

PI Interview Roland White

Let me start off by asking you when and where you were born?

A Born 4 March 1962, in Durban.

Q Did you grow up in Durban?

A Ja for..until about Std 2 which is the age of about 8 or 9. I stayed in Natal but went off to boarding school, a place called Kings. (Q In Natal?) Mmm. Nottingham Road. Did we talk about this at the other interview or not?

Q No.

A We didn't. Oh, because that is quite interesting - that is a very interesting school I suppose, that that was quite important for me, for the development of my attitudes, and so on. So that between the ages of 9 and 13.

And from 13 to ... Just after I finished school I went to Hilton College which is a large private school.

Q Why was the other important for formulating your attitudes?

A Well, because of the way it was run and the kind of school that it was. The person who ran it, he still runs it today, is a guy called John Mitchell Carlisle, Carlisle Mitchell in fact; who was ^{old} ~~an~~ member of the Liberal Party.

He basically owns the school and runs it himself. It is a fairly small place, rather ramshackle; does not have very much money but run on very sort of libertarian lines. Just little things for eg. we never used to address teachers by titles like Sir, or Miss.. It always used to be their first names: Jackie or Grant whoever it was.

A Practically no corporal punishment. A lot of emphasis in the school on things like pottery and art and so on. At the same time, given the kind of person that Mitchell was and - or is - and given on the other hand the kind of teachers the school used to attract generally you found I suppose at a quasi political level a fairly strong anti racist attitude and that kind of thing, from the staff.

Not all of which by any means were reflected among the pupils but to a certain degree that sort of thing percolated through to certain people more than others. I think the school in that sense was quite important in the formulation of my attitudes and that.

Q Did you say anti racist it wouldn't be non racial but they just didn't like racism ?

A No, well look...ja, I said anti racist (advisably) what I meant by that is to call it non racial would for me be to give it too much of a political content; would be saying the school has a conception of itself, has a conception of the school of specifically.. being part of a non racial struggle, which it doesn't. That is not the role the school is playing.

But at the same time he is a very strong liberal; strong left wing liberal I suppose. I mean the people who used to come.. you got all types of people at the school sort of ex hippies, and you know what I mean; a whole lot of different kinds of people. And who were all, while not themselves saying being politically involved, at the same time had basically fairly cool attitudes at a humanitarian level.

I think that was quite important in terms of my being able to break away from some of the conventional racism of SA attitudes.

Q And it's still all white?

A No, no. It's...at the stage I was there it was all white but now Mitchell has run entirely against the Dept. of Bantu Education or whatever it is called now..it is Education and Training, that's it. And he has introduced blacks into the school which is actually against the law, but he has done it. He doesn't have a permit or anything like that. So there are blacks at the school now.

I think he has to play quite a careful game because the D.E.T. has the power and at any stage, for any school which has black pupils in it to say that that is a school under which DET will take control over. It will then become subject to D.E.T. syllabus and basically become a Bantu Education syllabus and so on. So he has to balance very carefully between getting black kids in and not going over board. Because if he goes over board they are just going to say Bantu education. And the school is going to be fucked.

So he plays...he has been over the last couple of years..he has been getting quite a lot of black kids in proportion.

Q If you had kids would you send your kids there now?

A Oh ja. I suppose it raises another debate about boarding schools - it is only a boarding school. It is the kind of school very definitely where I would send kids, ja.

Q And why did your parents send you? What kind of people are your parents?

A Oh no. My mother and father were divorced at the time and a... they were divorced when I was about 8 and I was then under the custody of my mother. The way I got to Kings was because my mother my uncle, mother's brother-in-law knew of Kings and so on. He is quite a lekker guy as well. His name is Tony Morfatt. He is at UCT in the Extra Rural Studies dept. He was very close to Rick Turner and those people at the time of ..at that stage he was in Durban.

A In the English Dept of Natal University and he was very close to Rick Turner and that kind of Jean Rove person and he knew about Kings. I am not sure how. And he put my mother onto Kings.

My mother was basically fairly..if she had been born at the right time she would have been a hippy. Chuckle. She was quite a cool person. And she just liked the school and sent me there. My father had very little to do with it. My father..then I was in my sort of final years at Kings, I was transferred...my father took custody of me and my sister and I went to Hilton afterwards. Hilton was a terrible place but...

Q So did your father think Kings was a terrible idea?

A Not really. He was quite cool about it. He was quite cool about it. He didn't take me out of the school or anything like that. But he was definitely more I suppose socially conservative or is more socially conservative, than my mother was.

Q So what is the other school?

A Hilton is your equivalent..is one of SA's Etons; like St. Johns in Joberg, Micheal House another one. St. Andrews in Grahamstown, Bishoppes in C.T. Part of the private school elite grouping; hell of expensive boarding school; strong British traditional values etc. Bastions of colonialism in some kinds of ways. Very authoritarian; the kind of thing you would expect from that sort of place.

I was actually sort of expelled from the place in the end.

Q So what was it like - you were 13 at the time? Don't want to get all into it but just in terms of tracing that consciousness and politicisation? What was it like going from one school to the other?

A It wasn't very lekker. I had kind of psyched myself up for it. I knew there was going to be a big difference and I'd convinced myself that it was the...that I should in fact give Hilton a good try and so on. I had been convinced or convinced myself, I don't know, into thinking that it was quite a good thing to do actually.

So although the change was quite dramatic and ended up in...and I was in a very difficult situation for a lot of the time in my first year because of difficulties in adjustment I suppose. I kind of stuck it out but then basically by the time I reached Std. 9 Matric I was gat full and I had begun to develop a whole lot of attitudes which were clearly totally adverse to those which the school wished me to have. So it is an ongoing antagonism developed between me and the school authorities.

I had friends and so on there which...different shades of opinion but ... there was an ongoing battle until in the end I was actually thrown out. In fact I was thrown out and allowed to write my Matric exams at the school because I was thrown out in my 3rd term. We had 4 terms there.

Q Was there any political content to your clashes to the authorities? Or any pre political?

A Not really in the narrow sense of the term. In fact there was often more political contact...conflict between myself and pupils in the school.

I remember there was this one incident that I had when...for eg. in matric you each get your own study, ok or sometimes you had to share it with another person, depending. Now the other guys in matric will all have posters of Farrah Fawcett Majors and those kinds of things on their walls. My major posters were of dagga plants and oh, ~~for~~ Scope once did this whole spread on hands which had been bitten by snakes, or limbs which had been bitten by snakes and pictures of particularly revolting and gangrenous photos which I then put on my wall. Then there were some quasi political things as well and also surfing. I used to surf as well; I was quite into that.

But then quasi political things like there was this one graphic which

A had a stylised black person lying head to toe with a white person biting each others foot and it became a...and I put this up in a particular way with the black person on top in my study and people would actually come and turn it the other way up. Never very antagonistically. It was always slightly jovial and so on.

I was accepted by the other pupils as being I think, in political attitudes slightly eccentric. But I was lucky because I had quite a lot of power amongst the other pupils as well. I was with a... I ^{was of key part} sort, ~~keep out~~ of the informal power structure I suppose in the running of the ~~hostel-school~~. We had hostels and by the time I reached matric I was of the three or four people who were at the pinnacle of the informal power structure in the hostel as it were, in distinction to the authorities.

But I was the only person of those in the school that I knew who had really similar political attitudes. The others were there for different reasons. They were slightly antagonistic to the authorities; dressed in different ways but none of them really had very much of a political grounding.

Whereas I think I was much more vociferous and the basis of my rebellion to the authorities was from..far more political than theirs was.

Q So do you think you were liberal compared to them? What were you?

A I..oh certainly, ja. I think at that stage..you see I had a...I went.. I was certainly liberal and so on until about std. 8/9 ok, and then a friend of mine..who in fact had been a teacher at Kings, who had left the country to avoid the army. A guy called...I can't remember his name for the moment. But call him Brian ok.

Brian came back from overseas on a short visit and he contacted me - I had not seen him for many years and he had been a very important person at Kings; he was a very sort of...he was basically a hippie but just a very lekker guy. He had been very influential I suppose in formulating parts of my...one of the people who had been influential.

A He came back and contacted me at Hilton and we went for a long walk together and I remember at that stage I had just been through confirmation classes and ... one of the ethical

Q For what?

(R.C.?)

A For church. Everyone went through, no Protestant. Everyone at school went through those confirmation classes. But one of the ethical problems that I had raised with the minister who was preparing me; with the other pupils, before being confirmed, one of the ethical problems was the army.

What do I actually do about ... I don't support the government therefore, in a very liberal kind of way, what do I do about having to go and fight for the government. And the answer he had given me at that stage, this was about Std. 8; he said listen, don't look at it as if you are going to support the government in going to the army, but you are going there to fight communism.

And I thought ok cool, I'll buy that one. That sounds to me I thought at that stage that communism wasn't such a good thing and so on. Then this guy Dave came out and we went on various long walks together. He used to visit me at school. Only twice in fact. And I remember there was one quite important point that crystallises I suppose something of a turning point in my life or in terms of my attitudes rather. That was when we were down in the Umgeni valley; very hot day and we had been swimming, in the Umgeni river. There was nobody else around. It is very wild around there.

It was quite a long walk away from the school, couple of hours. And he asked me what are you going to do about the army. And I was about to come out with this answer and I said to him listen Dave, are you a communist. He sort of had a double take and he said well call me a left wing socialist. Laughs.

So I said oh. Now that was quite important because before, for me I suppose, communism had always been this faceless set of unthinkable kinds of things. It was just off from the beginning, it was simply a bad thing. All of a sudden it actually...there was

A Someone I knew, who I was very close to who..if he wasn't a communist he was actually very close to that.

All of a sudden it actually..there was someone who I actually knew who I was very close who if he wasn't a communist, was someone who was very close to that and that placed me in a very different kind of ... I had never known someone who had claimed to be a communist before. Whereas a lot of my attitudes were distinctively/instinctively reaching towards..I wouldn't say communism but at that stage were simply looking towards or far left-wards of where I had actually come from.

And certainly in terms of what I was confronted with in school and stuff..and my life in an ongoing sense. So then we had a lot more discussion where profit comes from and so on.

Now I wouldn't say at that stage I was totally swung from a liberal to some other kind of position. But there was a very important turning point.

Then by the stage..in STD IO I began to make or re establish contact with people who I had known from Kings. For eg. there was the sister of someone I knew quite well at Kings, who at that stage, when I was in Std. IO was in her 2nd year at Teachers training college in Natal which she then left. And by the time I...well we basically did re-establish contact, almost accidentally and she was becoming more and more I suppose left wing in her attitudes.

