

J.F. where and when you were born and then we can just progress - if you'd kind of take the lead then I'll just follow up towards the end if there's anything that (.....)

M.S. I should perhaps tell you who I am, too - I'm Marius Schoon - I was born in Johannesburg on the 22nd. June, 1937.

J.F. And what kind of a family background?

M.S. I came from a very South African background - my father was an Afrikaaner - my mother came from one of the very well established and respected English-speaking Cape families. My father was a teacher - spent his whole life teaching Afrikaans at an English medium school. We spoke only Afrikaans at home - in fact I was not allowed to speak English until I went to school.

My father definitely was a supporter of the Nationalist Party, though I think he disapproved very strongly of Hertzog not going into the war against Hitler. However, he was emotionally definitely a nationalist. Throughout my childhood there was a great amount of political talk in the house. I remember very clearly as a child the continual political conversations that there were.

I remember very clearly the jubilation in 1948 when Smuts was defeated in Standton (?) at the general election. I went to an English medium school. From school I went to the University of Stellenbosch, where my father had also been, and in fact where my grandfather had been. I went to university sharing to a large extent my father's view of the world. I was quite convinced that apartheid with justice was possible.

Coming from that type of white South African background I had never had any contact at all with black people except with black people as servants. I'd never, never had the opportunity of being in any form of a situation where there was a relationship of equality between black and white.

While I was at university I was studying a subject which at the time was called Native Administration, and my way to the left is actually stranger than that of most people's because I came to the left purely intellectually through actions of the Nationalist government that - you will remember the very bulky report brought out by the Tomlinson Commission on the future of the reserves - we spent a great deal of time discussing the Tomlinson Commission in class. My professor at the time was Nic Olivier, who subsequently became a PFP MP - and I was quite convinced that in fact this was the intellectual answer - that the findings of the Tomlinson Commission to me indicated that apartheid with justice was in fact going to be a reality.

The government then issued a white paper on the Tomlinson Commission in which they made it quite clear that the major recommendations of the Tomlinson Commission as regards consolidation of land, as regards the amount of money that would have to be spent on education and on housing was completely unacceptable. This happened during my second year at university.

I found it shattering because for the first time I realised that in fact the whole system of apartheid was just a con - that there was no intention whatsoever of actually trying to make it work - that the government was not prepared to spend the money, the government was not prepared to face white opposition which real consolidation of land would have brought about.

M.S. I used to go into Cape Town from Stellenbosch fairly frequently - not every weekend - every second weekend or so - and I started buying New Age, which was sold just outside the station in Cape Town - outside the main station. Now I started reading New Age at the time when I was very open to an alternative view of South Africa because it had appeared to me that the government had now made it apparent that the apartheid system couldn't work.

New Age had an enormous influence on me. I started reading New Age. I felt very isolated at Stellenbosch - there was basically nobody I could talk to. There were a small group of people who had slightly more liberal views than the rest of Stellenbosch, but Stellenbosch was a very, very reactionary place at the time. I started reading New Age - I had nobody really to talk to about it.

Then I was walking through the streets of Stellenbosch one day and I went into a small shop to buy cigarettes - shop down the bottom end of town run by Coloured people, and on the counter there was a pile of New Age, and I suddenly found I could buy New Age in Stellenbosch. So I would go in there on a Friday and I would buy New Age. After this had been going on for a few months I came in one evening and for the first time the man behind the counter, the Coloured man behind the counter actually spoke to me and he said : You know, you're the only white who ever comes in to buy the paper.

And we started chatting to each other fairly casually over a period of some weeks. And then I came in one Friday and he said to me : What are you doing on Sunday? So I said : I don't think I'm doing anything - so he says : Won't you come and eat with us on Sunday at lunch?. And I went, and this is now the first time that I had social contact with black people. I went and had lunch, and it was very stiff to begin with - I found it very difficult - and this man and his two daughters clearly found it quite difficult as well.

But gradually over the next couple of months I would fairly regularly go and have lunch there on a Sunday, and we actually started becoming friends - we would speak about the paper, we would speak about what was in the paper. After this had been going on for a couple of months towards the end of my second year at university, when I came there one Sunday for lunch there was an African man there who'd also been invited for lunch.

Now I'd found that I could actually speak to Coloured people, but this now was the first African person that I had social contact with - and to my great surprise I found that this man knew everything. He was quite the best informed person about South African politics that I had met. He could analyse, he could explain - I was absolutely fascinated. And he was there the next couple of Sundays, and then he invited me to go and visit him in the township - in the black township in Stellenbosch.

I started going to see him quite regularly - would go illegally into the township without a permit - and one evening I was there - this story actually sounds incredible - it sounds unbelievable what I'm going to tell you now, Julie - and we were talking, and I'd brought half a bottle of brandy and we'd had a couple of drinks, and he said to me : I've got something for you, come out into the back yard, and he paced out from his back step so many paces forward and then so many paces to the left and he started digging, and he got out a tin box and the tin box was jammed with books, and he said : Here, read this - and he gave me Lenin's What is to be Done, which came out of his tin box, and it changed my life.

M.S. And from my contact with this comrade in Stellenbosch - his name I'm actually not going to tell you because he's still at home and I'm sure still having a very, very great influence at home. I know that now from conversations with other comrades that this was in fact a very old activist in the Western Cape - somebody who had been involved in all the struggles in the Western Cape. From there it was a very easy progression for me in fact to make contact with the Congress of Democrats. I joined the Congress of Democrats.

It took me a long time to decide to join the Congress of Democrats - I toyed for a long time about whether I should join the Liberal Party or the Congress of Democrats. I could never bring myself to sign the Liberal Party's application form, which had a statement at the bottom saying: I am opposed to all forms of oppression like racism and communism. I could never bring myself to sign this - and in the year after I left university in 1959 I in fact joined COD and started working with the Congress Alliance. So where do we go from there?

J.F. When you say started working with the Congress Alliance - just let me take it a few questions back - before you found New Age had you heard of the A.N.C. - was it anything your parents talked about or came up when you talked to people at Stellenbosch?

M.S. There was a great deal of discussion at home about the defiance campaign. As I mentioned earlier, my mother came from one of the liberal Cape families - my mother was Rose Innes. My mother had a very high regard for Gandhi - she'd read virtually everything that had been written in English about him - she'd read quite a lot of his stuff. There was great interest at home about the defiance campaign.

However, the view expressed at home was basically that those people involved in the defiance campaign were misguided and that their judgment was flawed because in fact the apartheid system was going to bring about the very reforms that they were wanting. So they had - I can't remember if the discussion at home was specifically about the A.N.C. or if it was just about those people involved in the defiance campaign.

J.F. And was there always a sense that those people were black - did you ever think there could be whites involved with the A.N.C.'s work - a white Afrikaaner like yourself be in the ranks of the congress movement - was there any perception of that.....

M.S. I don't think there was any perception of that at all - I think that what is the gentleman's name who used to edit Contact - his father had been the governor general?

J.F. Patrick Duncan?

M.S. Now there was an awareness at home that Patrick Duncan had been involved in the defiance campaign. A great deal of criticism was expressed at home as well about this - but until I started reading New Age I had no idea whatsoever that it was possible for African people and Indian people to work together, let alone for whites to work together - for whites to work with the black people of South Africa.

J.F. And who did you think was writing New Age - did you have a sense that it was whites and blacks and Indians and Coloureds or what did you - did you have any perception when you bought New Age who....

M.S. When I started buying New Age I had no perception who was writing it. Subsequently during my third year at university I became very friendly with Jan Rabie, and they had a fairly large circle of Coloured friends, young Coloured intellectuals - people like Richard Reeve, Peter Clark. Through Richard and Peter I started meeting an increasing number of black intellectuals. James Matthews became a close friend of mine during that time - and by then it was clear to me that New Age was in fact being written by black people, some white people actually working together, actually trying to solve South Africa's problems together.

The effect of those particular intellectual circles in Cape Town was very profound - it was as - it had as great an impact on me as the direct political discussions that I was having in Stellenbosch with the comrade. My social life became almost exclusively with the young Coloured intellectuals that I met in Cape Town. I came into contact with a lot of Unity Movement people. I increasingly found their position very, very difficult to take - it seemed to me very hysterical - I saw no sign of them ever actually doing anything except talking.

By the time I was in my third year at university it was clear to me that the choice for my political future was either between the Liberal Party or Congress, and I was drawn to the Liberal Party, and yet there were things about the Liberal Party that I found very strange - I saw in various white houses that I went into - I saw a very stark contrast between the affluence of the white houses and the poverty that I'd become aware of in Cape Town. I saw a very patronising attitude from some of these white liberals - that they did not seem to be really close to the black people that they had in their houses - it was as though they had the black people there as exhibits.

J.F. Can I also ask you about the process of meeting this Coloured guy at the shop and then actually listening to him actually moving to see him as a human being - we were talking earlier on about people who just actually don't listen, whether it's because they're black or so-called communist - but what was the process whereby someone from your cultural background could overcome that barrier to go - you're actually learning from a black person?

M.S. Well, Julie, I think I was fortunate in that my first contact with black people was in fact with Coloured people. This comrade in Stellenbosch - I found the first day I was there that he had the same very great interest in the Afrikaans language that I had. He spoke beautiful Afrikaans, he'd read all the poetry - we could speak to each other about Afrikaans poetry. I found the first day that I was there that actually we were interested in the same things, not just in reading New Age, but that we had an enormous interest in Afrikaans poetry.

He was a man of very little education - a couple of years high school. He'd come from a very poor farming community in the Karoo - but it came as a complete shock to me that culturally in fact we were not different at all. We were both passionately interested in Afrikaans as a language, in the poetry - we found that we had an enormous amount that we could talk to each other about in addition to the politics. So similarly with the young Coloured intellectuals, handful of African intellectuals that I started meeting in Cape Town very soon afterwards, I found that one could talk to people again not only about the politics but that people were actually very well informed about all sorts of things, and I suddenly realised that I could be learning from people.

M.S. Now this happened to me at a time in my life when I was perhaps very open to learning new things. You know, my life's been very different from that of the bulk of my contemporaries at university - people that were in my class at university are now judges of the supreme court or senior officials in government, some of them working in foreign affairs - very respectable, very wealthy attorneys.

Now my life could very easily have been that too, and yet I took decisions, some of them conscious, some of them unconscious, during the late '50s which have ensured that in fact my life's been completely different, and I think I have no doubt whatsoever that in a small way I'm going to make a greater contribution to South Africa than those who've decided to be supreme court justices or wealthy attorneys in Benoni.

J.F. So you spoke Afrikaans with the Coloured guy that sold you New Age?

M.S. Yes.

J.F. What was more difficult, to overcome the colour bar or to move on to accepting a violent restructuring inevitably through violence?

M.S. Well, by the time the decision was taken in '61 I was quite convinced that the - that violence was the only option. It was quite clear to me after the state of emergency in 1960 - the enormous state repression in 1960 - that a reform as (?) change was quite impossible. The shooting at Sharpeville was devastating, you know. We have become used to the killing in our streets and perhaps we've become hardened to it, but the outrage that there was at home, and not only about those that we would regard - from those that we would regard as progressives - from a very, very wide strata of white opinion at home the outrage about the shootings at Sharpeville - unless we actually lived through it I don't think we can see what an impact Sharpeville made - and the shooting down of people protesting against the pass laws and the discussion that went around it from my friends in congress, from what I'd come to know of the reality of South Africa - by that time I was working for New Age - my first wife was in fact involved in putting up the MK manifesto in Johannesburg a few days after the 16th. - few days after the first MK comrades had gone into action - she was eventually sentenced for that, served a prison term for it.

By '61 there was no doubt in my mind that change was not going to come about solely through negotiation - that in fact the force and the repression of the South African state had to be met with the organised violence of the people's army. But by '61 I was a very different person from what I'd been in '57/'58 - I mean I - I - my thinking had changed completely. My whole way of life had changed completely.

J.F. I was going to ask you when you first saw that New Age was that '57?

M.S. That would have been sometime in - in - I went to university in '55 - it must have been sometime early in '56.

J.F. Maybe you'd better trace for me a bit more - so '56 how long did you do over the time of speaking to the Coloured guy and meeting the African guy?

M.S. This was most of '56 - the - and this was at the same time as the Tomlinson Report and the white paper on the Tomlinson Report. Then during '57 I - through my friendship with Jan Rabie I started spending more and more time in Cape Town.

M.S. My social life became to a large extent then intellectual circles in Cape Town, most of whom were much more left wing than I'd ever experienced before. Then I was up in Johannesburg in '58 - I worked as a clerk for a supreme court judge in '58.....

J.F. Did you get (?) a degree from Stellenbosch?

M.S. I had a BA degree, yes, and I was at the time doing an LLB at Wits which I've subsequently stopped doing. So I spent a year in Johannesburg. During that year in Johannesburg I started working off and on with COD, though I was also very drawn to the Liberal Party. Then in '59 I went back to Cape Town. I spent a year working in Cape Town, and during that time I shared a flat with Breyten Breytenbach. I went back to Johannesburg early in '60. I started working very closely with the Congress of Democrats in '60. I became very close friends with Indrus Naidoo, and Indrus and the young Indians in the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress - I'm thinking of Indrus particularly, of Aziz Pahad, who's now a member of our NEC, of Shirish Nanabai, had a very, very great influence on me.

So during 1960 I was teaching - I was also writing - starting to write quite regularly for New Age....

J.F. Teaching where?

M.S. Teaching at St. Martin's in Rosettenville.

J.F. A boys school or?

M.S. A boys school - St. Martin's is got a very interesting history - St. Martin's used to be St. Peter's, and when Bantu Education was introduced the Anglican Church was forced to close St. Peter's and they established a boys school using the same premises. Now the bulk of the staff at St. Martin's were members of the Liberal Party. It was chiefly through their influence that I decided not to join the Liberal Party because I found them very irritating, I found them very English - you know, part of my background is - is - I regard myself very definitely as an Afrikaaner - I regard myself very definitely as a South African.

The people that I was teaching with at St. Martin's spoke about home, meaning England, and I - it - I found it quite freaky, and I found that the contact that I had with people in congress, nobody had any doubts that they were South Africans.

END OF SIDE ONE.

M.S. I think that's a dead end - I think let's move on.

J.F. So you were teaching at St. Martin's - it was 1960 and you were...

