

J.F. O.K., so do you want to tell me when and where you were born?

S.K. I was born in a place called <sup>St. ~~Stansburg~~ St. Staysburg</sup> on the 25th. of June, 1941. <sup>Malmesbury</sup> Stansburg's in the little Karroo and I lived there till I was about 18 months and then moved to Marmasbury in the Western Cape, which is a very Afrikaans area where I basically grew up until early adolescence - something like eleven I moved to the Eastern Cape and I..... <sup>Malmesbury</sup>

J.F. You have such a good accent despite this influence.

S.K. Oh, that's after 20 years in Islington - so I grew up very much Afrikaans - my father was Afrikaans and very - very militantly Afrikaans - he grew up in Pietersburg basically in a mud hut and after the Boer War, and that was very much part of my culture, growing up with the iniquities of the Boer War and the deprivation of land from these families, and yes, he grew up without any suggestion that he might be educated, and his sister who was a cleaner in a boarding school in that area sort of took him along as the youngest in the family - family of very many children, many of whom had been (in) the British concentration camps -

And the teachers at the school where she went discovered that he was very bright, and he'd never ever heard English spoken so he basically started school round about the age of eight and by the age of sixteen he was at Wits. University (Laugh) studying for a degree - so it was very much the Afrikaaner made good -

And he came to teach in the Eastern Cape and met my mother, who was English from a - her father was a magistrate in the Transkei, Lusikisiki area, <sup>Matatiele</sup> ~~Atatiale~~, that sort of area - so she came out of a very much more middle class very English home - she could't speak any English (?) (Afrikaans) and this created a lot of sort of conflict -

I mean he saw himself as doing something very extraordinary by marrying her - she was quite a lot younger than him, and she was very innocent and so on.

J.F. Why did he go to Wits if he was Afrikaans - was there no.....

S.K. Well, he went to lots of places - he went to - he - by that - I mean the point I was really making was that at the age of eight he hadn't heard any English - he'd never heard English - by the time he was sixteen he'd qualified with enough education to go to university - he went to many universities - I can't remember the order, but he certainly met Braam Fisher in the Orange Free State - played rugby with him at the same time, and remembers him as a very nice chap and still (Laugh) amuses at the fact that, you know, such a nice person could become a communist (Laugh)

He also went to Pretoria, and I suppose he was always a bit of a maverick - Afrikaaner - quite an intellectual but always with a sort of awareness of the fact that he'd been very deprived and, you know, that he'd sort of managed to glean some sort of realisation of his potential through his own efforts, really, and with a tremendous amount of sacrifice on the part of his family, so I grew up very much with that....(Tape off)

J.F. So how about when you were growing up - how did you - did you accept all that about the Afrikaaner heritage and all that -

J.F. .... you were in an Afrikaans (.....) totally....

S.K. Totally - I mean the only person who spoke English to me was my mother, and Marmasbury the children who were English speaking were in special class - I mean they were kind of considered odd - it was a totally Afrikaans town, and a town where the only black people were Coloured farm workers, so they were in a very - the kind of relationship between the whites and the Coloured farm workers was very va(st) - I mean great sort of discrepancy, but nevertheless for reasons -

I mean I can remember in maybe '49 - I can't quite remember what year it was - was the Van Riebek festival - maybe it was '51 - and I mean we had marches through the town - torchlit marches in support of really Afrikaaner nationalism, but in support of the great - you know, the Van Riebek landing and all this sort of thing - and we went into Cape Town to go to the Van Riebek festival, and things simply made an impact on me that didn't on my family -

I mean I don't know why - I mean I've got no explanation - things like seeing Bushmen as exhibits at the Van Riebek festival really kind of appalled me - things like we had a servant who lived in a very small room in the back near the garage, but my father was the school principal of (.....) School - I mean they sort of - after the Dutch Reformed Minister the most important person in town -

And the things that I remember of the way she was treated - I mean her children - she didn't have a husband and something was made of that, but her children were basically accepted by the family and we played with them - the one was called Qusi, which was what my father's family called him, and the second son was called Buti, brother - little brother - and that's how we played with them.

But this woman who worked for us all the time I was in Marmesbury, Raleigh her name was - you know, we had quite a nice house and flowers in the garden and so on and when the flowers got nicked - got stolen - there was this terrible drama about, you know, Raleigh (Laugh) had stolen the flowers, which might strike anybody as a little bizarre (Laugh) -

And things like sugar, you know, that my mother, who is a lovely very kind, human, loving person, but she locked the sugar up because, you know, you walked into the pantry and there was sort of crunch crunch - somebody'd been at the sugar and she assumed it must be the servant, and these things actually upset me when I was quite young - I don't know why (Laugh)

J.F. What were they - was she a Coloured servant?

S.K. Mmm.

J.F. Was your grandfather a Boer War general?

S.K. No, that was my - my uncle - no, my father's uncle, I think - anyway he was related but not my grandfather, but my grandfather got a medal in the Boer War, which I've still got, for service in the Pietersburg area.

J.F. And the other relative was what, a general?

S.K. Yes, he was THE general - he was a general who led a rebellion - basically a right wing rebellion, as far as I understand it.

J.F. So you'd say that there was some kind of questioning and non acceptance of what was going on when you were young, but did that manifest itself in any way - did you....

S.K. I suppose, in retrospect, when I've thought why did - what - what formed me, you know, I did - there was always terrible arguments in the family, not so much between my mother and my father - she's not very political although, as I say, her father was a magistrate in the Transkei, and I've got a letter signed by all the headmen and leading sort of Africans in the area - I think it was Matatiele, which I think is where Mandela came from, signed saying they didn't want him transferred when he was due for a transfer, so there was that side - but my mother didn't really impinge on me except in a sort of as a person - from person to person, that she was kind and good -

But from my father's point of view - he was very political and there were constant arguments raging so behind closed doors, and as far as I understand, although he is right wing and he is very frightened by changes that are taking place, nevertheless he did question Afrikaaner nationalism -

I mean some of my family are Broederbonders, and my cousin was dentist to the prime ministers and so on, so there's a fairly sort of elite Afrikaaner element in the family and he always rebelled against that.

He also rebelled in the Second World War against the Afrikaaner acceptance of the Ossewabrandwag, so the sort of - I mean he was very hostile to the idea of taking up arms against the South African state, and I mean those were big issues - so I suppose the ethos of questioning the whole Afrikaaner dominance was there, although he never really broke away I mean at all - he just shouted a lot (Laugh) about it.

J.F. And were there any other members of your family - brother or relatives....

S.K. I've got two sisters but neither of them - I mean they took a lead from me - I mean they older than me. I think one of the formative things was that I moved from Malmesbury to the Eastern Cape when I was about - I think about eleven - my parents, in fact, got divorced for ten years, and I went with my mother to East London where I was still in an Afrikaans school, and then for a year to Grahamstown in, for the first time in English school, where I stayed with my father, and then my adolescence really in Port Elizabeth -

And I think Port Elizabeth - that was the sort of early '50's - something like '53 - and the feeling about Mau Mau was extremely strong, and there were also so-called riots at the time in the Eastern Cape - I can't - don't really know much about what happened but I remember a nun being killed in a township (Laugh) so those things.....

J.F. Township in Cape.....

S.K. In the Eastern Cape.

J.F. Oh....

S.K.

There were uprisings at that time in the Eastern Cape so we were going from what was a relatively placid safe area, I suppose at a fairly impressionable age, with the MAU MAU thing being huge - you know, this fear of Africans and an Indian area that was very definitely African and it wasn't - it wasn't farm labour Africans - it was Africans walking the streets in obvious poverty but nevertheless as people, you know, and that certainly made an impact on me - that poverty then hit me, which it hadn't struck me in Malmsbury - not in any way that I was aware of anyway -

That people there - it seemed sort of to fit in that there were farm workers and poor, but in the Eastern Cape they were people the same as the rest of us on the streets, but they were poor - patently poor - I mean in rags but not behaving as if they belonged (Laugh) in rags.

And I read a bit then - I don't know where and how but I started rea(ding) - I read a bit of Alan Paton, Cry the Beloved Country, Trevor Huddleston, and heard Nkosa Sekilele for the first time, and I don't know always from then had the approach that I think afterwards meant a great deal - that I was the one who needed to change in order to fit into this acceptable social formation that was out there - an African one that was singing Nkosa Sikilele -

I didn't understand much about it but it was clear to me that morality lay on that side, not on my side. I still haven't formed properly the fact that it was a political thing - that poverty was a direct consequence of apartheid, but I was well on the way that way - I felt clearly that, you know, it wasn't right that these people were good people and that I was somehow excluded from that, and that my task was in a way to get closer to it.

