VOL. 14, NO. 3 / WINTER 99

MILLER CENTER REPORT

A Publication of the Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia

THE REPORT OF THE MILLER CENTER'S NATIONAL COMMISSION **4**
On The Separation of Powers

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL HISTORY: A CONFERENCE
Thinking about Political History **5**
The Questions, the Methods, and the Audiences **10**
Writing History: Neglected Methods and Subjects **12**

THE PRESIDENTIAL RECORDINGS PROJECT **14**
JFK and the Mississippi Crisis
McNamara and Bundy on Vietnam

LECH WALESA INAUGURATES THE KOSCIUSZKO CHAIR **18**

POLAND'S AMAZING TRANSFORMATION **19**
Ambassador Kozminski Reflects

JOHN SUNUNU LOOKS BACK ON A POLITICAL LIFE **20**

CLINTON AND THE NEWS MEDIA: SPIN IN REVERSE **21**

To Our Readers

As you can see, the Miller Center Report has a new look! We have redesigned it in order to provide you with more in-depth articles that reflect the broad range of research taking place here at the Miller Center. We hope that you will find it of interest, and we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,
Margaret Edwards,
Director of Communications
(804) 924-7889
me8n@virginia.edu

The Miller Center Report is a quarterly magazine covering programs and events at the Miller Center of Public Affairs. The Center is a non-profit, non-partisan research institute dedicated to study of the national and international policies of the United States, with special emphasis on the American Presidency. Address all correspondence to Editor, Miller Center Report, P.O. Box 5106, Charlottesville, VA 22905

PHILIP ZELIKOW
Director

MARGARET EDWARDS
Editor

TODD CABELL
DANIEL WARNER
DREW ERDMANN
ERIN MAHAN
Contributing Writers

TOM COGHILL
STEPHANIE GROSS
TOMI HUSZAR
Contributing Photographers

ANNE MATTHEWS
Designer

WEB: http://www.virginia.edu/~miller
PHONE: (804) 924-7236
FAX: (804) 982-2739

Happenings at the Miller Center

★ The Miller Center has added several new research staff in order to ramp up the **Presidential Recordings Project** that began last summer. Part of the Contemporary Political History program, the Recordings Project is transcribing and editing the White House recordings of the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations. Brief excerpts from the tapes will regularly appear in the Miller Center Report to give our readers a taste of this fascinating research.

★ Acting on suggestions that emerged at the inaugural conference for the Contemporary Political History Program (see pages 5-13 of this issue), the Miller Center is establishing a **Presidential Oral History Project**. The Miller Center has experience in such work, having sponsored and managed the most extensive presidential oral history effort conducted in recent years, a project focused on the Carter administration and directed by James Sterling Young. This new project thus renews a traditional dimension of Miller Center research, and Professor Young has again agreed to take charge of it. This large-scale project will collect material on the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations. President Bush has already pledged his support, and the Center, mindful of its successful past cooperation with the Carter Library, will be working closely with the George Bush Presidential Library in organizing and managing the project.

★ Scholar Erol Munuz has come to the Miller as a Research Fellow for four months to write a book on American aerial surveillance during the Cold War. Mr. Munuz is centering his narrative on the tragic shoot down of an EC-121 by North Korean aircraft over international waters in April 1969. The story of that shoot down, of the decision- making behind it and the resulting crisis sheds light on a dark but crucial corner of the Cold War.

★ The Miller Center Papers, a series of papers drawn from addresses presented at the Miller Center, are being published in a new form. The papers, available to scholars and the pubic both in thematic groups and as individual documents, are a documentary collection of reminiscences, analysis and advice by leading figures in American public life. They can now be purchased directly from the Center for a nominal fee. The Miller Center Papers catalogue is available in hard copy or on the web at **http://www.virginia.edu/~miller.**

★ The Center's home, Faulkner House, is undergoing refurbishment and repair. Last renovated in 1907, Faulkner House is receiving new plaster, carpets, paint and furniture. In addition, a feasibility study to construct a new addition to the Center is underway. ★

Who's New

MARGARET EDWARDS became Director of Communications for the Miller Center in October 1998. She handles all aspects of the Center's communications and outreach, including its publications development and press relations.

WISTAR MORRIS became Executive Director and General Counsel of the Miller Center Foundation in January 1999. He is in charge of all aspects of fundraising for the Center.

MAX HOLLAND joined the Center as a Research Fellow in December 1998. He is completing a history of the Warren Commission to be published by Houghton Mifflin Company. He is also working on recordings made during the Johnson presidency for the Presidential Recordings Project. He is a contributing editor for The Nation and The Wilson Quarterly.

EROL MUNUZ joined the Center in January as a visiting Writer in Residence through April 1999. He is writing a book about the tragic downing of an EC-121 reconnaissance plane during the height of the Cold War. In conjunction with this book, he plans to publish a case study examining the policy issues surrounding the event.

FRANK GAVIN joined the Miller Center as a resident Research Fellow in January 1999. He is focusing on international economics issues during the Kennedy administration for the Presidential Recordings Project. He is also conducting research on macroeconomic policy and the presidency for the Center's Program on Policy and Politics.

JONATHAN ROSENBERG is a non-resident Research Fellow working on the portion of the Kennedy recordings that deal with the Civil Rights Movement. He is Assistant Professor of History at Florida Atlantic University. He will be in residence at the Center beginning in July.

ZACHARY KARABELL is a non-resident Research Fellow focusing on civil rights policy during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. He is the author of What Is College For?: The Struggle to Define Higher Education, and Architects of Intervention: The United States, the Third World, and the Cold War.

