

INTERVIEW WITH

Eli Ginzberg

by

David Horrocks  
Oral Historian

on

May 14, 1975

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



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This begins an interview with Dr. Eli Ginzberg at Columbia University. This is David Horrocks of the Eisenhower Library, May 14, 1975.

DR. GINZBERG: I don't know how far we'll be able to get today, but I'm obviously willing to continue at some mutually satisfactory time after today if there's more material to come.

My first direct personal acquaintance with General Eisenhower occurred when he was chief of staff, and it came about through my close friendship with General [Howard McCrum] Snyder who had served as the assistant inspector general in World War II for things medical and with whom I had been associated since the latter part of 1943 or early '44 after I came over from General [Brehon B.] Somervell's office to help out the surgeon general of the army. And General Snyder, early in the game, decided that we had good facts and figures in my new office and then tried to get me to come over to the inspector general's office and I said no, that he would be better served and that everybody'd be better served if I stayed where I was, and that began a very long and increasingly intimate association. During those years, Snyder got to be acquainted with the research work that I



had opened up at Columbia before the war, which was really pioneering research in manpower and human resources. I was in the process of publishing three books that were really terminated during the war--one called The Unemployed, another called Grass on the Slag Heaps: A story of the Welsh Miners, and the third one called The Labor Leader: An Exploratory Study--so that Snyder knew that I came out of the academic background with a deep interest and really some pioneering approaches to the study of human resources. When Eisenhower came back to the Pentagon as chief of staff and after his, I think, acceptance of the presidency of Columbia --but that's a little hazy with me at the moment. I really believe that I talked with Eisenhower in '46 and that he didn't accept the Columbia offer until '47. So my impression is that the first meeting with Eisenhower came out of a discussion between--it was a long luncheon meeting, took almost three hours. Now I remember, it had to be in '47 because it did involve discussions about Columbia and therefore the Columbia thing was already in place. He must have still been serving there as chief of staff, but hadn't yet reported to Columbia. So I'm a little hazy on the exact date of that. But General Snyder set up a luncheon and



there were just three of us there; General Eisenhower, General Snyder and myself. And it went on for hours and the subjects of the luncheon were really two: namely, General Eisenhower's interest in discussing some of the academic problems and the nature of the universe here at Columbia and, secondly, my interests and his interests and the possibilities of doing some work on the military records of World War II to try to get a better understanding of what had happened with manpower utilization and mal-utilization as a part of the war experience.



Let me first say that I remember some of the funny things I told Eisenhower about the difference between the military and the university. I said to him, "General, in the military structure you have a chief of staff and then you have a deputy chief of staff and assistant chiefs of staff and the odds are pretty good that one of the assistant chiefs of staff or the deputy'll turn out to eventually be the next chief of staff." I said, "It doesn't work that way at a university because the deans that you'll find are really not very successful professors who stopped professing and therefore became administrators." So I said, "The first thing you have to watch around the university is the fact

that it's not structured in a formal, hierarchial manner and you can't draw any conclusions about the relative importance, contribution, or productivity of anyone depending on his status." I told him about John Dewey who was totally incapable of operating as a member of a committee, but who nevertheless was one of Columbia's greats. Second subject I discussed with Eisenhower at the time I remember quite clearly was that I told him that the trustees undoubtedly needed him and wanted him to collect a lot of money, and he made it clear he wasn't going to. And I thought to myself, well, you're a good general and a good chief of staff but you're not very wise in the ways of trustees because obviously that's what Columbia needs and needs badly. But I also went on to tell him that I thought while everybody would try to convince him that the university was doing poorly in terms of needing much more income, that it would be worthwhile to think about at least, after he got there, what parts of the university were maybe extensions and excrescences that had just come to be and that cutting them off or reduction or shrinkage might not be at all injurious to the institution and its future. So we had that kind of a discussion about



financing and control. My recollection, as a whole, was that he explained to me that he was interested in young people and that's what attracted him to the idea of becoming a university president. Not at that point, but at some time later, he did tell me the story about the fact that when the trustees first talked to him about coming to Columbia he said that they had come to the wrong Eisenhower, that they should go to Milton, because Milton was the educator and that they had really had come to the wrong one. Obviously Mr. [Thomas] Watson, who had played, according to local reports, the key role in convincing General Eisenhower to come to Columbia, knew exactly what Eisenhower he was talking to and so on.



The other part of that luncheon conversation, much of which of course is lost to me now, had to do with the manpower part of General Eisenhower's interests. And he did tell me, I think at that early point, and of course since I really saw a fair amount of General Eisenhower from 1947 on until the time surely of his retirement from the presidency of the United States and then later also--it's a long period and I have, therefore, not exactly any way of recapturing when he told me different things. But he did tell me a



story at one point about his first assignment in World War I after graduating from West Point. They gave him a detachment of "left-over" soldiers that everybody said he couldn't do anything with. It was a Pennsylvania unit as I recall, at least the soldiers were stationed I think around Carlisle Barracks or somewhere. And he decided that he would treat them as if they were just ordinary soldiers perfectly capable of doing what any ordinary person could do. And he took great pleasure in recalling the story that he had them whipped into shape and absolutely indistinguishable from any other soldiers within a relatively short period of time from which he deduced, with emphasis, the fact that a large part of so-called human capabilities and human frailties are in the eyes of the beholder rather than in the eyes of the performer and that, if you approach people properly, you can get proper work out of them and so on.

In any case, this was a story that I think he told at that lunch. General Snyder was very quiet, as he usually was in General Eisenhower's presence, except if they were alone; so the conversation went back and forth between myself and the General. He wanted to know a little bit about



my research and he indicated that one of the things he hoped to accomplish if he came to Columbia was to be, at least, critically involved in stimulating a set of studies in the human resources arena having to do with this big experience of the United States arising out of World War II. Very few people believed then, or the later materials that I'll introduce, of what a lively role he played and how far he went to conceptualize these issues and that he was in a very real sense of the term, the innovator of these studies. Everybody just assumed that I was being polite and these were completely my ideas, even largely my ideas. I think there's no doubt it became a joint effort. But after General Eisenhower came to Columbia and he asked me to draw up the proposals--I saw him at least twice a week, frequently for an hour and a half to two hours in his office. And I have somewhere hidden in my files probably, the eighteen drafts of the covering letter that he worked out in which he wanted to send this proposal out to a list of people to get their responses and their encouragement and eventually their financial support. But he was involved in this in very great detail.



To get a little ahead on the story, he drew up a list of very prominent individuals whom he wanted to have express an opinion on this project going all the way from the presidents of a series of large corporations from whom he eventually hoped to get the financing for the project all the way to Cardinal Spellman and some other people in public life from whom he obviously did not expect money but he wanted to be sure that he had their reaction. And then to my embarrassment, but indicating how sensitive he was and how involved he was, he called to my attention one day that there were no labor leaders on the list and that he thought we better put some on, which we did then. And Walter Reuther was one of them, and quite interestingly enough it was Walter Reuther's reply to the president, it was generally quite friendly, which got the project to change its name, because we did not call it The Conservation of Human Resources initially. We used some kind of a word about work and utilization (I'd have to check; that's still in the early records; I've forgotten what it was), but Walter Reuther pointed out to General Eisenhower the word utilization had a kind of manipulatory overtone and he suggested we would be better not to use that.



And I was reading some Teddy Roosevelt material at the time, and Teddy Roosevelt had talked about the conservation of human and natural resources. The human part had dropped out because the conservation movement in the early 1900s had been limited to physical and natural resources. That seemed like an innocuous enough title and that's how we came to be called The Conservation of Human Resources.

Now, when those letters came back and I analysed them, since General Eisenhower had written a long, two-page, single-spaced letter, he had indicated in that letter which went out that he, in the event that he got friendly responses, was going to come back on the business corporations and ask for support over five years so that the letters that came back were kind of cautious. And, none the less, most of them were friendly--one or two were hostile, overtly hostile.

HORROCKS: From labor or business?

GINZBERG: No, exclusively from business, there was no labor hostility. The president of the A.F. of L-C.I.O., Mr. [William] Green, never bothered to answer, but there was no hostility at all from the labor side. There were just a few



characters, up and down the line, who decided to answer, I would say, beyond the levels even of politeness. They were rough letters. I always thought that if I could use those letters and do a profile of the leaders of the American society at that time as reflected in those letters, I could have subventioned the entire project in that fashion.



The letters came back in dribs and drabs and periodically I would do a briefing of them and talk with General Eisenhower, and then I'm a little unclear. I think he got called back to serve as a temporary chairman of the chiefs of staff in between so there was some hiatus of his presence in and around the campus. In the meantime, Phil Young, who was dean of the school of business and General Eisenhower had become closely befriended. And then when General Eisenhower came back to the campus with a block of time, Phil Young and I, we were very close, closely allied--I was a member of Phil Young's faculty--finally sat down with the General and said, "We have to make some operational decisions now. How do we really move this from these letters to reality?" And at that point Eisenhower said to Phil Young, "You carry the ball. It's your job to go around with Eli now and call on

these captains of industries and get the money." Because Eisenhower'd made it clear in the letters that he wrote that he could not put university money into this project--that this was an important project in his view and so on, but he did not want to go that way.

At one point Eisenhower had talked to [James] Forrestal about the project and came back and talked to me about his conversations with Forrestal and said that Secretary Forrestal had been willing to put Pentagon funds in. I said to General Eisenhower, "I'd like to think about that," because I saw some difficulties from his point of view as well as from my own if you get the project quite that tied to the Pentagon and especially from a funding point of view. And he then sent me down to see Forrestal. I saw Forrestal, among the very last people who saw him in office, because he went into the hospital right thereafter and met his untimely death thereafter. I had three quarters of an hour with Forrestal at that time and I recall coming out that I was very uneasy about the whole conversation, not because of anything that was said, but because of the impression that Forrestal made on me and I couldn't figure out what it was



until I realize that he had strapped himself so tightly. And I always wear my belts very loose and when his illness became known, and his tragic end occurred, I had realized that that had bothered me the whole time throughout the interview --that this man was so taut and so tight and that it was physically demonstrated by that belt that he had strapped himself in with. I came back and told General Eisenhower that I thought we ought to try to get the money ourselves, that I had worked an arrangement with Forrestal, however, that the Pentagon would be very helpful on access to records and they would even make manpower available to help us, to abstract the records and so on. I felt that was a better over-all arrangement than to get so tied in with the Pentagon that the question of eventual publication and all kinds of other constraints would be there. And I didn't think it was appropriate for General Eisenhower or desirable necessarily for him to take that kind of funding for that project. He agreed and that's the way we left it. And Phil Young and I began to wander around and we went to Standard Oil of New Jersey, now Exxon with Mr. [Frank W.] Abrams; and Cities Service, it was Jones, who was an old friend, Pete



Jones, an old friend of General Eisenhower's; Pete Woodruff of Coca-Cola was involved. There was a fellow from Cleuet Peabody by the name of Litchfield; I may get his name wrong-- and Barry Leithead.

HORROCKS: Leithead.

GINZBERG: Leithead. Right. And so on and so forth so the first group of supporters were really personal friends of General Eisenhower to whom he was able to tap into some money. But then we broadened the support to companies--some of the larger companies like DuPont and General Electric and so on where there were no personal relationships. We were getting on the average of about \$5,000 from each of the companies per year with a kind of implicit understanding that we would need something like \$50,000 a year for five years. That was the order that we were talking about at those times.

There was a big flap along the line. The Ford Foundation, and I don't exactly remember the dates, made some monies available for social science to be distributed at the discretion of a series of university presidents, and a part of that money came to Eisenhower at Columbia. And he took





part of that and gave it to the Conservation Project, but Ford decided that wasn't really what it was supposed to be used for, so they refilled it. We got some money out of Ford, but they didn't like it--I think they made the President's sum whole again and gave him the money for something else. It was a little obscure and the whole thing is not too clear to me at the moment.

Eisenhower did have enough caution to send the Conservation Project plan through the senior academic board at Columbia for their comments before he went public with it or at least seeking money outside. So he got a kind of a generalized approval inside that this was a perfectly reasonable project to go to work on. It was a very personal affair and there were really just three people involved: Eisenhower; Phil Young, who became the bag man and did very hard work and was a wonderful salesman. He's an attractive, nice man and he was able to say things I think that would have embarrassed both Eisenhower and myself to say about the potentialities of the project. So that's how we got going. But as I say, there were these multiple drafts of General Eisenhower's about how to put this project before the public. And he remained, of course, very



directly interested in the project's outputs over the years. The major book, The Ineffective Soldier - Lessons for Management and the Nation, which is dedicated to the General, came out in '59--that means close to the end of his period in the White House.

The most exciting interchange that I had with him on any of the specific products came when I had my Negro Potential in press, or it was just about to go to press; I would guess this was December of '55--the book came out in '56. It might have been even December of '54, but I would guess it was '55, although I'm not sure--that would be hard to work backwards. It doesn't matter. He was down at Jones or Woodruff's shooting lodge at Thomasville and I got, late in the evening, a phone call from General Snyder that the General, who was with him, the President was greatly upset because Snyder had given him my draft manuscript to read and there was a chapter there on the Negro soldier and he didn't like it at all. And I tried to get clear from General Snyder what was bothering him and he said, "Well, it was, I suppose basically that the evidence and the conclusions weren't close enough. It was too apologetic." He was in a big



uproar, and Snyder was uneasy about the uproar. So I said, "Well, tell me as clearly as possible what's bothering him and I'll think about it." And I reread it and General Eisenhower turned out to have been a pretty damned good critic because it was written quite apologetically. The problem was that there was a lot of evidence there which was really quite unfavorable to Blacks--they had, let's say, syphilitic or gonorrhoeal rates about a hundred times greater than the whites, et cetera. And I was writing one sentence of fact and one sentence of interpretation to get away from the facts, and he found that very unsatisfactory. I then rewrote it and got him to reread it and then I met him one day. I used to be at the White House at least once a week, once in ten days, and would visit with General Snyder which was right on the lower floor of the main building. One day General Snyder wasn't there but the President passed and he saw me and he came in and he said that, "Well, I got to tell you, Eli, that I reread it," and he says, "It's all right; I've no objections to it." And he said, "I've thought about it a bit and," he said, "my view is that there really isn't that much difference among people after all." He walked off. There'd really



been no change except the stylistic reorganization of the chapter which was a major change, no change in evidence or interpretation, but he was much happier about it.

