing?" Mulford said, "Somebody nailed a black wreath, a funeral wreath, to our door at our home . . . death threats on the phone. The kids are upset. Marjorie is doing all right." Mulford says to me, "I don't understand why many of my colleagues don't stand up about this." Never blaming, never shaming . . . just "I don't understand it." Then, the debates came. I went to the debates . . . packed auditorium in Coffman.

CAC: This is Milt Rosen who challenged him.

MD: Yes. He owned the tire company.

CAC: He was a city councilman in St. Paul.

MD: He says, "If you never met payroll, you don't know what the hell is happening." Mulford just creamed him in the debate without attacking him.

CAC: What was the subject of the debate?

MD: Civil liberties, academic freedom . . .

CAC: I see. It really wasn't a debate in the classical sense?

MD: Yes, it was. It was broadcast live throughout the state of Minnesota.

CAC: Was this done on campus?

MD: At Coffman.

CAC: So, the university had to sign off on this?

MD: Yes. Afterwards, Mulford, and Marjorie, and a small group of people went to celebrate at the Nanking downtown. The owner of the Nanking recognizes Mulford and paid for our dinners that night. "Mulford, you were wonderful!" I always say, "The Chinese are the Jews of Asia."

CAC: [laughter]

MD: I remember that and how courageous he was, and gentle, and compassionate . . . a lovely human being who helped shape my politics and what it is to be a man on the circuit.

CAC: He had a nice sense of irony and distance also.

MD: Oh, yes. I loved him. They supported me with some money for my work . . . always encouraging, always. In my speaker's brochure, there's a quote from Mulford, [Noam] Chomsky, Phil Berigan, Dave Dillinger, Grace Paley . . . little nice things.

CAC: The Student Peace Union was addressing . . . there are a couple of troops in Vietnam, but that's certainly not [unclear] yet.

MD: They were addressing Soviet and American nuclear testing in the atmosphere, cold war, and so on.

CAC: We still have the same thing thirty years later with the French.

MD: Yes, and people are rising up in Tahiti in passionate ways. It's been going on for some time.

CAC: How soon does the Student Peace Union pick up the Vietnam thing?

MD: I think by 1964, it had faded. SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] was on campus.

CAC: I see.

MD: Art Himmelmann will know this. At the arraignments in Jackson, was the first time I met Bill Kuntsler, who died recently. He broke ground by taking those cases to federal courts and winning them. He broke ground . . . a young man then in his forties. They brought him down because he had just started to get interested and became King's lawyer after the Freedom Rides. Malcolm X and others . . . they claim he's a modern Clarence Darrow like Ken Tilsen, my pal.

CAC: But things are milder in Minnesota than they are elsewhere on these scores?

MD: I wouldn't say so. No. Always activity around politics . . . the liberals were into backing [Eugene] Gene McCarthy, [Orville] Freeman, Humphrey. I was becoming a radical. I had worked in DFL [Democratic Farmer Labor Party] precinct activity and supported Humphrey, and McCarthy, and Fraser, and the rest of them, but I left the DFL in 1960 . . . never again tempted to return, never.

CAC: I see. When did the SDS come on campus?

MD: [Tom] Hayden, Al Haburn, and others, started it at Michigan right after the sit-ins . . . the Port Huron Statement, 1962.

CAC: They are here by 1964 on this campus?

MD: Oh, yes, and SNCC is traveling to campuses . . . the Northern Student Movement is supporting them.

CAC: One imagines that there is an overlap of membership in SDS and SNCC?

MD: That's right, yes. In 1963 and 1964, while reading *Liberation* magazine . . . Mulford was on the editorial board with Bayard Rustin, Dave Dillinger, A.J. Muskie, Barbara Demming, Stuart Meachem from Peace Education, secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, who had

gone to college with Dean Rusk, a war criminal who is dead in hell burning, if there is such a place. Henry [Kissinger] should be there, by the way. Daniel Elsberg, who became a friend, told me "The only truly evil person I've ever known is Henry Kissinger." I believe it. When we ate lunch at the Harvard Club on Dave Dillinger's book tour, which I organized with Gene Sharper who was teaching there . . . I thought, if Henry's here, I'm going to piss in his soup.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: But only John Kenneth Galbraith was there and he's a good guy, so I decided to keep my dick in my pants. I get angry and lose the non-violent cool from time to time.

CAC: How large is the initial group in SDS here?

MD: I'd say twenty, a nice group, led by Art Himmelman and others. Art's a good friend.

CAC: Where is Art now?

MD: He's got his own consulting firm . . . a very good guy, very compassionate, a great dancer.

CAC: That's not a very large group.

MD: Twenty activists who know what they're doing can make a lot of trouble and educate a lot of people and it was growing, as it was elsewhere. That's what I remember at any rate . . . somewhere around twenty. I went on an integrated Canada to Cuba peace walk in 1963 and 1964 sponsored by the Committee for Non-Violent Action. I had epic experiences.