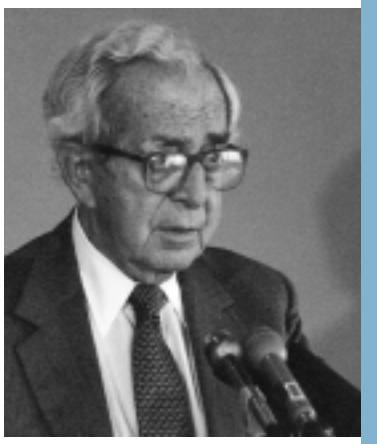
DAVID SHREVE arrived at the Center in January 1999. He is researching portions of the Kennedy and Johnson administration recordings dealing with economic issues. He is a budget analyst for the Louisiana House of Representatives. He previously taught history at Louisiana State University.

ROBERT D. JOHNSON is a non-resident Research Fellow. He is working on the Johnson administration tapes as part of the Presidential Recordings Project. He is Assistant Professor of History at Williams College. His most recent book, Ernest Gruening and the American Dissenting Tradition, was published by Harvard University Press in 1998. ★

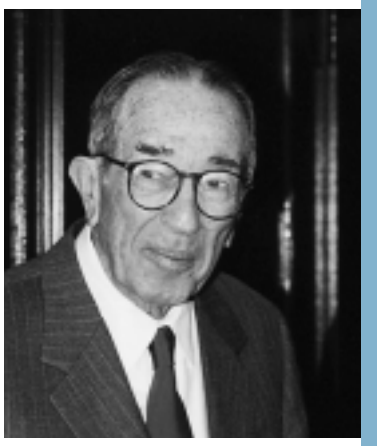
Max Holland

Frank Gavin

Miller Center's National Commission Releases Report on the Separation of Powers



Lloyd Cutler, Commission Member



Attorney General Griffin Bell, Commission Co-Chair

Howard Baker, Commission Co-Chair

BY MARGARET EDWARDS

The National Commission on the Separation of Powers, a bipartisan committee sponsored by the Miller Center of Public Affairs, urges that the independent counsel statute be permitted to expire next year under the five-year "sunset" provision. In one of the most dramatic statements on Presidential powers in the last decade, the Commission outlined five ways to reduce gray areas in the separation of powers.

Calling the separation of powers "one of the hallmarks of the American Constitutional system," the Commission strongly supports a clearer delineation of responsibilities to ensure that the system of governmental checks and balances unique to this country is not further eroded. The Commission, comprised of former members of government, scholars, and journalists, met Monday, December 7, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to release its report: The Separation of Powers: The Roles of Independent Counsels, Inspectors General, Executive Privilege and Executive Orders. The Commision's co-chairmen former Senator Howard Baker and former Attorney General Griffin B. Bell, and Commission member Lloyd Cutler answered questions from the press.

The Commission recommends that:

- The independent counsel statute be permitted to expire next year under the five-year "sunset" provision, and a narrower law be drafted;
- The General Accounting Office or other neutral agency periodically review inspectors general (IGs) operations to ensure consistency and to rein in IGs who exceed their statutory mandate;
- Congress reduce its demands on the Presidency concerning its internal deliberations and Presidents invoke executive privilege to resist unreasonably invasive demands from Congress;
- Congress narrow the provisions of the War Powers Resolution to require consultation with designated leaders only and repeal the requirement to withdraw American forces if Congress has not concurred within 60 days.

The Commission began its work almost three years ago, well before the current presidential investigation became a subject of national controversy. The report makes clear that the Commission's recommendations are not meant as a comment on the specific work of any independent counsel, but are rather the result of analysis of the subject as a whole. ★

Copies of the full 12-page report are available at the Miller Center (804) 924-7236. The report may also be downloaded from the Miller Center's web site: http:www.virginia.edu/~miller.

Thinking About Political History

On October 15, 1998, Miller Center Director Philip Zelikow and Harvard historian Ernest May opened the Conference on Contemporary Political History. Their remarks are excerpted here. The conference brought together eminent scholars, journalists and publishers to discuss "the state of the art" in political history today.

PHILIP ZELIKOW:

On behalf of the Miller Center and the University of Virginia, I'd like to welcome you to this conference. Although historians, editors, and journalists gather within their own communities, I have never before seen a gathering that brings these groups together.

You may be wondering why the Miller Center has convened this conference. First, we are starting a new Program on Contemporary Political History, and we are in the process of making decisions on the program's scope and priorities. We hope that the conference will help us define its mission. Second, we want you to have fun. By bringing together this diverse set of people, I hope that the exchange will be both interesting and educational for all.

First, let me address the scope of contemporary political history. Conceptualizing what "contemporary political history" does and does not encompass requires a definition of what is meant by both "contemporary" and "political." Starting with the term "contemporary," I offer two premises: (1) Most reasoning in political affairs is historical, as opposed to economic or legal; (2) Most historical reasoning arises from inferences drawn from contemporary history. From these two premises, the conclusion follows that understanding contemporary political history is extremely important and constantly alive in public discourse.

"Contemporary" is defined functionally by those critical people and events that go into forming the public's presumptions about its immediate past. This idea of "public presumption" is akin to William McNeill's notion of "public myth" but without the negative implication sometimes invoked by the word "myth." Such presumptions are beliefs (1) thought to be true (although not necessarily known to be true with certainty), and (2) shared in common within the relevant political community. The sources for such presumptions are both personal (from direct experience) and vicarious (from books, movies, and myths). For the generation who fought World War II, "Munich" is an example of such a public presumption; for the Founding Fathers, "Horatio" was a shared public presumption. The power of these presumptions derives from their role in facilitating conversation, analysis, and understanding.