Then I moved into the house between the time when I was in Matric or left school and the time I went to Rhodes. I stayed in the same house as her and a group of Natal University students. One of which was Micheal Hamlyn who was killed in the Gaborone thing. Although he I think..he moved in a bit later.

And I just got to know people..I just became..obviously that context was very important form me in moving my attitudes. So I think really by the time I reached my first year at university in a lot of respects advanced way beyond a liberal position.

What year would that have been when you asked him whether he was a

Q communist?

A Probably about 77 or 76.

Q So was all of this in a vacuum about communism and morality and SA - did it have anything to do with Soweto 76 and black people?

A More of a vacuum I think. There was some kind of influence, ok but I think being, particularly for me being at a boarding school and that kind of thing, the issues were far more, I suppose, moral and that. my everyday life, you know, about black people and stuff and coming out of the Kings experience and so on. I don't think that there were...I think there was some political influence from Soweto and stuff like that but I don't think it was major.

Q So is there anything you would mention in terms of that period of your life you've discussed up to now where you were confronted with or dealt with blacks or had anything that ... because of this issue of non racialism? Or was that not as much of a factor? You had to find out where you stood ?

A I think it was from my point of view more abstract probably. It wasn't so much that I ... look no hang on that's not entirely true. Look the contact..at that stage I never had any political contact with blacks.

Look there are a range of other things which..I haven't mentioned everything which was important in terms of formulation of my attitudes. But there were a range of other contacts and people that I knew - friends of friends at Kings and so on. People who had been involved in the 73 strikes and so on in Durban.

This guy Tony Mrofatt that I mentioned earlier. He was a very important reference point for me because I think particularly agh, getting Freudian, but without having a father to a certain extent when I came home he became a bit of a father figure for me. My father wasn't around very much; I was staying with my mother. We used to see a lot of thã family.

A Tony Morfatt was close to Rick Turner. I got to meet Rick Turner when I was quite young and so on there, as a general result. You know what I mean there was a general sort of context: Tony is very sussed guy. Himself...I wouldn't know what to put him...I suppose cynically left wing or radically ~~liberal~~ liberal, whichever way you want to look at it. But quite a sussed out guy.

I used to ask him a lot of questions and so on. So there were a range of other influences which were important as well but they weren't directly from black people.

But the black people I had ... or sorry the context with black people that I actually had were mainly confined to relationships with domestic servants in my mother's place and a couple of those domestics I did have very good relationships with. Also the okes who used to work in the garden around in the white suburbs and I would go during my matric years I'd often...in quite good relationships with them...go and smoke dope with them.

But it was not a direct political influence from a black person. In fact there wasn't really an important political black person in my life. Far more important were people like Tony Morfatt and Dave and so on.

Q Do you remember what year that was you met Rick?

A Fuck, shit I don't know. He used to come to Tony's house a couple of times with his wife; now that would have been probably when I was in about Std. 4 or 5; so we are talking about - when did he die? about 74 (Q 78 he died)Ja, I think we are talking about 74/75/76, between those 3 years.

Q And do you remember what it was like to meet him? And when you asked your friend if he was a communist did he .. what did he represent? Was there any kind of... I am just interested ...

A Who are you talking about now, Rick or Dave?

Q Rick.

A Ja, no Rick did not tell me he was a communist. (Q NO) Ja, no

Q No in the way you saw Dave relation or did it thinking this is a well known guy who was taking on the system? He was (A Ja) white ..

A To a certain degree I was I suppose a bit over awed by Rick. Not because of what he said; I never had a very intense political discussion with him. It was just simply round chats and so on. And mainly with Tony in that he was not really talking to me very much.

At that stage I was about II I suppose. But he was..I mean I just knew that this was a guy; he was married to a black woman, ok, Fozia; he was banned; he had been involved and to a certain extent I just had a lot of instinctive respect for that I suppose. As I say not coz of what he said but coz of what he represented.

Q Ok and moving on in terms of you went to university and you'd moved politically. What was the next influence? Do we get to any black ...

A Yes, now the next influence—I went to varity and I was..I went there with a slightly, what I regard now as a slightly, almost ultra left attitude towards politics ^{at that stage.} In other words I went there and because of the nature of some of the influences which had become important - particularly in the last 6 months before I went to university - when I was going through I suppose a fairly intense process of politicisation. Living in that house in Durban and there were a couple of other people who weren't living in that house who I knew politically who were quite critical for eg. of NUSAS. A fairly ultra left point of view.

One typical thing one of the people used to say to me was look they are a bunch of wankers. Wanking off on a white campus; they are not really where it is at politically. And I went to a certain extent becoz those people had become important reference points in the formation of my over all political framework.

What they had to say also about quite specific things became important

A and specific things like NUSAS.

So I went there with a slightly ultra left attitude towards NUSAS. And I joined immediately..I made quite a lot of contact with black students really off my own bat. I joined an organisation there called PHOENIX which was really an organisation..well non racial student organisation.

It was dominated by - well I didn't really know then but - which I came to know as a kind of Unity Movement influence. A key person of the organisation being a chap called Allen Zin whose now the publicity secretary for SACOS and then National Publicity Secretary of SACOS.

Q White guy?

A No, no a coloured guy. So I moved then, became involved in Phoenix. Phoenix had a very strong non racial principle. They believed that the only way of organising if you are...in accordance with the Unity movement principled methods of struggle and so on; the only acceptable forms of organising if you are heading for a non racial future was totally non racial. You must have blacks and whites as part of the organisation.

I moved in and became part of Phoenix for the better part of that year. I remember going through various things. There was the whole 1980 schools boycott which Phoenix then confronted and handled in the end very badly. In fact totally abysmally because of the way in which they approached it, which was in terms of their principles. I can go into that if you want a bit of it, just now.

But by the end of 1980 I basically moved out of Phoenix because I began I think to recognise that as being a politically inept approach. Or the approach which Phoenix embodied was a politically inept one; unable to really make, I think, the most important advances which could have been made particularly...I mean my major experience of that was in the 1980 schools boycotts.

Just in the way they handled that. The issue there Phoenix took the line firstly that what should happen is that all students,

A University students should boycott in total solidarity with the black school kids ok. So if you are going to boycott you must go on an indefinite boycott alla the school kids were; they were boycotting indefinitely. That was the first principle.

Second principle was that there was no differentiation between white and black at all. Now it became very clear to me during the course of the boycott that the way, if you wanted to make any gains amongst white students at all the worst thing to do was to ask them to go on an indefinite boycott.

They didn't understand the issues, they didn't know what was going on. It was a very different constituency to the black students. I mean that seemed to be a basic political fact. And yet Phoenix because of its insistence on operating in a principled way simply wasn't prepared to take account of that kind of fact.

As a result...phoenix only suffered I think a certain amount of losses amongst white or white things and in the end their efforts even amongst black university students collapsed because they would not recognise the difference between a university student and a black school kid and develop appropriate strategies to that particular kind of terrain.

And that to a certain extent embodied...it was a lot more complex than that. But those kinds of issues embodied or crystallised the whole approach of that kind of unity movement leadership to political things on the ground.

By 1980 I just realised that it was a particularly bad way of going about things.

Q This is in Durban, right?

A No, no. This was at Rhodes. Ja, 1980 I was..from Durban I lived in Durban but I went to Rhodes for the whole of my university career.

Q So is Phoenix around the country?

A No, no it was simply a Rhodes organisation.

Q Maybe you told me about it because I interviewed someone else who was involved with Phoenix.

A Really. Maybe a different Phoenix. I don't know but this was at Rhodes, ja.

Q And when did you know that it was Unity movement?

A Well, when did someone say to me it was Unity movement...I suppose sometime during the course of the year. The point I am really trying to make I suppose with that, is was really through a really concrete grappling on my part when I went into the organisation fully predisposed positively, positively predisposed, towards its aims and objectives and so on and I came out of the organisation negatively. Quite negatively about it.

Feelings that we had to go about..I had to...the political methods had to^{be} different to those which were operating in Phoenix. That was because of a really concrete grappling on my part with the ideas of Phoenix. Obviously not outside of the influence of other people.

Obviously I had a lot of NUSAS friends; they were quite critical of Phoenix and their ideas were feeding in and so on. But it was really through a lot of concrete grappling on my part that I came out feeling negative of the thing. Rather than because I came out of having read a lot of ~~Communist~~^{Congress} literature and someone said to me listen ~~that~~^{it} is Unity movement don't touch it. You know what I mean, it was a very different experience for me and a very concrete one that I went that I went through.

It put me in a very good position now because I know the Unity movement kind of methods and thinking and so on very well and in terms of debate and so on it is actually quite useful to me to have had that experience in some ways.

Q So were they just in Grahamstown as well as the Western Cape or are they..is...

Q Ja.

A No I think there is a Unity tradition in the Western Cape and in the Eastern Cape to a certain degree. Not anything like it in the Western Cape.

Zin's family come from the Western Cape I think, but he moved to P.E. I am not sure how exactly it all worked. And then he came to Grahamstown. This was very much...he was a very strong person Zin. In some sense he is a hell of a good person. Very strong, very forthright; could be a very good leader. But unfortunately he has, or what I regard as the wrong kind of politics; ends up not being that effective.

Q Ok, I want to ask you because this is looking at class and colour - you have just kind of glossed over...the black contact, can you say anything about what it was to actually finally after all of the thinking about the issues he dealing with blacks? Was it a first experience to be in Phoenix? I mean other than the kinds of contacts you talked about before.

A I think one of the things that struck me was the similarity of a between a lot of black students and a lot of white students. There wasn't a huge difference in a lot of ways. And that I found quite disappointing in fact.

I don't know what expectations I went there with but I found in their attitudes, like for eg. maybe we are getting into a more abstract area, but your average black student who is...becomes involved in politics, at university. There is 2 characteristics there generally.

The one is that they generally, not all cases, are going to be petty bourgeois which actually is because very few blacks student get to Grahamstown university. If you are going to get to Rhodes; to a white speaking university you have got to have a bit of money and so on behind you, ok. That's firstly.

Secondly, you often find that a lot of black students, to become

A politically involved don't go through the same kind of social revolution that a lot of white students do. Almost an existential revolution. Let me just explain that a bit.

If you are a black person from the township and you come to university, to a certain extent political struggle is...and suffering under apartheid, even if it is only in a petty bourgeois kind of way; but to a certain extent the experience of apartheid has been with you and opposition is, to apartheid is a natural part of what you are going through.

If you are a white you go through no such thing. So often you find, I think it is a bit less so because of the growth of NUSAS and so on now; it is a bit less the case than when I first went to Rhodes. But you found that for most whites students they had to go through a political identification with a very oppositional point of view. Was part and parcel of a broader process of really rebellion against or revolution against authority structures, against those kinds of values, against parents and so on. White middle class values essentially.

It couldn't be any different.

