

**Interview with Anna-Zohra Tikly by Margaret Ling, 27 August 2013, for the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives Committee project Forward to Freedom**  
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*Margaret Ling: It's Tuesday 27 August 2013, I'm Margaret Ling. I'm about to interview Anna-Zohra Tikly for the Forward to Freedom Anti-Apartheid Movement History Project and we're sitting in Anna-Zohra's house in Haringey in north London.*

*Anna-Zohra, could you give me your full name?*

Anna-Zohra Tikly: Anna-Zohra Tikly.

*ML: And when and where were you born?*

AZT: In Haringey ... I wasn't [laughs], the Whittington Hospital in London in August 1965.

*ML: What date was that exactly?*

AZT: Sorry, the 24th August 1965.

*ML: And what did your parents do for a living during the period that we're going to be talking about, the period up to 1994?*

AZT: My mother was always a teacher in Haringey, and my father was a teacher until he left to go to the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College as its director, around 1980. He had come from South Africa as an exile, he was exiled, he came over as a young man, he was in exile for the political activity that he was involved in, having become involved in the ANC in South Africa, and then continuing to be involved when he came over. So during the '60s he was involved in the anti-apartheid activities, including a die-in in Trafalgar Square around the time of the Sharpeville Massacre, which I remember seeing newspaper reports of. And he was involved in our local ANC unit, and he did a lot of work in education when the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College was developed after ... in the aftermath of the Soweto massacre, which I remember quite clearly as being a great stepping-up of activity. And because it had had television coverage, there was a lot more awareness of what was happening in South Africa being generated, and I have memories of increased activism at that time. And he became very busy helping set up the school and developing a curriculum for it. And one of the things that he did was help coordinate the collecting of donated books to go to the school, which meant that our house was almost permanently full of boxes of books which people had donated, which was great, although because there were quite a lot of initiatives against racism in education and pro-multiculturalism, unfortunately we got landed with quite a lot of the old textbooks which were not the kind of things that we wanted in the new school, so that was rather ironic. And at that time it was with anti-apartheid people helping that those books were sorted and distributed to the school, and also at that point I was involved with the Anti-Apartheid Group in collecting, and ANC people, working together in collecting material aid. I remember distinctly going outside the Sainsbury's in Muswell Hill and we had a stall so that when people came in we explained to them

what would be useful at the school and what wouldn't be, even though you might think it would be, giving them a leaflet about what they would be helping with, and then when they came out they'd put something in our collection box, some material aid, mostly toiletries and so on. And I really felt that that was a very good way, one, of collecting what the school actually needed, and secondly for raising awareness. And it was a very human approach, because it was a very direct way of helping, and then imagining what it was like for those who'd had to run from South Africa.

*ML: Just going back a bit, when and why did you yourself become aware of the situation in Southern Africa?*

AZT: I think it was always present in my understanding of the world, because my father was always involved, and we had ANC meetings in the house from when I was very young, and I was also taken along to ANC and anti-apartheid activities from such a young age that I really can't remember when it began. And so people, for example Wolfie Kodesh and Freda Katz and other ANC people, the Pahads, were sort of like an extended family because everybody was working together, exiled in north London, and the same went for anti-apartheid people who I was very familiar with from a young age. It was a bit like being in a ... my earliest recollections was a bit like an extended family of activists, and sort of people took shape and I understood who was who as I grew up. And I suppose at that point I chose to be involved, from my mid-teens.

It then became more and more well known as an issue. When I was young, it was terribly upsetting that people were very ignorant of South Africa, very racist about it. There was a lot of negativity, just from the general public, that black people couldn't possibly run their own country, it was a very different time, where people really did think of African people as more primitive, and so you were contending with a lot of very quite basic, or very uneducated, racist ideas, as well as trying to explain what was going on in the country. And that changed a lot as awareness of South Africa came higher on the agenda, also in the anti-racist movement in Britain, a multiculturalism came up, so that there was maybe more of an opening of attitudes to what the Anti-Apartheid Movement was talking about in terms of being ... of having the right to ... run their own country, and I suppose more of an anti-colonialist ...

