

Q you were expecting temptations...

ANS Um, well first of all if your motivations are psychological rather than political as a white person then the temptations to get caught so that you could become a sort of martyr, you know, are likely to be increased. So perhaps we can begin to talk about sort of coming back and operating underground.

I was instructed not to have ^{any} contact with ~~any~~ black people which was terrible because I hadn't really had that possibility beforehand and now I was being told ^{not} to do it again which needs to be set in the times. Obviously at that stage I mean now with the development of mass organisations...non racial mass organisations contacts between blacks and whites on the left are frequent and daily. But at that stage they weren't and to be going into townships or whatever would've marked one out and would have lead to one's detection and capture and danger and other reasons as well.

So I was told to not have any contact with black people in so far as other than the kind..the sort that any white South African would have.

I was also told to pretend that I was..I had lost interest in politics. Um, I came back to lecture at UCT but was told to sort of to present myself as being a careerist, someone interested in getting on with my academic career and so forth.

Told to cut all my ..I had been involved in a small sort of radical white friends on campus. I was told to cut them completely.

Now all that is quite hard going - you feel terrible. My brother who's not very political but at the same time his sympathies are in the same direction as mine, was..more or less disowned me and was disgusted by this sort of Jeremy Cronin who came back from overseas. And um, I remember several ^{coming round} friends and being anxious to talk politics and just general things who were quite involved till now and you know student politics or whatever. And the sort of horrible experiences basically cutting them and telling them I wasn't interested or whatever.

Um, so it was quite a lonely experience that sort of thing. And apart from some of the problems of being a white person and all that which..(telephone) The white or black sort of underground operatives do have the temptation of getting caught

ANS because finding..all the mysteries can be revealed - deep friends that you've annoyed or hurt or whatever...all those uncomfortable kinds of things will kind of be revealed, will come out and those kind of psychological operation..um dynamics or deprents presumably if you're white or black presumably ... increased given that white sort of thing we were talking about earlier. Ok um...

JF So you came back and you had to - did you keep it from everyone even your intimate friends - did you get...

ANS I was married before I went to Paris and um (your wife was with you ?) My wife was with me ja. um...she knew broadly what I was involved in but I was...I did not tell her specifically at all. Um...

JF Did she suspect or understood that she knew there was something and she knew she shouldn't know?

ANS She knew that I was in underground activities and..that my comings and goings were you know had to do with that. A lot of the work: at first I was working on my own then I got..I was ...I linked up with the Rakins - David and Susan Rak in um, who'd been working a year before me um, doing the same kind of thing - that's production of underground ANC and SACP literature and pamphlets and things like this. And a lot of the work was done at you know in the early hours of the morning or whatever, working through the night.

So clearly it was important for my wife to know .. I was told that in training as well that made a great deal of sense that you..you couldn't expect to be out ^{all night} and not raise some kinds of suspicions particularly as the...you would operate with um, surgical gloves a great deal too, ^{to prevent} getting finger prints on things and uh, They smell uncannily like condoms so...I came home creeping at about four o'clock in the morning smelling of what seemed to be condoms . I think that my marriage would have been in difficulties. So ja, she was aware of it..in a vague way but had no idea who I was involved in..with, you know, individuals or the details or whatever.

JF Did she support you?

ANS Ja, she was enormously supportive...which did help in and I must say it would have been that much lonelier clearly if a ...'coz its...quite a funny sort of life or it was then with um, your emotionally and so on a great deal of energy and concentration and your preoccupations are concerned with it... but you're only active really for you know, um, brief periods so all your life is going into protecting this kind of thing -camouflaging whatever it is that you're really doing and so forth. Um but there are only brief bursts of actual..engagement in that kind of work. Um, pretty...and I mean..again its.. fairly consisting of you know pamphlets, um putting thousands and thousands of leaflets, folding them and putting them into envelopes and posting them all around and that kind of thing.

We also did um, bucket bombs which we...where one planted a bucketful of pamphlets with a small explosive device next to a bus queue or whatever as another way of kind of you know, circulating material. Ah, so that was quite exciting and nerve-racking but exciting. But it happened in small bursts ah...

JF You should say, ^{explain} exciting because you don't want it misconstrued ...(romantically exciting for sure) coz you know in that you felt you'd done something.

ANS Well I mean that period as well...mid now say its...early '72 came back, beginning of 1974 it was sort of active in this way - '73, '74, '75 and middle of '76 when I was arrested.

