

J.F. So can you tell me when and where you were born?

H.K. I was actually born in Namibia in (.....) in - on 17th. October, 1945 - and as my name indicates it's got a German connotation to it, but that is not to be (Laugh) misunderstood - I.... I come from a family which on my father's side goes back five generations and in fact goes back further - they came to Southern Africa as missionaries in - the first Kleinschmidt arrived in 1842 for the Rhenish Mission....

J.F. The which mission?

H.K. The Rhenish Mission from Germany, which was then based in Berlin, and this missionary, Kleinschmidt actually came to assist a missionary who had been sent there before in 1808 by the name of Schm eden (Schmelen) and Schmelen had arrived there under very interesting circumstances. He was invited by a group of Griquas to missionarise to them because they had fled the Cape Colony, having been accused of cattle theft and the British Crown had put a price on their heads and so they crossed the river, the Orange River to the north into what is Southern Namibia in order to avoid being caught, but they'd also been missionarised and so they were also Christians, and so they invited the local Wesleyan missionary from the Cape Colony to come and join them, but he was loyal to the Crown and didn't come (Laugh)

So they wrote away to other mission stations anywhere in the world and the Rhenish Mission in Germany sent them this what effectively is the first white man to settle in Namibia, and he in fact married a local woman, a Griqua woman with a maiden surname of Bahm, which is also a Xhosa surname, and my great great grandfather proceeded to marry the daughter of that couple, and so I have the (Laugh) burden to live with of having - being connected to the first white family that actually settled in Namibia 80 years before it became a German colony.

J.F. Did you see that (.....) book on the (.....)

H.K. No.

J.F. It's about those kind of experience of those Griquas - was this something that you were aware of from your early years or did you have to kind of later find out from your parents?

H.K. I was only aware of part of it, because the part I didn't know and I discovered as a teenager was that we had a black grandmother going back a few generations, but this was not spoken about in the family, and it turned out that my grandfather, for example, in some early photographs, and a lot of the family there had short curly hair - and my father, who was very associated with Hitler Germany, they destroyed all the photographs of the family, and the reason was obviously that they were embarrassed about the dark skin and - and hair that some members of the family had, and he denied it completely - my father wouldn't admit to this being so -

But I understand through discussions I had with other relatives much later that when he first joined the Hitler youth movement in 1936 or '35, I'm not sure, he had to prove his ancestry, and was apparently somewhat suicidal when he discovered (Laugh) that there was a black grandmother involved....

J.F. So did he manage to fudge it for the Hitler.....

H.K. So it was fudged like I think the majority of white families in both South Africa and Namibia do and used to fudge it, and it was very extensively denied, and when - during a political trial in which I was charged in Johannesburg many years later the Rand Daily Mail did an interview with me, and in that they did my history and I - a sort of a history about me - I spoke of this - I got tremendous flak from my family, from a cousin whom I have not spoken to since, and this goes back 20 years, I think, who at my age had just been married and his wife was expecting a second child, and apparently I'd really upset the whole family relations, not only with she not (?) happy with him having (Laugh) a black grandmother but he told me that I was lying, it was all made up, and besides that he was very worried and feared that the second child might turn out a bit darker than (Laugh) he had hoped for (Laugh).

J.F. So how did you come across the whole thing - did you.

H.K. I came across it in a history book on Namibia in which there was some talk of the family and where it was alleged that Schmeland, the father in law of Kleinschmidt, was living like one of the locals, and it said there, because he'd married a local woman, and that was my first indication, my first knowledge of this - and when I raised it, begrudgingly sort of family members would admit it, but I never had the nerve to ask my father straight out (Laugh)

J.F. So what did your parents do?

H.K. Well, I go very briefly through the family history - my great great grandfather was a missionary, and then his son who sur - he had many children but the son who survived was a mission trader in the service of the Rhenish Mission - and then comes my grandfather who was a mission farmer, and the mission had to sell these farms in the 1930's because of the economic crisis so they - he became a smith, a blacksmith and wagon maker in (.....) in Namibia, and my father, as a result had to leave school in the early '30's, and became a salesman, a travelling salesman in South Africa for a German company, and in 1936 was elected or chosen or picked, I'm not sure how exactly, to represent together with ten other youngsters from Namibia the German originated youth from Namibia at a Hitler world youth festival in 1936 in Germany -

And together with people, youngsters - German youngsters or people who claimed to be German anyway from all over the world they were sort of celebrated through Germany for a whole year, and he learned his trade there as well, which was really in machinery connected to winemaking industry -

And so he then returned to South Africa and worked in Cape Town for a firm where he at the same time or simultaneously was the leader of the local Cape Town Hitler youth, and he actually paraded down (Laugh) Aderley Street with swastika flag with a couple of hundred German youths behind him.

J.F. So wasn't also a (.....) who was actually known as Hitler youth in South Africa....

H.K. This was - these were not Afrikaans or English or not Greyshirts or Ossewabrandwag - these were actually people who calimed that they were German and that they were really the direct supporters, so this was, ja, explicitly Hitler youth, and when the Second World War broke out my father was in Cape Town and went to the German Embassy and volunteered to join the war effort on the German side,

H.K. and there was a boat apparently in Durban Harbour and he was planning to go there, but he was advised by the German Ambassador that the war would be won by the Germans within weeks and therefore it was not - it would take him too long to get to Europe because he'd have to go via Japan or something -

However, within weeks it looked rather different and so he lost his job in South Africa and returned to Namibia to (.....) and the South African security police was so inefficient that in Namibia they didn't have a record of him, and so he as one of, I think, only two German speaking men were not detained for the period - for the duration of the war, so he actually in spite of his very active engagement managed to remain free throughout the war years, and ran a little shop -

And then later, after the Second World War, he rejoined the very firm he had started off working for, which had then moved to Johannesburg, and when I was three years old we moved to Johannesburg and so I really grew up in Johannesburg.

J.F. In the firm - he was still a travelling salesman?

H.K. He remained a travelling salesman base - well, he later on became a sort of manager but essentially he was - most of his life he was a travelling salesman.

J.F. And this was also the manufacture of wine...

H.K. Well, they had all - they were really an agency for various German firms that were selling produce, agricultural equipment from - made in Germany and actually in other countries, in South Africa.

J.F. So did you get back to Namibia much or were you just in South Africa?

H.K. We got - I got back to Namibia quite a lot, yes - my mother still lives there today and went back there after I - well, after I had left home then my parents both went back and then my father died there many years ago, and my mother lives there to this day.

J.F. In (.....) - so when you were quite young you spoke German first?

H.K. Mmm, home language was German, yes, and I was sent to a German school.

J.F. Did you learn any Afrikaans?

H.K. Yes, in fact when at one stage in 1956 my parents were moved - my father's - the firm sent him to a town near Cape Town, Paarl, and I was put into an Afrikaans school there, so for four years I went to an Afrikaans school, and then back to Johannesburg back to a German school.

J.F. At the German school they taught Afrikaans or did you....

H.K. Yes, yes - in fact until the age of 20 English was my third (Laugh) language.

J.F. So were you in Afrikaans neighbourhoods or your friends were...

H.K. In Paarl we were but in Johannesburg, no, we were not - we were in English, and despite my father's attitudes we were in neighbourhoods which were largely Jewish like Highlands North and (.....) and so on, where our neighbours were definitely of Jewish origin.

J.F. So how did you feel ethnically - did you feel like a German South African or like a South African.....

H.K. I certainly in my childhood felt like a German South African - in fact when I was twelve, I guess, twelve and thirteen, I think, my father took my brother and myself along to clandestine secret Nazi-like meetings, like celebrating Hitler's birthday and things like this, and he was also associated with extreme right wing groups and he belonged to a secret organisation in Pretoria -

I'm not entirely sure today, but if I remember right it was an organisation called Paroselsus, which is a - I think it's a Polish doctor but the Germans used to claim that he was actually (Laugh) German, and I don't know what he invented - it was some historical significance to him but I don't actually know that -

And he also harboured an Austrian war criminal in our house for some time when I was a kid, who was free initially in South Africa but he was going to - a guy by the name of Suchek - he had been condemned or sentenced to death in his absence in a Austrian court for his SS activities, and my father was very au fait with that -

And the guy had come to South Africa to start an aircraft company at the same time as the South African Government was starting an aircraft company, Atlas Aircraft, and somehow this man - I don't know the actual reasons, but somehow this man got into his way - or into their way, into the South Africans' way, and suddenly he found himself in detention under the - actually held under the then 90 day law, and that was my very first experience of ever going into a prison was into the old Martial (Marshal) Square, where in later years I was to read about, you know, our (.....) comrades being held there -

But my first experience of that was taking food for this man being held there for weeks under a law but being an extreme fascist right winger, and was later deported, and who en route escaped from a South African Airways aircraft in Switzerland, I think, and went to Spain, and I've never heard again what's happened to him - it's a fairly murky history, isn't it (Laugh)

J.F. So when you were growing up did - what was the atmosphere in your house - did you feel different from - was it different from say, very right wing Afrikaaners or was there a specific....

H.K. Mmm, it was because I think my parents were racist in the sense that they also looked down upon Afrikaaners, you know, like as a German you were a cut above Afrikaans right wingers, and that was essentially actually based, I think, on a resentment of Afrikaaners who came into Namibia after the First World War, and as a result of the military take-over of Namibia were allocated land and farms and were taking over the administration and what have you at the expense of the former colonial German settlers, so they were very resentful of that, and obviously they, the Germans sort of in their superiority complex believed that they were running the show better than the new Afrikaaners who were then just arriving -

So it was very much based on a kind of hatred, and I think that was very much reflected in the way my parents would speak.

J.F. And how does that filter down to a kid - did you take that on - did you have the same feelings - say, for example, I ask the question to everyone - how do they relate to black people in their early youth - was that just a servant to you?

H.K. Yes - well, I should add a few things here because, for one, somehow my parents, or my father had not made out very well economically and so we weren't well to do whites at all - we were - in many ways had failed, or my father had failed, and I think he'd felt that throughout his life, so like we never owned a house or a car, and there were always sort of financial crises, and he was a very - well, alcoholic - he drank a lot, and that finally destroyed him as well, and that factor in itself created tremendous tension between myself and him and my brother and him at a very early stage, so we were fighting him merely at the level at which he was handling family affairs, but that had no political relevance at all - we just rejected him in that sense -

It also produced embarrassment for us as kids because we were made to look different - we were to wear leather pants which he'd brought back from a trip to Germany, and it made us stick out, and we resented that enormously - and we were always kept separate somehow, not in any forced way but somehow our social circles were only in German spheres and others were always others and we were, you know, to stick together -

And that didn't make any sense living in a modern industrial city like Johannesburg where our neighbours were English speaking kids who were either English and of Jewish origin or of Greek origin and - and we made friendships that way in spite of the fact of going to a German school - and so there were contradictions there -

And then at a rather early stage luckily, I think, my brother and I were identified by two teachers at this German school in Johannesburg, both of whom had come from Germany after the Second World War, and who saw it as their task to re-educate German children from their sort of - from the sort of Nazi-like things that were going on, and they started -

They couldn't do this through the school because the school was desperately right wing, so they started a youth club to whom they only invited a few kids to come and participate, and my brother and I were, for one or other reason which I don't know to this day, chosen to participate in this group. One of them was Peter Horn - you know, the artist, the poet in Cape Town University, the professor of German today and who was very - I mean who writes very committed and engaged poetry about South Africa -

And he was then a teacher at this German school and he chose my brother and myself to join this group, and that sharpened the conflict on a more rational level with my father and with the whole cultural milieu within which we were functioning. It wasn't only political, it was at all sorts of other levels - it was, you know, a debating group around issues of atheism kind of versus Christianity (Laugh) and -

But finally what they were really after was to challenge our right wing views from our home backgrounds, and we became very attached to them and we obviously wanted to be very attached to them, but my father started hating them very specifically and would not allow us to join the group, but his own - firstly the fact that he was travelling a lot throughout South Africa for his work, and because of his lack of control over the family because of his drinking habits, we sort of continued doing that without being specifically challenged by him - and that, I think, set me going initially, and my brother for the same reasons.

