Q Just to..so who did Solly marry again? Did he marry someone after your mother?

A Yes, he was married for a number of years to my mother, then they divorced. And then he married Dulcie Hartwell, who was a garment worker and afterwards became a very.. a leading figure in the trade union movement, mainly with TUCSA. The Trade Union Council of SA.

She and my mother have become quite good friends in recent years.

Q And just with the expulsions aspect, what was the view of communists or CPSA that you grew up with, given your fathers expulsion? Did he try to explain that to you? Did you have a sense of...

A No, you know um..the Communist Party was banned in 1950. So I was 15, I was at school then. I wasn't..wasn't politically active as a kid. I grew up in a political world but I wasn't politically active. I didn't belong to any, at that stage any youth organisation or group.

So by the time I became active myself which was a few years later, there was no CP. After one discovered it had gone very deep underground. So these weren't live, kind of open issues.

What I knew was was that my father was a very contraversial figure. That many people, many of my friends would be... would talk with a certain measure of caution when his name cropped up. They admired him as a personality. They admired him as a figure, they admired him as a fighter, but they disagreed with a lot of his views.

So for a long time I was Solly's son. At school it didn't register very much. At university..Chuckle...my first year at university I wasn't politically active at all. I was interested in books, literature, poetry, it was a world outside that narrow world of cinema, dates, rugby, sport, passing exams; I was clearly keen on another world that touched the imagination.

But at that stage I wanted to be like everybody else at the the university so I was fairly keen to take part in the Rag Procession, to attend the inter university rugby thing and we used to go to sing songs. Preparing for the rugby match, to cheer on our rugby team. And they used to shout slogans.

Cape Town University used to be South African College, had been the SA College school which then became the university. So they used to shout Yay SACS. Smoke Max, which was a cigarette, Brooklax which was a medicine to make your stomach

A run, Solly Sachs which was the way they ended up. I mean it fitted in with the whole inane kind of a thing.

So there I would be shouting 'Yay SACS, Smoke Max, Brooklax Solly Sachs!' you know with all the rest. Well that was a kind of fame when your fathers name enters into one of these stupid chants. That means that he has broken through a certain barrier of the high profile.

But it didn't feature very much and then at the end of that year I met a youth crowd. It was actually off the campus called the modern Youth Society and that was my great moment of transformation. Because these were young people, mainly but not exclusively white who were struggling for a free, liberated non racial SA.

They had all the values that were lying latent inside me. But they were my pals, my generation, my crowd. I wasn't doing things for my parents because my mother said or my father said - I developed a definite reaction against that.

That just somehow made me feel different at times; made me feel uncomfortable, awkward. I wanted my own autonomy, my own ideas. So I..I never rebelled against my parents ideas but I withdrew from them. I ran away from them.

But the minute I found my own generation with those ideas I just gloried in it. Immediately this is where I wanted to be, I knew. And it touched on a whole range of things.

We used to climb Table mountain. We used to have all night parties. We used to walk home, I remember this one guy, Paul. From a party we would walk home, none of us had cars. Maybe it would take an hour to walk home and then he would walk with me to my place and we'd be talking politics and I would say ok Paul, and I would walk down to his place. Coz we did not finish. Then he would walk back to my place and we would spend the whole night walking and talking.

And at that stage, this was 52, onwards, the Modern Youth Society was the only non racial organisation in the whole of the Union of SA. It was the only one. The CP deep underground. Apart from that there wasn't a single non racial organisation, social, cultural, political, in the whole country.

Even the churches were divided.

Q And this would be what year?

A This was 52 when I joined. And we had a lot of activities. We organised a youth festival. When I think back it was astonishing. I was away at the time, but I helped in the preparations. I heard about it afterwards.

We used a, hired a disused sports field near Simonstown. We sent some of our more respectable white members saying that we wanted something for disadvantaged youth. We couldn't say it was for a youth festival for peace and friendship. And in the end I think it was something like 500/700 people camped out for a whole weekend. White, black, brown; with sports activities, cultural activities, with choirs, dance groups, plays, sketches and so on.

At that stage to have a what we call non racial dance it was an act of defiance. And we used to have them and they were very popular. It was most straight forward social activity, having fun but defying the..it wasn't the race laws necessarily; we defied the laws in the sense that the serving of liquor was always controlled in terms of race. But the real defiance was in terms of the fact of black, white, brown, just dancing together. That was something that we did.

One of our members was Toivi Yatoivu. He was a migrant worker in CT at that stage and he joined our organisation and he used to climb Table Mountain with us. I don't think he ever knew quite why. But the progressive youth were climbing the mountain - I think he expected there to be a meeting at the top. And then there was no meeting, I think he was a bit surprised but he loyally climbed up and loyally climbed down again.

Q And he was a contemporary age wise?

A Ja, ja.

Q Just joined as a youth?

A Ja. Maybe slightly older.

Q And what was the origin of the group? Was there any particular political...

A I think it started at the university and it was then decided that we intellectuals must move amongst the masses, amongst the people and there was a great debate as to whether we should change the name from the Modern Youth Society to the Students and Workers Cultural ~~Society~~ Association and in the end we stuck to Modern Youth Society. We felt the other was a little bit heavy.

A But we worked with the ANC Youth League and we were Congress orientated and every Saturday afternoon we would go to meetings, ANC meetings. I was snapped up as a speaker, put on ANC platforms aged 17, 18,19 deliberately by the ANC at that stage.

We would go out to the locations to show the non racial quality of the ANC. Although the ANC was black only they would get me up there and I learnt to speak. I learnt public speaking on ANC platforms.

Q And what kind of things did you use to talk on ?

A Nobody is free until everybody is free! And I think often they would be very philosophical, abstract kind of things. And you would say that and then the interpretter would speak. And I would say something very serious and heavy like that and then the interpretter would speak and the people would be rolling with laughter and I couldn't understand why.

And in fact somebody like me was just an occassion for the interpretter to make a speech. Laughs.

I remember speaking about peace - importance of peace, world peace and against the atomic bombs which was also a strong theme in the early 30s and ANC took it up very well. But the people didn't like peace. They didn't want to hear about peace, they didn't want to hear about peace. Peace to them meant the whites continuing to dominate.

And so once I was talking about peace and this comrade was interpretting and I asked him afterwards what was he saying - he said Comrade Albie, it is no good just saying peace, the people want war because when there is war the people will be able to overthrow the oppressors.

So if you just say peace, peace, peace, you don't get anywhere. You see what I told them was he said, if there is a war there is this atomic bomb, you have got to watch out for this atomic bomb. The bomb comes here and it lands on Dr. Malan's house and he points in the direction of Malan's house, 2 miles away. And it is not only Dr. Malan's who gets blown up, we get blown up as well living in our little pontokkies in the locations. This atomic bomb doesn't distinguish between the oppressors and the oppressed. We all get blown up. That is why we have got to be against this atomic bomb/warfare.

Q And did you ever have any experiences of what the reactions were from people in the locations when you went out to speak?

A Vey powerful, very positive. The only resistance that I ever

A noticed was from two black intellectuals in CT. This was when I announced that I would be one of the volunteers in the Defiance Campaign. And this got a tremendous roar from the people; they were very happy that whites were joining in. The masses had no problems, but the one was a bookseller, the other was a sort of clerk. Both went on in fact to join the liberal party.

And they were the ones who were saying the people weren't ready and the people won't like it, the people won't..the people were cheering and applauding and very happy. But they were saying the people wouldn't. They obviously had some resistance.

This was a very important year for me. I joined Modern Youth Society in the year that the Defiance Campaign started. One of the first, the very first political activity that I took part in, the very first, was campaigning against the execution of the Rosenbergs in the States.

Telephone.

Q An Excerpt, I think it is in "50 Thousand Years", in a letter that Ruth First wrote to the ANC Youth League, and they respond and say look, actually we don't want you to join, but we do believe in non racialism, but it is quite a thing.

A Ja.

Q I was thinking about that. You didn't....

A With us it was well established. We never applied to join..

Q Aha, I don't know what it was some kind of joint something..

A Ja...

Q But there wasn't any kind of rumblings of Pan Africanism or...

A Let me come to it. Let me just tell you about the Rosenbergs, to get it on record. You know the first time you go out into the street you are absolutely terrified. You don't know what is going tohappen, you feel strange coz the streets are just places you have walked in before. You have never actually gone there before to display a poster.

So that was my very first action and I am very happy that it was over an internationalist thing and especially now that we are getting so much support from the world, you know. I am

A happy that we in SA were always internationalist and that we helped the refugees from Nazi Germany and that we took a stand on questions very much in Africa, defending the so called MauMau; defending Banda even though he hasn't done so much for us; defending in the early years the patriots in Zimbabwe and Kaunda and so on. And also in the U.S. on the issue of the Rosenbergs.

But this was the year of the defiance of the unjust laws Campaign and one of the first meetings that I attended was April 6, that was the day Jan VanRiebeck landed and was being glorified as the white, day of white supremacy in SA.

We were told go to the Salt River, some hall in Salt River. A sort of working class coloured area. Something important is going to happen. We went there and the hall was packed and we were sitting down on those horrible uncomfortable wooden benches - the platform starts but everybody is looking towards the entrance.

Suddenly this comotion, and in walks Johnson Gwibela, one of the ANC leaders.