J.F.

And then what - did you go on to university?

S,K.

Yes, then I went to Cape Town to study physiotherapy which was - so I was again somewhat on the outside of the mainstream of university culture, and when I got to university the whole thrust was for me to be drawn into the whole rag queen business - I mean the first week I was there I was being - attempts were being made to recruit me to stand for rag queen and so on, so there was quite a strong thing like that, that in my first year I had to serve champagne to a football match - rugby match between Stellenbosch and Cape Town football teams who played, in a sort of little tennis dress with no shoes on, and the captain of the Stellenbosch side - then I got these embraces and lots of photographs taken and so on -

And the captain of the Stellenbosch side was - God, I've forgotten the name now - Darvy de Villiers\* who became, I think, ambassador here for a time, wasn't he - he became a Dutch Reform minister - he became very much in the mainstream of - but he was the football captain then - and I really in a way had to fight my way out of that -

It was the time that we - that the referendum for the republic was happening, and I had a sort of enormous conflict between anti Englishness which was very strong always in my upbringing - you know, you (Laugh) definitely didn't like the English - and identifying the republic with that and the sense that by then that I was aware that apartheid was responsible for poverty and

*Dawie  
\* also Springsbok  
rugby captain & now  
a Cabinet Minister.*

S.K. .... the sort of social evils that I had recognised by then - and then I think I always - I deliberately set out to find the political people on the campus - I suppose I voted against a republic with great reservation - I mean it really upset me, you know, to vote against (Laugh) - the sort of enormity of overcoming the idea that your government is synonymous with love for your country was an enormous thing, and to be able to separate that was very difficult - sort of tremendous sense of guilt, I suppose -

And I suppose I must have been in my third year when I was recruited to the ARM, which arose out of the fact that there was a big demonstration - it was '62 in fact - I went to university in '60 - '60, '61, '62 so it was my third year - there was this - the Sabotage Act was being passed and there was a huge demonstration on university premises, so you know, not publicly, not in the streets - a torchlit demonstration and the police surrounded it, put handcuffs on all the gates, and we were kind of enclosed into this particular campus which was in town - it was the legal camp - the law campus - and I mean a couple of us stood - happened to be in front of these gates and stuck our torches under the handcuffs - you know, couldn't have done anything (Laugh) to the handcuffs, but the police went berserk and climbed over these gates - these huge wrought iron gates and arrested us and we were dragged off -

And I suppose I was very sort of cocky and defiant, and they kept us - about three of us for a time and the students - there were all these soldiers with guns aimed at us - I mean they were standing with their I don't know, fixed bayonets and machine guns and God knows what I mean actually aimed at the student crowd, and dogs and so on, so it was a very highly charged atmosphere -

And I think there'd been a similar demonstration in Durban that had been shot on so we knew all that - and I was very defiant, and I was one of I think three students who were dragged off, and the students who remained behind reacted with great passion and demanded our release and so on, and we were eventually released and sort of - I mean after a couple of hours - and sort of went back -

But I think because of that my - attention was drawn to me by - I mean as far as the ARM people were concerned - and so very shortly afterwards - I can't remember how long - an approach was made to me by Adrian Leftwich who was, I think, either at the time or in the previous period, president of the National Union of Students in South Africa, and was a very well known campus radical, so-called -

I think one of the mould of NUSAS people who were full of sort of earnest talking - you know, they have a style that ran through several presidents (Laugh) of terrible earnestness - you're not giving me any leads here - I mean.....

J.F. No, you're doing fine.

S.K. And I was very bewildered - I mean I'd heard - Harold Strachan in fact had been arrested in Port Elizabeth at the time, just before, for some sabotage, so I actually had some vague idea about something - this was '6 - I think it must be '63 - ....

- S.K. .... something like the beginning of '63....
- J.F. Was he MK sabotage - was he...
- S.K. Who?
- J.F. Strachen - at that time when he was arrested...
- S.K. Certainly A.N.C. associated, ja.
- J.F. .... he's so different now (You're very faint)
- S.K. Oh, yes, I think he was A.N.C., but I mean I wouldn't have known that - it was just...
- J.F. You knew that sabotage was.....
- S.K. It was Cape Town - it was Port Elizabeth, which was my home town and, you know, just was - I was aware, but I didn't really know what it all meant - what sabotage meant, because I remember this Leftwich took me for coffee and he was like, you know, a senior and I was some small fry student, so I was highly flattered, and he took me to a very Afrikaans coffee place, koffiehuis in Cape Town, and asked me what I thought about sabotage and I mean this seemed an entirely bizarre (Laugh) conversation, which I'm sure it was -

And all I really knew about sabotage was this Harold Strachen incident and I didn't really know - I didn't really know what sabotage meant - but basically, I think because of my sort of very Calvinist upbringing you had a very simplistic idea about right and wrong and duty and - and by then I knew that I was against apartheid and that poverty in South Africa existed because of apartheid, and therefore basically anybody who expected me to do anything to demonstrate against apartheid was on a winner (Laugh) -

And he said to me, you know, that he had these friends who were involved in sabotage - I can't remember that that much was spelt out about the purpose of it or how it all worked and so on, but basically I sort of said, yes, yes, sure - and he said, go away and think about it -

Once I went away I got very frightened - it all seemed pretty terrifying (Laugh) but they came back and so I joined.

- J.F. Can I ask you at that juncture if someone had come and said, I'm part of this organisation called Umkhonthe we Swizwe and we want to talk to you about sabotage, would it have had the same impact?
- S.K. I think much more - I think that I was very - I mean in Cape Town certainly at that period - this is '62/'63 - there was no contact between ordinary whites and any - any blacks. My only contact with the movement, the Congress Alliance, was through in fact Defence and Aid (?) which then existed in Cape Town, and in which there were many old stalwarts - people like Dora Alexander or Alexander's sister, Ray Edwards, Albi's mother -

There were people like - some of the liberals like - there were the Rappaports (?) - they were the old white stalwarts, some of them liberals and some of them - some of them - a few of them liberals, not many, and good liberals - Dorothy - God, I can't ....

↓  
Clemshaw

S.K. .... remember their names - you will know them - everybody knows them - I just can't remember their names - who were without question liberals but they were the sort of liberals who were very close to the Congress Movement - and then a lot of these sort of older - people like the Carnesons I saw a lot of in that period - but that was the only possible contact with the A.N.C. was through whites -

I mean there was no way that there was any contact with Africans except - I had ten years contact with some of the people.

J.F. How did you have contact?

S.K. Well, through these sort of people - these sort of mainstream known whites - I got drawn into over - same period that I was in the ARM - into things like they need(ed) - at that time there was new legislation whereby you couldn't publish anything without having a named person as the - as the named person, and address - and you had to go to the post office and take out some sort of - I can't remember - pay something - a licence or something -

And there was a thing called Focus '64 that came out then, and people like Legum in fact contributed to it - it was broadly Congress oriented - and because, I suppose, I was new, unknown and sympathetic my name was used on this thing, so I had some contact - never met contact - I knew about Legum I mean quite closely -

So that the whole ARM thing was happening really that they were - that was what was possible, for a ill informed white who was radical...

J.F. Coming in at that point.

S.K. Mmm, and who didn't do - who didn't come from a background - and I think at that point there were a lot of whites who were becoming politicised - radically politicised - with no background - people like me - there were a lot of us - I mean a lot of us, maybe two dozen, there were a lot of us - whereas previously I think there were people like Alby - you know, people who came out of a tradition of radicalism -

We were the sort of first generation of people, and there were quite a few, and the ARM was there ready.

J.F. So when Leftwich approached you did he say, look, this is something we whites can do, or...

S.K. No, no - they were always at great pains to make that there weren't just whites - I mean that was very important to them. I mean I don't think I was ever taken in but it didn't sort of bother me personally - I mean I just felt people did what people had to do and you know, all this sort of terrible breast-beating that went on (Laugh) didn't seem to me entirely important, but they were certainly at great pains to make that, you know, there were black people in their ranks.

J.F. But did you think, well, I don't have contact with the movements - this is what I can do as a white?