The..it was the period..I mean pre '76 in S.A. was really a time when one had a sense that the apartheid regime was all powerful - the Security Police would detect the slightest you know, murmuring of opposition and there was a lot of defeatism around at the time; resentment or whatever of the apartheid regime but that we couldn't do anything and I think that ~~one~~, that was why we were on the kind of mission that we were really - it was important at a propaganda level to assert those organisations were around - the tradition continued and that the police could be defied - ah, one could get away with things. Now I don't know what the survival rate is of the underground cells was but I know Timel for instance agh, another person who died in detention; they said he jumped out of 9th floor of John Vorster Square -he had

ANS been involved in the same activities as we were involved in - an underground cell producing pamphlets and I think that cell lasted for a few months and really it was pretty well on its second pamphlet that they were arrested and Timel was caught and died and another two people were sent to jail.

And um, one had a sense the survival rate was not..the time period was not long and I was also told in training that other units had not even got active and that they had got into the country and just hadn't been able to get themselves together.

And so I remember after the first time that I had produced a pamphlet and posted it I was convinced I was being followed by the police - I had been given lots of training in counter surveillance techniques and so forth; the trouble with counter surveillance techniques is that you get so good at spotting tails and so forth that you start imagining that they...there are tails all over the place which [?] tend to be fed into the kind of ah, ruling feeling that was around at the time, you know, they're on top of you and they're around all over. Ah, having got away with it I was convinced I was being followed and I was gonna get caught doing it but I was prepared...was determined I was going to do it. After posting and not getting arrested for an hour or two and three hours and then a whole week I was really elated at least now I felt that I was going to work very hard not to get caught but at least probably the most depressing thing is I think is to get caught before you've had...actually got away with at least a couple of missions.

Um, and it lasted for two and a half years which was quite long - not long enough. I mean I was not pleased I got caught. I was...the cops um, and the police later and the prison officials ~~ad~~ me you know, if I regretted having done what I had and so on. I did have a regret and that was a single regret and that was that I'd got caught. Um ja.

JF Did you ever think to yourself or did you confront it later or criticise later, say ok, you did that, but what was that? I mean it wasn't like John Mathews where you could pick up the paper and ^{say} look the bomb's gone off, I mean (Ja) what's a pamphlet do - did you ask yourself that, did you ever get any feedback, did you have someone say ah, they saw pamphlets in town? What

JF did you feel like you were gonna do? I mean how far did that take someone?

ANS There was quite a lot of feedback, I mean again one didn't hunt it out because that would have been suspicious but again to be seen in the context of the times: when the apartheid regime was claiming that it had smashed those organisations for once and for all and if anything they were just a tiny little exile group. So to be able to operate in the backyard of the apartheid regime and get away with it was important and people getting those pamphlets were uh, very excited because they were posted in Cape Town, P.E. or wherever we - we didn't always post from Cape Town, created quite a bit of a stir. But of course one is only reaching several thousand people. Hopefully the pamphlets circulated. I know when I'd been a student you see, I'd also been at the receiving end sometimes and that's...those pamphlets are not mine I'd say. Remember I've said to you how I sort of read the pamphlets to see if there was a place for whites in the struggle for one. And two had also distributed that pamphlet around and made photocopies of whatever and insured that other friends got it and so forth.

Clearly some people would have...thrown, would have panicked when they got the pamphlet and we got some feedback that that was the case as well. People were convinced that it had come from the police ah, sometimes. But I know from the..my own personal experience that some of those pamphlets would have circulated quite widely so that although its mailing to several thousand people several other thousand people would likely to have seen them as well.

But we're also getting other feedback. Um, from time to time in the newspapers there would be reports that ... once I remember having gone up to P.E. to post and in a "Rapport", the Afrikaans newspaper a week later there was um, an article saying that, um the ANC was operating in a very cowardly way. It was using foreign seaman who would stop in at P.E...port cities like P.E. and walk outside of the docks and quickly post several thousand pamphlets and run, run away. And I remember feeling quite bucked that...clearly this was a response to what I'd done a week before in P.E.

ANS The other interesting thing was that occasionally we...we always enjoyed doing pamphlets. Um, the ANC was always very careful at that stage of its attitude towards Buthelezi. They/he hadn't clearly marked himself out as um a problematic individual but the SACP was rather more critical at that stage and we were always producing (Zulu) 174 which was the official organ of the SACP and that would often be quite critical of Buthelezi. Um, now at that stage Buthelezi had a weekly column in the Star newspaper of the morning group of newspapers-Cape Town's Rand Daily Mail and sure enough in a fortnight his...he's such an arrogant guy that within a fortnight of producing an anti Buthelezi pamphlet or a pamphlet which in the course of it had various points that attacked Buthelezi. He would come back uh, saying that SACP have been saying these dreadful things about me X Y and Z and so on and he would reproduce a quarter of the pamphlet in his column with a view to attacking it. But that ensured us of a wider distribution of the pamphlets was/for us and we were rather pleased. And then of course the pamphlets bombs were...would also cause quite a stir and would make a bit of press impression and so on. The...main idea was to reach um, a core, a group of people in the townships basically and to provide them with some kind of political guidance and leadership and so on. We weren't producing the pamphlets, or most of them, most of them the copy was produced ...came in from overseas from the Central Committee or whatever of the various organisations. But we also did produce our own for Gane which enabled us to act more immediately to events - obviously it came out in..as ..supporters of ANC but not in the name of the ANC because we weren't empowered obviously to write ANC pamphlets. Um...