*ML: Did you feel that the family background you'd come from, did that make it easier to speak to people?*

AZT: It was very hard to explain, really. Mostly, a lot of people, as I say, didn't know about the situation, though they wouldn't ... other children of my age wouldn't really understand and so having .. my father had, you know, people whom he had known who had died in detention, and been imprisoned, and that was always such a big difference, and if a child didn't know about it, it was hard, very hard to explain. And also my father being Indian, so you had the whole issue of people not knowing why an Indian would be involved in Africa. There was still, it was the time of the Kenyan Indians, and the Ugandan Indians, coming over, and that always was ... I think that still there was not really an understanding that the ANC was a multiracial organisation and quite what it was fighting, just because there wasn't ... as I grew

older that became ... and as Anti-Apartheid became a bigger thing, and people started to sort of get an understanding of the issues.

*ML: Can you remember how old you were when you first started having to have these conversations with other children or with other people?*

AZT: Oh, from a very young age, because being mixed race, people constantly asked where I was from, and then in order to answer that, getting stuck in [laugh] very complicated, you know very difficult conversations where people, because I'm half Indian, wouldn't accept that I was Indian at all, because I don't look like, to them, a typically Indian person, and you've got to remember in those days people were very hostile, and not wanting to sort of put their minds to understanding why someone might not be who they expected them to be, or fit into a certain box. And then also my mother being Scottish and not South African, that was a big difference between me and some of the exile children, whose both parents were South African and who'd come over together and were going to go back, you know, as a family, and had family there, it was actually, though it was, yes ...

*ML: Did you feel very different?*

AZT: I did, because the struggle was always there, and it was quite dominating in terms of our lives and our identity, and also because on the one hand you had a life in Muswell Hill in north London, and on the other hand there were things going on that you knew were affecting your father very deeply, and a struggle had to be won. So when I look back I think there were a lot of children in the same position from ... immigrant children from exiled, you know, children of conflict in other places who'd sort of landed up in Britain, and certainly, you know, there were other, there was an awareness that there were other people like that, but yes, it complicated the question of where I was from, and certainly in those days it did, because it was ... one had to argue that one was English anyway.

*ML: What was your mother's position in all of this?*

AZT: Well, she supported my father but she wasn't actually an ANC activist, and although she kept up the home and supported his work, she wasn't actually an activist herself.

*ML: Do you have brothers and sisters?*

AZT: Yes, I had four, one sister and three brothers.

*ML: Were they all involved in Anti-Apartheid?*

AZT: I think it was only me who was involved in the local group and also then went on to keep ... although my older brother had some involvement.

*ML: We can go on to talk about your involvement, what form did that take, you've mentioned the local group?*

AZT: Yes, so the local Haringey Anti-Apartheid Group, as I say there's recollections of having gone on demonstrations, being involved in publicity and fund-raising activities, when I was younger. And then I more formally got involved with the group, Haringey Anti-Apartheid, when I was in my mid or late teens, and then the activities were, we followed the activities from the central organisation, that all the local groups were doing, so if it was to do with the sports boycott, we would do maybe a stall or an activity on that, we would join in marches as Haringey Anti-Apartheid Group. I think I also went in as an individual to help with mailings in the office sometimes, the main office, but I remember I wasn't on a central London committee or the London Committee as an elected member.

*ML: Did you have a formal role in the local group?*

AZT: This is what I'm trying to remember. I think I was on the committee, but I can't quite remember when and where, I'm afraid.

*ML: Can you remember the atmosphere in the group, what was sort of the dynamic in the group, the drivers? What kept you all motivated?*

AZT: I think there were always defined activities that we could be involved with, which I suppose that's something to take note of now, that there would be information and materials for the group to use on our local stall that linked in with what the other anti-apartheid groups were doing, which was very important, and though I think we looked at what was coming centrally and then adapted it to activities our group could do, and then sometimes combined with other groups, and sometimes in a London, on a London basis. It was a very lively group, and there was lots of debate. And there was political debate about what direction we should be going in, and there was arguments about the non-stop picket that was happening in Trafalgar Square that was organised by another group, and I remember there being discussions about that. And some more theoretical discussions about the nature of the struggle, but mainly there was a job to do that was ... and I remember there being power struggles within the group and arguments about that, but the group doing ...