HORROCKS: Was he mostly upset about apologizing for the facts, that the facts should just be there and that's--

GINZBERG: It didn't really come out the way he had either remembered the story or thought it ought to be told. I never really got the full flavor of the upset. It was a rough era, if you recall. He had to, finally, a little bit later put troops into Little Rock. And I think General Eisenhower was conflicted on this point, like on many other points you know, for what might be called emotional response levels, intellectual response levels and purely formal, technical response levels as a reader, and I really don't know on what level all of this was going on. It surprised General Snyder, that's the important point. There is nobody, I believe, who ever lived who knew General Eisenhower more intimately and better than General Snyder, and he was taken by surprise. So the fact that he was taken by surprise meant something, something had been ticked off pretty deep, and it



was never too clear to me just what it was. But the ostensible things that bothered him were perfectly reasonable things for me to take care of. I took care of those, and he was perfectly relaxed after it was taken care of.

HORROCKS: Did you have the feeling that he just wished the whole racial subject hadn't been brought up?

GINZBERG: Well, no, he didn't have any objections about my writing a book on the Negro. Oh no, that wasn't it. I do believe more generally that the whole question of the Black issue in American life was an issue which he saw primarily in terms of very long historical time dimensions, that I heard him say not once but many times. He really didn't believe that law could be an important instrument, and he really hoped and expected that people would become a little bit more civilized and as they became a little bit more civilized would deal with human beings in terms of their merits, not in terms of their color. And he was, therefore, I think, really, a non-interventioner and generally sought to avoid doing anything in terms of forced changes of institutions. I was also in the company of a large number of



civilized, and by no means rabid anti-segregationists, but he did see a lot of the southerners and I think they were probably trying as a general policy to persuade him also that keeping it cool and not getting the federal government to be too active on this front was a good idea.

HORROCKS: Did he seem to feel that--going back--if it's all in the eyes of the beholder, if you treated the Black soldier or the Black citizen the same as the White soldier or citizen, that the performance would be the same.

GINZBERG: Let me say it's easier to talk in terms of what actually happened. I had a further relationship to General Eisenhower on the question of Black soldiers. I was the consultant for the secretary of the army in 1951-52 when General Eisenhower was at SHAPE, and I was specifically instructed to go over and to prepare the way for the rapid desegregation of the U.S. Army on behalf of the secretary of the army. I stopped off at SHAPE deliberately, first to see my friends--General Snyder and General Eisenhower were there and I always put some time in there and I knew Al Gruenther well who was the chief of staff and others--but also because



I thought that if I could tell them at Heidelberg and at Stuttgart, where I was going, I'd stopped off at SHAPE and General Eisenhower was interested to see them move energetically along these lines, it would make it easier for the secretary of the army to proceed along the lines that President Truman had ordered. I did not get what I would call anything more than a side-stepping approach. This was not SHAPE business. General Eisenhower wasn't looking for any added involvement.

HORROCKS: He had enough problems of his own--



GINZBERG: He had plenty of problems. But I think basically and deep down, as it was true I think on many aspects of General Eisenhower's life, the rate of change in American society on certain selected issues was greater than he had an easy accommodation toward, and this was one of the areas. I think that he did not see any real net advantages of playing a dominant, lively role on this front. And, from many points of view, I think had he, some of these problems might have been made worse earlier but maybe made a little bit less serious later on. Because he really played a very passive

role after the Supreme Court decision in '54. He moved in terms of a higher challenge to the federal authority at Little Rock, but that's a different matter. But it was nothing that he did with any pleasure, that's for sure. Basically his view was that this had to do with human relations and with human decency and human understanding and the qualities of soul between people--white and black--and he did not see this as a social reform problem in which the courts in particular and government was a usable or easy instrument. That was the book, however, of the Conservation's many books, that particularly elicited his special response, and, as I say, he read that key chapter twice, not once.



HORROCKS: The racial question brings to mind a related question that has broader implication. Was he wrong in failing to use institutions as a way to change and develop people to accomplish things? Did he have an anti-institutional bias?

GINZBERG: Well, it's an interesting question. Let me go at it this way. General Eisenhower, in my opinion, was a man of high native intelligence, no question about it and not



very great literacy in the sense of he was not a deep reader and had spent lots of time out of the country, especially once the war was on, and had a somewhat constricted group of friends with certain rather delimited points of view and had, I would say, never been what we would call well educated. He had had a West Point education and Kansas basic education. So the world of ideas, in terms of political and social and economic dimensions, was not something that he moved from books to understanding. He really moved from experiences to understanding. At the experiential level he was a very wise man and a very sharp man. But if the materials hadn't come into his experience in a particular manner, then he really had rather narrow focus. He was a very complicated person to judge given this very peculiar, very high quality of response to materials that he had really been exposed to and quite, I would say almost naive, unsophisticated response to materials that were not part of his experiential world. So that you had a great imbalance on that. For instance, the general view at Columbia was, of course, that he was anything but literate and very few people thought he could think straight and so on. But, of course, he would periodically



make statements that were very hard to interpret unless one was sympathetic and understood that these were statements that were really not in the realm of his experience and that these were just words which didn't have enough roots in his makeup, and therefore he had a kind of a general, I would say 1890 philosophy, and he was dealing with these in terms of an 1890 philosophy. But he wouldn't do that on anything that he knew well. And that was the conflict. So that he really had to make use of what I really would call--

[Interruption]



GINZBERG: My wife reports that during the eight years that he was President, I spent most of my life explaining to my friends that he was not mentally retarded. That was the view of, I would say, the east coast intellectual community, academic community. Not really retarded, but a person really with exceedingly limited perspectives who didn't cope. Now, of course, that wasn't true at all. He had a philosophy of the presidency, both in terms of time and general philosophy so it was reinforced, which was, that the President was one of the three parts of the federal power and he did not believe in what we would call the strong presidency. Surely

didn't act it and really didn't believe it, I don't think, fundamentally. Moreover, I think he was exceedingly canny and shrewd about his own personal relationships to American history and the American public as evidenced by the fact that he got out of office after eight years with practically no diminution in the good will of the American people towards him. He would have been our perpetual President had he not taken himself out. That's indicative of how careful and shrewd I think he was and perceptive about whatever role he decided he wanted to play. That's the role that he played, and he did it with, I would say, consummate skill. So that there is no possible charge of naivete; this was a very canny kind of a President, given his philosophy of the presidency. Now you may not like that philosophy of the President. The people thought that Kennedy and Johnson, especially Johnson, had an entirely different notion of the active President, but that was not what Eisenhower wanted to do and that's not what he did do. And, in addition, he was closely associated with quite a few, I would say, quite conservative characters like Mr. Humphrey, his secretary of the treasury and that reinforced some of these earlier views



which were non-interventionist. So he was, I would say, except for his international politics, he was basically a believer in small government. And this goes back again to the 1890 philosophy. He grew up in a Texas-Kansas world in which a federal government was a very unimportant instrument of daily living, of the adjustments of people to the world, and I think one simply has to say that he never brought his philosophy and the problems of the modern world domestically and the institutions that might need some adjustment all into a new alignment. That's the way I would see it. I remember some discussions with him. I never really did any writing for him as President, but at one point they did ask me to help out on some speech on health. I happened to have a long interest in the health field but a quite conservative posture on health--it's not consistent with many of my other postures although I'm not very far off the middle on most of them--but on health I had always taken a conservative viewpoint. But he was probably even more conservative and he made himself very vulnerable on that because he had really been a beneficiary of socialized medicine all the years that he was in the military and then in the presidency. He



never was able, for instance, to realize that he had been the very successful beneficiary of a socialized medical system in the military.



HORROCKS: What you're saying seems to add up in a way to concluding that, as a President, he presided over the country and practiced personal good will.

GINZBERG: No, I wouldn't agree with that at all. See I think there was much more to it. No, no. No, that's much too simplistic, I think, an interpretation of Eisenhower. Eisenhower was not a simple man. (Through confidences with General Snyder, among the best informed people in the United States alive about General Eisenhower, because General Snyder used me as a safety valve, and he knew that I was responsible and would keep my mouth shut.) General Eisenhower really exploded only to General Snyder, if he could--he at least used him as his major explosion valve--and I would occasionally be the second valve for General Snyder. So there are degrees of personal and other kinds of insights over very many years into General Eisenhower in addition to my own quite considerable exposure. I had an arrangement with General Eisenhower before

he left Columbia that when he became President I would be able to write him on any issue and that he would read it. And I started, before he became President, and recommended that he stay out of Wisconsin because he would be booby-trapped by McCarthy. And from that date until eight years later, I don't think any recommendations that I ever wrote General Eisenhower he followed, but in a certain sense my job, which I gave myself, was a kind of "the non-conforming advice giver." I felt that he had so much advice of people who were ostensibly so concerned about his image, posture, position, and so on, that I gave him all the tough advice. I wrote him a long letter to say that I thought he ought to commute the sentence on the Rosenbergs because I thought it didn't make any sense to have them executed--I said, "I haven't the faintest idea whether they're guilty or not, but that wasn't the point." But the point was that I thought that if they were guilty, he surely ought to keep them around because you might learn something, and if they weren't guilty you surely didn't want to finish them off. And I didn't think that killing them would be much of a deterrent, et cetera. But I gave him, long, long periods of advice. General Snyder would get



the letters and would put them on his bedside. Periodically he would respond.

HORROCKS: Can you think of any specific instances?



GINZBERG: Oh, yes. A major instance when he wrote--personal and confidential--back to me. I did some semi-official work that he knew about on the Mid-East crisis at the time of Suez. I went out to Israel and then through the Middle East and stopped off to see the Vatican people and sent some messages back to the White House via the embassy in Rome. And General Eisenhower knew I was interested and close to the Israelis on a personal basis and so on. My father had been a professor at Hebrew University as a visiting professor way back in 1928; there'd been a lot of linkages. I talked with General Eisenhower a lot about Ben-Gurion and he knew Ben-Gurion had been in my wedding and so on. So a lot of relationships there. And in connection with the Suez crisis, Eisenhower, who was under very severe pressure because that was the time of the Hungarian move and the Israelis had moved and they hadn't told him about Suez, and he wrote me a very explosive letter which was really for the record in a

certain sense, of clarifying his own head, of why he was so mad. Because he really saw the Israelis as undermining a kind of international policy of the U.S. aimed at peaceful solution for--

HORROCKS: Did he feel that Ben-Gurion had betrayed him or was unreasonable?

GINZBERG: Yes, he thought he was not reliable. In general that was not his view of Ben-Gurion. I carried a couple of messages both ways. He told me rather that Ben-Gurion in his view was, as he put it, "an extremist." And therefore, with an extremist you never knew what he would do, at what point the moral code would break down and the goal would justify the end.

HORROCKS: This was his view of Ben-Gurion.

GINZBERG: I think that's an absolutely correct resolution. He liked Ben-Gurion, he admired Ben-Gurion, he was very helpful to Ben-Gurion when he had been commander-in-chief in Western Europe and had facilitated Ben-Gurion's access to the camps and the relief of the refugees and so on. He





had considerable admiration and liking for Ben-Gurion, but it was the notion of his extreme nationalistic orientation and the fact that he thought--and, of course, the Suez, as far as he was concerned, proved it. That is, of course, Ben-Gurion hadn't let him in to it. Now that may be my fault in part. And the reason it was my fault in part, was Ben-Gurion, when he saw me--this was couple of months before Suez--said something to me, but that wasn't my business. I wasn't a diplomat so I didn't hear so clearly. He said, "Maybe you can tell your President that--"--you know he talked around it, didn't make it that clear--"that if he would turn the other way, we could solve some problems in this area that would be useful to both of us," he said.

HORROCKS: Were you involved at all in the settlement of the Suez?

GINZBERG: No. Absolutely not.

HORROCKS: Did he discuss with you Nassar at all? This would be President Eisenhower.

GINZBERG: No, but there is a major place where I came in on



this affair. I sent a cable from Rome, which ought to be in the President's files somewhere, to the President which said that, on balance, this is what I conclude is likely to happen in the Middle-East. This must have been June of '56. I said, one, a fellow there in Irag, Nuri Said, I said I don't know anything about this, but I'm told that he could be assassinated; (b) it looks as if the Syrians or the Lebanese or anybody could cut the pipeline to the Mediterranean; third, I said I would not be surprised if Nasser just jumps in and takes the canal; and four, I said, and this is the one thing I can report with assurance, and that is that unless the United States gives Israel a higher order of assurance than it has, that the Israelis are likely to jump. That was reported.



HORROCKS: Did you reach these conclusions after meeting Ben-Gurian?

GINZBERG: Oh, yes, it was after I also had a meeting with the high Vatican officials and had other meetings with intelligence chiefs, et cetera. This was put together out of a combination of stuff. The Israeli stuff was clear.