S.K. I don't think I saw it quite in that way, that I quite sort of was able to evaluate it, but basically it was this was all that was coming to me - I couldn't go out and find it because that

S.K. .... wasn't possible in that period, but here was somebody coming to me and asking me to do something, and I would do it.

J.F. And you - there are so many whites in South Africa even today who would easily have a reaction of ag, you know, leaking (?) that work - they don't know what they're doing - and just give it a heavy dose of cynicism and a wide berth, but that you were not that way at all - you didn't try to rationalise that this seemed a foolish risk because it's.....

S.K. No, no, no, no, no, I was ver(y) - much too naive and - and I think the Calvinist thing was very important, that you know, there were concepts like duty and sacrifice, and you didn't question that, and you - people asked something of you you didn't - I mean I never did and I still don't in a way, because I think although I might evaluate them now, and frankly I think they historically pretty unimportant - I actually think they almost entirely unimportant (Laugh)

J.F. (.....?)

S.K. Yes - I will never deny my own role in it because I simply think that's as how things happened - you know, that there was - at that time there was a vacuum - and I will never try to justify or rationalise the whole thing - I think they were - I wasn't sophisticated but I think they were a group of liberals largely in the Cape -

In Johannesburg there were a group of Trotskyists - and when I say group I mean a handful really of, in the Cape, liberals - mainstream Liberal Party people who, I believe now, were almost entirely motivated by an anti communism and a feeling - a lack of confidence, I suppose, in the mainstream of the movement - a feeling of their own historical importance - I mean a kind of white arrogance but who recognised - who came out of a - a background where non racialism was considered important, and therefore recognised - recognised the future South Africa was a future that - you know, there was no -

I don't think there was any reservation on their part that a democracy was what was being fought for in South Africa, and that that was right - one man one vote, if you like - I don't think there was any reservation on that part - nobody talked about federation or any sort of formula that may exclude the majority - so I think as far as that was concerned they were utterly straight, that what was required in South Africa was an ordinary democracy.

I think what they didn't recognise was the importance of African nationalism as a concept as a real thing in this process, so that they recognised a sort of non racialism that obliterated all that - you know, people were just people and the fact that they were African or white was unimportant - yet it was important for them to establish their credentials by ensuring that they had some black support, and they had very little - very, very little -

I mean I think you could really count on one hand how many non whites - African and Coloured people they had working with them.

J.F. Why do you say they - you were part of them - are you saying them as the leadership?

S.K. Yes, very much the leadership corps who I saw as (.....).....

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J.F. .... you saw as....

S.K. Yes, very much as the mainstream liberals - Liberal Party people, who were in a way ~~manipula~~ - not manipulating but I mean I certainly see myself, either then or now, as sort of cannon fodder, but I think they did recruit many whites who were - didn't belong anywhere - who didn't have a background of radicalism, who came from nowhere -

I mean I think that was quite extraordinary, that they recruited people who were in some ways a bit odd in that they were prepared to take such a radical leap without any background, any preparation for it at all - the sort of people who jumped from conscience - through conscience almost entirely, without any either academic training or political training or family training - there's nothing - they were people who came from nowhere and did leap into this - were recruited -

Not many - again it's a handful - I mean we talking about, you know - couple of dozen people mainly.

J.F. Was that because they were threatened by rooted people - because they were anti communist and they saw those people as too CP oriented or?

S.K. I'd certainly think they were very deeply anti communist, but I think also that they had no - nothing to offer people who really knew about politics - you know, that any white, never mind any black, who knew anything about politics wouldn't - I mean could see that simply to organise a small clique of saboteurs was not actually what was going to bring about change.

I do understand that they - and I'm rather surprised that they did make contact with MK - I mean I have this from - I would never have believed it from them, and by them I suppose I think of Adrian Leftwich and Randal Vine - I mean they were the people who were political, who understood what they were doing, who understood the context in which they were doing it - and I understand -

Vigne

I wouldn't have believed it from them, because I very rapidly became drawn - I mean in a way everything was happening so quickly, for me, as it would happen in a way to anybody in that position - that I'd hardly discovered that apartheid was wrong when, you know, I was a saboteur and I was a Marxist - I mean it all sort of just pshew within 18 months virtually, so I could hardly catch my breath and catch up with myself -

And I think I represented in a way what I've seen with many young white South Africans who come from nowhere and just have a very quick understanding - they just see the reality very quickly and very - and not just people from my background - I've seen people from Durban, for instance, who say, came to Britain and I kind of tend to think, what are you, who are you, where've you come from, why you suddenly in the A.N.C. - but I discover that they have that - I think there is something in that situation that can, if one is in a way innocent to begin with, can radicalise you in a very real way very quickly and you fall on your feet, so to speak, politically -

So things were happening very quickly to me, and I very quickly would have been very cynical about Randolph - I didn't actually have any contact with Randolph but I knew he was behind the whole - behind somewhere - but when I came here and I had contact with the A.N.C. I discovered that in fact they did meet with MK people

S.K. .... and discuss with them how they would fit into the general sabotage campaign, and I believe that, you know, they were dealt with in the way that I would expect the movement to deal with people like that - to sort of say, you know, yes, go ahead and, you know, that's O.K. - without actually either discouraging (Laugh) them or encouraging them -

But it was quite interesting to me, because I think they were very vehemently anti communist and would see the A.N.C. as being communist tainted.

J.F. Why don't we go back to the coffee bar and take it just experientially because you've said a lot about what they are about, but I don't see how you fit in - Adrian Leftwich was a NUSAS president at the time?

S.K. Mmm.

J.F. And Randolph Vine was what?

S.K. Liberal Party professional - I don't know what he was doing - he might have been a publisher or something, but I mean he was a bloke out there, and much older.

J.F. In 'Maritzburg?

S.K. No, no, in Cape Town - this was all Cape Town - but Adrian was very much on the campus, and with the sort of style of radical NUSAS politics - intellectually and academically far ahead of me - you know, I was just a sort of kid, and so I was very taken by it - very flattered - and met some other people -

I mean it caused tremendous sort of problems for me obviously that (on) the one hand here I was trying to become a physiotherapist (Laugh) on the other hand I was, you know, running through military camps to reconnoitre them for possible sabotage, running saboteurs up to -

I never actually got to a point where I did an act of sabotage myself, so I was running saboteurs up to electric pylons and railway cables and things - I was....

J.F. Running them up in a car or?

S.K. Ja - and it was all unknown people - people from the university campus but people who were entire nonentities like I was, so that we didn't know each other at all - all under pseudonyms (?) obviously.

J.F. Wait a minute - you met him in the coffee bar, you were flattered, and then what happened?

S.K. Well, then I - he said well - he insisted I go away for a week to think about it, and then I sort of thought about it and kind of got really frightened and didn't go back, and after three weeks he came back and sort of said :Well, you know, what about it - and I just never could bring myself to say no, because it seemed to me morally, you know - if I've thought -

I mean it wasn't thought out in that way, but if I thought poverty of my fellow countrymen, which is how I saw it by then, was a entirely political exercise, and I was called upon to do something to eradicate that then I had to do it (Laugh) and I wasn't sophisticated enough to really sort out what I was doing or who

S.K. .... for or anything like that.

J.F. So he came back to you and then you said O.K., and then what happened?

S.K. I was put in a cell with a whole lot of people with pseudonyms - I was given - well I mean these sort of things are - I've never really admitted to publicly but I mean they - I was given training in sabotage....

J.F. By?

S.K. By Leftwich, I suppose - and prepared in a way they expected all members to go through some sort of personal activity, sabotage activity, so I was being primed for that but in the meantime was driving small groups of saboteurs here, there and so on, a few times -

And then I mean I suppose I survived about 18 months and then we were arrested. The big thing came - I was working at the time in a hospital - I'd qualified by then, and I was working in a hospital that it really was a sort of dumping ground for black Cape Tonians who had suffered either spinal injury through car crashes, which was numerous along that road past - out to the airport from Cape Town - I mean people just run down - or in fact police shootings - and this hospital was full of people who'd been sort of dumped there, and through the physio department, which was new, we really created quite a prestigious hospital - spinal injuries hospital -

So I was having this going on on one hand and the hospital staff, many of whom were young Coloured blokes doing the sort of specialist nursing, and the patients - I was leading the sort of life that involved me with black people - on the other hand I was going into military camps on the other hand (Laugh) with an entirely sort of white outfit, although they kept on boasting about these black members, I never had anything to - any contact -

So it was a sort of extraordinary dichotomy - you know, I was doing all these sort of radical things on behalf of black people who didn't appear to be involved, but nevertheless my personal life, or my working life, if you like, was - was very much involved, and those were the people that came to my trial, and they sent me things when I was in detention and they rallied very much to me.