*ML: Why did you keep going, what was the attraction for you?*

AZT: Well, it was a very obvious thing for me to do from my background. It seemed like the natural thing I should be doing, because I was sometimes helping the ANC in the office, for example, that's at Penton Street, with the mailings and so on, so that was sort of having gone along and helped with my father, I then began to go along independently and help. But Anti-Apartheid was British, and it was about ... I suppose it was the way that as a person here I was expressing my abhorrence of apartheid and wanting to continue to campaign against it, and it was the sort of obvious forum. And politically it had also been... there had always been great links between it and the ANC. I remember discussions about the PAC and whether we supported it too, and so there was a lot of political discussion about, and questioning about the politics of it, and I think there could ... it was at a time where there was still quite hardline views on the left, which could get mixed in with things, and I think questions about whether we should always be following the ANC line, for example, and what that line was. I remember bits and bobs of arguments like that. I was quite

young, and don't remember, apart from the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, and some associated troubles like that, which did get very contentious actually. I don't think it ever threatened the overall kind of vision and unity of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

*ML: Do you think it actually motivated people to stay in the group? Was that something that people enjoyed?*

AZT: I think that it made, you know, to have argument, and to have to then decide what your view was, and support a view, a way of going ahead, was probably galvanising, yes. I remember being quite distressed that there was some disunity, and being at a bit of a loss because I wasn't really quite sure sometimes who was right and who was wrong [laugh], because I was young and it was quite complicated. And also I think I had, being the child of ANC people, there is a whole other question about when you grow up in a movement and your loyalty to that movement, how you then make sure you develop an independent view on that. So I think that I was probably having thoughts about that, and so then in the Anti-Apartheid Movement any discussions about union with the ANC would have, I would have felt quite sensitive about it, and not really known. I think one thing is that you can be quite in the middle of something, but not really know what's going on [laugh] in another way. So I tended to be a bit, sort of going along and doing what I could do, and hoping I was keeping on top of political arguments.

*ML: Did you ever take these arguments home?*

AZT: No, I didn't, because ... no, at the point that was going on, I think I had left home and was living in a shared house with actually some other anti-apartheid activists, Nad Pillay. I remember talking a lot about this with him and we were in Anti-Apartheid together and that was very good. He was from a South African family as well, and then he started working for the ANC. We did discuss what was going on together but not back in my family home, no.

*ML: Are there particular campaigns or events or experiences that stand out for you from those times?*

AZT: I think an excitement when really the British public started getting on board, local initiatives such as renaming streets, or boroughs, you know, giving Nelson Mandela the freedom of a borough, and so on, it was happening and going along and kind of being part of maybe of a celebration about that was to me such a breakthrough because it had really seemed insurmountable and I didn't ... when I was younger I hadn't thought that it would ever catch on and that the Anti-Apartheid Movement would ever grow in the way it had. But then, and then, big .. but as the events, in a way, I'm trying to think of a kind of .. the moment where things really started gathering momentum was also a moment where I started to worry a little bit about the nature of how the struggle was presented, the way that the media and the people who were starting to get involved *wanted* it to be presented. Dumbing down of ... the Anti-Apartheid Movement didn't do this, but there was a ... having to convey the struggle to a wider public meant a certain amount of simplification and also at that point the raising up of Nelson Mandela as an individual figure, I felt always very

uncomfortable with, and completely understood as a sort of marketing issue, but I always felt very very uncomfortable with it. One thing I meant to ask you, actually, was that I distinctly remember arguments about when he was taken, singled out, amongst the Rivonia trialists, as a figurehead, and obviously he was the leader of the ANC and also I know there was in the early '80s in South Africa a kind of Free Mandela campaign came up. But it always worried me, and especially at the time during the time during the '80s and '90s when the Soviet bloc was disintegrating and falling, and all the statues were being pulled down, and on the one hand the media was very much against figureheads, and it was assumed to be a Stalinist idea, it seemed to me that a figurehead was being raised who would become, you know, a typical heroic figure, and there was always such a problem with that. And then my fears were realised when he actually was released and he had become a saintly figure and then, and more and more associated with forgiveness and sort of, endurance and forgiveness, which I really felt was against the whole ethos of what the ANC and the Anti-Apartheid Movement had been before, and it rubbed out a lot of the history. When I was young, first of all, the ANC wouldn't have got anywhere without Soviet funding, and also it was socialists and political Christians – driving, as far as I could see, the Anti-Apartheid Movement – and some liberals, I think. But without the support of, one, the organised left in Britain, and also the trade unions, the Anti-Apartheid Movement wouldn't have got off the ground, and I think being funded and supported as it was. So I really felt a difference between the culture that had come up and made the Anti-Apartheid Movement win over the British people and really get the support it needed for sanctions and disinvestment, and so on, with then, how [inaudible] the rainbow nation, where the black people were willing to forgive, and democracy was all. And apartheid hadn't been a democracy, as people knew, it hadn't been, but the onus was on black South Africans to make it this perfect, or this wonderful democracy, and to act in a way that the [inaudible] wanted to see, rather than a full understanding of, well, I've got my thoughts about the political and economic direction that the ANC went in.

