

Q: When were you born ?

LN: '59.

Q: And are you from Cape Town ?

LN: Ja, I was born in Cape Town, lived in Cape Town, studied at UCT and did a Bus. Science LLB degree and I'm registered to do a Masters in Criminology at UCT at the moment - it's my second year doing a Masters.

Q: So you did the business aspect of Law ?

LN: No, the Law was independent, it was the undergraduate course with Bus. Sci instead of a B.A.

Q: Why did you want to do that ?

LN: Well, my parents thought it would be useful ( laughs ). I regret it with hindsight because I think I missed out on a lot and I'll never use that Business Science training.

Q: So what kind of family background are you from ? Are your parents liberals or not ?

LN: Middle class, liberal, Jewish - in an ethnic rather than a religious sense, cultural rather than a religious sense - liberal, but very concerned about my own involvement which makes them reactionary at times.

Q: So when you first went into university did they convince you...like strongly tell you that if you wanted to get some kind of living you should do business ?

LN: Yes, well that's how I was brought up, you know.

Q: How ?

LN: Well, they....that the fact that my goal in the long term was to be an international lawyer at the Hague, and that kind of sums it up - it was that kind of upbringing.

Q: Was your father a lawyer ?

LN: No, he was an investment consultant - Director of Computer Services (?),

Q: Does your mother work ?

LN: Ja, she's a Manager at Stuttafords, but it was very much that kind of direction.

Q: So did you support that idea when you first went to university, or high school ?



Did you think that was quite good - I mean why did you do business and....?

LN: Well, the feeling was that if one day I had to leave the country there would be nothing that I could do with a B.A. and the Law wouldn't be that useful because it's South African Law, which isn't practised anywhere else. So if I had a Bus. Science training then at least I'd be able to do something. ( laughs )

Q: So their line was that business was safe and your line was that business was practical ?

LN: More or less, I think I was quite uncritical then. I think that , even at school, I had a strong sense of justice but without much political analysis to it...so it was more a moral or ethical sense of justice or injustice. But without any real understanding of what was happening in the country because...I mean, the way our education system is geared and the way the newspapers are geared and T.V., I mean that's not encouraged - so coming out of school one has a very biased understanding of the nature of South African society, and it's really only through university and through the activities of NUSAS that one's really exposed to what's happening.

Q: Do you have brothers ?

LN: A younger sister who's a final year architect.

Q: So were you brought up with the idea when you were younger that, of course, military would be something that you would have to do or want to do ?

LN: It wasn't a question - you know, every young school boy has to sign the registration forms, I don't <sup>even</sup> remember signing them, that's how little impression it made on me at the time ?

Q: That was when you were about 15 ?

LN: 16.

Q: Then your parents didn't even speak to you about it, it was just known that you would go to the army ?

LN: It was taken for granted.

Q: So where did you get this idea in your head that business was good because you might have to leave the country...when....did you start thinking of leaving ?

LN: It was always their idea more than my idea.

Q: Your parents ?

LN: Ja, and that was because they thought that the political climate here was so unstable, that one day all the whites might have to leave. In other words, running away and not leaving for sound political reasons - not going into political exile.



as much as running away because things here were degenerating to the point of chaos.

Q: So that that sense of leaving was more in your head ?

LN: In their heads.

Q: Ja, but you weren't thinking of it in a different way from them ?

LN: No.

Q: So was it only at university that you began to think about the army ?

LN: Well, my introduction to political understanding didn't come from a taking up of these issues as much as from a general exposure to what's happening - schools boycott in 1980 and '81 made a particular impact on all of us, I mean, we had a 4 thousand UCT students marching around campus on boycott, and from my house which is in quite a larny area in the southern suburbs, one could actually hear the sound of rifles being fired on the Cape Flats - and that made an enormous impression on quite a lot of us that became involved in NUSAS as a result of that where we hadn't been involved before.

Q: Who were the <sup>4</sup> thousand students ? White students ?

LN: White and black students marched round campus on boycott - we went on boycott in solidarity with the black school kids.

Q: The blacks who were at UCT and the whites who were at UCT ?

LN: Well it was the school kids in the western Cape, the black school kids who were out on boycott and the UCT students came out on boycott in solidarity with them.

Q: Uhuh, and where was the march ? On campus ?

LN: Ja, we marched around campus.

Q: And when the shots were being fired on the Cape Flats, do you remember how that was explained from the white parents or the white community ?

LN: Politics.... are not discussed at home, they really aren't.

Q: Was there anything that was said to say what was going on there.... ?

LN: No, it was frightening, people are frightened, they're worried about their own lives, they were worried about mobs rioting in the town or shopping centres where they happened to be, worried about their personal safety - but there's no consideration given to causes of that conflict.



Q: But when one would hear the shots in the Flats, some white would explain it - what would they say.....that's the cops quelling disturbances or what, the police saving us ?

LN: Well that's what the T.V. would say.... you know, my kind of family wouldn't even discuss it. It's really important to understand that - that politics is not discussed and that's one of our aims within ECC or within any white organisation be it NUSAS or JODAC or whatever, to put politics on the agenda, to get people to understand that they're involved politically whether they like it or not - and to break down all those distinctions between either religion and politics and politics and one's every day life. There's such a clean separation, I mean, you would 've found that in Zimbabwe too, although maybe not so much in Zimbabwe because the fighting was so much closer to home - but there's such a clean separation between the secure white suburb and what is actually happening in the townships on the Cape Flats. People have no idea, my parents will never have been to Crossroads, they will have no idea what conditions are like there. When I tell them what's happening, I tell them that people are dying and people are starving and their homes are getting bulldozed... it's difficult for them to understand... they'll believe what they read in the newspaper, luckily the Cape Times is quite a liberal newspaper, but over and above that they generally wouldn't accept what I was telling them - they think that it's bias and leftist propaganda. It's not an issue for discussion - not because they're frightened to discuss it, because generally it doesn't affect their lives.

Q: Are they PFP ?

LN: They would support the PFP, ja.

Q: But even that kind of politics isn't discussed ?

LN: No, and that's the joke, that's the norm, I mean, they're no exception.

Q: So why even be PFP ? Why vote.... I mean, is there something there ? What's the motivation behind PFP ? Just that it's them or the Afrikaner Nats ?

LN: Because politics, Parliamentary politics and voting once every 4 years is a legitimate exercise of political activity, that's normal, OK. So when that comes round they'll do it - they won't go to political meetings.

Q: Ever ?

LN: No, I mean they're coming now to ECC but that's more because I'm usually talking at those meetings - so they come now and they support what we're doing, and I think it's the issue too, and that would be a general point to be made about the participation of the white community in the ECC, that we've been able to involve



them in political activity, even if it's only at the level of their coming along to political meetings, in a way that up to now no other issue has and that's because conscription is the one issue of apartheid that is a real imposition on their lives - and it's one thing saying that white people support the status quo tacitly through the way they live their lives because they enjoy their positions of power and privilege. It's another thing altogether to say that they are supporting the status quo as combatants by fighting as combatants in a war and that war is so real now, I mean, much more real now since the army have gone into the townships, than it was 2 years ago.

Q: A lot of issues are coming up now....

LN: Sorry I'm going too fast....

Q: But um... what about your, I still don't think I've got how you moved.....I mean, you were going to do business..... I'd just be interested to know that process, when did you go on campus? Was it '80 or after '80?

LN: '78.

Q: So you went in to do a degree and then.... what happened? You hadn't thought much about the army, you figured after university you'd do it? Did you have any plans about after university.....