It was also the time when the Rivonia arrests happened, and there was enormous amount of talk and commitment to the Rivonia trialists who we thought would hang - I mean there was no question about it that they would get capital punishment - and the last acts of the ARM in Cape Town were aimed around the date of, I think something like a month after sentence or something like that - round June the 18th. or something - I can't remember - but it was very much geared around the Rivonia thing, so in a way we were very much acting by proxy, and the spirit of being. you know, part of one South Africa was strong - in the reality it was quite different.

J.F. Your 18 months, when would that have been exactly?

S.K. I was arrested in June, I think, '64, so it was from early '63, end of '62, something like that.

J.F. And when you said in and out of military camps (.....)

S.K. Well, there - for instance, Wynburg - in Wynburg there's a military camp and we would reconnoitre it - you know, spend a couple of days reconnoitring how you get into it, what the security arrangements are, and whether there was anything worth sabotaging in the camp.

There were several places like that of some military significance.

J.F. This is all remarkably non sexist for the time - the fact that you were a woman, it didn't figure at all - it was just?

S.K. I don't think it did, no.

J.F. And reconnoitring military camps, it didn't look a bit odd for a woman to be going around?

S.K. Oh, I'm sure we - we probably made ourselves into couples in order to do it - you know, courting couples perhaps, but - no, I don't think it really arose - it probably arose in my willingness to simply follow - I'm sure that was a very sexist exercise on my part, but no, in fact, it wasn't an issue at all.

J.F. And in all the training was there ideological training or did you just have talks about what the motivation....

S.K. Not formal - not in the way that I would expect say, from the A.N.C. - not sort of ensuring that one had a particular political orientation at all, but there was lots of political discussion, a lot of argument, a lot of almost university undergraduate questioning of the thing - you know, that a rather sort of spurious questioning of what are we about, what are we doing and so on -

And always the insistence from Adrian's side, as representing the sort of people who set up the whole thing, that it was non racial, you know, and it was certainly for a non racial democracy that they were doing it.

I think I very rapidly became so congress oriented through my defence and aid contacts, my sort of old stalwart - the Fred Carnesons, the Sarah Carnesons - that sort of contact that in a way I was - I never needed the ARM's political thinking - I stayed with them till I was arrested simply because it happened so quickly that I didn't have a chance to really consider anything else, and in a way nothing else presented itself -

I mean if Mk was there and recruited me perhaps I would have then - but at the time I mean there I was training to be a saboteur and my politics were going beyond that very rapidly, but I never really had a chance to catch up -

What would have happened was I would have become so involved, I believe, with the congress sort of orientation that I would have then felt obliged to tell them about my ARM connection, but I never - it never quite - it nearly got there (Tape off)

J.F. So then?

S.K. Well, I think the ARM in the Cape I think it was very different in the Cape from the Transvaal and Natal - in the Transvaal and Natal the whites who entered it tended to be people who were - considered themselves Trotskyists, ultra leftists, Marxists

S.K. .... already, right, but Marxists who weren't in the mainstream of South African Marxism - whereas in the Cape they were very much on the other side of ideology, and I think that many of the people - and we talking really in terms of a handful of people - but the people who were recruited I think were people who would have been recruited to whatever was going, and that the ARM happened to be there at a time when nothing else was....

J.F. For whites?

S.K. For - cert - for - certainly for whites - that we stood there and watched the Langa march - I mean there were 30,000 people led by Sebukwe who came into town, and of course for us the P.A.C. then was something that was, you know, very much in the Cape that existed - it was an important factor and (.....) which was I mean these same liberal whites who would rather have Poko (?) and the P.A.C., and subsequently people like Duncan, who was the great guru of the liberal movement - Liberal Party - I mean did become very strongly aligned with P.A.C., and I think sort of deeply there was an - such an anti communist thing that bound them together that all else went away, but I mean Poko was anathema by - everybody considered it wrong and terrible -

But I think for people like me - you know, we became radicalised, and I suppose what was different in that period was that people like me who came from nowhere was looking or going - automatically going to the most radical possibilities, that there was no question about us -

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1962 or 63 | You know, the Liberal Party hardly existed, COD was outlawed very soon - early in the '60's or if - no, it wasn't - was it outlawed - it may not have been outlawed, but basically there was no overt political activity, really, except the Liberal Party, and that was no longer really something towards which one looked because it was - I think it was so obvious that South Africa wasn't something for which whites had to find a solution, but something for which the solution would come from the rest of the population, and into which you had to play - in which you had to play a part -

And I think what was different was that we were - we came from nowhere - we were just young whites who hated what was going on, and spearheaded in a way the beginning of white involvement in - I mean of white, ordinary white involvement - non Marxist in a way -

I mean I know there were people like Helen Joseph - people like that who were not Marxists and so on, but they came in in a period when mass Congress Alliance activity was there for them to respond to, and the period we became aware nothing was happening - it was after everything had been squashed - lots of radical legislation was coming in to, you know, make dissent almost impossible -

MAIRIUS SCHOEN

And there were lots of people who came in from the ranks of the Afrikaaners, from - I mean people like Marie Schoen, who (be)- came involved then - Lynette van der Reit who, you know....

J.F. Was Marie arrested for ARM?

S.K. No, but he was - he was - he wasn't, no - he never - he was congress (?) but he in a way was the same - he was in Johannesburg and therefore had contact at that level. If there'd been more

- S.K. .... activity, more organisation (in) the Cape we would have been there too - I don't think there was any divide really into the recognition of who was going to bring about change.
- J.F. So you're saying in Cape Town it was kind of pre Marxists, the people who were....
- S.K. Ja.
- J.F. But in Natal it was definitely - I didn't know it was Trotskyists and....
- S.K. Yes, there were....
- J.F. I really don't know much about it because there isn't much written - I read and I know people, but I just don't know the people and there isn't much written.
- S.K. I can't remember everybody's (?) names but all the people - a lot of the people, you know, became sort of academics - well, no, you wouldn't call some of them - you'd get more out of (... ..) (Sounds like you learn) - you wouldn't call him a Trotskyist - but there were people who were developed ideologists.
- J.F. I had always thought of the ARM as kind of the left wing of the Liberal Party, or people disillusioned with the Liberal Party's direction and its.....
- S.K. Non violence, because it made a great emphasis on non violence - certainly - I certainly think Leftwich, Vine, Hugh Lewin were people exactly like that - I think they were people who were never Marxists and never would have been, but I also think - I mean Hugh was in prison for a long time and therefore got influenced - I don't know what he was like before -
- I think that people like Vine and Leftwich were very heavily aligned to the West, you know - I don't think they could ever have become happy with anything that had anything to do with Marxism or anti capitalism -
- a guy called Watson*
- Also the main sabotage trainer in the Cape was widely considered after our arrest to be an MI5 operative.
- J.F. To what end - on the base that MI5 specifically sent someone down to South Africa? (You're still faint - not clear)
- S.K. Mmm, something like that - he certainly was in demolitions in the British Army (Laugh) which is a rather bizarre background to have for - yes, I think there was the feeling that he got out pretty smoothly and disappeared (Laugh) off the face of the earth - Robert Watson his name was.
- J.F. And did you suspect him at the time at all?
- S.K. He was always held in some reservation, certainly. I remember going - I was friendly with his girlfriend, and they would like throw a party - he would - I think she was above suspicion, but he was very sophisticated - and I remember they had a party once and we discovered secret tapes - tape recorders going - and they invited basically everybody who was radical in - at Cape Town University to this party (Laugh) and we had -
- Selina Moltano*