The sources of public presumptions fall within four broad categories:

First, public presumptions can be "generational." They are formed by those pivotal events that become etched in the minds of those who have lived through them. These presumptions can be mapped with relative accuracy. The current set begins in approximately 1933, although the New

Director Philip Zelikow

"Political history is the history of how individual people or public organizations made a difference in public life."

Philip Zelikow

(left to right) Brian Balogh, Ernest May, Philip Zelikow, Joan Hoff

Deal generation is fading. The Second World War and Vietnam, however, continue to resonate powerfully.

Second, particularly "searing" or "molding" events take on "transcendent" importance and, therefore, retain their power even as the experiencing generation passes from the scene. In the United States, beliefs about the formation of the nation and the Constitution remain powerful today, as do beliefs about slavery and the Civil War. World War II, Vietnam, and the civil rights struggle are more recent examples. Different sectors of the nation—regional, racial or ethnic, and economic—may derive different presumptions from their different memories of such events.

Third, public presumptions often concern "dramatic stories plucked out of time," such as the Alamo, Pickett's Charge, or the Titanic.

Fourth, some public presumptions gain currency because they have a particular resonance for us today, either because they invoke powerful analogies to the present (Watergate versus the current Clinton crisis, for example) or because they offer a causal link and seem to explain "why we are the way we are today."

Taken together, we see that presumptions that remain "contemporary" are—with few exceptions from the 18th and 19th centuries—events and episodes from the last 60 years.

What constitutes "political history?" Political history is the history of how individual people or public organizations made a difference in public life. This conception does not include the history of changes in the private lives of individuals, but rather changes in their shared public life. Making a "difference" distinguishes history from antiquarian enterprises. And "difference," in turn, hinges upon devising a criterion for influence or significance. A possible problem with this conception of "political" is that it implies that if persons or organizations were not powerful, then they are not part of political history. Russian serfs, for instance, might not be considered subjects for study under this definition. Some object that this conception denies a voice to the disadvantaged and disenfranchised of the past.

Yet there is the pragmatic question of what a reader does when confronting a history of solely impersonal forces or impersonal masses, where he or she cannot point to the people or organizations that propel history. A history's narrative power is typically linked to how readers relate to the actions of individuals in the history; if readers cannot make a connection to their own lives, then a history may fail to engage them

at all. In slightly different terms, readers are drawn to histories that help answer how the choices of individuals in the past either "affect me" or "instruct me."

Finally, I would like to stress that the purpose of this conference is not to "bemoan" the current state of political history. Instead, it is meant to stimulate discussion of the extraordinary and continuing power of political history, its sources of strength, and of the public's huge appetite for more.

ERNEST MAY:

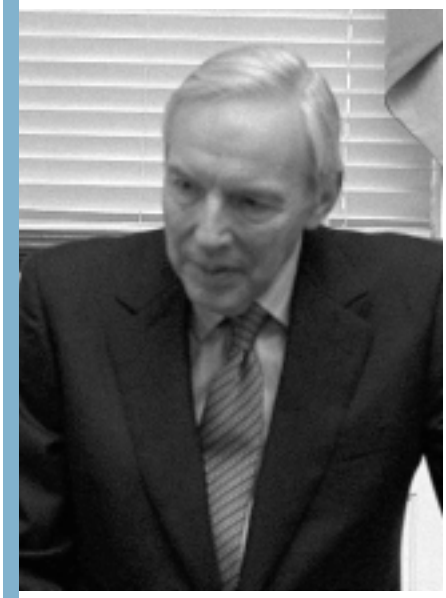
As guests of the Miller Center, our mission is to give advice on the new Program on Contemporary Political History. My comments this evening are intended to stimulate such advice. I'll start off with the idea that different cultures conceive of "contemporary history" in different ways. For example, during the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson complained to Clemenceau that the French were making demands for territory that had been outside of their control for over one hundred years. The French leader replied that Americans could not understand the French position given Americans' short history and, therefore, short historical consciousness. Textbooks serve as a useful indicator of how a nation defines "contemporary." In France, contemporary history textbooks start in 1815. In Spain, they start in 1880.

Herbert Parmet

We should not spend our time together lamenting the state of political history in the United States and in the academy. Nonetheless, there is a common perception out there that political history in the United States "needs a boost." Essays by Oscar Handlin and Marc Trachtenberg emphasize this, as do the contributions to the "standards debate" by Arthur Schlesinger and Diane Ravitch. There is a sense that political history is not well done in our schools. One example–after one of my lectures a few years ago at Harvard, one of my undergraduate students thanked me for finally making it clear why it was called "World War Two." After another lecture, a student told me she found the lecture very interesting, but that she was confused by the reference to the "Great Depression." "When," she asked me, "were Americans so depressed?"

That said, I'd like to offer four propositions—admittedly argumentative—to stimulate discussion and debate.

First, the points of complaint by Handlin, Trachtenberg, Schlesinger, et al. have more to do with symptoms than with a basic problem. The basic problem confronting contemporary political history originates in the cognitive reali-



Ernest May

Historians can do a lot more to make the public appreciate the usefulness of history."

Ernest May

ty that people retain knowledge that is either "useful" (in the sense of helping them with their daily or professional tasks—such as a salesman's or politician's need to retain names) or "interesting." Humans have different "bins" for information. There can, of course, be a connection between the two categories. The early public opinion studies of Samuel Lubell did not ask for an opinion on discrete issues; rather, they sought to identify what people knew about, what information they retained as salient to them.

Linwood Holton (right) with David Kennedy

The fundamental problem is that the claim of "usefulness" has been appropriated by social scientists—and historians have allowed this to happen essentially without challenge. For instance, when elections or the presidency are discussed, the media usually knock on the doors of pollsters or political scientists. To a lesser extent, historians have also ceded to cultural studies vital questions related to roots, origins, and identity. Historians have not asserted strongly enough their claim to "usefulness."