*ML: Do you think that the Anti-Apartheid Movement contributed to this, or did they get it right?*

AZT: Well, I'm trying, I've been thinking about this, because I wonder, I would be interested to know about this recollection that I have of this debate, about the ... I think I remember there being a poster with all the Rivonia trialists, and then a decision to just have Mandela on the poster. But it's a bit in my distant memory, and I'm really not sure about it. I've been meaning to ask other people if that's something which was a bone of contention. And I think that to have one figurehead, and a very important one, and a very worthy one, and the leader of the ANC who was imprisoned, that sort of made sense, and it did make people, the British public, have a face, it put a face to the struggle, it was a good story, but it also, I think, by the time it came to his birthday concert I was terribly worried that although it was ... I already had an idea of what that could lead to, which sounds ... I didn't know yet the political and economic direction the ANC would choose to take, but I really felt worried that – so that's a different matter actually, so I suppose the simplifying and flattening out of struggle into terms that masses of people would fill a stadium and sort of whoop about and musicians would come on with slogans and everyone ... in order to

generate that support you have to harness it, harness that feeling, but there's real dangers in doing that, I think.

*ML: Can you remember the atmosphere at the Wembley concert, and were these the thoughts that you were thinking at the time?*

AZT: I really was excited and amazed. I felt strangely isolated, because ...

*ML: Was this the first one, before he was released? Because there was one for his birthday, before he was released.*

AZT: Yes, it was the first one. But I remember thinking that the Anti-Apartheid Movement had done such an amazing thing, I really was proud to be part of that and I was really impressed, you know, because it was such a feat. I was also, really didn't like, I don't like the culture of those sorts of rock concerts. I don't think it's good for our country. I think that all the individual activism, the local groups, the trade unions, all that grassroots activism was a massive reflection of ...the British people were brilliant, you know, they came out and they really supported. There were gradually more and more of them... the anti-apartheid struggle. However, the generation of a mass, that was something different, I felt that that kind of concert is just really about making the audience feel good, and some of the audience would have been understanding of what they were doing, other people it was not so profound, and that worried me a lot. It was also about a flattening out and simplification, and de-politicising of the political struggle, that was happening at the time, with those big concerts, and Bono's approach – and it happened with the third world debt crises – it was the time really of the disintegration of the left and the vision that an alternative to neoliberal capitalism could possibly be achieved. The Labour Party was being more and more like the Tory Party, and a real, a flattening, a removal of the politics from compassion. It was whipping up compassion, but at the end of the day the vote wouldn't, and Mandela's release wouldn't, bring freedom and liberation to the mass of poor black South Africans. So I was, I was worried about it, because I didn't like ... I was worried at that time about that depoliticisation, though it was part of that.

*ML: Looking back, do you think things could have been done differently?*

AZT: Well, it's very hard to say, because then, I think at that point, it was all the left, and the ANC itself, were saying 'Well, we can't really do things differently', because the general mood and the consensus goes towards being an acceptable voice and in a kind of consensus politics, which has gone towards the right, and that charity is OK. Certain sorts of action are acceptable at certain points, but then there's a clamp-down on wider visions. So it was around that time, we know that the ANC was starting to have meetings in secret with the regime, when the business leaders came on board, that was a turning point, and then the ANC went down the route of the GEAR, and is it NEPAD, the other economic policies which are terribly different, and completely different from what they had been presenting as the future South Africa. So I think ... so I don't know what could have been different, I think ... I couldn't say how it could have been different, because I think the whole mood, political mood, was changing at that point, it was very difficult. And, yeah, personally I would, I felt it was very ironic that an individual was being feted and held up in this, starting to be a