- S.K. .... I mean there was one English student who was recruited in a very round about way by the South African Security and came out and, you know, with great kind of confessions about it subsequently - they all were in one sort of grouping together - the whole thing was I mean wide open to manipulation (Laugh) and infiltration - but certainly this chap had been in demolitions in the British Army and he taught - taught - he taught the saboteurs who taught the saboteurs, so to speak, on the nitty gritty of the thing and smuggled in plastic explosives into South Africa.....
- J.F. And where did this sabotage training take place?
- S.K. Well, in - initial training took place, I suppose, on dummy equipment so that that wasn't very difficult - you did that basically wherever you were - it's very difficult to remember - I mean some of it took place on Table Mountain - and then you basically did a job and tested out your - your theory - so it wasn't very profound.
- J.F. And you didn't have any connection with the Natal....
- S.K. I personally didn't at all, nothing - I mean that was - as far as I know that was between Hugh Lewin and Leftwich were the great mates.....
- J.F. What, that they were kind of national high command?
- S.K. Mmm, type of thing, ja.
- J.F. And there was also the Jo'burg contingent?
- S.K. That was - I think Hugh was Jo'burg, and then there was a Natal contingent as well - and eventually Adrian became State witness and basically travelled round and gave evidence.....
- J.F. Yes, well we'll get there (?)
- S.K. (Laugh) Well. Hivson
- J.F. So what were their names in Johannesburg?
- S.K. God, I'll have difficulty - I'll have to find you a book to read - I'll have difficulty remembering.
- J.F. But what books were written?
- S.K. Oh, several (?) - there were some sort of pot-boiler written soon after - came out the same time as I came out of prison - a couple of journalists wrote a little pot-boiler.
- J.F. O.K., I'll follow that up with the book then...
- S.K. But in the Cape I think people were very different - I mean they were all - the people I knew were really hi - almost unpoliticised people - I mean they were people just entering an awareness.....
- J.F. Could maybe follow up just the - what happened - you didn't actually sabotage yourself but you were involved in assisting....
- S.K. Yes, blowing up - driving saboteurs out to a couple of pylons and the - and the railway line was sabotaged. There was this

S.K. .... interesting chap who I knew as Luke, who was one of the main saboteurs, and he - after the one sort of job said to me : Let's go to my parents' place - it's O.K., they deaf and dumb - and I thought he meant in a sort of political sense, but in fact both his parents were literally (Laugh) deaf and dumb, I discovered afterwards -

I mean then people started getting arrested - there were mass raids throughout Cape Town that I assumed at the time were sort of one-off raids of kind of mainstream political whites really - the kind of progressives, liberals, that sort of - which was unusual - I mean that was the first time there were really mass raids - about 200 people raided -

And Leftwich was one of the people raided, and under his bed they discovered a kit of mock sabotage training stuff - you know, sort of simulated detonators and so on, but enough to make them feel they'd got onto something - he was then arrested, and his girlfriend, who was the daughter of a judge, van der Riet, she moved something like a suitcaseful of plastic explosives during the day from one place to the other, and the police were watching her, and you know, it was all sort of - I mean they simply couldn't believe what they were seeing basically -

Anyway he was arrested and - and began to sort of name and betray people one after the other, so (Laugh) over the next ten days people were being arrested - and apparently there were all these fine contingency plans about how everybody had to escape if they were under threat, but I mean they hadn't filtered down to the sort of rank and file, so I sort of hung about, you know, seeing people arrested and thinking this can't happen to me (Laugh) but was eventually arrested and, you know found -

I mean they actually confronted me with Leftwich and wanted me obviously to give evidence against him - I mean they - the last thing they wanted was for me to stand trial and for me - you know, me, this young pretty Afrikaaner girl to stand trial while this Jewish radical student leader came off - got off - but in fact it worked out the other way around and he was the one who gave evidence and we stood trial.

J.F. So when they confronted you with Leftwich they said : Look.....

S.K. They took me into a room where he was sitting talking into a (Laugh) tape recorder - I mean I kept on saying - they kept saying : Oh, you know, you don't have to keep anything from us - I mean Leftwich has told us everything - I said : He'd never - he'd never do that, you know - so they walked me into this room where he was sitting, and he was smoking, which really got to me - I mean he was smoking and I said : God, they let you have cigarettes - and they said : You too can have cigarettes (Laugh) you know, tell all -

And you know, he sort of said to me : Well, you know, there's no point in holding out - I've told them everything (Laugh)

J.F. So he wasn't embarrassed to see you brought in and find him, literally speaking - he didn't stop and....

S.K. I think he was, and subsequently when he came out he - when he came to Britain I mean he contacted everybody who'd stood trial except me - I mean he basically in fact wrote to John and asked



S.K. .... him if he had a photograph (Laugh) of me....

J.F. To who? *Lloyd -*

S.K. To John who'd been sort of in the background - I mean he'd been marginally involved - but John and I had been a sort of big deal on the campus, so he knew that John knew me.

J.F. What do you mean big deal?

S.K. Well, we'd be a big affair on the campus for three years or so, so Leftwich - or was it John he wrote to (?) or perhaps one of my co-accused - but anyway he wrote to somebody and asked for a photograph of me but he - everybody else he contacted and asked them to forgive him (Laugh)

J.F. And why did he want a photograph of you?

S.K. I don't know - I mean I suppose he thought he really did the most dirty on me - God knows.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

S.K. It might not have been him - I had a co-accused that he might have written to.

J.F. So you - did you feel obviously totally betrayed and shocked that he was the linchpin main guy and here he was selling everyone....

S.K. No, I didn't - I mean I understood - in a way my lawyers really had to work up my anger because I just felt, as always, slightly fatalistic and you know, here was this guy and he thought they'd hang him and, you know, that's what he did and perhaps I would have done the same - I mean I didn't feel particularly -

I do - I did - subsequently I felt, you know, that one had to draw very clear lines about betrayal in those circumstances - that there wasn't much room for forgiveness because other people were coming after and, you know it was an ongoing struggle, so I felt very strongly I mean I'd never have anything to do with him at all - not that I'm any longer interested, but for a period I had a sort of fascination of wanting, I suppose like people do against people who control what happens to one -

I mean I suppose it's the sort of thing that people who get kidnapped have about their kidnappers - I mean you have a sort of involvement that is a bit bizarre and so on, and for a time I had that with Leftwich but, you know, I always felt that politically it was entirely wrong and iniquitous and that was that, and if the struggle had ended then I could have forgiven him but not as it went on.

J.F. And so - I still want to kind of take it a bit more (.....) you walked in the room and you saw that happening with him and then they said you know, you could do the same thing as him and you said no - you refused him.

S.K. No, because I always knew - I had this sort of attitude that I - by then I had an attitude that it was up to me and that I was - I had certain standards and certain commitments that although I - it wasn't very developed - I knew where I stood in terms of South African history, and I was a person that was there and I was going to behave in a certain way as far as my country was concerned, and that didn't allow me to betray anybody, even if they were shits (Laugh) you know -

So I always knew that if I confessed or made a statement they would use that in order to get me to give evidence, and I could see very clearly from the beginning that I was obviously quite unimportant, and they would love to get this president of NUSAS who was also a Jew - I mean that was just entirely in line with what they wanted, and I happened to be in a position where they didn't want me on trial - there's no way they wanted me on trial -

I mean I was far too mainstream as far - I mean it offended them to find an Afrikaaner woman, you know, on the wrong side of the law - I mean they hated it - and they'd have loved me to renege on everything and so on, and I understood that if I made a statement they would drag me off to court to give evidence, so I held out - and then eventually they beat me up and that was that (Laugh) - then I confessed.

J.F. So how long before they beat you up?

S.K. It was something like ten days that I - after I was detained - and then they interrogated me over a period of - through a night or something and then ended up sort of bashing my head against the floor and then re-running what - I mean they - basically they had the story from Leftwich - what they wanted was my confession in order to have me there so they could get me as a witness, but I still managed to -

I made the confession and always - I mean always in the background was Nelson Mandela (Laugh) but you know, I didn't know anything about him, but he was this figure, and Rivonia just happened and I wasn't going to stand up in court and be on the wrong side, and I had these people on Robben Island on the -

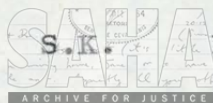
You know, they were the people that I was basically living up to - that was the standards that were being set, even though they had nothing to do with anything I was telling anybody - they were simply symbols of what side one was on, I suppose.

J.F. And so did they actually - was it like a Afrikaans security policeman who started manhandling you?

S.K. Yes, they always interrogated me in Afrikaans, although I always insisted on speaking English because I felt, you know, it gave me some advantage but - yes (Laugh) he was well known in the Cape and - I mean there's a long saga - you can read it - I think I wrote a chapter in Alby's book, if I remember, and it - ja, it was very frightening - I mean I'd never really been in any violence, I'd never really seen any -

I'd seen one incident of violence towards an African servant, but otherwise it was an entirely sort of frightening and uncontrolled sort of situation for me.