LN: Again it would have been taken for granted that I would have gone into the army. What happened was that I was exposed to NUSAS work on campus, began to understand exactly what how grim the reality was for the majority of people, and that's a slow process and one of diffusion when slowly all these ideas start filtering down. I had quite a strong liberal position, I was President of the Debating Union from first year and for three years after that - often attacking the left, NUSAS, mainly because I didn't like their style rather than their content, I thought they were arrogant and clique-ish - which we are, I mean, I was involved in NUSAS for 4 years after that - which I shouldn't say, I mean out of loyalty to NUSAS. I worked for NUSAS last year full-time as Sec-Gen. But anyway, it takes a long time, I think given the socialisation whites experience, for us to come to understand the reality of South African society.

So there wasn't any one particular point that suddenly made me think, "Oh, hang on, you know, now I should see things differently." Having a Marxist analysis taught in some of the Law lectures was an enormous break-through because suddenly you find an analysis which explains society in a way that your conventional world view doesn't; all of a sudden things start to make sense - so there's that happening at the same time that is an influence. As one starts to become friendly with NUSAS people there's a lot of personal interaction that has quite a formative influence.



Q: And I'm interested if....I'm not going to play it out of proportion, but just if you would have been critical... I mean, did you feel that you weren't being embraced or included in that made you more critical or defensive ? I mean, what was your sort of image of the NUSAS people ?

LN: That it's a narrow clique, that they were at the time really alienating and there's very much the sense that they've got the right line and so-one else has... and they are not open, they're not welcoming - and I think that we've shifted a lot in NUSAS, and in fact when I was in NUSAS I wouldn't have made those criticisms which reflects ....or I mean, says quite a lot about the organisation - with hindsight now, out of NUSAS, I would say that to NUSAS people, I think we've still got a long way to go.

Q: But it has changed ?

LN: It's changed radically.

Q: Because when you<sup>came</sup> along in the late '70 's were BC - can you talk a bit about that whole era ? I mean, do you think it was a political era thing that was also affecting you, your alienation feeling about NUSAS - was it because it was the NUSAS of '78 as opposed to the NUSAS of '85 ? I mean, do you think the NUSAS of '78 was more exclusive and less..... ?

LN: Ja, very much more - very much more radical in it's campus image. I don't think more militant because we're still as militant, but far more radical. You know at an SRC election when people were being interogated by the Debating Union, the standard question was ' Do you believe that the major problem in South Africa is race or class ?' - you see, and I mean that's bullshit.

Q: Why ?

LN: Because that's not the way that you win white students over to your... to our position. I mean, a crucial issue is apartheid and socialism and development of a socialist understanding is something which happens within our organisation to a far lesser extent on campus. To try and develop a Marxist analysis from a public platform say, after a Uitenhage massacre or a school's boycott is entirely inappropriate - I mean, we have a Marxist analysis and we operate within that framework... so again this is something that might get NUSAS into trouble....

Q: No, I'll try and get an understanding and then I think that.... ( LN: Ja. ) So you were saying that you believe that there are stages that people must go through in their understanding, that it's important to bring them to the first stage and then move on ?

LN: Mmm..I'll tell you about the stages in ECC later because we're definitely doing



that within the white community... moving through different stages.

Q: OK, um... I think this quite useful to go through, I didn't think it was going to work but I think it's.... . OK, we'll move direct with the ECC, but this is a question I'm asking everyone - do you... you don't want to put it down to one great event that politicised you or anything, but do you remember, specially since you said that no-one wanted to talk politics and you've very well articulated how it's a closet issue, can you remember ever when you first heard of the ANC or Mandela or those kind of forbiddens ? Do you have a memory of it, or is there any kind of memory that you have of when you first heard.

LN: First would have been Release Mandela Campaign and Anti-SAIC Campaign - those 2 issues.

Q: So you didn't know who the guy was ?

LN: I knew who he was but... I didn't understand his importance and what he represented at all, and the first time I heard of him.. that was at a meeting in the western Cape off campus - I was completely shocked, shocked from a security point of view, not from thinking that's politically incorrect, not from a conservative position but from thinking what are people saying, I mean, the ANC flags were there and just feeling... this is completely over the top, this is forbidden territory, we might think this and believe this but we can't talk about it publicly - and it's really nice to see the legitimacy that those questions now enjoy in the broader public.

Q: So this was what .... 1980 ?

LN: '78, '79, '80, ja.

Q: Release Mandela Campaign was '80, right after Zimbabwe. ( LN: Ja ). So until then you'd heard of it...how were you told about the ANC ? Do you remember the way you were taught about it, what kind of aura was it, did you have any sense that there was a debate ?

LN: You see, again as I moved into the Left, implicit within the Left is that support for the ANC, now again it's something that you can't say, but there is that sense without it being discussed that widely, and of course, as I became more integrated within NUSAS structures - coz I was on the SRC in '80, '81, and then the Left said to me they want me to be President the next year, mainly because they never had anyone else - and that was the start of quite a radical shift. And it's through personal interaction with people and reading stuff that you suddenly understand what the movement's all about.

Q: So you remember quite clearly being first feeling that it wasn't something that



a completely different era.

LN: Ja, a completely different era.

Q: How has that era changed that even white students can freely talk about it ?

LN: It's only now, only this year..... and since Botha's tour overseas which I think was the start of the increased/legitimacy for the ANC.

Q: Why Botha's tour ?

LN: Because Thatcher said to him that he must release Mandela, she met Trevor Huddleston from the Anti Apartheid Movement, someone who'd been really involved in the movement in the '50s and '60s, and that was more or less the start of it. Other people may have a different impression of when it started, but we've now reached the stage that the Cape Times in every single editorial that's covering unrest talks about Botha having negotiations with the ANC - Botha said he would talk to Mandela and release Mandela if he would renounce violence. You have people from Afrikaans medium newspapers actually talking to the ANC - or claiming that they've spoken to the ANC.

It's now on the agenda and it's tremendous that that's happened, it's no longer the bogey.

Q: And do you think that there was a period that you experienced in NUSAS when there was a contempt for liberals ? I mean, as you became politicised did that lead to a rejection of liberal politics - can you say something about that ?

LN: Ja, I mean a lot of my alienation was because of the way I would have been regarded as a liberal.

Q: Right....

LN: And again... something that you couldn't print but I think that we haven't gone far enough in NUSAS, and it would be a critique that I would make to people that I worked with last year in Nusas. I think that we've got a long to go before we understand or before Nusas appreciates the importance of working with liberals, not in an expedient way but in a genuine and sincere way, and that development for me has been as a result of working in ECC and working with those liberals and understanding what we're doing in the white community.

Q: OK, you've made a big jump between those liberals and you were a liberal yourself, so can I just..... I think that's interesting that the reason that you felt that alienation was because you felt that contempt was being directed towards you as someone who wasn't adequate ?

LN: Ja, ja.....and in fact when the Left was discussing whether I should be president or not that was a strong argument within their ranks against it - he's



just a liberal, you know. And well, I'd been on the SRC that year and... (Q: Which year ?) , the year before, that was '80, '81 and I was Ed. Comm. Officer, and there were 2 of us - myself and someone in Wages Comm. - sort of proposed a motion to give money from the SRC to SAWU; it was the time of the Wilson Rowntree boycott. So I think it was that that convinced them, also I spoke in the Commerce faculty calling people out in boycott in '81.

Q: So do you think that experience that you yourself had helped you understand.... what made you move towards accepting liberals ? Can you tell me a bit about that.

LN: That was working within ECC - you see I think the Left in Nusas have this notion of their being in the vanguard, having the correct position, which they do, I think - I mean, I would hold to that position - and they need to draw in other groups like Christian groups and liberal groups on campus for the sake of legitimacy and for the sake of reaching a greater number of people, but not because we sincerely or honestly respect those positions, and believe that we can move people which we are able to do - I mean we've seen from ECC. So my development came from working within ECC because we're as broad a front as one can imagine in South Africa - we have PFP youth affiliates in the eastern Cape, we have Black Sash, Race Relation Women's Movement For Peace, some church groupings which are relatively conservative.