And I saw Dayan the last morning before I left. So I knew I was reporting on Israel right and the rest was a little speculative. It was that statement that apparently that Nasser might grab the canal that came across Eisenhower's desk, as General Snyder later reported to me, while he was getting reports from Anderson, Bob Anderson, who was former secretary of the treasury. They were not flattering about Nasser and he wasn't telling the truth. Eisenhower may have gotten it second hand or may have gotten it first hand, but he did not like Nasser's repertorial integrity. The stuff was rough. He felt that he, the President, wasn't being dealt with altogether correctly. In any case, he got very mad when my letter arrived. He called Dulles over, and that was the morning that the U.S. broke off the Aswan Dam support.



HORROCKS: Now what do you know about the Robert Anderson mission?

GINZBERG: Well, Bob Anderson, I know all the way back. In fact I was responsible, in a certain sense, of working out the relationship between Bob Anderson and Eisenhower. To go back

to Columbia, when Eisenhower was here and the Ford Foundation at one point was going to put a lot of money into the Conservation project, at the last moment the Korean War began and they decided they didn't want to go into basic research. But they came back and had a discussion with us about starting a National Manpower Council. We discussed that with General Eisenhower--he was just about ready to leave for SHAPE--and it was agreed that Columbia would take that on and I would just broaden the Conservation apparatus. And I talked with General Eisenhower--who ought to be invited, to be on a national council. And he said, "Well, now, I tell you about Texas." He said, "There are three possibilities." And he told me about the president at that time of the Ft. Worth papers, I don't remember his name, a distinguished Texan that he knew. And then he told me about the Anderson of the cotton brokers--one of the distinguished lawyers in Texas. And then he said, "I met a young man, I just met him for half an hour when I was in Texas recently, Robert B. Anderson." He said, "You ought to have a look at him because he impressed me." So I said, obviously, "I'll do that." And Fred Korth was then the chief counsel of the army, later became secretary



of the navy and had to resign under Kennedy for some improprieties having to do with the use of navy stationery to ask somebody a favor. I don't know, it was just one of those unfortunate things. But at that time he was the chief counsel for the army and I knew he was a Texan and he had been Lyndon Johnson's campaign manager, so I said to Fred, "Do me a favor. I got three names and I think that the fellow who owns those papers, we will forget about him," because I think he is old. So I said, "We have this Anderson, we have the other Anderson, and General Eisenhower told me to find out about this young one because he was attractive but he didn't know whether he would carry enough weight on this council." And Fred Korth took about a month and then he got back to me and he said, "Well, it's very simple. If you want to have the more prominent citizen as of today, you take the other Anderson. But if you're willing to bet on the future, you take Bob Anderson." So I reported that. By that time General Eisenhower was already at SHAPE. The letters of invitation to the National Manpower Council members went from SHAPE; I sent them over to SHAPE and he sent them out from there; he still invited them. And



that's how Bob Anderson came to surface. And I remember that over the two years that General Eisenhower was at SHAPE, I periodically reported on the work of the Council to him. Told good things about Bob Anderson who was a good, hard-working, impressive member of the Council and then he was appointed secretary of the navy.



HORROCKS: And then the Anderson mission to the Middle-East?

GINZBERG: So I used to see Bob periodically. And at his home, at one point, I picked up by inadvertence, his relations to the Israelis who had kept his relationship to them very, very secret. I was never involved in any of the inner circle stuff on Israel and I never looked for it, but somebody slipped-- and there were only a handful, three or four people who knew anything about Bob Anderson's visit to Israel--but one of those four slipped in some conversation with me, and I was visiting Bob in his Connecticut home and I saw a picture of Ben-Gurion on the wall and that, of course, provided some confirmation of this affair.

HORROCKS: Bob Anderson had a picture of Ben-Gurion--

GINZBERG: On the wall.

HORROCKS: --in his home, on the wall.

GINZBERG: Right. Next to Nasser, probably. I don't remember exactly, but he had a whole bunch of pictures. I would guess both. And that alerted me to some more of this affair. Over the years the secrecy got a little relaxed and the Israelis came to see Bob quite a few times in this country; they kept up their conversations with him. Bob Anderson was very taken by Ben-Gurion and I think he was, as I remember this story, he was not so taken with Nasser; so I think he was probably one of the factors in the U.S. pulling out of Aswan.

Eisenhower, in my opinion, was utterly devoted to Anderson. Undoubtedly wanted to get rid of Nixon as his vice-president. That story I know better than anybody--that Nixon story. And I would say that Bob must have been the major person who helped to make Eisenhower very restive about Nixon. I don't know that for sure, but I believe that.

HORROCKS: But you do know for sure, from first-hand knowledge, that Robert Anderson had a very close relationship



with the Israelis and with Ben-Gurion.

GINZBERG: That isn't the right way to put it. He went on a very secret mission and then they kept up their contacts. First hand, no question about it.

HORROCKS: And that the President relied a lot on Mr. Anderson--

GINZBERG: I don't know that the President ever had greater faith in anybody than in Bob Anderson at that period of time.

HORROCKS: Do you know any specific things that Robert Anderson recommended for or against?



GINZBERG: No, see I was out of it, I never was in--I was in on many kinds of quasi-personal levels. For instance, I was the only person in the White House on the night that General Eisenhower announced, in the Oval Room, to the American public that he was going to run the second time, except Mamie and John. I happened to be there that day, and it wasn't at all that I was that intimate with General Eisenhower, but we had a kind of solid relationship in which I was always a little offish, because he was always a little



offish. We never were intimate for we had two different points of view about the world. I had great respect and admiration for him. He was very heavily involved and really reshaped my whole academic and intellectual life, and I was obviously very appreciative of that, and I liked him personally. I remember I walked back into the main house of the White House alone with him that night after that announcement. I knew him pretty well, and beneath the surface, I think he knew I knew him pretty well.

HORROCKS: And what did you talk about as you walked back?

GINZBERG: Well, I think if I must remember now--I had made a bet very early that if he recovered from his first heart attack that he would run. Because I had seen,--this is the seventh President in a row now that I have worked for --and while I was intimate with none of them and I knew Eisenhower best, I nevertheless have a pretty good sense of the ambience of Washington and the White House and what goes on. And it was easy for people to get caught by the aura, including people with more self-critical views of themselves than Eisenhower had, because he was not self-critical of himself.



HORROCKS: Did he have complete confidence in his health at that point.

GINZBERG: Yes. Oh, yes.

HORROCKS: And General Snyder had complete confidence that he would--

GINZBERG: Oh, yes. That was cleaned up. I think so. I think that was cleaned up pretty well. I started to say that when he had the attack, I took a bet with my wife, good-naturedly. She said, "I'll give you a million to one odds that if he makes it, he won't run."

I said, "You're on." Because I knew at that point that the Presidency had already gotten in his blood. Now I ought to state that I wrote him a seven-page memo, single-spaced, when he was at SHAPE. All the people who were seeing him in SHAPE told him to run. I acted a little bit like his conscience. I wrote him a seven-page, single-spaced, memo why he should not run for the presidency of the United States. This is the first time in 1951. I said your friends are kidding you; they're not telling you what the job really is;



they're not looking at your best interests; they just think it'd be great to have you President. I think your influence on the American people would be equal or greater if you didn't become President. I don't think you want to be in that grind. There are a lot of aspects of the presidency you won't enjoy at all. I didn't see any reason why he should run.

Now to go back to where we were which was the Anderson-Eisenhower-Dulles-Aswan affair. I have to simply say, to incapsulate that quickly, I was not in on any state department secrets, missions, or so on. General Snyder and General Eisenhower knew that I was going out to the Middle-East. It was understood that if I picked up some stuff that would be useful, I would report it, which I did, because I thought it was hot enough from Rome--

HORROCKS: Who did you report directly to?

GINZBERG: General Eisenhower.

HORROCKS: Directly to him?

GINZBERG: Yes, I know I cabled the President; I think I



sent it straight to the White House. I might have sent it through General Snyder, but that was simply a question of how to get it to the President. Oh, yes, there was nobody else, nobody else. That's the way that went.

HORROCKS: What sort of response would you receive? Would you receive a verbal response from the General?

GINZBERG: Not frequently. I went in to see the President after I came back, and that was the only time I was in CIA headquarters after that trip. General Snyder must have--he would not do this without asking the President--but he set up a visit for me with Dulles, Allen. I went over to see Allen and I was upset and disappointed. I don't know whether in my greater maturity I would feel differently about it, but I felt he was very wooden and--well, you know, he was the chief of intelligence--but I thought he was just unnecessarily ungracious.

HORROCKS: And you told Allen Dulles at this time--

GINZBERG: Yes. I told him whatever I had learned and I thought he was being both ungracious and negative--it's



probably true in retrospect I would say, since he and the Israeli intelligence really had worked closely together and probably even at that time, I probably wasn't telling him much new and he probably had thirty minutes off his schedule because the White House called. But I would have said that since I was not a person without some quality, having been a little bit more imaginative, he should have been able to get something out of me. It was an unpleasant, that's what I remember. There were very few experiences in my life where I thought that the person I was talking to, no matter how busy he was, was less than gracious and sensible about how to handle the interview.

HORROCKS: Was he not listening to what you said, or did he not like what you said?



GINZBERG: I have a feeling that he didn't find it comfortable what I was saying and decided that he had already been through this exercise, and therefore didn't have to stop again. That would be my reconstruction of it; it's a little dulled now.

HORROCKS: And you were telling him what you said about Nuri Said--

GINZBERG: That's right. I had four things--I mean, never again would I ever hit a hundred percent at one time, you know, absolutely sheer fluke.

HORROCKS: But those things that you mentioned earlier in the interview were the things you told Allen Dulles.

GINZBERG: Yes. That's right. That's what I went over to do. Plus some additional quality--I probably talked to him much more than I put in a letter in the President about the Israeli anxiety levels and why I thought they were going to, you know, to go to war. And they did. I really could have saved, if they'd paid a little bit more attention, if the President could have been a little bit more prodding on Ben-Gurion, probably would have learned that this damned thing was being cooked up.

HORROCKS: Did Snyder ever give you any feedback on this?

GINZBERG: I tried. Interestingly enough, I had the most



interesting intimate relation for General Snyder. General Eisenhower asked me to bring him, if I could, to Columbia. And General Snyder came up here as my consultant in '48, '49. I had some dollars in a research budget that made it possible for me to keep General Snyder up here. He lived with General Eisenhower at 60 Morningside. He used to come to my class. He met with my research staff all day, had many dinners at my home, et cetera. So we were together four or five days a week. And that was the level of the intimacy of the relationship. It was very, very close. On the other hand--I never really pushed in all the years that we had these intimate relationships--whatever I got I accepted and listened to attentively and I got lots of stuff that I never asked for of--a whole view of General Eisenhower about everything, because I really was the outlet for General Snyder's pressures. And you don't discuss the President or anybody so easily, and he knew that I absolutely had an ability to keep my mouth shut.



HORROCKS: Which you did.

GINZBERG: So that over the years I could develop a fairly

long picture of the President. It would take some homework for me to put that all together. For instance, I have in my files, daily bulletins that General Snyder wrote me for the record, I believe, although they are personal letters, at the time of General Eisenhower's heart attack in Colorado, because nobody knew whether he was going to die and General Snyder, I think, wanted a record in existence that he didn't kill the President.

HORROCKS: But General Snyder realizing your close relationship and trust in your discretion, still did he ever talk about--

GINZBERG: Not much.

HORROCKS: --the Suez, for instance--

GINZBERG: There--

HORROCKS: --the General's reaction to what you had reported?

GINZBERG: Not in detail. Not in detail. He would occasionally give me very, very indirect clues as to what moods were, but not in detail. And I never pressed, ever.





HORROCKS: What did Robert Anderson find--what was the basis of his friendship with Ben-Gurion or Israelis?

GINZBERG: I think he came on this confidential mission and found--Ben-Gurion was a charismatic character.

HORROCKS: Was it really a charismatic appeal that Ben-Gurion had for Anderson or was there geo-political--

GINZBERG: Well, I think, both. I think Anderson decided it was better to deal with Ben-Gurion than with Nasser, he had more sense of confidence in him. I can't prove that, of course. That's just my sense. Anderson came out of the oil business as a negotiator, and part of negotiation is to make some judgments about human beings and whom you can trust and how far you can trust them. And I think he was intrigued and really decided there was some solid core among the Israelis there. He had also been the secretary of the navy and the deputy secretary of defense. I think, if I had to guess, he also, and this is sheer hypothesis now, but I would guess--since I have many years around the Pentagon, you get to have some impression as to whether the military



part of that kind of a complicated country, that would be Dayan, or whoever else he was exposed to, made sense.

HORROCKS: Have I covered all the Suez points, do you think?

GINZBERG: I think so until I remember something later.

[Laughter]

HORROCKS: Then feel free to bring it up. You mentioned Nixon in '56.

GINZBERG: Well, that I know lots about and I have a classic story on that and that we really have to put some restrictions on.

HORROCKS: Okay.

GINZBERG: I think so. At least, I want some guidance on this affair.

HORROCKS: Okay. Well, none of this is open until you sign a letter of gift.

GINZBERG: All right, so we'll think about it anyhow, and I'll ask for some guidance. I knew from Snyder because the



President had a very, very short fuse, unlike most people who thought that he was even-tempered. He was anything but that. He was basically an impatient man and, in my opinion as a quasi-physician-psychiatrist, I would say, General Eisenhower would never have made it without General Snyder's unbelievable psychological support. That is, he was the safety valve and he had a relationship with the Eisenhowers that went back to 1922, after the death of their first son at Ft. Meade. Snyder carried Mamie and the relationship between Mamie and Ike and that was quite extraordinary. This was a kind of a story in its more complicated dimensions that's got to be understood. In any case, he began to talk to me, General Snyder, because of the amount of pressure that was coming on him from General Ike--that this Nixon thing wasn't working well. Ike never liked him. There was no, what I would call, what do the kids call it, kind of emanations that, you know--

HORROCKS: Vibes.