Don Oberdorfer, Max Holland, and Richard Reeves

Second, most historians have not capitalized on the public interest for contemporary political history. If you look at the figures the Miller Center put together on trends in book publishing, it is clear that people are interested. The popularity of memoirs or Paul Kennedy's work likewise indicates a popular audience for historical books. Most academic historians, however, focus on small subjects and write exclusively for other historians.

Third, historians can do a lot more to make the public appreciate the usefulness of history. The Thinking in Time course at Harvard and book has persuaded a small segment of the policy-making elite that studying history is worth the effort. Historians must be more assertive about the usefulness of their work to a broader audience. As the current economic turmoil reminds us, social scientists may be good at identifying correlations but they are terrible at explaining change. History's important contribution is to yield questions that won't be asked by others.

Fourth, despite public interest in contemporary political history, historians do not typically view themselves as educators or as writers. Lacking such a self-image, most historians do not approach their scholarship with an intent to engage a general audience. But we should. ★

Full memoranda of discussion from the conference may be accessed on-line at http://www.virginia.edu/~miller, or call the Miller Center at (804) 924-7236 for a copy.

Conference on Contemporary Political History

PARTICIPANTS

October 16-18, 1998

BRIAN BALOGH Professor of History, University of Virginia
JAMES CEASER Professor of Government & Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia
PATRICIA COHEN Ideas Page Editor, *New York Times*
JASON EPSTEIN Editor, Random House
DON FEHR Editor, Basic Books
JOHN LEWIS GADDIS Robert A. Lovett Professor of History, Yale University
JAMES K. GALBRAITH Professor of Economics, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas
LEONARD GARMENT Counsel, Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard, McPherson and Hand
HUGH DAVIS GRAHAM Holland N. McTyeire Professor of History, Vanderbilt University
ASHBEL GREEN Vice President and Senior Editor, Alfred A. Knopf Inc.
ALONZO L. HAMBY Distinguished Professor of History, Ohio University
GODFREY HODGSON Author and Director, Reuter Foundation Programme, Green College, Oxford University
JOAN HOFF Professor of History, Ohio University
ZACHARY KARABELL Author of *What's College For?*
MORTON KELLER Professor of History, Brandeis University
DAVID M. KENNEDY Donald J. McLachlan Professor of History, Stanford University
DONALD LAMM Chairman, W.W. Norton
MELVYN P. LEFFLER Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., Professor of American History and Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Virginia
NELSON LICHTENSTEIN Professor of History, University of Virginia
ERNEST MAY Charles Warren Professor of History, Harvard University
JUDITH MILLER National Correspondent, *New York Times*
RICHARD NEUSTADT Professor of Government and Public Policy Emeritus, Harvard University
DON OBERDORFER *Washington Post*, now in residence at Johns Hopkins University
HERBERT S. PARMET Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History, City University of New York
JAMES PATTERSON Professor of History, Brown University
RAYMOND K. PRICE President, Economic Club of New York
RICHARD REEVES Professor, Annenberg Center for Communication, University of Southern California
STEPHEN A. SCHUKER William W. Corcoran Professor of History, University of Virginia
EVAN THOMAS Washington Bureau, *Newsweek*

The Questions, the Methods for Answering Them and the Audiences

Friday Morning, October 16

At this session of the Conference on Contemporary Political History, Donald Lamm, chairman of W.W. Norton; Donald Oberdorfer, who spent 25 years at the Washington Post; and John Lewis Gaddis, Robert A. Lovett Professor of History at Yale University, made opening remarks from their perspectives as publisher, journalist and academic, respectively. Excerpts of their remarks follow.

"The days of the blunderbuss are over."

Donald Lamm

Donald Lamm, on the Subject of Political Memoirs:

Memoirs are a quick means of capitalizing on public prominence or popularity. Publishers must assess the market value, which is not always the same as its historical value. In fact, the two rarely intersect. On the whole, speed is of the essence in a publisher's negotiations for a political memoir because people want to read an insider's account while the events are still fresh. One exception to this was Dean Acheson's Present at the Creation, written 16 years after Acheson left office. The book was a modest bestseller.

Presidential memoirs are a special case of this phenomenon. The first yield from a presidential archive is usually a memoir. Like most political memoirs, they are done in haste. A premium is placed on the memoir telling the truth, but the memoirs cannot be relied upon to provide the whole truth. Next, volumes of the official presidential papers are published, which reveal more of the "true" record. The memoirs of contemporary presidents like LBJ and Nixon brush over crucial topics. Carter sugarcoated his. Reagan's memoir evoked sympathy. Top dollar presidential memoirs, from a profit point of view, must have at least one major "revelation."

I have four concluding thoughts about the present state of political memoirs: One, the day of the blunderbuss is over—length is a serious consideration for publishers. Two, there is a declining interest in public policy books and memoirs — fewer people buy them, and even fewer read them. Three, nice guys finish last. The memoirs of public officials who have not become involved in a scandal have lower market value and are less likely to be published than those who have. Four, in our litigious times, potential memorists are less likely to keep the kinds of journals and diaries that usually provide grist for good memoirs. Stripped of vivid contemporaneous material, the memoirs of public figures will earn an ever more secure place on the shelf of unread books.

Don Oberdorfer, on how a Journalist Writes History:

Current events are like an iceberg, in that only a small portion is easily visible to the public. The task of a journalist is to penetrate as far as possible below the waterline while the action continues. As a practitioner of contemporary history, it is possible to go much further to discover the inner stories.