By the way, I met Martin King at Mankato in 1961, after we had returned from the Freedom Rides. A black friend of mine who is an M.D. [Medical Doctor] said, "I know Martin. I worked in Nashville. Do you want to meet him?" I said, "Wow! yes." So, six of us, who had gone, went. They put us in a small room and then Martin came in . . . very quiet. I realized how small he was, shorter than I . . . very intense eyes. He wanted to know who we were and thanked us for being there, going to Mississippi. I mentioned I knew Bayard. "How do you know Bayard?" he says. I told him. Then, he says, after a half hour with us, "I've got give a talk. They tell me it's going to be packed in the big auditorium. Do you want to ride with me to the auditorium?" I said, "Sure." So, I rode with him. The president of the "U" came out to greet him and he was going to introduce Martin. Martin dropped his hat. I went down so fast to get it and he beat me down there.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: I almost bumped his head. I could have knocked him out before the speech because I was down there to get it. He said, "Marv, it's all right. I've got it." On the Canada to Cuba walk, we were in D.C. [Washington], in August, when he gave his "I have a dream" speech . . . Dave

up on the platform, sitting next to Izzie Stone, I.F. Stone, and Dave and Izzie are saying, "Martin's giving a boring speech. What the hell's wrong with him? There are 200,000 labor union people, and blacks from the south, and whites. What the hell's wrong." He tosses away his speech and goes into "I have a dream." Dave and Izzie said, "Wow! he saved it. He saved it." They censored Lewis's SNCC speech because Kennedy wanted it censored. Kennedy said to all the civil rights leadership, "There are abundant funds for responsible leadership." But, John's speech—he demanded that all speeches be typed and given to him—is unacceptable and they censored it. John went along. He was going to say, "We should have used the tactics of the south, block the runways at Dulles Airport, forced mass arrests. We're getting the shit beat out of us and they're doing next to nothing," and a critique of American capitalization . . . unacceptable to Kennedy. They wanted the money and the influence. They all sold out there that day except John. John comes from a sharecropper's family, eight kids, in Alabama, desperately poor. He wanted to be minister . . . courage like you've never seen . . . beaten silly in Birmingham while the FBI stood and took notes and the Kennedys would do nothing. I was learning.

CAC: But, you always come back to the Twin Cities?

MD: Yes, I love Minnesota.

CAC: The Student Peace Union, and SNCC, and SDS . . . but how early is the Honeywell Project?

MD: That didn't happen till 1968. I went to the first big demonstration against Vietnam on buses. Students from the "U" and other campuses and adults in the community . . . I think a couple hundred of us chartered Greyhounds and went to the April 1965 SDS first big demonstration against the war.

CAC: So, SDS was the effective group for mobilizing [unclear]?

MD: Yes. Yes. I went to the Assembly of Unrepresented People in August of 1965 with 6,000 to 7,000 who were going to do civil disobedience . . . walk into the Capitol . . . make peace with the people of Vietnam, pass some labor legislation that would be enlightened. Some radicals in labor . . . Bob Moses came up from Mississippi. I was walking around a tree outside the White House with Bob. I'd seen Bob in Jackson—he was a legend by then—and Dave was there and getting busted with the rest of us . . . Stauton Lind and many others. I knew Stauton because he and Howard Zen taught in the black college complex in Atlanta in the 1950s. Alice Walker was a student of each of them. Julian Bond . . . I met Julian Bond down there . . . movers and history makers, men and women who were absolutely stunning in their courage and insights.

CAC: Having Minnesota in mind, Minnesota is not contributing much to that national leadership?

MD: At another level . . . Zev. I was becoming very, very active. There were a number of Minnesotans, most of whom attended the "U", who went to Mississippi in the summer of 1964 after [Michael] Schwermer, [Frank] Chaney and [Andrew] Goodman had been murdered in Philadelphia. Ronnie Siegel, Heather Balm, Dean Zimmerman . . . a number of people went to Mississippi. We had a crowd of people who had experience down there who were organizing . . .

CAC: These same people show up in the anti-Vietnam?

MD: Absolutely.

CAC: There's no broken [unclear]?

MD: No, there's a great depth to the southern Civil Rights Movement. If you look at the leadership of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, they were people who were in the south. At Stanford . . . David Harris who started draft resistance on a national level with others. He had been in the south. Mario Savio at Berkeley had been in the south. Men and women, whites who had gone there came back totally transformed in their lives and started Free Speech Movements and anti-Vietnam activity that had national affect. We were doing it here.

CAC: I'm bating with questions. It doesn't come to be a major force here in the Twin Cities until 1969?