Q Johnson ?

A Nkwabela..Ngwevela. He was a clerk in the lawyers firm Sam Khan and Co. Very well known firm, very brilliant lawyer. And a very important figure really, in C.T. political life, Johnson Ngwevela was . And he was banned. He was one of the first to recieve a banning order and he was now attending a meeting in defiance of the banning order.

And everybody sttood up and sang and of course singing is such a part and parcel of SA politics; you know the peoples songs and the harmonising, and the emotion and feeling that comes through was just tremendous.

And the police came in and took him away and we carried on singing and then we sat down and someone said 'Comrades you have seen the Comrade Johnson Ngwevela defying the unjust laws, we now call for volunteers.'

And I was sitting on this terrible wooden seat, and I had to like nail my hands, you know people were rushing forward and 'take my name, take my name' and everybody was given great cheers. I mean you might say it had a revivalist atmosphere - I haveonly seen these revivalist things on film. But this was a revival of emotion, a revival of defiance, it wasn't to go to heaven.

It was to volunteer to participate in the struggle that would bring the people freedom and I was saying to the comrade next to me: Why can't I join, why can't I join ?

A You say it is a freedom struggle, why can't whites participate, it is for everybody. We believe in a non racial SA, why can't I join?

Wait, wait, it is not time yet. We are just starting, wiat. Wait, wait we are always told to wait. So I said at least the question has got to be taken up. So he said, ok, we will take up the question.

Q So by about, that was April, in May I am saying: Well, what is the position, what is the position? June, July, wait, wait, you know! Don't be in such a hurry. Now I am the one who is telling people wait, wait.

By about..August or September the word comes through. The leadership at that campaign in Joberg say it is ok for whites to join. See who you can get.

Then I had a very extraordinary personal experience-going to the members of this organisation and asking them are you prepared to join. And particularly looking for whites because the blacks had already joined. Finding out who were willing and who weren't. And some of the most heartiest, in terms of speech, politics and ideology and so on had reasons why they couldn't join.

Some of the others who were very quiet, you know, willing. Mary Turrock was one - she said just tell me, straight away where and when. Full stop. Hymie Rochman who is now a doctor in Chicago, joined without any problems or difficulties as an English worker, Arnold Harrison and myself.

We went and sat down - it was during our university vacation- on a post office bench in...big huge P.O. in C.T. And these benches they were actually marble seats - it seems a lot of my politics have to do with uncomfortable chairs, laughs. And we wrote telegrams to Dr. Malan saying'hereby defy unjust law, welcome arrest', or something like that.

And nobody would arrest us. And I remember there was a white cleaner going past there saying: 'Hey man you can't sit on those chairs, they are for blacks only'. And in our rather heavy way saying: we fully appreciate that what we are doing is a violation of the laws, but we feel these are unjust laws therefore we are sitting here. He was very puzzled and he went to call somebody a little bit higher.

Eventually virtually the General Manager of the P.O. came down. Now any black who took part in the defiance campaign was whipped off in no time. People actually went out to get us a cup of tea, we were waiting so long to be arrested.

And by then I would say a thousand people, black people, had

A gathered around and two colonels, I think, came to arrest us. So we weren't even arrested by any old sergeant. And one of them said to us: You realise what you are doing is a violation of the laws. And we say: We realise, but we feel these laws are unjust and so we do so. He said: Well then you will have to come along with us, we are placing you under arrest. And I turned to the crowd and shouted: Maiboya, under the nose of this colonel, and they shouted back: Heya Africa. The blacks come back Africa. Three times. I was 17.

Now, I tremble now when I think of it. Where does one get the confidence, the assurance to do that.

Then came humiliation for me. We were brought to court, they discovered that I am 17, that I am a juvenile, my name can't be mentioned. The magistrate says is his mother in court, my mother stands up and I was placed in the care of my mother even though I was the leader of the group.

So that was my first activity. The people greeted us. They were pleased there were whites willing to participate in this campaign. The court was always packed and they were happy that there were young whites willing to participate in their campaigns. There were no difficulties.

Q Were there many other whites who participated?

A I think we were either four or five. It was Arnold, I think we were, ja, Mary, Hymie and myself. I think we were four in C.T.

There was a bigger group in Joberg - Patrick Duncan took part and they had some more prestigous people. We were just mainly students.

Q But still around the country it was a few handfuls of whites mainly?

A I think it would have grown but the campaign was called off within that month. There were uprisings in East London, P.E. Kimberley. Lots of people were shot. But the government introduced whipping laws to put it down.

And it was felt the campaign had achieved its major objectives and now the advance was towards the Freedom Charter and the programme. And that would have been the next big activity that I was involved in.

Then we had our own activities in the Cape. The youth festival, cultural activities; some were involved in trade union and it was a strange group we were involved in in a way. We were white dominated, there is no doubt about that.

A We were always eager to have blacks in positions of leadership and somebody would roll up at a meeting and three weeks later might be the chairman. It was a bit artificial. And almost invariably these people turned out to be police spies. The police would send their agents along and the next thing the agent would be the chairman of the....

Because we accepted the importance in principle of black leadership of a peoples movement.

Q You mean the spies would be black?

A Ja. And someone would come and say so and so, don't trust him he is a spy and then we would interrogate and sometimes they would own up. Sometimes they would say we were told you were terrible people and we discovered you are so nice we can't..we are not going to spy on you any more. Some I assume just carried on.

So basically ours was a white dominated group.

Q This is the Modern You th Society.

A The M.Y.S. You know the thrust..the drive and so on. But there were always blacks involved. There was always I would say, the majority of the members were black. Some of the blacks involved were more active in other things. In trade unions - they were leaders there but not in the M.Y.S.

We had a club in C.T. We painted a beautiful mural - everybody took part. It was a mural of C.T. We wanted an image of our city with Table Mountain in the background, the docks, the dock workers, the factories, the workers, the people, at work, at play. Covered a whole big wall and one of our artist friends, comrades designed it and then we blocked in the colours.

A month later we were expelled. we were evicted. The police spoke to the landlords and we were evicted from this club house. I often wondered afterwards what happened to it.

Q So throughthe 50s were there any..did you get involved with the Congress of the people at all?

A Ja. I went to the Congress of the People and ah...

Q You made it, Amy Thornton didn't.

A Ja, and getting there was difficult. I went there by train

A because the police were blocking the roads and stopping...

Q And under what auspices did you go? With a delegation or was it just you?

A No, I went in a double capacity. I think I also went partly as a journalist. I had then started working on the New Age newspaper.

Q Did you get expelled from university or had you finished?

A No, no, no. I was..I must have still been at university. All I know is that I was at the press table when the police walked in. And if you look at Ellie Wynberg's book you will see one of the photographs showing a very serious, tall young white with this short hair cut watching and had every reason to be really serious. The police had just moved in with stenguns, that surrounded..mounted police had surrounded the whole area and police with stenguns moved in - they were looking for a chance for a massacre.

But we just stood up and sang. It was a powerful, emotional moment. Anyhow that photograph, that picture is there-

Q Were there many whites at the Congress of the People?

A Maybe 50. Quite a lot.

Q Ja, ja.

A 3000 people there, their number was small.

Q So again, I mean there is a lot to say, but focussing on the non racialism aspect...

A Well, that was non racialism in...overt, self conscious, affirmative form. That is exactly what the Congress of the People was to project-a vision of SA that was a SA after apartheid, apartheid destroyed.

And it was absolutely and inevitable and natural that the very meeting itself should take that form. And so the African delegates were the overwhelming majority as one would expect but there was involvment and participation from everybody, on a basis of natural equality.

The platform was always arranged to project this theme. The

A choice of speakers. It had a very strong African quality in the sense of not only in terms of the demands reflecting the demands of the African people for land, against the harassment, the pass laws and all the rest; but in terms of the mood, the singing, the slogans. The quality the personality, was very South African.

When you say very South African you also mean very African.

Q Just change the tape...

Side 2

A I learnt to sing, at meetings. Many African songs, I didn't even know what the words meant but I knew the meaning of the songs. The em otion, the feeling from the participation. I even learnt to dance at our parties. It is lucky actually, it is much better because you learn a kind of movement that is more natural than if you go to a dance school. I mean my contempories at school were all going for dancing lessons and we never had the money for that and I think I actually never liked the idea.

But the party, by party I mean the dance party, was part of our culture and our movement and I just learnt. The people carried me along and shook me up and I learnt to dance that way.

Some of the things one noticed, little cultural things. We used to come to meetings - the women would come in jeans, and we would come in sports shirts and so on, the whites. The African women would come very elegantly dressed and the men often wearing suits. And we regarded this as bourgeois. For them it was important - this was their day of the week in which they could express themselves as free people with dignity and they rather looked askance at us.

On the other hand these whites were..they are not very civilised, they are not very cultured about these things, we have to make some allowances. So they were tolerant towards us. But it took us much longer to learn and understand the meaning of suits and dressing up. And respect for certain protocol and so on in the peoples' movement. Because you know we were much more influenced by bohemian sort of... does one say bohemian these days? I mean now it is hippy but we weren't quite hippy. But you know the pre hippy ideas, they were much stronger with us.