JF Did you have a list of names of people (Ja) ...And Mupane - how was it identified as the bottom - friends of the ANC or ...?

ANS Yes, yes I don't think we actually said that but..it was quite.. it didn't say that it came particularly from anybody - it was pretty clear that it did come from..at the very least from friends of the ANC, ja.

JF Did you find that more and more interesting and stimulating

JF actually to be able to write something? It was quite stimulating to get something and see what the line was and be...?

ANS Well, both. Obviously they were serving different purposes the one um, it was...useful for us to know what the..um.... coz again um, presumably organisations operating their headquarters overseas also had great difficulty in having an...^{clear} picture of what was happening inside S.A. but inside S.A. it was equally difficult, more difficult. They would of had channels of information operating that we didn't have so it was very useful to see um, the kind of understanding that was being effected /reflected by those organisations. But it was also important to act quite immediately to and now it was '75 getting on to '76 ah, when we started using...and so the pace of events began to pick up . And it was important to be able to talk into those situations.

And we were around from...well, we were arrested at the end of July so we had a couple of months or a month and a half really um, of operating after June 16. That was our great regret that we...weren't able to operate you know through ah, more substantially through the 1976/77 period ah, we would have been able to um, ah, produce a couple of pamphlets which were quite useful and quite important I think. Um, but it would have been so useful and...to be able to operate a lot more um, in conjunction with now the mass struggle emerging .

JF What about the role of you as whites in say the middle of '76 if someone would say how could some two or three whites be telling the blacks whats going on in the townships? I mean these Pokane's were aimed at blacks as well. (specifically at blacks as well -JC) Did you struggle or did you try everything that was on - did you have to try to figure out what to say, do you think that was something you had to deal with or were you just picking up what you thought to be obvious precepts of the organisations and applying them to the situation?

ANS Ya, I mean not information as to what was happening in the townships because well, David was working as a ... David Rabkin & a lot of as a journalist so he had access to information that perhaps the stories were being spiked but he had access to them so we had a

ANS fair amount of information but what was more important was to offer some political guidance into the situation of a more general kind. To techniques of you know operating um a lot of people phone up by that thing often operate in a very loose way : big brave but adventuristic way often and was being used to instruct people in forms of organising in underground organisation and so forth. That was part of the task um, as well. So there was a bit of political guidance, a bit of um, technical guidance almost - modes of operation, um, we also produced which I notice has been quoted quite a lot around since then in sort of appraisals of '76 um, where we, one talked about the...working class in the struggle and so far as we were trying to offer political guidance um, one of the dangers that we recognised then was that um, sometimes the youth were not...regarded themselves as being in the vanguard of the struggle or whatever, and were alienating their parents. rather than working with their parents and seeing that finally um, what was going to contribute to the success of this struggle was the mobilising and organising of the working class basically. Not exclusively but that has been the major force in our struggle. Um, and secondly sort of talked um, about the problem of...that initially um, the uprising was pretty contained and confined to the townships - the black townships and so themselves - and we saw the necessity of taking the struggle outside of the townships as well, uh through various forms of action which again it pointed to the importance of the working class; that strikes and so forth would be important forms of action.

Because as long as the struggle was confined to the burning of schools or beerhalls or whatever um important as that might be it wasn't really striking at the power centres of the white regime. So we produced a bit of an analysis of that kind. How influential one, you know, I mean, who knows, but um, I gather from comments I've seen in various places that it did assist some people around. And kind of anticipated what became a more important thing that came later in the struggle.

JF When you say that ? was quoted around I'd love to be able to quote (ja) something but where I mean...?

ANS Um, maybe I can tell you (JF Later) ok yeah.
Um, the....what else? Ok, then we were arrested in '76. Now we

ANS were very uncertain about the role that we played but um, say in uprisings. Probably a very peripheral role. But the cops were...fortunately in some ways for us... well alot of things. First of all one ah, should say it was that the other major... ideological...major, I mean in so far as we...seemingly significant is a better way of saying it...was of course we were reacting to the raid into Angola - the invasion of Angola by S.A. We were not well known in S.A. at the time um, and what was less well known was that basically S.A.'s invasion which had been defeated on the battle field um and we produced and circulated very widely pamphlets about the situation which were important.