Q: Say the groups again sorry.... PFP Youth in the eastern Cape...

LN: Ja, Black Sash, Race Relations in Cape Town, Women's Movement For Peace in Cape Town..... I'm worried about what I'm saying that..., not the ECC part, the Nusas part. ( laughs ) I'm a bit critical of Nusas.

Q: No, what I wanted to bring out more was that I think that's an important development..... would you say that you went from being a bit.... being on the receiving end of that contempt or dismissal to adopting it yourself before you..... ? That's just what I'm trying to work through .

LN: Ja, I did.

Q: So you did?

LN: Ja.

Q: So after being on the outside once you were on the inside you also didn't want to know liberals ? Or what... you thought they must immediately become radicals ?

LN: Mm, there was a sharp divide between the liberal and the radical - and then we've got the right position and there's not much room for them.

Q: OK, you keep saying it's ECC that changed you - can you just tell me a bit about the process, I mean, there must have been some sort of process where you began to



see what the liberals... why it's so important ? I'm just unclear.... about how quickly you began to see the light.

LN: OK, well it is quickly coz I mean, I've had this job for... since January or February this year... OK, there'd be 2 things; first would be a political understanding of what we're doing in the white community and the second would be contact with those people. So as far as the first is concerned I think that what we're trying to do in the white community is mobilising an increasing number of people away from supporting the government towards supporting a progressive position, that's it in a nutshell and we can talk about that later and what that involves.

In order to do that we have to be reaching out as broadly as possible, the broader our support the greater the threat that we pose to the state, the more legitimacy we have within the white community and the more protection we have. I don't like the protection side so much - it's true but it sounds too expedient a reason, but it's true, I mean, the fact that we have the main-line churches behind us is a source of protection for ECC because we're sitting in the hot seat, dealing with the military is such a vulnerable area for the state - so it is important, but that's not the main reason.

The main reason is that we want to draw in the white community as extensively as we can away from supporting the government and we think that the significance of that is that it contributes to the crisis that...., crisis of legitimacy that they're experiencing where their ability to rule as well as their right to rule is being questioned by the black community, the white community and the international community also.

I also believe that we have the ability to move people - so when we have PFP youth coming into ECC, I don't believe that that will cause us to move backwards and to compromise ourselves and our position - people are moving into ECC with an understanding of what we're doing and that would be ... our views have been encapsulated in our Declaration which, if you haven't seen, I could give you a copy - and that would sum up what the different groups in ECC, despite their different political and religious perspectives would all adhere to, and that's a progressive document.

So I think we have the capacity to shift people and the personal thing - working with people like Molly Blackburn in the eastern Cape - Molly's regarded by UDF and COSAS and TU activists as a comrade, and the kind of contempt that some of the Nusas radicals in the old days had for the PFP would be completely out of line with the way someone like Molly's regarded. Di Bishop too, um, because they're playing such important and progressive roles there - working with the Christian Left, too, because the same scepticism would apply to the Christian left, within Nusas in the old days .

Working with the Christians one realised that we might be talking a different language but we're saying the same thing essentially, and that



we're committed to the same goals - I think that had a really powerful influence over my work in the last 2 months. Meeting the Cathsoc and the YCS people here and coming to understand that their commitment is no different from ours and the energy they put into their work is no different from ours and I think, I'd go further, that we can learn a lot from them, that's there's a sense of compassion and humility that the Left often lacks - where we're arrogant and overconfident and exclusive, they are far more open and compassionate, there's a moral basis to their politics which is repressed, I think, within Nusas..... again they'd shoot me for saying that, I mean, they'd accept it internally.....

- But I think that all of us come into Nusas or into the Left from a moral position, we develop a scientific analysis but that moral position is repressed, that it's almost... the 2 are seen as exclusive, that if you have a moral stand you're a liberal, if you have a scientific analysis then that qualifies you as a Leftist. It's the result partly of an over-academic approach.

Q: ( tape blanks out )..... scientific morality level ?

LN: Ja, I think that that distinction is partly a result of the introduction of Marxism on the English speaking campuses through academics, the big liberal-radical academic debate that was taking place in the late 70's.. on the SA English speaking campuses, and I think that contributed to that dichotomy between a sense of morality, a sense of outrage, of concern about what is happening and an analysis of what we have to do to change it.

Q: And you're saying that you feel that there's something that must be added to that academic analysis besides just it's clarity on that level ?

LN: Ja, we can't... we do repress that sense... let me give you an example - that massacre at Uitenhage, OK, Nusas gets to hear about it - again this is something you couldn't print - (Nusas in CT) but their initial reaction, and I would have been the same in Nusas, is not one of shock and horror... their initial reaction is what are we going to do about it on campus. Let's pull together Nusas members, let's design our posters, organise our mass meeting, let's hit campus within the next few days - that's how we think... not that sense of disbelief and horror at what's happening, because we operate as political machine, people are completely over-stretched and over-worked, worried about what effect their having on campus, understanding the crucial importance of mobilising white students around issues like that, having difficulty in doing that on all the campuses. ~~So~~ that's how we're geared, that's our response politically on campus.

Now how do we actually feel about this - and I think that that actually manifests itself in the way we actually take up the issues on the campuses - I have no right to be talking about Nusas as an ex- Nusas person.....



Q: Well, I think I can use what you're saying if I would not say Nusas but say some of us whites... I mean, you're saying us and I don't think it's a problem.

LN: Sure...

Q: Maybe if I just substitute that because I think it's really interesting.....Tape goes

LN: blank..... critique that you're talking about. If it's directed at the formal activities which is what I'm talking about, ja. If it's questioning the existence of work within the white community, then obviously I don't believe that or obviously I wouldn't be working here.

Q: No, well I mean.... let me ask you a bit about that because I would quite like to come to grips with that. I mean, that's what I was saying I don't want to just get into policies about ECC this month, I want to really take a bigger question... I mean, what about the role of the whites and how do you see it? Is ECC going to become a mass movement one day?

LN: It's becoming a mass movement... I think that what's happening within the white community as the course of struggle intensifies is that the community will become increasingly polarised - which means that a greater number of people will be hostile to what we're doing, but a greater number of people will take the step of supporting us, because I think it's becoming increasingly intolerable for the white community and obviously so, for them to be sitting on the fence. You know, things are just so bad that they have to take a stand, they have to do something, so they'll go one way or the other.

So I think we can expect more opposition to what we do but also more support - and I think that has proven to be the case. Our support since the army moved into the townships last year has been radically different from the support that we were getting prior to that, a massive increase in support. That doesn't mean that we will mobilise a massive number of white people - at the launch of the ECC Declaration we had 1500 white people. ( in CT )

Q: When was that?

LN: Middle of the year last year. ECC was formed at the end of 83, beginning of 84. That's a great turn out, it's more white liberals than we've ever been able to organise in our history in Cape Town, and anywhere in South Africa. So we're not going to get... I mean, that might mark the outer boundaries, no that's pessimistic, we've got a long way to go before we reach the outer boundaries... We're never going to mobilise the entire English speaking community or a significant sector of the Afrikaans community - I mean we accept that. But we are mobilising a significant sector of the white community, significant in terms of it's quality rather than it's quantity, because their articulate and they represent the churches-mainline church hierarchies have come out behind us,



they have international profiles, like Sir Ricahrd Luyt and Sheena Duncan, Bishop Tutu, Archbishop Hurley - those kind of people, the university students are articulate and visible as a community, they're seen as the leadership of tomorrow, and we make a noise, we're articulate and vocal in public - whereas that mass in the middle, they are silent and conservative and not saying anything.