saintly way, when at the same time we were all meant to cheer when the statues fell in other places, and I think that my premonition has been proved right [laugh], you know, because it wasn't a good thing. On the other hand, you can completely see the need to put a human face to a campaign, and also you couldn't predict then how the ANC was going to change, because I think probably what's happened in the ANC, the ANC presented itself as going to make changes and I think got anti-apartheid people on board. Because it was going to nationalise, it was going to redistribute land and give people, share the profits that apartheid had built up, and that was part of the struggle, people, anti-apartheid people wouldn't have joined if for example it was a black nationalist organisation. It wasn't, it was multiracial, it was non-sexist, it was saying South Africa belongs to all in it. The Freedom Charter can be very easily interpreted as a socialist document, and certainly at the extension of the end of apartheid in lots of people's minds I think was that it would then become more of an equal society and not what's happened today. So I do feel that [laugh] perhaps that whole depoliticisation and building up of Mandela as the saintly figurehead was part of that whole, to my mind, degeneration of the regional politics. But then you see you have the argument, and which would have been raging in South Africa at the time, 'Then what can we do?' You know, we need to keep the infrastructure of the country going, we need to keep the white people here feeling OK, on side, you know, you can see how one issue after another would have forced decisions within the ANC government and leadership, and led to the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Committee] and so on – but a very different South Africa to what I think people came on board to support.

*ML: Looking back, now that was a campaign that you felt, you know, you have worries now, you had worries at the time. Are there campaigns or activities that even now you think were 100% spot on, correct?*

AZT: Oh well, definitely, I think that the sanctions campaign, the whole emphasis on sanctions, even though there might have been debate about whether, about how effective they could be, that was good in itself, because it really made the connectiveness between what people do – it was about globalisation in a way and international capital, and who was actually behind apartheid in supporting it. So I thought that was excellent. It just really to ... go to the heart of the matter, which was the infrastructure that was keeping South Africa existing.

*ML: Can you remember particular activities that you were involved in to do with sanctions, or in the local group?*

AZT: You know, I remember talking to people about it a lot on stalls, and having that argument, and asking people to boycott, which again was great, because it just made, it gave people something to do, and it was very very exciting to hear about how a little shop in the middle of the Hebrides or somewhere wasn't stocking South African fruit any more and so on. And it really was a, even though there's a worry then that you think by not doing something, you're doing something, which I think is a problem, and I think then actually [laugh] that [*inaudible*] slightly into another individualistic and posing kind of politics which I didn't like the whole issue of not doing things or not buying things as in a way become a distraction I think, but that's another matter. Whether or not the South African boycott fed into that, it was really

the big thing, and you did feel that enough people were doing it that it made a difference. And just the fact that something, people could talk about, and I think because it went to the economic heart of the matter, that I thought was brilliant. It was meaning that one had to talk about who was supporting the economic - because then when governments didn't support sanctions, they wouldn't disinvest, then you had to ask them, well, why not? And it brought those issues up, well why would they continue to support apartheid? And of course when Thatcher came along, it was a very difficult time for the ANC, and so in fact that was a time of fear, because she really hated the ANC, she really did think that she would call us terrorists, and

*ML: When you say 'fear', who are you referring to?*

AZT: Well, I think that there was a lot of fear about ... because in that time in the '80s, before it had become more of a mass movement, and a lot of people didn't know about the ANC, but there was also a lot of BOSS activity, a lot of ANC activists being spied on, being terrorised. There was a bomb in the London office, there were bombs that killed the French chief rep, Dulcie September – she was in Paris but I think she was [inaudible] the other, obviously, activists who were killed, and people inside the country were being killed and terrorised. And there was ... so ANC people, you knew not to open a parcel, there was a feeling of fear that was around, and Margaret Thatcher's hatred of the ANC, you know, she really did, at the same time that she really did set things back here, but also it meant that things worked into British politics, because she stood for so much that the kind of people who ... I don't know how many people who supported Thatcher supported Anti-Apartheid, I do know there were Tories involved, and Liberals involved, as well as generally people who were on the left who supported Anti-Apartheid. So in a way maybe it was, it gave a voice to the people who were nay-sayers about ... and racists really, and hated, fear of the ANC and anti-colonialism, and would have preferred the colonies to still be ruled by the whites. So in a way although she made things worse, her stance against sanctions and her attitude was maybe quite galvanising, and it was something then you could talk against, rather than people who were sort of mealy-mouthed about it.

*ML: The fear, just going back to that, was that something that affected your family, was it something you felt at home, was it something discussed?*

AZT: Yes, we did feel it. And the anti-apartheid bomb of course. We did feel it because people we knew, or my father knew of, were ... and obviously ANC activists were being ... so I think I was afraid of the spies, and knew that there were a lot of spies working in the ANC, and I think when you're a child especially, that's ... and also that there were spies in Anti-Apartheid, and there were a lot of, you know, people ... it was a huge amount of, well, a lot of energy was invested by BOSS that infiltrated Anti-Apartheid, and so little stories coming out about so-and-so having been an informer, and this and that, was very destabilising and it was very nasty.