One, on the level of information. But two, at the level of getting census...getting a sense of... that the white regime was not omnipotent and that it could actually be defeated. And we also circulated that stuff, we were instructed to circulate it not, I mean in the townships and so on as widely as possible but to the embassies and to MPs and so forth. And it seems that that particular act um, really got up the noses of the Security Police and they told us as much later.

And um, they decided at that point to throw everything at this cell and try and hunt it down and root it out. Which was possible at that stage because it was pre June 1976 and so they could throw a lot of energies into uncovering this or that, you know, groupings. And of course something like a propaganda cell by its very nature, part of its duty is to in fact to conceal who or where it is, but basically to proclaim its existence. So thats...certain other kinds of underground activities don't go out of their way to proclaim their existence. That kind of particular activity like I suppose explosions are not at all equally/or equally indicates that somewhere some ? people is around carrying out these things.

And um, thats finally how we were detected was just through solid, you know detection work - peicing together lots of things rather than super trail.

JF Did you figure out your mistake or was there any little thing...

ANS It wasn't so much a mistake as just the fact that there were able to throw a lot of resources at it.

JF There was no track that you left that you (Well...)..later?

ANS I think that more the problem was we picked up the fact that we

ANS were being tailed um, in the sort of weeks preceding our arrest. But we were always in a quandry because you're not sure if you're being paranoid or not or whether you really are being tracked. A lot of times they were false alarms so you have to start saying to yourself no mustn't be paranoid, you must carry on with work or whatever. And..

There's partly that and then there's the...you don't actually want to know really you're being followed - you kind of find it hard to believe that they have detected you. So we, we picked it up that we were being tailed or at least that they...David picked up that he was being tailed um, but we weren't really sure and so we were working on it - er, perhaps dropping it, you know, playing safe.

Its..always a difficult decision because every time you think you're being followed you actually never produced anything if you stop working immediately. Um, but you've got to get that balance right and clearly we didn't quite get the balance right at that point. Um ja..

JF You didn't tell me about how..very briefly..how you um got in contact with David, so I mean did they contact you or....?

ANS It was via the communication network you know, that we had with the outside (so were you able to eventually come back and link up with them or..)Not originally but then a rendezvous was worked out and you know the sort of normal passwords and wearing particular clothing and what else, so you know, it was that. But it was set up via communication with the outside.

JF So you worked on your own for how long before you worked....

ANS I forget exactly but it was probably about nine months.

JF Was that quite a lot nicer to link up with other people?

ANS Oh, it was amazing. Ja, particularly because they had had experience - they had been going for about a year, a year and a half. So they...it...it was very ... one was operating over very great distances - people training you were far away, and you couldn't ring them up for advice or if you stumbled across a problem or whatever. So it...one had a sense of being very alone - it was very nice to. But also for a long time we didn't know each... they didn't know my name for instance..I was operating under another name and here we were comrades at last the ones that you

ANS could talk fairly honestly and freely to but you would only meet him and had to for your own safety and theirs, had to limit meetings and so on to the bare minimum. So..it was a very intense comradeship that built up but it was crammed into little moments really.

JF So did you find that when you were finally in prison with David that you got to know him, like his middle name and stuff?

ANS Indeed ja, yes, we almost got to know each other for the first time almost, properly...we...ah, ja.

JF Ok, can you tell me about the arrest - when it was and what? A bit about...the relevant aspects. Again the point is to a white involvement, um would be interesting to me - how the police treated you, I mean I'm interested in that phenomenon of them perhaps being most threatened by whites like you (Ja) and most probably the feeling that you're from within the fold and there would be (right) this treasonous....When was it you were arrested?

ANS July, end of July '76, and um they... its kind of true what you're saying. Um they...well you see there are whites and whites. One of the first questions they asked me was I Jewish? Because that would have explained things to them. And I had quite a lot of fun evading the question or not coming out - keeping them guessing and refusing to see the pertinence of it or whatever. And a second question they asked me, which obviously related to the first was, was I born a Communist.

Because I presume if you're a racist sort of the biological explains everything to you and you know, if you're Jewish well that kind of explains why you might be tempted to go in these directions. But in some way or other you must have somehow genetically inherited the predisposition; rather difficult to work out if you're white. So obviously this was a question which bothered them - you know this were you born a communist - which is quite how one gets to be born that, I certainly wasn't. Born in Durban in a naval base. The um, I'm just trying to think really...the