Q: But how can you say it's a mass movement? I mean, is it a mass movement..... ten-million black people... what do you mean a mass movement?

LN: Ja, if you're using it in that sense, no within the white community we'll never have a mass movement.

Q: But in South Africa I'm saying...

LN: In South Africa... we won't.

Q: That's what I'm saying - that's what the criticism often is that one has to know the place.... and I don't want to.... I think maybe it was a mis-speaking but I want you to locate it within South African democratic politics.

LN: So then the question is the significant - we can call it a movement for peace and justice, not Peace Movement because that has European connotations, it's a movement for a democratic and just society. Why is it significant - what's the point - we're never going to get ten thousand whites out on the street like in Australia or hundreds of thousands as they can in Europe.....

Q: Or as they can in ....

LN: Ja, or as they can in the black community here. No, we can't and we won't. The significance is that we're putting into practice now what we talk about as an end goal - a non-racial society. WE're br<sup>2</sup>aking down that myth of the Nationalist government that white and black people can't work together. So I think that that ideologically is an important intervention that we're making - that young people are prepared to make enormous sacrifices and are as committed and work as hard and are as disciplined as their black comrades.

That's important and I think that would be our critique of AZAPO - that they see no place for whites. We would see their position as being a racist position. That doesn't only apply to activists, the fact that we get so many liberals coming to our meetings, people who would be proud .... I mean, I'm not using that word in the derogatory sense. At a meeting where SWAPO people are on our platform and UDF people are on our platform, we're talking about release of Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC - their participation in those meetings and in our organisations, more importantly, gives the lie to that myth.

At the same time we're winning the support away from the state and



winning the support for the struggle for democracy, and the significance of that is that it applies a lot of pressure on the state. IN other words the state would govern the black community primarily through the use of force, though obviously ideological means would be used to divide and rule and all that kind of thing, but primarily through the use of force and that would stop the black South African community from taking power. But the state attempts to govern the white community through ideological means, it attempts to win a consent for it's programme and it's policies and it's reforms and for it's use of force against the black community.

Now if we're serious about challenging the state then we need to challenge it's means of control at every single level. We can't pick out one level and or one community and say well, that's where we're going to work - we've got to do that everywhere in whatever ways the state is trying to win control or retain it's control, we need to be challenging that. It's for that reason that I reckon that the white community is so important. The state is in a crisis, I mean, ..... we used to talk analytically about this dual process of reform and repression and how they went hand in hand. we've never seen the 2 taking place in quite such a schizophrenic fashion as we've seen in the last 6 or 7 months - with all these reforms, I mean they are reforms - they may not be meaningful in our terms, they may not bring us closer to the kind of society we're working for, but they are reforms and they are radical shifts in terms of the mind set of the state and it's immediate support.

At the same time it's applying the iron fist in a way that we haven't seen before, I mean it's..... and I think that the level of repression is higher now than in 76, or just about at any other time in our history - it's unbelievable what's happening in the eastern Cape, which we can talk about later.

The fact that it's operating in such a schizophrenic fashion, the fact that that repression is so intense and that all these reforms are being pushed out just about weekly now is a result of the crisis that it's found itself in. That crisis comes from organisation within the black community - resistance and that, I think, is the primary source of the crisis. I think also from the international community and from within the white community as well.

Q: OK, now try and answer the whole question about if you're working towards non-racialism, why you're operating separately and what is this non-racialism ...is there any working with blacks involved ?

LN: Exclusively ?

Q: Is it exclusive ? I mean is that what you meant... what area do you work with blacks ?

LN: Ja, we would work primarily within the white community and that's the way ECC



started off because the white community is the conscripted community, and because within the black community the issue of militarisation hasn't been a priority - that would be true of the period up until the invasion into the townships. So we would see ourselves working within the white community primarily; some of our organisations are non-racial, like SUCA ...

Q: Like what ?

LN: SUCA, which is a Students Union for Christian Action and in Durban there would be UDF affiliates that are part of ECC. But I think that the way we would see our work in the black communities is one of support for the work that is being done by the UDF and by other black groupings that would be prepared to work with us - so for example, we would have reps on UDF - IYY ( International Year of the Youth ) committees. In Cape Town there was a UDF anti-conscription committee and we exchanged reps with them. At UDF meetings we have ECC speakers, at ECC meetings we have UDF speakers. We can't however, at this stage, if we are trying to organise within the white liberal community, mobilise in a non-racial way - because although we're saying the same thing more or less, at our meetings, what would be said at a meeting in the townships, we're saying things in completely different ways.

So the starting point of the different communities is different and the way one talks to them is different. There's a level of militancy at black meetings, for example, that we can't have expressed at meetings in the Claremont Civic Centre in the southern suburbs or the northern suburbs here in Jo'burg.

Q: What <sup>do</sup> people say..... what do you mean you can't express it, you're just talking out 2 sides of your mouth, is it really being honest to both of the if you're saying you can't say it in the same way ? What do you mean ? Aren't you just saying 2 different things to do different..... you know ?

LN: No, we're saying more or less the same, but in different ways because the starting point of any political activity within any constituency is that you start where people are at, and you try and move them in a progressive direction. Now people are at completely different places if one compares the white and the black community. In other words, the white community needs to understand, firstly, how bad apartheid is - they may not appreciate that, they may not appreciate the extent to which the black is suffering. Now the black community doesn't need to be told that. The white community needs to be told that white people are fighting for freedom - fighting and freedom, the black community doesn't need to be told that to the same extent.

Q: So it is different things ? What is the sameness ?



LN: The sameness is that the end goal, or the point that we want to take to the different communities is similar. I mean, when we talk about..... when we explain the nature of society and what we're working towards, there's no fundamental difference what we say in the white and black communities, but we're saying it differently..... different starting points..... I don't know if you went to.... there was a mass meeting here on campus, OK, now there were a lot of speakers, white and black speakers - I spoke and Sheena Duncan and Grant Rex, who's SRC President, and Raymond Suttner and there were a lot of black speakers - they speak completely differently. We're not saying that that what we're saying, the real essence of what we're saying is that different, but we approach things in a different way because we're appealing to different sectors of that audience. White students are alienated by militancy - when people are shouting ' Viva ANC, viva Umkhonto ', they are alienated by that - it's not part of their experience to be militant. You know, within the white community we talk to school kids different to how we talk to university students and that's different to the way we talk to ministers - because all of them have a particular idiom which they're familiar with. I mean, we're doing a lot of work within what we call youth counter-culture, people who will identify themselves by their music and the clothing that they wear, that go to clubs or whatever - we talk to them completely differently to the way we talk to white liberals, saying the same things essentially but our approach is different. You'll see that in our media..... different styles.

Q: What do you mean I'd see in terms of how you address the counter culture?

LN: If you look at our media, I can see later if I've got copies of it... the media that we would put out at a concert, an anti-war concert, would be quite different from the media we put out at a public meeting. When we put out pamphlets for white school kids or for ministers - all of them are different. The essence is all the same, you know, the position that is articulated in our ECC Declaration is reflected in every one of them but the whole style is different, the use of language, the graphics - all different.

Q: Again you've backtracked on a whole lot of things.... tell me about how Oct. 84, the going to the townships changed things - you spoke about that as a very important kind of watershed. I mean, you speak very well in abstract and theoretical role but there are specific things you can tell me about? That you saw people change, I mean how.....?

LN: It wasn't specifically 84 that was the turning point, it was the fact that the



SADF now moved into townships in an ongoing and consistent way, they've moved into at least 20 townships in the eastern Cape and the Transvaal since that time. The shift in attitude from the white community is now reflected in newspaper editorials, where before we were calling for an end to conscription we didn't get support - you saw that Cape Times editorial - we're now getting support from English and Afrikaans medium newspapers expressed through their editorials, saying there must be an end to conscription if young men are going into the townships and taking up arms against fellow South Africans - that's clear.