I remember once one comrade driving out in this time and he was comrade Wolfie. He wasn't an intellectual although he was a big reader. He wasn't a speaker although he went to all the meetings. He was a real kind of muscat bearer in the movement. His car it was an old Chev, reall tough generation of old chevrolet cars that we always said should

A should go into the museum of the revolution because it had.. it knew so many secrets and every weekend he would take ANC organisers out to the countryside. He was the chauffer that was all. He would get very bored; he would drop them somewhere have to go off into the white part of town, not to be noticeable and wait two hours. So he asked me to come along frequently, so he would have someone to talk to.

Once we stopped on the way - we sitting in the front, Africans sitting in the back and we stopped at a petrol pump to fill up and the Africans comrades at the back would organise everywhere. One of them actually organised his way from the Transkei, I mean worked his way from the Transkei to C.T. going from one petrol station to the next, and so the petrol pump workers union was one of the best unions at that stage.

So he would be speaking Xhosa to the workers and once I saw him put his hand on top of Wolfies head, a little bald patch there and kept it there patting away, almost hitting him on top of his head. And we drove off afterwards and Wolfie said 'What the bloody hell was that for?' What is going on here?- The guy is laughing, laughing, this is comrade Wolfie. He says I was telling these workers that these are our brothers - they wouldn't believe us. They wouldn't believe that we were organisers, the white man driving the car. Whites are our enemies. They wouldn't believe us, he said, come on Wolfie in our culture if you put your hand on top of a man's head it is a sign that you are like a father. It was the only way I could convince this petrol pump attendant that you were really a comrade, really a brother, was by putting my hand on your head.

So Wolfie laughed a little bit, a little uncomfortably you know. Accepted politically but he didn't enjoy it very much. So in that sense we operated at two levels. There was the M.Y.S. activities that was open, that was overtly non racial anti racial in character. But white dominated.

And then there was organising work that was all semi secret and that was black dominated, where we would be driving, we would be called in for study classes. The ANC would tell us where they wanted support from us and we would be involved in that. And we did a lot of that and it is not very much spoken, written about but it was important.

Q Study classes? Like a night school kind of thing?

A Ja, ja. But it could be anything from politics to the history of SA and I remember one ... once they said Albie we want you to tell us about how a bank works. I knew very little about banks. When I became an advocate I got my first cheque book and I was so nervous that every time I wrote AL Sachs - my second name was Louis, I crossed the L, I made it into a pound sign. I couldn't stop it. For a whole day I could

A not sign an ordinary signature. So I didn't grow up in the world of banks. I don't know that my mother had a...at that stage a bank account. But at least I knew basically how a bank operated and the people wanted to know about these things.

They wanted to know about human history; origins of man. Jan Van Riebeck coming to SA.

Q I am interested again in this whole dynamic of non racialism, did that mean that being white you knew everything? You could impoart. I mean was that whole experience you learning things as well? I...

A Oh no.

Q I mean I just don't want people to think ...

A No, I knew..I had book knowledge, a lot of it. The people wanted that. They wanted book knowlege, they wanted to hear, they wanted ideas and so on. I'd be recruited for that but for me I mean this was my real university.

By going into a tin shanty, the workers would be there. It had a very intense emotional quality. The interaction between us for them and for me. It had a..even an intense visual quality because it was all by candle light. And by candle light you just see peoples' eyes, their cheek bones, their highlights of their faces. It was so expressive even in visual terms.

Somehow when you are sitting in a room with electric lights and there are bright curtains and carpets and their cushions and their kind of sheik progressive colours and weaves and so on it is one thing. When you are sitting in a..and you are talking politics, poverty and the people and the masses when you are in a shanty and all you can see is the eyes, and it flickers, wavers a little bit and people speak and then their hands move the intimacy is really extraordinary.

And the people speak about their lives and you would say something and it was part of our style and it would be a dialogue and an interchange. And they would say yes, I remember this, that and the other and they would ask questions and the questions would reveal a whole life experience. And what about this and what about that but you would say the other.

So it was very, very much a two way thing. And I can tell you I read about those people ~~and I~~ today, you know I say we were in study classes together because I was introducing something. And I think that was also an important thing/ theme. You had to learn not have a complex about the advan-

A advantages of growing up in a priveleged white society had given you. Complexes help nobody.

You had to learn to take everything that you'd got from that and put it at the service of the peoples' struggle. And that is what the people wanted. They didn't want us to be poor and or to pretend to be poor or to voluntarily accept poverty. They wanted us to use our capacity to travel or to drive a car to drive their people around. Our capacity to travel to carry messages.

Ability to travel to other parts of the world to bring back experiences and to tell them. And to bring back books, films and records. They didn't want us to say we must voluntarily impose upon ourselves all the limitations that apartheid society imposes upon people. What does that gain anybody? That is a kind of a self sacrifidal idea that was totally out of keeping with the concept of liberation.

So in that sense it was also good. I learnt to overcome my complexes through activities, through study classes, through working in the underground, through working in the overground. It was very, very good.

Q Take it through..

A Let me take it to also one thing further. In the States when I travel around people ask me what is it like being a white working for black freedom. There was something about that question that just jolted me. Something I didn't like about it, something all wrong about it but it made me think-

Well, what was I doing? And you know in the States people are very into the subject of your motives, and why you are doing it and what do you mean and what does it signify and so on. I thought about it and thought about it and I thought no, that is not what I am fighting for. And that is not what I was doing. I had not been fighting for black...for the black people, I had been fighting for myself.

I had been fighting for the right to be a free person in a free country and the only way that could be achieved would be through the liberation of the black people. And the reconstruction of SA. But I wasn't fighting for them. I wasn't fighting for others, I was fighting for me. For the person that I wanted to be, the kind of life I wanted to lead, the kind of values that were important to me.

And maybe that is where grwing up in this politicised, anti aparthied, pro freedom world helped. These had become my values from very early on. And as far as I am concerned then and now that is what I am fighting for. A free citizen in a free SA. I am not fighting for the black people. I don't like that idea; nobody fights for somebody else.

A You participate in a cause and a cause is to find/defined in those terms to a certain extent and there are lots of cultural problems and questions that have to be handled and they are not easy and it never ends. It is not something you can say well, now I am there it is over.

But basically you fight for yourself. You fight for the kind of life you want to lead, the kind of person you want to be, and the kind of society you want to live in.

Q Although I think wanting to understand that, I can understand as well because to me what I think is so fascinating about the struggle in SA is that people get out of that compartmentalised race, class defined culture, whatever to find space and see a future vision and move there. Whereas in so manyother societies that is not the case or else you have a very narrow struggle.

Like when you say for yourself I think of Zionism for eg. my people, my..something like that. It is so narrowly defined. There is something quite powerful about people in SA moving beyond the borders of race and class.

A Something else I remember from that time. After the Defiance Campaign and a number of whites had joined in and whites were asking to become members of the ANC. The ANC decided that we have to do something with all this very, very mixed bag; extraordinary mixed bag of old time communists, trade unionists, church people, liberals, odds and sods, people with a sense of destiny...most mixed bag imaginable.

Said ok, you guys get organised. Form your own organisation that can work with us. And the liberals refused. They said to set up a seperate organisation for whites is to accept apartheid, everything we are against. I think also they were not ready for African leadership for all that they were saying. They were willing to have Africans in their ranks but not to have a tumble and the others tell them how they should organise.

Many of the individuals dropped out because they didn't want to be in an organisation. They were willing to join in a campaign but not to be organised. In the end the whites who set up the Congress of Democrats, we couldn't really call it the Congress of Whites. Were almost all on the left, not all.

And then people were saying: well you see the communists do this, that and the other. There were a lot of communists in COD but it certainly wasn't exclusively communist and lots of leading people like Helen Josef weren't communists.

A But in a way the communists were, amongst the whites, the only ones willing to accept from the ANC an organisational structure accept an organisational structure suggested by the ANC. Willing to accept overall leadership from the ANC, willing to accept a programme.

And somehow that was blamed on the communists afterwards, as though it was an evil design or a something or another.

Those of us in the COD accepted that position. We accepted athe necessity but never really enjoyed it. We never enjoyed being in an organisation of whites. We carried out our tasks and we accepted it not just blindly or obediently. We were not just obeying. But the activities that gave us a charge were activities with the people.

Years later I met Moses Kotani. Somebody took me to Alexandra township for something or another. Now I am grown up. He is not seeing Ray's little child any more. I think he always had this special feeling for me in that sense because he had known me as a kid. He now sees I am in the Defiance Campaign and my name gets mentioned in the papers sometimes having participated in this and that.

So I think he is feeling quite pleased. But he gives me a little lecture. He says; You whites, you all love running to the location. You get big cheers from the people, big response from the people. He says water always follows the path of least resistance. He says we don't have access to the whites. We can't organise amongst them. That is really where you people have to be. You have to be there but you always run away from that. Because it is harder, more difficult.

And in recent years we have had many debates about this whole question and clearly he was right you know. But at the same time often blacks can organise whites these days better than whites can. In the sense that many whites want to know what the political positions of black leaders are.

They want to hear it directly, not through intermediaries. That is one point. And of course things have changed quite a lot too in the country since then.

And also for the whites working amongst the whites they need something to give them energy. It is such a, at times, such a dismal process coming up against this wa paternalism and prejudice and the consumer society and terrible values and so on.

You need direct contact with the underground struggle, with the peoples' movement to give you a sense of why am I doing

A it, what is it for. So I don't think it is an either or sort of thing at all.