MD: Look, when we were in the penitentiary, families and friends kept agitating. They went to Elmer Andersen who was the Republican governor and said, "We're getting rumors people are being mistreated at Parchman Farm." One day, we're in maximum security. The warden and the sheriff of Hinds County come by and they call, "All Minnesota people, out of your cells into the first three cells." They give us the prison uniforms, the bold striped uniform. I started talking like Jimmy Cagney and Humphrey Bogart because I was into film.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: "Who's coming to visit us? It must be my Jewish mother." Suddenly, a big group of people come in. The sheriff of Hinds County is right behind them . . . an AP [Associated Press] reporter, the warden, Fred Jones, a guy in a suit with hands trembling. He puts his hands through the bars and he says to me, "Marv"—I think Zev and Gene were in my little cell—"I'm assistant attorney general of the state of Minnesota. This is Gladys Brooks, the governor's human rights commissioner. We're here to see if you're having any trouble." I took a chance with the sheriff of Hinds County looking over his shoulder at me and said, "A couple of SNCC workers came in, one white, one black, they wouldn't walk into the building. They were dragged in. The sheriff who brought them up went to their cell and said, 'Nigger, you nigger lover. I want you to clean up your filthy cell.' The guys quietly said, 'Sheriff Tyson, you call us by our names

... we're happy to clean this cell, which is already clean." He had a black trustee come by, put wrist breakers on their wrists, tightened them so circulation got cut off. They're dragged down to the cell block into solitary while we all start screaming. As the only means of dissent then—because we're locked up and they would never take us out—we started singing . . . "Come and take our mattress, oh yes." Then, they came and took the mattress. "Come and take the goddamned blanket, oh yes." They came and take the blanket. "Come and take the Bible," the only book they gave us to read, which we were playing Twenty Questions with from cell to cell. They took everything, turned the blowers on so that the aluminum sheets, which were our bunks, got cold. They came and sprayed us with DDT for alleged bugs. We're all dripping with that slime. They demanded we clean the DDT off the cells.

CAC: This was before or after the attorney general from Minnesota [unclear]?

MD: Before.

CAC: So you shared this stuff with him?

MD: Sure, with the sheriff looking in.

CAC: Did it change anything?

MD: Yes, it changed a few things. What happened was the day they dressed in prison uniforms and took us to the first three cells, the two guys were let out of solitary, everything was cleaned up, sanitized for our visitors.

CAC: Who was attorney general then?

MD: I don't know who it was. It made big news back here. When they returned, they had a press conference. One of the changes was that I never got my mail after that. They tampered with federal mail. I said, "Black trustees are telling us they brought the women up now, black and white women, in the other wing of maximum security. They're doing vaginal searches on the women for dope. Women do it with hands gloves dipped in Lysol. It burns. Cut that shit!" So, that stopped. But, I never got my mail. That's all they did. We protested for a week. People were fasting, some of them. I was learning, man. I'll never forget those moments in there. SNCC Freedom singers came out of that and that's what I took Carl [Eller] to with the Freedom songs. They were traveling the country and Carl loved it. Carl had never been involved except—he grew up in North Carolina—as a black person. So, he's involved [unclear] being black, wherever you live. One of my black friends in Minnesota said to me, "You ain't white. You're Jewish." "Thanks for doing this for me for us," [unclear] says. I said, "Man, I didn't do it for you first. I did it for me, for me. How could I live knowing what I know without going there? This is what I believe. I had to go for me to maintain my dignity and then for you and all the others I don't know. But, for me, I always do things for me first. I'm selfish."

CAC: In 1964, you get the Civil Rights Act. In 1965, it's the Voting Rights Act, right?

MD: Right. We forced [President Lyndon B.] Johnson to sing, "We shall overcome." Grassroots efforts have always changed America. I was debating Don Fraser before a Democratic study group a couple of years later.

CAC: That's what I'm leading up to . . . a couple of years later.

MD: Let me finish this story because it fortifies my analysis. My analysis comes out of reading, thinking, but mostly pragmatic experience in the Movement.

CAC: I understand.

MD: I check out the analysis. They're inextricably intertwined. Practice tells you what you believe and who you are, to me. I learned that from Dillinger and from all kinds of elders who live all their lives that way. Private and publicly they're one person and they're healthy. We're schizophrenic. It's the American disease . . . privately, I believe one thing; publicly, I act another way. I got a wife and children to support. Judges told me that. U.S. federal officials told me that. I was trying to make it one to be healthy. It's a struggle because we're being constantly indoctrinated to be schizophrenic. I want to be healthy. I was learning this stuff. I asked Don and the 1960s DFLers in the room that Saturday morning, "Can anyone in this room give me one example in American history where a Congress, in and of themselves, did something powerfully enlightened. Nothing but silence in the room . . . I said, "Yes, you dig it, don't you?"

CAC: [laughter]

MD: It's grassroots Americans who have forced people of good will.

CAC: This means by 1967, 1968, 1969 that this kind of grassroots activity has to be the way on campus and the region generally to address the war?

MD: That's right.

CAC: Now, where does the Honeywell Project come from [unclear]?