M.S. 1960 - then during the emergency which followed Sharpeville my army unit was called up to go into Langa, which I was definitely not prepared to do, so I went to Swaziland - I stayed in Swaziland virtually until the end of the emergency.

M.S. While I was in Swaziland I had very close contact indeed with Ruth First, spent a long time talking to Ruth, as well as a number of other comrades who were in Swaziland at the time. I came back slightly before the end of the emergency - three weeks or so before the end of the emergency. I then started teaching at a school called King David in Johannesburg. I spent the bulk of my time out of school doing work for the Congress of Democrats, and following the state of emergency a large number of young whites came into COD, so suddenly COD was transformed from being a fairly middle aged organisation into having in both Johannesburg and Cape Town a very active - not very large but very active group of young whites.

We worked very closely particularly with the Indian comrades in Johannesburg but also with various African comrades. During this time I worked very closely with Mike Ngubeni, who was subsequently tried with me and also sentenced to 12 years.

J.F. Mike Ngubeni?

M.S. N g u b e n i. Now Mike went to prison - he served 12 years on the Island. He and I were in the same trial - then when we came out of prison Mike was one of the accused in the Pretoria 12 trial - he was one of the six who was acquitted in the Pretoria 12 trial in 1977.

J.F. Was that Joe Gquabi's.....

M.S. That's that trial, yes. Mike was subsequently banished to Uppington and as far as I know is in fact still under a banishment order in Uppington (?)

J.F. So when you say doing work for COD what did that mean - what can you say that meant?

M.S. Oh, well, COD produced a two-monthly publication called Counter-attack. I was on the Congress of Democrats propaganda committee - I was involved in producing Counterattack. We were involved in demonstrations on the City Hall steps - a whole series of demonstrations which culminated with the enormous mass demonstrations against the Sabotage Act. We were running a political discussion forum called the New Africa Youth Forum, which I chaired for a while.

We were attending meetings in Kliptown in New Clare (?) organised by the A.N.C. - even though the A.N.C. had been banned the A.N.C. structures were still intact at that time - the structures were only finally smashed with the enormous security trials in '63, '64, '65. I was doing a fair amount of work with Defence and Aid, because the big trials in the Eastern Cape were starting - it was clear that a great deal of work had to be done about that.

I was also working for New Age - I'd go into New Age on Saturday mornings - we'd work there with Ruth - I was having articles in New Age virtually every week. I was doing some freelance journalism for - particularly for the Sunday Times. I mean we were very busy - we were very busy - we did political work possibly six nights a week, and virtually every Sunday, and part of the work was going around ringing doorbells trying to sell our literature, trying to speak to whites.

Now it was a very small group of whites - I mean NUSAS at the time was controlled completely by the liberals - we had virtually no - no either contact with or faith in NUSAS, yet they had young white activists on at least the Cape Town campus and the Wits campus who were members of COD, so we were having contact with - with students.

M.S. The time following Sharpeville was in some ways rather - rather similar to the present period in that there was a political ferment - the organisation had been banned - we were gradually learning the principles of clandestine work. We would be painting slogans in Johannesburg at least one night a week. I painted a beautiful slogan on the prison in Johannesburg, which was there still years afterwards - they were unable to get it off that brick wall.....

J.F. What did it say?

M.S. It said Free Our Leaders. The Indian comrades were involved in something which they'd established called the Picasso Club. The Picasso Club painted slogans regularly all over Johannesburg, particularly on the public library in Johannesburg, where the slogan would go up : Us black folks aren't reading yet - and then the Johannesburg City Council would bring in a machine to sandblast it off, and the day after it had been taken off it would go up again - it was there, oh, for years.

So during this period we were learning rather gropingly the basis of clandestine work, because we were involved in not only the overt political work but also in a measure of clandestine work, there was incredibly close comradeship between the people who were working - in various stages of my life I've had the privilege to experience that very close comradeship, the comradeship which comes from political activism is in fact possibly one of the most rewarding things that can ever happen to you.

In addition to the political work we had a very hectic social life - almost a frenetic social life, because when we had parties everybody had been busy with political work all week - we had grand parties - we were actually living in a way which when I look back at it, the non-racial way in which we were able to live in Johannesburg in the early '60s I think was quite amazing - you know, there were even more restrictions on blacks then than there are now - black people weren't able to drink, for instance.

So running a non-racial social life one was automatically breaking all sorts of laws immediately, and yet we managed to establish small - small but a truly non-racial community amongst young people drawn from the Indian community, Africans and a handful of whites. I think when you speak to Cde. Thabo, for instance, he will also stress to you the importance of those non-rac - of the non-racial community that we were able to establish.

J.F. And did you worry about dealing with or fending off the system's legislation - that Liquor Act, the Immorality Act, all the things that (.....) any kind of interaction?

M.S. Basically we just ignored them - basically we just ignored them - I mean they were always there - they were always there in the background. The police would regularly raid our parties. One would have to be careful at a party - the liquor would always have to be in the kitchen and somebody would have to be there to put it away when the police came. The Immorality Act was always a reality.

J.F. And when you did COD work how did you find that idea of trying to reach out to whites - did you have faith that COD could change whites point of view, or how did you see your work there?

M.S. I saw that work as a duty - I found it particularly irksome and I could - I was never convinced that we were actually getting through to whites that way - I thought that we were getting through to whites better through those stories that we were able to have placed in the mass circulation papers, particularly in the Sunday Times.

M.S. I saw that we were able to get through to whites better with our demonstrations on the City Hall steps, with picketing and placarding various things. I'm afraid I never had much faith in ringing the doorbells, and I think I was very bad at it. I think some people did have success.

J.F. Did you get detailed to Afrikaans neighbourhoods - did you ever feel that you might be able to reach an Afrikaans person more than English?

M.S. No, I felt that it was virtually impossible to reach Afrikaans people. Perhaps I should tell you about the - the Sabotage Bill protests. Now when was the Sabotage Bill passed - '62 - '62, yes - '62, this was the first - this was the first legislation allowing detention without trial, 90 day detention. Now you know, the culmination we - we protested on the City Hall steps in Johannesburg every day for a week - the young people from COD, the Black Sash - the Black Sash had a 24 hour vigil on the City Hall steps for that whole week before the Bill was - became law.

We protested there every lunch hour - I remember particularly one - one demonstration that we had on the City Hall steps - if you remember, the Sabotage Act created a whole new series of capital offences for which the death sentence was possible with the way that sabotage was defined - so we had cardboard figures on wooden gallows with placards on the figure saying: I went on strike - I handed out a leaflet - with the things which it had now become possible to get a death sentence for.

So we spent a solid week fighting with the police on the City Hall steps - the police tried to break up the demonstrations every day - series of - a large number of Afrikaaner thugs were brought in by the police - we fought with the police every day. One day during that week I was very badly beaten up indeed - I'd been at the demonstration at lunch time - by this time I was working full time for New Age....

J.F. As a paid journalist (?)?

M.S. Ja, I got a grand salary - I got five rand a week - I mean I suppose it was paid - as I got out of the car going home - we were staying in a little cottage in Orange Grove - a car stopped next to me and four of the thugs who'd been on the City Hall steps climbed out and they really beat me up very badly. The next day there was the last major public outcry in Johannesburg, public outcry from whites against the erosion of civil liberties by the state. There was a march from - from Wits University to the City Hall in which 30,000 people took part - 30,000 whites I mean through the streets of Johannesburg - this was the last real stirring of white consciousness in South Africa, that the citizens of Johannesburg were bitterly, bitterly opposed to the Sabotage Act and were prepared actually to come out into the streets.

30,000 people is a lot of people - it's very exciting in a march like that - I marched in that march with 14 stitches in my face. Well, shortly after that it became increasingly clear that the paper was going to have to close - legislation had been introduced that new papers, papers which were not registered, had to deposit I think it was 30,000 rand, and if they were closed down under security legislation that money would be lost.

New Age by this time had become - become Spark - New Age had been banned - Spark had been started - it was clear that Spark was going to be closed down very soon.

M.S. We had a fair number of names of papers registered, and these papers had to actually be in production before a certain date to avoid having to pay this deposit - so for a while after Spark was closed I edited a small paper which was called Parade (?) which we were just basically keeping alive, dealing with sports issues chiefly. I was then offered a job in Tanganyika, as it then was, so I left the country illegally to go to Tanganyika. It took me much longer to get there than I thought it would.

By the time I got there the job was no longer there. By this time we'd - the movement had established the first of the external missions - we had an office in Dar es Salaam, one of the first of our foreign missions. I spent six months in Dar es Salaam then working with our office.

I then came back to South Africa - came back illegally. I was involved in various organisational tasks in Johannesburg, in Cape Town, in Durban. Then in '63 came the Rivonia - I came - I came back early in '63 - January or February of '63 - '63 we were shattered with the Rivonia arrests - just after the escape of the comrades from Marshal Square, Goldreich and the other comrades, I was sent down to Cape Town by the organisation.

I was working in Cape Town - I was arrested in Cape Town in September of '63. I was held under the 90 days clause. I was in prison I think for 64, 65 days. During that time I had the unpleasant experience of being interrogated by that murderer, Swane-pool. Then I was released in about - I was released in fact just a few days before Kennedy's assassination - what's that, December, '63.....

J.F. November, '63.

M.S. November, '63. I stayed in Johannesburg - I was continuing to do work for the movement in Johannesburg. Then in July of '64 myself and the comrade, Mike Ngubeni, who I mentioned earlier, and a man called Toms, were arrested as we were placing a bomb at the radio installations at the Hospital Hill Police Station.....

J.F. At the Hospital Hill?

M.S. Hospital Hill Police Station in Johannesburg - we were trying to blow up the radio installations. And then in September - the September of '64 - this was in '64 - in July '64 I was arrested - September of '64 I was sentenced to 12 years - then I was in prison for 12 years.

I'd like to just add one thing before you ask questions - during the time that I was in detention in '63 my first wife, Diana, was banned while I was in detention, and I think she is in fact the youngest white to have been banned - she was 19 when she was banned - and I think her banning order was chiefly because of the - well, firstly of the increasing amount of trade union work she was doing, and secondly because of the increasing amount of work she was doing for - for - for the South Afri - African Womens Federation.

Now I've always been able to work in a very supportive environment in that the people that I've been close to have also been very much committed to the struggle. Now ask your questions.

J.F. Did she go under the name of Schoon?

M.S. Yes.

- J.F. When you were detained you said you were interrogated by Swanepoel - did he have a special amount of trouble with you because you were Afrikaans - was that hard for him to handle - how did - I'm.....
- M.S. He handled that very aggressively.
- J.F. And what did he actually say to you - you said it was a terrible experience to be interrogated - what was his line - what did he want - what did he think were your motivations?
- M.S. Well, I was in the fortunate position in that I'd been arrested for something that I was completely uninvolved with, which I realised very early in the interrogation - they thought I'd built the radio receiver at Rivonia. I don't know - have you ever had the opportunity to speak to Swanepoel - Swanepoel is just a very, very frightening human being. The first thing he said to me on the first day of interrogation is : Ja, you remember that friend of yours, that coolie Babla - well, I killed him, and that's what's going to happen to you if you don't talk. I mean he's just a very, very frightening human being - he's a neanderthal man.
- J.F. What was the name of the guy Babla?
- M.S. Babla Saloojee.
- J.F. How do you spell Babla?
- M.S. B a b l a - this is a comrade who supposedly committed suicide jumping to his death from The Grays, from the special branch head - what was then the special branch headquarters in Johannesburg. This was one of the first deaths in detention.
- J.F. And did he ask you questions that indicated how he thought a white Afrikaans young guy like yourself would fit into things - did he see you as being used by the communists, did he see you as wanting to get involved with black women, did he see you as.....
- M.S. He saw me as being used by the communists - his line in the interrogation was : You must realise that you're just completely expendable - they just using you. He kept on saying to me : Well, you mustn't think that a little traitor like you is going to stop the progress of my career. He made it quite clear throughout interrogation that he was prepared to be absolutely ruthless and that as far as he was concerned he was going to achieve results regardless of
- J.F. And when he said traitor did he speak anything specifically about you being an Afrikaaner?
- M.S. Oh, very definitely, very definitely.
- J.F. What did he say?
- M.S. Well, he spoke with great contempt.
- J.F. And the idea that - did they have evidence.....

J.F. black people?

M.S. They had evidence that I had a lot of contact with black people - they had no evidence of what I'd been doing at all, though clearly they knew I'd been in Tanzania - something which to my great surprise I was never charged with.

J.F. Why, they didn't know enough about it?

M.S. I don't know - I think that they would have had to have exposed somebody actually to prove it.

J.F. And was that something that - how did they deal with that?

M.S. I think - no, let's go on about that - I think in fact that they possibly would have had to expose Ludi to do that. Ludi, as you know, was the - was the policeman who was working in the Congress of Democrats.....

J.F. Gerald Ludi?

M.S. Ja.

J.F. And he was a police spy?

M.S. He was a police spy, yes.

J.F. Did you suspect him - did you deal with him - did you have a contact with him?

M.S. I'm always uncomfortable sounding wise after the event, but I was one of the few people in COD who - who never trusted him, and I had fairly long conversations with various people about him - unfortunately my suspicions were - were dismissed at the time.

J.F. So for that reason they didn't push the Tanzania thing, but there are (.....) that blacks and whites can't possibly work together, and yet here they had evidence that you'd worked with blacks for a while - that you were doing - they knew you were doing legal and illegal work.....

M.S. They suspected that I was doing illegal work - they suspected very strongly that I was doing illegal work.

J.F. How did handle that - how did that fit into their theories of how - of apartheid, that you could be working with blacks?

M.S. I think they just found it ununderstandable - I don't remember any specific reaction to that point.

J.F. What did you take - you were just released, no charges, after 65 days?

M.S. That's right.

J.F. What did you take from that experience in detention - did it intimidate you in any way - did you figure this is what could happen in the long term....

M.S. My detention was relatively easy - I was not physically assaulted except I got a couple of slaps once or twice, but I was never badly assaulted. The loneliness of a long period of solitary confinement is something that again unless you've experienced it I don't think you can visualise what it does to your mind.