J.F. What age was that?

- H.K. That must have been from the age of 15, 14 to until we finished school three or four years later.
- J.F. And before that had you - what were your relations with black people - did you have a servant who worked in the house?
- H.K. Again because of the financial situation of my parents we couldn't always afford a servant, so we had one when my parents could afford one, and there again, I don't know whether I'm romanticising the point, but just before my father died, and he then had had two heart attacks I - I didn't expect him - I didn't - I don't think I did - I didn't expect him to die, but I wrote a long letter to him after a silence of two years, because we had fallen out very seriously at that stage because at that stage I was deeply involved in political issues, and in that last letter I actually explained to him that I believed that some of my values I derived from his education, and what I meant by that wasn't the symbols by which he was conducting his politics but I felt that he had a sort of justness in his personal conduct with individual people, and that included the woman who would come and clean in the house and so on, and he wasn't -

It was apartheid of course and she was treated second class, but he would never beat anybody or he wouldn't - in fact I remember - and what I think I wrote in that letter to him was that I remember - I was a kid - I was very small, but one of these images that you remember from a very, very small age was we were travelling in a car from Durban to Johannesburg and I think we were coming back from a holiday, and the black nanny of the house had come along, and I remember stopping at a filling station and a black man was lying under a car fixing it when the white mechanic came along and started kicking the black man, who couldn't defend himself because he was lying under the car -

And I think the only reason I remember the incident was because my father started pulling the white man away, who then started hitting my father, and my father started hitting the white man, and my father sort of feeling that that was an unjust type of situation.

I think these were sort of my very first - I can relate other incidents like that - I can't think of any particularly now, but there are things like that which I then explained to him and said, you know, there was that sort of fairness which I felt I could relate to (Laugh)

- J.F. But you had no other exposure - there weren't any other blacks that you've come across....
- H.K. Not at any equal level at all, none whatsoever, and I - there were other contrary experiences I remember - I must have been an early teenager when I was - my parents would never allow us to be, because of their sort of puritanical attitude, to be served by the servants of the house - you know, like we had to clean our own shoes and we had to make our own bed and we weren't allowed to be brought coffee or tea to bed in the mornings and you know, the sort of I suppose very typically kind of German attitude towards things - and so we had to wash the dishes as well and so on -

And I remember standing in the kitchen one night washing the dishes and I said to the black woman who was helping in the house that thanks for the pudding, I liked it very much - or food, I think it was, I can't remember - and at that moment my mother walked in and she said : What did you say to her -

H.K. And I was too embarrassed to express appreciation for her cooking in front of my mother because it seemed to be - you don't do that - and so I - I refused to say what I'd just said, and my mother then said :Well, then we'll have to sack her if - if you don't say what you were going to say in front of her - and so this became an issue type of thing and I reali - you know, those are sort of incidents where there was a very injust example.

J.F. And then - so mainly your actual thinking and changing would have come after the influence of this teacher at the school.....

H.K. In the earlier stages that was the only things - I was later on - I was still at school - brought into some sort of German debating group, and I remember my brother and I volunteering to prepare an evening's discussion on why - I don't remember the exact theme, but something which was politically challenging that group, and I remember the two of us reading furiously everything we knew about liberalism and (Laugh) sort of fighting these (Laugh) people and I think losing very badly too because we were ill equipped, and it was a rebelliousness more than - more than a thought through situation -

We were just reacting partly to this peculiar thing, which always seemed peculiar to me, that why should one be treating oneself so separately because, you know, you can't see what - what is it that makes you German - today I'm stuck with it because I've got a name that sounds German, and because I happen to speak the language but - but it doesn't make me German, you know - my whole experience and background is South African really, or Southern African, if you like.

J.F. So how would you describe - you kind of developed along the line of little incidents - but just maybe you can move us on to how you changed - was that older, when you got to university.....

H.K. Ja, it really crystalised much more when I came to university, and I was always quite eager and keen politically, and initially in a right wing sort of way, in an unco-ordinated - not in the vein of my father but I was definitely - belonged to the right wing - and when I came to university, for example, I got involved with what was essentially a social club of some sort which involved German and Afrikaans speaking students at Wits University -

It wasn't with a strong political motivation, and in my first year at university the NUSAS president was banned, and I was naive enough to believe that that was unjust, having been influences in discussion by NUSAS people, and tried to ensure that there was going to be a contingent of this society who would go on a demonstration protesting the banning, and all it evoked was a counter demon - I got six of us or something to go -

All it evoked was a (Laugh) very prominent faction of this club or society doing a counter demonstration hailing the banning of this NUSAS guy, and then - I think then a few political things became clearer.

There was another thing - in those days there were still three or four or five African students at Wits, and I got to know some of them and chatted with them, and that moved me politically - I don't think they must - couldn't have thought very much of me, but it was an opportunity that I - or an experience I just had never been exposed to, and I think yet they were, you know, people who were final year engineers and who were, you know -

H.K. I remember one guy very specifically and, you know, they were - they were much smarter than me and they knew what they were talking about and I was put in a corner where I was very unsure of myself - I don't know how objectively I experienced that, but I certainly know that that was the type of incident that shifted or pushed me.

J.F. What year did you go to Wits?

H.K. '66, I think, yes, up to '70 - I first did a degree and then a teaching diploma at the Johannesburg College of Education, and then at that stage I was thrown out because after my - well, aft - in my first year, I think, at Wits, yes, I was invited to participate in a NUSAS - what they then called a NUSAS leadership seminar, which was really training people to take up office in all sorts of little NUSAS committees or in var - it was a national thing so people came from all the campuses all over the country, and I fell in love with an Indian girl (Laugh) and I think that moved the whole thing forward again, you know, because we started going out together -

She lived in Durban and I used to go and see her and everything had to be done totally clandestinely and so on, and at that stage already I had moved politically quite far because I - but I think I was identifying at that stage with the - the liberal mode which was the dominant feature of Wits campus, and for me the sort of two poles of sort of - of the world were the reactionary world I'd left behind and now having moved into the liberal world of white affluent English speaking South Africa -

And I was closely identifying with that and I'd - I joined a NUSAS committee and found that very difficult initially when I was in my second year, I guess, because I was - if I look back I think what I found difficult was that I came from a rather poor background when the people I was working with and studying with were infinitely more affluent and could do things I could never do, and I resented that, and that expressed itself in their rather more adventurous lifestyle than for me - you know, life was a far more narrow (Laugh) path and I - I found that rather difficult, so I - I remember joining a committee and getting off again and then a few months later joining it again believing that, you know, that shouldn't affect me and so on and -

But I was aspiring or identifying very much with the sort of liberal imagery of - of - of - of what was going there - and then something else happened which I think shocked me enormously - at that stage I was regularly involved in NUSAS activities, but it was in '68 - ja, I think it was '68 I - my parents had moved back to Namibia - I was staying in a student residence, and I got a phone call at my residence, the university residence where I was staying, and somebody said: I need to meet you and I can't tell you other than that my name is - I can't remember - Peter or something - and you better report - or you better be present at that and that restaurant - it was in the total centre opposite the Wits university in a cafe and a steak house which name I used to remember - I can't remember it now - and at such and such a time -

And at the time there was a lot of right wing thuggery going on amongst the students, and I was scared so I told a couple of friends to hang around in that area whilst I went to find out what this person want, but who was very insistent and said I had to turn up, and I sat down and a man in a dark suit came and sat down and said: Look here, I'm working for South African security police, I know a lot about you, and we know your background, and now you're involved in NUSAS, and whilst we don't want you to spy on NUSAS what about spying on the university Christian movement -

H.K. And here were friends of mine watching through the window and sitting at other tables, and he hadn't cognited on that because they were keeping a very safe distance, and he went on and on and on and talked and talked and talked and said : Oh, you don't have to say anything, I'll contact you again shortly -

Well, he left and I left and met with friends and told them what had happened and they took me to the campus, and we got into a room with a whole lot of people and I told them what had happened, but I was petrified because I didn't know what was going to happen to me next, you know - here I'm sort of spilling the beans - would they come and, you know, do something to me -

Anyway nothing further happened and I just hoped that man would go away because I think I was essentially scared, and a few weeks later he did call again and I went immediately - at that stage I'd taken legal advice from a lawyer - I'd gone to Peter Randall, who was then working at race relations, asked his advice - I'd become quite friendly with him through my NUSAS work - I'd gone to the SRC president, Mark ~~Aukin~~, and I'd gone to the principal of Wits University, I.D. McRone (?) and so they all knew what was going on -

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And so I went for the second meeting just to tell the guy that he could shove off, and at that stage obviously the same restaurant was chosen - he said : We are going to a different place because your friends are hanging around here - and then I just said to him : Look, I've - we've got no cause to meet and this is it -

And what had happened was that the next morning - I remember it was a Saturday morning - I'd given a long interview to the Rand Daily Mail and it appeared as front page banner headline news, the whole story, because I wasn't the only one who'd been approached at that moment - there were quite a few people, and they'd all given their interviews - and I didn't tell the guy - you know, just said no - but he didn't know yet that the thing was going to break in the newspapers the next morning, and I thought I was terribly courageous (Laugh) and that I'd done a wonderful thing to sort of smack them in the face, but I was absolutely scared too -

But I think that again pushed me and at the time it caused a lot of difficulties for my father because I then became vice president of NUSAS, and I was approached by colleagues of his who I think were in their own right somewhere connected to the police, who told me that if I was to accept the job in NUSAS as vice president he would lose his job and he would get into difficulties, and he had already gotten into difficulties because in a strange way he defended me as his son, not politically but as his son -

And because the MP for Windhoek where they were then living had actually sounded him out, unbeknown to him, about the possibility of approaching me to spy, and he didn't realise what they were asking him, but he felt very deceived by that type of thing - and so he'd spoken about that and he was told to shut up by basically his boss, I think - and later on he did lose his job, which might have been connected to some other things in his personal life as well, but it was partly that, you know, there was this sort of revenge on a son, and maybe two sons who were doing the wrong kind of thing -

And well, I think those were terr - those were testing me - those were incidences or instances which tested me severely, and I then had a sort of - made another jump politically, I think, because in spite of what I thought had been an honourable and correct thing to do, and I suppose in my own way I thought quite a heroic thing to do - I kind of thought it was the right thing, you know,

H.K. to do, and the more sophisticated people, students at Wits who came from their liberal backgrounds they then started looking at me and said oh, that guy with that history - maybe this is just a ploy by the police to identify the thing in public - maybe he's saying that in order to get into the centre of NUSAS and yet he is their agent - and that philosophy became kind of pretty widespread in certain Wits circles -

And I remember walking into the canteen to the table where I'd sit with friends and everybody - and I thought they were friends - and everybody'd keep quiet and wouldn't say a word, and I'd be excluded from meetings and so on, and I think what that evoked in me was a real need to - to rehabilitate myself on my own terms - I wanted to show that I was who I truly was and that they'd have to respect me without my having to beg for it -

And in more than one way I think that pushed me into taking on a more political role and pursue things, and I think a year or two later I was - worked hard to be accepted as - or be voted for as NUSAS vice president at a NUSAS conference - and after we'd finished studying I found a lot of the liberal English well to do fellow students to drop their politics and go into business or to cushy jobs, and at that very moment I found myself having been chucked out of the education department because the Transvaal Education Department decided I wasn't suitable as a teacher with a NUSAS history like that, and I had a court case pending to repay them for my scholarship and so forth, and I realised that, you know, there was - they had been liberal whilst they were at university and now they were selling out, as it were, and I was prepared to carry on, and I guess I felt quite strong about that.