MD: I came back from Berkeley and L.A. [Los Angeles]. I was working with the Vietnam Day Committee. Jerry Rubin, who is dead now, along with Abby [Hoffman] and Bill . . . I grieve for them and will always remember them as friends and comrades. I get draft resistance organizing in L.A., led by a woman, very rare, Sherna Gluck, who teaches oral history at Long Beach State . . . heads the department. She's a luminary in that world. I've called Marvin [Gluck], who is a screen writer and Sherna twice a week for thirty years and they came and visited. Arvonne [Fraser] set up a thing on Palestinian women. Sherna, as a Jewish anarchist, supports the Palestinian movement. I've been demonstrating with Palestinians at synagogues in

town about the fascist-like treatment they get from the Israeli military and government. That's my Jewish mission. I've only spoken in three synagogues in forty-two years because they don't like my expected position on Israel and they're right. I've been in every other denomination frequently.

CAC: Let's come back to the Honeywell thing.

MD: I come back from L.A. the summer of 1968. I read an editorial by Stauton Lind in *Liberation*. "Isn't it time that the anti-war movement, which makes an analysis about capitalism and imperialism, the radical part of it, takes on the war producing corporations?" I read that and I thought, Honeywell makes cluster bombs. Dave Dillinger sat on the Bertrand Russell War Times Tribunal in Stockholm and he wrote about testimony taken about cluster bomb torture, throwing National Liberation Front [NLF]—not Viet Cong; that's the American phrase—agitators out of American helicopters, tiger cages that my friend, Don Luce, who worked with AID [Agency for International Development] over there, exposed . . . stuff that's so obscene which our government, Democratic and Republicans support. Genocide is the name of it. [Sarturo?] is correct. Every time you see a napalmed Vietnamese child with the flesh hanging off, you want to throw up in pain.

CAC: It was Stauton Lind's piece that moved you to [unclear] local time, so whom did you go to?

MD: I went to blacks. I went to Indians. I went to Catholic leftists. I went to students.

CAC: On campus, whom could you work through?

MD: There were a number of people who came from campus and were in SDS . . . Per Nyberg, for example, and his wife . . . a number of people. I've got the names written down. I save everything being an anal historian.

CAC: I get a story elsewhere that the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] was often a place that this group could meet.

MD: Yes, we met there. They supported us.

CAC: Could you have met in the Student Union in Coffman?

MD: Sure, I spoke often there and we met there. I was on panels. We were innovative at that time.

CAC: This really took a hold.

MD: Twenty-three years.

CAC: Twenty-three years, but it involved lots of people.

MD: Thousands from the "U", Carleton. Paul Wellstone would bring his Carleton classes to demonstrate.

CAC: Would that have been later?

MD: In 1970. We involved thousands during Vietnam. The national media came here.

CAC: There would have been other corporations other than Honeywell?

MD: Why Honeywell?

CAC: Yes.

MD: They were number ten on the list of national war contractors . . . cluster bombs and we didn't know . . . guidance systems for nukes, first strike nuclear weapons. We learned that in the 1980s.

CAC: Did you ever get in it with [James] Binger?

MD: Binger was the first CEO [chief executive officer] we met, chair of the University of Minnesota Foundation, which invested a corporate portfolio for the "U". A conveyor belt from IT [Institute of Technology] to Honeywell Ordinance where we got information . . . people on the inside would ship us stuff, send us stuff as we were leafleting and keeping it up because endurance is the key there when you're battling [unclear] national. Ed Anderson taught mechanical engineering here. James Woods Haley taught physics. Woods was in the Honeywell Project as we began along with Paula Giese, who taught humanities here . . . Diana Johnstone in the Experimental College where I was teaching.

CAC: Do you want to swing off into that Experimental College deal? These things all overlap by now. Now, it's 1969, 1970?

MD: It's 1970. Roger Jones and Val Woodward—Val teaching genetics and Roger teaching physics—along with Joe Nathan, who's a prominent educator, and others started the Experimental College at the "U" and I applied, and got appointed the founding year, and taught my non-violence class, and was a staff member, 2,000 a year . . . no degree, which I don't have to this day . . . just forty-two years of experience.

CAC: The university will give you an honorary degree one of these days.

MD: Nahhh, are you kidding? I hardly get invited to speak here over the years. I used to. I'm at the small colleges and I want to be here. I want to come.

CAC: How many students were involved in the Honeywell Project at its height?

MD: Hundreds from all over the state . . . hundreds. Name a college and I'll tell you the students who came.

CAC: By this kind of activity, you were able to get to see Binger? How early?

MD: We called Ed Anderson in April of 1969. He had worked in their missile program and he had quit in disgust. Wood said, "Call Ed. He knows Binger." Ed calls Binger, "There's a group called Honeywell Project." Binger says, "Yes, I know. They caught one of our guys at a forum at Coffman. Marv Davidov stood up and blasted the shit out of us on cluster bombs. I know about them." "They want a meeting with you." Binger said, "Bring three of them up immediately." Ed, me and Woods met for two hours with him. Gary Morris, to show the revolving door . . .