- M.S. I mean I found detention a very, very shattering experience - not so much the interrogation as - as this - this desperation of being alone.
- J.F. You were - how old were you then?
- M.S. I was 26.
- J.F. (.....)
- M.S. This was '63.
- J.F. And did you come out of it - did you make any understanding in your own self about an understanding that you could have to go to prison and that this was just a taste of a long....
- M.S. By - by - by '63 it was pretty clear that there was a very, very good chance that any activist was going to prison and was going to prison for a long time.
- J.F. Did you have personal friends who by then had been put away?
- M.S. I knew various of the Rivonia people - various black comrades that I'd worked with while I was on New Age were already in prison. I knew some of the people from the Eastern Cape - you know, there were those devastating trials in the Eastern Cape - virtually every family in the Eastern Cape had someone going to Robben Island in '62, '63, '64. But at that time we were still very much more frightened of prison than I think our activists are now.
- Prison was a very, very real fear, whereas I think people at home now realise that one can actually cope with prison however horrible it is.
- J.F. And by then you hadn't been directly involved with MK when you were detained then, or you hadn't gone to the degrees that you soon would - did you get any - I'm just trying to get to the thing of - I think there's two big hurdles for the kind of mainstream.....
- M.S. I think these are questions you not going to get answers to.
- J.F. No, I just want to try to explain what I'm saying - there're two big hurdles - one is non-racialism, blacks and whites working together - one is violence - so whatever way you can give answers - maybe you'll give the answer the way you gave at the dinner table the other night about your Afrikaans background then the acceptance of violence - was it - you talked about it before when I said to you how did you accept violence, you said you had understood the need, but that's an intellectual understanding perhaps - by then you'd seen that violence - what it gets you in terms of the system and their opposition to it and determination to smash it, and yet you went further - I'm just wondering if you could talk about that at all.
- M.S. I'm just trying to think how I - how I can talk about that. Have you seen the Daily Mail of the 17th. December, '62 - '61 - with the front page pictures of blown up pylons in the Eastern Cape with the first MK action - it's a Mail that you should perhaps draw out of a library and have a look at. I think we felt the same feeling of excitement when we saw those pictures - the same feeling of certainty that we were actually going to win, even though this was just the beginning - the same sort of excitement as we all felt when we saw the pictures of SASOL in fire.

M.S. I don't think it's just an intellectual thing - I don't think it's just a question of having thought things through intellectually. It's a very - it's a very real thing that we've seen the examples of other countries. We know very well that the people of Cuba would not have been able to establish a sane society in that island if it had not been for those handful of people who had started the guerilla struggle. Cuba made an enormous impression on us. Cuba for my generation was perhaps every bit as important as Vietnam has been for yours.

We'd seen on the City Hall steps the naked violence of the South African state, as our people are experiencing it day by day in our townships at home today. Nobody who was progressive could think that there was a chance of negotiated sanity in South Africa. You remember what Lutuli said : For 30 years I've knocked on the door and it's never been opened.

We knew that Cde. Nelson was underground - we would get rumours of his being here and there. Nelson was a very great unifying factor, a very great example to us. I don't know, you see, I never know how to explain this because to me it's so self evident - it is so self evident - just as it was self evident that when the English tried to take our countries away in 1899 that they had to be fought.

I grew up in a house where there were certain heroes (?) and the two real heroes in my parents' home were President Steyn, who rode and fought with the guerillas as president of his country until the end of the war, and Christiaan de Wet, possibly one of the greatest guerilla leaders in the history of the world. I had no doubt that the war against the English was a just war. I'd grown up with stories of the English concentration camps. I'd lost family in the concentration camps.

One of the other things that was spoken about at home all the time was 1922 when, as was the rebellion of 1917 - in 1917 I had family members on both sides, some of them with the rebel commandoes, some of them with the government troops. In 1922 I'd had family members on both sides. You know, the A.N.C. didn't invent violence. South African history is a history of violence - within 18 months of the whites landing at the Cape the white settlers were riding out on their horses shooting the (.....) and the (.....) as though they were animals.

The whole history of South Africa is a history of violence. We had actually experienced the violence on the City Hall steps. We had seen the naked brutality of the South African police and of their thugs on the City Hall steps. I had seen on the City Hall steps young women, white and black, being slapped - being hit with batons by the South African police. This isn't something I was seeing as - as an onlooker - these were people I was very close to - very, very close to.

There was no doubt whatsoever that the only way we were going to get rid of those bastards was to shoot them out of our country - to shoot some sanity into them. I - I don't know why this is so difficult to understand. I have no doubt either in my mind, no doubt whatsoever, that the war against Hitler was completely justified. I know too, as we all do, that if it had not been for the Soviet Union and the incredible resilience and resistance of the Soviet people that in all probability fascism would have taken over the world - but I see no more difficulty in seeing that we have to fight South African fascism with arms in our hands, not just with stones and tin lids, but with the most modern possible weapons in our hands - I have no doubt that that is as justified as it would ...

M.S. have been to join the British or the American or the South African army to fight fascism in Europe. Now why should it be more difficult to see the justness of the people of South Africa, not at last but again defending themselves against the brutality of the state to establish a sane society in our country - why is it more difficult to see that than to see that it was correct for somebody from Minnesota to go and fight Hitler in Europe.

Now I don't think anybody has any doubt that the young men from Minnesota who went to fight fascism were doing what they should be doing. My comrades in Mk are doing what they should be doing for South Africa. I don't know - it's very difficult for me to answer this question - am I getting anywhere.

J.F. What about as you were yourself finding your way to supporting armed struggle which led to the bomb and your prison sentence - was it - was there any difference - was there any approach, was there any understanding that you could articulate for a white, not only - it seems like you're articulating how you got there, but to be accepted or to be just practically used or for you to deal with other people - I'm just trying to get the non-racial dimension of it - is it just something whites, blacks, everyone's accepted if you go to Mk or is it just people have different duties - you have to operate different in South Africa because of the apartheid structures and all that - what could you say about being a white accepted by whites.

M.S. You know when we were having coffee just now we were talking about something else, and I spoke to you about this incredible acceptance of various positions that the A.N.C. has - the A.N.C.'s serious about being a broad front. The A.N.C. is also very serious about being a non-racial organisation. I've got a very sharp antenna for - for racism, whether it comes from whites or for blacks, and it continually astounds me how very, very seldom I meet any form of racism from black comrades in the A.N.C.

I'm a member of the A.N.C. with the same rights, the same duties, the same obligations as any other member of the A.N.C., and I'm continually strengthened virtually daily at the genuine lack of racial feelings from my black comrades. I know what they've undergone in their lives - I don't know if I would be big enough if I'd grown up in the - being a black in South Africa to accept whites quite as openly and quite as openheartedly as I experience on a day to day basis in the A.N.C.

I think this is one of the very great strengths of our people.

J.F. And then just, as I say, obviously this is what you can talk about, but in terms of being a young white in the early '60s with the - you were arrested in July, '64?

M.S. July, '64.

J.F. With Rivonia having happened with the kind of level of just how you work in apartheid South Africa to be effective - how did that factor into your getting into MK, your acceptance and your involvement in terms of do you think it was harder for a white to get involved - do you think you had just totally different kinds of duties.....

M.S. I don't quite understand what you getting at (Tape off)

J.F. so when you were learning what the Umkhonto's policies were did you speak explicitly about what it was geared to do, what the approach to civilians was?

M.S. Yes, very definitely, very definitely - Umkhonto's policy in the first phase of the armed struggle was that we would launch attacks on certain government institutions - on facilities like communications, electricity supply, but greatest care was taken that there was to be no loss of life. The first attacks were on electricity pylons - a comrade was killed when a bomb exploded prematurely, which he was placing at one of the government administration offices in Dube. To my knowledge that's the only loss of life that there was in the first phase of Umkhonto's actions, because very, very great care was taken that there would be no loss of life.

When we placed the charge at the - on the radio mast at the Hospital Hill Police Station well, the closest houses were some considerable way away. We were completely confident that the victors of the explosion would in fact come out from the wall where we had placed the charge and would go over sportsfields on the other side. We were convinced that the possibility of loss of life was extremely small, and in fact we had chosen that target specifically, not because it was the easiest target to hit, but because our planning took into account all the time the instructions from MK that there was to be no loss of life - and what we were hitting was in fact a - a vital communications link for the police on the whole of the Witwatersrand.

J.F. And you (Tape off) - you were caught because of this informer?

M.S. Yes.

J.F. And it came to light later who it was?

M.S. Yes.

J.F. Was it a black or a white?

M.S. It was a white - a man called Ed Round (?)

J.F. Called?

M.S. Ed Round.

J.F. Had you suspected him at all?

M.S. In hindsight we should have - at the time we didn't.

J.F. Do you think there's any racial aspect to informers - do you think that it's easier for white.....

M.S. No, there are white informers and there are black informers, and there are Indian informers and there are Coloured informers.

J.F. So it was never an issue in terms of you and the people you were dealing with that it was a white person - they knew that there'd been as many blacks who'd sold them as well?

M.S. Oh, certainly - certainly, and we've been done very great damage by certain whites - Gerald Ludi, Pieter Beyleveld. We've also been done very great damage by various professional black state witnesses, some of whom have subsequently been shot by the people's army - I'm thinking of Hlopane. I think Hlopane being shot by MK is something that all the informers must have in the back of their minds, that even though they were police agents in the '60s it does not mean that the people's justice will not catch up with them 15 years later, and some of them will be tried when we take over at home.

- J.F. So they caught you in the act.....
- M.S. They caught us as we were placing the explosives.
- J.F. And in this interrogation - how long were you detained for interrogation?
- M.S. Hardly at all - a few days we were - we appeared in the Magistrate's Court and were formally charged within 48 hours. They actually wanted to try us as quickly as possible because at the - more or less at the same time all the ARM arrests had taken place - there was a great outcry about the ARM arrests, which were predominantly young whites, predominantly young white liberals, though not exclusively.
- Now the comrades from the ARM, some of them were very badly beaten up in interrogation - it was clearly going to take them some time to bring the ARM people to trial, and I think they wanted to bring us to trial as quickly as possible to show that in fact they were dealing with substantial things and to justify holding the other people.
- J.F. And it was you and.....
- M.S. Ngubeni.
- J.F. and who else?
- M.S. A man called Toms.
- J.F. T o m s?
- M.S. T h o m s.
- J.F. Was he white or black?
- M.S. White - he subsequently gave evidence against Jock Strachan in the prisons trial.
- J.F. So did he get - in your trial did he get sentenced?
- M.S. He got 12 years - he served 12 years.
- J.F. And then gave evidence?
- M.S. He gave evidence while he was in prison - prison broke him completely.
- J.F. And when they were dealing with you within the white prison - when white police guys were dealing with you was there a sense of you - had they pushed the line of you were involved in violence and you could have killed people?
- M.S. Yes, definitely - definitely, that would be said to you while you could hear these - the colleagues of the white prison guards beating the black prisoners in the corridor next door.
- J.F. What would be said?
- M.S. Oh, you people were involved in violence, you could have killed people you could have hurt them - and you could hear the African prisoners screaming as they were being beaten in the corridor next door.
- J.F. Did you have any sense that if and when you got to prison you would have a different experience than black prisoners or detainees - that the cops were somehow slightly less brutal with whites or was there not a belief about that?

- M.S. Well, you know, the first large group of white political prisoners went to prison in '63 - there were a number of - of women from COD who served three months during '63 - they'd all been involved in putting up - in putting up the MK manifesto - and those were actually the first whites who'd been to prison for a long, long time.
- J.F. Who were they?
- M.S. Mary Turok, Pixie Benjamin, Eve Hall, Anne Nicholson - now my wife, Di, was not arrested at the time because they would have had to expose Ludi - she was only arrested after Ludi had already been exposed - Violet Weinberg. Now those had been the first white political prisoners for some considerable time, other than detainees - purely having had comrades who were in prison made the fear of prison recede, because one realised immediately that it was actually handleable, that it was manageable.
- I think there was also an awareness that however horrible things would be for white political prisoners they would never be as bad as for blacks.
- J.F. So what kind of publicity did the trial get - was there a black and white on trial together seen or did they want to play that down because they didn't want people to think blacks and whites could work together?
- M.S. No, the - the trial was very widely reported - the demonstration at the end of the trial was very widely reported.....
- J.F. What was the demonstration at the end?
- M.S. As we were taken from the Supreme Court into - in the prison van - and there was a crowd of several hundred people in the street outside singing, shouting Amandla, brought the traffic in the centre of Johannesburg to a standstill - this was very widely reported - it was very widely reported that it was also not only a black crowd but that there were a number of whites in it. I remember very clearly when we were in the van we were handcuffed, we were in leg-irons, and the windows in the van were very high - we couldn't see out - we could hear the people - we could hear them singing, we could hear them shouting our slogans, and then clearly inside the van we heard Mike's wife - Mike Ngubeni's wife, and she was - she shouted : I'm proud of you, my husband, just remember that - it was grand - it was grand.
- J.F. And was that something that.....
- M.S. And that was also very widely reported, that statement of hers.
- J.F. In the papers?
- M.S. Ja.
- J.F. So I could go.....
- M.S. I've actually got those cuttings - I've got all the cuttings of my trial - if you come to East Africa I'll show you the cuttings.
- J.F. And did anything - sorry about harping on this non-racialism kind of ferreting it out if it was there, but was there anything that came up in the trial or interrogation.....
- M.S. We were basically not interrogated.

J.F. In the cross examination in court that the system was trying to put across that either exposed or did they try to play down the non-racialism or - was the idea of a black and a white person on trial together is something that shakes the foundations of apartheid if it's truly understood - I'm just wondering how the system dealt with that or how that came out as a way of encouraging people possibly.

M.S. Now the only way that that was dealt with at the trial at all is - we didn't give evidence at the trial - we all made statements from the dock, and all three of our statements stressed that particular point.

J.F. So was your statement from the dock reported in the papers as well?

M.S. Very badly.

J.F. Do you have the original of it?

M.S. No.

J.F. What did you say - tell me what you said?

M.S. You know, I can't remember - I've written so many documents since then - I - I - I've got the vaguest recollection - by the time we were - we came to trial - we were awaiting trial with a number of other white comrades who were subsequently sentenced in the - in the first Bram Fischer trial - the trial that, if you remember, Bram was granted bail and then went underground, and the people who were in that trial were in the awaiting trial yard with us, even though they were sentenced after us - so we worked on our statements very closely with the other comrades - I mean the - this - our statements from the dock were very definitely - we had the benefit of a very good collective to discuss them.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. And then after all of your non-racial experience you got put into prison not with the black men you'd been involved with?