When I begin a historical work, I start with what I know or can guess, based on my experiences and instincts. Then I undertake interviews and seek access to documents, tapes and other source materials. Because memories are fallible, it helps to have documents. Henry Cabot Lodge's personal notes of a crucial meeting with President Johnson, for example, were important to my book, Tet! But because documents omit the flavor and can be biased, it is helpful to have interviews.

When I am writing contemporary history, I ask myself three questions: 1) What am I trying to convey? 2) What is the material? 3) What form can best tell the story? I try to write in a way that is interesting and easily understood and at the same time will make a contribution to history.

John Lewis Gaddis, on Teaching Contemporary Political History:

There is a definite perception that contemporary political history as a subject is declining or being phased out on many college campuses. There is a distrust of studies of power, in part because of the lingering malaise of the Vietnam era. But I've observed no lack of interest in my undergraduate students. In my Cold War History class, I am using the CNN video documentary as a teaching device for my 380 students. I've found that this new medium can be far more powerful than a lecture because it allows the players to speak their own words. This accomplishes something important: it puts the younger generation in touch with its elders. I'd like to see contemporary political historians explore other new methodologies in telling these stories.

★

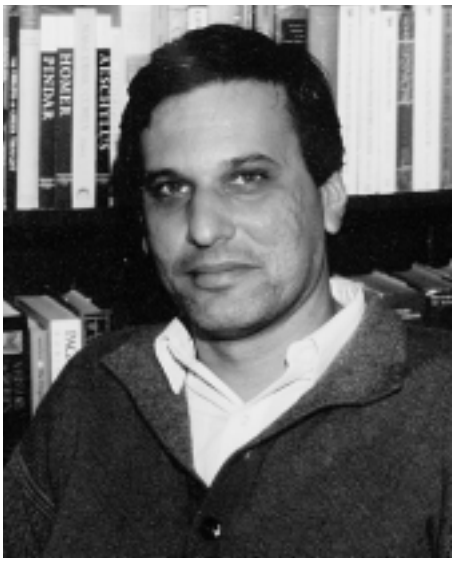
The memoranda from which these excerpts were drawn can be found on the Miller Center website: http://www.virginia.edu/~miller or by calling the Center at (804) 924-7236.

Writing History: Neglected Methods and Subjects: Who, What and Why

Brian Balogh, Professor of History, University of Virginia, spoke on the general issue of the historical treatment of policies, agencies, and judicial decisions on Saturday, October 17, 1998. His remarks are excerpted here.

Good morning. It seems to me that two major strands of debate have emerged in our discussion these past two days. First, what is political history? Is it just the formal and legal processes that yield collective consequences? Or does it include topics such as how agendas are formed and the consequences felt by those not directly involved in the formal policy process? Does it include "ideas," "ideologies," "mind-sets," and "mentalities" (terms that were hardly mentioned in the recent discussions)? Second, what sources capture political history? Documents, photographs, videos, interviews?

I'll use the historiography of the postWorld War II Civil Rights movement as an example. The story I was taught as a Harvard undergraduate in 1973 by Frank Freidel was a story of presidential activism, a story of JFK, a story of top-down change. About that time historical scholarship changed dramatically, however. Historians turned their attention to the Civil Rights movement and its leaders. The scholarship of David J. Garrow (Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 [1978]; Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference [1986]), David Levering Lewis (King: A Biography [1978]), Clayborne Carson (In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s [1981]), William Chafe (Civilities



and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom [1980]), Robert Coles (Children in Crisis [1967]), and John Dittmer (Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi [1994]) have propelled this transformation and now exemplify the new historiography. Central to the new story of the Civil Rights movement are the conception of it as a social movement, the influence of Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, the role of African-American churches and Christianity, and the legal strategies leading up to Brown.

This new story has been successfully disseminated beyond academia and has replaced the story of presidential activism. In essence, the story of presidential activism has been turned on its head. This bottom-up story, a story of charismatic leadership within the Civil Rights movement, has made its way into

the public consciousness in textbooks and documentaries such as "Eyes on the Prize." Now the common story culminates in the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, with things turning "sour" in 1968 with the Watts riot and the assassination of Martin Luther King.

What explains the success in disseminating this new story of the Civil Rights movement? Academic historians have not been primarily responsible for the dissemination of this story. Instead, this rich, gripping, and previously neglected story has attracted the attention of professional writers—such as J. Anthony Lukas and Taylor Branch—and memoirists. It is these writers who have communicated to a broader audience the new story of the Civil Rights movement.

But where are the agencies in this new story? The scholarship of Hugh Davis Graham (The Uncertain Triumph: Federal Education Policy in the Kennedy and Johnson Years [1984]; The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy, 1960-1972 [1990]), political scientist Gary Orfield (The Reconstruction of Southern Education: The Schools and the 1964 Civil Rights Act [1969]), and Abigail M. Thernstrom (Whose Vote Counts? Affirmative Action and Minority Voting Rights [1987]) tell the important story of professional ideals, interest group politics inside the Beltway, and the unintended consequences of political action. This story is equally vital to understanding the Civil Rights movement, but it is often complex, dense, and not intrinsically exciting. Even when students are taught this story, it does not stick. This portion of the public story has not penetrated textbooks or documentaries like "Eyes on the Prize."

The solution to this problem does not seem to be to teach Hugh Davis Graham how to write better. Such a solution represents a misdiagnosis of the nature of the problem. The problem is that the nature of the subject matter itself does not lend itself naturally to engaging stories. The historian's task in comprehending its inherent complexity yields essential information, but not an engaging story. Certainly some "lousy" scholarship exists and there is a need for more writing workshops. However, I must defend my earlier defense of specialization. Perhaps one thing the Miller Center could do would be to serve as a broker between professional historians and those who are currently working on textbook revisions or forthcoming documentaries. The historians could then offer their services to future projects. In this way material derived from rigorous, sophisticated, specialized studies—material that may not naturally lend itself to a gripping narrative—can be translated into a more popular product by writers or film makers. ★

Complete notes on the ensuing discussion may be obtained from the Miller Center webpage: http://www.viriginia.edu/~miller or by calling the Center at (804) 924-7236.