CAC: I don't know Gary Morris.

MD: He was head of personnel.

CAC: Oh, at Honeywell, I see.

MD: He did their labor negotiating . . . an officer in the [unclear], revolving door. I was learning. Our theory is on it . . . our classical radical theory is on it. Binger is ruling class. He sat on the board of Chase Manhattan Bank, etcetera. We have a class-based society and I teach that to kids. I ask them, "What class do you and your family belong to?" "What do you mean? Middle class, right?" "Bull shit." There's a ruling class. Then, there's everybody else . . . it's stratified.

CAC: What did you say to Binger?

MD: He started calling me "Marv" right away so from then on, I said, "Jim."

CAC: [laughter]

MD: No paternalistic bull shit. You call me "Marv" . . . you're Jim, Steve, Bruce, Donald Nyrob . . . well, Bruce, well Marv . . . first names.

CAC: They knew what the joke was.

MD: Yes. They were sort of intrigued, as I was coming from my background.

CAC: I think they were having a good time, sure.

MD: Yes, and never going anything much about it, by the way. I said, "Jim, you guys have been making cluster bombs and other hideous weapons for a long time now. They're being used indiscriminately against men, women, and babies in North Vietnam," and I stopped pause for a breath and Jim said, "And the South, too," just that way, dispassionately . . . "and the South, too." That was chilling, chilling to us, the three of us. I said, "Jim, we have a plan. We'd like to bring Melman in from Columbia on peace conversion—he's an expert and teaches at Columbia University—free of charge. We'll bring marketing experts, movement people to help you convert with no loss of jobs so that people can be proud of you instead of thinking of you all as war criminals." He said, "We already have peace conversion plans." They never did a fucking thing about that. They kept laying off people. I said, "Jim, we're going to come to your homes, your country clubs, your businesses, the inner lock on the board and we're going to demonstrate." "You have every right to do that."

But Honeywell's public position for the first time came out in the *Trib* [*Minneapolis Tribune*] about war production. We have a democratically chosen government. If you want to change the system, change the government. We're proud to provide our troops over there with the necessary weapons. We believe in your right to peaceful and legal dissent. While we make money off of murder, you can vote for Hubert, George, or Nixon, but you've got to be peaceful about it." I said, "We're going to make it international as well. You've got offices all around the world and your PR [public relations] department gave us a map showing us where the offices are. Japan has a big peace movement. You've got offices there. You're all over the world. You employ under 50,000 people. We're going to reach them." I talked about the Ghandian method. We don't mean to hurt you or your families. We'll be disciplined, but we're going to make trouble. He said, "Thanks for notifying us that you're going to be at Honeywell during our shareholders' meeting. If you had caught us by surprise, we might have unloaded our big guns on you." They contacted the FBI, our files show, immediately after that meeting. All of the intelligence services got into it, the Minneapolis Police Department, feds, FBI, CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], the whole trip were on us because of the potential threat to national defense production. Clarence Kelly, FBI director, sends us a letter after Don Fraser wrote to him . . . when we discovered we were an FBI [unclear] pro target and we had informers in our group for a three-year period.

CAC: Did you ever have any trouble with the university?

MD: I said to Gene Eidenberg once, when he was vice-president, "We think that some of the improvements on the cluster bomb may have been thought out by people at the "U". He got very nervous and said, "If you can show me documented evidence, that's atrocious." It was Gene, while Malcolm Moos was away, who called cops in at the armory. He got nervous and thought we were going burn the building. A fraternity loaned a car in 1970 to burn in the streets.

CAC: Ahhh, I didn't know that story.

MD: They burned it and people took down the iron grate fences and knocked on the door, banged on the door. Nobody was going to burn down the armory. Gene got excited and called

the cops. They started pounding on people. That built it from one hundred of us to a couple thousand. The day of Kent State, Bill Telden, vice-president of the Minnesota Student Association, was rapping. Somebody comes hysterical out of the building. They'd killed students at Kent State and the pictures were coming across. Boy! did that enervate [energize] the crowd . . . 2,000 kids sitting in front of Coffman. I had spoken . . . Paula, Mulford, Earl Craig.

CAC: This is May 1971?

MD: May 1970 . . . the invasion of Cambodia, big. I was on the campus everyday and I was teaching at Experimental College. I had an in as well as being well-known and humorous. We were organized. It was effective. I've got to tell you, I look at the slogan above Northrop . . . I can just paraphrase it, but it's something about service to the people of the state of Minnesota and, in my mind, with my experience, with exceptions in every department, the University of Minnesota as a body politic, prepares people to serve the corporate state.

CAC: Sure.