J.F. So you went to university in '67, you said?

H.K. '66, I think, ja.

J.F. And this experience with the police, was that early on in.....

H.K. That was '68.

J.F. And '69 was when the blacks walked out of NUSAS, wasn't it?

H.K. Yes - now - yes, that - that affected me quite a lot - I'd obviously come through the whole matter of this particular experience - maybe this other thing was in '67, I'm not sure now - however, at the NUSAS conference in '69, which was held at Cape Town University I had just been - I was not - I'd not - I was elected vice president at that conference, that's right, but I'd been - I'd served on the NUSAS executive from '68 to '69 as Transvaal regional director, so I served two years on the executive, one as director of Transvaal and once as vice president -

And my disillusion with the liberal white students was quite strong - I felt very disenchanted with that - and NUSAS' objective was to make the participation of blacks far bigger than it had ever been or than it had been at least for the past ten years or so - it had probably been quite big in the '50's - it had indeed been but it had disappeared virtually -

And so in terms of my task I set out to contact all the institutions where blacks were studying in the Transvaal, so I went to SACAD had a little committee somewhere in End Street - I went to the Transvaal College of Education for Coloureds, I went to the equivalent for Indian teacher training, I went to Hammonskraal to the theological college for Catholics, I went to Terfloeb and got arrested and banned from the area there by decree -

H.K. I went to all sorts of places and in the process met people like Abraham Tiro, subsequently sent a bomb in Botswana (?) and killed, but he was at the '69 conference - I met Barney Pitjana - I'd already met Steve Biko, although they were from other provinces, but I got very involved in the whole ambit of the black student movement, and through this girl friends I had in Durban I got involved with a theatre group in Durban called Black on White, which was Streeny Moodley, a now prominent AZAPO man (Laugh) and in those days a supporter of NUSAS -

And I met a lot of the people very closely who worked with - subsequently formed SASO. Anyway the achievement of my year's work as Transvaal regional director was that when the NUSAS conference took place in '69 there was a bigger black participation than there'd ever been, and in fact it was just less than 50 percent -

And there was a lot of fighting and haggling going on at the conference because the blacks felt, rightly, the same thing that I felt, which was that the kids from the very smart swish public school backgrounds were monopolising the congress debate - they knew all the smart answers and knew how to manipulate events, and others who had not come from that background didn't know how to assert themselves on the congress floor and therefore their resolutions were adopted, and that was the gripe that the black students had about NUSAS, correctly, I believe, to this day, and they walked out and formed SASO in response to what was in fact very substantial white manipulation in what was essentially a white student organisation dominated by liberals -

And my relationships with a lot of the SASO people, or subsequent SASO people had grown very strongly, and I retained the friendships with those people in the years after they formed SASO - I used to be very close to a whole lot of them and would stay at their places even up to the days in my Christian Institute days in the '70's - I would stay at Steve's place, I'd stay at the house of Streeny Moodley and Sats Cooper and - and - and I'd have a very close - I'd retain that relationship all through -

And they would come to stay with me when they came, either when I lived in Cape Town or Jo'burg at my place, so I didn't even in the Christian Institute days substantially challenge BC - I didn't see that as a problem - I did see it as a problem where it.....

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H.K. I did see it as a problem where it related to the forms of manipulation and - and - and well, types of reactions from the organisation which - which were racist or wrong - I didn't feel that they belonged into the context of the SASO organisation - I had a lot of problems with this because I was - from '69 to '70 I was the NUSAS vice president and therefore officially there were no relations between NUSAS and SASO, and I was even invited to Europe as a NUSAS representative, and found myself in awful situations, for example, here in the UK, where I was told to not speak - address the NUS conference in Margate, because they'd recently heard of SASO and why should there be a white student talking and so on and so on, and that was a big thing then (Laugh)

H.K. But that didn't impair my actual contacts with the people - I continued to have that, ja, and I have a lot of those friendships with some of those people - I had them all the way through - I of course don't have relations today with the BCM lot here but a lot of them date to - are my peer group and - and people I used to work with in South Africa -

I don't find it easy today to conduct relations with (Laugh) them but that's many years later.

J.F. So much we've gone over - let me just pick up a few short answers and then I'll get back to asking some longer ones - why did you go to Wits - was that rebellion....

H.K. No, that was also just circumstantial because my parents lived in Johannesburg it was cheaper for me to go to Wits than to go to a place where I also have to get residence.

J.F. And you were NUSAS vice president under which - who was the president?

H.K. Duncan Innes.

J.F. Now in terms of you having gone around and tried to connect....

H.K. Duncan Innes was in my first year - vice president I was to Neville Curtis, sorry.

J.F. He was the one who was banned?

H.K. Mmm.

J.F. The fact that you had contact with black in the time that was in fact the run up to the split - did you in any sense feel it coming - did you sense it at all - did people - you went around saying look, we'd like to have black involvement, did they say to you look, this is not the way of the future - or was it a surprise to you when they walked out - can you just tell me about that?

H.K. Yes - I saw - I saw the - I saw it coming - I think the tension was very explicitly there year, two years beforehand - it was always there, I thought - it had always been expressed, and it was a protest against a liberal student group who in fact had moved - the whole NUSAS political debate had moved to the right over the years - the debate was between liberals and conservatives, but in the 1950's the debate was a far more radical one, there were communists and there were liberals who were having it out and, you know, a left wing was there - maybe not communist, but left wing was there - and that was the level of debate -

So as that debate had moved right in NUSAS so the chances of blacks who were seeking to change - seeking change in South Africa were obviously not having a suitable platform here, but with that right wing movement it also moved into far more establishment forms of - of conducting its affairs - it was really the debating chamber for the kids from the swish schools in many ways, I feel - and it was coming, but I didn't expect it to form itself into an organisation in its own right - I wasn't party to that - I certainly was never taken into anybody's confidence that that was on the cards -

But I don't think I was the only one who continued to have good contact with a number of the people involved - there were a couple of us, and there was a feeling that some of the whites were not of the category that brought about the - the - the problem in NUSAS -

H.K. And I didn't ever feel that that was the point of SASO, and I remember even this theatre group in Durban when I used to go to the performances they would say ja, ja, ja, you know, it's merely for the image that we don't want you to be in the audience but come along anyway - we'll bring you in quietly, but it is merely that we need to make a political point to our black comrades now, and in the -

I remember debates with Steve Biko, who was quite explicit when he said : If it comes to the point of exile I know what I'm doing, and that is my allegiances are with the A.N.C. - and I felt that was closely - very much related to his belief in the non racialism, and I think he conducted himself personally in that way too, and there was no problem in my -

See, later on I had a lot to do with him because he was in that (.....) staff - he was - there was Peter Randall who set up Sprocas (?) - do you know about Sprocas?

J.F. This is what I want to ask about - maybe we should get into that - I want to hear about it.

H.K. O.K., but I'll come back to that - I want to just cover something....

J.F. Just to finish on the split - was it a shock - I don't know much about it - I just read Steve Biko led a walk-out, right - was it Biko who led the walk-out?

H.K. Abraham Tiro was the - was a chief actor there - Biko was there, Streney Moodley was there....

J.F. But how did....

H.K. there was another guy, I don't remember - I can't even put a face to.....

J.F. But I'm more interested in your reaction - was - did you feel at all like gosh, you'd spent a lot of time trying to get these guys and then they just walked out - what was the reaction with some of the other whites....

H.K. Well, I don't feel a sense of let down or sense of defeat, but I - I can't deny that I also empathised enormously with the people who - who walked out - I had politically at that stage felt that my material situation was closer to - my material situation was such that I had more affinity politically speaking to blacks than I had to the whites who were in NUSAS - it was easier for me materially speaking because they were also people who were not making out economically and I was battling to make ends meet as a student at (Laugh) that stage, and it was somehow easier for me - at least that was an element in it - I - that was -

I spoke in defence of what had taken place, whereas a number of the liberal students argued that this was black racism which should be condemned, and they were insensitive to what had in fact happened, and I opposed that all the way - I didn't find that difficult - I wasn't a prominent speaker or anything, you know - I wasn't a sort of big haranguer from the platform but my contributions were definitely against that type of attitude.

J.F. And just to get a bit of the history - then you carried on - you were still in NUSAS after the walk-out - did you find it - when you were working clearly with whites only, there was no effort to deal with blacks - did you have to reorient yourself or did you just....

H.K. Well, yes, of course NUSAS went through a huge crisis at that stage and we had a whole reorganisation and one which brought the organisation to the - to the brink of collapse - it was in very, very serious trouble because it was also the threat of the right wing taking over, and we had to work hard to avoid being sucked in by all sorts of other forces -

I was also quite involved in trying to get some Afrikaans students into NUSAS before this walk-out as well, but not with any success at all.

J.F. And then when did you go onto JCE?

H.K. I'd already done my year of JCE in 1970, so my - I first did three years of university degree - or in fact four because I'd redone one year - I had done one year at JCE and I had done my - my year as vice president was actually full time in Cape Town after I'd completed.

J.F. Which year were you full time?

H.K. That was - I went down - it was 1970 - it might have been half year to half year - it might have been half '70 into half '71.

J.F. And then after that...

H.K. And then after that I - I didn't stand again - I didn't stand for a second term, which a lot of people used to do at that stage, and I was unemployed for a brief period, couple of months - nothing really working out sort of because I was - I'd actually expected to become a teacher in the Transvaal, but they told me I could go to hell because I'd done various things which resulted in investigations into my involvement - for example, I'd been to the Durban and Westville campus of the Indian students who at the time were really oppressed in everything they were doing and they - there I became friendly with a guy who today lives in exile here in (Laugh) London too, who wrote an article about the conditions on the campus but he had no newspaper or any medium through which to publicise this, so I rewrote it and wrote it into our Johannesburg College of Education magazine and printed -

I was in charge of the magazine - I printed a couple of thousand extra - or a hundred extra probably, and drove them down to the Indian campus in Durban and they were handed out at night to students and overnight and so on, and the professor Oliver, who was the head of the university, objected strongly, and later on it was discovered that I was the author and that resulted in an appeal to the JCE authorities to investigate whether I was suitable as a teacher or not -

And then much later, because I required or requested a year's dispensation in order to do my NUSAS vice presidency year, they refused that and said I had already in fact broken contract and I had to pay them back and that couldn't be renegotiated and so - so I didn't have a job -

And then I got an invitation from Colin Eglin and Rob Peterson - his name was only interesting in that he was one of the leaders in the sort of faction in SACTU a few years ago that led the militant group - never mind about that - but they came to me and said.....

J.F. The Hempson people?