I think that churches too are being pushed - the Methodist Conference and synods are debating the issue and taking a more radical position now than they have in the past, because of the invasion into the townships. Same too with the Catholic Bishops Conference - they've just passed a marvelous statement calling for an end to conscription on the grounds that conscripts were being forced to go into the townships. That statement's embargoed at the moment and it'll be made public in a month or two - marvellous statement.

I think that from the support that we .... from the people that attended the ECC Uitenhage meetings in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban - the way people are talking now, that shift is also reflected. One of the things that we're doing at those meetings when we try and encourage discussion from the floor, is no longer to have discussion about how bad the army is, which is what we used to do when ECC was formed, but to talk about how people can actively involve themselves in working towards a just society - and the response that we get from people from the floor is absolutely fantastic, you know.

We're saying to people basically that it's not good enough that you come to a meeting once a month, that you protest; you have to do more - be talking to your parents, talking to your families, talking to your classmates, talking to your brothers and sisters at school - saying to the people that come to our meetings that protest is important, but it's not sufficient, if they want to make a contribution then they need to be actively involved in an organisation, which would be the highest level of involvement for them.

That's the kind of discussion that we're trying to have at our meetings, public meetings... and that's because we think the time is ripe for that, and the response that we get at those meetings is tremendous and people are joining ECC in increasing numbers.

Q: You still haven't given me any specific..... I don't know, is it possible



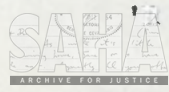
to tell me what these things that people say are or anything that was so different and shows this response . You've talked about the response being... I mean, can you remember what people said.... I mean what they've said at the meetings or..... ?

LN: What I've said is that the churches' position has become more radical - that they're calling for an end to conscription on the grounds, not on the ground that the army plays this role in abstract or that it has the potential to be used here, but because it is being used here. The newspapers editorials the same. The people at our meetings are agreeing with that when we say that they have to become more involved and they are joining our organisations - when we say at the end of the meetings ' If you want to get involved in ECC come and put your name down ' - they are doing that.

They're coming up with creative ideas, people are saying that it's important that we work with school kids, because they're subjected to Christian National education and the cadet system, which is militarising, I mean it's giving those kids a romantic and glorified notion of war - it's preparing them for the role that they're going to have to play. People are saying that it's important to reach the youth counter culture - I mean, things that we're doing, but those are the ideas that people are coming up with themselves.

Q: This counter culture thing interests me..... coz I'm very interested in not just the white left but the disgruntled whites.... you know what I mean.... we may have the opposition here. Can you give me any examples of how you've seen people like that move and who are these people ? Where are they moving from ? I mean, more specifically.

LN: Ja, we've had the most experience of that in Cape Town . There existed in that counter culture society an anti- establishment... I' mean the whole idiom is anti-establishment, without it necessarily being political. A lot of people within that don't like the army because it's an army - not because it's this army here and now but because it's an army and, you know, ' we're just not into the military ' - it's contradictory because there are a lot of them that are wearing kind of military outfits. But many of those people with some political understanding join ECC in Cape Town at it's formation last year - not highly politicised people but have become highly politicised who understand where their peers were at and organised concerts and put out, pamphlets and media, posters that was directed at their constituencies - and the big event that was in Cape Town last year was a concert, it was called





' Rock the Rattel ' - a rattel being one of the army vehicles.... and they put out T-shirts with rattels upside down on them and the slogan was ' this side up'. And some of the bands played wearing ECC T-shirts, those T-shirts, there was an enormous ECC banner behind the band, some of the bands played anti-war songs that are specific to our situation here. One of the groups, Dynamics, they're quite a popular group, that was their last concert in South Africa before they left for reasons of the military - in fact there's a letter from them at the back there.

Then we didn't lay a heavy political trip on people, somebody stood up between the bands and said ' Listen it's really shit that we're going into the army, it's 4 years of our lives effectively, it's the prospect of having to shoot somebody or getting shot at, and we need to be critical, we need to question whether it's right that we go in or not. We can't go in blind. If you want to find out more then go to the ECC stands' - we had those on the side of the hall, and we were selling our publications and posters and buttons and that kind of thing, and COSG had their counselling service there.

So we weren't laying a heavy political trip on people, we were just saying if you want to ask more, then come to us. A lot of people came to us and the general feeling that I got from those people, because I was behind one of those desks, was fear. They don't want to go into the army because it's apartheid's army and they may not have strong political views on any other issue, you know, they may not understand forced removals and bantustans and influx control... but they understand that that army's apartheid's army that they're going to - and they're frightened because they don't know what to do and what their options are, and I think that that's the approach that they're coming to us with. Then we try and involve them in.... in Cape Town we have a Youth Culture Committee and their tasks ... at the moment they're putting out T-shirts which they're going to silk-screen in public places, like flea-markets. They're putting together a n art and poster display around the themes of militarisation, taking those to Michealis, which is the Art School in Cape Town, involving them and then taking it to the Labia which is a kind of alternative movie-house, to the Baxter which is the liberal theatre in Cape Town and to campus, to other organisations, they'll make a slide - tape show from that, put out Christmas cards with those pieces of art displayed on them, hopefully in 1986 a coffee table diary with our art in it. These are kind of the youth culture ideas that are coming out of Joburg would be to produce a record of indigenous anti-war material which Shifty Records - you know Shifty Records ? It's a recording company that's just been set up to promote local progressive musicians. They've just put out a record called " A naartjie in our societ"



and they're prepared to do an anti-war song.

Q: What's this song called ?

LN: " A naartjie in our sosaatie" - playing on anarchy in our society.

Q: Whose doing it ?

LN: The group is called Shifty Records.

Q: Ja, but whose the group ?

LN: It's a compilation of different bands.

Q: Where can you get it ?

LN: If you don't know they're not trying hard enough... um, shit I don't know of contact numbers for those people...

Q: Can you say something about.... just again, the bigger issue of putting it in it's place ? Someone was talking about conscription as being the single most valuable contribution of whites , I mean how would you put that... I think that you'd look... there's lots of ways to put it, this is the only decision that all whites must make, irrespective of how involved they are. I mean, when you mentioned here that it's a real imposition, to me that's interesting, I mean, to some people it's an imposition - they'd rather be making money with their business education. And with other people it's a moral quandry, and with other people it's an intellectual quandry ... Can you just talk about if someone said, you know, gave you the opening " What does it mean for whites ", you know instead of just taking it from the point of view of me trying to say, not to be arrogant, but to say what the place of whites is ? It's a big question, but I'd just be interested as to how you'd answer that. Why are you devoting your time to it ? Why is it such a big issue of such potential ? Do you think it's got more potential to reach more white people- why ?

LN: OK. IF the starting question is why are we taking it up, why have we used this issue to mobilise the whites community - there'd be 2 answers. The one would be, as I say in that interview, that it is the one aspect of apartheid that 's a real imposition on the lives of white people, that it's four years out of normal society, that's being subjected to a system of conditioning which is dehumanizing, it involves the prospect of being shot at and



being wounded, and for a lot of people the prospect of having to shoot somebody. (A lot of white people will ask themselves the question " Is it worthwhile, is it worth the effort ? " And they would conclude that it isn't - either for selfish reasons, some of them, and some of them for moral and political reasons, that it's not worth taking up arms to defend apartheid, some of them because it means disrupting their careers and leaving their families, wives, children, whatever... for an effective 4 years, taking 2 years national service plus all the camps.