MD: It's disgusting and obscene to me because the university should have been in the forefront of calling out its students, faculty, and campus workers to resist that barbaric war, to be involved with every social justice activity, and prepare people to go out in the world to serve the people rather than the corporate state.

CAC: I'll make a statement which is the form of a question, which often I do. The university responded to that situation with a flexibility of how students could fill out that year, right?

MD: Yes.

CAC: Then, summer came and the summer takes the sting out of everything at a nine-month university?

MD: Right, and a commuter campus.

CAC: We had teach-ins. I dropped my courses or transformed them into another subject that spring and [unclear].

MD: Mulford does the same . . . don't [unclear] class but study it. Whichever—to me—whichever, but get involved. Instead, the cops are called on as we're doing, essentially, peaceful demonstrations. The National Guard is called on the campus.

CAC: I had Anna Stanley and Rosemary Freeman in my class.

MD: Rose and Anna . . . [laughter]

CAC: [unclear] spring.

MD: Of course. You're among the people that, I say, are into it . . . each in their own way. There's no one truth. There are many paths to it. Mulford always said it, "Many paths to the truth."

CAC: Many roads to Rome.

MD: Lovely . . . and it was big here.

CAC: The Honeywell Project sustains itself past 1971, 1972?

MD: To 1990.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Tape 2, Side 1]

CAC: We'll lead into the occupation of Morrill Hall. I was raising the question of how the energy went out of this thing. I know that Honeywell goes on for a long time?

MD: We fell apart . . . yes, it goes out in 1973.

CAC: How do you account for that?

MD: People got tired of the struggling. Phil Berigan once said, "The average life of a movement activist is six months." You've got to prepare for a lifetime of struggle, as they do.

CAC: And the quieting of the draft.

MD: The quieting of the draft, the changing of the colors of the bodies coming back to Vietnam. Vietnamization, they called it.

CAC: Yes, yes, yes.

MD: The war was racist, and sexist, and genocidal, and classist.

CAC: What core can you depend on—the Honeywell Project goes on—again thinking of the university, which is the focus of my project here? What groups sustained, then, past the slump of 1973, 1974 here?

MD: Committed radicals on the faculty.

CAC: You're back to the core group?

MD: Yes, oh, sure, it contracts. It explodes and expands. That's American history. I believe every twenty, thirty years, a big one comes, a mass, visible movement.

CAC: That sounds like Arthur Schlesinger with cycles. I'm not so sure about that, Marv.

MD: All right, but I believe it. Harvey Wasserman has written about that, too, and I believe it. That's my experience. That's Dave's experience.

CAC: We're kind of overdue.

MD: Dave Dillinger predicts it will come sometime in the next ten years, but on 1950 issues rather than Civil Rights and Vietnam. He's been right so often . . . astute observer and activist. I go with Dave. Little groups are working all over the U.S. on 1950 issues. Our problem then will be coalition building and development of a third party.

CAC: Ross Perot is going to take care of that issue.

MD: Oh, yes, Ross Perot and Colin Powell . . . that's third party.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: Bull shit. I'd argue with you on cycles.

CAC: All right, but not today.

MD: Not today; it's too much . . . too far out.

CAC: Schlesinger keeps hoping for FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] to come along every twenty years.

MD: Oh, I know.

CAC: But, it doesn't happen.

MD: Schlesinger spoke at the Vietnam retrospective at MAC [Macalester College] in 1978 and he said he was an early opponent of the war. We never knew that. Bull shit. I almost stood up and said, "Why you lying? Why you lying to everybody?"

CAC: He was too close to Kennedy.

MD: Oliver Stone was wrong about Kennedy, too. Chomsky is right. Kennedy was not going to change the policy in Vietnam. He was changing it over in Cuba and that's why he was murdered.

CAC: Let's go back chronologically to 1969 and 1970 and the occupation of Morrill Hall. You were in on that, too?

MD: Oh, of course.

CAC: Say something on it.

MD: Black students wanted a department of black studies, wanted more black faculty, wanted resources to enable them to pursue their educations and help their communities. So, naturally, those of us who understood that joined them in the occupation. My FBI file lists all the people who were there.

CAC: They don't black them out when you get it from them?

MD: They black out some, but they describe it.

CAC: I've seen some of these; it's just all blacked out . . . not yours but others [unclear].

MD: Yes, they black out names, but they describe the event. I do have some names. They're historians, too.

CAC: How many white students were there in that?

MD: Quite a few and black football players were involved. They list them. They were very interested in that . . . anyone who has some influence to them. Creepy crawlies, FBI, and informers in every group . . . sitting-in in David Noble's class—the class is military intelligence, Army intelligence—and reporting back on what David does. They were in other classes. Anonymous letters went from the FBI to the administration about all of us. They were watching carefully and doing what they could to disrupt.

CAC: Were you part of any committee that went to see Moos on this thing?

MD: I knew Malcolm and Tracy [Mrs. Malcolm Moos].