GINZBERG: Vibes, that's it. Just wasn't there. And I'm sure that Snyder told me that Ike offered Nixon everything



in the book to get him to step down as vice-president after the first term. Offered him the secretary of defense, offered him any ambassadorship, offered him anything, and suggested to him that this would be desirable so he could get some experience of a different type.

HORROCKS: But this was an excuse--

GINZBERG: Oh, definitely planned. His eye was on Robert Anderson. That's the fellow he had wanted to pick up as his vice-presidential candidate. What that tremendous strength of Anderson in Ike's view was is hard to understand fully. I think he liked his cut; he was verbal; he was highly intelligent. I like Bob, I haven't seen much of him recently. I used to visit with him about every two weeks when he was in the Pentagon--every three weeks. I saw a fair amount of Bob in those days and I like him and I could understand. But I never understood the full enamorment between Eisenhower and Bob, but it was there, it was there. And Ike had this tremendous regard--

[Interruption]



GINZBERG: And there was just no question that there was no ease in the relationship, the human relationship between Nixon and Ike, and that Ike wanted to get rid of him in terms of vice-presidential post and offered him everything in the book. Okay. There was a big cocktail party given by Max Rabb, who is key to this part of the affair.

HORROCKS: Right.

GINZBERG: And General Snyder had been operated on and almost killed at Walter Reed via a simple prostatectomy that had gone wrong; so he'd had a long convalescence up there and at this party he was out on furlough--I mean just allowed to come to the party. And I remember, I was at the party and Mrs. Snyder and the Youngs at some point in time, like seven o'clock say, they're going home--would I stay with the General? I said, "Sure." And he had his car and his chauffeur to take him back to Walter Reed; he wasn't ready to go yet. This was his first time out. And then I stood around and we drank some more and we chatted and finally I said, "Come on, it's time to go, Howard."

And at that moment Rabb came through and he said,



"Oh, just a second, General Snyder. The vice president's coming through; it'd be nice if you introduced Eli to him." So he said, "Sure."

So in about two and a half minutes Nixon wandered through and it was fortunate that I was so acutely aware of General Snyder's speech--he always called me Eli and periodically would call me Dr. Ginzberg. But he had never called me Professor Ginzberg in his life. So when the vice president came there, he said very quietly, he was a beautiful man and well spoken General Snyder was, he said, "Mr. Vice President, this is Professor Ginzberg of Columbia. He believes that you've never done anything right in your life; that you're not doing anything right and that you're totally incapable of ever doing anything right in your life. Mr. Vice President, Professor Ginzberg." Never had Snyder shown any evidence of liquor or any such quality of not being in absolute command of the situation, and what had happened unquestionably in my view was that he had seen Ike that afternoon--that morning--sometime--and Ike had given him another terrific explosion about Nixon. And this is how it came out. The next morning General Snyder had no recollection;



I was very careful because he was still convalescing--I didn't want to press him hard--absolutely no recollection of that whole affair.

HORROCKS: Did General Snyder, in any other instance, ever directly discuss with you the General's opinion of Richard Nixon?

GINZBERG: Oh, I would say on more than one occasion. The whole mood is unequivocally clear and that is that this was simply not an easy relationship. Had nothing to do with whether Nixon was capable or not, it was just not easy--Ike didn't like him. It was as simple as that.

HORROCKS: And you've arrived at this knowledge by being told point-blank of it by--

GINZBERG: Oh, no question about it. Now I saw, I used to go to Ike's birthday parties after he retired as President; we used to have these birthday parties somewhere in the Pennsylvania mountains and there were about fifty old friends. And I remember Nixon used to come. He was an outsider. One time he gave a god-awful speech. But I'll



say the next year, he gave an absolutely brilliantly humorous and nice speech. The range in those two speeches I've never forgotten. But the first time it was very tight, very tight speech.

HORROCKS: Well couldn't Eisenhower have taken more positive action to get rid of Nixon--

GINZBERG: Well Eisenhower could have taken positive actions on thousands of things. I'm suggesting he could have taken more positive actions on the Rosenbergs, he surely could have taken more positive actions on Kirk which I'll come to. Could have taken more positive action on Mr. Wilson, the secretary of defense, because within three days he knew he was a total flop.

HORROCKS: Okay, well, why don't we explore that one right now.

GINZBERG: Well, which one?

HORROCKS: Charles Wilson.

GINZBERG: Well, here again, my major informant is not the





President directly, but General Snyder. But it was clear that General Eisenhower had in general--and that I can talk about directly because I know this from the General himself --he had the most exaggerated notions about the relationship between getting to a top position in American industry and being competent and being wealthy. Those three things were mixed up in Eisenhower's head. And the reason they were mixed up is understandable because Pete Jones and Bob Woodruff were very able guys, and they had gotten to the top, and they had lots of money. Therefore, in their place the correlation was perfectly okay. Ike generalized it and it took him a very long time, if ever, to--I'm sure near the end he understood that that was an error, because he had had enough experiences--that it hadn't worked. But he was still in that naive mood when he got Wilson, of not having broken that correlation. He could not conceive that a president of GM could be that incompetent.

HORROCKS: And when and how did he realize--

GINZBERG: Oh, within a week, I gather. Just nothing was happening. Ike was very smart--Ike couldn't deal with anybody



very long before he knew whether a person had substance or not.

BORROCKS: And yet he kept Charles Wilson on until '56, I think.

GINZBERG: That's correct. So Ike was a softie when it came to this kind of judgment. Now that's different from McCarthy. I pressed him hard on McCarthy to move earlier, but that I think was simply some of his own shrewdness about--and I think he told me that himself--that if the President gets into the ring with an s.o.b. like McCarthy, that only increases McCarthy's opportunity to get still bigger headlines, and so on. So that was shrewdness, that was a delay that was tactically and strategically planned to get that kind of a character undermined and gotten rid of, but on other stuff he was just soft--he just wasn't tough enough. Whether he decided that Wilson wouldn't do anything bad to defense because he himself was competent to watch it, or whatever the rationale was, or whether Anderson would run it --you know, there may have been a thousand rationales. Now it is true, I think he felt embarrassed about Nixon and did



not get tough with Nixon because he felt Nixon had done a decent job on getting the McCarthy thing cleaned up. And Ike did have a sense of responsibility that if somebody does everything you ask him to do and he does it all right, where do you get the nerve to suddenly cashier him. I think that played a role in the Nixon affair.

HORROCKS: Was the President actively involved with [Harold] Stassen's attempt to unseat Nixon or was that--

GINZBERG: I don't know anything about it. I would, offhand, doubt it. There was nothing in Ike's style that would lead me to believe that he was. But that explosion in General Snyder--putting words in my mouth, is just--this is just a ventriloquist.

HORROCKS: That's fascinating.

GINZBERG: Yes, that's really wonderful. One of the stories.

HORROCKS: Well, there's so many things that we could be talking about.

[Interruption]



HORROCKS: Why don't we continue on now and talk about General Eisenhower as president of Columbia University.

GINZBERG: All right, I would say that the first thing that happened is that he had a provost by the name of [Albert] Jacobs, and I think that an interesting question is--and I never really was altogether clear as to why Jacobs left--but apparently that meant that the inner office was not working smoothly enough or that his relationships to the president were not smooth enough to satisfy either. Jacobs was married to a woman of considerable wealth and maybe just decided he wanted to operate, you know, as the first man, not in the shadow of General Eisenhower which was, after all, a somewhat difficult problem. When Jacobs left I was seeing General Snyder daily, and I indicated to him to please tell General Eisenhower to think about making John Krout the provost of the institution. And he came back after lunch one day and he said he had communicated that to the General but unfortunately, twenty-four hours earlier, the General had offered the job to Kirk. And I said, "Kirk! My god, we're in trouble!" I didn't know Kirk that well, but I knew that they were not of the same order of quality of people--John



Krout and Kirk--and Krout I knew very well. And I said, "Oh, gee." And within a week I had, let's say, repercussions back from General Snyder via General Ike that his judgment about Kirk had been premature and wrong. But Ike was the kind of person who never did anything about that kind of an affair--

HORROCKS: Again.

GINZBERG: --until I was at SHAPE one day and I visited with him one morning while he was painting on a Sunday morning so we had a kind of relaxed couple of hours. I was sitting back of him and he was around painting and I was impressed because I'd never really seen Ike basically stripped and he was a more powerful physique than I had realized, because he was really a small man. And with a smock on I realized for the first time with those shoulders one could understand that he once played football. That was not my image of him interestingly until that morning when he was painting. But anyhow, to make a long story short, he said he had gotten a letter from Kirk and Kirk has been offered the presidency of Rutgers and he said, "Eli, I want you to go back and tell him from me,"



--I got very few messages in my life that way, directly--  
"that he should take it."

I looked at the General and I said, "That's quite a message I'm supposed to bring."

He says, "Yes, you go back and tell him for me, he's supposed to take it." So that was not exactly the most pleasant message to be delivered. I delivered it.

HORROCKS: Why didn't he like Grayson Kirk?

GINZBERG: He just decided--I don't know. Something didn't work out. Grayson was a very, very passive kind of a character. I don't think it was easy to be provost under Ike. But Grayson turned out as president to be a very passive kind of a fellow. And kind of a, what I would call, a 19th century British ruler.

HORROCKS: So really what we've covered here is we have General Eisenhower's two major legacies in a way--Richard Nixon and Grayson Kirk--one to Columbia, one to the United States--neither of whom he wanted.

GINZBERG: That is correct. Within a very short time



realized it and wouldn't do anything about it. That's where he somewhat at least has to live with those decisions. That is, he was entirely too bright not to recognize the error quickly.

HORROCKS: Was General Eisenhower an active administrator of Columbia University?

GINZBERG: Well let me say this. I never figured it out but it would be an interesting exercise. I think one could find, or recalculate it--I once did it roughly--that he was on the campus about eighteen months. During that time he was sick and away for about six weeks in Florida after the Forrestal episode, and then he was in Washington as the temporary head of the joint chiefs of staff. So if you knock out, let's say, three months plus two months roughly, that's five months, and some summer vacation, and a little traveling for Columbia to collect some money which was part of his duties--

HORROCKS: Which he wasn't going to do, but he ended up doing.



GINZBERG: Right. Of course. Then, the answer is that he did not have anything like a significant block of time to do anything at Columbia. There's no way of reading his accomplishments at Columbia because it was time that Truman asked him to take over that and then he was sick at one point, and General Snyder was plenty worried about that episode--didn't really know what he had on his hands. It was really a psychological collapse after the Forrestal affair.

HORROCKS: General Eisenhower's psychological collapse just too many, too much pressure, too many things going on.

GINZBERG: Too many pressures, too many different kinds of pressures and so on; so he took him away and quieted him down and so on.

HORROCKS: Was the General being very tense and short-tempered?

GINZBERG: It was a difficult time, I know. You know, I could pull it out of the back of my head, but I know that Snyder was worried about him and took him on a longish trip to Florida. It wasn't a short one; it was a long trip.





And it was too much pressure out of that Forrestal event. It meant that Ike had thought he had left that military life behind and so on and now it was here; the election--that whole '52 nominating convention was around so--see a lot of people were trying to manipulate him, trying to manipulate General Ike for their own purposes.

HORROCKS: And were successful.

GINZBERG: Of course. He was open to a lot of manipulation and that didn't ease the situation at that point. Mamie never found it comfortable at Columbia so there was an additional strain. Snyder was spending a lot of time trying to keep her in one piece; so that added to the pressure. So I think what happened really was that Ike came to Columbia, had no idea what kind of a place it was, that it had no management since 1929 of an effective nature, very long interregnum in terms of effective leadership. He did some quite sensible things in getting some minimum structure into place. He tried to reorganize his board of trustees. He got some of the old trustees into what do you call it--honorary class, you know--retired them. So he put the first



active Jewish member of the board on. He did a few things. He was very interested in this American Assembly. That was, of course, a critical area and then Phil Young was again the key person--so the two legacies at Columbia, other than Kirk, is the American Assembly and the conservation project, and they were operated really--Young and Ginzberg. Young really was the key operator for the Harrimans on Arden House. So I think what you can simply say was, Ike never felt very comfortable with his professors; they didn't feel very comfortable with him. They felt that the trustees had really been disrespectful of them because they had never even consulted the professors' selection committee about Ike--never even consulted them. There was a lot of hard feeling about that.

HORROCKS: When Eisenhower came into Columbia with Robert Schulz and Craig Cannon and perhaps later Kevin McCann, did they form a palace guard around him?

GINZBERG: No--but nobody took--see a university doesn't operate, except for the deans, very close to the president. So nobody cared what was going on over there at Low Library. See I think the deans might have had their nose out of joint. And



if you go back on the Jacobs story, he probably left because they were guarding the General too tightly. But since I had access to the General because of the Conservation project then, I needed him, there was no problem there for me. And the rest of the professors couldn't care less, by and large. But it was a feeling that he was pretty far away. But that wasn't the critical issue. I mean, I don't see the present president, and I happen to have a close personal relationship, but I don't see him sometimes four or five months, so that's that. It's the deans where the issue is a little different. He never really got control of the deans and really worked closely with only one or two. So he never really got started at Columbia. That would be my interpretation. There was no Eisenhower regime at Columbia, except for a few selected projects. He got some administrative changes through; he got some fund-raising structure into place under Paul Davis moving. I forgot whether Paul came in before or after or during--

HORROCKS: Before I think.



GINZBERG: --before, yes, that was my impression. But it was just getting going, with these major interruptions it was for all practical affairs, nothing much.

HORROCKS: What sort of areas, you mentioned at the very beginning that we cut some areas at Columbia.