H.K. Ja, ja - they came to me and said : Look, we need a white opposition in this country, Susman is old, she wants to pack in - we've got support from Anglo American and others and basically we're establishing a youth structure and do with it what you like - we're appointing a team of five people and we'd like you to join it - and Peterson was the leader of that team, so I joined that team for a year, but didn't go very well because I - '71 or '72 - '71 there were - Abraham Timo was caught and subsequently thrown out of the window at John Vorster Square, and in the wake of that arrest there were nation-wide house searches going on and one of the places which was searched was my place -

And they found a copy of African Communist in my flat, and so I had a trial for having had that publication - the Progressive Party as it was then called found that quite unpalatable to have someone working for them who was caught with a copy of African Communist - I think there was another problem because when my local PFP or Progressive Party boss came to my flat he saw a large picture of Karl Marx hanging on the wall and I think (Laugh) that just about put paid to the whole thing -

So I - I - I resigned within a year and had joined the Christian Institute, so in '72 I started working for the Christian Institute.

J.F. What was this Progressive Party thing called, this...

H.K. It had no name - it was just the - they had a national youth director and regional youth directors, whatever we were called, and there were four of them and this national guy.

J.F. Now what was the view then - it seems like all the years (?) were being squashed down because - I guess they're parts of years but it would be '71 when the progressives approached you to join this thing, was it?

H.K. Ja, '71, mmm.

J.F. What was the view then on your part and of NUSAS of the Progressive Party - how....

H.K. Well, it was critical - no, I think there were a couple of people who were very critical of my doing so and who saw that as a bad move - politically retrogressive move - and there were others for whom that was just natural and normal....

J.F. Because what was the view of the Progressive Party?

H.K. I - well, it was - it was a - certainly the party of the - of capital, of - of the employers, of people in the upper income bracket suburbs - I didn't - I find that difficult - I found that difficult - I didn't really enjoy much of the company that I was keeping at the time - I think they felt the same about me - I think my heart was never in it - I think it went a bit bad -

And we had some notion that we could stage some kind of palace revolution in the party, but that never really materialised at all - I think it was a notion which was ill founded (Laugh)

J.F. And was there any contact with blacks at that time - did the Progressive Party have any kind of support from blacks or any.....

H.K. Not support.....

J.F. or any connection with blacks?

- H.K. No - well, it had connections because there were always links like to the Coloured Labour Party, and similarly in the Indian areas there were, you know, with teachers organisations, there were contacts and there were even - informally there were those connections, and Colin Eglin would be quite an agile sort of guy who had - who'd have another sort of framework around his social life where you would meet blacks and so on - he was quite sort of adept at that.
- J.F. You've talked a lot about your view of liberalism - was that the real break for you when your affiliation with them ended - was NUSAS liberal or was NUSAS always critical of liberalism....
- H.K. No, NUSAS in those days was - I think was liberal - was frankly was a liberal organisation, and they might have thought of themselves as being radical liberals because they were not more than that....
- J.F. Just in tracing your development, or more importantly really, the development of someone like yourself - I think what's coming out is a kind of : Correction - I think what's coming out is that there's a kind of a class position that lends itself to be critical of liberalism, but I'm just trying to see if that - how that relates to this non racialism theme.....
- H.K. Yes - certainly my political stand - my political views were way beyond the PFP at the time I joined it, right - I mean I wouldn't - I didn't - in fact technically I never joined the PFP (Laugh)....
- J.F. But for what reasons - just to get specific because I don't want to make any assumptions when it was a different situation then - would it have been because they just didn't support majority rule or because they - what was it that would have put people off - what was the critique?
- H.K. My - I think my feeling was quite strongly that it was really party of rich people - it was strongly that - I felt very hostile to the people I used to meet in it - I actually - if they knew half the time what I was otherwise engaged in I think they would have hated my guts as much as (Laugh).....
- J.F. But just to answer a kind of devil's advocate - they were rich people who happened to be at least anti Nats - would that have - or would you have felt that was.....
- H.K. No, my problem, I felt they were hypocrits - I remember at an early stage being invited to have an - I knew that from my NUSAS days for that matter, of going to Helen Susman's place and somebody standing with a - some black man standing in a white suit and a red sash outside her garden gate to open the gates and so on - you know, for me that was sort of the personification of enemy anyway, and that was a gut feeling - it wasn't a very thought through class thing at all, but it was my gut feeling that in the end those people were also part of the enemy -
- I was seeking a platform, I think it was - it was - it was an extent of opportunism on my part involved - they paid me a lot of money, I could pay back the education department its job - I wasn't smart enough to go back to university - I didn't really know where to go actually (Laugh)
- J.F. So you hadn't finished your - or you mean to go.....

H.K. I'd finished - to get a further degree or anything.

J.F. And....

H.K. And as far as that relates to the non racialism bit well, I think there was a whole lean period throughout those years where contact effectively became less and less and less, and the PFP was in the wake of that to - it had also - it certainly got extremely harsh criticism from Coloured and Indians who had previously been members of the PFP - I remember meeting such people in the Cape Town area, you know, who had at one stage before the Improper Interference Act in '67 or '68 was passed, were members of the PFP and who felt that this party was just not solid and it was not on and so on and...

J.F. Was there also a parallel radicalisation of yourself when you say that you got that AC - how did you get an AC?

H.K. Yeah - I was actually interested in reading something about armed struggle (Laugh) at the time and it was an article by Duman Okwe on the armed struggle (Laugh)

J.F. And how did you get it - were people reading them?

H.K. Not very much but I - the NUSAS library used to receive - NUSAS had a little library and they would receive it through the post and, you know, you'd sort of sneak off with it without telling your colleagues (Laugh) that you were planning to read the thing - in fact I had three different magazines, and when they were knocking on the door I managed to stuff two of them into the hot water tank in the bathroom, and the third one I just didn't think of so when they came in they found that (Laugh)

J.F. So they just came through the post illegally....

H.K. Ja, and they - and they came, ja, and that used to happen a lot.

J.F. You just passed them around amongst you, because when you say library you mean kind of an exchange and....

H.K. Yes.

J.F. So they didn't come from black people - there was no blacks pushing them around?

H.K. No - no, in fact in - throughout my political upbringing in South Africa I didn't ever connect with anything that was per se underground - we engaged in forms of semi illegality and illegality but that was always determined by our own limited little initiatives of various kinds, including sending information abroad, which subsequently I often found out was actually related to A.N.C. people - it was actually well, collecting information about investments - but it was not - it wasn't - it wasn't underground activity in the way that I understand underground activity to be or in the way that it is taking place in South Africa today.

J.F. And Timo, just briefly, he was arrested when?

H.K. He had come back from London - he was arrested in - ja, I was then in the PFP, '71 - '71, ja.

J.F. And that had nothing to do with you - they just decided better check everything and see if he.....

- H.K. Well, I don't know the full story - I suspect that somewhere along the line I was on some address list or a list to be contacted, but he was detained at an early stage of his trip and that was it.
- J.F. And he had only been doing propaganda - he wasn't making bombs - he was just making out leaflets, wasn't he?
- H.K. He wasn't making bombs - ja, ja, ja, he was building up cells for the A.N.C., as far as I know.
- J.F. Now had you heard of the A.N.C. much - did NUSAS people take it seriously?
- H.K. No - no, NUSAS didn't take it seriously - I hadn't heard much about it - I think there was an element of respect for the history and for the events of the '50's but we didn't - I certainly didn't know very much about that period, and I think that handicapped my own political development extensively -

I tell you whom I respected, because she would tell us a lot about it, and she did it out of a self motivation which I don't really know where it came from, but that was the younger sister of Neville Curtis, Jeanette, who got killed in Angola - she actually read and studied the history of A.N.C. and Congress Alliance and so on and would tell us about it, but I -

I didn't - I hadn't read very much - I was - I met occasionally interesting people, you know, who would talk about it - I can't remember now - there was a teacher in Cape Town, Coloured guy, well, who - who would just talk to me about such things and I'd learn on the touch lines really a little bit about that....

- J.F. But what was it, that it was....
- H.K. Helen Joseph was a bit helpful...
- J.F. But what was the feeling, that it was old and distanced and mysterious or - it's just so different....
- H.K. No, it was mysterious in the sense that there was always sort of like somewhere an assumption that there was an inner circle or the inner sanctum of - you know, there was a sort of among African people a respect with which they would talk about certain older people, you know, who'd either come back from Robben Island, who were still there - I up to that point anyway -

Later on it became different - when I went back to Johannesburg and worked for the Christian Institute then my perceptions changed because then I got friendly with Winnie Mandela quite extensively, and that resulted in a whole nother sort of political insight for me....

- J.F. Well, let's get to that - just finish one..... (Tape off)..... awareness of the A.N.C. but in terms of differentiating you from liberals would that be - would one difference be that you were getting involved in left politics, you were reading theoretically at least - you were an anti liberal position?
- H.K. Yes, I think that is so - I think I simply would have sort of read and therefore espoused some very crude form of socialism as a picture for myself and ja.
- J.F. So then after that experience with the PFP thing then you went to the Christian Institute?

H.K. Then I - yes, I resigned from the PFP and joined the Christian Institute - Theo Koetze was instrumental in that, but I got the position in Johannesburg in fact, so I left the Cape.

J.F. He had been in the Cape.

H.K. He was then the director in the Western Cape in Cape Town, and the PFP job was in the Cape and the NUSAS job was in the Cape, so I then moved to Johannesburg....

J.F. I better check it was PFP - was it, or is it still Progressive Party?

H.K. No, it was still called Progressive Party then, ja - it was before the merger.

J.F. So then what position did you take in the Christian Institute?

H.K. Well, the Sprocas - that the Study Project of Christianity in apartheid Society had produced some six reports on different aspects of South African society, and there was some strong feeling then that it was important that besides studying that society there should also be a programme to implement the objectives of that analysis, and what was thus called SPROCAS Two really, SPROCAS One being the study projects, SPROCAS Two being the action project - I think it stood for Special Project for Christian Action Society -

And so there was an attempt co-ordinated through the SACC and the Christian Institute, but in fact much more through the Christian Institute, to - in fact we fell under the staffing arrangements and so on of the Christian Institute - to establish a white programme and a black programme, and the white programme was headed by Peter Randall and assisted by myself - the black programme was headed by Benny Kwapa, a social worker from Durban, and assisted by Steve Biko, and so we formed a foursome staff with one or two people later on added to it to run black programmes and white programmes with a level of co-ordinating -

And that was probably the most productive time that I think I had in articulating a more clear political position because I was not under the clamps of something I didn't feel I could associate with - I was not really in the church mould that the Christian Institute might have, but that was not a problem - Beyers never demanded or expected that I needed to have a church affiliation, which I didn't have.

J.F. You had none?

H.K. No.

J.F. Your father, had he continued to be religious?

H.K. No, because of his extreme right wingism he had condemned the church absolutely.

J.F. So you had no affiliation?

H.K. No, but I was - I was baptised and I was confirmed in the Lutheran Church, but that was out of some historic tradition or something.

J.F. You didn't grow up going to - so you were - you said your position there in Johannesburg was - what would it have been?