CAC: Say something about that then.

MD: Malcolm wrote in [President Dwight D.] Eisenhower's last speech, "Beware of the military industrial complex." He was a speech writer for Eisenhower. We knew that. I knew Malcolm a little bit socially after they tossed him out and isolated them from the rich community. They

treated them very badly. Tracy was an eccentric southern lady who was wonderful and Malcolm drank a lot, as people knew. He was a decent human being. They came to hear Dave Dillinger at Carol Connolly's house on Summit [Avenue]. I'd see them sometimes when they lived at the Commodore Hotel. Malcolm, and Tracy, and some friends sitting around . . .

CAC: When was Moos living at the Commodore . . . after he was president?

MD: Yes, after they threw him out.

CAC: After he came back from Santa Barbara?

MD: Yes. I came in with a former Gopher cheerleader who was a radical I knew, a date, and Malcolm and Tracy said, "Come on over here, Marv."

CAC: What kind of a response did you have from him at the time?

MD: At the time, he would listen. He was nervous about it. How do you handle this?

CAC: He had no precedence.

MD: Yes, right. Good guy . . . I went to his funeral. I went to [John] Berryman's funeral. I used to drink with John at the Mixer's Bar.

CAC: He could out drink you, Marv.

MD: I know. So, he jumped like his dad did from the bridge . . . sad. My friend, Bruce Rubenstein, studied with John Berryman and he said, "John was who kept me at the 'U'. I would have quit." Bruce is a fine writer and he's rich. Some of you guys affect us deeply, help us change our lives.

CAC: My daughter, who is a good student but nothing spectacular, always thought of Berryman's course in humanities, where he did very little but read poetry, as the best course she ever had. She never understood poetry until she heard it read by him.

MD: Of course. I went to his funeral and I cried. Malcolm was there, and Tracy, and many others. Going to the "U" Film Society a couple times a week . . . When I didn't have any money, Al [Milgram] would let me in free. [laughter]

CAC: I picked up a sentence that you said earlier that after Moos left and went to Santa Barbara, and that didn't work out, and then he came back here, he was pretty isolated? His friends in the [unclear] community didn't pick it up?

MD: They wouldn't invite them to parties. He was no longer useful to them. He was no longer president of the "U". They didn't give a shit.

CAC: Isn't that interesting? I'd never heard that part of it.

MD: They told me. Carol Connolly told me, "They're hurting." Class-based reality . . . if you're useful or they think you're useful, you go to parties. Once you're no longer useful, fuck you. I met these guys. I negotiated with them. Donald Nyrop, Bruce Dayton . . .

CAC: This is through the Honeywell Project?

MD: Yes. Who was the ambassador and wrote for the *Trib*, a DFLer?

CAC: Gerry Joseph?

MD: She was as cold a human being as I've ever known . . . "You people with your neighborhood protest don't understand cosmic politics."

CAC: [laughter]

MD: That kind of thing. We lay a cluster bomb [sound of fist pounded on table] on the desk with [unclear], "You affirm this, don't you?" We get a little upset.

CAC: Arvonne [Fraser] and Gerry Joseph are very close and Arvonne is much more approachable person?

MD: Absolutely. Arvonne's a human being. She's cold. She's Madame [unclear].

CAC: [laughter] Have we covered a lot of stuff that you wanted to share about the university?

MD: Yes. I think I've said it all, more than people want to hear. [laughter]

CAC: What's your entre to the university now, if any?

MD: I call Alan Hooper and tell John Dolan in Philosophy, "I want to teach here. I'm really good at it."

CAC: Sure, sure.

MD: I know something and I do it with passion. I get the highest evaluations they see from students because this is what I do and draw out of them who they are. They don't know anything. I love it. I can't wait to . . .

CAC: You're teaching at St. Cloud and St. Thomas and . . . ?

MD: Gustavus, Carleton, St. Olaf, Macalester, and Hamline are getting interested.

CAC: You've never been able, after the days of Experimental College, to find a niche here? You know, there isn't much of niche.

MD: Right.

CAC: Experimental College used to be the best place.

MD: Yes. The Extension Division. Alan's going to call a guy there. John's thinking, do you want to teach in China? He has a friend over there who couldn't get in with a Ph.D. John's a dear friend.

CAC: Your contacts with the university now are primarily with a very few faculty [unclear].

MD: Alan Hooper, Val Woodward, John, Charlie Sutton in English, Marty Roth in English, a couple of others . . . Homer [Eugene] Mason . . . I play poker, but they don't want me here because I clean their clocks in poker.

CAC: [laughter]

MD: They never invite me anymore.

CAC: You're a good bluffer, are you?

MD: Nahhh. I just play tight. They're loose. They have money.

CAC: I see.

MD: I play tight because I don't have any money. I play with Bill Tilman. Lawyers . . . they play loose, too.

CAC: They don't play no limits though.

MD: Do you play poker?

CAC: No.