M.S. No, but with whites.

J.F. What can you say about that - how did you maintain over those years a commitment in a sense that you were actually working against that system when you were in fact when they were perpetuating apartheid to that degree - just the kind of level of even culturally, having been with black people, having dealt with South African culture which was black anyway?

M.S. I don't know, you know, I don't understand what you talking about now - I - I was in prison with comrades - I was in prison with comrades from the A.N.C. Prison - prison was a highly political place. Just because we were in a segregated prison didn't make a - stop us being South Africans - it didn't stop us being committed South Africans.

M.S. It didn't stop us being members of the A.N.C. It didn't stop us being loyal to the organisation. I don't quite know what you're getting at.

J.F. It's just somebody else who was in prison after you said that they tried to kind of - some of them spoke some African languages and they tried to kind of do African languages together, and they tried to get African music to play on the - when they played the radio-gram and.....

M.S. No, but we don't get African music to prove non-racism - we get African music because that's what we like to listen to - we like to listen to Dollar, and not because Dollar is black. You know, we - we share the same culture as our comrades do, whatever their colour. I'm sorry, I find this continual insistence on the difficulties of non-racism - I find it very foreign - I find it very hard to understand what you getting at.

J.F. Well, maybe I'm asking how it did come naturally - if you can talk about that - it's just other people have stressed in that way - as I said, there was someone who spoke about that kind of not insistence to prove anything - they were proving it to me by himself (?) - but the idea that they were pissed off that they were put alone - there was somebody else who was tried with a black guy and he said that they made sure that they got the chance to have the same kind of cultural experiences that they wanted to have because they were South Africans and that that was important to them, he said, and the fact that the one guy who knew some Zulu kind of tried to give him Zulu lessons, which didn't work that well, but it was just nice because they could kind of not just have to be in a totally whites only kind of environment, that that grated - maybe it wasn't an issue to you - maybe it was obvious that (.....) do it that way....

M.S. I - I - I never regarded it as an issue, perhaps wrongly, I don't know.

J.F. It just seemed to me that just that kind of injustness of having been on trial with a guy and then apartheid.....

M.S. Oh, sure - I'M - I - I mean we were very aware all the time of two aspects of something - firstly we were very aware that we had comrades on Robben Island, very, very aware, and we were also aware all the time and we - we - in a very disciplined way we fought the authorities right from the beginning, and the first two years in prison were pretty grim. We fought them - we knew all the time that any improvement that we could get in our conditions sooner or later would also affect our comrades on Robben Island - and we were very, very aware of being separated from our comrades, of not being in the same prison as they were, but we never felt that our struggle against the authorities was not part of the struggle that we knew was going on on Robben Island in very much more difficult conditions.

J.F. And can you speak at all about the prison experience - what it did to you and for you?

M.S. It made me grow up. Well, O.K., firstly even though our conditions were never as bad as on Robben Island there were times when our conditions were very, very bad indeed. It was very educative to be continually treated in the way that black people in South Africa are treated all the time. It gave one a very good understanding both of the feeling of powerlessness and of the enormous frustration that blacks must feel on a day to day basis.

M.S. The most important thing about prison as far as I'm concerned was the incredible comradeship - the real solidarity and closeness that there was. I mean I've got - some of the comrades that I was in prison with have made political choices subsequently which I disagree with quite strongly, and yet I'm still very, very close to them. There's a bond between all of us who were in Pretoria together, which is actually there forever.

I mean I spent most of yesterday with Hugh Lewin. He and I, I think, have only seen each other three times since I came out of prison, and there's something between us that will actually be there forever. I possibly know Hugh better than I'm going to know virtually anybody except a woman that I'm in a very close relationship with. I know how Hugh supported me in various difficult times - not only Hugh - all the comrades that I was in Pretoria with.

I know how I've been of some assistance to them. Now I was speaking to you earlier about comradeship, and - prison was actually a very positive experience - I learned a great deal - I learned - firstly I learned a great deal about oppression - I learned an enormous amount about politics - I learned an enormous amount about South Africa and South Africa's history, and especially about our struggles in South Africa from having the opportunity to speak to people who'd been involved in the struggle, some of them since the early '20s.

But more than anything I experienced over a period of twelve years this intense comradeship with a group of - of people - very disparate (?) people - and sometimes we quarrelled, sometimes we didn't get on with each other, but all the time - but we were always a very closely knit group - it was like living in a family. Now I experienced this to a smaller extent in the very exciting period of the early '60s working at home. I was also privileged to experience this subsequently working in Botswana with the comrades that I was working with in Botswana, where again the movement has sent us different ways.

We see each other very seldom, but the comrades that I was actually working closely with in Botswana, we see each other after a lapse of two years, three years - it's as though we were together yesterday. I've also had the even greater fortune to experience that very close comradeship in a marriage (?) situation. So you see, prison for me was a learning experience - quite an expensive way to learn, but all the same.

J.F. And how did you kind of keep in touch with political developments - did the new prisoners coming in after brief you or did you get.....

M.S. We were never as well briefed as the comrades on the Island were, because people were coming in very seldom, and during all the time that I was in prison we were allowed no - no radio, no newspapers. For most of the time that I was in prison, when we were allowed to get magazines the magazines were so heavily censored that - I mean sometimes they would come in with just with the front cover and the back cover and everything else cut out.

We'd occasionally be able to steal a newspaper from the warders. We'd occasionally be able to pump something out of the warders. We devised techniques to get news over at the very heavily supervised visits. We were very out of touch - much more out of touch than the comrades on the Island were.

M.S. The comrades on the Island have since the early '60s been able actually to keep themselves much better informed than we were in Pretoria. I'll tell you, for instance, we had some glimmerings of what had happened in June of '76. By that time I'd been moved away from the other comrades - I was being kept in isolation in - in the condemned section of Pretoria for the last three months that I was in prison - three and a half months. I'd had some glimmering from the warders that something had happened in June, but I actually knew nothing.

And then we were moved over to Johannesburg about four or five days before my release, and we were moved in a car, not in a closed van, and coming through Johannesburg suddenly saw troop-carriers in the streets - we saw police in camouflage uniform all over parts of Johannesburg - it was the first indication that I had then that June, '76 was actually big, that it wasn't - that it wasn't just some form of minor disturbance - we were very isolated.

J.F. When were you released exactly?

M.S. September of '76.

J.F. And did you have a plan as to what you were going to do - did you think of leaving the country?

M.S. Ja, I was thinking of leaving the country - I was also thinking of staying. I was going to see how things went. We'd spent a long time in prison - well, Ray Suttner had come into prison in about October or November of - of '75 - so Ray had brought us up to date to a large extent. We'd spent a lot of time talking in prison about what I should do when I came out, and I came out of prison knowing that I was going to stay there for some time, even if I was going overseas - and following discussions in prison it was quite clear that I was going to be spending as much time as possible working with the white left.

It was clear from the briefings that Ray had given us that there had been a revival of the white left but that the white left was very definitely an anti-A.N.C. left. We'd taken decisions in prison that I should come out and I should do as much as I could to influence the white left to try and swing a substantial part of the white left behind the A.N.C. So I had a fairly clear idea that I was going to be doing that - I had in my mind that it would only be for a fairly short time - that I would possibly be going overseas.

I then - a few days before I was released from prison I was served with very stringent banning orders and a house arrest order. It became apparent to me very, very soon after my release that I was in fact basically unemployable. I was very fortunate in that I met Jennie Curtis within a couple of weeks of coming out of prison. The comrade who introduced me to Jennie said to me when she introduced us : Well, Jennie's definitely the best of the young people at home in that she is the only leader of the white left who has actually worked through the whole question of the white left's relationship to the A.N.C., that she is the only person in the white left who actually has no doubt whatsoever that the - that the A.N.C. - that without the A.N.C. we are not going to take the struggle any further whatsoever.

M.S. And then Jennie and I worked very closely at home. Jennie was banned oh, I think a week or ten days after I met her. Jennie was able to introduce me to very wide sections of the white left - people in the trade unions, people in the community organisations, students - and Jennie and I did a solid nine months political work at home before we were eventually forced to go. We both deliberately decided that we were basically going to ignore our banning orders. We saw a large number of people.

We argued the case for the A.N.C. - we argued the case for the A.N.C., SACP alliance. We argued against workerism, we argued against the Althussarians - we saw literally dozens of people - it was a very, very political nine months. Perhaps I flatter myself, but I feel that that nine months work that Jennie and I did actually made a substantial difference to the white left. I don't think there's anyone on the white left now who can seriously say that the A.N.C. is irrelevant, whereas when I came out of prison people were regarding the A.N.C. as completely irrelevant, amongst the white left.

I flatter myself that that nine months political work that we did at home actually had a considerable influence on the white left - for the first time many of these young people - they were very young people then - they were people in their '20s - were actually being challenged about the incorrect views that they had about the A.N.C. For the first time they were speaking to someone who'd actually read the documents, which often they hadn't read - and they were often amazed when they would make particularly outrageous remarks about the A.N.C. when Jennie and I would refer them to strategy and tactics, for instance, and say : But this is not the A.N.C.'s position - you setting up straw men which you are knocking down - the A.N.C.'s position about the role of the workers in the struggle is actually spelt out in strategy and tactics - it's not what you say it is.

There was a complete misunderstanding amongst the white left of the two stage theory of revolution, which is something that we spent a great deal of time talking about. There was a complete misapprehension of - of the national struggle. As I say, perhaps I'm incorrect, perhaps I'm being grandiloquent, but I actually regard that nine months work as one of the achievements of my life.

J.F. I think one of the most important things we should talk about (?) because I think there still are a lot of those misapprehensions and straw men around.

M.S. I think they are still there but there are no long - when I came out of prison those misapprehensions were held by everybody - a really good person, my dear comrade, Barbara Hogan - when I came out of prison Barbara was arguing that the A.N.C. was irrelevant. Now I have no doubt whatsoever that the position that Barbara holds at the moment is as a result of conversations with Jennie and myself. And Barbara is not the only person.

Those misapprehensions are still held - a lot of those mistakes are still being made, but they are no longer being made by everybody in the white left. There is a substantial part of the white left at home which is now solidly behind the A.N.C., and which actually understands what the A.N.C. is about.

- J.F. I understand if we go over some of that ground I think it could be educative, especially for those who haven't had.....
- M.S. Julie, you know, I no longer remember the arguments - I mean I used to be on top of all the arguments against (.....) - I used to - but I - I'm - I'm no longer on top of it - I haven't dealt with that stuff for getting on ten years.
- J.F. Well, perhaps just in a very brief way I could just ask you kind of - what do you think was the reason that there was this anti A.N.C. feeling - was it purely innocent very sincere lack of exposure - were there some hidden agendas you saw - what is it that makes people who are left be ultra left or be so scathing about the A.N.C. and about which they have had so little exposure?
- M.S. O.K., I think that one of the things is that the enemy had had a very great propaganda success, and this was not only true of whites - it was true of blacks as well. The enemy deliberately and very consciously denies us our own history. I've spoken to numerous black comrades who left home following '76, and the thing that has impressed them more than anything once they have made contact with the movement, once they have learned about the movement, is that resistance in South Africa did not begin in '76.

Now the enemy had denied us our history so thoroughly that the generation of '76 in fact thought that they were inventing resistance. They had not heard about what nearly fifty years of campaigns against the Pass Laws - they had not heard about the defiance campaign. They knew nothing about the treason trial. They'd heard of Rivonia, but they basically didn't know what it was all about. Now this was very, very true of whites as well, and I will say whites had less excuse for this, because the bulk of whites on the left - by no means all, but the bulk are in fact intellectuals - not all - and intellectuals always have access to information.

In fact when I came out of prison the white left was all very much into Marxism, but they weren't reading the stuff written by South African Marxists, which is not unobtainable, especially because most of them travel, and the stuff is obtainable in London, and the stuff was obtainable at home - but you could not speak to people about the A.N.C., SACP alliance because they hadn't read any of the documents.

Now perhaps I'm being unfair, but I think that firstly there is the question of the regime denying us our history - secondly, I think that that stage of the struggle in South Africa - a new generation of radical whites - a very exciting new generation of radical whites had not yet made the step from intellectual involvement to activism - and I think subconsciously people denigrated the A.N.C. because if they actually supported the A.N.C. they would have to be involved in activism, and a lot of the white radical activity was in fact intellectual activity.

It was radicalism of the seminar room rather than radicalism of the hard work of organisation, the hard work of political or community activity. Now I think there's been a substantial shift not only amongst my white comrades but amongst my black comrades as well. The BCM leadership was into the same type of things that the white left was. Then the older people in the white left had experienced the SASO breakaway. I think they'd misinterpreted the SASO breakaway.

M.S. Jennie, for instance, had been on the NUSAS executive when Steve Biko broke away. Jennie went on until we left home having the closest contact with Steve. Jennie had worked through the reasons for the SASO breakaway and realised that there were still very, very relevant things that she could do. The work that Jennie did in the revival of the democratic trade union movement at home, for instance - Jennie correctly and very wisely, right from the beginning when the Wages Commissions were set up would make it her business to find the old SACTU activists to get advice, guidance from them.

Jennie realised that there was a very definite role for her as a white in the political struggles at home and in the trade union struggles at home. But then Jennie was always an activist. I think many of the white intellectuals had been convinced by certain elements in the BCM, but there was in fact no role for whites as activists - that the only possible role for whites was to make some form of an intellectual input.

Then I think a large number of whites made a basic ideological mistake in that they thought that the only role there was for them was in the trade unions, and instead of going into the trade unions with a certain amount of humility and actually learning from the workers' experience they saw the trade unions as some form of toy which they could manipulate - and there's a certain white arrogance about it as well - there is a certain white arrogance about it as well, which all of us who are white South Africans have to I think possibly spend our lives fighting against - but I saw a very real arrogance that we are the only people who actually know because we've read the books.

I saw this particularly with some whites working in the emergent trade unions, and these are the people who I think are now taking the very strong workerist position in the trade unions.

J.F. And how did you see that - I'm wondering the process of breaking that down.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. that were more difficult - what dieharder (?) and what - or did they come quite easily to your point of view?