"The historian's task in comprehending [history's] inherent complexity yields essential information, but not an engaging story."

Brian Balogh

The Presidential Recordings Project

The Presidential Recordings Project is underway. Miller Center research fellows have begun transcribing and annotating the White House recordings of the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon Administrations. The edited, annotated transcripts will be published in book and electronic form over the next two years. We offer these two excerpts as a glimpse of the products to come. They will be featured prominently in future issues.

Executive authority must solve the problem of getting people to do what you want them to do. The following two examples show how the Kennedy Administration applied and appraised coercive executive power. In the excerpt on the Mississippi Crisis, we see the President as prosecutorial cross-examiner. In the Vietnam excerpt, Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy offer Kennedy their brief evaluation of preferred forms of dictatorship.

JFK and the Mississippi Crisis

In September 1962, the federal courts established 28-year-old Air Force veteran James Meredith's legal right to attend the then-segregated University of Mississippi. In the tense days before Meredith enrolled, President Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy talked several times with Governor Ross Barnett in a effort to secure his cooperation. Kennedy had three goals: 1) to see that Meredith was safely enrolled, 2) to avoid bringing federal force to bear against the citizens of Mississippi, and 3) to demonstrate, without ambiguity, the primacy of the federal courts.

John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, in telephone conversation speaking with Mississippi State Governor Ross Barnett, September 1962:

RFK: I think, Governor, that the president has some questions that he wanted some answers to, to make his own determination.

BARNETT: That's right. He wanted to know if I would obey the orders of the court, and I told him I'd have to [study?] that over. That's a serious thing. I've taken an oath to abide by the laws of this state and our state constitution and the Constitution of the United States. And, General, how can I violate my oath of office? How can I do that and live with the people of Mississippi? You know, they're expecting me to keep my word. That' what I'm up against, and I don't understand why the court wouldn't understand that.

JFK: Governor, this is the president speaking.

BARNETT: Yes, sir, Mr. President.

JFK: I know your feeling about the law of Mississippi and the fact that you don't want to carry out that court order. What we really want to have from you, though, is some understanding about whether the state police will maintain law and order. We understand your feeling about the court order and your disagreement with it. But what we're concerned about is how much violence is [there] going to be and what kind of action we'll have to take to prevent it. And I'd like to get assurances from you about that, that the state police down there will take positive action to maintain law and order.

BARNETT: Oh, they'll do that.

JFK: Then we'll know what we have to do.

BARNETT: They'll take positive action, Mr. President, to maintain law and order as best we can.

JFK: And now, how good is...

BARNETT: We'll have 220 highway patrolmen and they'll absolutely be unarmed. Not a one of 'em will be armed.

JFK: Well, no, but the problem is, what can they do to maintain law and order and prevent the gathering of a mob and action taken by the mob? What can they do? Can they stop that?

BARNETT: Well, they'll do their best to. They'll do everything in their power to stop it.

JFK: Now, what about the suggestions made by the attorney general in regard to not permitting people to congregate and start a mob?

BARNETT: Well, we'll do our best to keep 'em from congregating, but that's hard to do, you know.

JFK: They just tell them to move along.

BARNETT: When they start moving up on the sidewalks and on different sides of the streets, what are you gonna do about it?

JFK: Well, now as I understand it, Governor, you would do everything you can to maintain law and order.

BARNETT: I'll do everything in my power to maintain order and peace. We don't want any shooting down here.

JFK: I understand. Now, Governor, can you maintain this order?

BARNETT: Well, I don't know. That's what I'm worried about. You see, I don't know whether I can or not.

JFK: Right.

BARNETT: I couldn't have [the other afternoon]. There was such a mob there, it would have been impossible.

JFK: I see.

BARNETT: There were men in the street with trucks and shotguns, and all such as that. Not a lot of them, but some we saw, and certain people were just enraged. You just don't understand the situation down here.

JFK: Well, the only thing is I've got my responsibility.

BARNETT: I know you do.

JFK: This is not my order, I just have to carry it out. So I want to get together and try to do it with you in a way which is the most satisfactory and causes the least chance of damage to people in Mississippi. That's my interest.

BARNETT: That's right. Would you be willing to wait awhile and let the people cool off on the whole thing?

JFK: Until how long?

BARNETT: Couldn't you make a statement to the effect, Mr. President, uh Mr. General, that under the circumstances existing in Mississippi, that there'll be bloodshed; you want to protect the life of James Meredith and all other people? And under the circumstances at this time, it wouldn't be fair to him or others to try to register him at this [time?]

JFK: Well at what time would it be fair?

BARNETT: Well, we could wait a...I don't know.

JFK, Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy on the situation in Vietnam in late 1962:

JFK: The object of all this is to what? To try to conciliate this middle class in the cities?

McNAMARA: The object out of this for him [Diem] is to deal more cleverly with them, with less public visibility to the force he has to use. I thought that probably the most sophisticated analysis of the situation I received out there was from a Cambridge professor who had considerable contact with the area for a long period of time–decades. He said that in his opinion any other regime that replaces Diem would have to follow much the same program of repression, but that they could do it, he felt, in a much more sophisticated fashion. Without Madame Nhu, brother Nhu and the others constantly pushing it into public view. And this is about —

BUNDY: You're going to have an authoritarian regime, and the question is whether they make asses of themselves. ★

Lech Walesa Inaugurates Kosciuszko Chair

BY DANIEL WARNER

Former Polish president and Nobel Prize winner Lech Walesa visited Charlottesville on October 16, 1998 to inaugurate the Kosciuszko chair of Polish Studies at the Miller Center.