GINZBERG: He was interested in the undergraduate kids so he would go in occasionally and visit a class at Columbia College; that was of some interest to him. He made himself available to collect some money for a peace chair, but it wasn't very effective. I don't think much happened there. They got a little money, but not much. But the Arden House thing was something else again, the American Assembly, that was for real, and he played a key role in that. He was interested in this kind of a discussion forum, a place looking at big issues, no votes, consensus, that was already part of his larger vision.

HORROCKS: Okay. What--

GINZBERG: [Robert] Schulz didn't count at all. Schulz was a handy man--Kevin was a more sophisticated character and better liked and could deal with the press and so on.



General Eisenhower was very clear with me that he hoped that I could find a few dollars to bring General Snyder around because he, General Ike, did not want to have any more military characters around on the Columbia payroll. He was very sensitive about that.

HORROCKS: Did General Snyder, especially after this health incident after Forrestal, have any doubts as to whether the General should run for President in '52?

GINZBERG: I don't think so. The health thing was okay. No he came back from Florida, O.K.

HORROCKS: Recovered fine.

GINZBERG: He came back. I remember what Snyder told me. He took him on a boat to Europe for SHAPE, and he couldn't get him into his uniforms. And they had to get off the boat in uniform, so he put him on a fantastic diet on the Queen going over and he got into the uniform. He'd gained some weight. He took him off cigarettes while he was at Columbia.

HORROCKS: Right, right.



GINZBERG: I remember that was the only human being I've even seen in my life who was an ambidextrous smoker. I can still see that--I can still see the picture. He used to work with both hands on the cigarettes. He didn't smoke them all the way down, but he was the only two-handed cigarette smoker I've seen in my life.

HORROCKS: Well, this is fascinating. I think we've hit the time.

GINZBERG: Yes.

HORROCKS: And I thank you very much Dr. Ginzberg.



INTERVIEW WITH  
Dr. Eli Ginzberg

by

Dr. Thomas Soapes

on

April 11, 1978



for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

This interview is being conducted with Dr. Eli Ginzberg at Columbia University in New York City, on April 11, 1978. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes. Present for the interview are Dr. Ginzberg and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: The first topic that we had left over from the interview that David Horrocks did with you was the Truman-Eisenhower relationship.



DR. GINZBERG: I have been giving a little thought to that since I got your letter and I have very strong impressions of the extreme negativism that was reported to me by General [Howard] Snyder about how General Eisenhower felt about President Truman. But I must admit, I have a hard time remembering the specifications for those feelings. But about the feelings, I have no doubt at all. In light of what's happened in the press and that I know about, I suspect that the intensity of Eisenhower's feelings of Truman may have something to do with that so-called famous letter that Truman removed, or didn't remove, from a file that didn't exist or did exist. [Laughter] But I must say, even at the time when I used to hear that--and I had a more cautious view about Truman's strengths and weaknesses--I never understood the intensity of Eisenhower's negativisms. I always suspected



that there was an additional emotional factor playing. Now there may, as I've thought about this--there is little question that Truman did try to interest Eisenhower in becoming the Democratic candidate in '48, and I think probably caught Eisenhower unprepared for that kind of a suggestion and may have unsettled him about it. And that--again, I am looking for psychological interpretation of the intensities of the response. Now, you would think that if the President of the United States offers General Eisenhower a possibility of being the Democratic candidate, that would be a compliment. But Eisenhower, in my view, was a very complicated man, like all great people are, and it's just likely that the fact that he was not at ease with the answering of that offer may also have made him uneasy. He may have felt that Truman should have known better than to have made that offer to him because it was just embarrassing. That there was no reason to believe that he, Eisenhower, was a Democrat, or that he would accept the Presidency in terms of just becoming the stooge of the incumbent President. And he may have also felt annoyed by the fact that Truman was in difficulty with the public and the administration



was not in good repute, and, therefore, that he was suppose to clean up the dirty work. Now I do remember that Eisenhower was annoyed about the fact that Truman tapped him to become the head of NATO. He felt that this was really putting a burden on him that he didn't want and that it indicated that Truman was at the end of his rope in terms of finding someone to pull his own chestnuts out of the fire. And that he leaned on him, Eisenhower, and that while Eisenhower eventually said yes to that, he was not happy about it. That I recall directly. No maybe's about it. That is fact.

SOAPES: You got that directly from Eisenhower?



GINZBERG: Oh, yes. There was no--I was close enough in and around the Columbia scene--it happened, after all, here. I think Eisenhower also felt somewhat abused by the, then, administration because of the whole Forrestal affair. Forrestal was getting sick. Nobody exactly knew what was going on and Eisenhower had to take on the temporary chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs. And he was wandering back and forth between Columbia and Washington. And that, he felt, was an undue burden on him. And the fact that it was an undue burden is that he

finally broke up himself in terms of poor health. Eisenhower had to be taken off, as I remember, for six weeks to an extended rest in Florida because there was just too much pressure. So I think that one of the reasons of the emotional feelings between Eisenhower and Truman was that he felt he was being taken advantage of by Truman in different regards, leaving even the special letter on the outside. Now, on the other hand, I still felt uneasy by the degree of negativism that was reported to me by Snyder and that I myself saw, so it may have come from the fact that Eisenhower was by this time very closely associated with the big moguls--his friends [W. Alton] Pete Jones and [Robert] Bob Woodruff and Barry Leithead, and the rest of them--and I don't have a full recollection any more of what the attitudes at the time were between big business and Truman, but they were obviously strained. So that was further contributory matter. I'm sure that Eisenhower was in their company most of the time--he really saw nothing of liberal people--and that this must have reinforced his negativism. I would suspect that Eisenhower was not enchanted by Truman's attitudes on the whole race front. While Truman himself was



kind of cautious on race until the very end, when he really pushed on the Department of Defense to do something about desegregation in the armed services. And I got caught up in the middle of that, because I served as the bringer of the bad news to Europe for Frank Pace, who was the Secretary of the Army for Truman. And Eisenhower ducked completely. I went and stopped off at SHAPE, as I indicated in the earlier piece. I think that may also have played a part here. But then, finally, I suspect that this is a very gossipy world and that possibly Truman began--when he was turned down by Eisenhower for having any interest in the nomination--that Truman probably began to say some things that probably got back to Eisenhower. And Eisenhower was a very thin-skinned fellow. And I would suspect that Eisenhower began to say some things and I suppose that further estrangement came. Now the fact that Truman had this hero worship of [George C.] Marshall has to be added to this whole complicated equation, the answers to which I don't know. I am sure that Marshall kept his mouth shut, whatever he thought about Eisenhower, and he thought well about him in general. But it is just conceivable



that Truman decided that Eisenhower was not as generous in his assessments of Marshall as he might have been, or whatever that complicated relationship is. Obviously, there were a lot of Marshall devotees who later felt that Eisenhower's failure to come up and stand up clean for Marshall in that McCarthy attack in Wisconsin--but I'm even going back before that. There was a lot of Army politics, and it gets around and the White House hears about it. And it may well be that Truman felt that the great architect of the World War Two victory was Marshall, which I also believe, though I'm no professional military historian. And while Eisenhower did a most commendable job in leading the allied forces, and got all of the public acclaim--or most of the public acclaim--it may have been that Truman also felt that the apportionment of credit had gotten a little out of balance. I really don't know, but in any case it is clear that, I believe, that Eisenhower's negativism must have had an emotional base in part. Because I remember clearly saying to General Snyder time and again, when I would get this strong negative response through to him about how Eisenhower felt about Truman, I said, "I don't understand it. Why's he so mad?"



He's a pretty good President. May not be the world's best but surely not the world's worst." And so I suspect that it had to do with, really, the chemistry among the two people just didn't really take. And all this other stuff may just be additions, but it was a basic chemical response. That somehow or other Eisenhower decided Truman wasn't very smart and he was playing a very tricky kind of politics. If I had to outguess the formulation, that's the way Eisenhower would have put it: "Truman wasn't smart and he was a kind of crude politician." As far as Truman was concerned, I think he respected Eisenhower for awhile and then, as I remember reading the later Truman book and so on--and that's why I'm very careful of telling this story, because I don't want to mix up what I really knew first or second hand from the later books--but I think Truman must have soured on this affair. And it's not nice for the President of the United States to ask a man who doesn't want the nomination, and then to be rebuffed. Truman was a man of some pride, and so on and so forth. I would say that's the way that went.

SOAPES: You said that Eisenhower was a thin-skinned person. Did you have occasion to see this?



GINZBERG: Oh, I had occasion to see that repeatedly!  
Eisenhower had the shortest fuse of almost anybody I've  
ever known. [Laughter] He could hit the roof very quickly.  
This great big smiling face and this type of equanimity that  
got sort of transferred to the American people--a man in total  
control--that was one part of Eisenhower; but the other part  
was that he was very short-fused man who really didn't like  
to be crossed or, didn't suffer fools easily, really didn't  
like to engage in tough arguments. And I think that was  
partly--I always thought that Eisenhower had had most of his  
nervous energy drained by being the head of the--Commander  
in Chief of the Allied Forces. That was a--you know, to go into and  
out of that war and having to make the decisions in which hundreds  
of thousands of lives depended on was really a tremendous  
burden. And it was on that basis that I wrote Eisenhower that  
long seven-page memorandum in 1951--'52 I mean. I'm a little  
mixed up with the dates--when his friends were advising him to  
run for the Presidency. I said to him--on paper, to make sure  
that he got it straight; seven pages, singled-spaced--that I  
thought it was a mistake. That he had used up a very large



part of his emotional energy in World War Two. That he would be able to be a major force for the good in the United States by periodically speaking out on critical issues, and that his friends weren't talking straight to him about what the Presidency was all about. And that he would probably not have the energy or the desire to really run as President, to meet the demands of that office; and I thought there was no need for him to have that job in order to accomplish what he wanted to accomplish, which was to continue to provide some leadership for the country. And it was really on the basis of the emotional exhaustion. And in a certain sense, Mamie had a somewhat similar view of this and advised him to go back to San Antonio and play some golf, play some bridge, and so on. And I think I turned out to be right. But while I don't want to make any judgments about his Presidency, because that's not this affair, he really did find it necessary to have a relatively short working day. And in SHAPE, also, he used to work in the mornings from about eight till twelve and then Al Gruenther took over. So I think that it looked to me to be perfectly clear. And I knew enough about Eisenhower that--you just can't ask even





an extraordinary human being--I think this man had extraordinary talent and power--I mean, strength--to really have put in those years in the war, and then to have really done a full-time job in the Presidency. Now fortunately the country and he were at a kind of semi-quiet mood and he got through the Presidency. And I think in terms of the historical reappraisal of Eisenhower, he'll turn out to have been--within his own value scheme--I would think he'll rank very high among the Presidents. That is, he really believed that a President should be one of a group of parties that makes policy for the United States, and you don't have to be way out there leading, and that was his view. It was genuine. He was a conservatively inclined person and the country's mood was that and it went along all right. But when I think of what's going on now, or what's gone on in the last years in terms of a pile-up of problems and the concept of an aggressive Presidency--or whatever they call that in Schlesinger terms--you know, a real leadership Presidency, that was a different thing. And I didn't think Eisenhower had the energy left to do that in my view.



SOAPES: You said he didn't like to be crossed. That he did not appreciate somebody presenting a contrary view?

GINZBERG: Well, let me say this, I think this comes back to the energy problem again. I recall--and I'm not sure that this story isn't told even in my first piece--but it doesn't matter, it will make the point. He had a kind of neatness of organization and how materials ought to come to him. And when Grayson Kirk came back from Southeast Asia--I'm pretty sure I told this but it will make the point quickly--and went in to see Eisenhower to tell him about some of his findings in Southeast Asia, he was critical of the administration and of the United States. And Eisenhower bridled and he said, "Go over and see my Secretary of State; he's in charge of that." So Eisenhower was not willing to open himself up to protect his energy levels. And that's why Sherman Adams played that very critical role. My own view has been that there has really only been one President that has been able to open himself to cross currents and that to an extraordinarily capable degree, and that was Roosevelt. And I think his



greatness was connected with his capacity to deal with ambiguity and conflict. Most Presidents find that very difficult. Nixon, of course, was the most isolated of all. I think Carter, from what I can now gather about the White House, is pretty inaccessible, basically. I think the Kennedy presidency never came off in my opinion. And Johnson was in the middle of everything, but also really got rid of everybody who had a different view about Vietnam. So that I think it's very hard for a President to keep himself open. I must say, Eisenhower permitted me to keep on writing memos to him all through the eight years. But that was in writing. That's quite different from an oral discussion where you accost him, because there his tolerances were relatively, relatively modest. And I think it had to do with energy levels. And a desire, not really--Eisenhower had very little of the dissembler in him, probably the least of any--of course, he really wasn't a politician, so he didn't like to play games with anybody he was talking to. And then that means he told you what he thought. He told you pretty damn quickly what he thought! [Laughter] And he really didn't want to start in a big argument as to



whether he was wrong. That was too unsettling an affair.

SOAPES: Did Snyder ever speak to you about his concern about Eisenhower's energy and his--?

GINZBERG: Well, there's no doubt at all, in my view, that Snyder is responsible for Eisenhower having successfully served those two terms, and for having held a large part of that complicated marriage together from the early twenties. See Eisenhower--Snyder became an intimate friend of the Eisenhowers' right after they lost their child in Fort Meade. And he was a major stabilizer of the inter-personal relationships between Mamie and Ike, and was able to take both--permit Eisenhower to blow off steam on him, and also to give Mamie a certain amount of suggestions that made her less difficult for Eisenhower to cope with. And Eisenhower in turn was difficult for Mamie to cope with. So it was a very complicated affair. Snyder really put his body in the middle of that and carried both of them--one on each shoulder--in a very complicated, emotional way. And I would say that there is no doubt that Snyder insisted that Eisenhower spend a lot of time on the golf greens. And he yanked



him out and took him to Florida for that long stay and watched him like a hawk, because he knew about the explosive nature of Eisenhower's psyche and physique and watched it very, very carefully. And I would say, he did an absolutely fantastic job of health management, which was really a question of emotional management. So he was fully aware. And Snyder himself was very careful, very careful, to not come into conflict with Eisenhower on ideological, political, health matters, or anything else; he felt his contribution was to keep Eisenhower as healthy as possible, and one way was not to get into too much conflict.