M.S. O.K., as I say, I no longer remember the intricacies of the Althusserian arguments. I found it particularly easy to attack Althusser. I found it - I found it particularly easy to attack the misconceptions of the whole Euro-communism idea. As I say, I no longer have that stuff theoretically at my fingertips. At the time I did - I was doing an enormous amount of work on it. I found, to my great surprise, that very few of the white Marxists had actually read Lenin.

J.F. Why would that have been - would that have been just the lack of exposure or would that have been.....

M.S. Well, I think that this is part of the Sussex training - the Marxist ideas came into white intellectual circles in South Africa from Sussex. The so-called Marxists at Sussex are not Leninists. They take a very reformist position about many things - people have just not been exposed to Lenin, and one could argue against an Althusserian position from Lenin's texts - people found this intellectually very challenging. I think it made a lot of people read Althusser in a slightly different way.

Then specific South African questions - what are the type of criticisms that there were of the A.N.C.'s position - well, firstly there was very strong criticism of the alliance between the A.N.C. and the SACP, with the arguments being put forward by people who regarded themselves as radicals, which were actually exactly the same type of arguments as were being put forward by the Citizen. This rested on - on two things I think - firstly a very great misapprehension of the reality of the alliance. I came out of prison with a certain authority - I was the first person who'd come out of prison for a long time - I was the first person who spent any time at home for - who had come out of prison as regards whites.

I think I was also the first person who'd come out of prison, with the exception to a lesser extent Eli, who'd actually spent any time with the young people at all.....

J.F. Eli Weinberg?

M.S. Yes. So I came out of prison with a certain authority. I'd been involved with the A.N.C. for a long time - and I was just not impressed at all by the Citizen type argument that of course the SACP manipulates and controls the A.N.C. completely. Now I think we had some success about this argument - I think we - I think we explained to a lot of people what this alliance actually means, what its historical roots are.

Then there was a very strong attack, an ongoing attack - this attack still goes on - about the two stage theory of revolution. Now the workerists, black and white workerists, still reject the two stage theory, but I think that when I came out of prison for a lot of people it was the first time that they had spoken to anybody who seriously felt that the two stage theory was correct. The type of training that people had had in the university seminars was one of the givens from which they began was that the two stage theory of revolution was just obfuscation and nonsense.

And when one confronts people like that with the substantial texts in Marx, in Engels, in Lenin, which make it quite clear that the two stage theory of revolution can't just be dismissed - perhaps in certain situations the two stage theory is not - is not correct - but one can't just dismiss it with a wave of the hand and say : No thinking person could possibly feel that - which was in fact a view that was quite often expressed.

Now that particular theoretical question is actually the great divide. I don't think the ultra left will ever accept that argument because the work - the workerist position makes national liberation irrelevant - and there's still a large part of the white left that holds a workerist position. However, it is no longer exclusively held by them, as it was when I came out of prison, when nobody questioned that the two stage theory of revolution was wrong.

M.S. The other question that we spent a lot of time talking about was the - the whole inner colonialism debate, which started with a series for articles by Wolpe. Now my own feeling at the time was that neither the A.N.C.'s position nor the party's position was actually being put forward correctly in those papers of Wolpe's, and of various other people - there's a whole series of writings about it in the academic journals.

I think we challenged people considerably on their view of the two stage theory. I saw a paper from home recently in which somebody from the white left was giving a paper somewhere, where they said: Well, the two stage theory of revolution - no, sorry - the theory of a new type of colonialism - internal colonialism was a valid analytical tool but no longer is. When I came out of prison nobody thought it was a valid analytical tool - they thought it was nonsense. I think this is - my own feeling is that the Road to South African Freedom is a conceptualisation of inner colonialism - of a new form of colonialism - is in fact possibly the major theoretical advance to Marxist thinking made in South Africa.

Incidentally, it's regarded like that by our comrades in all the eastern European countries - they see this as a major theoretical breakthrough made by the South African Party. I think we were able to argue very strongly and very forcibly, and to come back to the quote that I gave you just now, in a way that it was accepted by everybody that in fact inner colonialism - the new form of colonialism was a valid analytical way of looking at South Africa, and without it we couldn't understand South Africa. People now have to say: Well, perhaps it was valid but it no longer is - when I came out of prison nobody thought it was valid at all.

Then we spoke to people a lot about commitment - about what does commitment mean. Commitment does not just mean sitting in a seminar writing papers which are read by other people that go to the seminar. I think it's very interesting - when Ray and Jeremy and Dave Rabkin went to prison they went to prison from courtrooms where there was basically nobody there. When the Hanekoms went to prison they went to prison from a courtroom which was absolutely crowded with black and white comrades. Jeremy, Tony Holiday, Dave Suttner, Dave Rabkin were regarded by the white left as being aberrant. They were regarded as though they'd done something slightly ridiculous by actually getting involved with activists of the A.N.C..

When our white comrades go to prison now I'm sure there're still sections of the white left that think that these people are just wasting their time posturing, but basically the white left is now solidly behind our comrades who go to prison - and of course the person we really have to thank for that is Barbara, because after Jennie Barbara was possibly the most highly respected white radical of her generation, respected by everybody - respected for her integrity, respected for her strength, respected for her brilliant mind, and Barbara went to prison as an A.N.C. activist and she handled herself with the greatest courage in that court, and Barbara actually made a large part of the white left have to rethink their position, because if somebody that they looked up to in the way that they looked up to Barbara was in fact convinced - and they knew with Barbara it was intellectually convinced as well as emotionally convinced - that the only way forward was to work as an underground activist of the A.N.C., then everybody better rethink their position.

M.S. And to me it's very, very significant the type of solidarity and support that is expressed for our white comrades when they are now in the fascist courts. We saw very recently when Helene Pastoors was sentenced there were so many people trying to get into the court that the police had to lock the doors - and you see, this sounds like a small thing, but this is one of the tangible ways which people show on which side they are. It actually requires an active commitment, it requires courage, to go to court to express your solidarity - and it didn't happen with Raymond, it didn't happen with Tony. The people who were there were just a small handful of people, whereas at Helene Pastoors' trial, like at mine, the courtroom was too small to hold the people that wanted to be there - and that to me represents a remarkable change in opinion amongst the white left.

Now one of the reasons for the change of opinion is of course firstly the A.N.C. is palpably there. When I came out of prison we were coming out of the period of quiescence. Looking back from '76 we can see that in fact the movement had been doing very solid work for some time previously, and in fact the movement had considerable influence in what was happening in '76. We know from what emerged at the Gqabi trial the enormous contribution that had been made by those experienced comrades when they came off the Island Gqabi, Makgothi.....

J.F. (.....)

M.S. Yes. But the whole climate at home has changed. Our people have changed the climate. We continually say the people have legitimised the A.N.C., and they not only legitimised the A.N.C. for the people of South Africa, they've specifically legitimised the A.N.C. for the whites. Nobody can ignore the A.N.C. - whereas when I came out of prison people just (.....) just doesn't matter - and the criticisms were often the same criticisms that one would see in the Citizen. You know, Oliver Tambo's got a big house in London, people would say to me. How can you belong to an organisation where the president's got a big house in London?

J.F. What did you say to that?

M.S. I just laughed. You talking about somebody who's likely to be the president of a free South Africa, or at least he's going to be a very, very senior cabinet minister. I would expect him to have a big house in London because he's got the most enormous amount of diplomatic entertaining to do. He's actually representing my country to the world.

J.F. You've actually spoken about it somehow, but I just wonder if you could say anything about if there's anything underlying aside from the intellectual kind of about when you did that seemed to emerge - you talked about the kind of reluctance to get into the fray, but this kind of - from people who claim to be so left or anti CP line and the.....

M.S. Part of this is the cold war - part of this is the cold war. The South African Party has never made any bones about its close ties with the Soviet Union and with the Soviet people. Euro-communism is very opposed to those sort of links - the type of intellectual training that these people have had makes them opposed to these links, and yet when one says to people : So, you say we must have these close ties with Moscow - we know very well which countries have voted consistently at the UN on the side of the people of South Africa.

M.S. We know very well that those small handfuls of countries in the world that we can turn to to arm our cadres, to put boots on our cadres' feet, to put uniforms on their backs, and often to feed them - one of the reasons why in the A.N.C., and I'm sure in the South African Party, people feel close to the GDR, to Moscow, to Cuba, is because we are getting tangible support - tangible support in the way that we do not get from any other country.. - we get support from other countries, particularly from the Scandinavian countries, and we feel very close to the Scandinavian countries.

I'm afraid we get in real terms no support from the United States, no support from Britain, officially at a governmental level. But also I do see it as part of the whole cold war paranoia, that just as the South African government has denied us our history of resistance so the bourgeois media have denied us a true picture of what is actually happening in the world, and people are products of their environment.

One of the other questions that we spent a lot of time talking about was the whole question of armed struggle. There was a misapprehension amongst the white left that the A.N.C. was completely militarist - now this is talking about armed struggle on a different level from what we were talking about it previously - but for reasons unknown to me the white left's attitude was: Well, the A.N.C. can see nothing except a military solution for South Africa. Now again one would refer people to strategy and tactics, where the military action is seen as one prong of the fork with which we going to roast the South Africans.

Our president spelt it out very, very clearly in his January the 8th. message the year before last, of our four-pronged attack on South Africa. The military struggle, international solidarity and international action, our (are) political struggle based on our activists working at home in the trade unions, in the community organisations, and the workers' struggle - and those are the four prongs on which A.N.C. policy has always been built - and it is just a complete misapprehension for the white left to have regarded the A.N.C. as being purely militaristic.

J.F. Yet they came with that - where were they getting that from?

M.S. Well, very often they sounded as though they were getting it from the Citizen - quite honestly the white left often sounded like the Citizen's leaders. I don't know - I don't know. One of the things that amazed me when I came out of prison, and I think that this is no longer true, is the enormous ignorance that there was about the movement. The vast bulk of people had been overseas, but they hadn't bothered while they were overseas to actually inform themselves about what the A.N.C. was saying. Perhaps this was our fault in the movement, too, in that far too little propaganda was going into the country.

I think one can always say far too little propaganda is going into the country, and no matter how many millions of copies you sending in you could use millions more - but it took the movement a long time to reorganise, to resuscitate itself from the blows of the early '60s, which is not to say that no activity went on during those years, but the activity was at a very much lower scale than it is - is now. But the white left more than anybody had an opportunity to inform themselves, and I was continually surprised - I would speak to people who'd just come back from London and I would say: Well (?) did you go into Defence and Aid and buy the A.N.C.'s literature - did you go into Collett's bookshop and buy the A.N.C. literature - no, they'd say, there's nothing that those people can teach us.

M.S. I saw a very great arrogance.

J.F. We've been speaking quite technically leading to a lot of theory that it's not - it's a totally (.....).....

M.S. O.K.

J.F. so let me ask you if you can just define the terrain - what's the white left - why did you come out - go into that area when before you were in prison you were working with whites and blacks - was it the era - was it just a tactic - was it the area that you were most effective - could you not work with blacks because it was kind of late BC or - why did you get into this area (.....)

M.S. I was working with blacks as well - I immediately made contact with black comrades once I - once I came out of prison - I was working very closely with black comrades. It was much easier, especially given my very stringent banning orders, for me to be seeing whites on a fairly large scale than blacks on a fairly large scale - the blacks I was seeing were comrades and friends - I was working very closely with them - we were discussing things, we were working collectively.

The work I was doing was clearly supplementing the work they were doing. Some of them were doing very much the same type of work with the white left as I was. It was a tactical thing, given chiefly that that was the only political - mass political work that I could be doing, given my banning orders. I was also involved in various other clandestine things where I was working very closely with black comrades.

J.F. But you did devote this energy to - because of circumstances to the white left - what - tell me what....

M.S. I came out of prison very - well, we were very badly informed about various things. I still had the idea that NUSAS was sort of the very wishy-washy liberal thing that it had been in the early '60s. Jennie had to teach me how they'd battled to transform NUSAS, and NUSAS had become potentially a very progressive force in South Africa as we see it today. But I want to make another point here - I was aware all the time that I was at home that whereas we hoped that - and the increasing number of whites are going to make a contribution to the liberation of South Africa - we dealing with very, very small numbers of white democrats.

The real political work at home is going to have to be done with black people, and the real political change at home is actually going to be brought about by black people - that just because I'm speaking about work done with whites I don't want you to think that I regarded that as by any means the most important work that the movement was doing - it seemed to me as though that was the work I could do at that time - and especially because Jennie was able to give me an entree to that world.

As she was able to give me an entree to a wide variety of black trade unionists it was just impossible for me to have - to do anything like mass mobilisation work with black people because of my banning orders.

J.F. From the exposure you did have to blacks did you see the effects of BC on their thinking - that was something you'd missed - that was new to you - what did she tell you about where blacks were?

M.S. Well, we spoke a great deal about the whole BC thing. The blacks I was seeing were from the A.N.C. basically - I was seeing comrades who'd been on the Island - Indrus Naidoo, Joe particularly. I met for the first time comrades like Phyllis Naidoo, like Judson Khuzwayo, who died very tragically here in Zimbabwe as our chief rep - various other comrades who'd been on the Island. I had very little contact with - with young people. I had some contact with older BC people.

It was quite clear that BC had changed people's perceptions of themselves and of the struggle considerably. In some cases I had to learn to adjust to that - but I didn't have any difficulty talking to, relating to any of the black people I saw when I came out of prison.

END OF SIDE ONE.

M.S. '76.

J.F. And then you left South Africa?

M.S. We left South Africa at the beginning of June of '77. An article appeared in the Sunday Times by a rather pernicious man called Neil Hooper which indicated that the state was going to be linking me to the second Breytenbach trial. The advice that I had from the comrades that I was working with was that there was no point whatsoever in facing a possible further jail sentence for very peripheral involvement in Breytenbach's craziness, and so I was asked to leave. Jennie insisted that we should get married the day before I left. She insisted that she would come with me. So we got - got married.

You know, our courtship was very difficult because we were both banned - it was - we were breaking the law every time we saw each other. Theo Kotze married us very quietly in Johannesburg, and we left for Botswana that night - entered Botswana and were granted refugee status in Botswana.

J.F. Do you want to set the record straight after stuff like the Sunday Times story to say something about the Breytenbach thing - what were they trying to do and....

M.S. Well, during the last three months that I was in prison I was kept in the condemned section in Pretoria where Breytenbach at his own choice was kept most of the time that he was in prison, and during this time we'd exchanged, through the warder that eventually gave evidence at his trial, a series of notes - my notes were actually quite extensively at his trial, if I remember correctly - I've actually not read the trial book, but I think they were quoted extensively.