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A Whereas black students don't have to go through a lot of those processes. Because political involvement doesn't entail the rejection, necessarily, of those kinds of values. They are not (into) to those values in the first place. Secondly political revolt can be a fairly natural outgrowth of what they are doing.

I think that is quite important because you find for eg. that often white students in my experience, have had a far more tense relationship with their parents than black students have. And it is part and parcel of this whole difference in how you come into political involvement to begin with.

Also the issue of sexism and the creation of alternative kinds of

A value systems along those lines. Sexism is often far more of an issue for white students than it is for black students. There are a whole lot of broader reasons for that as well; to more traditional ways of looking at things and that kind of stuff.

But white students often have to get through and grapple with kind of issues like that in a way that black students don't. White students who are politically involved do coz there are those sociological differences to begin with.

So to come back to the question that you actually asked. What was it like to be involved with blacks. It wasn't in a lot of ways that different. It was a little bit disappointing..socially.

Firstly coz a lot of them had what I regard as conventional attitudes towards sexism and so on. Issues which really for me had been raised towards the end of my matric year and stuff like that, with the house in Durban. And which people in NUSAS were grappling with. So for me there was...sociologically there was more of a resonance with the way, values and so on ^{in which} ~~had been~~ ^{were being} looked at amongst the NUSAS people than there was amongst black students.

But having said that I don't want to over stress it very much. It never was a major issue for me. I just remember feeling that ..there would be something slightly different, something a little less conventional about a lot of the...and the little I did at that stage was a little bit less conventionally middle class. About not all, but a lot of the black students who were at that stage part and parcel of the Phoenix.

But it wasn't a major issue for me. It was just something that was not quite...I actually now what my expectations were, but it was a little different to what I had expected. A little bit different. Ja.

Q So after the Phoenix experience did you...

A Then I became more and more involved in NUSAS. And basically carried on with the NUSAS involvement in different areas. When I say NUSAS I mean the student movement generally.

A I was involved...I never for eg. stood for SRC at Rhodes, which is a key area for NUSAS, in which NUSAS is involved. I think quite validly involved. But I personally never wanted to do that. In the end I think maybe a little bit inadvisably.

I remember people used to put a lot of pressure on me to stand for SRC on a couple of occasions because every year you have your elections right. They wanted me to stand. One occasion in particular I got a lot of pressure to stand and I refused because I didn't see that as being where I wanted to be involved. In retrospect I think a little bit immaturely; I think actually maybe I should have got into that...but I don't think that was a major issue either way.

I carried on nevertheless being involved in NUSAS activities. I became involved in the Wages Comm there. In fact I was the Chairperson of Wages Comm at some stage. It is a body that had specific focus on support of labour struggles. And for eg the Wilson Rowntrees boycott with SAWU. Then I was ..head up the formation of the Rowntrees support committee, in Rhodes and then Grahamstown more generally. We used to raise money for them and try to propagate the aims and so on of the strike and get support for it and that kind of stuff.

That was the sort of thing the Wages Comm did and there was also educational programmes, various internal ones.

I was involved in the Grahamstown Voice . Delta, well Delta is the organisation which runs the Voice which is a community newspaper. I was sort of mini Grass Roots which was appropriate for Grahamstown. Delta actually went through a big transformation when I was there.

I got involved fairly from the beginning. It was always very cut off from the township:but I wasn't really involved in it from my first year and during my second and third years and a little bit during my honours year, so that was during 82 and 83, particularly I became quite involved in Deta, really involved.

At the same time it underwent a huge transformation really. Really from some I suppose peripheral paper without much definition or role to, at the stage, now, where it is very clearly linked in with

A the organisations of the township. It operates in a way which Grass Roots does in Cape Town. And is very much part of an ongoing organisational project, in the Grahamstown community as a whole.

So I was involved there. Just by the way Olivia was the Editor during I think for me was the key part of Delta's transformation. She edited the Voice then. And then there were about a couple of the rest of us involved.

I was involved in things like NUSAS referendums where they have this referendum every year. The students vote whether NUSAS should belong or Rhodes should belong to the National Union or not. We have not had one for some time now but there were a couple that I was involved in in fighting.

Q Do they vote to disaffiliate?

A Well, I won one and lost one.

Q

A Ja, well look we just have to use this room alright...

Q So when was the disaffiliation?

A That was about 1984, no hang on 83. We affiliated in 82. See when I arrived there we were not affiliated. I think I fought 3 referenda. not affiliated; we fought the first one and lost it. Fought the 2nd one and won it. (Q To reaffiliate) Yes. Then the anti disaffiliation started a campaign and we fought again and lost it.

Q I am just interested, I don't want to get too involved in NUSAS disaffiliation experiences and why but I think that is quite interesting because of the idea of working in the white community that must have been a bit demoralising. Tell me a bit about the Rhodes student body and what the forces were among the white students. Maybe it...

A Essentially...ok...look it is important in its own right I suppose but I don't know ^{for} what other things it is important but essentially you had the majority of Rhodes students are very apathetic I64

A except I suppose there..sometimes they are not. I mean for eg. recently at Rhodes had this amazing demonstration. The biggest demonstration that Rhodes has had in the last 10 or 20 years. Political demonstration where we got..an alliance was formed, essentially between black students within BSM, white students particularly mobilised behind NUSAS and academics., in which GCD people played a ^{key} role.

What actually happened is that people protested around the state of emergency and the banning of COSAS at Rhodes. There was a baton charge on the campus - the following day we re-organised, a huge march. I think the majority of students, in fact about 60% of students from Rhodes came on that march. About 2000 students I suppose plus a lot of academics and then all the black students.

That was the biggest political demonstration there has been at Rhodes certainly since I have been there which is 6 years and as far as I recount for any years previously. That was a hell of a big breakthrough. That was like white students being mobilised politically.

But so when I say the majority of Rhodes students are apathetic I think there is always a situation of flux. Students are sometimes... obviously can be mobilised more at sometimes than others. Then in the cases of the referenda the referendum margins were always incredibly narrow. We used to win or lose on a 100 or 150 votes every time.

But the majority of students are sort of liberally, in SA terms, disposed and they would vote for the PFP, the majority of students for eg. And then you have I suppose a left wing kind of leadership and a right wing kind of leadership. Or sometimes it is a bit different for eg. you had a very conservative..the first one that we fought and lost, there was a very conservative PFP streak, grouping of people who were pro PFP but were anti NUSAS; and they fought NUSAS and won that one. And really on the basis of conservative opinion in some of the reses.

Then we won the one on straight political ticket really. And the last one we lost was really a case of the other way round. It was a very right wing leadership actually posing as a conservative liberal moderate kind of influence. One of the people leading it

A was a person who joined the Security Branch the following year, or in fact had probably been working for SB at the same time, at Rhodes. He was a lieutenant, Lloyd Evans is his name.

Q What was his name?

A Lloyd Edwards. In fact there are rumours that he has left the country now. Left Grahamstown; had a nervous breakdown or something. But he has been in the Security Branch for the last two years, I think.

Q Was he exposed with this..something about him?

A Recently?

Q Mmm.

A No that was a different thing. No, Lloyd he was in fact in politics class for a few years. And so, Edwards headed up the thing and he was a very conservative person, very right wing. But they opposed as liberals saying like we are against apartheid; we just don't like NUSAS.

We were trying to say listen, if you are against apartheid you must support NUSAS type of thing. And they managed to win by a very narrow margin.

So it is always a struggle over a very, very narrow margin. I didn't find it a hell of a lot demoralising. Maybe I am just a bit impervious to demoralisation. I am. I mean I...it's to a certain degree if you are working in the white community, to have high expectations or unrealistic ones is really stupid-so you don't have them. You make gains where you can.

Q But then did you always feel it was important to work in the white community? You didn't think you should....

A No..no (Q more exciting to be in the townships or...)
Look I tink there is this ..there is..someone in my position I face

A that tension in some kinds of ways and then there is a tension in the understanding of non racialism and particularly for people who are fairly new to struggle. Clearly where it all seems to be happening is in the townships. And you want to go there and be involved there and working in the white areas doesn't seem that important.

But I think I accept it except from the end of my first year at Rhodes, I accepted the importance of...coz I came to understand the importance of organising whites, white students as white students. That you had to develop appropriate tactics and strategies to that particular terrain if you wanted to make gains there. And it was important to make gains there for a whole lot of macro political reasons.

So a weakening^{of} the white block and trying to pull people to your side and all those kinds of things. So I accepted from the end of that... but I never....I accepted the importance of organising white students and I think I just gradually extended from that into the importance of organising whites in other areas. And again, if you are going to organise whites and you want to make gains at that level, you want to organise whites in other areas, you have to develop appropriate strategies; appropriate kinds of organisation and so on.

That means essentially that you have to organise on a ^{seemingly/} semi exclusively white basis. But which starts of what the issue of non racialism is all about. I think generally there are 2 ways it can be seen.

The one way is that you as a white person go and get involved with black people directly on a day to day basis. And I suppose just because the kind of the kind of area I was living in and the epoch that I was living through in Grahamstown I was very exposed to that kind of organisation. For eg. my work in that Labor and community or what was then the Labour ~~and Community~~ Research Committee - which has become the Labour and Community Resources Centre.

That is an organisation which is mainly there are white people involved it is small, four or five people. And I became involved; the employer of the organisation. But our work is done all for say UDF affiliated organisations. It is activist training, providing of information etc.

A It is a resource organisation and all our work was done for UDF or not only UDF affiliated organisation; like trade unions, General Workers Union etc. But mainly for mms based, predominantly black organisations.

So that was a very concrete way in which I as a white was being involved in black organisation but in a resource kind of capacity. I wasn't doing the organising obviously.

And then another area for eg was Grahamstown Voice. Now being one of the people who was living through that transformation of the Voice really was all about establishing or deepening links with the township community; establishing greater links with organisations in the townships and activists there; who were beginning to emerge as part of the post I suppose, 76, and particularly the 1980 phase of struggle, which then became the UDF affiliates, like the Grahamstown Civic Organisation and the Youth Organisation etc. And activists who were important in forming those organisations before they were formed.

Do you want to close the door? (Q Ja) Just give it a hard bang

I said that was another area in which I as a white was involved in black organisations, really. Or had contacts with black people, black activists. Then I..obviously the time I was on the UDF Exec that was all about that kind of thing in the E.Cape. I just generally had a lot of contact with, both in P.E. and Grahamstown, or particularly in P.E. and Grahamstown.

I think also just the nature of the way things have developed in the E.Cape have meant that to a greater degree than in areas like Joberg etc. there is a lot of contact or non racial contact between white people and white organisations, sorry white activists and white organisations; progressive organisations and black people and black organisations. There has just been that kind of development, but we can go into that. It is just a fact, ok.