Q I think it is actually quite important because it comes up again and again. And with..since UDF people organising in the white areas.

Do you want to take me through the rest of your..we are still on about 1955 I think. So were you at the founding of COD? Were you involved in...

A Ja. Ja.

Q So would you have been at the Congress of the People in ....

A COD was a movement that played its role. It was very important for the education of its members. Helen Josef could never have been Helen Josef without COD. I mean as a person she brought herself but it gave her an organisational base for participating in the general congress movement. That was...

Q You know she told me that once, that when Solly was leaving the country, when did he leave?

A 52.

Q Who was it, Ruth First or someone; she said Solly is leaving and things look desperate and I have got no future and this and that. We have got a place for you and it is a group called COD. It was quite a nice...

A Ja, right.

Q But...COD made the Congress of the People much easier.

Q How?

A Because HERE were a group of whites clearly identified and as accepting ANC line and leadership. One didn't have to speak in abstract terms about this is a non racial struggle, the ranks are open to everybody. And so it wasn't just the case of somebody coming forward and saying I want to join. It was somebody who was an organised member of the Congress movement accepting the tasks, responsibilities, the discipline and the programme. And that helped considerably. Apart from the obvious practical things, in terms of

A the input which COD had to the same way as the Indian Congress, ANC made which was quite important.

And then this group became important. When ANC was banned COD played a big role in helping to create the first underground. Not as COD but in..technical terms, in finding houses transport, things like that. This meant we now had a group of whites who understood discipline, knew how to work, and because it was impossible for the underground leadership to function in the black areas at that stage....

Q That one is only a tape don't worry about it. This one is still going.

A Oh. Places like Rivonia and that wasn't the only one had to be found. Places for Mandela had to be found so he could move around quickly and so on. So we already had an organisation that knew how to work properly and knew about secrecy and so on.

It was quite an important little role that COD played before it was totally liquidated and extinguished. Just about e every member was banned, house arrested, sent to jail.

Them came the period after Sharpville. I am now an advocate in C.T. These were days of immense excitement in the country- picked up outside and because the outside world is paying so much attention this reverberates back into the country.

Even the massacre of Sharpville itself. We had so many massacres and nothing happened. It got some headline. This one became the Sharpville massacre because it was picked up internationally because it was just after MacMillan had been there. Partly because it was filmed on video and broadcast.

So it provoked a crisis in the country. And I remember one of the liberal lawyers, Gerald Gordon, came rushing into a room where I was standing speaking to some colleagues and he always used to speak about Africans. But in the excitement of the moment he lapsed: he said: The natives are marching. He said they're pouring into town.

He was half excited, half frightened. His name was Gerald Gordon, a lawyer. (Q Aha) And I just shot out of the building, I just shot there. This is what we have been dreaming of.

Then I saw the march headed by Fidoh Gesana, pouring over the hill near Roland St. prison. Come up over Dewaal drive past the prison, into the centre of C.T. It is one of the highest moments of my life. A dream, a vision, a longing, materialising in front of your eyes.

A And they sat down there..three hundred yards from parliament. The city at their mercy as it were, they could have taken over. And they marched back again.

History doesn't give you a second chance.

Q And was it because Patrick Duncan told the police don't worry and ...

A It was partly. He was the go between and he was teelling the leaders to go home peacefully and he was telling the police don't do anything.

And the leaders were promised if they came the next day they would meet top government people and you know the moment was lost.

Q Just some histories say that it is not clear what you know Duncan didn't write it..anything in his great diearies so they say it couldn't have been true that Duncan was the ...

A The key...

Q You know, that he fucked it up. I can't get...clarify whe-there its true..

A I mean the strength of the march came from its sponteneity in a way. Kosana wasn't even there - they had to find him..(Q Ja) to put him at the head. So they had no leadership really. They were just absolutely furious with the police, the harass-ment, the pin pricks and so on in the locations.

So in that sense they went to town to talk to the police. They didn't go into town to take power. And that was what have it sponteneity - it happened so quickly. It served its strength but when they were there they couldn't develop the situation. They couldn't do anything about it.

Anyhow that is one moment when power trembled in SA. And after Verwoerd was shot and there was uncertainty and Paul Sauer spoke about a new chapter must open in the book.

So we have been through what we are going through now before except now the people are much stronger and promises of re-form came before and nothing came of it.

Anyhow then all our leagal activities became illegal, vir-tually all. The last big thing was the strike in 61 in which

A all the coloured people become very involved. And it had extensive success. Lots of meetings. I'm unbanned for a brief while...

Q When were you first banned?

A I was banned in 55. It was called the first white student to be banned. There is always a first for everything, so.. maybe I was the first student of any kind to be banned in 55. And that ban ended in 60 and it was not renewed until 63.

So 61 we were very very active. Calling for the strike. Mandela called and you know now it was an appeal to the coloured people who had not taken part in 60 to take part.

Q By strike you mean stay away?

A Stay away, stay home, ja. And it had a big measure of success. But that was the last activity of that kind. Then came more stringent banning orders.

Q You got one as well, you got in 63.

A Ja, not immediately. It was Sabotage Act. Also end of 61 the beginning of armed struggle. And this was avery key period for us as individuals.

We had been on platforms, we had been around, we had been pushing ANC politics for years. M.Y.S. is getting a little older. What do we do?

Dennis Goldberg was asked to join MK. He was an engineer, very practical, very efficient with his hands, he could do things.

I was a talker, a writer. I used to go to court. I used to do journalism so I was asked to do other things but to continue public work. It could have been the other way round. Ones whole destiny was determined by sudden decisions, requests that were made, chance encounters.

I might have done something for MK at that stage. Once somebody came into my office, took a little document out of his sock, gave it to me and I put it in my sock and I waited...

End of tape.

A My office in town, the advocates office was very convenient for people to pass through and meet. There was a lot of traffic. It was very watched. Tight supervision all the time.

So I took this document out of my sockand gave it to this other guy and he put it in his sock. And to this day I do not know what the document was. I have got a feeling it might be the MK oath. I don't know. It was clearly something every important. But I was not involved in MK work.

I went to a camp that was held in Marmery. That featured a lot in the Rivonia trial. It said that this was an attempt to train guerillas inside SA itself and I am sure this was why I was detained. Although it..I was never told what the reason was.

But I was invited there just to give lectures on politics, economics. I never saw anything, no arms, no training. But I have had quite a lot experience of study classes and so on and that was my function.

And the police came that day and they picked us all up. Then they released us, and I never know why exactly. I think it was to follow some people, maybe they had some plants there as well.

And at the ANC conference, it was held recently in Zambia. I am walking in the hall there one day, someone comes up to me and stares into my face, staring, staring, staring, and he says to me: Are you Albie Sachs? I say: Yes. He says: Do you remember me? Gives me his name, remember the camp the in Marmery.

He was an 18year old school boy then; I met him once. I mean pupils always remember the teacher more than teachers remember the pupils. And he said they had escaped afterwards, gone to..got training somewhere, had fought in Zimbabwe against the Smith forces (Q Really) trying to get their way back to SA. Had been arrested, spent twelve years in a Zimbabwean prison in very harsh conditions.

And now he's a youngish middle aged person and I don't recognise him at all. Three people had all been at that camp, the same thing had happened, had all got away. It was a terrific feeling that we are all going strong. Even though we are in exile now.

So there were lots of activities of that kind. Highly hazardaus, strict security involved. I am not told what it is for at all - just told there is a group of people in the camp who want study class.

A I remember one guy, who was in charge there, 'Look Smart Sowandle. Had a little stick, sitting in the tent, very hot, December, air getting heavier and heavier, and some of the people nodding off while I am giving them the history of SA or watever it was and he used his little stick and gave this guy a little whip and me with my liberal ideas on pedagogics saying, no, no Comrade Look Smart it is not correct if the teacher is boring and sends the pupils to sleep it is the teacher who must get the whip.

Laughs. Not long afterwards Look Smart goes underground and not long after I am sitting in my office and there is a knock on the door. A women comes in and I say sit down And says I am, I think she said, Beauty Solwandle, I am the wife of Look Smart. And I know she is going to tell me he's been detained under the 90 day law. And there is nothing we lawyaers can do.

The people would come to the lawyers whenever somebody was arrested or detained and there was always something we could do. No there is the new 90 day law there is nothing we can do. And you feel terrible telling somebody there is nothing you can do.

So I feel very tense with her and she is saying myhusband has been detained; I say, I know, I know, but.. and he was taken from this police station. I say, I know, I know...but then to the other police station... II say I know that...she is slowly taking me through the story and then she says and He was found hanged in his cell.

He was the first of the victims. And then of course apart from the shock of having lost this close comrade, there is this sense of anguish - what can we do. We have done nothing, we can do nothing.

So I said there is something we can do, we can push for and inquest. I can't take it because I am banned and all the rest. But get in touch with so and so and that is how we got lawyers involved, assisting on the inquest and at least the tortures to which he was subjected were exposed.

I suppose these are all the traditions of our struggle. The memories, the activities, the relationships. Look Smart is dead, Dennis spent 20 years in jail, Toiyu Yotovu who was one of our members is now in exile. He is Secretary General of SWAPO. Prominent personality in the continent and the world. But there are many others who are still active. You know I can't give their names but I read in the newspapers so and so has just been released from prison.