J.F. What trial book?

M.S. The Breytenbach trial book - there was a book written about the second Breytenbach trial by some Afrikaans journalist. I've actually not read the book.

- J.F. And so they wanted to make you into (?)
- M.S. I'm pretty certain that I would actually been arrested if (?) I'd been part of that trial.
- J.F. He - I think he says he didn't ask to be kept in the condemned section (.....) - why would he have wanted to be there?
- M.S. I don't know whether he asked to be kept in the condemned section or not. He asked not to be kept with the white political prisoners. He was taken there just for one day - one or two days shortly after I was released and then whisked away, but for a long time he wasn't put with the other political prisoners, I'm certain because - because he asked not to be - but I don't think we should use that - I - I don't want to be launching attacks on Breytenbach.
- J.F. So you then left the country not with a passport?
- M.S. No, I'd never had a passport, nor had Jennie.
- J.F. And did you - was it a good idea to be in Botswana, did you think - what did Botswana represent at that stage.....
- M.S. Botswana represented outside South Africa. In the first few days that we were there we were briefed by two members of the NEC who asked us to remain in Botswana.
- J.F. And then what did you decide to do there?
- M.S. Well, after considerable difficulty I got a job teaching outside Gaborone in Malepolole. After some time - after we'd been in Malepolole some time Jennie also got a job teaching. We subsequently moved from the teaching job to administering the development aid programme.....
- J.F. For?
- M.S. For international voluntary service. Botswana of course was very good to both of us. Both our children were born in Botswana - we very proud indeed that both the children carry Botswana passports - Katrine (?) did until her death, Fritzie still carries a Botswana passport.
- J.F. And in '77 what was - what did it mean to be in Botswana - was it a BS (.....) was it a frontline state - did it have a policy with the A.N.C.?
- M.S. Well, we had a chief representative in Botswana. The movement had a small presence there. The Botswana government was in the sort of nutcracker that the states bordering on South Africa always are and feel incredible disapprobium with what the South African government is doing, and yet realise that they can be squeezed economically all the time. The Botswana government was clearly on the side of progress in Southern Africa - was giving the A.N.C. whatever support it could without rocking its own economic boat too hard.
- J.F. Now I want to ask (Tape off) - in a political way what did you feel your work could be in Botswana?
- M.S. In Botswana, as anywhere else in the world, I felt I would be able to serve the movement by doing what I was asked to do.

M.S. I want to deal with Botswana very briefly - let me give it just a few moments thought. So during the time that we were in Botswana Jennie and I performed a variety of tasks for the A.N.C. Jennie was also very much involved in working with SACTU, gathering information for SACTU, writing proposed policy documents for SACTU on the basis of her knowledge of the trade union movement inside the country and the developments as they took place.

During the years that we were in Botswana we saw a wide variety of people from home - some of them, as if common knowledge, subsequently were working for the A.N.C. inside the country - comrades like Barbara, like Guy Berger, many of whom had no intention of working for the A.N.C., and their coming to Botswana didn't mean that they were working for the A.N.C.. We were open to discussion with anybody. There were periods when we were seeing a great number of people from home. There were periods when we saw very few people.

Throughout this time we carried on as best we could performing the tasks that had been assigned to us by the A.N.C. working within the A.N.C. structures. Perhaps the real importance of our being in Botswana was that we never made any secret of the fact that we were part of the A.N.C. I think for certain whites at home it was perhaps important to realise that white comrades were acceptable to the A.N.C. - that white comrades could in fact work in the A.N.C. structures.

We were involved very closely in various aspects of the work that went into the 1981 protest against the republic. In fact I have a suspicion in my mind, though I have no proof of it, that Jennie's death in Lobango was linked directly to the burning of the South African flag on the Wits campus in 1981. Again this was a period of particular importance in my life as regards the contact with comrades - the comrades that we worked closely with in Botswana are people that again I have links with that will last all my life.

The question that you come to all the time, the whole racial question - in the structures in Botswana it was clearly completely irrelevant. I'm sorry, I keep on saying this and I don't know if I say it correctly - I mean I've been with the chief representative on the delegation to see, among others, the - a senior minister, a senior official from the Norwegian foreign ministry - I've been with the chief representative to see various diplomatic guests - sometimes I've been asked to go on my own - sometimes I've gone with the chief representative with another comrade - the work I was doing was as an A.N.C. member, not as a white A.N.C. member.

This was accepted completely by my comrades in the A.N.C. It sometimes was not accepted by the foreigners that we saw - they were sometimes very taken aback at having to talk to a white member of an A.N.C. delegation. This is a question that we actually discussed in the structures in Botswana, and those people who were hassled by talking to white members of the A.N.C. I didn't go to see.

J.F. What kind of people would have been hassled then?

M.S. Various non-South Africans.

J.F. Black and white?

M.S. White.

J.F. But the A.N.C. would never ever - it would only be a tactical thing - there was never any feeling that you shouldn't represent?

M.S. Oh, never - never - I mean for a long time we lived outside Gaborone, but we were going down to Gaborone sometimes three, four times a week, 60 kilometers on a very bad road, and I would frequently be asked by the chief representative to come down to assist with something because it was something that I had knowledge in. Jennie was continually asked to speak to people on trade union affairs.

You know the preamble to the Freedom Charter is actually a reality. You know very well what the preamble of the Freedom Charter says - We the people of South Africa heregathered say for our country and the world to know that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black or white, regardless of colour. We actually take this Freedom Charter very seriously - it's not just words on paper.

A major book has just come out on the Freedom Charter, the Charter, written by two of my comrades who were in prison - two of my white comrades who were in prison, Ray Suttner and Jeremy Cronin, and Ray and Jeremy show in that book just how relevant the Freedom Charter is to our struggle today - a document framed with remarkable wisdom that it can actually still be relevant to South Africa all those years after it was framed 30 years - and in the A.N.C. we actually take the document seriously - we take every clause of that document seriously, including the preamble which I've just quoted to you, and including the little piece at the end which says : These freedoms we will fight for side by side until we have won our freedom.

J.F. Why did you mention the flagburning?

M.S. I have a suspicion that the South African security police suspected we were - that we were involved in the flagburning at Wits.

J.F. From Botswana?

M.S. From Botswana. I think it's an incorrect assumption on the security police's part, but I think - I do have that suspicion - and I think everything that happened in 1981 - the flagburning at Wits has hassled the ideologues in the police more than anything else.

J.F. And in your time in Botswana was the emergence of (.....) an important element in the view you were seeing and encouraging and supporting - was that a kind of late '70s phenomenon?

M.S. Yes, I would say that possibly as regards the white left the most important phenomena of the late '70s was the debate about war resisters. We were involved in discussions with a wide spectrum of people - I know people at home criticised us very heavily for the - what they regarded as the hard line that we were taking. Our line was, from 1977 on, that it was impossible for anybody to go into the South African Army. The movement at first did not have a clear policy on this. Subsequently this became movement policy. I think it's now clear - it's been clear since Sebokeng, and it is increasingly clear that any progressive young white man in South Africa dare not go into the S.A.D.F. and still regard himself as being on the side of the people - and I think that this has now been realised at home as well.

I think the small contribution we made from Botswana did contribute to this debate at home - and for a time I think we were possibly the only voices putting forward the line quite as strongly as that.

M.S. However, we were assisted in that line by a variety of war resisters who were in Botswana. There were war resisters in Botswana already when we arrived there - Chris Wood, who'd been a NUSAS leader, who was soon joined by Julian Sturgeon, also a former NUSAS leader - and an increasing number of a new generation of war resisters came through Botswana - some of them spent some time there, some of them only spent a very short time - but increasingly their voices joined ours in calling on the young men of South Africa to refuse service in the S.A.D.F. on any terms whatsoever.

I think this was a correct analysis and I think that this is an analysis that is now acceptable at least to the bulk of the white left.

J.F. And how did they articulate that that was hardline - what was their - what was the other line?

M.S. Well, as far as we could make out people were saying : Ja, well, we doing such important work in the trade unions or the community organisations that we can't afford either to go underground or go overseas - we'll just do our army service - we'll try to get into something as innocuous as possible. I'm afraid we were not convinced that being a clerk in some rear-echelon headquarters was not actively pursuing the policy of oppression of the S.A.D.F.

I think one of the values of our close contact with the A.N.C. is that we were convinced very much earlier than many whites at home that we actually are at war, and that in a war situation you have to choose on which side you're on - and we were continually saying to people that they had - that they must not think that the S.A.D.F. was the only option open to them. One can receive perfectly adequate military training from the people's army as well.

Some people at home said : Well, they want to receive training from the S.A.D.F. so that it can be used some time in the future on the side of the people. Our attitude to this was : But you can receive that training from Umkhonto, and you can take with you whatever skills you have to Umkhonto. The war resisters, however, were very important. I think the whole question of war resistance was something which was discussed very, very widely in the white left. I think decisions were in fact taken that leadership of certain of the structures of the white left would actually be held by women because they were less effected by the - by the whole call up question - yet to us this question was always quite clear, that nobody was doing work of such importance unless they were doing it under the direction of the A.N.C. that it warranted their going into the army - and for a very long time, and I think still, the - what we call the epicentres of the white left are actually not directly linked to A.N.C. machinery.

The only excuse that I would give for anybody going into the S.A.D.F. is if they were doing it under the instructions of the movement, as I'm sure certain young men are doing now.

J.F. Did you know Mike Hemlin quite well?

M.S. I knew Mike very closely - Mike's death in Botswana is just an enormous tragedy - sorry, I can't speak about Mike without weeping. Jennie and I saw Mike grow from a very young, very confused young man into a self-assured, dedicated and committed revolutionary. Mike's death has actually affected me more than just about anything that has happened to me - more than virtually any other horror that the regime has perpetrated.

- M.S. One of the most talented, brilliant young people one could meet - a musician who, if he'd set his mind to it and if that is what he wanted, could actually have been a world class musician - a young man with an exceptional mathematical brain, with - and this was acquired in Botswana - a deep political understanding, a deep political commitment, and with that one of the gentlest, kindest people that you could ever meet. To a certain extent Mike was almost - even though Mike was not all that much younger than Jennie - Mike was almost like a son in the house, and Mike's death has affected me like the death of my own child.
- J.F. I'm glad you spoke about it because I tried and wanted to bring it in but I really - there wasn't any person who could speak about it really, and I think you're the best person....
- M.S. Phyllis too - Phyllis also knew Mike very well.
- J.F. I don't think there's anything else to say about it except why that was such a threat to the regime, that a person like that - they don't know exactly - they can't pinpoint targets, but clearly someone like Mike was a threat, as gentle as he was and whatever he.....
- M.S. I don't see that Mike was a threat to the regime except that Mike had thought things through. What Mike was doing in Botswana was acquiring the most brilliant science results of any graduate that they'd had at the University of Botswana. He was preparing to go away for further studies. Mike was in Botswana as a student. Mike was a threat to them perhaps for what he would have done in the future, how he would have used his brilliant mind and his political understanding to threaten them in the future, but at the time Mike was killed he was a student - he was nothing but a student.
- J.F. The other thing I wanted to ask about is one more nasty thing about that, but I do think it needs to be raised, and that is something that I'm sure is said in the black community but I'm just not as familiar with it - it's kind of - it's a little bit like Oliver Tambo and his big house - kind of a well worn argument but people - when you were inside the country you were saying well, you've done your 12 years, you'd obviously - nobody could say a thing - you're under banning and you were suffering more than anyone or had paid your dues, but once you were out of South Africa people can say : Well, so-and-so is sitting outside, and the people inside are being put in a tough position, a kind of cannon fodder line - as I say, I'm sure there's a counterpart about the blacks.....
- M.S. I - I can answer that question - I can answer that question very - very - very clearly. I think that if we'd stayed at home there's a very good chance that Jennie and Katrine (?) would be alive. We have never for one minute thought that we are safe outside the country - not in Botswana, not here where I'm talking to you in Harare, not in Tanzania where I'm working at the moment, not when I'm in Europe. I don't think we left the country to opt for safety.
- J.F. And what - how do you feel about the responsibility of having someone through exposure to you learning from you, however it evolves, then taking a decision to put themselves in a position that could cause them to get into Barbara's situation now - just the idea - just that kind of - everything you've done in South Africa mainly concerned yourself - obviously you probably did things that had other people at risk, but you were also putting yourself at such a risk it probably wasn't an issue, but whereby your very being was at risk in Botswana or elsewhere you've made clear - but just the idea of someone coming and then taking a decision - seeing Barbara go back knowing that whatever she was doing she had taken a decision to put herself at risk.

M.S. O.K., well, let's speak about Barbara specifically. Firstly both Jennie and I would be filled with admiration for Barbara all the time, and we were as aware as Barbara, perhaps more so of the risks that she was taking. You know, we not going to change South Africa without the best of our people taking risks - unlike the majority of whites in South Africa, the people that I am close to are taking risks all the time - whether they are taking those risks inside the country or outside the country risk is something that we live with - and of course we were devastated with the unbelievably heavy sentence that Barbara got. What came out at her trial it was unbelievable that she should get that sort of punitive sentence, and it's devastating - but, Julie, neither Jennie or myself or Barbara, if we lived through the situation again, would make different decisions.

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. take it further how and why you left Botswana and where you decided to go and why.

M.S. Well, we were working for a British volunteer organisation called International Voluntary Service - Jennie and I were the joint field officers. Round about April of 1983 the general secretary of the organisation flew out from the headquarters in Leicester to see us in Botswana to tell us that he had been called in by the British foreign office - the British volunteer programmes all receive 90 percent of their funding from the British government - that he had been called in by the British government indicating that they felt that Jennie and my continuing as - to work for IVS was not desirable.

After considerable discussion with Nigel Watt, the general secretary, and after Jennie and I had spoken about it, we felt that it would be foolish of us to carry on working with IVS because there was - the threat had I think been made that the funding for the Southern African programmes might well be stopped if IVS continued to keep us on. We felt IVS was doing important work in Botswana and particularly in Mozambique, where I think IVS has a very good programme indeed. We felt that it would be foolish of us to jeopardise IVS's position with the British government, and we agreed to resign from the organisation.