That is one understanding of non racialism which I think is quite important. But I think as important is an understanding of non

A racialism as very much a concrete process of struggle and that stems from the theory that non racialism, what you define as non racialism as an abstract goal can be anything.

It can be in the end that you aren't going to have any people that are black or white. You are going to have a coloured kind of people running around in a couple of 100 years time when there will be no such things as races; even if you are talking about different colours of skins. That can be pure non racialism.

Or it can be a slightly more..thing where there are just simply no racial differences are acknowledged and so on. No racial differences are acknowledged. So you still have people with white skins and black; that is not an issue at all.

So you can define non racialism as an abstract goal according to any one of those type of criteria. But the important question I think for us today as well, how do you put non racialism as a method of political struggle into practise. And I think the whole understanding of what it is to organise whites as whites is based on really an assumption that the greatest contribution or one of the biggest contributions that whites can make to a non racial SA in the end is by organising other whites..by mobilising the greatest number of whites to support that particular struggle; the liberation struggle.

And again it flows then directly from that, that nonracialism then as a method of struggle becomes aligned with other organisations say predominantly black organisations but developing methods, tactics and strategies which are appropriate to the white political terrain or to the white political arena.

That means for eg. that you form an organisation like Grahamstown Committee of Democrats (GCD) which is aimed specifically at a white constituency, audience. Because if you wish to appeal to and mobilise those people to support the liberation and as a result weaken the ruling block as a whole; pull people over to your side etc. if you want to do those kinds of things you can't simply form one organisation in the whole of Grahamstown and get the townships,

A the working class townships and white middle class of Grahamstown in the same organisation it won't work. You are not going to be able to even start convincing white people of the importance of what you are all about and the validity of your goals etc. So you have to develop an appropriate approach which is particular and specific to those ends.

So non racialism to be as effective as possible and if you want to be the best possible non racialist that context means being as effective as possible on the white political terrain or in a white political arena.

Exactly the same thing with ECC. It is for ECC to make the greatest possible contribution o liberation in SA it must be able to organise whites effectively against the SADF. And against war and against conscription particularly. And that is an issue which appeals to whites in a way it doesn't appeal to blacks because white males and white people are faced with the issue of conscription and blacks are not. So you have to develop an appropriate strategy there. You have to develop ^{it} as a white campaign, organisation.

So you get this kind of paradox which I think is quite logical. Whereas in a certain respect, in fact in one of the most important respects, I think, to be the best possible non racialists you often have to address yourself to racially particular terrains and you have to develop racially exclusive ways of actually operating... ja, which is a paradox that comes out of the nature of the struggle in SA.

But it is one which I think that I think the democratic movement as a whole is has begun to understand. Certainly I think we've begun to begin to understand the whole thing. And there is a lot of acceptance within UDF and that, certainly in the E.Cape, for the kinds of things that for eg. GCD and NUSAS are doing.

Q You talked about..ok, let me just..this context of Grahamstown and you spoke about the non racial history, factors in E. Cape...can you say something about that?

Well, for eg. I think I will have to think a bit more about this

A to be able to go into the reasons for it. But if you take Grahams-town for eg. It is a small community. If you are going to have a UDF area committee forming there..no that isn't a good way of approaching it.

Let me start at the level..just describe it. I just think in the cases of P.E. and Grahamstown, the 2 places I am most familiar with you've simply had a process whereby you have a hell of a lot of contact between your black activists in the townships and activists in the white organisations and so on.

I think one reason for that is resources. Say organisations are... have been very young to Grhamstown. I mean GRACA was launched in 83/4, ok the Civic was there and the Youth was launched after the Civic and SAWU was launched after GRACA was formed there; So the process of organising in the townships and black people in Grahams-town is organising as such is quite new.

Now a lot of those people, say for eg. COSAS as well, would need resources like pamphlets, literature; access to resources to actually assist in their organising process. So they would come and approach white people who they had begun to meet and so on. You had a whole lot of informal activity like this happening. And I think that is one reason and in the context of Grahamstown being a small community so that people know each other quite well; you actually had a strong formation...a lot of contact between your white and black organisations.

I think that has all been affected by the state of emergency a bit, recently...(Q Ja) Obviously, the townships..I mean I used to spend as much time in the townships, particularly when I was on UDF Exec. as much time in the townshps in Grahamstown and P.E. as I did in the white areas of town. Just go in there and go out the whole time.

Now, I don't often go into a township these days..because if I get bust there by the police or lmilitary I am going to get hammered for it.

Q Say that...

A If I am caught there by the police and the military I am going to get hammered for it, I can stand for emergency regulations, to have a very..R200 000 fine I could get. Also there is a lot of police and military around, clearly.

Also again because clearly the kind of relationship I had established with leadership activists and so on in organisations like PEYCO, P.E. Youth Congress and GREYCO in Grahamstown and so on, with those people I obviously hadn't established a relationship with the mass of youths in the townships and they are going to see me as any whitey to go in there and there have been a couple...

I mean I was stoned once in a township I don't know who by..some militant. I know a lot of white democrats who have been involved in townships who like Janet Cherry for eg. in P.E. who was involved in a similar way in resource work and also had contacts with those people; that she was once..in fact it was some of the PEYCO people in the same car as her. She was once stoned in a car in the townships as well.

Q So you were in a car when you were stoned?

A Yes, I was still in the car.

Q Can you tell me about the experience.

A Agh no I was just going through Raglan Rd. in Grahamstown. It was at night, ja. I was coming back from Queenstown; I had been meeting the whole day with SAWU people and it was just for resource work. I was coming back at night and all of a sudden a stone came out. And they couldn't see who I was or who the car was. It was simply a car on Raglan Rd. that should get stoned.

Q So it wasn't even anti white? It wasn't a white face necessarily?

A I don't think they would have seen a white face. I am sure..I they...

A I think they assumed that most cars are white which is a correct assumption to make.

Q I thought you might have talked about the E.Cape tradition of non racialism the way one talks about the Cape liberal class and colour history. I didn't know if you meant...I am quite interested in Grahamstown with the township being so close and some of the peculiar features of the E.Cape. Not just Grahamstown per se but more perhaps than any other part of the country you might have had an inkling of what is going on in Craddock and plus the whole history of the E.Cape having been very ANC aligned; any of that.

A I think maybe that is it. I think part of..BC never had..I mean the difference between the Transvaal and the E.Cape certainly lies to ~~the~~ extent BC has an influence. I think a Congress ideology has always had far more of an influence ~~than~~ in the E. Cape than BC ever did.

So you found that people..when I first started making contact with the comrades in the townships there were always very accepting of whites and white democrats. There was never..never is a bit wrong but there was...I came across very little, if not nothing of a racist anti-white kind of feeling or you know or a suspicion, not even racism, about whites. And people have been very accepting of non racism.

I think that, a lot of that has something to do with the importance of a Congress ideology in the area.

Q You talked about...

A Don't you want to try and close that ddoor again? I find it...

Q Ja, but it doesn't close. I will find something, to put something...

A Put a shoe or something ...

Q I was going to say you talked a lot about the (That sewing machine) why don't I turn this...

A ..they did...look I think it is a sort of a ..if one wanted to jargonise a bit, it could be seen as a dialectic between theory and practise. On the one hand if you are organising politically ok, as a white person; several things have become apparent over recent years. One of those has been for eg. is that a lot of white activists or democrats are being produced. They come out of universities.

NUSAS has been incredibly..increasingly successful I think.

NUSAS I don't think is a perfect organisation but it certainly is being increasingly successful over the last couple of years in producing a fairly large number of white|democrats who come out of univerities for eg. predisposed to that kind of thing.

So one of the questions is what role are those people going to play in struggle generally. What are they going to do. They can't all be involved in resource work like I was being involved in. The days of...white playing ^{important} a role in trade union formation say I think are largely over. I think that is correct; I think they played an important role back in 73 and so on. But I think it is very important to develop a black, specifically African leadership to trade unions and mass based organisations now.

And I think that if we attempt to keep on making a role there for whites it wouldn't be a very productive thing.

So one concrete question posed on the ground is what are all these white people going to do that are becoming increasingly thing. If we simply let them...thing is this energy dissipate and often you get this critique about white students going to university; they become radical and they come out and they fade away.

Now a certain part of that is, I think, why, there are a whole lot of broad sociological, class based reasons for that kind of thing. One of the reasons, very concrete, often is because people don't have a concrete role to play.

So you have to develop appropriate structures and organisations which will give those people a role to play but which is going to be a role which is not a sort of sinner cure. It is going to be

A be a role which is productive to the goals of and aims of the struggle. So on the one hand that's a very practical problem.

For eg. you have the formation of UDF. Now UDF is a broad anti apartheid front. It is based primarily on the upsurge of organisation in the communities and townships over the last number of years. Particularly post...

End of tape.

A Ja, so UDF being based on that upsurge, mainly in the townships, post 76 really but particularly post 1980. And bringing all those things together in a political front.

Now the question that it raises - it inevitably raises a question in the white political arena and the fact that it's raising this question about various reform proposals etc.; the fact that that is based largely in the upsurge in organisation, militancy and mobilisation in the black areas doesn't mean that the question is limited to blacks; it raises it in the white areas as well.

For your average white democrat it is well what do you do about the UDF. How does it actually confront you. Ok. What that question is really raising is the question of extra parliamentary activity in the white political arena, ok, which has been really characteristic of..or throughout the history of struggle in SA; it has been characteristic, inevitably of blacks things coz the essence of the oppression or part of the essence of oppression is they are excluded from parliamentary structures.

But it raises the question of well what do progressives in the white political terrain do in such a situation. And that is really, obviously there..the answer to that is broadly you form in identifying with mass political struggle; here you are talking about extra parliamentary political involvement in the white political arena.

So that is now a very concrete on the ground question inevitably for you as a white progressive by for eg; the formation of UDF. So those are two..that question and the previous one about all these white activists or democrats coming out of universities and so on. Not just universities but particularly out of there; what do you do about it.

So on the one hand there are those very concrete on the ground practical things. On the other hand there are a whole lot of - there is an understanding of struggle of what you are doing

A of what is an acceptable tactic of and method of struggle etc. which would certainly be informed broadly by the Congress tradition and that kind of thing, Well certainly for me .. in my case it was.

And it is in the convergence of that kind of thing that you actually begin to hammer out practical political solutions to these questions and those generally occur in organisational form and you then sit down and go through the process of forming the GCD etc. As being really ja, a result of or as a solution to these, both theoretical and practical, questions that you face. So there is definitely a kind of dialectic operating there.

Q I just wanted to make sure that I could ask you about this and then we could go on more chronologically. You spoke about Mike Hamlyn; I wondered if you could say something about what his death and what this circumstance with that particularly brought something home to you.