Been in and out for 20 years, so and so in the Women's Movement. So and so in something else, so and so...

A Oscar Mopeto was very active in those days.

And it makes you feel that the indestructability you know, of a movement of a cause and this non rcaism is a thing that has been achieved. It is not just a lovely idea, it is something that has been fought for, it has been struggled..people have been invested, their lives, their hope, their time, their energy, their wit; it has all gone into it and that is why it is so solid.

And I think that is why it worked when the UDF was formed. There was already something there. And when the older leaders were insisting on certain organisational forms and having Helen Josef at meetings and so on, against a certain opposition from some of the BC people, they knew that these things weren't just programmes. They knew it worked. They knew it produced good results. That it opened the door for further advance because then we saw the whole thing.

You know history repeating itself in brilliant form with the UDF and the mass activities and the union movement and so on at that later stage.

Q What, was there any kind of mumbling...

A Let me have a break now.

A I was mentioning earlier that at that stage the bannings repressions and so on I was involved in a lot of public work and to some extent that determined my relationship to the struggle; what underground work I did. And it was not an accident that I was doing a lot of public work, because being an advocate gave me certain skills, and a certain position and a style of work that made it easy and appropriate to do that sort of thing.

And this idea of being an advocate, being one of the peoples' lawyers was very important politically and personally. I don't know why or exactly when I decided to be a lawyer. All I know is that I was going to be a doctor and suddenly I was going to be a lawyer and that was clearly connected with the idea of the struggle. That.. I had that objective in mind, even at school. Even when I wasn't very..active politically at all really.

I had ideas. I took part in the debating society but I knew that I wanted to be a lawyer because as such..and I would be able to make a contribution. And when I qualified, the very week in which I got my degree and became entitled to practice was the week in which I and many others were raided by the police.

A It was the week after the Congress of the People and very brilliant lawyer in C.T. Lionel Foreman was sent up to Pretoria for the Treason Trails, so his office was vacant - he was on..standing trial for treason. He wanted a tenant and I was looking for somewhere to start off with so I walked into his office literally. I took over his phone book and his desk; I took over the big settee that he had - people would say you don't have a consultation, you have a mass meeting.

The kinds of problems and cases that came, you couldn't have enough chairs, you had to have a big sort of couch. You had to have a whole family, big family sitting on it. And I took over his attitudes which was most important.

And that was basically the client mattered, not the laywer. That you're not doing anybody a favour. He had a very strong practise; he never took a penny for cases, political cases at all.

And that there were ways of conducting defences in political cases that were just different. You couldn't create your own rules, you had to be very careful to maintain the rules of procedure and so on. But there was a different way of allowing your client to participate in the proceedings that distinguished the activist lawyers from the other lawyers.

The other lawyers might put up a very good defence and defend people very well technically but they were the ones who dominated the show and maybe would say to the client ok, speak now, do this, do that. The clients were almsot like actors being directed by the lawyer.

Whereas we had a different approach completely. The approach was that it is the client, their dignity, their values that really counts. They are the ones that are going to go to jail if anybody goes to jail. They are the ones who have to take responsibility for their position, why they are there and for the basic strategy of the defence.

But we explained to them when you can speak, what the possibilities are and then they would often say what do you advise and then we would advise.

This was something that I would say the left laywers, we had much more developed than the others. This was another important area of non racial, if you like, anti apartheid activity that was using our skills. Using our access to the power structure if you like, in terms of to the courts and so on to try and defend the people.

We could never gain anything, but we could provide a bit

A of a shield and sometimes carry the attack to the enemy. Expose the tortures, expose the abuses.

One realised that every trial had the potential for an exposure for some of the iniquities of apartheid. So much so that the journalists, if ever I came to court for any case they would follow me around because they would always think that there might be something; some interesting angle or aspect. Even a straight forward divorce case - they might think there may be some angle.

And that also meant for me I would have to constantly be in touch with the people who were the clients. Inspection in the area where they lived, speaking to people there. It was a very natural and important form of contact that meant even if through my political, direct political work, there wasn't this non racial interaction, through my professional work there would be.

But that was because I chose a certain area of professional work; instead of going into commercial work or matrimonial work or instead of getting the dagga runners, the dope dealers as my big clients.

My clients were the trade unionists and people involved with rent problems and Pass Laws and so on.

An interesting little theme there that is indirectly relevant to what you are saying; as I say I never took a penny for any of these cases. It was my big terrible guilty secret that the bar council would find out that I was handling all these cases for nothing.

They would have only been too happy - they would have said good for ALbie, he has cornered his share of the market and he is getting rich on all these cases ~~because~~ good luck to him. If you do it through the masons or you do it through..whatever angle you get onto, they thought that was my angle.

But if they had known that I was defying the bar laws, the rules which had minimum pricing policies, I would have been in big, big, big trouble. So I was terrified that I would be found out. That was my awful secret.

You know, one day Govan Mbeke who was visiting C.T. mentioned something or other about sending lawyers up for... to P.E. where they had very very few progressive lawyers. And would I be able to come or something or another. And he said we will collect the money. So I said if I go that is not a question because I expect my, if possible my fare to be paid, but I never take any money from these kind of cases. Saying it with that little bit of pride, ok here

A here's my back give me a few pats. And he also gave me hell. I don't see my relationships with these leaders is to be lectured to by them. His Comrade Albie. He says! You just think of yourself, you are just worried about the purity of yourself, you soul. You should take money from these cases. He says: at this moment in P.E. the only organising that we can do is raising funds for our lawyers. The only chance that we have to go out to the people, to meet them in their homes to talk to them; the only chance that they have to express their support for our struggle, which they can't do openly, is through raising funds for the lawyers for our people on trial.

And you are so worried about your own soul and not taking a penny from the poor people. You don't see these things politically. Now you have got to learn to think politically. And not just think in subjective personal terms.

And I never worked that one out completely. I couldn't, just couldn't take money for those cases, I couldn't. Where our people were being persecuted for their part in the struggle. The people were being harassed by the whole apartheid machine - I couldn't take money for defending the innocent as against the guilty.

Emotionally, you know I think one has to allow a little for the way people function. And have a little tolerance for our own souls as well as the overall political thing.

In any event the interesting outcome of all this was in the 60s where there was extensive activity in the Cape and the PAC suddenly became very, very active. I found myself involved in defending literally hundreds of PAC people.

It was filled with ironies. Some of the liberal lawyers and by the way the Liberal Party was associated with the PAC. We were always a bit puzzled by this. They wouldn't join the COD because it was whites only and this was against the whole idea. But they were very happy to give support to the PAC, very, very happy. A lot of the liberals, not all of them.

They gave a reasonable service, honours service, but they weren't peoples' lawyers. They didn't know how to conduct these defences. They had not really integrated their lives as lawyers with their lives as political people.

They were liberal people who would give a bit of money and maybe handle an occassional defence as liberals. But they weren't real veterans. Even though they were older than I was at that stage; in how to conduct defences and these kinds of trials.

A Then of course they expected to be paid and there was nothing wrong. I think it was correct that they should be paid.

Then there were some black lawyers. We had very few in C.T. at that stage, very very few. And some of those who were there were not good lawyers technically and they were not good lawyers politically.

The kind of people who would end up being involved in this tri cameral parliament. I am not saying as individuals they did. And often the situation cropped up in which there were some black lawyers who did not follow the path of Tambo and Mandela. But who might be very vocal in verbal terms. Took huge sums from the people and gave them a rotten service.

And I would be involved, maybe in the same case and I took nothing. And here was I, I was a white you know and fighting really hard. The people kind of saw that.

I am not saying that white lawyers, progressive white lawyers are better than progressive black lawyers. That is rubbish. I am not saying we are more virtuous than anybody else. All I am saying is that people saw in practice that a kind of...a black middle class was emerging there, that would sometimes be very vocal in verbal condemnations of apartheid. But in practice they were parasitic and they gave a bad service and they didn't work.

We belonged to another tradition. It was a tradition of peoples' lawyers. That included...it started even in Gandhi's time and included some of the early ANC leaders and then included Brian Bunting's father and Sam Kahn, and Bram Fisher and others. That had a whole different approach.

And I would say that was very respected by the people. A respect based on years and years of work inside the courts and activities and fighting and defending the people and being with the people and a good style of work. Good relationship with the people.

And here was this curious situation where I...the ANC lawyer was defending hundreds and hundreds of PAC people. It was doubly furious: one was the slogan of that period 'No bail, no defence, no fine'.

So in the main PAC trial about half the PAC people came to me and asked me to be their lawyer. And the other half said no bail, no defence, no fine, including Philip Kosana.

What was quite amusing for me was that I would always start off cross examining. The trial depended on cross examining the police who had taken notes at meetings. And we developed

A our cross examination to a very high art, very high art. The highlight being a dictation test in court which the police always failed.

You know we would smuggle in a few doublt negatives. 'Who can be surprised if some people in our ranks say kill the white man, burnt down his houses. But that is not our policy'. Then this would be dictated and what would the cop write down? 'Kill the white man, burn down his houses'. Because that stands out. And none of this who will be surprised part was in there.

Now I think some of these PAC people had said things like that without the 'Who would be surprised'. But the prosecution had to prove its case.