SOAPES: Uh-huh. You opened up a very interesting subject, and that is the relationship between Ike and Mamie and the difficulties there.

GINZBERG: I must say that while I'm full of all kinds of suggestiveness that Snyder offered me over all of these years that we were close together, I never probed. I thought it was inappropriate. So I was really serving in a certain sense for the same kind of balance wheel as Snyder--that Snyder was serving



in there. And one of the best things I could do was keep my big mouth shut, quiet, and just listen. And I think what happened there, as far as I can see, was that--with all Army marriages where the man goes very high, the woman frequently has a hard time pacing his advance. So that while Mamie was a pretty woman, an attractive woman, I think that the long period in World War II, in which Eisenhower went very quickly from a lieutenant colonel to a five star general, that just--and is dealing with heads of state all the time--Mamie was back home with the war widows--that created a major block. Now I think Eisenhower very importantly--and I can give you a concrete case-- Eisenhower really was very work-oriented all through to the end of World War II, when I think his energy levels got adversely affected. And Snyder told me the story that when Eisenhower was working for MacArthur, he would frequently stay at the War Department until 8, 9 o'clock at night, and Mamie would bug him and say, well all of her friends' husbands get home at 5:30 for cocktails and they can start to play bridge. And Ike would say "Well, it's too bad. Your husband isn't so smart." So there was tension about how to spend time, what to do, what to




share, and so on. In World War II, I remember this--Snyder told me; that's why I say I remember--Mamie wrote to Eisenhower about promoting the husbands of certain of her friends and he wrote back, somewhat caustically, "Don't you remember, those are the fellows who had time to come home for cocktails at 5:30." [Laughter] So that tells you one area of intensity. Now when Mamie came to Columbia, I felt very sorry for her, because she really felt so out of the water here. Eisenhower was able to keep busy. He found the University kind of strange, but he found some friends and he was able to make a go of it. But she really went almost into a blue funk and took to bed. And that's when General Snyder was living with them. He actually came up and lived at 60 Morningside. And he tried to make sure that Mamie did not become a drag on Eisenhower and also didn't just destroy herself by being so frightened that she would remain in bed. And she really was, I think, very badly shook up here. Of course, she lost her friends; they weren't here in large numbers and she was a modest person, always, and I think needed more support than she got from him. But that's a, you know, a typical case. It's nothing unusual



about the husband being Ike. It just runs through a whole part of the world unless you have a very strong woman. And I would say that Mrs. Truman, apparently, was somebody who had a quite different personality in relationship to her husband. Obviously Mrs. Roosevelt was quite different. But Mamie was an Army wife, and had modest demands on the world and wanted a piece of her husband, and as he got more and more important, it became harder and harder. I have a feeling, quite deep down, that Ike really found male companionship much easier. And he was an athletic fellow. He enjoyed the long hours on the golf course. She really didn't play; I mean Mamie. He enjoyed the rather tough bridge games, and those were all male games with Al Gruenther and the rest. He--I don't think Mamie was much of a reader or anything, so I think they just really went apart. To what extent the Kay Summersby affair added to it, I think that's a minor matter--minor matter. I do have in that letter from Denver--when he got sick--that Snyder wrote me; he made Mamie get into bed with Ike to warm him up, because that was the first night of the attack. So apparently that was no longer the normal procedures. So there was some estrangement at that level. But that was the only time I ever caught that. Snyder

good heart, is alive at this late date; that's no small contribution.





was too discreet--didn't talk much about it. But that point is in the letter to me, that one of the things he did was insisted that Mamie get into bed with Ike because he was scared he was going to lose his patient. And one thing that happens is a heart attack patient gets very cold, and that was the best way to warm him up. My general sense was Ike was always polite to Mamie when I saw them together; I saw them together quite a lot. But nevertheless the Columbia years were very unhappy years for Mamie. In the White House, as I recall it also, it--you know, she did all right but it was no great deal for her. It was not a very exciting period. She did very little in public life, as I recall, very modest. But at least in Washington, she had enough of her own coterie of friends and got a lot of support out of them. And it's amazing to me--I said it to my wife the other day, that Snyder would feel great pleasure about his, medical skills. That Mamie, who really did not have a good heart, is alive at this late date; that's no small contribution.

SOAPES: O.K.



GINZBERG: Now on this woman affair, I've already mentioned that a little bit. But the case that I really want to call to your attention is when Ike--just as he was getting ready to leave Columbia, we established at Columbia the National Manpower Council in which he was very interested, and he actually wrote the letters of introduction to the members to serve from SHAPE. And somewhere down the line, about 1955, the Council finished a book called Womanpower, which was a major study of women and work, and we went to the White House. [James David] Dave Zellerbach, who later became Ambassador to Italy, was the chairman of the Council and we made a presentation at the Oval office to Eisenhower, because he continued to be interested in the work of this council. And I never forgot--I was a little embarrassed all around--when we gave him the book, and Dave must have said a few things and I said a few things about the book. Ike said, "Oh, yes. Women. They were very important in World War II. I don't know how I would have gotten on without those telephone operators." And it was absolutely straightforward. That was his conception of women in work. Now Eisenhower basically was a very conservative and really a late 19th century, early 20th century man. The fact that this was a book dealing



with a quite important revolution underway in American life, with women playing an entirely different role--although he did appoint Mrs. [Oveta Culp] Hobby as a member of the Cabinet--that was not something that was easy for him to deal with in terms of career women. And that was his quick judgment. I never forgot it--about those telephone operators as being--I'm sure if he'd have thought longer, he would have said "nurses." But a very traditional view of these matters. I would say that it's just part of his general traditionalism. There was nothing special about women. Although when I do begin to think back a little bit more, I don't have the feeling that he was particularly easy with women.

SOAPES: Not easy--

GINZBERG: Easy--yeah--I mean in relationships; that is, I think he really preferred male company. And I think that's part of the whole military story, et cetera. It goes back to, I think, his major advocational activities which were golf and very highclass bridge. I don't think he would have suffered easily with poor women partners in a bridge game. Again, he



was a very impatient fellow; he didn't like to lose. And we had the same barber. My barber used to tell me that it was awful to cut Eisenhower's hair after he'd lost \$20 or so, either at poker or bridge, but mostly at bridge. Very competitive person underneath. Obviously, you don't get to the top without having any strong competitive streaks, and that was true with his football life up at West Point, and so on.

SOAPES: I assume from what you've said, when he was here at Columbia, he did nothing in terms of advancing women in the University or--

GINZBERG: Oh, I would think that was absolutely beyond his purview. But in fairness, I would say his successor never thought about putting women in the university either. So I mean you have to put it back into context. No, I think the more important part of Eisenhower's conservatism has to do with race, because that was an issue that came to the fore with the 1954 Brown decision. And I told about that in terms of the earlier interview and my book on The Negro Potential. So I think he



was a basically conservative person and the conservatism surely included women, but was most noticeable with respect to race, which was beginning to stir in America at that point. While he had I think, in terms of individuals, a willingness to be able to deal with anybody in terms of their individual competence, as a social phenomenon Ike really was, underneath, conservative. He didn't believe that the law ought to be used as a major instrument to accelerate social change. That was not his perception of how this thing would be. So I would surely acquit him of any anti-feminism. I just think he was conventional, like most of the people at Columbia were conventional at the time. Absolutely nothing happened here on the female front at that time. No. I did point out that Mrs. Hobby did become a member of the Cabinet; that was the second female member of the Cabinet. Although there was no intimacy, I don't think, or closeness of relations. From my dealings with Mrs. Hobby in World War II, I don't think she was very easy to deal with. I don't think there was any special rapport between Eisenhower and Mrs. Hobby.

[Interruption]



I ought to add, we did have one woman on the National Manpower Council, Sara Southall, who was a leading expert on industrial relations for International Harvester, and there was surely no comment on a negative nature that Eisenhower made when I submitted that name. And we had documented the suggestion through another member of the council [Wilbur Cheny] Willie Munnecke, who used to be key advisor to Marshall Field in Chicago, and who knew Sara Southall, who was a really very able and distinguished lady. But Eisenhower surely didn't say to me "Why don't we have another woman?" At the same time, he didn't say to me "What do you need a woman for?" So it just went through that way. I hadn't thought of that for awhile.



SOAPES: The next subject that we had on the list was Eisenhower on wealth.

GINZBERG: Well, that really means Eisenhower and what I would call "the captains of industry;" that's how I would redefine that. I think that's something I know quite a lot about, both directly and indirectly. If you look at Eisenhower's cabinet choices, you begin to see that he moved very strongly to get

key industrialist--[George M.] Humphrey, [Charles E.] Wilson--  
"G. M."--and so on into the cabinet. Eisenhower had a fund-  
amental belief that this was the cutting edge of American  
society--that is, the economic edge. That a man who went to the  
head of a large corporation must by definition be a highly  
capable person. It was beyond his perception, initially, but  
he found out--because he was smart--and he found out fast that  
Wilson was a very inadequate Secretary of Defense. He found  
out within one week, and communicated as much, at least to me  
and to others. And he couldn't understand it. Because he  
asked himself the question, how could he possibly have come  
to the head of one of the largest corporations in the world  
and be that incompetent?



SOAPES: What was it that clued him in that Wilson couldn't do  
much?

GINZBERG: Wilson couldn't make a decision. I remember, that's  
what Ike was complaining about. He said, "I never saw such  
a thing. He's on the phone to me asking me should he do this,  
should he do that. He's Secretary of Defense!" Very impatient

with him. And that was within one week, he knew he was in trouble. So that became very hard for him to understand, because he did have--among his two closest friends was [Robert] Bob Woodruff, whom I knew well, and [W. Alton] Pete Jones. And these were real captains of industry. They were highly successful. They had the aggressiveness and the confidence that really fitted the role, and Ike just took for granted that anybody who was the head of a major corporation was of that quality. And so this unnerved him. This really unnerved him. Because it meant that this kind of simplistic association that he was making--and I think it was an understandable story. He thought back to who were the Chiefs of Staff and he knew that Marshall, Eisenhower, Bradley were among the very ablest people who came through, and he just assumed that was true in any other part of life. I think Eisenhower had a fundamental respect for wealth, as most people do who haven't had much. It's very hard to grow up in very modest circumstances and not to be impressed with people who have a great amount of money, and especially people who made a lot of money. And he really knew a lot of people who'd made the money! So it wasn't a kind of



have been quite different. And that just came back--I pull

this out of the back of my head--but that was, after all,



a Rockefeller story. As a matter of fact, Eisenhower, I think, has to be given a large part of the credit--or the blame, depending on how one feels--about Nelson Rockefeller's story. As a matter of fact, Eisenhower, I think, has to be given a large part of the credit--or the blame, depending on how one feels--about Nelson Rockefeller never having gotten anywhere. Because he did not like Nelson. He thought Nelson was a softy liberal and really never went out of his way to help him. I think had Eisenhower had a different feeling about Nelson, Nelson's career within the Republican Party would have been quite different. And that just came back--I pull this out of the back of my head--but that was, after all, wealth that was inherited. And that's a different story. And he probably thought, well, you get soft if you--and he really thought that Nelson was something of a pinko.

SOAPES: Did you hear him say that sort of thing?