*ML: Did your parents talk to you about it?*

AZT: Not really. Well, my father did as a by-the-way. We more picked up on what, but yes, no that's right. And there was a time when I was afraid for him, when he got appointed and then went to Tanzania, and there were ... Tanzania was near one of

the military training camps of the ANC, and there were people being killed, and I just thought, well, O doubt that the South Africans would bomb the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College because it was full of children, although they kept killing children all the time. So I was afraid. But that sort of war situation, where you just have to go with things, and it made it more urgent to stop them. I think I did feel terribly angry that people didn't know about the extreme violence, the more that came on television, and the more Anti-Apartheid managed to get things on television, and of course there's all that unseen work of just lobbying, you know, a journalist and getting their report on to the TV, and getting this demo shown so then they'd have footage from South Africa, I mean, all that kind of donkey work. I really always think, imagine if that hadn't happened. It took a huge effort to just get it into people's consciousness that this white government was doing such horrific things, so, such as, you know [inaudible].

When I was very young there was more of an association of apartheid with the Nazis, I think, so being born in 1965, there was a lot more ... still, it was that post-war, so what's our response to Nazism feeling, so a lot of people I knew who were activists and a lot of the kind of spirit of the '60s was a reaction to the war, and I think there was a lot more awareness when I was young, a correlation between apartheid and Nazism, which actually beared out [sic] in ... the National Party very much admired Nazis, Hitler and the Nazi regime, and the way that the state was run was quite similar in lots of ways. It was a very strong state and obviously its racial segregation policies and so on were similar, very much inspired by Nazism. But I think that as I grew up, there was a time when that was taken as a given, that almost to be involved in Anti-Apartheid was an extension of, you know, it sort of had the imperative of fighting the Nazis. To the people I can remember being among, but then as I say as I got older, if you'd said, 'Oh, they're like Nazis', you know, it's like a Nazi regime, I think in the '80s that had been lost, that sort of connection, origins of the colonial project that became South Africa, that's why we would fight it.

*ML: No, I don't think you are at all actually. I was getting the feeling that that anger was something very much that motivated you to be involved, and perhaps going back to what you said earlier, was almost something you felt got lost sight of and with hindsight you regret that it did get lost sight of, that something was lost, as time went by.*

AZT: Yes, because to me the struggle was never about just ending apartheid, it was about what then would be built after that. And I do feel that a lot of hope connected with what South Africa then could be that was part of it. And I do feel very angry about how things have gone, but as I said, you know, in terms of the actual decision-making as the campaigns stepped up, I would be very interested to be me now, and to go back in time and sort of, you know, have a chance to take stock and think 'I wonder what would have been the best thing to do in the circumstances?' And it's so hard now.

*ML: Where you involved in other political campaigning activity apart from Anti-Apartheid?*

AZT: Yes, I was involved in CND, to go to Greenham Common, involved in the Anti-Nazi League, which seemed to be a completely natural, we were doing the same thing really. Those were the two main campaigns.

*ML: Do you remember, were the same debates going on in those other campaigns?*

AZT: Yes

*ML: ... about the compromises you have to make between the purity of the message and the mass marketing?*

AZT: Yes, I think so. I think that ... well the Anti-Nazi League, anti-racist activity, I don't remember there being that issue as such, because they were usually quite ... no, I can't remember sort of wider discussions then, straightforward campaigning events ... there was a whole link between Artists Against Apartheid had really been started by Ska, Jerry Dammers and people who were involved in ... now to me as a young woman Ska spoke to me because it was political music, and I was ...

*ML: What's Ska?*

AZT: So it was the 2 Tone music, it was The Specials and lots of other bands who were very much a sort of anti-racist, political ... it came in that time, it's based on reggae music but it's very British in its identity, so it was 2 Tone, Ska, and Jerry Dammers was in The Specials, which was the big Ska band, which then he really was the driver of Artists Against Apartheid, and he was very very inspiring to me and I remember thinking he's done a very very good thing and Ska music linked in to Anti-Apartheid and anti-racism kept like that, he was trying to keep it like that. That was a kind of direct link between my own music, because music – I don't know, it was very important, the music of the time really did link in to the politics of the time, which was a big time of politics. [Inaudible] was very big and important. And I still, I mean I had [inaudible] to the whole anti-Vietnam time, which I remember, you know, the whole ... I was born into the anti-Vietnam, and that was a big [inaudible]. So I think there was a sense, certainly I felt, of this inter-connectedness between the campaigns although, you know, not necessarily really, you've got Anti-Apartheid [inaudible], but there was always a big ... having worked on the mailing lists, I knew there was a big cross-over [laugh] between them.