- H.K. Well, I was just a staff member in the SPROCAS Two.
- J.F. And what did that mean you were supposed to do?
- H.K. Well, that meant that the white programme Peter Randall and myself were to find ways of translating a non racial society into an active programme by co-operating with white groups, be they student or be they church or be they anything - we didn't fare very well because I think we went through the doldrums of South African political life at the time - you know, there was in the worker world in Durban in '72 there were the strikes, and that set off a couple of things -
- But in many other ways it was a heyday for the SASOs and BPCs and so on, and in white politics there was - it was a very fruitless period - in fact after a two year period we closed the programme down, the white programme down, and expanded the black programme and made it independent from the Christian Institute simply because we had not met with any serious success - or serious impact of any description in the white community - we felt that it had gone very badly.
- J.F. There was just no response - it wasn't that they were threatened - they just didn't respond at all?
- H.K. They didn't respond at all - it was just a very, very dismal experience (Laugh)
- J.F. Really - because I had seen this book that you wrote the preface to, The United White Liberation....
- H.K. Ah, yes, White Liberation - yea, that was one of those efforts in doing it, yea...
- J.F. Because I'd pulled out a few quotes to ask you about when you said for the first time in South Africa black people were withdrawing from multiracial organisations and white people are trying to hear the assertive voice of BC.
- H.K. Ja, that was so small - I mean we were talking to a very small converted crowd but it was so small that it turned out to be our friends basically (Laugh) and that seemed to be such a futile thing to do - and we amongst other things decided to in the elections in '74, was it, or '73 - when were the elections in South Africa, '73, maybe - must have been '73 - we put up Peter Randall as a Social Democrat candidate and I was his election agent, and we tried to appeal to the white electorate in the Van Brander's constituency, which was really, you know, the sort of clapped out bit around the bottom end of Braamfontein and - and running along Van Brander's Street sort of area where the poorer whites were, to appeal to the old South African Labour Party for votes, and we got a few votes and we caused a bit of a stir, but it seemed to take a disproportionate amount of effort for what came out at the other end.
- J.F. And when you said blacks are withdrawing from multiracial organisations was that advisably - did you differentiate between multiracial and non racial at that stage?
- H.K. Yes - yes, because I think that wouldn't have denied the need for non racial - for a non racial approach, but the de facto situation was there was a multiracial organisation.
- J.F. I guess some of these quotes you've already dealt with - so you saw it as your task to work with whites but then had to conclude that it was just not worthwhile....

H.K. Mmm, I wasn't - yes, and I was critical of whites who continued to do what I essentially saw as do-gooder scenes and the black scene, you know, in the black world, because I think what I by inclination was keen on doing myself was sort of, quote, unquote, development work, but I declined or I thought that I should refrain from doing that - I should avoid that because it was being the do-gooder in the black scene and that inevitably that brought with it the notions of hand-out and control and manipulation and so on and so on -

And I think the modus within which whites were doing that - largely - not all but certainly largely were doing that should be criticised - I don't think - I wouldn't criticise whites today who are genuinely progressives and have found a way of expressing their political commitment in the South African situation on a day to day basis - that's not a problem - I'm not - I'm not - I've no problem with that at all, and would have thought that that, if that was worked out and thought through at those days in South Africa it should have taken place - should have happened -

But I think the whites who are involved now have come a long way from what we were involved in then, and that I think is the big difference.

J.F. That's what I was going to ask you about, this very difficult period for white activists - would you ever then have predicted something like JODAC?

H.K. No, we were - we wanted that - you know, we wanted that, and I think the whole notion of the Christian Institute was to say - because it was very white in fact, you know, in spite of its activities with and initiated by blacks in it, it was very white - the idea was that somewhere something should happen that showed that there were whites who were sincere in their opposition to apartheid and who were not just putting words to it but who could live by it and who would act properly - act accordingly and do what was implied by the statements you make -

And I think right from the time I left NUSAS that was my understanding of myself, you know, that I was going to remain a political activist and that my opposition to apartheid wasn't just a luxury which, because of my white position, I sometimes engaged in and when it didn't suit me I walked away from but that it was something that it was only an authentic statement if you also then acted as a result of that - and the time was not ripe -

I think we found it difficult at the time to know when the time would be ripe, but I think we expected some different times to come about, yes, whether that - I always argued that it was - and I still do - I mean I think it's very important that there are whites who act in all spheres of the struggle consistently with all the dangers and incumbent penalties against apartheid and against racism simply in - well, in order to, on the one hand manifest non racial ideal in concrete terms - and I think there are whites who've done that and find that quite easy to have done that - but also in terms of the reconstruction after apartheid the self image of that white community will have a lot to do with that smaller white community who have fought against apartheid - and I think a lot of what I'm saying here has something to do with what I think is the deep seated crisis in my German upbringing, because I think that's a problem which seemed to me to exist with a West German society anyway where it took others to liberate them from fascism, and there's a very lowly view of any Germans who participated in the resistance struggle, and I don't think that is as -

H.K. That is not as immediate a crisis for the people in East Germany, who have a strong tradition of having fought Hitler and having been massacred by - in numbers by Hitler - but it is certainly a crisis of identity in the West German make-up that - as opposed to the Portuguese who participated in their own liberation from Salazar - or other countries -

And wherever you've got a group that becomes marooned in its own confines, and in South Africa that happens to be a white group, if they consist only of racists - only of people who side with apartheid or who do nothing to oppose it and then want to live, accommodate themselves in the new South Africa because they did not actively act for racism, then I think that's a very weak reasoning to have a stake or a share in that society -

I'm not suggesting this in any sort of, you know, you've got to act to preserve your interests, because I should think that that is a motive which must be generated from within each individual and within that group in its own right, and I think South Africa exemplifies that in many ways because I think there is a strong tradition of important resistance in all the different communities - I think that it's not something - you know, one would expect it from the African community, but sometimes it's been questionable in the Coloured community, for example, but again its own tradition of resistance it's very strongly there.

J.F. You know, the BC line to whites was black man you're on your own, the blacks are going to do it themselves, whites go conscientise your own people - are you basically saying we tried and failed at that juncture - now if JODAC kind of UDF area committee kind of efforts are succeeding it seems to me that's only because the times have changed.

H.K. That's true....

J.F. And it's only because when whites are seeing actual violence in the streets, when they're actually seeing the economy taking the downturn they have to act and that gives rise to more activism among the radicals, but it was also the kind of point of departure for everyone - it's quite different - in the complaisant '60's and '70's and the boom '70's - so how would you, if you were to speak to blacks about BC now, would you say to them look....

H.K. I would....

J.F. I don't think you were right - what were they telling whites - they were actually committing them to that marooned island really.

H.K. What I would say to them - what I do say to them is that it was a period where the resistance struggle was very weak, and that SASO and BPC were not mass based organisations, were not worker based organisations, that its trade union wing, BAWU, was paying lip service to the workers struggle, frankly speaking, and that in fact it was the liberal black politics versus a liberal white politics -

It was students who intellectualised about the problems in a highly articulate way but it was protest politics similar to white liberal politics - it was based on a very articulate form of describing what apartheid does to one but it never moved to the stage of resistance or organisation or to communicate with the masses - it was indignation and ja, I think its highest form was its articulate nature - the articulate way in which it expressed indignation, and therefore this whole moral trip about whites, you bad guys and

H.K. you've got no rights etc., etc., but in itself it was a very weak form of organisation - it - it was a talk shop - it was concerned with the identity of the individual - all of these were tenets which were not so dissimilar from the very liberal white mode of politics, so I think ja.

J.F. And how do blacks respond when you say that?

H.K. Well, obviously the BC people don't like that at all, and I think that's precisely why today people I used to know very well then wouldn't - I wouldn't have (Laugh) any basis of us having contact with each other at all - but the BC people who went into the A.N.C. would agree with that, and that in large numbers - and people whom I used to know then in South Africa very well who would I think make similar - identify the problem in similar ways - and ja, I think we were going through a period when the - we grew up through a particular era when the 1950's and the 1980's are similar in character of mass struggle with forms of resistance that do seriously challenge the regime - that challenge is something which even today the BC people find difficult to quantify - they have some difficulty in identifying just what does that mean because they don't understand organisation, mass base worker participation etc. in any clear cut terms at all -

They talk about it but the fact is that I don't believe that AZAPO today is organisationally that which it requires to be a really.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

H.K. in a serious challenge to overthrow apartheid - I think that is where - where my argument with it would lie, and that in a way their strongest impact is well, obviously in the hope of appealing to people from public platforms, but after the public platform a lot of other things have to take place, and revolutions don't happen by accident - they're actually organised together with a lot of forces that you have to identify correctly, but I think the 1950's constitute an effort in that direction and I think the 1980's constitute a very important progression along that line, but the period of the 1970's was neutral in that way in white politics and in this BC era of black politics.

J.F. That was one of the things I wanted to ask you about, about your contact with blacks who were - did you ever have contact with blacks who were critical of BC's shortcomings in terms of the lack of a mass base or the support by the intelligensia?

H.K. Well, much more so when I moved back to Johannesburg and I worked for the Christian Institute, and that was through a series of contacts through people through whom I learned more, I think, than - politically speaking I learned more rapidly than I had done at any previous stage -

- H.K. Like this man (.....) Ramaghadi, whom I mentioned to you, who'd then just come from Robben Island after ten years, an old man, and who subsequently spent another seven years on Robben Island and was released rather recently (Phone)
- J.F. So you had some - there were some blacks who actually sensed that critique, because I speak to blacks and they say to me no, but if you look at late SASO we were aware of some of these shortcomings and....
- H.K. That's true - I think there were people who - let me explain it in this way - I remember a staff meeting of SPROCAS Two - Peter Randall, Benny Kwapa, Steve Biko and myself, and when we talked of the future South Africa or the nature of the struggle - and I don't want to put down the other two people at all, but there was a different divide than the racial divide in our political discussion - the divide was that I found it easier to go with what Steve Biko had to say and Benny Kwapa found it easier to go with what Peter Randall had to say (Laugh) and in a way they had different perceptions of the politics by which the struggle would be made and the future South Africa would be made, and Steve Biko would argue strongly in favour of a socialist state and - and Peter Randall would find it much easier to argue in favour of a liberal structure of some sort and who would be fearful of harder forms of struggle -

And to some extent Benny Kwapa would associate with that, but don't quote me on that one (Laugh) - he might resent that today - ja, and there were other people who, you know, when they came from Robben Island and I met them through my work in the Christian Institute, because one of my tasks was to support families and people who had been affected through imprisonment and detention, who were actively asking me also questions about the BC period, you know, because they had not lived through it and they wanted to know, you know, what did we make of these people and how they disagreed with them on Robben Island - and those were people who come - who had argued from a much more ideological stance and were opposing BC by seeing it as a clear-cut ideological stance which they were opposing head on and - and - and that was that -

I simply in the absence, or lacking such an ideological platform from which I would argue, saw it as a much more differentiated thing and I think my impression, simply because I'd lived through the period, was a fairly accurate one - I knew that there were different strands in it, and I remember very interesting discussions with Streeny Moodley and his father - his now deceased father, who warned me of BC, and who himself was a founder member of SACTU and who said to me : You are very friendly with my three sons but I'm warning you we have a lot of political problems with these youngsters and I'm not agreeing with what they are saying - and he would go into a whole lecture about what non racialism meant and that - and what the tradition of struggle meant and which they refused to acknowledge.

- J.F. But if you look back on it now - are you saying that the BC era - we can look at it in retrospect and say that things have moved much more quickly and much more substantively since non racial came into the ascendance etc., etc., that it caused the divide and that people like yourselves were kind of in a wilderness for a long time, but do you think that there was anything that was maybe necessary or good or useful about it, or do you look back at it and think gee, '68 to '74 what a dead loss?