GINZBERG: Practically. Yes, I would say; that, or the equivalent. Oh, yes. But "soft-minded," you know. And whether that came out of specific conflicts when Nelson was



the Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, or just a general view, I don't know. I want to come back and emphasize that Eisenhower was leading a very constricted life in terms of whom he was talking with all the time. He was talking with a group of Bourbons, so if they didn't like Nelson, he heard a lot about it. Now there may have been conflicts between Dulles and Nelson, and so on. I don't know anything about in detail. But I would say there is no doubt that Eisenhower was not positive on Nelson. There is no question about that. So I think that when you put together the fact that Eisenhower admired people who did things--who accomplished things--he was very positive on those people who had amassed great wealth and power in the economic world. And I think he himself--and that's understandable--had never had much money and had a kind of respect for it. And while it's a little hazy, there was a whole series of favors that were done him when it came to buying that farm in Pennsylvania, you know. Some of his rich friends made it possible for him to accomplish that. Eisenhower was not avaricious in any sense of the term, but he did want that farm. He did want the nice cattle. And he got it,



and I don't know how they helped him or didn't help him in it, but that was part of the affair, too, in the background. He got used to, I think, being taken care of by his wealthy friends very well. And he used to go to Thomasville, that hunting lodge down there that Jones had, and I think he just enjoyed the luxury and the conditions under which he lived. Of course, that was also already a part of being Supreme Commander in Europe; you get used to very good things. I had enough of the high military for a very short time to know that when you have your private planes, your private servants, your private hotels, your private everything, its very easy to think that's the way it ought to be and can be, and so on. On the other hand, I must admit that [Joseph] Joe Barnes, who helped Eisenhower do the Crusade in Europe--Eisenhower was still working very hard when he did that book. Joe told me--he was my editor, too, later on--that he never saw anybody able to dictate 5,000 words in a morning the way that Eisenhower did. So he didn't become soft by virtue of this exposure to things of luxury. But it was, nevertheless, I think, something that his friends were able to do for him and that sort of gave



him an extra positive response. That makes this whole final speech of his on the military-industrial complex that much more interesting. The speech that [Malcolm] Moos put together for him at the end. He got into ruction with [General Lucius D.] Clay. Clay was running American can--Continental Can. I'm embarrassed, it was Continental Can. And Clay was somebody, I think, for whom Eisenhower had very considerable regard. Thought he'd done a good job, and then watched him as he went into the private sector. And then at some stage of the game my recollection is that--it would have to be checked out-- that the anti-trust division was beginning to breathe a little bit down Continental Can, or maybe all the can makers', back. And Clay came to Eisenhower and asked some favors, or what Eisenhower thought were favors, and he bridled at that. Bridled at that! And then I think he was--I always thought Eisenhower had a very good IQ. He was semi-illiterate when it came to having the time and energy to analyze a lot of stuff in detail. He had had no training in formal economics, but he was smart. And I think he began to see things, via the political route, about who was playing games with whom, and



who was putting pressure on budgets, and so on, that he finally didn't like what he thought was the appropriate responsibility of himself towards what I would call the public interest. And that was a kind of pent-up emotion. I think that was another one--not so short fuse. I think that was a long fuse!--but he--I think, there was a lot of unhappiness that accumulated in that particular speech. That he had been--I think, he thought he'd been abused, taken in by these guys. And maybe he was annoyed with himself for having been a little bit overnaive. But that he found Wilson a bloody bore and fool as Secretary of Defense, and he really put [Robert] Anderson in there as deputy secretary--for whom he had this, I would say, exaggerated positive view--to make sure that he had somebody who he could cope with over there. So this question of wealth--I would put it, probably, in a more general way, to say that there are very few people who are not born to wealth, who have the opportunity to associate and get used to the advantages of wealth, who don't become a little impressed with it. It would take a very unusual person. I would say Truman was probably more of that kind of a person who was unimpressed. He really never lost his wits back there as a kind of small-



town Missourian. But Eisenhower, I think, especially with the farm--that's the only thing I knew that he was particularly interested in. Now when I think back, we used to have these birthday parties for him after he retired as President--I mean he was finished with his term as president--up in Pennsylvania there. And it struck me, because the complexity of Nixon showed up at these affairs. One year he came and was morose and couldn't say anything, couldn't be gracious; the next year he was one of the most astute, funny, after-dinner speakers. All within two years. The complexity of Nixon really showed up then. But if I think back of the so-called fifty friends who would show up at that party, I would think forty were very high up in the money world; surely thirty-five. And there were a few of his close staff people. So the question of people of means is really another way of saying that Eisenhower was impressed by accomplishment, and one of the major frontiers of accomplishment in the United States was making money. It was as simple as that. I don't want to get oversophisticated about it. And, as I say, I think the fact that he was very close friends with Woodruff and Pete



Jones, for whom he had genuine admiration, because he really thought they could think straight on a lot of stuff; liked them; enjoyed their company. He just assumed that everybody got up to the top with something like that quality. When he found that Wilson sure didn't have it, it puzzled him.

SOAPES: OK. We also have on the list a discussion about Eisenhower-Dewey in the 1948 nomination.



GINZBERG: Well, I think that's very important. Very few people--I don't read a lot of history--but a lot of people have assumed that Eisenhower came to Columbia with all kinds of political shenanigans and a long-run plan to establish himself so that he could move to the Presidency. And I think that's wrong. The reason I argue that's wrong is that it was clear that Dewey was going to be the '48 candidate for the Republicans. Very early in the game that was clear. My recollection is Ike came to Columbia in '47. I think that irrespective--I don't know the date when Truman was supposed to have asked him, but I don't think Eisenhower ever had really seriously intended to run in '48 on any ticket. And

if one assumes that Dewey was going to run in '48, the reasonable assumption, surely, in '47 was he was going to win. By and large, if he was going to win in '48, he's going to run again in '52. And that would have meant that Eisenhower would have become a potential candidate for the first time in '56. If you add that up, that was a most unlikely story. Now it may be true that [Thomas] Tom Watson [Sr.], who was a key member of the Columbia board, was smart enough to figure out "you never know" and may have had perceptions that really proved to be right that life is uncertain and it would be a good idea to have Eisenhower well-positioned. That's a different matter. I had a feeling that the question of Eisenhower, as I remember it, and his political future, this was, oh, a kind of outside, very low-level probability. I remember some discussions with General Snyder, but very modest and not very intense. And for the reasons that I just pictured. So, all right, you wouldn't say that "I will never run," like Sherman, and that kind of stuff, but you didn't have to, really.

Now--





SOAPES: Was there some assumption on the part of faculty here at Columbia that Watson was up to--

GINZBERG: Well, they got very hurt at Columbia. There had been a big search committee for the presidency and then, without any communication between the trustees and the faculty search committee, at the very last moment Watson moved into this Eisenhower affair. Now there're two points about that. I remember being asked by the Columbia search committee--I was still in Washington--to call on Fulbright to elicit his availability, and I called on Fulbright at his home on behalf of the search committee at Columbia. And we discussed it, and I remember exactly what he said: "You are, regretably, a year too late or several years too early." He said, "I would have taken this most seriously under consideration had I not been just elected to the Senate." And he said, "Just having been elected to the Senate, I simply can't walk away." He said "Some years down the road, maybe; if you'd come to me a year earlier, definitely been interested," but he said it just didn't fit. So there is no question that that was an active search committee, because I was an agent of it in this one



regard. And then I do recall what Eisenhower told me himself about the fact that when they came to him and first opened up this Columbia discussion, he said, "You have the wrong Eisenhower." He said, "Milton is the scholar in our family." He said, "What are you talking to me about this for?" He said, "You ought to talk to Milton." And Tom Watson said, "No." Now that meant that the faculty was so outraged at the unilateral action of the trustees in the matter and inconsideration, the bulk of the faculty was severely against Eisenhower from the word go, and they were undoubtedly looking for all kinds of nefarious ideas on the part of the trustees. I would even suspect that Tom Watson could have just thought that while this probability existed, Columbia was in a bad way. It needed a major figure. It needed to get a lot of funds. And it was perfectly logical to think about Eisenhower if he would do it! So I don't say that I think it would be--unless Watson says that this was all a part of his long-term planning scheme--and I don't think it was. I think what happened was that it seemed to be a sensible person to get. I think they could have worked it much better with the



faculty had they taken a few of them--Eisenhower was some charmer--and if they'd taken a few of those faculty down to meet Eisenhower, you know, given the General a chance to talk simply and unpretentiously about his interest in youth, I think they would have accepted him. It wouldn't have been easy, but it would not have been impossible. But the fact that it was so unilateral and without even "by-your-leave," that's what really got the Columbia people upset. Now to the best of my knowledge, and I think I am correct, I brought Dewey and Eisenhower together for the first time. And that was as a result--that's how far away Eisenhower was from active politics in forty--I've got to think now--'49. Dewey asked me to do a hospital study for the state of New York. He was the Governor. So he was still Governor, so that must have been late '47. Yes '47. And I remember, I said I wouldn't work for the Governor, directly. I was more careful about political entanglements--but I said, if the Governor would write a contract with Columbia, I would take on the project. And I remember Charlie Breitel, who's now the chief judge of the Court of Appeals, was then the Governor's counsel and I had



to go up there. And he says, "Nobody tells the Governor what he has to do." Well, I said, "I'm just telling you what I'm going to do. You either write the contract with Columbia or I'm not going to do it." And I said, "I just cannot be out there and get in the middle of some kind of politics in this state. That's not my idea." And I said, "I'll make this deal with you that if you give us the money and I write a report and the Governor doesn't like it, or it's politically unpalatable to him, I will simply publish the report under my name. It doesn't have to be tied up with the Governor at all, and that's the end of that. If he likes it, he can take as much credit as he wants." And I said, "That leaves us both free to do whatever we want to do." Well, it turned out to be a very popular report for the Governor, because I saved him from a commitment he had already made that would have cost him fifty million dollars a year subsidy for voluntary hospitals. And then there was a big show here. Eisenhower gave a reception on the occasion of the completion of this report and there was a big picture in the New York Times, with myself between Eisenhower and Governor Dewey, with



the transfer of the book. This was a big occasion. It was an important report; the Times ran six articles on it six days in a row or something like that. But that was to the best of my knowledge the first time that they had met. So there had been a considerable distance. And Eisenhower had not become involved in Republican politics and had clearly kept himself aloof in '48. That's the way it had gone. So I know that. I was in the middle of that. And it was questionable whether Dewey even wanted to visit. The party was at the faculty club. And then they did have their first conference. There was, I think, a considerable slowness with which Eisenhower really made up his mind to become a candidate. It was not just an impetuous "yes". There was constant delegations going over to SHAPE to persuade him. That was--he was not that immodest a person to think that he was the ideal candidate for the Presidency. And I think his friends, who I believe fundamentally misled him, they didn't do him any harm because he was a perfectly good President from his point of view and from their point of view. But I think they really didn't play it clean with him about telling him, realistically, what that job of President really



meant. But they were very anxious for him to run. I think they really thought he would be a good President. I think some of them thought it would be nice to have a friend of theirs in the White House. But Eisenhower didn't break down that easily. I would not have written that memo if he had already made up his mind. And that memo was--at least my recollection--pretty late in '51. I mean, I was over there, so it was still uncertain at that time. And the thing--it started early, but it was still--of course, General Snyder would never have let me do that. He had to move the memo in. He wouldn't have done that unless the matter was still open, and Snyder himself had mixed emotions on it. I think he had some of the feelings I had. He wasn't sure that Ike was going to be able, ~~psychologically~~, to have the flexibility that it needed or the energy level, or was necessarily fully prepared for the job. I think all these were all questions. And Snyder had great regard for Eisenhower, knew that he was a man of very high ability, but still, President of the United States? I think he was straddling a little bit himself in his own views of how much sense--and he was willing to go any way



that Eisenhower was going to go and he was going to help to make a success of it, obviously, if Ike decided to go.

SOAPES: As a faculty member here at Columbia, what was your assessment of Eisenhower's performance as President?

GINZBERG: Well, I had a very unusual relationship to him, so it is completely different to what was going on here. I saw Eisenhower two to three times a week. The fact that he asked me, before he came here but after he had accepted the post, that if he came he wanted to develop this Conservation of Human Resources Project, which I direct. And he played an honest-to-god active role in the planning of that. I have multiple drafts of his that he worked over of a letter that he was going to send out to people to ask their reaction-- fifty leaders of the country that he was going to pick--everybody from Cardinal Spellman to labor leaders. So I had a view of him on the seriousness with which he was approaching this problem. His capacity to contribute to thinking his way through this, and the pleasures that I got of working with him--of course, it was very real and no nonsense--but the rest



of the campus, that was a quite different matter. As a matter of fact, I suppose I began interpreting and apologizing for Eisenhower. The intellectuals always thought he was a very simple person. Not of their class. All during the eight years that he was in the White House. I spent a kind of miserable social existence. It had nothing to do with whether I agreed with or didn't agree with his opinion, but I kept saying to everybody among his critics, "You're just silly. This is a man of very real competence and capacity. You may not like what he wants to do, but he knows what he wants to do; and you've just got to give him credit. You just have no picture of the capacity of that man." So I was constantly--my wife used to say, "For God's sake, you don't get paid for doing this. Why don't you stop?" Well, I said I just couldn't stand it because, while I had tremendous differences with Ike all during those eight years--all kinds of policies--I never had any delusions that he wasn't competent and making competent judgments within his value system. My value system was different from his in many regards. But around here it was just, by-and-large, not a successful incumbency. But in fairness, I once figured it out. It was a very short incumbency. He was here a relatively few months before he got tangled up with taking over this





Joint Chiefs of Staff for Forrestal. So that was bad. He was spending two days a week in Washington and commuting. Then he took ill, so he had another six weeks out. And I would say, I think, if one adds up the effective days that Eisenhower was on duty as President of Columbia, it would be considerably under eighteen months, in terms of effective time. And I would immodestly say that he did three or four things that left some impact on the place. He was an important party to getting this Arden House estate from the Harrimans. And had the conception of the American Assembly, played a key role with Phil Young in establishing that and it became a most successful contribution to continuing education in the big sense. And it was an imaginative thing and he played an important part in that. He played a role in trying to get a peace chair at Columbia, but I don't think that the full endowment ever came in. But he did something in the arena of international relations and got a piece of that chair. I've forgotten--I think it's called the Silver Chair--but the money that he hoped to get for that never came fully to fruition, as I understand it. But there was some--he made some contribution there.



There is no doubt that I am the major recipient of his Columbia presence. This was a lasting contribution he made to the University. I was the instrument. I played a large role in it, but it never would have come to be without Eisenhower. He first gave me a whole new sense of vision of what I could do with this. I would have been much too modest. I was a small-scale, inter-disciplinary director of research and I might have doubled and tripled my budget, but he really saw it in the large and played a major role. And I always felt very good--and he got considerable pleasure out of that. He knew that this came off and it was something concrete. And that it was lasting. And that's very nice. That was always the major positive note between us, that he gave me the opportunity and I delivered. And that was a very nice kind of relationship. And General Snyder was very critical because he really was the go-between and kept Eisenhower informed on all of this. The other thing that he did that was less academic but very important for the University. He restructured the board and began to restructure the central administration, so that he got some people off the board for age and he added



some new rules and regulations. He brought [William S.] Bill Paley on and a few other people, and he began to reorganize the central administration, bringing in a vice president for development, and so on. So the place began to move a little bit. Unfortunately, as I say, it was a very short period and therefore it was easy for the professors to keep sniping, because his presence was not really felt in any significant way. Harry [James] Carman became close to him and there were a few people who got close. I think that Eisenhower's great mistake, which he knew about and which I reported on, I think, in the other interview, was the selection of Kirk, which was done precipitously and without enough caution and did not do the University much good. But I think that's what really was involved. He might not have, I think, made the mistake about Kirk had Ike not been under so much pressure. I think Eisenhower had enough instinct of workmanship that he didn't like to not carry out his job effectively. I think he felt he was not very effective here. And I think part of that blame he put on Truman and it



is true. So that was not a very happy situation.