*ML: And then in both two large single issue campaigns, I just wondered if the same debate came up in CND about whether the message was being diluted.*

AZT: Yes ... I think in a different way because CND began... I started actually working there when I left the ANC, when the ANC was unbanned, and it was just at the time when CND was losing its wide appeal and people were starting to not be so afraid about the nuclear threat, and to become more complacent about Trident and so on. So I was involved in trying to keep it up as a major campaigning group. Michael Eavis who ran Glastonbury had just dropped CND as I got there – wasn't that [laugh] a coincidence – and I remember going and trying to talk, in a group, to try and sort of say, 'No, don't go with Greenpeace, don't give up CND'. But I don't know what, I think there were little talks about how, what leaflets, you know, you could

maybe ... I don't think there was really a chance for CND of doing that, at that point, the message had just become kind of, quite... I do remember a couple of instances, I think I can go along that route – oh, I know, there was a route, the only argument I can think from that point of view actually is a discussion where some people thought, if you raise the idea of terrorists, so-called terrorists, being able to get access to nuclear weapons, then that would strike fear in people's hearts and they might be more likely to stay CND members or become members, as a leaflet or. And I remember arguing against that because it [inaudible] from the terrorism of the states who had them, you know, it then meant that 'Oh, does that mean that the superpowers aren't as ...' and who can we call terrorists? And so on. So I suppose that was a way of trying to make the message a bit popular, dig into current fears, that I thought, oh no, we can't do that. But that's not at all similar really.

*ML: Looking back, what would you pick out as the high spots and the low spots of anti-apartheid campaigning?*

AZT: Well, I've got this slight blur about the ... there was a big, there was a sort of huge march, wasn't there, over the [inaudible] go on that I was part of organising and I think I went on, was it a cycle or a Mandela ...?

*ML: The Free Mandela March?*

AZT: The Free Mandela March, it went all over the country. I'm afraid I'm slightly blurry about it, so I can't really analyse it, but I remember that being an exciting time, I liked the idea that it was a countrywide campaign, an awareness then of how many small anti-apartheid groups were all over the place, working at the ANC office, all over the country, and people really being supportive and coming on board. I think that was a highlight.

*ML: Even though then there was the dilemma of the celebrity?*

AZT: Yes, later. So I think I always differentiated between the mass ... I think the celebrity came after, you know, the mass of people actually was generated by actual ... I hope I'm not romanticising this, but I really do think that Anti-Apartheid managed to get its message out very well, through kind of quite hard work to lots of places who were then all linked up, and I suppose if you look at it as a percentage of the population who were Anti-Apartheid members, it's probably not that big, but it was a significant percentage. So that when things did step up there were a lot of people ready to do a lot of, you know, marching and campaigning. But no, but when it came to the posturing and the celebrity ...

*ML: Do you have any memories of what was a real low point?*

AZT: I think probably that time after the unbanning, when things got very hard to... things in South Africa were going so differently than had been hoped, I think ...

*ML: '92 to '94?*

AZT: Yes, and also I think an awareness before that, with the whole Mandela being released, funnily enough I did feel that as a low point because although he was released, it struck fear in me that BBC would do this live news coverage, or make a song and dance about it like they did, it just [inaudible] or it was, for anyone [laugh]. And the Movement isn't one person, you know, I do regret that that had happened. Though, as I say, completely seeing, his birthday, you know, you've got a human story there, I don't think Anti-Apartheid maybe could have hooked in all those people ... possibly you could use that but not have ... but then it's not really about Anti-Apartheid, because it was about what happened with the ANC and the nature of its leadership. Mandela could still have been a figurehead, the ANC didn't have to be the beast that it turns into, you know, you could have had both maybe.