I am just interested in trying to do something with that and I had this meeting taped in Durban and nothing really came of it. It seems like he is symbolically if anything coz I don't know much about him..deserves a place in terms of a white who was somehow involved and I wondered if there was anything done in terms of a memorial that you knew about.

A No I don't think so. No nothing at all. Hamlyn at the same time...look he was a very lekker person and I knew him personally well; I suppose very well and he was just hell of a lekker. Then he left coz of army reasons really and went to Botswana; Didn't hear much news of him while he was there and then he was killed.

Now, personally that meant..brought a lot of anger etc. for me but I suppose in the end that is apart of the ongoing part of the tragedy of the struggle here. I mean that is the kind of enemy that you are actually up against. It is going to mean that kind of thing.

So it was very shit but it wasn't...I wasn't totally distraught

A by the whole thing, because to a certain degree you come to expect that kind of thing to happen. It is the nature of what you are fighting.

But the thing about Mike he wasn't a hellofa, as I understand ..ja, no, he wasn't a hellofa prominent thing. He knew a lot of people; he was very nice but he wasn't a hellofa prominent white activist. Like for eg. Raymond Sutner or Jeremy Cronin or someone like that; of that kind of thing. So there wasn't any memorial or anything like that organised for him. He was not a very important symbol I suppose at the end of the day.

Q Did people

A But he was quite an important person.

Q He wasn't important symbol?

A Ja, I am drawing a distinction there. I said he was not an important symbol; he didn't symbolically occupy the minds of a lot of people, a place, ok. But at the same time I think he was quite an important person and a very lekker person.

Q I guess we can move up to the present if there isn't anything you want to talk about in terms of influences.

A No I think it is enough.

Q And the non racialism theoretical thing, you talked about it- anything you want to add ?

A Not really, to what I have said...I have said so far..if you have particular questions...nothing.

Q So GCD was formed then in May this year, when I was there..

A It was May was it ja.

Q Ja, I was at the launching, And ...

Well it had been going on before then for some time as a

A steering committee but it was first officially launched in.. you see we formed a steering committee which was basically open to whoever wanted to join it.

And went through quite an intensive process of working out the organisation; of working through exactly what we were trying to do; defining our role for ourselves, working through what our position was, working out our objectives, etc. Then we officially launched the organisation in May.

Q And were blacks involved at all in advising or in any way in the formation; when you went to and all the past..or did you take advise from them? Did you see what they thought of it?

A Yes, there was consultation, certainly there was consultation with comrades from the townships. Ja. But I suppose the major part of the effort in the organisation and a major part of the theorising of what we were doing and that was really done by the white people who were at the middle of the organisation.

Q So what has happened to GCD?

A Well we have actually been set back by the state quite a lot. They banned our meetings in July.

Q Specific meetings?

A Specifically ja...GCD..all GCD meetings. That means any...any meetings that we have. That ban may be renewed. It is a 6 month ban; it may be renewed on the 31st December this year, it may not. But that has hampered us quite severely.

Q ...on the 21st July, the State of emergency that they got banned?

A No, it was pre the state of emergency, ja. And the reason why was because we were in a very formative stage. We were beginning to develop a very positive dynamic.

A We had had after our launch we had our first general membership meeting which .. we have them monthly; a statutory general meeting we have every month.

The first one had gone incredibly well. And we were really beginning to develop a major dynamic as GCD in Grahamstown. And beginning to do a whole lot of things which the other political organisations amongst whites, like the PFP, weren't doing and we began to get an momentum going.

Q Getting to what?

A I said we began to do a whole lot of things that other organisations in the white political arena weren't doing. () Like responding to the Uitenhage massacre etc. and things had just gone very well up until that point.

But the thing about it is the essence of our work was public work, at that stage certainly; is very public work coz you are trying to reach a constituency; you have just launched. You are trying to recruit a general membership; you are trying to meet on different projects like the 'Democrat' and other sub committees to set up and so on. Now when all our meetings were banned, you have got two choices, or three perhaps.

Either you simply defy the ban and go on meeting, which I think for us would have been suicidal. It simply would have meant that we all would have been prosecuted etc and it simply would have chased a lot of people who might have been interested in GCD away from GCD. Because they would have seen us as being really radical etc. And just stupid about the way we went about things.

So I don't think that would have been a very productive thing to do - to openly defy our ...our meetings had been broken up in any case. It would have been totally..we wouldn't have achieved anything.

Or you can go I suppose quasi under ground, like the other organisations in the townships are generally done. When their meetings have been banned they have kept on having meetings but

A they have met underground really.

But that actually contravenes the essence of our work at that stage because our work then is public work. We are trying to invite people to our meetings and all these different things. And so to go underground is totally unproductive; it is...a contradiction in terms. In terms of what we are trying to do.

Or you can suspend operations, which is what we did. And so as GCD we suspended operations and a lot of us moved into other areas in which meetings weren't banned and the two major of those were the ECC which was beginning in Grahamstown then. The Grhamstown Action Group was the other, which was the body, an ad hoc committee formed specifically around the consumer boycott.

Now while we have continued doing work in the white political arena in Grahamstown on these two things, it is not the same at all. I think we have suffered a severe set back because what has happened is that our ability to build an extra-parliamentary organisation with a symbolic importance of its own; with an identity of its own and with its own strong internal dynamic that is what has been really negatively affected, by this banning.

On issue specific areas, like ECC or GAG; simply doesn't achieve the same things. You can obviously make a certain amount of gains and advances in organising around the consumer boycott from the point of view say of UDF kind of line if you want. But you aren't building an organisation in the same way with the same kind of ongoing dynamic and importance as you are with thing.

So you aren't in a position for eg. from GAG to respond to an issue like the Convention Alliance. You can't do it. So there is a vacuum there.

Now what GCD should be doing is responding to that kind of issue. Coming out with a clear position, saying why, articulating a clear extra parliamentary position and trying to

A pull people over to that position. Whereas with GAG you can't do that. It is a specific thing. It is consumer boycott oriented. And ECC can't do that either.

Q Did you have anything to do with that liberal Party get together or was it ...

A Well I attended one of the sessions just as an observer; I didn't have anything to do with it, but I knew that it was happening and I knew one or two of the people who attended and I ended up being invited just as an observer. Just to listen to one of the papers; Brombergers. I would have liked to have attended more but didn't get the opportunity. I was too busy.

Q Do you see that as a threat as filling the vacuum? Do you think that people could be drawn into that who otherwise might have been fringe people at GCD?

A What's Liberal Party? I mean Liberal Party .. I think what became very clear there is that the Liberal Party has had all the ground cut out from under its feet.

I mean you are either one of two things at the moment - firstly there is not a lot of difference between what the Liberal Party was saying and what Slabbert is saying at the moment.

The Liberal Party was saying at that conference, in terms of its traditions,...the conference was very interesting in its own right because what it did is that you saw almost a kind of a transferral of leadership I think, going on in the liberal things or it was more apparent then than it is now ~~because~~ Slabbert has eclipsed some of the area.

But you had a lot of people like Paton and so on representing the traditions, the old leadership, looking around and not quite sure what to do. And then you had Simpkins from UCT coming in and responding to a paper and basically just laying out the agenda, saying this is where we go. Saying we have a radical left or a militant, ^{increasingly/} discretely militant left if you want

A Or an increasingly militant left ; you have the government, and you have the middle ground which is opening here and that is what we must go for. Exactly what Slabbert has been trying to do with the Convention Alliance or there...a potential to open up a middle ground here between violent revolution and violent repression. And it was a similar thing Simpkins was trying to say at the Liberal Party conference.

So Slabbert has taken over a lot of that area but Simpkins at that stage was talking about that kind of thing as being the way forward for the Liberal Party.

But it is not a way forward at the moment. If you are a white person looking around for a role the traditions of the Liberal Party don't make very much sense, I don't think to one. You are either..if you are going to go rightwards, if you want you are at least going to go as far as Slabbert and the PFP. And if you are going to go to anything to the left of that you are going to go to the UDF and its affiliates. There is really nothing in between.

? don't/doubt
I know the Liberal Party can define for itself a role between those two things...

Q But then ^{did} the Convention Alliance of the PFP, to the left of the PFP, did it pose any threat with the state...

A Oh certainly. I think that possibly our strongest..obviously our central opponent is I suppose the National Party dominated state. But a key part of who we inter...enter into engagements with is the PFP because we are talking there about establishing an extra parliamentary opposition movement which is rese - ? of the masses of the masses of the country whereas the PFP is talking about...ok you could call the Convention Alliance extra parliamentary but the PFP is essentially a parliamentary political movement.

It is talking about change, it wants certain objectives, but what it is talking about is one which is not based on the will and interests of the masses in SA. It is based on the reform

A from above essentially. They want reform, a different kind of reform to say the National Party, but they want it to happen from above.

Whereas what we are talking about is not so much objectives, difference is not so much one of objectives, but it is listen what you do is you first create a mass political movement which is comprised of and is accountable to the interests and people of the masses of SA. And they determine what they want. That is what democratic change is all about. They will determine what they want and so on.

Obviously in line with the history and the traditions in the Freedom Charter etc. But that is where you actually come in and that is what you support. You don't support a set of reforms and so on that is being foisted on by some other things.. because then you just...

Q I think this is an important area because I think in the future maybe when this might appear in two or three years; that is obviously where in the US and various forces are interested in moving the debate. So the Convention Alliance, although it is being written off it is still the elements..(A Yes) like Slabbert and Buthelegi will...continue to pose that same threat.

So I mean you were talking about that, did you have that in GCD where you would actually have to deal with someone who might have come in and said look I have got this worry..I mean that argument you were just making to me, who would you make that to? Or were you just preaching to the converted?

A No...I don't think preaching to the converted is the right way of looking at it. I think with GCD is that first we are a UDF affiliate. So anyone who is going to become essentially involved with GCD has to agree with the aims and objects of the organisation.

So..and being a UDF affiliate doesn't..isn't just a simple matter of fact. It sums up quite a lot about the policy etc of the organisation on which we style ourselves and that kind of thing.

A So if you are going to join a member..if you are going to become a member you are going to join on that basis. Secondly though, ja, I mean GCD's other role is clearly to try and engage bodies or forces like the PFP publically as much as possible and to win over support from the PFP to our side.

So certainly if you are already inside GCD then we aren't having those kinds of debates over the policy of the organisation. And there is a lot of debate inside the organisation but not around that..that is very basic issue for us; that is resolved ab initia from the beginning. So we are part of the mass democratic movement in SA, we are not part of something in between. And that is embodied in the UDF affiliation.

But clearly we are going to engage publically in debate with organisations like the PFP around that kind of issue.

Q What was the membership of GCD?