However, the understanding was we would stay on in the job until we had time to work with our successor, and that in all probability we would remain in the jobs more or less until the end of '83, which would give them a chance to run a decent recruiting programme overseas for a successor and that we would have a period of overlap working together with the successor.

Then as IVS field officers the only British diplomatic function that we were ever invited to was the Queen's birthday in July - in June - and in 1983 we were again invited to the Queen's birthday at the high commission in Gaborone. Just as we were going the High Commissioner came over to speak to us and said he had to see us urgently, could we be available later in the afternoon to see him in his office

M.S. So we went to see him later that afternoon - early that evening - he then said to us that the British government had good intelligence information that the racists were going to assassinate Jennie and me in Gabarone - that they felt that our continuing at all in the IVS programme was putting British volunteers at risk, and he basically instructed us that we were to stop the jobs immediately. We expressed some scepticism about the intelligence information that he said they had. He immediately put us in his car and took us around to see the head of the Botswana special branch, who said that the same information had passed over his desk and that we were to take it very seriously.

We went straight from the Botswana security police commander's office - we drove straight down to see the chief representative of the A.N.C. - we discussed with him what had been said - we phoned the office - we phoned the general secretary in Leicester at his home to tell him what was going on. It was quite clear that we couldn't remain in the IVS jobs, and in fact the general secretary I think had to do quite a bit of pleading with the foreign office in England to allow us actually to finish a major report that we were doing - they wanted us to hand the keys over the next day.

After discussion with the chief representative, who was just on his way up to Lusaka - I think he was going to Lusaka the next day or the day after to go, where he'd been summoned for consultations with headquarters. He came back four or five days later or a week later and told us that Lusaka's feeling was that we should move - that we should move. So we moved from Gabarone to - to Lusaka and we spent six months in Lusaka working in the headquarters offices of the A.N.C., working both in the department of arts and culture and the department of education.

We were then requested by the secretary of education to go to work at the University of Lubango in the Republic of Angola. The A.N.C. had received a very urgent request from the central committee of the MPLA to assist with teachers of English for the university in Lubango. The secretary of education asked us to assume these responsibilities, so we went to Lubango in Angola to teach English there. I was teaching English and linguistics, Jennie was teaching English - sent there by the A.N.C. at the request of the central committee of the MPLA.

J.F. And was Angola a different experience than Botswana just in terms of how you were treated and how you were dealt with by the Angolans?

M.S. Well, it was different language experience to begin with - we were sent there with no language preparation whatsoever, so it was very difficult for us actually to talk to people - but Angola is clearly a very different country from Botswana. The reality of the recent revolution is apparent all the time in Angola. The day we arrived in Angola in December of 1983 the South Africans were launching a major attack in the south. The reality of South African aggression is always present in Angola. It's spoken about by ordinary people as well as by people who are very much concerned with political change. We were quite clearly moving into a country which was struggling to maintain the gains of the revolution, a country very different from Botswana, which is a very settled, on the surface very comfortable country.

The reality of food shortages, the realities of a rationing system, were apparent to us within the first few days in Angola.

J.F. How about the kids - how did they adapt?

M.S. Well, Fritsie was very small - in fact I'd weaned Fritsie in Lusaka - Jennie had had to fly over to England to go and brief our successor in the IVS job, and we took her to the airport and Fritsie had his last breastfeed at the airport, and then I took him home and he didn't have it again. So Fritsie was very small. It was relatively easy for him to adapt. Katryn missed Botswana desperately - she missed her friends in Botswana, she missed our friends in Botswana as did we, but I think Katryn missed them more than we did.

The last six months of the little girl's life were unfortunately not happy for her. She - she found Angola very, very difficult. She had to cope with the language much more than we did. She'd learned much more Portuguese than we did - but I think she felt very lonely, very isolated, whereas she'd felt very close to various people in Botswana, and I think she missed them enormously.

J.F. I think we should talk about the murders - I should let you talk about it if that's O.K., and I think you should just tell it - my feeling is - I was thinking about it before you came back, is that I think that with all the kind of propoganda that the regime put out about it that they should pay for it in terms of I think you should talk about it and people should have to know the real - what really happened and that there was the kind of Sunday Times version kind of shift and.....

M.S. That I was running intelligence for the A.N.C. in the whole of Southern Africa....

J.F. I'm just saying it was something that happened that - if you can talk about it in some detail I think would be important just because it's - it should be historically set straight.

M.S. O.K. So we moved down to Lubango. We spent a bit longer in Luanda than we were intending to - there were certain administrative difficulties in our going to Lubango. We started working at the university. After we'd been there for I think two months we started going up - one of us going up once a month to - to Luanda, where we were going up alternate months and working with the chief representative of the A.N.C. in Luanda working on our development projects there.

I came down to Luanda in June - towards the end of June - and I was due to fly back to Lubango on the 29th. On the evening of the 28th, then our chief representative in Angola came round to the house where I was staying and broke to me the news that Jennie and Katryn had been killed in an explosion in the flat. I want to speak at some length about the Angolan people, about - I don't know if you find that relevant. I want to tell you about the incredible kindness that we received from our Angolan comrades, and I'm very bad at this - I get the shakies and I cry, so you must excuse me.

We were staying at the house of a comrade, a very close friend, Jane Bergerol, who's worked as a journalist in Angola who's now become a doctor in Angola. Jane was upstairs working - she was busy writing exams. The chief told me what had happened, said that they'd had no real news - they'd received a phone call just saying that they had both been killed in an explosion. I went upstairs and I told Jane, and Jane came down, and we'd already made a decision that a comrade would be going down to Lubango with me the next day.

M.S. Now I was booked on the aircraft but he wasn't booked, and getting onto aircraft in Angola is very, very difficult. So Jane came down and she said to the chief: Right, let's go out in the car and we'll ensure that - we'll go and see various people and we'll ensure that the comrade who's going down with Marius actually gets on the aircraft and that in fact that they both get on. They in fact went to see Cde. Ikko Carreira, who at the time was head of the airforce, central committee member. Cde. Carreira assured them that he would see that we were both given top military priority to be flown to Lubango the next day, and he assured us that if by chance the civilian aircraft was not flying, there was a military transport going down later in the day and we'd go on the military transport if the civilian aircraft was not flying.

After they'd been to see Cde. Ikko Carreira Jane went round to see the wife of a fellow student of hers - people that I knew very vaguely - I'd been in their flat - Jennie and I had been in their flat shortly before Christmas for a party for their children's christening. This comrade, comrade called Justine, worked as an operator on the international telephone exchange, and making international calls is very difficult - it can sometimes take one days.

Jane came back with Cde. Justine to the house and Justine on a secret number phoned her colleagues at the exchange, and then she turned round to me and she said: Right, you make whatever international calls you want to - this line is open - the comrades will put you through straight away - and I was in fact speaking to my sister in law in England within five minutes of Justine coming into the house.

I just want to go on speaking about Justine. On the day after the funeral - the funeral was very emotional, very harrowing. We came into the house and the phone rang within five minutes of us coming into the house, and it was Justine, and she said: I'm not supposed to be working this afternoon, but I've changed my shift - here I am - I'll put you through to anywhere in the world that you want to. Now this is the type of kindness and the type of consideration that in that ghastly period of Jennie's death we met from virtually every Angolan comrade that we had contact with.

I'll talk to you just now about going down to Lubango, about what we saw in Lubango - let me just try and do these things consecutively. We flew down to Lubango - I'll talk to you about it in some detail just now. We couldn't get through to - to Luanda until the next day. The next day the university was going to be having a memorial service for Jennie and Katryn. The university had already made the incredible bureaucratic arrangements for us to get the bodies back to Luanda, but there was enormous difficulty about getting them onto a commercial aircraft.

So we phoned the chief representative in Luanda to see what assistance he could be - he said: Oh, I've been trying to phone you all day, I've not been able to get through - I've just come from seeing Cde. Ikko Carreira - he has assured me there is a military aircraft which is not scheduled to go to Lubango which has to be used to take supplies and ammunition to FAPLA in Cabinda - it will be diverted from Cabinda to Lubango and it will be at your disposal. And later that morning I was in the director's office at the university and a young FAPLA officer came in and he saluted the director and he handed him a letter - the director, who spoke a little bit of English - and we had someone there interpreting as well - turned - turned to this young officer and he introduced me to him.

M.S. The officer saluted me - he says : I've got orders from the commander in chief of the airforce to report to you when my aircraft lands in Lubango - the aircraft is under your command - it will stand on the strip at Lubango until you order me to take off, whether it is today or whether it is in a fortnight's time. Now you know, we'd only been in Angola for six months. I don't think there's any country in the world where that would happen. I don't think there's any country in the world where from the very highest level, both of the army and of government and of the party, that sort of consideration would be shown to people who - who were foreigners - who'd only been there for a few months.

So we flew down to Lubango the next day. Again as we got off the aircraft onto the tarmac one of the security officers from Lubango, somebody who was in charge of the airport security who we knew vaguely, came over immediately - he took the two of us - took us through all the bureaucratic hassles that there are travelling in Angola with - just walked us through - he said to me : There's a vehicle outside - and as we walked in I saw - we were - in the flat next door to us there was an A.N.C. comrade staying who we were very close to and he'd actually - I'd spoken to him on the phone the previous day, and Fritsie was with him.

I could see the two of them standing inside. I rushed over - I took Fritsie from him, and Fritsie put his arms around me and he said to me : So I thought you weren't coming back as well. Fritsie was in considerable shock. He was actually in very, very poor shape. Fritsie's normally the most vocal human being in the world - more vocal than anyone I've met - and apart from putting his arms around this and saying this to me he said nothing. He just said one other thing in the car.

We went into town in the land rover being made available by party administration, and I was sitting in the front with him on my lap and he said virtually - he said nothing, nothing at all - and he just held me. The only thing he said to me all the way into town - takes a long time, 40 minutes - is he whispered in my ear and he says : Marius, the enemy didn't kill our Jennie, they just broke her into pieces. Now Fritsie must actually have seen the horror in the flat for him to be able to say that - he must actually have seen Jennie decapitated with an arm wrenched off, which he's (?) not yet really been able to understand - to determine exactly where the little boy was when the explosion took place, but I'm certain he was either in the flat or just outside it, and I think he was the first person in the flat, if he was outside it, afterwards.

So we drove into town - we stopped in front of the flat - the whole street was cordoned off by the police - street for a whole block was just filled with glass and masonry from the explosion. We went upstairs to see the flat. The flat looked as though it had been hit by an artillery shell. The flat was just absolutely devastated - and there was a smear of blood three metres wide from floor to ceiling on the one wall, and that was literally all that was left of Katryn - Katryn just disintegrated.

Then we went up to the university and met with the greatest consideration, the greatest helpfulness from the students, from the trade union at the university, from the university administration. The university put Fritsie and me in a hotel that night. Then we'd indicated that we wanted to take the bodies up to - up to Luanda because I felt very strongly I wanted Jennie and Katryn buried with the A.N.C. comrades around them.

M.S. The university had already indicated they would make all the arrangements. They asked if it would be possible for us to have a memorial service for the comrades the next day at the university, which was actually a very, very moving service indeed - I mean the staff at the university was very much an internationalist staff - there were comrades from the Soviet Union, a number of comrades from Vietnam - comrades from Cuba, comrades from Uruguay, comrades from the GDR, Angolan comrades. It was a very moving ceremony at the university. Virtually the whole student population of the university was there.

What I regard as a very great tribute to Jennie is that virtually without exception the manual workers, the drivers, the people who carried the stuff around in the stores, were there to pay respects to Jennie. Then immediately from the memorial service at the university we took - took the two coffins out to the airfield - and as we drove through the streets of the city everything came to a stop, and everywhere we went through the streets of the city the people standing on the pavements were saying (.....) - it was very moving. It made me realise just how close we democratic South Africans are to our sisters and brothers in Angola.

Then we flew to Luanda in the military aircraft with the two coffins, with the representatives from the students union, from the trade union, from the university administration, and myself and the A.N.C. comrade that was working with us there, and we flew to the military airfield in Luanda where we were met by the A.N.C. The bodies were taken from there to a hall built into the wall of one of the major cemeteries in Luanda, a hall which is normally only used for the bodies of FAPLA heroes who've died in action.

We buried the comrades in Luanda. I think you've heard the tape of - the rather bad tape of what I said at the funeral - it was a very, very moving funeral, just as a year later when we unveiled the gravestone it was very moving - perhaps if I can just jump a year ahead.

J.F. Do you still have the tape of that because I gave the tape.

M.S. I think I have a tape of that - it's a very bad tape, I'm afraid. A year later when we unveiled - went to - back to Luanda to unveil the gravestone - we didn't do it on the 28th. - we did it on the 26th., and it was in fact the - the main event for June 26th. in - in Angola - and what I found more moving than anything on that day was - I'd become very friendly with a young woman in Angola who's a medical doctor, a FAPLA officer, works at the military hospital in Luanda - she'd shown me very great kindness both before and after Jennie's death.

She'd helped me with Fritsie - somebody who's become a very close friend. And the comrade was at the unveiling of the gravestones in her smartest military uniform, and very simply she laid on the grave - on the gravestone something which is actually completely unobtainable in Angola, which is a bunch of red roses - and I understand that in order for them to be able to get the red roses to lay on the - on the gravestone - she spoke very briefly, very movingly about how this was a tribute from the people of Angola and from all those who'd known Jennie in Angola - but I understand that in order to get those red roses they'd actually had to approach the central committee of the party, so that they had to be flown in specially from - from Lisbon.

M.S. Again I'm stressing the friendship and the consideration of the Angolan people. I've spoken to you previously about comradeship. I've actually not only experienced comradeship from the people that I'm working closely with - I've actually experienced comradeship from a whole country - it's just devastating.

Now while we were in Lubango I spoke to a Vietnamese comrade who'd been in the flat when the explosion took place. He'd been badly injured in the explosion - he was very, very shocked when I saw him. His face was badly cut, his hands were badly cut, but he'd actually been in the room when the explosion took place. Now according to him what happened is that he came in to borrow the tape recorder, and Jennie - we had a round table in the centre of the room.

Jennie was sitting at the table reading something, and Katryn was sitting on the floor playing with something more or less next to her chair, and when he came in Jennie offered him coffee, and she got up and pushed the table away from her. Jennie offered him coffee - she got up to go and put on a kettle in the kitchen, and as she got up she pushed the table away from her, and she took two or three paces and then the explosion came.