*ML: Looking back now, with all the benefits of hindsight, what does the struggle against apartheid mean to you as a person?*

AZT: To me, it means a great deal of hope that a situation can be changed from the grassroots, a combination of factors, and I think it was really important for Britain, because it wasn't, it was very much about what Britain should be, so if you were in the Anti-Apartheid Movement, you were saying, 'I'm against racism, I want us to support this move on from colonialism, and I support the right of people to be in their own countries and ...' Really it was, at the time it came up it was really, there was still masses of racism, and people, we weren't the multicultural society that we're now. No idea that things could change as they did, and I think that the Anti-Apartheid Movement had a lot to do with that, it was about a British identity, saying that it's part of a British identity of what we can be, we can be better, and you know, this is part of that. I hope that makes sense, but I do think that being in the Anti-Apartheid Movement was about Britain as much as about South Africa, which is a good thing. The debates that went on around that were about us, and do we want to be a country that supports ... and I do think we have to remember that what we were supporting, what the ANC was saying it would do, because again I reiterate, if it had been the black consciousness movement it wouldn't have got the support it did, if it had been very conservative it wouldn't have, it plugged in to the left wing politics that were big in Britain at the time, and I think a feeling that we wanted Britain to be a better country, and we wanted South Africa to be a better country, and in a way maybe people pinned their hopes a lot on that. And on the one hand, not for somebody in another country to say how another country should run itself, but I think the British people have been let down, certainly the anti-apartheid people have been let down and we should be able to say that, the Freedom Charter by any means, and we should be quite able to say that, and that not take away from what we did, and actually be cross, because this isn't what we wanted, we didn't go on demos and do all this work for this. You know, I don't think people would have, if they thought that this kind of society in South Africa was going to be [inaudible] personally, and I'm happy to say that.

*ML: Do you think the Anti-Apartheid Movement made a contribution to the emergence of a multi-cultural society in Britain?*

AZT: Definitely. Oh absolutely, yes, maybe so I would say that, yes. I think so, because it was supporting the right of multiculturalism in another country, or against

segregation, racial segregation, so therefore it probably made people think about that, and therefore helped break down. ... And it was a good thing, so the Anti-Apartheid made that a good thing. And it wasn't necessarily before, you know, at all, I mean, lots of people were still, even though they wouldn't say there were racist, they really thought it was a bad idea for races to mix, and that mixed race children would be mixed up and we wouldn't know where we belonged and all that kind of thing, it was all a very big part of my childhood,

*ML: With the benefit of hindsight, what does your involvement in the struggle mean for you now?*

AZT: Well, I realise that it completely shaped my life, I am who I am because, you know, having been involved in it, because that is what ... and it was such a huge thing for my family and it meant that my father left. First of all, that he was always involved there anyway, but then he actually left, and didn't come back due to his involvement. So, it completely shaped the whole trajectory of the family, and I do think that growing up knowing that something, sort of like being in a war, you know, there is this thing going on that is much more important, and much bigger, and that was imperative that apartheid was ended, so I think when you're brought up in that, that sense of urgency and that campaigning environment it just does affect ... I look at young people, for example children who are Somalian refugee children and, you know, or other people, and I think, I suppose there's a similar juxtaposition in their lives, you know, so it's not unique, but it definitely shaped.

*ML: Do you have any regrets?*

AZT: I think I would have preferred being able to talk to ... my father and people were always around, and I absorbed a lot by osmosis, but, and I went on to work for, my volunteering for the ANC turned into full time work, I spent my 20s really working. And I do, I think I would have preferred to be able to step back and to, well, I suppose it's like anything really, you want to know what you know now, but then, you know [laugh] and it's so hard to

*ML: Are there things that you particularly value?*

AZT: Yes, I think that the sense of comradeship, absolutely, and you know, you just see the best of British people, in that activism. And also appreciation of the churches and their contribution, because, I'm not religious, and I'm, one is often aware of the damage that religion does, but I've always seen, through Anti-Apartheid, the really ... and CND, that real, you know, I've appreciated the grassroots work of the church, and also people coming to the same desire that something should be changed from a different angle, from a religious angle. So it's always made me actually appreciative of them, although I've kind of been opposed to organised religion, I've really, I suppose perhaps had a better, given me a deeper understanding of the Church of England and the Catholic Church than otherwise, and the Quakers. Well, you know, so that's I think probably been good. But also a lot of, you know, really appreciate, you know, the organised left, in all its awful [laugh] factionalism, and sort of compromises and you know, but I do remember being part of something that was much more optimistic, and a real time that things could change. And then in fact,

South Africa did end apartheid, you know, a constant reminder to keep going. I'd rather not have been just in the middle of it, but sort of in the middle of it and able to be critical. But that's something [laugh], you know, it's like going back to school and wishing you knew what you knew now, it's just ... what can you do?

*ML: Is there anything else that you'd like to say?*

AZT: I hope I haven't missed out lots of people and – like the ANC bazaars – they were always fun.