H.K. Well, that's a sort of either or type of analysis which is generally posed, and I really disagree with that - I think that the - prior to BC and subsequent to the heydays of BC oppressed black people in their individual rights - right - if they don't live in a milieu of resistance have to, and have always had to liberate themselves from the notions of what the oppressor has done to them culturally, linguistically, in the very way of looking at their lives and their articulation of issues and so on -

And in that sense you may say that there's always been a need for the conscientisation of the individual - and then during the middle '70's you suddenly find this taking an organisational form and becoming far more prominent as a social force and called BC, but it's always been there but it has never - it - there was never a need for it to become such a prominent feature - so whilst I would say that yes, it has a necessity, it has a place, it was a regressive factor in that I think it was dangerous - it contained the dangers of feeding into sectarian forms of struggle where it became to seek an end in itself for the sake of BC - that it became something that could never accommodate itself in the mainstream of the struggle, and will not.

J.F. That I can understand ideologically - on the level, because you'd be one that could analyse it best, having tried with SPROCAS Two and stuff, do you think it ultimately had an effect - anyone would agree look, whatever its legacy has been with AZAPO and all this stuff now, it did take blacks into a kind of feeling of power and fullness - what do you think it did for whites - do you think there was an element in which the kind of threat and discomfort it posed to whites might have been useful - do you think in a sense it just pushed them further into that island....

H.K. No, I think it had an impact on the liberal white who was plagued by guilt, and you ended up with more feelings of guilt on the white part - I don't think that that moved whites to action or to resistance or to a clarity about that - the fact of what we see today in JODAC or similar forms of white - ECC or whatever - is dictated by the pace of the - the developing revolution itself but through the harsh forms of that revolution - that's why whites are talking and rethinking and as you correctly say, it is the period that is determined that there will be whites now who are seeing themselves on the side of the struggle, but I don't think it was the product of - of - of BC that did that -

It evoked a certain worry, concern in the churches and in certain other groups who felt - whose guilt could be kindled at any stage or could be made to be bigger at any stage, and I think it did that, but I don't think that that guilt ever resulted in people becoming - people in the - never motivated them to struggle - in fact I don't think that that has happened to this day because the areas where the BC movement communicated most effectively was in the churches, and if I look at the people that were involved in that by and large I wouldn't say that they are the people to this day who are central to the struggle -

You know, they were - they're the people who are still espousing liberal - I mean the mainstream of the white church remains a liberal structure which is more pained by the current events but which was also at the same time of the BC era feeling more guilty, but I don't relate guilt to resistance - I see no link there - I see no bridge.

J.F. The one thing that BC did do pretty well, although one can critique it as being black liberalism, was shouted about white liberalism...

H.K. Ja...

J.F. Saying you white liberals are useless...

H.K. Ja, I think so - I think the only criticism I would level was if it was only possible - you see, '69 SASO was formed, and '72 you have a very important development in the labour movement in Natal at least those two things happened virtually next to each other, mainly in the Natal area, and there were two types of black society living next to each other without having any impact on each other - if only that BC movement could have not been as articulate but looked at forms of organisation and - and become a vehicle that was - that would have provided the seeds for a resistance movement in really serious terms I think that would have been helpful -

O.K., you know, there were lots of reasons why one can say it didn't happen in that way, but that would be my reading of that situation today.

J.F. And are you saying - you said at one stage that Steve Biko actually verbalised his support for the A.N.C.

H.K. Mmm, mmm.

J.F. Because everyone - Richard Attenborough, who is with us in Harare making this film on Biko, apparently said if Biko was alive today he would have supported the A.N.C., and at the A.N.C.'s June, '85 conference there was talk about....

H.K. I was present when he - I mean I think he said it on many different occasions but I know that he - well, I was present when he said it before I left South Africa but I - I don't want this to be printed because I think it's too early in history for this to go down, but I had something to do with some communication before he died and - and - and getting messages through to the A.N.C.

J.F. Just off the record it seems that that's what's coming out now....

H.K. Yea...

J.F. And by the time what I'm going to be doing will be published would be two years....

H.K. Yes, yes, I - I - well, I - I think it would be useful if the - if certain people at the right level in the A.N.C. would reveal that, and I don't know the details frankly - I was merely a messenger boy in that exercise so - there are really much more profound levels to this that people have been sitting on, and obviously have to be sitting on for some time yet.

J.F. Could you then just at least say just on the level which people have revealed that he seemed to be leaning that way?

H.K. Well, what I can say, yes, is - was that in the context of SPROCAS Two and discussions regarding staff and also at a subsequent occasion when I met with Steve and Tangiwe Ntsinso and with Mapetla Moghapi, also killed in detention, in the Eastern Cape I spent three or four days in Ginsberg Location and at the clinic, and what the four of us were doing was we were designing an aid project for the people who'd come off Robben Island and couldn't find jobs -

- H.K. And those were - were the context of the people Steve had met, very largely A.N.C. people, and he saw a very clear need to have that link with those people and that those people came back with experience - they were important in the black community, they were respected both in terms of seniority and experience - and in that context my - my understanding, my knowledge of Steve was certainly never an independent BC movement externally, and his choice was not P.A.C. but was A.N.C. - there was no question in my mind about that and....
- J.F. And did he seem different from other BC people in that regard - was he....
- H.K. Yes...
- J.F. kind of the good BC as opposed to the others?
- H.K. Well, yes - I was not terribly aware of that except in the articulation of certain individuals who went differently - I - I had expected, for example, from people like Streeny Moodley that he would have gone the A.N.C. way, and I was very, very close to him, but that looks today like wishful thinking (Laugh) because he's certainly hard line BC - Sats Cooper on the other side I would have expected to go the other way, ja.
- J.F. Back to the history, SPROCAS Two failed, then you did what - you decided that....
- H.K. Then I just joined the staff of the Christian Institute - I mean I just merged into the staff of the Christian Institute - I became in '75 at the annual conference assistant to Beyers Naude - not assistant director but assistant to the director....
- J.F. And you joined the CI in?
- H.K. '7 - well, I mean under SPROCAS Two in '72.
- J.F. And what did that mean you did just concretely....
- H.K. Well, then my job was really the sort of admin of - of the Christ - of the whole Christian Institute - it was organising events, it was - well, it was being the legs and the arms for the extension of what Beyers' work involved really in different ways, and at the same time took care of the central administration which Byers needed to be free from, so I had to look after staff matters and, you know, down to keeping the fleet of cars going, all that type of thing.
- J.F. Maybe I'd better - I think we went off into something when I was - you were saying you went to Christian Institute - it didn't matter about any lack of Christian (.....) - what was the CI trying to do - I'm trying to - in the terms of the non racialism white - you decided that it was useless to keep trying to awaken the conscience of whites and do white consciousness, so CI felt it should do what?
- H.K. Let me say I joined it because I respected I suppose its leaders for their stance, and I'd been in discussion with people there - I knew Peter Randall, I knew Theo - I didn't really know Beyers - and Beyers recruited me on the basis that he said - and my then wife, Elona - on the basis that he said - and she's from Jewish home - he said : It happens to be so in South Africa today that I've got more in common with non Christians than Christians so I've got to recruit non Christians into the organisation - and there were a couple of other people who weren't in the church -

H.K. This was not something all the members of the Christian Institute could accept - there were criticisms of that - but it was in my view an organisation which was closer to opposing and resisting apartheid than anything I knew in South Africa at the time - it was that - it was for me the most radical structure that I could reach and that I could find - I knew at that stage that there were other forms of that - I had notions of other forms of that but I - I guess that was as far as I was prepared to go and it was also what was accessible to me -

I didn't know how to get hold of anything else - later on through the Christian Institute work I met A.N.C. people who had come from the Island, like Indris Naidoo and Ramoghadi and Winnie and other people - there were quite a few people I met in that way - and then that resulted in my feeling without any difficult - I didn't find it difficult to be doing little jobs which I knew I wasn't meant to know the details of and I never asked the details of, but things where I was asked to hire a car - you know, blacks had difficulties in those days hiring cars - structurally that was difficult - so they needed a front, and I was asked to do that, and I later discovered that these cars had to travel between Swaziland and the Transkei to frustrate the efforts of (Laugh) Transkeian independence and things like that -

I didn't have any hesitation with that - I realised that I was endangering the Christian Institute in the process because that was likely to - if it came out, to be a big smear, but in my mind I accommodated that - I ja - I became very committed to everything that the Christian Institute stood for, I really did, and it became a sort of home for me - I felt - I think in my whole political development I felt that was the first time where I could stop and rest - not rest politically speaking but say I've now come to a point where I feel accommodated - that's O.K., from here I don't need to make urgently further developments (Laugh) or anything like that.

J.F. And was it all whites, all the staff?

H.K. No, no, no - no, there were quite a few black staff members - in fact the objective had always been to make it half and half - I think that objective was not really successfully achieved but it was attempted, and there were people like Roshadi Pakati and Jane - oh, there were quite a few - Lindy Meers - oh - oh, no, there were a lot of - lot of black staff - but the dominant flavour I think was - well, if I can describe it this way, it wasn't so much a team that was moving forward - it was the activities generated by certain very powerful individuals, and the most powerful individual was Beyers, and then there were a couple of others, you know - there were the Cedric Masons and there were the - the (.....) Meyers and the Peter Randalls, and they all generated activity really around their person rather than -

It wasn't a good team - it wasn't a coherent organised structure in what I understand by organisation, and I suppose in that sense I always had a criticism of the Christian Institute - you know, it didn't become a force which moved in a co-ordinated way - it was a - it was - its weakness in the end was in its sort of ultra individualistic expression - you know, they were individuals who took stands which were the stands of martyrs - they were expressions that showed - that were symptoms or pointers to the future, but they were not the act of resistance in the sense of organisation, and in order to organise you needed to organise your own group in order to communicate effectively with mass - with any constituency, black or white -

- H.K. But we had no notion of how to do that really - I think we were very much plagued by a sort of our - our own middle class backgrounds that, you know, thought that politics was made by prominent individuals who would then lead the masses forward and - and when they didn't come, you know, we were disappointed type of thing and - and - and there were - all the staff, I think, black and white, were powerful in their individual role, and a positive role at that, but very individualistic.
- J.F. What about on the non racial, racial level - when you say you found a home, given the tensions in NUSAS and the tensions with SPROCAS and the - all of the climate of the BC hegemony - would that indicate partly that we were coming historically out of that period of very strong BC influence - has that waned a little bit - you felt a little bit less...
- H.K. I felt that in my own experience, but I don't think that holds for the rest of the Christian Institute because that tension remained powerful until its banning essentially, and the tension expressed itself oh, very much when, for example, SASO and BCP would regularly need the resources of the Christian Institute in the form of money, cars, typewriters, paper, anything, and there was a strong sense in which the Christian Institute would always provide and give and say : Yes, of course -

And I remember at one stage I was put in charge of the fleet of cars, and there was a fleet of cars for the simple reason that we had constantly loaned them out to the SASO and BPC structures and others - and there was also a - an attitude in the BC structures that because it was provided for by whites it need not be respected, and that resulted in there being a preponderance of car accidents or cars being wrecked in one form or another, to the point where we had to react to that or - or - or say, you know, we can't just go on doing this - and especially when we were told that at a SASO conference the very people who came to loan the cars would argue, would say things like : Every time we wreck a white man's car it's another blow for the revolution -

Well, that might have been an infantile statement but it came from a very prominent person in the SASO leadership, and it was the black CI staff who then demanded of the white staff that they should cease giving cars or anything to SASO until SASO had rethought their position, and that really we were providing at the level of our own guilt, which was just nonsensical - you can't, you know, in that type of relationship just say : I want to give you more and you going to hit me more for giving you more - and a lot of -