[Interruption]

GINZBERG: --was my old dean, Phil Young. They both came into the University at about the same time. Philip Young was also not a real academic and I think Eisenhower felt easy with him. Phil Young was the son of Owen D. Young and liked Eisenhower personally. Phil's wife had considerable grace as a hostess. So they were able, as two outside couples, to sort of get into relationship with each other. And the fact that Young and I were very close and that Eisenhower finally said to Phil, "Will you go and help Eli get this conservation thing going," was another binding point. I brought Snyder and Young together, so that was further cement. So we were kind of an inter-supportive group of Eisenhower. What happened is that [Albert Charles] Jacobs, who had been his first provost, left to go to Denver. I don't know, but it was clearly Jacobs' feeling that he was not getting a clear room to operate as provost and it was too difficult. I never really got a clear



view of that, of what was so unhappy from Jacobs' point of view that he moved away. Maybe he felt that Eisenhower was not really attending adequately to the University affairs, or wasn't permitting him to be fully in control. But Jacobs was not that kind of a restive soul, I would have guessed, but it didn't work out. I never really knew that story. Somebody may know just what didn't work out. It may be that Eisenhower didn't care much for Jacobs, which I could understand, because Jacobs was a kind of flat personality, and that may have been all that there was to it, and Jacobs may have sensed that. But he left. The Kirk thing was an unhappy affair in terms of the University. It just didn't work out. So I think what one simply has to say is that this was, basically, a kind of democratically-oriented, professorial group; quite snobbish, quite intellectual, who had their noses very out of joint by virtue of the way Eisenhower came here, and very few people gave him the time of day. It was just not a very happy state. Moreover, the one way that he could have cemented himself with the faculty, he really never had enough time, and that was to bring in big money.



Any president of this university at that time, or at any time since, who would have brought in lots of money, would have been forgiven for whatever intellectual limitations he had, if he had any. That was not the issue. But to have a president who was not in a major academic tradition, and not to have him bring in money, what did you need him for? And who was viewed as maybe using the University as a base for other activities. So everything conspired to lead this to be an unhappy time. It was unhappy. Mamie just went into a complete funk. She really didn't get out of her bed. So I think that's what it looked like. Ike had not much pleasure from it. Now I think one of the additional problems was that the people around Ike--the immediate staff, [Robert] Schulz and [Kevin] McCann--were not as savvy as they might have been. Schulz obviously didn't know how to operate around a university and really wasn't supposed to. But McCann didn't find it too easy because his problem was the protection of Eisenhower and the advancement of Eisenhower. And I think that someone who had had more university roots, who would have said, "General, let's do this tonight or let's do that." "--Eisenhower



had enough curiosity that one could have had a quite different relationship between him and his campus. But it would have had--and that's what Carman tried, finally, to establish. And Carman had the personality and was able to do that with Eisenhower, but it was very late and not enough. By that time, he was caught up with too many other things. Just caught. Because [it was] quite clear that the amount of time that he spent on getting my project moved indicated that there was a possibility for him--and the success he had with Arden House--indicated that there were things that he could do, that engaged him, and that interested him. But he would have needed a staff that was close in, that would have given him a chance to sort of find himself in these areas.

SOAPES: Did that interregnum, when he was at NATO and it was essentially Grayson Kirk and John Krout who were running the University, was the University then left in limbo without leadership?

GINZBERG: Well, I would put it more generally. My views--  
I've been on the campus fifty years since I was an undergraduate



in 1927, so it's the fifty-first year that I'm here. I would say this university, in terms of effective leadership from the time that [Nicholas Murray] Butler had the stuffing knocked out of him by the depression of 1930--Butler was the great architect of modern Columbia. He was a fantastically successful president. Not a very likeable guy but a tremendously successful president. By '30's--he never recovered from that depression, and then he started to fail and got old and blind and deaf and it was just godawful. From 1930 on, until 1970 when [William J.] McGill came, as far as I'm concerned there was no leadership in this university. So the question of the Krout interregnum--I mean, Kirk-Krout affair, when Kirk became president--there was no change, there was no leadership either. [Laughter] That's a little severe. But I would say, for all practical purposes, the last ten years of Butler, or more than the last ten years, because I don't think he got out til about '43. Then we had an interim president by the name of [Frank Diehl] Fackenthal. Then we had Eisenhower, who as I said was not here 18 months. Then we had an interregnum. And then we had a very weak president, Kirk.





Then we had Andrew Cordier, who put the university back together. That first year was an extraordinary job, '68-'69. I always remember, as senior advisor, Cordier did a spectacular job. The second year, he did less well. He was really a crisis president. He did beautifully that first year, but it was very short. He was president only two years and then McGill came. So I would say, in any meaningful sense of the term, Eisenhower was not conspicuous by--[Laughter] I would say Eisenhower has nothing to be ashamed of in terms of the record, because nobody did any more in eighteen months, or eighteen years, around here. [Laughter] It was just an unbelievable open period. The inertial capacity of the university to survive was based upon the fact that the deans are very powerful at Columbia. So the law school was able to go on, the medical school was able to go on, the business school was able to go on, the journalism school was able to go on, by virtue of strong deans. Otherwise, it would have been impossible. But it was not good for the university to be without a head, effective head.



SOAPES: We've covered a good deal of ground now in these two sessions, separated by three years. Is there anything else that you would like to get into the record?

GINZBERG: Well, I would say that Eisenhower has always remained to me a person to whom I responded at many different levels. When he was relaxed and we had a chance to just deal with non-argumentative subjects, or even work subjects like conservation, he was an extraordinarily attractive human being and very bright and very positive. One of the times that I remember in particular was when I was at SHAPE visiting. Snyder arranged--Ike used to paint on Sunday mornings--and I spent two hours with him while he was painting, just chatting about Columbia, about this, about that, telling him about what I'd learned in Germany. I'd gone into Germany. He was interested. And he was relaxed enough. I didn't want anything from him and he didn't want anything from me and he was an extraordinarily attractive person. He never was easy about me. I was much too smart not to know that, because he knew that I insisted upon making my own judgments about him. And he knew that. And he knew they were not fulsome, praising judgments. I think he



respected me for that, but there was always that underlying tension. I was not like, you know, all the big, rich friends. They were all "Mr. General," "Mr. President," and so on. That was not my status towards him, and he knew that from the record, because I kept sending him all these memorandums. I practically sent a memorandum a week all through the eight years he was President, and usually to nudge him to do something he didn't want to do. So I was still welcomed to do that, but that was at that level. Secondly, I always felt that it was a shame that he hemmed himself in so heavily with what I would call the captains of industry after he came back to the United States, because I had a feeling that Eisenhower was a very quick learner, depending to whom he was exposed to. And had there been more balanced exposures, there would have been different reactions on his part. You know, he made that statement about he was opposed to national health system because it was like being in jail, or some very unfortunate comment. Here was a man who had lived all his life off of national health system--the Army medicine--and that never would have happened had he had any smart person that he was



knocking this around with for ten minutes. So I always felt that this was a man very high in intelligence and basically good leadership responses, but whose tabula rasa was just too--just didn't have enough information. It really went back to his Abilene youth and to West Point, which was a very antiquated institution when he went through. He obviously became alerted to a lot of things later on in the Army and elsewhere, but he was really an untutored person from many points of view. Much better on politics because he had lived that life and had learned a lot of things about Europe. Interestingly enough, that was the same response that I think a lot of other people [had], who were both critical of Eisenhower in terms of some dimensions of him but who also had great respect for him. Ben Gurion's view of Eisenhower is not that different, because he found him a man of great warmth, great intelligence, great sensitivity, and great lack of knowledge about a lot of pieces [Laughter]. And that's what I was always running into. I did feel that the way he ran the White House, which I watched carefully--and that he was unable to take his friend [Walter Bedell] Beetle Smith and find a way of really using him



effectively was, I thought, most unhappy because here was a man of that quality that Ike should have been able to use. The relationship between Eisenhower and Dulles, very complicated. I think I have in that first piece that one night at dinner, when Eisenhower had these soirees with his friends, he got called away. And I remember his coming--he was away for forty minutes or thirty minutes on the phone and he didn't like that--and he came back and he said, "I don't know whatever history will say about Dulles; he's sure the goddammedest, hardest working Secretary of State I know." That was an ambivalent relationship. I think, Eisenhower, because he really didn't want to carry too much, let Dulles carry more than he should have. And that was the problem in the way in which he structured the whole of the White House. Why, Eisenhower was really much better than anybody else! But that was the energy problem, and that's why I felt that my original insights of early '50, when I said to him "You're really too tired to do this job, because you really don't know what the demands will be." And that was always a great unhappiness to me, because I felt that he really was better



than the people around him. And still couldn't make the investment of gathering the knowledge and information he needed to use his own very good intelligence, which was very high. On the whole question of the McCarthy period, in which I was bugging him a lot, [Laughter] of course, that was a very unhappy thing. I think he did really quite well. He took a view that the last thing in the world he must do was to get into the gutter and have a slugging match with that slimy fellow, because that would just add grist to his mill. Because if you get the President in there slugging with you, that just gives you more exposure. I think it also fitted his preferences not to go and get into that slugging match, because that meant that Nixon did the dirty job, finally. And that meant he became beholden to Nixon. That was a source of constant anguish to Eisenhower. See, he really wanted to dump Nixon. There's just no question about it. But he also had a sense of commitment that if you asked a man to do all your dirty jobs, and then to kick him out; Ike just wasn't that tough. Now that's a major weakness of Eisenhower. He really wasn't that tough. In the war, when



a general in London breached security he could get rid of him, but short of that he really was not a very tough guy, in the sense of taking strong personal action. He suffered with this guy Wilson, and he suffered with a lot of people. So that the question of what it takes to be up there at the top, I think Eisenhower was a little too human. And that's at least a friendly kind of failing from my point of view. See, I think Roosevelt could lie, look you in the face, do all kinds of things, and never think twice about it because it was always the question of how do you get from here to there. Eisenhower was not that calculating. He was really not that calculating and didn't really want to take on human beings to whom he was indebted or friendly with, unless it was just gross incompetence and he felt there were no maybe's about it. So I felt there was a soft streak there, which really served him poorly. See, he also never was willing to level with the trustees at Columbia. He had a correct opinion of Kirk, very quickly, but he really didn't share that. So that's a failing as far as I'm concerned. You really have an obligation, I think, to institutions that transcend the obligation to individuals. But there is no use--I mean,



people are built differently. Most people in political life are softies in my opinion. I think the really great political figures are figures who really feel that they are entitled, really entitled, to make decisions in terms of some kind of a concept which is logical and must be able to surmount these human feelings. Well, so this comes out as both positive and negative, as far as I'm concerned, with Eisenhower. I'm not altogether clear in my own head as to whether he ever sat down at the beginning of his two terms--and I'm convinced if there hadn't been that congressional amendment, which he interpreted, you know, to say you ought to go out, he'd have been President forever. That's my feeling. Because he really protected that relationship between himself and the American public very carefully. What I don't know, and am not satisfied with, is whether Eisenhower really thought through fully, at the beginning, what he wanted to leave as President, or whether he just played it semi-ad hoc as he went along and was quite satisfied at the end that he had not done anything bad. He kept the country involved in its international commitment, which loomed very large for him. He knew that. Didn't want to do any crazy experiments on the domestic side. So that





I think what one had was his conservatism and his caution. He had a very modest program for himself, probably didn't need a great big set of challenges. It just came out nicely, but I did have a feeling that Eisenhower never put, basically, his Presidential prestige on the line for anything. And that's an interesting point. He didn't really put it on the line. I think he would have put it on the line for something on the international front, and had he been forced to do that. He fortunately didn't reach that crisis. I think that's the one thing that would have gotten him to say, "OK, I don't care what they think about me. This is so important, I'll pull the plugs." But he never did that. He didn't have to on the international front which was crucial. I don't think there was anything else that he wanted that badly. But it is interesting. I think most Presidents eventually become spendthrifts and really use up the good will that they go in with. Eisenhower didn't! Eisenhower left with as much good will as when he went in. That's a quite fantastic performance when you figure it! I don't know if there's any other President who ever did that. You know, I'd have to think back, and I'm not that much of an American historian. But he left with almost as much goodwill as



he went in with. He did move in Little Rock, but it was clear that he was moving on some very important federal principle and nobody could have objected to it. We'd been through the Civil War. We weren't going through another Civil War. So that was semi-easy. He didn't like it, but it was semi-easy. I mean, once the governor set him up that way--but it was interesting. So he really was--you see, I think underneath, interestingly enough, he was a modest person. I don't think he had any great ambitions as president. I don't think he had any great delusions of what he was supposed to do, and therefore, I think he realized he had had a great accomplishment. He was a great leader in that war, which he obviously was. I think he felt he was doing pretty damn good as President. It was a troublesome job for him; he never felt at ease with it. And he couldn't be at ease; but, you know, I think on balance he thought he was doing all right. He ran a second time. He could obviously have used health to excuse himself, but he didn't. For he made his peace with that, but he never got great kicks out of it. And I think he was basically modest, when all was said and done. And that was quite an important



quality because it's very easy to lose your head. Very easy to lose your head. But he really didn't. And so we have in Ike a very complicated being, very complicated. I haven't seen the beginnings--I don't know if there's even half a biography yet that captures him. And he would not be easy to capture.