Now it's because it's the aspect of apartheid that's an imposition on their lives and because it's such a grim imposition, you know, I mean going into the townships now is horrific for many young men.) Again I'm talking about... I don't want to make it sound as if what I'm saying reflects the general attitude of the white community, it doesn't... I mean we're talking about the liberal community. So that's why the issue has so much potential, but that doesn't mean that our focus is exclusively around conscription, and I'll come to explain why. But I was saying that there are two reasons for seeing the issue as important - (so the one would be that it has potential in the white community; the second reason would be the role that the army plays objectively in society - I mean it is ultimately their last mechanism of defence, it is their instrument of force which will ultimately prevent the South African <sup>people</sup> from seizing power. )

Now that's tricky ground for me, or for an interview, because you see in terms of the Defence Act section 121 c. we can't encourage or do anything to assist <sup>or to cause</sup> servicemen not to go into the army. We can also not do anything that will undermine the morale of the SADF or depress or alarm the general public in matters of the defence of the Republic, OK. So we don't make explicit the object of.. in so far as it's directed at undermining the army - I mean we can't do that and that can't ever be in an interview coz that's suicide for us. But that's obvious, I mean that role that the army's playing is crucial, in the same way that we see education and the media and whatever else... as sites of struggle - so we see the military as a site of struggle.

Q: But the most important one?

LN: No.

Q: The most strategic one ?

LN: No, one of many. I don't think that conscription is the most important issue, objectively speaking - but I think it has the most potential around with



which to mobilise white people.

Q: Ja, ja, for whites it's <sup>got</sup> that strategic edge.

A: Ja. But I don't think if one's looking at the broader spectrum of issues that we and UDF and other groups like Trade Unions take up, I would never say that conscription is a .. and the military is the most important issue.

Q: No, but wouldn't you say that to come to grips with the military is the only uniquely white political responsibility ?

A: You see, that was what I was going to say earlier, that we're not exclusively working around that issue. It is an important issue that allows us to mobilise the white community in a way that no other issue will. But we're trying to move them beyond an understanding of simply the role that an army plays. In other words, we need to get to use the issue of conscription to get people to understand the nature of apartheid society. Ivan Thomas does that very well.... doctor at Crossroads, conscientious objector, his arguments against going in are based on his experiences at Crossroads.

②

When Brett Myrdal..., did you meet Brett in Zimbabwe? OK, the basis of Brett's objection was that I'm not prepared to be in an army whose primary role is to defend a system that... and spelling out.... homelands, migrant labour, influx control, detentions etc. (So we want the white community to look a little further than the immediate issue of conscription to the broader issues that affect the South African people. We want them to understand that we're living in a civil war and what that means. We want them to understand what is actually happening in the townships. We want them to understand the intensity of the struggle and why force is being used by both sides, and we want them also to understand what we're working towards.. like when we talk about in our Declaration " working towards peace in our land", that's pretty amorphous. We need to spell out in detail what we mean by that, so that we talk about the dismantling of apartheid and the release of Mandela, unbanning of the ANC etc., the things I was talking about earlier.



Do you want to talk about what that all ultimately leads up to ? Aren't more whites leaving the country than before ? ( Ja ) Are those figures... you just can't get those figures... I mean, that



7 thousand who didn't show up, it's a misleading one because it's a whole range of people. I mean, this person and I just had this talk about it..... that that figure is useless and ECC is jumping on it to say, look what it shows, but half of them are students who already have deferments and the other half are Afrikaners who just wouldn't get it together, or something like that. What do you think about it ?

A: I think, although I wouldn't say this publicly, that there was something of an administrative bungle that they made at the time. I mean, they weren't sending out their forms properly, it was clear at the time that that was happening. But that 7-thousand were people who failed to report, it doesn't include people who were granted deferments, it doesn't include ~~students~~ - I mean that's factually incorrect.

Q: Ja, ja

A: And that jump from 15-hundred to 7-thousand is partly exaggerated because of an administrative bungle.... you know, at the time of the call-up last year they were saying we've jammed up our computers whatever..., if you haven't got your call-up sit tight, you'll get it but there's, you know, someone's thrown a spanner in the works, they were saying that in the newspapers. But I think that the fact that the army's gone into the townships in a way that is unparalled in SA history has had an effect also. But you say it's people who've been granted deferment.... that's nonsense coz those people would be not considered part of the number who failed to report for duty. These are 7-thousand people that they are missing so to speak.

Q: Ja.

A: Tell me about some more of the criticisms of ECC.

( Blanks ) I think a question for people like that is what contribution are they making to the struggle, coz I think that a lot of the criticism from white lefties comes from people who're academic or who're not involved in struggle - so it's an important question, what are they actually doing ? Of course, it does come from people who're involved in the Trade unions... Fosatu people might be critical of white involvement. But I think the question

..... I s'pose it's too personal a question... but the more important question is, is the work we're doing in the white community



advancing the struggle, or is it retarding the struggle? And I could spell out quite clearly why I think it's advancing the struggle. And I think that people like that need to explain how it's actually setting us back. That it's not a question of principle, it's not a question of the class background of whites, it's not a question of saying well, in the long run they're never going to be committed socialists, that's not the point.... and it's not a question of saying well, in the long run they'll sell us out, in the long run the PFP youth are not going to be behind us. That's not the point. The point is that at this point in time, is their participation advancing our struggle or retarding it?

And I think that if you talk to UDF people, exec people here, Raymond or Vally... Cheryl Carolus is here, a really good person for you to talk to... she's on the western Cape exec last year, she's tremendous and speaks at a lot of our meetings so she understands the white community quite well. And if you look at the ANC's position, I mean it's absolutely clear from the way black activists see it it's not only us as white activists, they understand the importance of what we're doing.

And as far as that funeral is concerned you know, there were about fifteen of us there, or I went in a group of about fifteen from P.E. , ... this is the big massacre funeral..., and we were approached by many, many young people, mostly activists, I mean wearing youth T shirts who wanted to take us to the front, and their reason was that these were whites who had come to their funeral you know, there were fifteen thousand, seventeen thousand black people ... and for them it's unbelievable that white people are prepared to take the risk, that they actually care enough to come along there. It's not a racist thing, I mean, it's not.. oh because you're white you should have a nice position, it's just that it's so fantastic that you've actually come that we want to make sure that you can actually see what's happening. And most of us were too skaam to take it up..... I said no to everyone, and many people approached me, and I said no, I'm happy, I don't want to be shepherded through the crowd. The only people who accepted were two of our gang who had cameras and were taken to the press table and put on that.

The spirit of non-racialism, I mean there were only fifteen of us, and people went out of their way to help us, was fantastic. We got stuck because the kombi which was coming to fetch us broke down and we had to walk from the township to Uitenhage so we could get picked up at the cathedral and it's about a 2 hour walk. And



a group of 10 black people, old and young, walked with us to keep us company, I mean they were going to.... and this was a long walk for us, you know, we were exhausted at the end on it. These people were going to walk back and they walk that every day of their lives if they're working in town. They were there to look after us and the cars that were leaving the funeral stopped, many of them stopped to offer us, the whiteys a lift, again not as a sort of "yes baas" thing, it wasn't that at all. It was because... it was acknowledging the effort that.... or that it was significant to them that white people are coming to their funeral to mourn with them and share their anger and their grief. And every time we would say, "No, you must take the old people", because there was one African woman, old, real old ladies, tiny, must have been about 60 or 70 ploughing along slowly.... and I went up to her and said here's a lift why don't you take it...., thinking of course that we were really looking after her and she was really holding us back coz she was walking so slowly, and she said no, she can't leave us, and we walked till dark, and she said no, she would never leave us if we've come to their funeral.

So that kind of approach is... from your photographer, arrogant and misinformed and doesn't reflect the way people in the townships actually... the way they saw us there. It was a marvellous experience for white people to be there.

Q: Did you write that thing in that UCT paper about it... that says why army in the townships? It's like an 8 page pamphlet written by hand, it's very well done but for some reason they used handwriting on a screen and there's someones account of the funeral?