I remember I was in charge of the cars, as I said, and shortly after this decision was taken unanimously by the staff that we would not give cars, I was approached and I said : Sorry, no car - and I was immediately told : Oh, you bloody racist - and I was thumped around and said : You - you typical, I'll go down and I'll see the director and so on - and I went to see Beyers - this guy went to see Beyers and Beyers said : Yes, unfortunately this is a decision of (Laugh) the Christian Institute but I've got a private car, I'll give you that - and he took it out of town and he had an accident (Laugh) you know (Laugh)

But the point I'm making is that subsequently he really said, you know, how difficult he found it to deal with his guilt as a white - and I think simultaneously I learned in that situation too, and I think it's very important that I had tried then and I suppose subsequently to conduct myself in such a way that I, on the one hand

H.K. sensitive and sensitised to the whole question of the white history in Southern Africa, and at the same time to know that if I respond to that my guilt - if my motive is guilt it is merely another form of patronage of the black person, and therefore I cannot be a political person in the South African struggle and - and refuse to accept that I can have arguments, disputes, and for that matter, break-ups with black people whom I'm closely related to if that means - if - if I happen to have an argument with them - but the colour of their skin cannot determine the nature of that relationship -

And I think that's something that I think to this day a lot of the whites find very, very difficult, and something that certainly was constantly going badly in the Christian Institute - that relationship was an uneasy one and I think a bad one, and we tried to grapple with it and from both sides, and I think the people who had the correct attitude were the black CI staff who were challenging the whites and saying : Look here, you know (Laugh) what you're feeding into, you know, is something terribly stupid -

And you could translate that particular incident onto a whole variety and other levels of how we conducted ourselves politically.

J.F. What were the successes, or what did you actually do at the Christian Institute - how would you describe - you said you did administrative stuff, but what it did in terms of what I'm asking about?

H.K. Well, we - I think in a very important way the Christian Institute through that period kept together a - a nucleus of a black and white community, separate maybe at that stage, who were subsequently very much involved in the development of what became a much more important wave of resistance after the banning, so I - I think -

I see it in this way that I think the Christian In - and I was personally of course not part of it because I left in '76 - but after the banning and - there was a whole period which I think is a fascinating 18 month period from the October bannings into '79 where certainly senior people in the Christian Institute did a lot of heart-searching as to role and where do we go from here, and similar to the BC people who found their way into the liberation movement either at home or in exile, I think there was this corresponding search going on in the Christian Institute with a most elaborate extensive correspondence going on for 18 months about, for example, the notion that the Christian's role is - and I read that always to be the white Christian's role - but it was espoused by the Christian Institute, some Christian Institute people, that we should support all the black liberation forces, and then there would be mentioned A.N.C., P.A.C., AZAPO, INCATHA etc. -

And I would challenge that and I would say : You're not saying anything that is Christian, and I believe that it is in fact also racist because you can only do that as a white and....

J.F. What, be non aligned and support everybody...

H.K. Ja, ja - you can't go - you can't go to people who are struggling and dying in the struggle and tap them all on the shoulder and say good show, and you go to another one and say good show and good show - and the fact that these black groups have got diametrically opposed political concepts in certain instances is something that must be respected because it's not - your call for unity is in fact a politically very immature stance - and that was a difficult argument and a difficult one to go through -

H.K. And one which I think is finally being settled, not in the churches as such, but I think the orientation that people came out with at the end of this debate was an important one, and it for once and all decided or settled the question of where people were going, and that was if you -

I said, for example, that if you are claiming that it is Christian to support everybody in the struggle, every organisation, every group, then I don't believe it's Christian - I believe it's merely an expression of your middle classness and your whiteness - it's got nothing to do with Christianity - solidarity is a different thing - solidarity means that you accept that you stand side by side with somebody who's struggling, and that means choosing sides, and therefore you can't say that it's this - that you support them all - you've got to go and make a choice, and you go to that choice and you stand in the frontline with them, and then that's Christian -

And we had - one day that can all be shown, but it's obviously premature to deal with that....

J.F. One day that what?

H.K. That whole gamit of correspondence - it's - it's documents and documents of all the main actors of the Christian Institute communicating with each other inside and outside the country around questions such as that one, and what is solidarity, and what does non racialism mean, and what is believed to be Christian, and how this whole notion of being Christian confused the question of how to be non racial in the struggle along these lines - that can all be shown one day, I hope, because I think it will be a very important political statement of having clarified a really key issue in the foundations for the struggle that we are seeing unfolding today - not in the struggle as such but in that little contribution that the Christian Institute was making at that stage....

J.F. And what period was this correspondence?

H.K. '77 to '79.

J.F. Also from when.....

H.K. I was outside, yes, but you know, there was - a huge controversy was caused apparently by myself when I spoke to the UN and I said that I predicted that the majority of people who'd just been - had their organisations banned would end up in the A.N.C., and then there were those who said I should be thrown out of the Christian Institute because this was an unChristian attitude to adopt and an uncharitable one at that.

J.F. And you weren't in the Christian Institute then - you'd left?

H.K. No, but I represented the Christian Institute externally for three years from '76 to '79, and I clashed with Ashadi substantially on that issue, and it involved, you know, how do you struggle - I don't want to go into this now because I think it's off the record - it affects the question of armed struggle and so on....

J.F. But you have the correspondence because you were out....

H.K. Yes, yes....

J.F. anything inside (.....) - maybe I'd better - I have to keep moving back to the....

H.K. Back to the theme....

J.F. because I keep missing the years - so you were in the Christian Institute and then under what circumstances did you leave.....

H.K. Yes, I told you that in '75 I was appointed assistant to Beyers, and a few months later - or I think a month, later - I think that was in August in Cape Town, and a month later I was detained under the Terrorism Act and I was held until November, and that was because of alleged contact or collaboration - alleged conspiratorial work with Brechten Brechtenbach on that thing -

My good luck was that I - they thought he had recruited me - they thought I'd met him when he was in the underground in South Africa, or secretly in South Africa - it turned out that they arrested him and then me before he ever contacted me, so I literally didn't know anything - I didn't know the name - what was it called - OKELA - I - I'd never heard about it and that was my good luck there so -

Nevertheless they gave me the workover for everything under the sun because they obviously saw me as a problem case and wanted to deal with me in a general way, but I was released without any explanation or court case or anything at the end, and remained in the country for another six months, which was a bad period for me personally, partly reintegrating but also partly because Beyers had gone through a major operation at the time and was not around and so I was forced to take on tasks in the Christian Institute which I wasn't very - which I didn't find very easy - easy, because I had been released having had a statement forced from me which said that I would not go back to the Christian Institute and that I would go into teaching, which was, you know, what I was trained for and well, they'd said that they would even find me a teaching post -

Well, I obviously didn't intend to do that, and so I came out and I was suddenly put into the top chair there which I - I was unsure of myself - coupled with the fact that I got to know - got involved with people I knew from before but in political work, which was rather more clandestine, but not in any important way - I was merely a link, the last link in a long, long chain but I was - I was helpful to certain people doing certain things, and that resulted in '76 in this particular person coming to me and saying: Look, you don't need to know the details but I know that because of certain people being kidnapped in Swaziland into South Africa I should leave the country, and since your name is connected with certain events related to that you should leave the country as well -

I made the arrangements, and as you know from Cedric's book probably, you know about my departure - well, anyway there's a few pages in which he describes the morning when I climbed over some walls and I was picked up by a motor bike and taken to Half Way House Airport and he even flew me into Botswana - and the man who was going to leave with me chose in the last moment not to leave, and in fact he remained free for a couple of months and then finally was picked up and sentenced to seven years, and he's now out of jail since last January - not this past January, the January before - and he's 76 years old - quite a remarkable man.

H.K. Ja, so I couldn't stay in Botswana - in fact they wouldn't give me asylum - or they wouldn't not give it to me but they asked whether it was possible for me to leave as soon as possible because they wouldn't want to provide security for such a large community of people and so on, so I was forced to look for alternative asylum - ended up in Holland through Beyer's connections, lot of Christian Institute support - started up an office there - opened up an office for the Christian Institute.

After a year Oshadi Pakati came to join me to strengthen that office after she chose to leave, and then the banning came, and then there was this huge split between Oshadi and myself, who started creating an exile based BC organisation, BCMA with its own military wing, and we stayed in the same house, and I was excluded from meetings of her BCM Christian lot that used to come - and when I found out I really opposed it very seriously - I - I -

I was completely opposed to it - and it was as leaky as all hell on top of that - they were really dangerous people - I mean they were just not revolutionaries, I don't think - they were very indignant and had every right to be indignant about South Africa, but they were not people who knew what - I don't believe they knew what they were doing - they were all intellectuals, they were all - half of them were priests and so on - and they had a notion that they were that -

So I said : No, no, no, no, the future is not that - and in fact I made my own allegiance very clear, which was pro A.N.C. - and in South Africa there would remain some sort of coherence but - but people were banned and they couldn't talk to each other, so it wasn't very clear how people were coming out of that debate, but in fact there was a hell of a disputing going on as well -

Anyway at a particular stage Theo Koetze was asked to leave the country in order to take charge of this office of the Christian Institute and to resolve this problem, and in '79, June, we finally closed the Christian Institute offices there....

J.F. Where, in...

H.K. In Holland - on the basis that we - officially that we couldn't sustain an office which had no organisation inside the country, but the truth was that our differences were irreconcilable, and Oshadi started saying that I was a spy for the regime and, you know, and I was seriously - I mean I was completely opposed to what she was doing, and remain opposed to what she's doing to this day, which is still in favour of a third force...

J.F. Is there also a BCMSA outside?

H.K. Only a few individuals but they espouse that on the different - ja, there are three or four diff - there are two or three in London - there's some small groups - Azania Frontline is a newspaper which has got its own group, and there's a BCMA as well, but they don't agree with each other - there's the group that has moved to a socialist position, and there's that which have moved - which have remained in the mainline BC line.

- H.K. Ja, so I then was offered a position in IDOF and then I came here in '79.
- J.F. And what position was it in IDOF?
- H.K. A - I initially joined the position as fund-raising, I suppose but it was never - I never did that until now - I was actually in the legal department to look after trials (Laugh) in South Africa - that's off the record for the present as well because we're a banned organisation - we're not supposed to be doing this at all.
- J.F. Really?
- H.K. IDOF is a banned organisation in South Africa, and we are the major organisation that funds political trials in South Africa, so I was put into that section, and so I worked in that section - but I'm just saying that's off the record because we obviously don't want to have that publicised at the moment.
- J.F. And when you first left South Africa - there's a particular position as a white in.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

- J.F. or handicaps when you came outside, being white and being involved in resistance politics - did you find non racialism was a solved issue or were there....
- H.K. No - well, I suppose - I mean far more solved in the A.N.C. confines - I mean there that is treated with a far greater degree of maturity than I'd never experienced anywhere before, and the debates we were conducting in the '70's were actually debates which had also been conducted and far more adequately resolved in the '50's - very much the same debates actually, and the whole - the whole Congress Alliance was in fact a very careful and more sophisticated and in the end more mature working out of the four population groups having a political relationship to achieve an objective, and ja, that I thought was important -
- But as far as Europe was concerned the debate was ten years before even - I mean the European sense of non racialism was backward as far as I was concerned, even when I came out, and it's very backward now - I think South Africa's far advanced in its politicisation, in its understanding of non racialism, in its - ja, particularly on those points compared to Britain or anywhere on the Continent for that matter, I think -
- There are of course people here who are clear about it, but mainstream politics here, even the Labour Party's terribly confused about black and white - terribly confused about black and white when it comes to the question of solidarity for South Africa and - and I think people here simply haven't fathomed the real issues at all.
- J.F. The British people or the Europeans, but what about when you came out and you found the A.N.C. were able to deal with them openly unlike being in the country....