Addressing a crowd of over 600 University of Virginia and Charlottesville residents, Walesa stated, "I am deeply confident that the Chair which we are inaugurating today will allow us to cultivate our identity...without xenophobia. It will allow us to cultivate individualism without forgetting or rejecting social qualities. It will allow us to cultivate pride but without prejudices."

The chair, named for Polish patriot Tadeuz Kosciuszko, is funded through gifts from hundreds of private donors and the American Institute of Polish Studies. This effort was spearheaded by Lady Blanka Rosenstiel, chairman of that organization and a strong supporter of the Miller Center. An appointed search committee expects to fill the chair in early 1999.

Born and raised in communist Poland, Walesa began a labor movement for worker's rights that culminated in the Solidarity workers union. Despite constant threats and imprisonment, Walesa maintained Solidarity's momentum and emerged victorious in 1989, when Poland won the right to semi-free elections. Walesa was elected Poland's first non-communist president a year later, remaining in power until 1995.

Walesa said that communism's reliance on censorship made it doomed to fail in today's constantly shrinking world of instant communications. Although he did acknowledge that some communist nations seem to have survived into the digital age, he jokingly voiced his suspicions that perhaps America was maintaining Cuba as an "open air museum on communism."

Walesa cautioned that purely economically-minded politics will simply lead to slavery in the twentieth century. Rather, the world needs to devise a new system that respects life, dignity, the individual, and nature, Walesa said. People must always be allowed to interrogate the government's assumptions and never be forced to accept injustice. Asked how the U.S. could best support Poland in the future, he answered, "We need your generals: General Motors, General Electric!" ★

"We need your generals: General Motors, General Electric...."

Lech Walesa

Polish Ambassador Jerzy Kozminski and Lady Blanka Rosenstiel, President of the American Institute of Polish Culture listen to President Walesa.

Poland's Amazing Transformation: The Polish Ambassador Reviews Poland's Radical Reforms

BY TODD CABELL

Jerzy Kozminski, Polish ambassador to the United States, concluded the inaugural ceremonies of the Miller Center's Kosciuszko Chair in Polish Studies on October 17, 1998 with a discussion of his country's turbulent journey from communism to democracy over the past nine years.

Educated as an economist in Warsaw, Kozminski is a close associate of former Minister of Finance Leszek Balcerowicz, the author of Poland's free market economic reforms. Working with Balcerowicz in October 1989, Kozminski helped formulate the strategy by which Poland has transformed its state-run, communist economy into a free market system.

Poland faced substantial obstacles in its journey toward economic liberalization. Most financial institutions needed to be privatized and the country's banking system was in disarray. There were massive shortages of goods, a foreign debt totaling nearly 44 percent of the gross domestic product, and widespread environmental pollution. Hyperinflation in 1989 was as high as 2000 percent, Kozminski recalled.

"Our aim was to build a stable, competitive, outward-looking economy," Kozminski said. As they looked closely at the deplorable economic conditions throughout the country and calculated the resources needed to achieve serious reform, the Polish economists soon became convinced that they had to push through a radical, rather than gradual, program of reform. Basking in the glow of their newfound independence, the Polish public was willing to accept certain hardships in the short term. But Kozminski and his fellow reformers knew that the public's willingness to endure these sacrifices would dampen over time. As Kozminski and his fellow reformers saw it, they had only two choices: to succeed in rapidly implementing free-market reforms, or fail altogether.

On January 1, 1990— just two months after the first economic reforms were proposed—the Polish government launched its new economic program.

Despite changing governments eight times in nine years, Poland is the first post-communist country to achieve positive growth of its gross domestic product, Kozminski reported. As a result of aggressive economic reforms, inflation hovers around 10 percent. Heavy importation and a subsequent increase in foreign trade has eliminated formerly common shortages of goods. Between 1990 and 1991 alone, Polish exports rose by 70 percent, Kozminski noted.

Today, Poland remains committed to economic reform. In addition, Poland is seeking to strengthen its ties with the west. "What Poland really needs to complete her historic journey," Kozminski declared, "is to become integrated with all Western European institutions." Now that Poland has been formally invited to join NATO, Kozminski sees securing Poland's membership in the European Union as "the final seal" to the country's enormous political and economic transformation. ★

"Our aim was to build a stable, outward-looking economy."

Jerzy Kozminski

As Kozminski and his fellow reformers saw it, they had only two choices: to succeed in rapidly implementing free-market reforms, or fail altogether.

John Sununu Looks Back on a Political Life

BY DANIEL WARNER

On November 13, John Sununu spoke at the Miller Center about political life, leadership and American democracy. He highlighted the importance of personal action and open communication as he discussed his career.

Sununu first entered politics when he moved to New Hampshire in the late 1960s. "I was absolutely apolitical at the time," Sununu told Charlie McDowell during his television interview for the PBS television show, For The Record. "I was interested in American politics in terms of watching what happened in the process, but I had absolutely no interest in being involved in politics. But when you get to New Hampshire you discover it is a state in which people volunteer to participate in the process. It is the most democratic state in the country— small 'd.'"

In 1972, Sununu successfully ran for the state legislature. He became governor ten years later.

"What I learned as governor is that it really is very difficult to make good, solid policy in the public domain, because the process of making public policy demands a little bit more outreach in participation than private sector decision making," Communicating your goals and listening to those of your colleagues leads to better policy, Sununu said.