MD: Too bad.

CAC: There are other clusters of poker players in the university that used to play no limit poker.

MD: Oh, Jesus.

CAC: Harold Deutsch, for example. He had a whole group . . .

MD: I studied with him.

CAC: That's where Harold got a lot of his money during the . . . he was the OSS [Office of Strategic Services] during the war and he came back with a hell of a big stake.

MD: He played poker.

CAC: That was no limit poker and he made lots of money.

MD: Thousands.

CAC: Yes. He was a good player [unclear].

MD: I like to gamble obviously. I've been out a Mystic Lake losing my ass.

CAC: Oh, don't do that! That's no odds.

MD: Nahhh. I quit. No odds.

CAC: Poker is a game of skill, but this other is not. I had a colleague whom I interviewed and toward the end he said, "I've been here thirty-five years and I just have to define the state of colleagues in terms of melancholy; it's the melancholy of the professoriate."

MD: That's what I hear.

CAC: Now, with your friends you still have here, how do they stage their lives? I'm not asking you . . .

MD: They're committed. They're committed.

CAC: Committed to the university?

MD: They're committed to radical politics in their lives.

CAC: How do they stage their lives within the university?

MD: They teach enlightenment and it enlightens them. They're beloved by their students. The morale is down everywhere that I talk to people. Look at the Medical School.

CAC: Yes. Would the same thing be true at St. Cloud? Is there a melancholy there?

MD: Yes, people are tired. My friend, Sue, wants to get out of there except they've got a great department. Kids tell me that teachers are bored. My class is exciting in comparison. Also, I only teach one class. If I had four, year after year . . .

CAC: You get worn down.

MD: I learn their names, twenty of them, by the second period . . . first names, so I can go around and before they speak, "Okay, Joe," "Okay, Joan," "Okay, Alice." I bond with them right away . . . humor, wild humor, and I make them laugh and cry, and they come out with who they are in journals, personal stuff . . . "I got abused sexually when I was a kid." Everybody's had racist and sexist stuff done to them, been humiliated in class sometimes if they stand up. It's a shit hall. But, everywhere, there are enlightened people teaching, everywhere, all across the world.

CAC: In Biblical terms, it's a saving remnant, right?

MD: Yes. I meet wonderful people and wonderful students. I work them intellectually.

CAC: Do you find any, in the last five, ten years, sense of a major student movement anywhere?

MD: Yes, in small groups. It's happening everywhere. My friend, Paul Lowe . . .

CAC: But, as you were describing the 1950s and 1960s with small groups?

MD: Yes. Dave says that's the only way history is changed. It begins small. At the right moment in history . . . a Rosa Parks who had done that before and was deeply involved all her life. Not a tired seamstress . . . that's the myth. Dave knows Rosa personally for years. They appear on platforms. She sparked off twenty-five years of cultural, social, and political rebellion. She had done it before and it didn't take. At that moment, it took. Martin wasn't ready to do it. They came to him and they tricked him, "The meeting's in your church, Martin. You have to be there." He didn't want to do it. "I have a family and my first church. I don't know that much about it. I've read some [unclear]. No, I don't want to do this." "You have to." "What do you mean?" "Because the meeting we set up is in your church, Martin." He said, "Oh, my god! Okay, I'll try it." That's how it happened.

CAC: How far along are you on your autobiography?

MD: Twenty-one type-written pages in a week. I did fifty-eight hours of oral history in 1980, but I want to learn to write so I'm at the typewriter.

CAC: What did you do with those? Did you interview yourself?

MD: No, no, no. Marvin Gluck, my screenwriter friend, wanted to do a book with me.

CAC: I see. Have you got those transcribed so you can work off them?

MD: I'm going to write. I'm going to learn to write. I talked with Robert Bly last night. They had just gotten back from Czechoslovakia and Norway. I told him, "I'm writing my book." He said, "Welcome back." I had told him, "I'm depressed for a year . . . still teaching, reading, but isolating myself." I would have gotten into it with you last January as we talked. I could have done, but it wouldn't be a free-flowing. I would have fucked up. Robert says, "Write. Don't edit." Two friends looked at it who are pros and they said two words, "Charming and guileless."

CAC: Disarming.

MD: "You're on the right path."

CAC: I had a hard time with my graduate students . . . saying that you don't have to write perfect sentences. You go ahead and you write one after another after another. Then, you turn the page, and you write some more sentences, and you write some more. Just keep going and don't stop. When you put down what it is you want to say, you can go back, and polish, and whittle, and all of that.

MD: People will look at it . . . friends. Robert will look at it. Bruce Rubenstein . . . Lorna Sullivan . . .

CAC: When you start worrying about paragraph [unclear], you don't ever write anything.

MD: Half of it has to be tossed. I've got 5,000 pages in my head.

CAC: Get with it, brother. [laughter]

MD: I love you! You're a mensch.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[End of the Interview]

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