A Our membership when we..our meetings were banned was about.. you see we have got quite a few members, new ones at our last meeting; I think it was in the region of about 50/60 people, at that stage.

Q What is the population of Grahamstown?

A This is interesting. The population is 12 thousand, of which 3 thousand are students. That leaves you with 9 thousand, of which anything between a third and a half are under the age of 18 or 16 say. So you are talking about probably 6 thousand adults which you can get to, in Grahamstown, as a white political organisation.

That 6 thousand people is a cross section of white SA society. It has got all the class elements and political things etc positions, in it. I made that point just to illustrate for eg. while there are a lot of similarities between us and JODAC at a general level, for eg. there are huge differences in our concrete conditions and I think that is why one of them.

With JODAC you are talking about a vast constituency, relative

A to ours, of white people living in the suburbs around Joberg. We are talking about numerically a very, very small grouping of people and I think if you put us proportionately the number of people who are inside GCD, relative to the number of whites, adults in Grahamstown, ie. post 18 year old adults, I discount the students because they are catered for by NUSAS, - so the proportion is probably higher than any other white organisation in SA. In fact I'm dead certain it is.

Q And why...

A White extra parliamentary Udf affiliated organisation.

Q Mm. Why..what do you attribute that degree of success to?

A Well, I think it's...I don't know if it is success. I don't think we have been successful enough. I think we could have had..by this stage we should have had at least a hundred members, in GCD if not more. Ja, more.

I am not being unrealistic about that. I think based on..or just projecting from our kind of grey throat...growth rate in Grahamstown and just looking at the way things were panning out; we could easily have got that amount of people. But I still don't know. I mean I think that would have been success.

At the moment I think largely our success has been quite hampered by the state, effectively, in its repression. Also other forms of repression; when we had people detained. I was detained for some time this^{year} under the emergency regulations. Another member of our organisation was also detained, under the same regulations.

Q Who was that, when?

A It was about 3 weeks after the emergency was declared.

Q So who were detained?

A Myself and Sue Lund. (Q AND..) But let me come back to that.

A All I say is there were a lot of different kinds of repression which have affected us. It is not just the banning of meetings - that was the important one.

But why we have been successful. I think the university has got something to do with it. It is that you have got..it is a fairly liberalising, relative to the size of the town, it is big as institutions go; it obviously is the place if there are going to be any places, where more liberal and left wing ideas are going to abound etc.

Q Why would the state get so up tight about 60 people? I mean why do you think they banned the organisation? Have you had any exchange or insight as to why the state is so threatened by GCD?

A I think for two reasons: One because they, I think, saw us as being quite closely allied to townships organisations and that and ja, it was worried about that kind of connection. Secondly because I think we were becoming more and more of a force.

We were beginning to fracture in a very real way or should I say have increasing success in fracturing white political consensus in the town. And to pose a real challenge to the thing. Certainly to the left of the PFP, or certainly adding another dimension to that. Articulating seriously, and with some degree of success,^{to} challenge to the left of the PFP and they don't like that all.

But also bear in mind that the state's approach to repression has been a totally blanket one in the E.Cape. It has been basically just fuck as many people as you can; whether you shoot them or detain them or whatever; anyone who can be associated with their..the democratic movement you fuck over, one way or another. So it has been a very blanket approach, to the thing. So they banned all meetings, all organisations, except NUSAS. NUSAS did not have its meetings banned. (whispered)

Q Were you surprised when you were detained?

A No I was expecting it.

Q How long were you detained for?

A For 2 weeks. I was released..they had this thing renewal of the state of emergency; you have to get it renewed and I was released after the 2 weeks.

Apparently it was all a bit of a mistake the fact that I was released but I hadn't been...I was..went into hiding for a bit after that because I heard that it was a mistake when I came out. They had,..another one recently with a black student in fact - Mano ^T Debata - and they ~~wanted~~ didn't get the detention.. the papers extending the detention order through on time. They were in fact keeping him illegally in jail and his lawyers intervened and got him out. But they wanted to keep him there anyway.

The same thing with Sue and myself. And so then the police were looking for me for a bit; Branch were ~~looking~~ for me, so I went into hiding for a little while, about 2 or 3 weeks and I wasn't...I mean they went to my house a couple of times while I was away from home. But since then I haven't been hassled. But I have been trying to keep a slightly quiet profile as well. Towards the end I was toally open.

I wasn't picked up again. I think also they tend to be releasing people in the E. Cape as well, generally. They tend to be wanting to. All those P.E. people ^{that} were released.

Q Just from the way the police questioned you - they did question you?

A Not very much. One of the surprising things was there wasn't as much interrogation as I thought there ~~were~~ was going to be.

Q Did you get any sense as to where, how they were threatened

Q by it or what they or their perception of it, an organisation of 60 white people was...

A I wasn't questioned on GCD at all. I was questioned on other things, mainly, to do with the townships. I was questioned much on...

Q So would really be who is this white guy who gets to go into the townships and...

A Ja. They have had me on their files for long enough..(Q No sure..)I mean so...

Q But the phenomenon of you being a white who has got contact with blacks, that threatens...

A I think that is part of it. I don't think that is the only part of it. I wouldn't want to say that they feel..I think that is definitely part of the threat, certainly from the questioning and from the attitudes I know that they don't..that they are worried about that.

But also I think that they are concerned to a certain degree about my role in white areas as well. GCD wasn't so much of a thing but they did question me a bit about the consumer boycott and GAG and so on because that was the issue of the moment then.

Q So tell me about the consumer boycott again. I want to remember this being all hooked up, years from now, so...without getting too tied down in details. But is..it is an important phenomenon. Also I heard that there was some cell mate of yours, some guy that...they put away briefly. (A Ja) Can you talk a bit about that.

Just generally. So as of July the meetings were banned, and then, was it GAG...

A Ja, GAG formed. GAG formed really around the state of emergency in fact. Ja...it was formed, ja, around the state of emergency issue or no it was a little bit before the emergency.

A No, but clearly what became the most important thing, the one thing that GAG tried to do is that it was formed just before I was detained and the first thing they tried to organise was a protest meeting around my detention and Sue's detention. And a state of emergency in general but that was the particular thing that galvanised that particular activity.

So it was a protest against the emergency but with specific reference to us. And there was a meeting which Sheena Duncan was to address. And what actually happened was that the meeting was banned in the end. It was a totally black thing..there were to-tally spurious reasons: we were going to cause a riot and public disturbance and so on.

Total shit, it was in the white area of town and Sheena Duncan of Black Sash was going to address it. It was total bullshit, they just banned it, ok. On the basis of spurious reasons.

But then we changed the focus of GAG, from protest around at that level to the ongoing issue of consumer boycott. And our call was that whites should support the township struggle by themselves boycotting. And we weren't just talking about white people who were members or white political organisations or UDF affiliates. We actually made it a call to quite aggressively go out to Grahamstown and get whites to actually join the boycott. With varying degrees of success.

Because we thought it was very important to make that call as a way of really, in that context, being able..to push the demands and the position of the democratic movement.

Q When you say we thought, was this something you with blacks in the boycott?

A By we I talk mainly of the GAG grouping. Oh it was certainly consulted..we consulted with black people in the townships before we made the call as to what we should do and so on.

Q And they thought...

Ja, certainly. So there was consultation certainly. But again

A it was our particular initiative.

Q How can whites support the boycott? What were you saying to people?

A You don't shop in the white areas.

Q Don't ~~shop~~ in the white areas.

A Ja.

Q So did that...

A The boycott was...all the same. So then what we did was we organised...well you see we had to obviously make our call a one which was able..whites could reasonably be expected to actually join if we wanted to have any degree of success.

So what we did was to for eg. we made certain exemptions, which the townships did not make. But exemptions which whites could use otherwise whites wouldn't be able to buy their stuff - wouldn't be able to get their groceries. So we had to make a realistic call.

But I think the important thing to bear in mind is that we didn't regard...the fall of our support for the townships was not that...that we thought by getting a lot of whites to boycott we could actually put a lot of economic pressure on white businesses in Grahamstown. Which is what the black boycott is all about.

It is about putting economic pressure on..to get a political result. To win cert..they put pressure on political authorities to win certain political demands.

Now we didn't think that our contribution, by calling on whites to boycott was really going to be an economic contribution because clearly we realised in the beginning that we were going to get very limited numbers of whites to support our call etc. But the reason why we did it was because

A firstly, because of its symbollic nature. It is we are making an ideological stand/statement by making that particular call. So our effects are ideological effects rather than economic.

We are using the call, unlike the black township which is using the call as a way of winning..of economic punch to win political demands. We are using the call to make, to give certain ideological punches really, in the white political community in Grahamstown.

Secondly, and that really exists in a way in which we come across to our constituency; the way in which we propogate the call etc.

Secondly we thought it very important to make that call as a platform from which to exert pressure on the white authorities to actually accede to the demands of the townships. We felt that if we simply said to the authorities as GAG listen you people must actually give in to the demands of the township. That would be fairly ineffective.

So we had to make a strong call; strong and distinctive call. One that is quite distinctive from the PFP etc. A strong call from which we could then say ok, now you must accede to the demands; publicly in a way as a protest, in a protest style of doing things.

We didn't ever meet with the city council or anything like that behind closed doors, but we thought it was important for us to make a strong call as a platform to apply political pressure in support of the struggle in the township.

Q Did that require some logistical coordination? I mean what did whites do and where did they shop?

A We organised various things. There were certain exemptions from the boycott.

Q Like?

Like we said that whites should choose one cafe which they

A would then patronise, rather than using any cafe in town. And then make the point to the cafe owners that the only reason they are being patronised is because they couldn't get their stuff anywhere else.

Then we organised a cooperative scheme as well. There was one wholesale outlet as well which we could use. The cooperatives, well there was different..some people were really into the coops in GAG, other people weren't. I wasn't particularly into the cooperative idea. The other people thought they were quite important but they were only seen as important in so far as they contributed to the success of the boycott.

So there were certain wholesale outlets we could use and that as well. But now the boycott has been called off. It was a campaign of mixed success. I don't think...but we still have to reassess it, assess it.

Q And how about impact in terms of did people notice...

A Oh yes there was a lot of impact and we had a huge debate in the local Grahamstown paper, the Grahamstown Mail and the Grocotts Mail and so on.

We had a huge..I mean it..we had a lot of impact. Whether that was all positive impact I am not quite sure. Obviously a lot of it was positive. But to a certain extent I think some people were turned off by the boycott call. But I think it still something we have to assess, before I can give any definitive statement there.

Q How do you spell the name of that paper?

A GROCOTTS Mail.

Q And this white guy, you were saying...

A Ja, he was just a guy called Salter. Now he wasn't in my same cell - I was held in solitary when inside. But for certain times we had access to the same courtyard for exercise.