When George Bush decided to run for president in 1988, Sununu immediately joined the campaign. Sununu said that Bush's success in New Hampshire came from direct contacts with voters. Instead focusing on TV coverage, Sununu sent Bush to fast food restaurants and bowling allies. "Face-to-face campaigning is important," Sununu said. "There is a wonderful osmosis process that the press never sees in campaigns . . . not by television, but by neighbor talking to neighbor, and the president reconnected." Bush won the presidency, and Sununu was tapped to become the chief of staff.

President Bush also shared Sununu's penchant for open and active participation. Sununu said that the president's leadership style made everyone feel like they were an essential part of the process. Sununu also stressed Bush's focus on detail. From Bush's deft political maneuvering during the Soviet coup, to his personal work in designing the 1991 budget, Sununu believes that Bush led by action and constant communication— two factors which are the bedrock of participatory democracy. ★

"Face-to face campaigning is important. There is a wonderful osmosis process that the press never sees in campaigns"

John Sununu

Clinton and the News Media: Spin in Reverse

BY DANIEL WARNER

The mainstream news media has "ill-served the nation" from the start of the Clinton presidency by focusing on small, unsubstantiated scandals, **Robert Rankin** declared, and "the nation is worse off because of it."

Rankin, a Pulitzer-prize winning journalist, is senior White House correspondent for Knight-Ridder Newspapers. He spoke to a large audience at the Miller Center about President Clinton and the news media on October 30.

Calling comparisons of the current Lewinsky scandal to Watergate "ridiculous," Rankin characterized the national press as operating on a distorted system of values which prioritizes its role as watchdog of the federal government over its duty to report the news fairly and accurately. Media attitudes developed during the Vietnam War and Watergate have fostered scandal-seeking amongst journalists.

After six years of covering the Clinton presidency, Rankin said he is left with mixed emotions towards the President. On one hand, he believes that Clinton has achieved substantial success in bringing a measure of fiscal discipline to government and in overhauling the welfare system. "He tried hard to do what he pledged," Rankin stated, noting that Knight-Ridder's statistics show that Clinton has made good on 102 of 160 of his campaign promises, about 66 percent.

Whitewater, Travelgate, and the assertion of campaign finance abuses remain unproven "empty" allegations, Rankin observed. But the Lewinsky scandal has proven "beyond argument that Mr. Clinton's character is flawed." Still, Rankin criticized the media's treatment of the scandal as "grossly excessive," and attributed the overwhelming coverage of the story to "reverse spin."

"Reverse spin" is the process in which the media turns insignificant scandals into news, Rankin explained. During the first week of the Lewinsky scandal, the major networks devoted 67 percent of

their news programs to the topic. The scandal eclipsed major news stories on Russia's failing economy, the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, the fate of the tobacco bill in Congress, and instability in the stock market. Rankin predicted that the "reverse spin" phenomenon will continue, despite the fact that "the conscience of the profession is troubled by the way this has been handled." Only adverse public reaction can help thwart the growing tendency toward focusing on the latest scandal rather than on real news, he concluded. ★

Knight Ridder's statistics show that Clinton has made good on 102 of 160 of his campaign promises, about 66 percent.

Spotlight: Morris Joins Miller Center Foundation

"The Miller Center has a remarkable number of committed and generous supporters," says Wistar Morris, who has just been named to serve as the first executive director and general counsel of the Miller Center Foundation. "But the Center faces a critical point in its history, as expanded programs and plans for construction of a new east wing place new burdens on our financial resources."

Morris, who worked at the Miller Center from 1985 to 1987, graduated from Middlebury College in 1985 with a degree in Political Science. He earned his J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1989. Prior to returning to Charlottesville, Morris practiced business law at Fulbright & Jaworski in Washington, D.C., and then worked as an international business consultant at Vega Group Limited, also in Washington.

Morris hopes to institute a more organized annual and planned giving program. "Most of our donors simply write checks; I want to help make our supporters aware of more tax-advantaged strategies, such as gifts of appreciated stocks, gift annuities, and charitable remainder trusts," says Morris. "No one likes to think about it, but I will also try to encourage people to remember the Miller Center in their will." Foundations are another area Morris points to as offering potential for funding the Center's program and building goals.

"I am delighted to be back in Charlottesville, and especially back at the Miller Center," Morris said. "The people that support the Miller Center have such interesting backgrounds. It will be a real pleasure to work with them and, hopefully, help the Center achieve the goals it has set for the next decade." ★

The Miller Center of Public Affairs Welcomes Your Support!

Although part of the University of Virginia, the Miller Center receives no state funding for its research and program activities, such as Forums, publications, national commissions, the Presidential Recordings Project, and the Program on Policy and Politics. The Miller Center must rely for funding on its own modest endowment, foundation grants, and increasingly on private donations through our annual giving program. In addition, the Miller Center will soon launch a major capital campaign to finance the construction of the new east wing of the Miller Center.

If you are interested in making a donation to the Miller Center, or would like information on how to make a bequest or planned gift, please fill out this form or call B. Wistar Morris III, Executive Director and General Counsel, Miller Center Foundation, at (804) 924-7236.

YOUR NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

TELEPHONE: _____

FAX: _____

EMAIL: _____

I would like to make a tax deductible donation
in the amount of $_____.
Please make checks payable to "The Miller Center Foundation."

I would like information on:

[ ] How to give appreciated stock to the Miller Center
[ ] How to put the Miller Center in my will
[ ] How to make a planned gift, such as a gift annuity or charitable remainder trust
[ ] Other giving options

Please mail this form to: The Miller Center Foundation
P.O. Box 5106
Charlottesville, VA. 22905