H.K. I did not initially deal with them openly because I felt it would compromise my colleagues back home, so I appeared on common platforms and so on, but ja, gradually it was possible to have a far more easy and open relationship, as I obviously have now and very much so between this organisation and the A.N.C., and we have to have a - I need to - I'm the - well, I'm not the only one but I'm certainly one very important force in developing that relationship.

J.F. But I'm saying being able to communicate them in a way you couldn't be inside - how did you find their views on non racialism - were you at all worried about how they would - not worried - did you go in as a white to deal with them for the first time and then find out how they approached you as a white - was that a surprise to you or was.....

H.K. I didn't feel that I was being especially looked at as a white....

J.F. Which was different from South Africa in the early '70's.

H.K. Ja, ja - at the same time I mean I think there were obviously questions of my background, which because it was white, but only because it was white, that threw a particular problem - or that meant that things had to be looked at in a very careful sort of a way, in terms of was I reliable, was I trustworthy in what I was saying, but I think that was not a very - ja, it was different for me in that a thing what I said originally, that I think here people were much more mature - the movement - the A.N.C.'s organised cadres here were much more mature about dealing with non racialism, and I've seen that manifested in 101 ways, and I think in the ways that I think very strongly express today inside South Africa in the way that relationships are being determined at that level -

And it's a difficult issue because it's by no means a single attitude of non racialism means that you don't respond to whites being of a special colour or something - it is very much a matter of there being different responses from different individuals, but the broad trend is the correct one - that is that of non racialism being adhered to and wherever racial feelings are expressed, especially - in private or in public people are being caught (?) (.....) very quickly and because of the dangers that that can evoke, and I think that that's done with a degree of confidence and strength, which I think is a very powerful flavour for the future struggle and future South Africa.

J.F. I asked this a bit - the same question before and you said you didn't want to see it as either or, so I got an answer, but do you ever look at the kind of historical coincidence at the time you were active and regret that you had to go through that period, and if you look at some of the kind of JODAC experiences and the way that they haven't had to.....

H.K. I'd give my - I'd give my left arm if I could be in South Africa now - I mean if I could live through the period now - I think that I regret that I grew up through what I see a lean period in South African politics, yes - a very lean period, and I think my own political maturity I really achieved much more outside, here, simply because the issues were rather more confused when I was still in South Africa - I was not - I didn't have access to - to circumstances and to people in the way that, for example, people who go to Wits University have today - I mean they have a wealth of opportunities to orientate themselves by to gain experience through practical activism and acting in a political field where all these issues that we've discussed can be sorted out and - and you can learn by them,

H.K. and you can then become an activist in a very important way without having to be exiled or imprisoned, you know - you can actually make your contribution - I feel that that whole field has passed me by when I was still in South Africa, so I do regret that very much, yes - I wished I was there now - now I would have not even - I think I would have even rethought my - the question of having left South Africa - I would have rethought that if I had the skills that I feel I have today - if I knew what I was doing - precisely how I was doing it, what I was doing it about -

I know that, you know - I think - I hope I would have taken on more risks in the process, but I think it's a pity to come to the point when you're in exile and you feel aha, you know, by the way this is exactly how you see these issues and this is where you stand and this is why you - with whom you're doing what - once - I think the thing that is very demoralising was when I went into detention, prison, I actually felt left alone - I felt lonely, I felt - I didn't feel a comradeship with any larger political thrust - I didn't feel I was connected to something that was really politically important -

I felt it was sort of a once off there I go type of thing, and therefore my stance, my - the quality of my being in prison and going to jail, for that matter, didn't really matter one way or the other because I couldn't see myself linked up or tied up or being a member of something that - where, you know, this was another area where through which you could struggle - I mean I was the first one in the Christian Institute to get detained - it evoked shock and fear in the Christian Institute circles -

People, you know, withdrew from it and others said : Oh, we've got to support him - but, you know, it wasn't a - you didn't feel like you were going there because you were part of a movement in the broader sense of the word, and that your act was related, or your whole conduct was completely related to that political thrust, as people did in the 1950's - you know, they were there as one link in an important movement - I was there by some freaky accident of some fool who tried to make an underground connection with me, which he hadn't made -

I was also in the Christian Institute where I knew the individuals would support me, and hopefully they got somewhere, but I didn't feel part of - of a movement - and I think that's a very weak basis (Laugh) on which to struggle.

J.F. Why do you think the Christian Institute was banned with all those BC organisations?

H.K. Well, I think it was a miscalculation on the part of the regime at the time - I think that was still the philosophy that where you see opposition you've got to deal with it and slap it down and finish it off and everything would become quiet - that was obviously their motive and that was the basis on which they had survived for 17 years from the 1960 period to then - that's obviously a generation of security police considerations which cannot hold today because they realise very well that it evoked an underground and a resistance which they couldn't have anticipated or expected.

J.F. And how do you see the future with just a comparison of the past - during the height of BC would you have thought that non racialism would come as far as it has - do you see future stumbling blocks ahead, and do you think that South African struggle is pretty clearly on a road of non racialism?

H.K. I see dangers ahead - yes, I think there are problems ahead - I mean the - the bitterness of the struggle to all those who have not got a political foundation I think may yet evoke a far more hostile reaction to whites - there is such a thing as a P.A.C. concept, which may never materialise, but it certainly is a worrying thing, where they feel they don't need organisation, and I think AZAPO was probably motivated in their heart of hearts on the same level - they don't need strong organisation because they simply would say that the day will be there will come when if they had an opportunity to address the masses with radical rhetoric they would turn their way, and that would then be on the lines - certainly amongst that would be a total denial of a non racial approach - so I think that's conceivable -

It's obviously less today than it was - I mean I'm slightly contradicting myself, but the strongest safeguard against that today is the strong political foundation that has been built as a mass movement with that non racial ideal, I mean in that it is strongly entrenched in the UDF and all its affiliates as a very important principle - that I think is the strongest safeguard against that.

J.F. What's the racial make-up of IDOF?

H.K. Ja, it's made up by - of - it's half English half South African - of the South Africans the majority are white, and the majority are white because of the immigration policies of the British Government - all the governments through the ages - so that whites found it relatively easier to get into the country than blacks - we are now addressing ourselves to this issue more concretely and for example, my deputy here at the moment is a man seconded by A.N.C. treasury in Lusaka, who got into the country on the basis of high professional qualifications rather than as a refugee (Laugh) and - but it - it is predominantly white.

J.F. Who's that deputy?

H.K. Tembo Luxumu.

J.F. And what's IDOF's policy about A.N.C., P.A.C.?

H.K. We will support anybody in South Africa on the level of political trial or aid to a family who has lost a breadwinner as a result of imprisonment, irrespective of political criteria, never mind the A.N.C., P.A.C., anything else, for that matter, as long as it constitutes an act of resistance to apartheid -

I'm giving you a crude interpretation of that because we've now - blurbs, we've got to say it slightly more politely - but in our external relations we have fraternal relations with the A.N.C. and with SWAPO, and we don't have really relations with P.A.C. - and that's more recent, because we used to have very open relations with P.A.C., but I've had quite a clash with P.A.C. personally - when I was appointed they wrote - I don't know - have you heard about this?

They wrote an 80 page booklet denouncing me as a potential Craig Williamson, because they said (Laugh) they may not have proof but any white should be suspected who's South African and who, in an organisation not (?) totally dissimilar to the IUEF, ascends to that organisation, so we just want to warn you about that - and then they go into my history and they write about me at great length a very horrifying, awful really painful story, which is partly written, I believe - I don't know that as a fact - by Oshadi Pakati, who in turn has her gripes against me (Laugh)

J.F. But she's not P.A.C. now, is she?

H.K. Well, she's very close to certain of the people in the P.A.C., ja.

J.F. And you talked about - when that AC was found in your flat was there a trial around it?

H.K. Mmm.

J.F. And what did you get?

H.K. I was acquitted on the basis of a lie I told the court - I said to the judge that I was actually reorganising the NUSAS library and I'd taken some stuff home to sort and analyse, and the heaps I'd taken back with me I didn't realise there was an AC amongst it, and he said : O.K., you get away with that (Laugh) ja - that wasn't my first trial, no - in '69 I led a demonstration to John Vorster Square when Winnie Mandela and 21 others were detained for a long period of time, and we got arrested outside John Vorster Square - I was charged under the Riotois Assemblies Act - in the end we had to pay admission of guilt under a municipal by-law.

J.F. And what was the AC trial charges under....

H.K. Suppression of Communism Act - and then after that I was charged under the Commissions Act for refusing to testify to the (.....) Commission - you remember that (.....) thing...

J.F. Into NUSAS?

H.K. No, in Christian Institute - and that turned out to be a mistrial and was dismissed or scrapped off the books.

J.F. And you spoke about - at one point about something and Winnie Mandela.

H.K. Mmm...

J.F. and I said you're getting ahead of me - I don't know what it was.

H.K. Well, it was just that I guess that there was a period when I was quite involved with the question of protecting her house and her children from attack, and provided really the physical means to protect her house - worked with some of the people on that one - and was the - I was - for six months I was the legal guardian of her children when she went to prison for a banning order contravention (Laugh) - I didn't do very much - it was just a technicality - (.....) was the one who arranged it and...

J.F. During your time in South Africa - I asked you if you'd heard much about the A.N.C. - had you heard much about the Congress of Democrats?

H.K. Yea, I should have said that once I moved back to Johannesburg in the Christian Institute I had heard much more about A.N.C., and I knew people who were involved and who talked to me about that, so I didn't get any literature other than the odd - I did read some of the underground books, I must say - let me just think - I read a bit of the Simons and Simons book, for example, in South Africa, and it - I did - I did - I was friendly with Eli and Sheila Weinberg - well, Eli Weinberg particularly - and Violet and Sheila -

H.K. I knew the Naidoo family very well - you know, Shanti, Prema, Indris, when they were still there, and Morti - and so it was more through friendships but which developed as a result of common political identification points, like participation in the human rights society, I think we called it...

J.F. Were you in that?

H.K. Yea.

J.F. Because Sheila told me about that and George du Plessis...

H.K. Yes....

J.F. and people, and I kind of thought gee, what people got up to in those lean years, but then I remember reading a (.....) to it...

H.K. There's a - I mean everything you did for that was immediately so harassed - I mean you know, you'd go to a meeting of 50 people and there'd be a hundred cops outside and you'd be photographed and - and - and beaten or anything - it was just unbelievable - I mean you couldn't - there was just - it was really a difficult one, ja (Laugh)

J.F. Because of the people like the Weinbergs being there?

H.K. Ja, ja, it was obviously seen as a - as a reviv - as an attempt to revive organisational structures, correctly so (Laugh)

J.F. And could you do anything - was it....

H.K. No, I didn't actually do very much for it other than go to its meetings, and would be helpful when it came to making posters and providing a bit of money here and there - it was through the people that we've identified, you know, by the Weinbergs - and it's through them I knew the Congress of Democrats - I - ja.....

END OF INTERVIEW.