A He was detained from Kirkwood, a little community from the E.Cape. He was totally apolitical. I mean I had political arguments with him inside when we used to walk around the courtyard. He fully supported Thatcher and Reagan. Totally unpolitical. But basically I suppose humanist liberal instincts. He is married to a coloured woman for eg.

Q He was married what?

A He was married to a coloured woman. But he didn't know the first thing about politics. I mean he thought that the he..his whole attitude to politics was that the politicians they can talk as much as they..much as they like kind of thing. That they are a bunch of useless people politicians. That was his attitude.

He didn't really know the difference between the ANC and the UDF and he didn't know really what COSAS was about etc. I entertain the possibility that he may have been someone there to actually spy on me. That he might have been put there to ask me leading questions and so on. But there was no way, he never used to ask me those kinds of questions at all.

The arguments that we had were all very kosher and abstract arguments about Reagan and Thatcher and so on. And I have checked him out since and he is entirely kosher. And he was just detained because his shop was not being boycotted for some reason.

Apparently the guy who detained him was the same guy who gave the order to fire at Lange in Sharpville, Lt. Fisher. So this guy is obviously a bit of a crazy. He just detained him because his shop wasn't being boycotted for some reason. It was a selective boycott in Kirkwood so he was pulled in.

Q So what was his reaction to his detention?

A He was fairly philosophical about it in some ^{ways.} Admittedly sometimes he was outraged, sometimes quite philosophical;

A Very stoical person, he was. He was actually quite nice. I phoned him a couple of times since then, just chatted to him a bit.

He's made...he had his photo in the paper a couple of times recently, in the Eastern Province Herald because of this marriage to this coloured woman etc. It was quite a human interest story. So I phoned him and then I phoned him just after he got out of detention as well.

Q He looks like one of those old white hobo kind of guys.

A Ja, he does. That is it. This is the thing, the wierd thing I got was this guy walked into fucking detention. I was told that I was going to get someone who'd be sharing the same kind of premises with me, in the morning and I thought when I was waiting, who is this other well known white democrat whose been detained and we can have good political assessments and discussions and so on. And they bring this guy.

I thought Jesus, fuck they have bought me a child molester. laughing. And I thought there is someone here they can't put in with the other prisoners so they put him in the solitary cell next to mine. So I thought what the hell is going on? Coz that is what he looked like. Dirty little cravat and his kind of thing..anyway he turned out to be kind of cool guy.

Q And he got released after two weeks?

A Ja, after 2 weeks. And his attitude was when I said what are you here for; he replied to me well I think it is political. That was the thing he didn't really know what was going on. He didn't know what he'd been detained for. But it is a totally bizarre story.

Q Was there any lesson in terms of how working class white or person like him would respond to detention to...

A Working class, he's not working class. He's good..you know, ja he is a merchant essentially and fairly well off one at that, just to point.

A But he was quite stoical about it. He wasn't ever interrogated or anything of that nature.

Q But it didn't make him any more receptive to the democratic line if in...

A I think it made him more anti the SA government but not necessarily receptive to the UDF and so on. If you were going to start with that guy I mean his political education..no I think, suppose in the political discussions that we had he went through a certain amount of political education. I think over all.. I think his basic line at the end of the day was that blacks have got genuine grievances in this country and there is no wonder why they resort to violence and so on.

So he wasn't really intrinsically a..even really against that kind of thing. But he wasn't the sort of person who was ever going to become a solid member of GCD or something like that.

Q So what else is going on now then? G isn't doing that much because there isn't a boycott.

A I mean the thing is ja, things will close down a bit for the end of the year and I think the new year is going to be interesting. First we must see if GCD's meetings are going to be unbanned or not. Decide what to do there.

We have begun assessing the successes and failures of GAG and that. We still have to continue with those kinds of assessments and so on; which we will be doing in the early new year.

At the moment things are really wide open and it depends a lot on the state's...or just on the conditions in general. Is the state of emergency going to be lifted. Things in the Eastern Cape are I think tending to tail off a little bit in terms of levels of violence; levels of struggle in the townships I think people are talking about reorganising and that sort of stuff.

Q And what about, the foundations of non racialism inevitably have a lot to do a lot with just material conditions of actu-

Q actually seeing blacks, seeing the townships; you having the contact. If indeed the polarisation is reaching the degree that people just can't go to the townships etc is that going to make inroads into non racialism? Will you be able to keep the spirit alive? How do you see the future of non racialism if it is too dangerous to go into the townships? Or maybe do you think it is only going to be a few more years anyway? What do you think?

A Ok. Point no. 1, I don't think it is a question of polarisation which is making the to more difficult. The primary problem of going to the townships is the police and army.

Q Ja, I didn't mean that peoples' attitudes are polarising, just that things are so polarised that you actually...

A It is going to make them war areas, ja.

I don't think it is going to have a huge affect. I think that whatever happens and even if you can't go into the townships yourself on an ongoing basis there is going to be ~~quite~~ contact between activists; whether it is in the white areas of town or wherever it is going to happen; it is going to happen.

And it is going to carry on happening increasingly so.

secondly I don't think the townships are always going to be no go areas. I think that there is going to be a strong..I think that within a short period of time..maybe not a short period of time, but there are going to be times in which, before liberation day, in which the townships, people are going to go more into the townships. I don't think there will be the same level of police and army presence there the whole time.

But I think in response to your last question I think there is going to be a good few more years before we see liberation in SA. I don't think it is going to be a matter of a couple of years at all.

Q It is just that when I was in Durban and I was interviewing

A a lot of the FOSATU people; their line on separate nations and their critique, the one point that I think held the most water in terms of needing to be accounted was they say ja, that is fine, with the UDF or ANC structures you have contact between activists but for those masses you know, we in the unions give them non racial contact but you are saying and then that is what they say at the best of times. But at the worst of times that inevitably does happen so I mean what does that mean for non racialism?

A Well, look it is a difficulty obviously the more that you can have, the more contact that democratic whites can have with the masses of black people, not so far as it doesn't cut across other political tasks and other political priorities, the better.

I add that proviso simply because to slip into an understanding that simply by having contact with black people and doing things with them that they are doing you are actually furthering non racial struggle. Where in fact it might be a more responsible and valuable thing by organising whites in your area. That may be the case.

So that is why I add the proviso. But within the context, or accepting the assumption that so far as it doesn't cut across doing other important political tasks it is very important for white people to have contact with the black people. That is good, should be maximised; even during the state of emergency it has been with funerals and stuff like that.

You often get a lot of, certainly in Grahamstown, a lot of white people have gone to those funerals etc. I myself have given some speeches at those funerals in Grahamstown, at the mass funerals there. And in other areas. So I think that kind of thing is very important but again to a certain extent I think it depends on the level of struggle.

I mean it is ridiculous to talk about organising an expedition of whites to go into the townships in the middle of a..when there is a major clash between the state and the people in the townships there. First it is not possible because you are

A going to get wiped out anyway. Secondly I think it requires a process, allso on the part of the black organisations and the black they take their people through a process of understanding what is going on. Because obviouly to a certain degree it is very easy for a lot of black people to get into an anti white frame of mind. People have to be taken through a process to go beyond and often it is not the best way to go beyond an understanding of thing just to see a white person in the township.

I think there are other educational processes that have to be gone through.

Q You are talking about that it brings you back to knowing you have to work in the white community. The last area I want to talk about was to ask you where are whites moving. You said you are impervious to demoralisation but do you see whites getting more or less reactionary? How are they reacting to the state of emergency, propoganda and all that?

A Look I think what has happened is that the political climate that has opened up in the last year really I suppose post tricameral elections because; but pre tricameral elections there Botha managed to get a lot of consensus around himself and reform was a place to be going.

Since then, essentially with the collapse of reform initiative and the subsequent, or possibly consequent failure of the state to actually divise any way forward; I think that that factor alone which is really a factor of incredible uncertainty, that a lot of white are becoming increasingly aware that the state has no plan. It has got nowhere to go. It is a state at the moment without a mind. Relying more and more on its repressive forces to keep things going etc.

That breeds a crisis of security for a lot of white people. They are getting incredibly, incredibly worried. So the political climate which has developed at the level of white political arena has been one of increasing fluidity which I think is based to a large degree on this question of uncertainty and

A of insecurity, etc. And I think that creates a very favourable climate for us to actually move. I think it is in that sense that out of that climate a whole lot of things can come.

I think on the one hand there has obviously been a strengthening of the ultra right. The CP and HNP etc. On the other hand there has been an attempt by Slabbert to ^{try to} create and capture some middle ground. An attempt which seems to have basically misfired. I..there are a whole lot of reasons for that I suppose.

On the other hand I think there has been increasing support for things like GCD and that. I don't want to get starry eyed about that - I don't think that we are in a position, certainly not in Grahamstown that we see ourselves as becoming a mass political organisation as such; I don't think that is on the agenda. Because clearly we are organising against the class interests of the majority of people who we are trying to organise. So there is a paradox there as well.

But at the same time I think we are fully involved in expanding our membership and influence to the greatest degree possible amongst the whites. Operating in such a way which is conducive to those ends.

And at the same time trying to become as much of a force in the white political arena as possible.

Q We talked about the non racialism thing. There are some questions I'd like to follow up on that. That paradox, you have not mentioned that at all. Is that a just a kind of given that you don't deal with. I mean the paradox of organising against the class interests.

A Ja. That is the given, that is the nature of the thing here; that flows from the nature of our involvement in the struggle in SA is that the class interests of the majority of white people are clearly not anti apartheid ^{class} interests. I mean their political class interests..

A It derives its power and influence and so on as a white block from the political structures of apartheid so in that sense we are trying to organise whites against their political class interests. That is a starting point for what we are trying to do.

Q And what is that in terms of that peculiarly South African situation of race and class? Does that mean that non racialism is actually integrally tied to ideology or is it purely or is it purely a tactic? Is it to say look we must destroy the states model, if we can block, anything we can do is tactically useful and a strategically useful tactically we do it in the white areas because in SA people live in white areas da, da. (A Ja, ja.) Or does it ideologically tie in?

A It is both.

Q How so?

A Well on the one hand it ties in ideologically in so far as obviously that's a kind of..in other words I can't ..to me ones tactics and strategies flow or are intimately connected with..ones ideology. So on one hand you are talking about a set of structural parameters within which one operates. As far as the principle or issue of non racialism ^{rather} the broadest of those structural constraints is that races are structural realities in a SA context.

They live in different group areas, they have different political rights etc. So that is your first one. And that then carries with it on the one hand or for that point of view, carries with it a whole lot of tactical things that we have been talking about. That only makes sense in terms of our overall objectives which are to precisely break down those racial kinds of things and to have a thorough going non racial democratisation of the society.