But then what would be amusing I would then sit down and then Kosana would stand up and the only lawyer he knew was me. So all my little tricks, the way I would point my finger; the verbal things that every lawyer has would be repeated by accused number three and four and eleven. And I would see myself in action. And often very brilliantly done you know, by these people who defended them-selves.

In fact they were all aquitted. So it was an ANC lawyer helping PAC people getting an aquittal in their case.

Some of the other PAC people were very fine. The old aged Jewish home. They were African working people of C.T. who at that time had been recruited by the organisation who had come to them and I think made rather spectacular and demogogic statements about 'on a certain day we will all rise up and attack the police stations and drawn on simple maps and all this was put in in evidence. Penetrated by the police, not holding out at all so they got lots of evidence.

But as far as I was concerned I wasn't defending PAC people as such. I was defending South Africans patriots fighting for freedom agaisnt apartheid. They weren't being persecuted for being members of PAC. They were being persecuted because they were resisting apartheid.

So there was no difficulty in that stage. Also I was very insistent amongst our comrades that one had to look at PAC in a sensitive way and not say simply it was the Labalo's and and these other crooks who were leading the masses into jail.

That PAC included many trends and tendencies and that many of them are people who would follow any leadership that was close to them. That projected the vision of free SA.

A So that was PAC. They were hardly even PAC at that stage because they had been organised for a very short while. The over...ideological things didn't come into it. They weren't interested in and nobody spoke about the Freedom Charter. It was a simple thing that the times come to rise against the whites, attack the police station. They even sometimes called themselves Congress, because the word Congress had quite a lot of meaning in the community.

And if you asked most of the accused they wouldn't have even been able to say the PAC or Pan Africanist Congress. They might have known Sobukwe, maybe.

Q It is very interesting because I interviewed a guy in SA who did a couple of years on Robben Island and he was... same thing. How did they treat you in terms of...

A I met Sobukwe in an interesting way. We..again this black white thing. One of the little paradoxes. In this trial, it was the trial based on the march in town, on C.T. The accused said they would like to call their leader to explain and so on. That meant Sobukwe.

Sobukwe at that stage was in..I think it is called Cinderella prison in Boksberg. So I said ok, my next holiday I will be going up to Joberg and I will arrange an interview with him and see if he is willing to come down.

So I got in touch with some PAC lawyers in Joberg. They were very excited with the idea. One of them said we want to speak with Sobukwe, we don't know how we can make contact. I will come in as your boy, I will carry your briefcase. And he was actually working for that firm at the time. As far as I am concerned that is up to you.

As far as I am concerned he is just coming in; you will be coming in as the lawyer, as the articled clerk of this firm. Honestly we walked in there, they took my name, and they didn't even take the name of this guy. And spoke to Sobukwe and he said anything you want..just if you want to call me I will say...he even said I will say what you want to say.

I said; No, you say what you want to say, what is relevant to the trial . And he was a person of dignity. He had no difficulties relating to me. I don't know if he knew that I was ANC but if he did it wouldn't ..it didn't interfere.

He knew that I was..and even though the line was no bail, no defence, no fine, this was a chance to respond to the other accused in that case. And he was very correct and very dignified with me..Made me feel dignified with him.

A And then the articled clerk, in inverted commas, carried on a long discussion I think in Sosotho which the police probably tape recorded so the last laugh might have been on them.

Q And did he appear at the trial?

A No, then we fought for bail and the trial had gone on for 9 months and we almost destroyed all the police evidence. Bail was granted. So it was no bail, no defence, no fine but I was asking for bail. I was the defence asking for bail. And it was a very different time anyhow. It didn't make sense them sitting in jail.

And just by the way, the accused kept telling me how Kosana had lots of dealings with Patrick Duncan. But as soon as Duncan left he would run him down and say that white I am just using him and it was very..they didn't like it.

Q Did you...Tape cuts..

End of tape.

Side 2

A ...neighbour, when I first started off as an advocate. But we were on the same floor. He brought out contact, in Parliament Chambers Buildings. Oldish building, I think it has been torn down now.

And we used to meet quite often and we had discussions there.. We kept saying we must sit down and have really serious discussions one day. And I went to his house a couple of times and we tried this really serious discussion.

I had the feeling that here is a guy who is honest, naive, genuine hater of oppression, and if only he knew how we really worked. Some of these obsessions and manias that he had would go away.

He comes out much worse in his book than the person that I knew.

Q Really.

A Mmm. Much more into intrigue, much more involved in his own personal destiny.

Q Which book?

A The Jaunty driver book.

Q (Ja) So is that worth reading?

A Ja, it is a very interesting book. Well put together and I think his diaries and statments and so on, he is much more of a manipulator, much less this naive idealist in the TE Lawrence tradition than I had thought.

So we maintained a personal friendship but we never really got close or achieved any kind of understanding.

Q Why did you mention Jewish old age home?

A One of the groups where the PAC set up a cell was at the Jewish old age home and they were penetrated and caught and... maybe ten of them. And do you know the matron, to her great credit came and gave evidence on their behalf and said they were such good nurses. They treated the old people with such kindness.

And here again this is SA. Here were people picking up, physically carrying, nursing, washing, feeding but with respect, tenderness; the respect Africans have for old people, whites.

And in their ~~evidence~~meetings the evidence that they were speaking about rising up against the whites and killing the whites and I could see it was the system they were against. It wasn't a hatred of a people, it was a hatred of a system, a sytem of domination.

And they were so fine with me. Speaking to them in the cells and all they said to me was: Ok, we have been caught, we have traitors in our ranks, they have got evidence against us. We have just got one old man who has been very sick, try and get a suspended sentence for him. And that is all I did in the case. Basically. I mean a few we got off, identification evidence and so on. I just fought for this old man who was sick.

And the magistrate wouldn't budge. And here was a man with a clean record using the legal terminology. Aged I don't know if he was 70 or 68 or something with a high recommendation from the nurse. Who had been very sick already in prison. Was scared that he would die.

And they just said please give him a suspended sentence. And he got three years like everybody else.

Q So you didn't have strong feelings about them ideologically? I mean you have talked about personally, Duncan and their attitudes. But I mean just having been so imbued with the ANC

Q traditions of non racialism. I am interested with that direct contact you had with the PAC. You didn't find that it just showed the shallowness of their ideology or anything.

A No the PAC that I met was A PAC in action which I never minded. They were mobilising the people. Then I was defending them so they had to be in action in the court setting. These questions didn't arise.

And I had no problems when I saw ten thousand blacks marching in on town and sitting down. You know it is a pity we weren't there. It is a pity our people were not in the leadership, more could have come of it.

But this was the people on the march and ok, they did something that we should have done.

I had more feeling against Duncan because he was using the magazine 'Contact' in divisive way. Afterwards even in a dirty way: when Mandela was arrested he said the communists had betrayed Mandela. The white communists had betrayed Mandela. And this was just really terrible dirty tricks.

That made one angry because that is already getting into this obsessional kind of a thing. Then there is a real issue there. The issue has to be argued, and it is an issue mainly amongst the people. It is an issue that I am not involved in, directly. I know where I stand. I don't accept the arguments.

I never accept the arguments if I were black I would be bitter and I would slit the throat of every white. I find that in fact a rather unpleasant kind of argument.

If I were black I assume I would be like the blacks I know who are serious, who are thinking about the country, who have a whole variety of emotions and imagination about the future and all the rest. But they are not just thinking about slitting throats and grabbing things and burning.

They are thinking about building things, and creating and ..all sorts of things. So this is..the whites who have such a shallow imagination themselves can only imagine that if they were black that is all they would be thinking about, you know like a tsotsi. So in that sense it is not my problem.

Q Did you ever get any understanding as to where this grab at anti communism comes from on the part of some liberals? I mean not necessarily Duncan but just the kind of..was quite

Q wide spread to a certain degree and what that fear was and was...I was just interested in your insight into ...

A I think this was a direct legacy of the cold war. It was part of the world that one lived in. A very pronounced ideological trend. And then it came in with a great paternalism in relations to the blacks, to African people.

The feeling that these white communists who were always invariably seen as white - they never thought of people like Kotane - the communists had to be white, are going to manipulate and manoevre and take over and all the rest.

And this put them in what they found a highly competitive position. They wanted to give leadership. Whether ~~they felt because~~ it was ~~they felt~~ because they felt they were the genuine people with the genuine article or whether it was to keep us out, us meaning COD people whom they simply classified as white communists and so on.

But there was always a division amongst the liberals. I also defended many liberals. I had good social relationships with many of them.

When liberals stood for parliament once I even said we must be there and be there pushing their programme as a progressive one. They had then arrived at one person one vote. Then we should help.

And the liberals were very unhappy and our comrades, a lot of our comrades were very unhappy. But in other words I was always against what I regard as a sectarian positions. That there were lots of liberals who found themselves more comfortable there but were honest people; genuinely anti apartheid.

A lot of them actually came over to us in fact, afterwards. Not through a campaign of recruitment but they just found the liberal party wasn't giving them a relationship with the mass struggle that they wanted.

And some of these currents you find even today...continuing. And the real question is not whether you pro communist or anti communist. The real question is how do you, this is amongst the whites in SA on sort of liberal left side, how do you see the people.

If you are frightened of the people then you are going to come out with anti communism. If you have respect for the people you want to be in there, with them you don't care who is with them. You say it is right that everybody should be there.