J.F. And he didn't have any trouble doing this to a.....



S.K. No, I think he - I think he enjoyed it (Laugh) I didn't really sort of see myself as an Afrikaaner - you know, I wasn't - South African yes, and I suppose for me South African was so ....

- S.K. .... closely allied with being Afrikaans that it never - I never actually spelt it out in my own head, and it was really only when I came to trial and the press made quite a lot about this General Kemp who'd been a rebel in the First World War - I mean he'd been a Afrikaaner - a right wing rebel - and they started making quite a lot about my connections with him that I suddenly sort of thought ja, well, I'm Afrikaans (Laugh)
- I hadn't actually ever thought much about it - I didn't sort of feel I'm an Afrikaaner, you know, this chap shouldn't be beating me up - I just saw him as being - I don't know - I mean it's very bizarre being in detention, and you lose all real connection with anything really.
- J.F. How long were you in detention?
- S.K. I think altogether about three and a half weeks, something like that...
- J.F. And then the confession?
- S.K. Oh, well, and then a bit more, and then trial - awaiting trial with - an then sentence.
- J.F. And the trial was - who was being tried, just you?
- S.K. No, no, no, it was five of us - it was - so initially we stood - we were charged with sabotage and then it was - a deal was made for a lesser charge, and it was Spike Duke got ten years and who was a sort of non political playboy on the campus - it was Alan Brooks who, like me, sort of went into the mainstream of politics....
- J.F. Afterwards?
- S.K. Concurrently almost - I mean we both - he was studying under Jack Simons or with at least then (?) - I had connections through Alan, so we were being radicalised almost simultaneously with being in the ARM - it was happening at the same time - and a chap called Anthony Trew (who) now works for DNA, and again his father was Automobile Associat(ion) - I mean they were all totally non political background, Alan as well - Lynn van der Reit, she became a witness - who were the other charged people - Eddie Daniels was the only Coloured guy...
- J.F. And you hadn't even known of him?
- S.K. Yes, he was a well known Liberal Party member....
- J.F. When you said that they kept the black - they talked about blacks but you didn't know about him - did you know that it was he.....
- S.K. I knew about Eddie, yes - I mean he was well known and I think - I mean there was an African in Johannesburg that I met here subsequently - you know, I really don't think they had more than five non whites in the whole outfit.
- J.F. So is it all in the book, how the trial came over (?)
- S.K. Mmm.
- J.F. And you got - how much did you get?
- S.K. I got five years with something suspended - two or three suspended, I can't remember - then my father went to see Vorster ....

- S.K. .... who was Minister of Justice, and Vorster tried to make this big divide between those people who were NUSAS and those who weren't in NUSAS, and I'd certainly never been in NUSAS, and you know, how NUSAS had misled us all, and so I was released early from my sentence - about a year early, I think.
- J.F. How much did you do?
- S.K. About 17 months including detention - and I met - most of it I was the only white woman in the country on a political sentence, so most of it I spent really on my own - now and again with criminal prisoners - white prisoners - in Pretoria just on my own sitting in the death cell but with - in exercise time mixing with black criminal prisoners, women - and then the last sort of seven months I was taken to Barberton, which is on the Swaziland border, and the Fisher trial had finished, and I was joined by about five or six women out of the Fisher trial - some from the original Fisher trial - the Communist Party members being charged with being - and so that was the first time that I was really with people, and that was, you know, very formative again (Laugh)....
- J.F. How so?
- S.K. Well, because that was the first time that I really - although they couldn't quite make me out because you know, here I was the sort of ARM oddity and they couldn't quite sort of understand my closeness to them - my feeling about them - but for me it was fantastic - I mean you know, straight out of Pretoria (Laugh) Johannesburg, the ~~first~~ (?) and they'd been there, they'd known people and they'd really been in the movement and everything that I'd known nothing - had no real contact with, and some of them had gone back quite a long way to the '50's and so on, and we spent these seven months together -
- And then I was released, and by then I was determined to sort of get back to Cape Town and see Alby again, who'd been my defence lawyer - and I was very unusually then not house arrested when I was released - I was - most - all political prisoners were being house arrested (.....) - so I was sent back to East London where my parents were living, without any banning order, so I made a bee-line for Cape Town to go and see my lawyers and I had this civil case against the police for assault pending - and then Alby was detained (Laugh) -
- And then when he came out after three months he just said you know, he'd had it, he was going to get out, so I sort of drifted behind him (Laugh) once again not knowing what was going on.
- J.F. To Britain?
- S.K. Mmm.
- J.F. The time - just to backtrack - when you - was there any substantive contact with these women criminal prisoners - did they - it must have been strange for them to see a - did they know you were a politico?
- S.K. Oh, yes, more than know - I mean - where shall I go back to - first there was trial in Rowland Street in Cape Town, and there there was a lot of resentment because I was making front page headlines every day and you know, they just couldn't - they can't - couldn't stand it because they felt it was all big ....

- S.K. .... drama over nothing and there were they, you know, facing all sorts of serious charges and nobody was paying (Laugh) them any heed.
- J.F. Who, the black women?
- S.K. No, these were white women in Rowland Street so that was there - you want to know....
- J.F. Which white women were they?
- S.K. Just ordinary criminals awaiting trial and so on - a real run down ghastly place - I mean - then Worcester, where I was detained (.....) but the criminal white prisoners again made contact - the black prisoners only very in passing - then Kroonstad, which is the main centre for - for white criminal prisoners in the country, so I mixed with the sort of people sentenced to - on murder charges and so on -

Oucamp  
Then Pretoria - they moved me up to Pretoria pending the Fisher trial finishing, so they were kind of keeping me there - they flew me up in this military aeroplane with all these soldiers and it was really bizarre, and the head of security within the prison service, who was then Brigadier (?) Oucamp - he took me to his home in Pretoria - we got in the military plane to Pretoria, and me in ordinary clothes and with all these soldiers sort of sitting in this aeroplane (Laugh) - I don't know what they made of it -

And then he took me to his house in Pretoria and I had coffee with him and his wife and they (Laugh) - it was absolutely bizarre - and then to Pretoria, where they put me in the death cell because it happened to be empty (Laugh) - that was a good place to keep somebody separate -

But during the day they had to - I mean I had to get out - you know I mean they couldn't - I suppose they could - I mean they did - but you know, periodically they put me in this little courtyard, and the black criminal prisoners were working in the courtyard, hanging up laundry, washing and so on - and yes, as far as they concerned there was absolutely no difficulty - I mean they just recognised me as being congress and they'd say that, and you know, I didn't go into the ramifications of well, no, actually it's not congress, it's the ARM, because as far as they concerned if you were political you were congress, and that was very strong, I mean and I was utterly accepted by them as being friendly and you know, I played with their children -

I wasn't allowed to talk to them, but in fact one did - I mean sort of behind the rows of laundry hanging up.

- J.F. They had children and kids with them?
- S.K. Mmm - yes, there was a little boy I remember, about two and a half - used to eat the soil round the plants - and - and Barberton again the men prisoners - Barberton we had to wash - again you'll find that in the book - we had to wash the clothes of the male criminal prisoners, and they were frequently covered in blood from beatings and so on - but also the male criminal prisoners had to kind of reinforce the windows and so on where we stayed - they had to sort of make more secure our section and so on and there was no - not ever any problem, you know -

S.K. .... between - with people understanding politics and that - I mean I don't think there is in South Africa - you know, people always gave us the Africa sign, thumbs up, and sang and it was just - I mean they didn't have difficulty accepting the fact that we were white women..... in the movement.

J.F. But isn't it a bit unusual to have contact between black and white prisoners - just interviewing Denis - he never - he was just separated from the blacks and that was that.....