A: No, I spoke to people in Cape Town. I mean, that's my kind of home town so I <sup>have</sup> friends there I live with would be either Nusas or ex-Nusas people.

Q: So maybe someone from there referred it...

A: Could be.

Q: So can you just tell me coz it was... I <sup>don't know if I can explain as you</sup> didn't see the pamphlet someone just mailed it to me in Zimbabwe so it must have been after a few weeks. But can you just tell me,, you said it very well but you didn't give the kind of begining part... , what it was like, I mean why you decided to go, what it was like to be there as a white?



A: It was never a question of going.... it was taken for granted that the white activists there would go to all the funerals. Firstly because of their political significance and because that's how we acknowledge the fact that people have died, and indicate our own commitment and determination. So that's automatic, there's no debate should we go... I mean, we debated for security reasons. Are they going to let whites into the townships, will we get through the roadblocks, we don't ever think is it important for us to go or not, so we go.

The atmosphere at that funeral was phenomenal, I mean there were a number of people, the combination of anger and joy at funerals which white people don't understand. You know, my parents look at photographs in the paper and they say " But everybody's singing and they're at a funeral, how can they be singing at a funeral ? This is just agitators, it's political mischief that's being caused. " But it's a fascinating combination of grief and anger and joy at our involvement in struggle, joy at working politically because we know what we're working for and because that's so inspiring.

The level of militancy's unbelievable and that was a real shock coming from the western Cape which is not nearly as militant. It's unbelievable finding that number of people who are as politicised and militant as at that funeral. I mean it would never happen in Cape Town, that number. You know, when we get 12 to 15 thousand people at the launch of the UDF in the western Cape we thought that was... it was, a remarkable achievement.

The level of militancy and politicisation at that launch was nowhere near as high as at that funeral. But all people, people not involved with political activity, not activists, is filled with that sense of purpose..... And on the way back we made friends with a little African girl who was about 9 or 10 and I spent a long time through an interpreter asking her how she saw things there and..... I asked her, at one stage, how she saw the white soldiers in a township, and she said " I want to shoot them all", and this is from a kid! There's no agitators, those people are the enemy and they are seen for what they're doing.

Q: Did you understand from her why she wanted to shoot the soldier and not how she felt about you ?



as a white man here I'm forced to be part of that army? That took a long time for her to understand, that I didn't have a choice, or that most young, white men don't have a choice, they're forced to go. She thought for along time and she said no, then she would shoot the leaders coz if she shoots the leaders then the soldiers won't have any orders ~~obey~~ <sup>my</sup>.

Q: And what day was that? Do you remember?

A: I could look it up... it was March 21st... it was roughly 2 and a half weeks after that. Sorry I get sidetracked by ultra leftist anti white.....

Q: No, it was great. Do you feel or how do you have evidence that there's a real understanding on the part of that little African girl? Or you know others, is there a great amount of African people who understand the role of whites? I mean, do you think there is understanding?

A: No. They understand that there will be activists who are committed to the same things that they are and that are prepared to take the same risks. I mean not really, but that are prepared to take risks and are disciplined and committed. I don't think they would have a clue about why we're working in the white community. They probably wouldn't know that we're working in the white community, so that would be a distinction I think. They see us there with our UDF T-shirts, we're part of UDF, we know the words of the songs and we have our fists up... so they're judging us not our work in the white community coz they have no experience of that.

Q: Can you speak any African language?

A: No, it's appalling. It's a cause for great shame. It ought to be compulsory in our schools and universities.

Q: It's begining to be introduced...

A: I'd heard its being introduced, not compulsorily but..



A: That's tremendous.. you must see the syllabus... I've seen the syllabus of some of the option courses, I mean it's just so unbelievably ethnic and.... but still, the fact that people can speak the language is crucial. I mean, as a lawyer.. hobby horse, I mean, here I'm a lawyer appearing in court and I can't speak the language of the bulk of the people. Neither does the court. The laws are not written in their language and the judge won't talk to them in their language and the lawyers don't talk their language.

Q: Do you have a law degree ?

A: JA.

Q: Have you practised ?

A: No.

Q: Do you want to say anything about plans ? Are you going to keep studying ?

A: Well, they're more less end of the line, you know coz I'm now 8 years out of school, I've been studying for 8 years, I haven't dropped a year which is why they've let me carry on. I'm 2nd year Masters and they're not going to give me another year, I doubt,.. if I'm lucky. But I certainly won't get more than 3 years. That's the end of the road and the options are limited:- 6 years jail, exile, homelands, registering at an overseas university and coming here periodically, going underground... but for someone like myself who's high profile, I mean I talk so often publicly and that kind of thing, that's not a viable alternative. I don't know if people are doing that.

Q: Do you think the Board's a viable option ?

A: Not for me because the Board requires more than a religious position, it requires that you're a universal pacifist and you have to prove it. I have no objections to the Board on principle. I would advise any religious person to go before the Board, even if they're not a universal pacifist. Again you can't say that publicly.... but many of the Catholic people particularly feel that they're compromising their just war position by going before the Board. I think that's



strategically incorrect. They're making a principled decision which I would respect and understand why, but I don't think it's correct coz I think that if people.... for them it would mean going to jail and people can be effective politically outside jail and not in jail so for that reason alone they must try and get alternative service, even if it means compromising themselves a little. That would be the advice I would give to people who are facing that dilemma.

But for myself I'm not going to bluff anybody that I'm a religious pacifist even if I tried, so it's not an option.

Q: So what do you see w happening ? I mean, that's the huge question that I have kind of decided that I'm going to ask people. I mean, if you had to make a statement about what you see in South Africa especially from your point of view, I mean, do you see more and more people leaving the country.. I mean, you've talked about the crisis of the state and this and that. I mean, do you have any sense that you could talk about.... even in the near future what do you see that is happening and what that's pointing to ?

A: That's the most difficult question you've asked me! In the immediate foreseeable future I could say trite and bland things - struggle will intensify, conflict will heighten and not be reduced, the white community will become increasingly polarised, I think we'll find more people being anti us and being public in their opposition to us, I think we'll find more people supporting us, I think the longer the army's in those townships the more people will refuse to serve in the army and leave the country or take other means. In the long run, I've no idea where the hell we're going - it's such a difficult question. Both what the government's going to do in the long run and how we're going to win liberation in the long run.

What will be the respective roles of the armed struggle and the trade unions and unorganised workers and our political organisations and the mass of people outside political organisations? How all of those, or the different parts that they will be contributing to at liberation..... I don't know. You should ask the UDF people. But for ECC.... we haven't spoken about our being a front, but it does come in here you know... it's a fragile front. I mean, in SA to have an organisation that is also a front and brings together so many different sectors of the white community organisations is a difficult task and throws up a whole number of problems for us....



mainly because e those groups have different religious and political perspectives. We have pacifists and people who support a just war ... people who support a just war position on political or religious grounds. We have people who are critical of the left and people who are critical of Christians. Within our ranks we have often a very different understanding of the kind of society we're working towards, whether it's socialist or free enterprise. The people who support the Freedom Charter and those who would disagree either from the right or the left.

We are able to maintain the front and hold those, contain those differences because we have a common enemy and a shared understanding of conscription and the role of the army - what's in that Declaration. That's what holds us together despite the differences. But I'm not sure when we're going to reach a point at which we can't hold things together. There might easily come a point at which it's simply untenable for organisations to work with one another. It's abstract because I don't know how it's going to happen or when it's going to happen or around what. In the very long run... yes. If we won liberation and we were in a situation of a democratic government that we felt was representative of the people conscripted people into it's army, what would our position be then. Would we oppose compulsory conscription or would we support it. I think that there would be some of us that would support compulsory conscription under those circumstances and other that wouldn't - we wouldn't be able to hold a front together in that kind of situation.