A And honestly when I pick up the Black Sash magazine and I see the two trends you see the same thing there. When I see the split in the Progressive Party it is the same thing really.

It is those who see politics as manipulation and who are scared of black Africa and who are scared of the masses and of the working people in SA. And because they are scared they are worried about manipulation and so on themselves, on the one hand. And those who have been to the funerals , who have been in the struggles, who have been there, who pick up the emotion of the people and who are with the people. They don't have these problems.

And already we could see the same themes at the earlier stage. Even the ARM that was set up had these two trends. They had the one trend that wanted to be with the people and the other trend that said if we are not there the communists, the Marxists will take over. You know more worried about that; with this theme always of this theme of manipulation. If we don't manipulate they will kind of a thing.

And the others very dedicated militants. Finding that this was their way into the struggle. Their way to be able to do something.

Q Did you get any sense from your exposure to ARM through stuff in in that era as to what that kind of motivation that is certainly different from the older liberals? I mean those were more ?

A Ja, I mean this was a group. It had maybe three streams in it. It was a part of the liberal party that was more radical generally apart from the fact that it had been in touch with PAC, to quite a large extent. Felt the peoples' movement and now wanted to do something more. That was one part.

It was a new generation then of young people, students and others who were fed up with the old guard and wanted something more radical.

And then into ARM came a group of socialists who were not in the ANC but who were sympathetic to the ANC. For a variety of reasons they hadn't got into COD; they didn't believe in a racial organisation for one reason or another.

So these three groupings constituted the ARM. The socialists certainly were not hostile or anti communist or anti or anything. They were mainly in Joberg - people like Monty Berman

A Burou Gerson and so on, would have....

Q Was B ?

A Ja. He went to jail with him..no secret.

Q No, coz Hugh he had just urged me to interview him.

A Ja. Adrian Leftwich belonged to the group of the young militants who wanted something. And then Randolf was the older person. Randolf's role I don't know what it was. In some ways he was a very courageous person, with qualities that Duncan would have liked to have had but Duncan didn't really have. But Randolf had.

Very cool guy. Did some extraordinary underground work. But I think he was in touch with too many intelligence services and there was too much behind the scenes. I don't say he was wrong to get out but the fact was when he got out they were left totally leaderless and just ended..in the Cape at any rate, in collapse.

The irony is that Stephanie and Allen Brooks took the brunt of the interrogation. Who fought the hardest to defend the ARM, had already moved..had already left the ARM, already moved to the ANC and the underground.

But they defended, they fought, in prison, not to reveal ARM secrets. Whereas Leftwich and the others who were ARM until they were cuaght just spilt the whole beans.

Q You didn't tell me about your own detention.

A I think the only point in my detention that I will mention is I have spoken about it many times and it is kind of long time ago. This thing of being white.

I think the best is actually if you can get the book and see what I wrote at the time. (Q Ok) I wrote the book in 64, immediatly afterwards and one of the little things I noticed is I keep saying 'the Africans'. Now I never the Africans. But at that stage that is the way one said.. the Africans said the Africans.

Q Ja.

A But the one thing that hit me very strongly was here I am locked up in solitary confinement and it was a kind of real

A solitary. Sitting on the floor on this mat, nothing to read, nothing to do, no activities, totally cut off from the world, like a germ, an evil germ that has to be isolated. Only people I see are the police and here am I this enemy of the state, the traitor to the whites, and so on. And one day, there was tap in the cell, a white sergeant comes in and he says:to the black orderly: Hurry up and get a bucket of water for the baas.

So I am the baas. Even in the circumstances and this black orderly has to bring me a bucket of water so that I acan wash.

Q So how long were you in?

A Then it was five and a half months.

Q What happened to 90 days?

A Then I was released for a few minutes then redetained. You get it out of the book.

Q Does it give a chronology? I just want to make sure you were detained..it was 63.

A 63, ja.

Q And that was a couple of 90 days?

A Ja, and then I was in again in 64 for three months under 180 days.

Q Aha. And then you carried on practicing as an advocate?

A Ja, but I mean it had virtually finished the second time. I mean my clients rightly said my job was to keep them out of jail not to go to jail myself. So then I left later on in 66.

Q You left in 66?

A Ja.

Q Did you go to Britain?

A Ja.

Q And had you seen your father since he had left in 52?

A No.

Q So you saw him for the first time?

A Mmm.

Q And what had he been doing in Britain?

A No, sorry I saw him in 1954. I spent a year in Britain. In between my BA and my LLB. I was very young, I was 19 and I knew that we wouldn't be able to travel and I felt I just may be able to go there and you know the way things were going in the country, so I spent a year.

He said read. Just buy books and read. You can work, you can spend your whole life working, read. And he was doing..sort of organising general anti apartheid work at that stage and he had about 8 very active years and then he bacame more and more out of touch and then the anti apartheid movement greally got going.

But he was somebody who really paved the way for the anti apartheid movement, without actually being a founder.

Q Yes or no. Your mum was also from Lithuania? Her parents were, she was born in LithuaniaPretoria.

Then I just wanted to trace the rest of your history but you can do that. The five minute version. About you and your father. You left in 66.

A Ja.

Q And was it on a one way ticket? Did you get an exit permit or did you just escape?

A No, exit.

Q They gave you an exit permit?

A Ja,it was a bitter thing having to apply for it. And then going to get angry with them because they are delaying it and replying to your request to leave the country knowing

A that you lose your, in terms of their laws, the nationality. They were horrible months. I don't even like to think of it.

But in those days it was almost impossible to escape from C.T. Almost impossible. People could hop over the border from Joberg. In Natal, you could get to Swaziland. We didn't have a chance in C.T. -just...didn't have a chance. Or virtually didn't have a chance, so I took an exit permit.

Q And did it just seem there was no possibility of staying in the country?

A If I had stayed on..I was about to be thrown out of the legal profession. They had introduced legislation to permit that. I was under very heavy restrictions that would have been a good defiance in a way that I never say die sort of thing. But from a practical point of view not very effective.

Or structures had been destroyed and it was either going underground full time or immigrating. And to be honest I didn't have the strength to go underground, especially after my second detention.

We didn't have the structures at that stage. We had just ruined structures and that's when I left.

Q Were you under another banning order?

A Ja...ja. I got my second banning order in 63 which was quite severe but it wasn't house arrest. And when I got the banning order I almost jumped for joy. I didn't want the police to see. Reading through pages and pages of stuff and the only thing that mattered, because there were standard clauses, you couldn't do this, you couldn't do that, you couldn't do the other, you couldn't communicate with other banned people, you couldn't write for the press, couldn't attend meetings; find you know all that's there.

The only thing that mattered was was it house arrest or wasn't- and I read through the whole thing with that impassive, poker playing lawyers face, giving away almost nothing. But I wanted to jump up and down in my and say great, great I haven't got house arrest. But all the police saw was a very serious person, 'will you sign here please', for receipt and that was that.

But it would have made it impossible to earn a living. I would have been someone continuing there but rather pathetic. You know needing support, economic support; political support...so looking back although it was very bitter to leave but I don't think it was wrong.

Q Were you married at that point?

A No, but we left with a view to marrying. That was also a factor.

Q And you went to Britain and lived in Britain?

A Ja, for 11 years, that is 66 to 77. In 77 I moved to Mozambique and I have been there since.

Q Ok. Is there anything with a view towards this project of looking at non racialism that you could say about those years. I am interested in encountering your father again and he said he wanted to write that book about white traitors and just where his head...what his views of things were.

A I don't know. My father wanted to write many books. That was one. HE started writing a book on Olive Schreiner and he was collecting papers and got some letters and so on for the centenary of her birth. And when he didn't make it I told him he could always try for the bi-centenary.

He was very involved with that theme/thing but that was a theme that he had when he was in England and where it is the English who are always asking you what's a white...almost in effect what is a nice white person like you doing in a movement like that.

It is not actually something that comes out of the struggle itself, it is something imposed on you by another environment that's actually an environment with a much lower level of consciousness. And I am not sure who he had in mind but it would have included people like Schreiner, Bishop Colenso and it would have been mainly church people and communists in and he would have put a chapter in about himself.

He had no reticence in that way. He had no problem about identifying movements and personalities. I think he got some publishers interest so if that is what you are doing you have even got a tradition of publishers interest in books of this kind.

But I opposed him a little bit and he hated being opposed by me. I said there is a story here and it is part of the story of SA but you don't want to single out the whites. Once more then the SA struggle becomes 'isn't it an amazing struggle - look at those progressive whites' and it is a kind of white domination you know - white supremacy coming through even in relation to the political struggle.

The feeling was this is a story that must be told sometime

A as part of another story. Maybe even as a story on its own. But until the world has been told about the black freedom fighters, in a much bigger way than it had been done, it was premature to focus in that way.

Q And just generally...

A And maybe we don't even like being called traitors. It is really, the term 'white traitors' means it is whites within the white campe betraying the white camp. And I think in fact, those of us involved see ourselves as liberators who are white.

I am white, that is a fact. I don't have any problems about that and having been white has meant at a certain moment in the history of the globe I have been located in a certain culture, had access to certain things and it has given me enormous advantages in a pure experienced term of what things you can see and do and travel and all the rest.