S.K. I think with women - I mean certainly in Kroenstad the black women were then in Kroenstad, and they were treated really like shit and they were entirely isolated - I think the problem always arose with white women that there were so few of us, and for the first year I was the only white woman around on a political charge and they -

I mean in Kroenstad they kept me - I'd just come out of 90 days and a trial and I was really mad - I mean I was just you know, in a total state of collapse, and they stuck me back into this whole wing by myself on my own again and I just - and there was nobody - it's in the middle of the Free State - I mean there's nothing - there's nobody and nothing (Laugh) - and I just curled up on my bed and lay there for about a week -

Well, I mean I presume their sensibilities are maybe a bit higher as far as white women are concerned - I don't know - but they couldn't have me lying there - I mean I didn't eat, I didn't anything - I was weighing seven stone - they just - the food came and the food came and I just lay there - I was obviously in a sort of catatonic state - so they put me in with the criminals in this cell for a time - in the section with criminal prisoners for a time, but they gave them enormous warnings -

I mean these women were sort of amazed when they eventually saw me because I came out looking about fourteen, you know, sort of weighing seven stone, looking like a little kid, and they'd been told how dangerous (Laugh) an enemy of the state I was, so it sort of undermined the whole state thing because -

And once I was with them I had some sort of latitude - I mean I bumped into black criminal prisoners in that prison, but the black political prisoners were absolutely isolated - after - I can't remember how long, but after a while with the main body of criminal prisoners the state then - the security - the same *Curcay* Ocump - I mean they basically were playing games with me - I don't know what for, but they were - they were playing games, you know, and I think they felt I'd recovered sufficiently and they then removed me suddenly overnight into a whole section by myself, so once again I was actually in solitary confinement in a whole section of prison all by myself -

They then moved me up to Pretoria where I was on solitary - I mean I think - I don't know - I think they felt on the one hand they weren't intending me to be in solitary - they didn't take me seriously enough for that - but that's how it was because there was no other white political prisoners.

J.F. When you spoke before about Tam (time) you said : I knew my place in South African history and I wasn't going to give State evidence, are you saying that you felt that you had - that as a white you didn't want to let the side down and be seen to be

J.F. .... the kind of white who gives in the way - whereas blacks are strong and have....

S.K. I certainly think I had a very simple idea about not necessarily blacks but people in the movement - you know, the big political people out there, that one didn't do this - but it's not so much as a white - no, not at all - the point I'm really making, and I think it held for many whites like me who were not ideologues - you know, we weren't academics - we hadn't really studied the classics or formed ideas of politics or anything -

We were just really people responding to this - to the situation - to the injustice of the situation - and I don't actually feel that given that, that without that sort of political sophistry that crept in with some people - I think that the ordinary rank and file white never had any difficulty about the fact that this was a struggle in a country in which the overwhelming majority of people were black, and that therefore if you were against the patent injustice of the situation I don't think there was any problem ever about the fact that you were trying to enter into a black struggle, so you might be in cell or in a outfit that happened to have largely whites in it, but the attitude and the spirit of that was, I think, entirely - you know, you were doing it - you were doing your bit in what was essentially a struggle of black people, and even though you may not be with them that was for historic, geographic reasons, and that that's still what it was all about.

J.F. Had you heard of Braam Fisher or Beyers Naude or any other...

S.K. No - (.....) - the predecessor to Beyers Naude was then coming up against the blasphemy laws - I think his name was (.....) (Jyser - sounds like Hayser) - a priest - he was defrocked - Beyers Naude was sort of that period, but people like that I mean were marginal - but Braam Fisher - I don't think I really knew that much about him until I was arrested - until he was arrested -

I didn't know he was Afrikaans really - I didn't know much about him and certainly my - certainly people in prison people often assumed he was Jewish - I mean the fact that he came out of this very elite Afrikaaner background wasn't generally known.

When I was in Barberton I was taught by these people out of his trial of Afrikaans version of the red flag that he'd got somebody to translate in prison - it's rather beautiful - very South African oriented version of the red flag. I don't think Braam was very important -

Oh, yes, of course I knew about Braam - I was at university with his daughter - with Elsa - she was my contemporary - very much my contemporary - but I don't think they were - I don't think I deferred to that.

J.F. So he wasn't any kind of influence on South Africa.....

S.K. No - I don't think that's the route I took - you know, I didn't think I had to identify as an Afrikaans rebel.

J.F. And then after you got out you said you left.

S.K. I spent about ten months in South Africa before I left, fighting

- S.K. .... this civil case against the State for assault, which eventually they settled just before I - it went to court - they settled out of court, and then I left - I mean I applied for an exit visa - couldn't get a passport - applied for an exit visa and....
- J.F. At the same time as Alby or shortly thereafter - you were there ten months longer?
- S.K. No, he left - he left about the August and I left the September so about a month elapsed, yes.
- J.F. And Eddie Daniels' trial - was that the same as yours?
- S.K. Ye - well, it was separated at one point, because they kept them under Sabotage Act and some of us were - lesser people were charged under Illegal Organisation or something much lesser.
- J.F. Was that because they caught him with more or because he was black?
- S.K. Well, there was Spike <sup>De Ketter</sup> Dukela as well, who got ten years in the same - he stood trial with Eddie - and he got ten years and spent, I think, a year in prison and was then released.
- J.F. Why was that?
- S.K. Well, he had a Swiss passport for a start (Laugh) - I certainly think yes, it was that Eddie was black to the extent that - I mean I think if not overtly there's a certain recognition that somebody like Spike had no real future - you know, that he - he would be a spent case really by the time he came out, whereas somebody like Eddie, Neville Alexander (?) - Neville Axander (?) was standing trial at that period....
- J.F. But for different....
- S.K. Yes, but it was quite sort of striking, the difference that there was this teacher with four young kids who, almost in parallel with us, had been doing things and organising and so on, and got far higher sentences than we did for...
- J.F. And you got ten years also?
- S.K. He did - the kids got - the kids were 18, that's why (?) they got five years.
- J.F. Which kids?
- S.K. There were four kids, schoolkids who stood trial.
- J.F. With him?
- S.K. Well, at the same time, and associated with him, who actually went in for sabotage. There was also the sort of political discussion group, right - Huey Chewy Chan or something....
- J.F. I remember.
- S.K. But there were also actually four kids from Livingstone High School or somewhere who stood trial.
- J.F. Anyway I was asking you about whites you'd heard of - you'd



- J.F. .... heard of Patrick Duncan?
- S.K. Oh, yes, certainly - not only heard of him, I think I went to a party at his house, certainly - those were the people who were - the white activists who were public in Cape Town were the Randall Vines, Patrick Duncans - I mean they - there was nobody else (Laugh) really.
- J.F. And what did you think of him - had he influenced you in any way - had you ever been attracted to what he was...
- S.K. No - no, because I don't think that one took a lead from whites - I mean I really don't - I don't think that one ever saw that you had to understand what they were about - I mean it was really that there was Nelson Mandela and the Rivonia trialists, you know, and Mandela was then I mean charismatically a symbol of resistance.
- J.F. And what about the role of Adrian Leftwich - do you think that it said anything - maybe it's unfair obviously, but in effect the kind of Piet Benevelds (?) and Adrian Leftwich, the fact that there were whites who cracked so quickly - do you think that that's left a legacy in terms of white activists - he wasn't actually a Craig Williamson - he was - he....
- Baylward*
- S.K. No.....
- J.F. .... he just couldn't...
- S.K. He didn't survive and I mean he still - when he came here to York University tried desperately to continue you know, his commitment and his - and he found himself very heavily ostracised by both ex South Africans (Laugh) and South Africans and British academics.
- J.F. What was he going to try to do?
- S.K. Well, for instance, they set up a Southern Africa studies unit at York University, and he tried to get into that - he was at - he is at York University and found himself very much you know, excluded and closed off -
- Well, I don't think that they cracked any more quickly than a lot of other people - black people cracked - and I don't think because they more obvious - you know, because they're white therefore it somehow is more important - I think people crack - I think Piet Baylward was very surprising - I think he was, you know, iniquitous and an opportunist, because he wasn't new in the whole situation, and he had a lot to give away, and he had a lot of responsibility -
- Leftwich was - I mean he was a big fish in a little pond, you know, and he - he couldn't handle it and he cracked - I mean I think anybody could have done that - I don't think one ought to but I think, you know, basically that's the power on their side - and I don't think people ought to be forgiven but I don't see it as particularly significant at all -
- I mean he didn't have anything in a way to sustain him by way of - you know, if one had to find sort of reasons in a way it's less significant than a black counterpart perhaps...
- Like that Brono.....

S.K. And Tolo, mmm.

J.F. I guess probably the reality is there are lots more Bruno Tolos than Piet Baylavelds but history doesn't - the kind of perception is.....