Now I think our security in - in Angola is reasonably convinced that some form of explosive device - a very, very powerful explosive device had in fact been placed under the table and that pushing the table activated the tumblers. However, it is possible that it was also some form of a letterbomb. I don't think it matters. I don't think there's any doubt whatsoever who was responsible for Jennie and Katryn's death.

I have no doubt whatsoever that South Africa - that the South African racists killed Jennie and Katryn - whoever they actually used physically to do it, however the explosion took place, I think that the responsibility for Jennie and Katryn's death is P.W. Botha's, is Magnus Malan's, is Johan Coetzee's, and those people killed Jennie and Katryn just as certainly as if they had placed the explosives there themselves - and I don't think there can be any doubt about that whatsoever.

J.F. And had you had any threats or anything before like it when you were in Botswana or Zambia or Angola?

M.S. Well, you know, we'd had the warning in Botswana from the British high commission from - from the head of the security police in Botswana. Let me tell you about something else that happened in Botswana. Just after Katryn was born I had to go away - Jennie got desperately ill a week or so after Katryn's birth - desperately, desperately ill. Her mother came up from Johannesburg, I came back from being away for four weeks. I got very ill - both Jennie and I had very serious hepatitis. Her mother was there for a long time - virtually three months.

Then a few months later - no, during the time that I was so desperately ill - I'd come back and I'd got ill within days of getting back. Jennie's mother was still there and they'd been unable to phone Jennie's father, and he suddenly arrived midday one day looking grey and drawn and he said to Jennie : So when did he die - and Jennie says : What do you mean - he says : When did Marius die - she says : Look, Marius is very ill and he's been hospitalised, but he's O.K. - and it emerges that he had received a phone call that morning supposedly from the administration of the Malopolole Hospital saying that I'd died during the night.

M.S. A few months later Jennie's father again receives a phone call that claims to be from the postmaster in Malopolole because we'd been unable to get through, and he's been asked to relay a message to him that Katryn has been admitted to the hospital with meningitis and she's only likely to live for another two hours. Now those type of things were happening reasonably frequently.

When I said to you earlier that we knew we were at risk in Botswana I actually meant it.

J.F. And can you talk a bit about the media treatment of the (.....) how the South African people were - what they had been led to believe had happened?

M.S. You know, the bulk of the media treatment was very good - there was one bad article in the Sunday Times, I think by Mr. Neil Hooper, wasn't it - probably - where there was a whole lot of - of nonsense where the innuendo was that I was actually responsible for Jennie's death. The same sort of innuendoes have been made about Cde. Joe Slovo about Ruth's death - I don't think anybody takes that seriously. Definitely nobody who knew me or knows - or knew Jennie takes that seriously. I don't think any progressive human being anywhere in the world takes that seriously, and in fact I don't even think that the majority of reactionary South Africans take that seriously - that's - that - that sort of stuff is just something that comes out of a poisoned mind.

J.F. Do you have any sense of what South Africans understand happened - did Jennie's parents give some sense as to how?

M.S. Well, you know, they flew - they flew up - flew up virtually immediately. They were at the funeral again with the assistance of the Angolan government - very much with the assistance of the Angolan government, who made it possible for them to enter Angola with no visa. They brought cuttings with them - I've seen most of the cuttings. What's more important to me than the media coverage is I know how many people attended the memorial service for Jennie and Katryn in Johannesburg. I know that services have been held in Durban, in Cape Town, commemorating Jennie.

I don't really care about the media coverage in South Africa - those people that I care about in South Africa know very well that Jennie had made an enormous contribution to the liberation of our country. I've never taken the Sunday Times all that seriously.

J.F. I guess maybe more important to get a sense of how South Africans react is to ask how the - Jennie's parents responded - what the experience?

M.S. They were shattered - and they still shattered. They were also unbelievably brave, unbelievably dignified and completely supportive, but Jennie's parents, as you know, are not Mr. and Mrs. Average white South African.

J.F. One last thing that you could tell me how Fritsie has assimilated it now he's (.....)

M.S. It's quite long - do you want something long.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. talk about Frits and how he's coped.

M.S. I told you the monkey's story the other day, did I - the evening I was here for supper....

J.F. The which story?

M.S. The monkey story - no.

J.F. I don't think so.

M.S. No, you would have remembered it if I'd told you - O.K., I'll tell you the monkey story now. I do want to talk about Fritsie because Fritsie's four now. He was not two and - not two and a half when Jennie and Katryn were killed. Now I don't know how relevant this is to what you doing, but I've always known that I would - that I can like small children very easily indeed. I never actually thought that I could admire a small child, a child of two and a half, and yet Frits has behaved with such incredible courage, and courage is something that I value very highly.

He's actually taught me that there things in small children, very small children, which we can actually admire, which we can actually learn from. If I can tell you at some length about how Frits has managed to come to terms and to, I think to get on top of what has happened in his life. The first few days in Luanda after we flew back from Lubango were very bad indeed - very, very bad - he was barely talking - he wasn't playing at all - he was - he wouldn't move away from me - everywhere I went he would hold onto me - he was listless - I was very worried about him.

Then his grandmother arrived - things started getting a little bit better, though he was still very, very seriously shocked. Now in the house where we were staying - in Jane's house - she's got a little girl a bit older than Fritsie - and just two doors down there's an Angolan family where there about six or seven children from small babies to about seven years old - and the little girl in the house where we were staying was friends with them - they were in the house often, and she'd go down there to play with them - and one day Fritsie said to me : I want to go down and play with the other children - and it was the first time that he'd given any indication of wanting to do anything other than just to clutch onto me, and I was absolutely delighted and I took him down the two doors down and we got to the front door and he said : I want to ring the bell and go in on my own - I said : Fritsie, will you be O.K. - he says : Ja, I'll ring the bell and then I want to go and play with the children - I said : Fine - it seemed grand.

And I walked back and there he was standing and I suddenly heard him screaming in absolute terror, and I rushed back, and there's a concrete beam just over the door of these houses, and there was a monkey that had come in from the bush sitting on top of the beam and leaning down grabbing at his hair, and he was terrified. I took him home - I carried him home in my arms - and it took his grandmother and me an hour and a half to calm him down, and he'd just stopped being absolutely hysterical when this bloody monkey tried to get in through the window of the house where we were staying and it just set him off again, and it was very bad - it was very bad.

Then we'd been going away in August - we were going to spend time in England and the Island in August anyhow. We had bookings on Aeroflot, and again I won't bore you with how helpful and how kind Aeroflot was, but Aeroflot changed our bookings, they agreed to Neville using Jennie's ticket.

M.S. So we flew on Aeroflot and it was pretty bad on the plane - Fritsie was very, very difficult - incredible kindness from the comrades on the plane - unbelievable kindness - but Fritsie was very difficult on the plane - then we had to sleep over in Moscow and catch the plane to London the next day. He barely slept that night. He was then absolutely exhausted, so he slept on the plane from London to Moscow. We were met at the airport in London by a very close friend and a comrade, British comrade, and our chief representative in London. We went back to the comrade's house. Fritsie'd woken up when we came off the plane.

He was a bit difficult, but he went to sleep - and then our friend Colin was going to be taking Neville and Fritsie and myself down to Devon the next day to Jennie's sister, who's married and lives in England. So we got up early the next morning and we went down to the car, and as we came out of the front door Fritsie looked around and he said : Those monkeys are here. Now this was actually the worst day of my life - this was actually as far as I'm concerned the lowest point of my life.

We rode down to Devon six, seven hours in the car, and the monkeys were there all the time. The monkeys were in the trees - the monkeys - every time we stopped the monkeys were getting into the car. The monkeys were on the bonnet of the car, and he was just in an absolute panic about the monkeys. Then we went down - we were staying with Jennie's sister, who's got children - the monkeys were there but they weren't there all the time.

Then Colin and - after we'd been there for a while - three weeks or so - Colin and Fritsie and I went over to Ireland - we'd hired a cottage in Ireland which we were going to be using - Jennie, Katryn, Colin, Fritsie and myself, and I decided well, we'd go away anyhow, We went over on the ferry - we had a very long car journey on the other side. We found the landlord of the cottage about one o'clock at night and we rode behind him to where the cottage is, and as we got out of the car the monkeys were in the trees and the monkeys were everywhere.

Then the monkeys started getting a bit less but they were still there. Then my cousin, Tony Holiday, came over to join us for a while, and the monkeys were there - the monkeys were there every day, sometimes more so than other days, but they were there all the time. We then went up to Dublin and again we arrived at the comrade's house in Dublin fairly late in the evening, and as we got out of the car he just sighed and he said : Oh, I'd hoped the monkeys wouldn't be here but they've got monkeys too - and for a long time in Dublin every time we went to a new place the monkeys would be there. Every time we went to a new house, and sometimes the monkeys would be at the house where we were staying.

But he was gradually getting better - he was talking, he was playing, but the monkeys were there. Then round about some time in September I was invited to go over to Copenhagen for a few days. I discussed it with the comrades in Dublin - they said : Look, you know, you actually need a break from Fritsie for a few days - we'll look after Fritsie for a few days. So I spoke to him and I said : Look, I'm going away for a few days - and he said to me : Don't worry, I'm going to beat those monkeys - so I said : That's right, Fritsie, you and I together are going to beat those monkeys - he said : Ja, we'll beat the monkeys.

M.S. So I was in Copenhagen for four days. When I came back from Copenhagen the first thing he said to me is : There were no monkeys while you were gone. Then we went over to London together sometime in November, again stayed with the same friend, and the monkeys were there - the monkeys - he said to me as soon as we arrived : This is the place where the monkeys are so bad. The monkeys were there, but the monkeys were more or less going away.

Then the decision was made that we'd come back to Mazimbu - we were flown the most inconvenient way through Cairo with a three hour stopover between one at night and four at night in Cairo, which isn't grand if one's travelling with a three year old child. So we arrived in Dar es Salaam - he was absolutely exhausted. It took a long time to clear us in Dar es Salaam, so we had to sit around for a long time in the airport.

It happened that the comrade T.G. was in Dar was going up to Mazimbu, so we were taken down to the place where he was - we were given lunch. Fritsie was dead tired - he didn't know what was going on, he was so tired. So I went out after lunch - we sat in the Kombi that was going to take us up to Mazimbu, and we sat down, he put his head on my lap and he said : I just want to have a look out of the window - and he looked out of the window and he said : The monkeys are here, the monkeys are here - they're all over the car - close the door, they're getting in the car. So the monkeys were quite bad for the first little while we were in Mazimbu - and then gradually the monkeys went away - the monkeys went away completely.

Then we came - I came with Fritsie from Tanzania to Lusaka last year - I was going to Angola for the unveiling of the gravestones - and I decided I wasn't going to take Fritsie to Angola - he stayed with comrades in Lusaka, and we then went away when we came back from Angola - we were in Angola for a week - we then went away for a week with his grandparents to Victoria Falls.....(Tape off)

So the hotel where we were staying had a very beautiful big terrace where one could have snacks and meals - and the first morning we woke up early and we went down and had breakfast. He was quite excited about eating in a hotel and : I want to have toast, he says - I want to have toast, and what's more they going to give me butter - I'm going to see they give me butter. I said : Ja, Fritsie, I'm sure we'll get butter. And then breakfast came and I spread his toast, put the butter on nice and thick for him and put marmalade on, and he said : There's nothing like that in Mazimbu, doesn't it look nice - I said : Ja, Fritsie, go on, eat your breakfast - and just then a real live monkey catapults itself out of a tree overhanging this terrace and takes the toast off his place and goes up into the tree, and I just shudder - I think, Jesus, it's all going to start again - and he was very upset - he says to me : What about my toast - I say : Look, we'll get you more toast - and one of the waiters comes over and very apologetic and says (.....) the man's going to get you more toast now, don't worry - and he says to me : Haven't you just been to Angola - I say : That's right, Fritsie - he says : Well, you better go to Angola again and come back with an AK and you and I will kill those monkeys - and the monkeys have gone.

Now I don't know, that story to me just illustrates the most incredible courage, and I don't think we will know for 15 years, for 20 years, what sort of harm has been done to Frits, but I actually think that using his own resources with help - with as much help as I've been able to give him and as much help as various comrades have been able to give him, but basically using his own resources, those monkeys which had become the symbol of all the horror, he's....

- M.S. actually beaten them, he's actually chased them away, and he's actually decided that they not going to bug him.
- J.F. And now can he - if someone - does he mention it to people - is he able to?
- M.S. He - he now says (?) you know, the monkeys aren't here any more - the monkeys have gone away.
- J.F. But I mean what actually happened to Jennie and Katryn - is he - can he talk (.....)
- M.S. He can't - well, he can't talk about what he actually saw - that is blotted out completely. Now he virtually never talks about Jennie. I've been told by a comrade who spent a long time working in Mozambique, a very highly trained paediatrician, that he's actually accepted Jennie's death because we certain that he actually saw Jennie, even though she was, to use his terms, broken, it was still Jennie - but Katryn just disintegrated - he actually didn't see Katryn - and he talks about Katryn all the time. He talks about Katryn, oh, not every day any more but at least once a week, whereas he virtually never talks about Jennie.

Katryn and I did this - wouldn't Katryn like to do this with me. Sometimes he even says : I wonder, perhaps Katryn will come back. There's just one thing I'd like to add to what we've done already. I'm talking about the period in Lubango immediately before Jennie's death. The day after her death when I arrived in Lubango and I went to the university, as I came up through the main entrance of the university I saw a lovely pictorial exhibition up on the main noticeboard in Portuguese commemorating June 26th., pointing out to our Angolan comrades that this was our national day.

Now the last political act that Jennie performed was to make the major contribution to our June 26th. exhibition at the university. The last act that Jennie performed in the world was to get up to offer hospitality to a comrade, to go and get something from the kitchen for a comrade - and actually to a large extent Jennie's life was actually pooled together in those two actions - her commitment to the liberation of South Africa, which was not just a commitment of words but was a commitment of hard work doing anything that she was asked to do - sticking pictures on a piece of cardboard, finding someone to get an adequate translation of the Freedom Charter into Portuguese, finding someone to translate our slogans, actually physically sticking up the exhibition - and one of the centres of Jennie's life was that our house was open to comrades always and that nobody would come into the house without being offered anything.

END OF INTERVIEW.