So organising racially in that sense or those structural parameters if you want which I suppose lead to certain tactical kinds of conclusions only are formulated with respect to goals.

A To objectives; a non racial democratic objective. And it is really in terms of a complex of those two that non racialism as a strategy or non racialism in terms of what it means at any particular point in time derives its essence.

And I think that non racialism must be defined with respect to any particular historical juncture. In other words at the moment it is practical to organise the non racial organisation means certain things in certain ways. And at a different time may mean a different thing.

In a post liberation SA it is clearly going to mean a different thing to what non racialism means now. That is because it is a historically specific matter. You can't..I mean the eg I raised earlier where in the end point you can define non racialism in totally utopian terms where there aren't even different coloured skins around. That doesn't help you very much if you are talking how you can'try and build a society in which race doesn't count as a social category.

You have to talk about political strategies in terms of that and so it is both in terms of those end term objectives and goals and in terms of the structural realities which confront one that you formulate your understanding of non racialism on the ground.

Q Ok, just a few loose ends. The army camp and the spotlight and that stuff, is that still there?

A No.

Q No!

A The army camp is still there, that is an ongoing..that is a (Q Ja) training camp. The spotlight has been on and off all year but it was removed for the larger part. Also I think it wasn't so much needed by the military because there was a bit ..there has been a gradually tailing off on the level of resistance, not level of resistance but the level of violent resistance in the township. There have been less barricades etc over the last couple of months than earlier in the year.

Q That's interesting. The Raglan Rd bypass, is that an issue, are people scared to go on that..

A But it has been resolved. The military still patrol it etc.

Q Been resolved in what? That the military keeps it on safe?

A Well firstly and secondly that there is going to be a bypass, ja.

Q Coz the impression that one gets is that the townships are ungovernable and that that isn't getting any better. But you are saying that the states repression has worked and that people are being coward.

A Not so much. I mean I don't think that the fact that you have ~~got~~ a people being a bit less violent at the moment necessarily means that the state is working. It could mean that the democratic movement thinks that it is important to reorganise.

Q Ok coz I wondered what the scene was like if there was the same kind of..if any of the brutality was continuing to filter into the white community; if that was...

A Ja, look, I am not saying for a moment that things have tailed off entirely or totally at all. All I say is that in the E. Cape there has been a spiral, a slow kind of spiral with intermittent bursts of a different nature. But there has been a spiral very downwards in the level of upsurge and violent resistance etc in the townships.

Port Alfred is quiet at the moment, Craddock is quiet, Grahams-town is quiet at the moment. P.E. is less quiet but has been getting quieter.

The consumer boycott did become the major form of political activity for a lot of people. That has reached...wond certain demands. Certain places like P.E. and Makacha I am not sure what has happened there. It doesn't mean to say, not for a moment, that the people are more accepting of apartheid than they were a while ago, that they have been coward in that sense.

A It just means that to a certain extent you may be...the struggle goes through ups and downs and next time things upsurge it will be that much stronger and things will be that much more reorganised etc.

Q So would you not go to any funerals these days in the townships? Is that era over or...

A I haven't been to a funeral for some time now. (Q Since?) But I must say it is not over at all. If a big funeral..I am sure...if there was another Matthew Goniwe died again, I would certainly go to that kind of funeral, no question about it

Q Did you go to Craddock?

A Oh ja, ja.

Q Did that red flag cause...

A Look, Crad...let me be clear, I do still go into the townships though not as frequently as I did then. I have been to the Gra..Craddock townships a couple of times recently etc. Ja.

Q I am just interested in terms of the effect it had in reaching whites, that red flag? Was that...

A Agh, man,...we didn't confront it directly because by that stage GCD meetings had been banned so we didn't really take it on; we never had to confront that issue directly. But it did become a bit of an issue in the press.

Q And you didn't think it was agente provocateur at all?

A No, I don't think that.

Q ..people there..

A I suppose so.

A I am not 100% sure about that. Sorry carry on.

No well I am..let me revise that. I mean it seems to have been, no I suppose that is right, ja. I mean there clearly was people there and that I suppose. Carry on.

Q Gracca is what?

A Grahamstown Civic organisation. It is a civic association.

Q So it would be ^(A Ja) GRACA. And there is a township called Josa.

A Ja, Jorza. That is the top township in Grahamstown.

Q JOZA.

A Ja.

Q And the other one with 't'.

A TANTJIE.

Q Ok. And the people who spoke at the GCD - Andrew Roux, what does he do?

A He is a lecturer in economics.

Q And Simon Burton?

A Lecturer in sociology.

Q And A Burroughs.

A She is just Ann Burroughs. She just works in one of the museums in Grahamstown. Employed there.

Q Has there ever been any resistance to the Dad's Army? Is that still big in Grahamstown?

A Ja, but it hasn't been an issue for a while. It will become a bit of an issue, big, again, no question about it.

Q Would there be any resistance that could be mobilised?

A I am sure there will be some kind of resistance ja. I am not quite sure what form it will take, but there should be ~~se~~ something.

Q And you spoke in the other interview saying that the various white organisations and white democrats had never been able to come together in any national meeting, would you think that is something^{that} should happen at this stage?

A I think it would probably be quite a good idea.

Q Are you studying now?

A Ja, I am doing a masters in political studies, Political Science.

Q So you don't have any title in ^{an} ~~the~~ organisation?

A No I don't at the moment.

Q Do you think UDF will be banned?

A Whistles. It is difficult - look I think there is one thing is clear, and that is the state..the post state of emergency ...I think the state of emergency is wanting to be lifted by the state at some stage, as soon as possible in fact. I think it does.

A post state of emergency context, I think, the state wants to be sure that such a context is not going to be conducive to the reorganisation of the democratic movement. I think they are going to be very happy to sit back and say well we have had one upsurge now over the last year, let us just sit back and you reorganise again and next time come back a bit stronger.

So I think they definitely are going to want to take measures to undercut the ability of the democratic movement to reorganise.

A Now...pre 1980, when were the tricameral elections - 83, (Q No 84) now pre those elections the essence of that cutting the ground from under the feet of the democratic movement was ja, probably the key long term component of that was a cooptive component ok. Divide and rule, the tricameral thing etc. But that has been smashed and so they are going to have to rely more and more on repressive measures and if it doesn't mean the banning of the UDF I don't know what it does mean.

So that is my prognosis - is that there are going to be some measures and that there..they are going to be repressive in nature and that would seem to me to be the banning of UDF.

But on the other hand the state may be on/out thinking at that level, atactically; maybe they may be just more stupid than I think they are. In which case they may just leave the democratic movement; they may not be so worried about those long term things. I don't know. I can't give a definite thing but if I was the state I would definitely feel forced into taking some measure of that nature.

Q And do you think that this issue of non racialism is an important one? I mean is it one that has appeal in trying the kind of prof. in doing the kind of organisation you are trying to do?

A Ja. It is a key issue in a number of different ways/levels. It is a key issue to understanding the nature of the SA conflict in the first place; point made earlier about race war and so on. Both locally and internationally, I think that is a key.

I think it is very important in terms of...organisationally for me, as you asked. I mean in terms of being able to demonstrate to concerned, often scared white people that there is a future in SA which needn't be exactly the way things have been. So organising non racially now, that non racial contact is very important to make your political points.

Ja...I think obviously from the other side and from the point of view of black people, as well as from the point of view of actually just strengthening the forces of liberation overall.

A Because obviously they are that much stronger, the more people they get and if those people are white people and furthermore the are that much stronger and therefore the weaker the ruling block gets, and the state gets.

So even if your impact is largely confined to organising or making an impact on the ruling block power is always a relative term. The power of the democratic movement or the masses is going to be relative to the power of the state. And if the power of the ruling block and the state is that much weaker then you are making an important contribution I think.

Q And you see a continued, I won't say successful, erosion of the ruling block, I mean despite..It is just that I am interested because some people from Joberg came up and they said people who do political work, but work in mainstream jobs and they said peoples' attitudes are getting worse and they are believing PW and they are actually quite concerned that this polarisation in the sense not that we were talking before, but really a polarisation of the races is happening. But do you think that...

A Look, I think that there have been significant fissures opened up in the ruling block recently. I think for eg. strategically in the consumer boycott. Certainly from my experience in the E.Cape has actually had those effects. It's alienated a lot..not just big business, in fact it is not only important in the whole thing, but it has alienated a lot of your petty bourgeois elements from the state, ok. Because they have been hit directly by this consumer boycott. They are getting squeezed by it.

And the state is refusing to respond in a way which everyone seems to be is fairly reasonable; where they simply sit down and talk to the people who are doing the boycotting. So it has opened up...I wouldn't want to say that it has lead to irreparable cracks but it certainly has opened up fissures of a certain kind. In the E. Cape it certainly has.

But on the other hand I think we must understand what we are trying to do here. I made the point earlier that I don't

A think that we are talking about, certainly from our of GCD we are talking about creating a mass political organisation. We aren't trying to get, we never will get the majority of whites to support us because of that paradox I mentioned earlier.

So if you go in there thinking that you should gauge your success by the average white on the street and their opinions, then I think you are simply going in with the wrong understanding of what you are trying to do. Certainly it is important that you always aim at that average white in the street; you shouldn't ever forget them but I don't think you should judge your success and failure in terms of the attitude of the average kind of white.

Maybe it is a small part of success and failure but only a small part. You obviously aren't going to get the support of all those people. You are aiming at I suppose a narrower grouping in the first place. But that doesn't mean to say that you should ^{not} always try and be out ^{ward} and looking and expansive.

And to a certain degree obviously you can measure your success by the extent to which you can actually mobilise people in the white block behind you and get them to support you.

Q And the talks with the ANC and the kind of more publicity that the ANC has been getting internationally, do you think there is any more receptivity among conventional whites to..?

A I think it must be having a lot of that kind of effect but I haven't been able to gauge it yet. I think we must just wait and see. I think that is an important question for us to confront.

Q The other things are just ...

A I think about 4 speeches in the last 2 years. The one was at the UDF launch in the E.Cape. The other was...

Which was where?

A That was in the Galvindale, the coloured areas in P.E. That was the E. Cape launching ; that was when I was elected to the executive. But I was also one of the speakers planned for that meeting.

Then another one was at the PEYCO First Annual Congress. They launched and then had their first annual congress. In fact I spoke with Matthew Goniwe on the same platform.

Then I gave a speech in Craddock in the hall there...just a speech there. They were having a ^{political} meeting on the weekend.

And then I gave a speech at the funeral in Grahamstown of the ..I think it was the second and third unrest victims, or police victims. They were buried together.

Q You wouldn't have any copies of those speeches?

A I have got them in Grahamstown.

Q Because...tape stops.

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