S.K. They - they highlight it in a way because there (are) so few whites that the whites who crack up I don't think it's significant and I don't think it's significant in terms of white awareness and consciousness - I think - I mean I think South Africa is extraordinary because I don't think there's any question about - I don't mean - I mean in general terms I think that it's very clear what the struggle is about and I think that the main - that's why I don't think the ARM actually has any historical significance - I think it's a - a non event -

I think it was there at the time, it filled a gap for a period for a handful of whites, but I think we would have probably got there anyway. I don't think - I don't think it actually influenced history one way or the other at all - I don't think it represented much, and I don't think many whites ever have looked for a road against apartheid that didn't recognise the importance of the mainstream of struggle -

I think to compare the ARM with anything like the BCM is wrong - you know, the BCM I think has real reasons and real roots, real historical place - I don't think the ARM had - I think it's a - it's a non event (Laugh).

J.F. No, I agree with you except to the extent that I think it's been an important lesson for whites afterwards to look back at - that and (?) Okela - the kind of futility and wrongheadedness of independent white action, or independent action, individual attempts....

S.K. Well, the ARM didn't see itself as acting as white action or independent action - I think that there are whites today, and I've come across whites today, specially amongst Afrikaaners - I don't think amongst non Afrikaaners, because I think non Afrikaaners have a head start - but people coming out of very conservative backgrounds, and conservative rather than Afrikaans but that often is synonymous, I think do still perhaps look towards whites to bring about change, and I'm setting them aside from the Helen Suzmans who consciously look towards a solution that excludes black majority radicalism, right, but they sort of innocent young white people who awakening to the situation in a way that they never did before - they were never in contact with it before - I think there are still sections of them that are looking towards themselves to bring about change and don't recognise that it actually isn't up to them - that they need to find themselves a place alongside the mainstream of struggle, and I think for people like that, you know, something needs to happen to make them see that it's not up to them - that they've actually got to fit into something, but I think they are quite a new phenomenon because I don't think those sort of people (are) anywhere near becoming aware or radicalised at that stage -

But for people like us I don't think there was ever any question about what the struggle was about, and that it was about black majority rule - and I think the only odd question is why there were anti communists and people who had such deep suspicion of the A.N.C., but there weren't many and they've fallen by the wayside - the Alan Patons and so on really have no force left at all.

J.F. What is your analysis of the motivation of that deep anti communists and the Alan Paton, Patrick Duncan, Benjamin (Razuvod) and it continues - Ernie Wentzel, Jill Wentzel - they're still a big factor - not a big factor but they're a problem for the white left or progressive forces - even there's the blacks as well.

S.K. I've found the - well, I think the blacks are different, but I find the white liberals quite difficult because I can understand the Helen Suzmans - you know, to me they fairly clearcut, they've got a stake in the present society, but the true white Liberal Party member in South Africa doesn't - they not liberals in the sense the British are liberals, that they part of the sort of mainstream of capitalism - I mean they really are liberals with a small l, and I don't really know where they come from and where they go to and why they so anti communist, because I really don't think in South Africa there is much middle ground -

You know, I think that one becomes radicalised and one jumps straight right over, and there is very little in the middle - I mean I can remember my own relationship to Marxism and the time - I mean I was studying to be (a) physiotherapist - you know, this was hardly an academic occupation - I came out of a entirely non intellectual - I mean my father read and he was bright, but we had no books in the house - he thought that, you know, if you needed a book you can go to the library, so I had no books, I had - nobody talked about anything -

I came sort of desperately searching when I went to university but I didn't really know - I've no background - but I never had any problem with recognising that only the most radical solution was appropriate in South Africa, and that wasn't a radical solution in the way that one may look towards Poko, which was a sort of violent radicalism - I mean radicalism in terms of violence - it wasn't that -

I was never - I never felt that killing whites was the solution at all - I always just felt that it needed a total overthrow of the system and that never - it never was a problem to me and I'm - I've come across many, many young whites in similar -

That's why I always believe young whites who come out of no background at all and have just landed in a totally committed position - ideologically committed position - because I know that in a way it's the only way the society presents itself, and my only problem is why there are people like Alan Paton - where they came from -

Perhaps they came from a background of anti communism - I don't know - I don't know what his history is.

J.F. And then I guess just the last thing is that what your further evolution was in Britain - what you.....

S.K. Well, I think in South Africa I became fairly firmly rooted within a sort of congress commitment - the problem was, and I very much saw my place as being, as I say, with Nelson Mandela as the sort of symbolic head, but the real people that I turned to both in I suppose those 18 months while I was active and then the 18 months in prison were - tended to be the white stalwarts - those were the people I was seeing - but I knew of people like Archie Sabeko, Alex Leguma - the people who were A.N.C. leaders within Cape Town at that period, so I didn't ....

S.K. .... actually have personal dealings with them, but they were there and I saw myself very much in that context - I worked within defence and aid finance committee where all the radicals seemed to be - the old stalwarts, you know - the Carnesons, the Alexanders -

And by the time I came here I mean there was no question that I was a congress person, so I didn't evolve here - I really just made sort of practical connections here, and you know, there was never any question that I would be part of the A.N.C. here -

And of course there were about ten years where very little was happening here - there's quite a strong youth section - but very little was happening in South Africa, never mind here - so it was quite difficult, that period after I left.

J.F. You left - you arrived when?

S.K. '66 - end of '66 - and until really '76 - oh, well the unions started, or the working class started really becoming - making an impact in the early '70's - '73, round about there - but as far as the organised political movement was concerned very little was happening in those ten years, so it was very difficult, but I think I evolved in that sense that I established for myself a sort of historical perspective that even though nothing was happening it had to happen eventually, and this was just a period -

Also a very important thing was that in a way although I had read a bit of Marxism in South Africa, and certainly considered myself a Marxist when I left - I mean one came across the odd - God, an odd obscure (Laugh) Lenin tract, when I think of it - emperor criticism and I can't even remember - stuff I wouldn't dream of reading now - but I certainly considered myself a Marxism (Marxist) but I was first and foremost a South African nationalist in the sort of broad sense of the word -

And what happened to me in Britain, I think, was that I actually became very aware of capitalism and being anti capitalist in a way that you can't be - couldn't be in South Africa - I mean capitalism didn't really strike you then, you know, because it was so overlaid with fascism and racism and so on, whereas here initially when you get on the tubes and you see black people can get on the tubes and sit next to you nobody - there's no hue and cry - you quite impressed, but that evaporates pretty quickly, so I think both that - both the sort of anti capitalism and I suppose -

I mean I visited the Soviet Union once and I'd never been interested at all - I mean as far as I was concerned you know, these places were foreign places and South Africa really ended at Mesina, you know, the Limpopo and that was it, but I did -

I remember when I did go to the Soviet Union a year after I came out I mean I did find it extraordinary that so many of the prejudices I'd sort of just assumed about it - it didn't bother me iota (?) - couldn't care less, you know - but in fact the place didn't look like a police state - there were more police in West Germany than there were - and army - than there were in Moscow - and - so that sort of sense of that I'd been lied to - that I'd swallowed a lot of lies - and the fact that you could be there and people honoured you for what you were - those sort of developments, so at a international level I dev-

- S.K. .... developed internationally - but as far as South Africa is concerned I think I was already there when I was there.
- J.F. And there meant joining the A.N.C. or....
- S.K. No, no - I mean there was no question of making actual contact in that sense - the most, I suppose, was through the movement in a broader sense so, you know, something like Focus '64 that I had contact with and I did my little bit for and ran around collecting articles perhaps.
- J.F. You mean in South Africa?
- S.K. Mmm - which was being done by people like Alex Leguma and so on - it was a legal but semi clandestine sort of newssheet that had articles about current - sort of semi intellectual, semi theoretical articles about various things that were going on in South Africa, taking up a line - political sort of - developed political articles - and that was really, I suppose, in practice what my contact was.
- J.F. That's - you mean after you got out of prison?
- S.K. No, before - so it was concurrent with ARM.
- J.F. Right, but once you got to Britain did that mean....
- S.K. Integration into the A.N.C. certainly - although as you know that really until Moragora in '69 actual membership of the A.N.C. didn't become formalised, but I mean you know, one was in the A.N.C. (Laugh)
- J.F. For whites or for everyone?
- S.K. For non Africans - non African membership of the A.N.C. was only accepted, was only ratified in '69, Moragora.
- J.F. I have a lot of off the record questions - if there's anything else that you want to say that you think we should cover....
- S.K. No, no, I don't know - I mean I suppose if I thought more about it I might find things that fitted in with what you looking for but I find it quite hard.....

END OF INTERVIEW.