Has given and in some ways still does. But fortunately my life hasn't been limited to that; being in a country with a powerful peoples' movement that is black essentially has enabled me as a human being to be involved in the gigantic historic movements of our time. To travel there, to be there, to be involved there to see, to feelit all. Up to a certain point and in that sense I think some of us are very blessed, as persons, as human beings of having been able to travel in the whole world, East and West literally, North and South.

There are very few blacks who have been able to do that. Very very few and if they do it is in a role; as a leader, as a something. But as a person, not. The white world has been cut off to blacks. It hasn't been cut off to me - the black world has not been cut off to me, in that sense. Because it is a much more generous world-

It is a world on the move. It is a world that is opening up and so on. And then with the curious historical things of our struggle; with the strong anti apartheid movements in the West and strong support from the East. It has also meant a kind of involvment in travelling between East and West that very few people seem to have.

You know the giant civilisations of our age; people belong to the one or the other and in my case and in our case people like Ruth and myself we have been able to move.

Telephone.

End of tape.

A And for me at a personal level what's been particularly, the word is felicitous, happy is living and working in Mozambique these last eight years. Because that is the only country that I can say I don't feel white.

I accept being white as a fact, it is an historical fact, it is a biographical fact, up to a certain point it is a cultural fact. But it doesn't mean to say that you are being white is something that I accept and I don't like to accept white as a state of being. But In SA obviously you do; you are acting the whole time. Britain you do - it is a very race conscious and racist society.

I remember someone once saying, a person who called himself well educated, speaking about the immigrants and in a very negative way of course and I said well you know I am an immigrant. 'Oh no, nono, of course we don't mean you. And I would say why not; I am much more an immigrant than many of the people they are speaking about.

And in the United States the race, and group and ethnic awareness is so great it actually gets on my nerves quite a lot. You...I feel restricted by it.

And in Mozambique for the first time I felt in terms of being, in terms of existance, I was just a person. My whiteness went away and it took time. It took time. This thing of racial quotas and seeing everything in racial terms. It took time for me...to...I wrote a little poem once.

Excuse me little children, they were playing in the street, if you see this mad man staring at you, with wild eyes, but I come from SA and normality disturbs me a little.

And that really was a feeling. As time passes in Mozambique even one sees that there are stresses, there are questions, there are currents about the cultural questions, continue under the impact of the war and the immense pressures and so on. There has been a certain retreat on these questions but basically it has been an absolute joy for me.

Maybe the mention of joy reminds me of a little thing once. We had a meeting in...of ANC people in Maputo, a little memorial meeting. It is a tradition of ours; when a comrade dies in any part of the world we have a meeting to commemorate that person. And this was for Ellie Wynberg, the photographer. Ruth was there and we always used to try to get Ruth to give the address at these meetings. Because she always thought so much about the people and what their lives meant.

Although she was such an experienced speaker she prepared, she sat up at night, she got nervous and you know she always had

A a remarkable little biography of a person in the movement. And now it was my turn and to speak in front of Ruth is always a bit daunting because she has extraordinary high standards. She demands the best. Nothing cheap, nothing that just gets by.

One of the comrades stood up and said well we all remember Ellie Wynberg - he made so many sacrifices, he gave up the good life and he always eat with us or something like that; one of the African comrades.

And I said I would just like to correct one point that was made and that was that for somebody like Ellie being in the struggle was a sacrifice or that he gave anything for it. For Ellie and for all those like him being in the struggle is an honour and a joy. And Ruth congratulated me afterwards and one treasured Ruth's praise because it wasn't easily forthcoming. But I think it was something that all of us had expereinced, that we had all known, that being in the struggle for somebody born white in SA is not a sacrifice at all.

The sacrifice would be to live a so called normal life in SA society; to sacrifice your spirit, your heart, your imagination, your being. And it has been a liberation for us. It has put us in touch with people, a movement, a surge and through that you have got to be in touch with your own people to be in touch with the peoples of the world. And it has put us in touch with the world, with history and it has made us alive; it has made our lives meaningful. It has given us energy, things to do; it has made us productive, wonderful friendships and all this is part and parcel of being in the struggle.

The fact that you are white perhaps gives a certain sharpness to it all because you have been reminded often by the outside world of that. And you are reminded of that by yourself by the fact that you can't speak ZULU. And you can't do this and you can't do that. These reminders come in little ways. But those are the external superficial things.

The real thing is the sense of comradeship that you have and that is comradeship. When I am with Hendrus, Bobby and Zuma and Zooey. We are with each other, we are with each other.

Q I am going to ask you just to conclude by..Ialways ask people at the end to just say if this is a worthwhile project? Does one need to talk about non racialism? I think in the context of the last conference and the decision taken?

You could just say something about the history and the present and why it has been important to look at the concept.

A I think it's a worthwhile project. For SA because in this way we are creating the new foundations of the new SA and it is the only way. They wan't be created by fancy constitutions and minority rights and these are simply ways of keeping the racial idea alive. And they won't work because people will start using racism ends for opportunistic means/ ends to get more economic power, to get more political power.

And you will find the apartheid idea will live on in different forms. And so what we are destroying is not just apartheid; we are destroying the apartheid idea. We are destroying the apartheid way of living.

And we have proved to ourselves that non racialism works. And because it works amongst ourselves in very difficult conditions; under repression from the right; from the regime. Under attack from popular racist forces; from the people.

It's proved that it works. It solves problems; it solves the big problems of SA; of how people can get on and work together. I think it is totally worthwhile.

Is it worth-while as an individual? You don't even ask that question. We are there, we are in it.

What I can say is that there were some moments at the ANC conference where I did go through my past life because I felt these moments were so intense and so sharp; like you are supposed to do before...while you are drowning. That certain highlights actually flash through my mind vividly; that this was a culmination of a process.

That for me started when I was sitting in that seat in the Salt River Hall hanging onto the uncomfortable wooden bench there not being able to go forward and say here I am, here I am. And knowing it couldn't have gone another way. It couldn't have been shorter. It couldn't have been done then. It had to follow this long arduous slow process of gradually achieving an organisational form, a structural form that corresponded to what we had achieved in practice. Built up over the years; in the underground, in exile, in the army, in the prisons.

And this was a culmination. It was enough; for a person it was enough to have lived for just for that. But of course we are greedy coz we just don't want to see this..coz you know what was so wonderful was it was accepted in our ranks, absolutely overwhelmingly. It wasn't accepted because the majority favoured it - there were a few voices against; a couple of abstentions, a couple of votes against.

It was discussed very calmly. In the end the person in the

A chair said I am not taking any more arguments in favour of the resolution to open up all ranks of the ANC to all people, because it is obvious what the people feel from the applause and so on. I am only hearing arguments against.

People argued against and there were whites..one white at least argued against. And very rationally and soberly and so on. But then the vote was taken and there was a cheer and a song about Tambo and Mandela, Slovo and the people surged forward and this was the young BC generation doing it.

They surged forwards because the older people are a little more correct in their behaviour. They surged forward singing in this very African way with this immense popular participation where if you have..are feeling joy you express your joy not just by beating one palm against the other palm and making a noise. But by singing and by moving. And lifted up Joe and lifted up Mac Maharaj and some of the others.

It was a moment of a life time for many people and one saw the difference..different themes and cultures coming together there. The African culture, the Ghandian culture, the revolutionary culture...the world revolutionary culture all merging, even in terms of the personalities. And this young, overwhelmingly black alive, militant, fun, full of fun, full of happiness, full of spirit, full of feeling that this is a moment of celebration.

People who are offering their lives for the struggle. They get nothing out of this except now a high chance of death, surging forward in that way. It was very fine.

It is that...I am not a believer in the sense of the spirit takes you and all the rest but I am a believer in another sense. A believer in a movement and a people and that you build up a spirit amongst a people that becomes a tangible force and it is transmitted and passed on. And that is something that is achieved in itself and it is also handed on to others and everybody contributes towards it. That is what we really achieved over the years.

That is a thing that can never be...that what makes our movement indestructible. And why suddenly the Freedom Charter emerged after what seemed all those years of ~~all that~~ neglect and why the non racial spirit emerged after what seemed 20 not 20, 15 years of silence and several years of BC that appeared to be opposite, but wasn't opposite. It was part of the dialectic.

There is not a leader of the ANC who hasn't believed in BC at a certain stage. It is absolutely part and parcel of the emergence of political consciousness in SA. It corresponds to what people feel and what the people need. But then it moves on.. it won't

A it out...it destroys itself. BC requires a consciousness that goes beyond and that absorbs everybody and liberates everybody.

This theme that maybe for another day, another occassion, I'd like to speak about is liberating the whites; but maybe not now. But it is the historic task of the African people to, and the ANC in particular to liberate the whites of SA.

By liberate them I don't just mean..it is not to liberate them from legal constraints although there are some that prevent whites, like all people from moving freely and thinking freely and acting freely. But to liberate them from the narrowness, the fears, the paranoia. Libertate them from being citizens of a country that is despised and hated all over the world . Liberate them from their tiny inlooking culture and cultural forms that they have and opening them up to the potential joy of the country and the creativity of the country. The music of the country.

It just so happens that it is the blacks who are going to do that and just so happens that I have been born at time when I think I will see it, as well as be part of it. Can I stop.

Q Ja.

Interview ends.