Maybe the level of struggle will intensify to the point at which above ground work is no longer possible, that will happen before we're faced with these big dilemmas for us as ECC. Maybe we will be able to move people in the course of our working with them... I'm talking about the more conservative organisations... to the point where when the crunch comes, we have them firmly with us and behind us, I don't know. We don't know when the state will crack down on ECC, we don't know how, but we think it will happen. We need to be prepared.... it could be a treason trial, it could be a defence trial, it could be a banning of ECC if there was a mass banning of organisations, state of national emergency like in '61. We don't know how, we don't know what effect that will have on our constituency, we think we'll be able to hold them together but that will depend a lot on what happens. These are... I mean, I know you don't like my vagueness and abstraction at times... but these are the issues we're



trying to grapple with at the moment. WE're moving faster than we anticipated, faster than we can cope with. We all believe that we have the potential to mobilise the white community, none of us realised how great that potential was. None of us realised that in the space of 2 months we would have 2 new ECC's in PE and PMB and one on the cards in Stellenbosch. We never believed we would win the support... or we never believed the extent of the support that we actually have won.

We're moving faster than we can cope with. I'm the only full-time employed worker in ECC, we could easily handle 3 or 4 people at this stage. We could handle national offices, regional offices .... we're just growing too fast both in terms of our mobilisation and in the building of our organisation.

Q: Do you have any membership figures ?

A: There are 50 organisations that are affiliated to ECC....

Q: You're confident about the role of whites and you're clear about it. Is that because of your confidence or do you feel that you have a mandate or the support of blacks ? Do you talk to blacks ? Do you check to make sure that because you believe this will ultimately be an African, not racial, but African leadership and all that stuff that people talk about these days? Do you care to check in with blacks ? Do you think it's important that Monty Narssoo is monitoring you, or do you just feel you know it already and you don't need them to tell you it's ok ?

A: Bit of both because you see I think at the level of principle, in terms of our broad programme of action, we know for sure without having to check that what we're doing is significant and will contribute to the liberation of the people - and that's the position that's been articulated by our organisation historically and would be articulated by our comrades within the UDF. It's discussed together not to check it out, but when we're under attack from the right or the left, usually the ultra left in the western Cape or from AZAPO on the right, so we would consult one another about how best to handle the situation. So we.. there isn't a ... we never have a sense of doubt in a broader sense. At the level of our strategy and tactics, we check things out all the time... when I'm in the ECC regions I spend as much time with UDF people as I do with ECC, Black Sash and church people. And fortunately working in NUSAS gives me that access so



I'm not meeting people for the first time. I can talk to UDF exec. people in all the regions and I know them which is a great benefit. When we planned this festival for example we checked that out thoroughly, there was a through process of consultation with UDF people. We want Molly Blackburn from PFP to be chairing the session which is Troops Out with Anton Lobowski, whose a member of SWAPO.. a white Namibian lawyer, and Stone Sisanea, whose UDF Publicity Secretary for the eastern Cape. We would check that out with UDF there and with UDF here before we actually invited Molly.

That's where the left would work within ECC - formally of course ECC can't make that distinction. Formally ECC's not answerable to UDF before it is to the PFP, but of course, as leftists within ECC that is how we work.

Q: You've talked about all this change and beginning to understand the need to bring in levels.... do you even think about winning over sections of the white working class or whatever that is in strange SA ?

A: No.

Q: There's inevitably an upper middle class movement. Why ?

A: It's a good question. It's not because from our analysis we would argue that there is no role for the white working class. It's because I think we would... first because we're coming from middle class backgrounds and we know that community; secondly, because we would always look for the community that we have the most ability to mobilise and that's how ECC would work, it's first NUSAS students before ECC, then the white liberal community, then the counter-culture, then the school kids coz they're the most difficult, the English community... not because we think Afrikaans is unimportant but because we know it's going to be a lot more difficult. So we're moving first into those areas where maybe we will win support, once we have consolidated that we move into a more difficult area.

So I think that might be true of the white working class, I haven't given it... and I haven't been part of discussions that have considered that. I don't know where the white working <sup>class</sup> lives and how it thinks and what it wears... I see people on the street, I don't know of any work that's being done in that community, I don't know what the potential would be. I would have a pessimistic view



a very pessimistic view.

Q: Do you think oh, they're the major population of DB. I remember when I heard Peter Mole speak the one thing that bugged me was that he had a real kind of.... he used to talk about the ou manne and just you know it was really.....

A: It's very interesting that, ja.

Q:....and a couple of other people.. this was back in about 1980.... picked up on that as well, I mean there was such potential. Where- as someone like Richard Steele talked a lot about how those guys taught him certain things, you know. ( LN: Ja sure.) And I just think this whole disgruntlement about not.. you know, and even the counter-culture, the anti-establishment... <sup>is it that</sup> there's too much to do in the areas where there's hope that why try to get into areas that areas that are so difficult?

A: At this stage. Maybe it's a question we should look at. You see, in class terms, in abstract class terms one could argue that as a working class they have revolutionary potential. But in political terms their exploitation has sent them rightward not leftward in the political spectrum. The rural farmers and the white working class would form the support base of the CP and the HNP, It hasn't caused them to shift leftward.

Q: No, but what's leftward mean.. ? Maybe things don't directly, I mean going to the middle isn't left, it's a little left but I mean ,maybe those people and things are really getting to the point we're talking about, maybe one day they won't want to serve in Botha's army, you know, they might have strange bedfellows at some stage... I'm just asking.

A: It would be a nice challenge for us inside ECC if the HNP wanted to join. Just discussed last night... coz a lot of people in ECC are critical of PFP youth being part of ECC, so I'm trying to raise that issue in ECC for debate at the time, and last night we were having a discussion and someone said.. ja, what about the white workers, um, what if the HNP wanted to join us ? It's hypothetical you know, they wouldn't - they must support that Declaration, any group that wants to join ECC must support the Declaration... they won't.



They might support calling for an end to conscription, for a reactionary reasons.... in other words, because it's a multi-racial army so they're not prepared to be part of the army. Now the more pressure that's brought to bear on the state, the better. But they won't be part of ECC. If I was invited to talk to the HNP I would do that or the ASB, on any platform. I would talk.....

Q: Well that's 2 different things. I mean, that's a long way... that's what D do ?

A: Ja, that's not around... but I mean there're no problems, I'm just saying...

Q: Are they not around or did they just fall apart ?

A: It's a pity.

Q: Oh... so but don't you think it should be on the agenda ? I mean say for ... if it was kind of a Pulse do or....

A: Undoubtedly. I was saying that we have a chance setting up an ECC in Stellenbosch - Dad's army's just been introduced and there are a number of lecturers and students that are very antagonistic to that and that have sought support and assistance from ECC in Cape Town. You can talk to Cape Town people about developments there.

Q: Is this an all male movement ?

A: No, 3 out of 5 of our chairpeople are women, composition of the ECC as a whole would be equal.

Q: Then why is it that women are interested ?

A: Firstly because conscription affects them in so far as their lovers or husbands or sons are being taken away. Militarisation affects all of us equally - militarisation of our society as it's manifest through education and the media and advertising. There's no gender distinction between a concern for the of the war and a commitment to doing something to change it. For us there's no distinction within ECC. It's more difficult... outside of ECC, to mobilise



women that men, particularly young women because the older women, where their sons are involved, we can mobilise easily, as easily as the older men.. in fact sometimes more easily, they seem to carry that burden more than their husbands do. Younger women it's more difficult to mobilise outside of a politicizing environment - students on campus.... makes no difference, equal composition gender wise. Youth culture - predominantly men not women.