

Interview with David Hillman by Jeff Howarth, 15 August 2013, for the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives Committee project Forward to Freedom
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Interviewer (Jeff Howarth – JH): *Ok, this is Jeff Howarth for the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives Committee, the Forward to Freedom project, it's the 15th August 2013. David. Could you give me your full name.*

David Hillman (DH): Yes my name is David Hillman.

JH: *And when were you born?*

DH: I was born in London. I was born in 1959. And... Actually on July the 18th, if that means anything to you? It's Nelson Mandela's birthday.

JH: *Oh, that's a good coincidence. And what do you do for a living?*

DH: I am the director of an organisation called Stamp Out Poverty, which works on creating a new source of finance for international development.

JH: *Thank you. Have you been involved in any other political or campaigning activity apart from Anti-Apartheid?*

DH: Well I suppose. Most of my professional career has been working in campaigning, and I think I really cut my teeth in campaigning and got involved in campaigning at the outset with Anti-Apartheid because after that I moved onto working on the landmines campaign; and then on the debt campaign; and then on the sort of financing for development campaigning or the Tobin tax campaign as it was then and has evolved. And if you like that trajectory started with Anti-Apartheid because the move to landmines was because I had appreciated the problem of, if you like, the legacy of apartheid in terms of what was happening in Angola and Mozambique... and obviously landmines pose a massive kind of legacy so, yeah, I would say AA has been a rather key part of my life.

JH: *Excellent. Thank you very much. When and how did you first become aware of the situation in South Africa?*

DH: Well, I would say I didn't become aware of it through the kind of radical left if you like in the UK, you know the quite pronounced left if you like... I did definitely come to it with a humanitarian perspective from the outset, and then coming back to the beginning of the interview through this coincidence, of finding that Nelson Mandela and I shared a birthday which prompted me to want to send him a birthday card which then prompted me to contact the Anti-Apartheid Movement as a source of information, this being quite a long time before the internet and I think a year after that I went one step further, I'm not just sending a birthday card - I'm sure these cards never arrived - but I'm going to find out where my local AA group is, I'm going to go along and find out what they do... And so it all started really from that. But I do think that for quite a while I had been aware that apartheid existed and that it was something I found morally reprehensible and completely unacceptable. But I think joining the AAM and going to my first local group meeting was where I started to turn those thoughts into actions.

JH: *Brilliant. How old were you when you discovered you shared the same birthday?*

DH: It would have been in '85. '84 around then. '85 I think it would have been. So I would have been 26.

JH: *And...*

DH: I should explain something about that first time I was there. It might help with things that follow on. At my first meeting which was at the Hammersmith and Fulham AA-Group because I'd been misallocated, I should have gone to the Chiswick Group but I'd been misallocated so I ended up there. I think it was just as well I was there because they were talking for the first time about whether they should picket the local Shell station because it was just around the time the boycott Shell thing was starting. And I'd been totally new to this. But at the time probably going between singing in bands and market research and various things but with one thing and another I had a bit more time so when I volunteered to take the lead and completely new blood to the group and volunteered to take the lead on the Shell campaign and when they said what's the frequency, I said we should do it once a week, they looked at me like I was mad but that's what started the weekly Shell picket and that turned out to be something we ran for a long time, I'd say several years.

JH: *Can we return to that... I'm still very interested in your sort of motivation. You say you weren't traditionally sort of, lefty. But then what made you become an activist on this issue? You said it was sort of to do with you found it morally reprehensible but I mean, there are quite a lot of things... What made it particular?*

DH: I'm not sure what made this particular

JH: *And then to throw yourself in so whole-heartedly...*

DH: Yeah. Because it does seem strange at one level. When I look back at it. I didn't have any specific South African or Southern African connection. And I wasn't doing it because it was a way, or the obvious way, of dealing with imperialism or something like that. So I'm not absolutely certain of what it was. I just decided that this was the cause I was actually going to devote effort to and started to find out more... I suppose once you take that first step and you start to just find out more about it and read the literature and find out about what's going on with the political prisoners who were being imprisoned, why there are deaths in custody... And I think that the people I was meeting, I think that was very important. I think that there was a camaraderie. And quite quickly I went from my involvement at the local group to being a representative on the London Committee and then on the Boycott Committee.

So you start to become part of the life of the campaign and what we didn't realise at the time was how extraordinary and unusual the campaign was, because you don't. We had more than 30 active London groups who could command 5 or 10 people at the drop of a hat so you had 300 people that you could pretty well muster if you needed to, and of course we did sometimes for outside of the embassy. I look at campaigning now because it's been my life and you know the ability to hold marches, our only equivalent was CND at the time. But now of course I suppose it's different because you can now rally people using new media through things like UK Uncut and other things like that now. But certainly the answer to your question is that quickly I became more and more involved with the subject, and the life of the campaign became a component of my life. Being an anti-apartheid activist.

JH: *So you were involved in the Hammersmith Group. Could you say a little bit about the structure of that?*

DH: We met monthly...the secretary was Sophi Tranchell. I don't know if you've thought of interviewing Sophi. She's now managing director of Divine Chocolate, and was a pretty organised political thinker. Her mum was a Labour Councillor. And her household was very welcoming and very political. It would have had a basic structure of Chair, Treasurer, Secretary. I remember one time learning about discipline. I was at one point for whatever reason vice-chair. I certainly ended up chairing this meeting with no experience whatsoever... and there were a couple of people who ought not to have been there but got in and managed to get a motion passed which went against the anti-apartheid line which... I didn't realise that this was a problem at all until the meeting ended and I was told that this is not OK, I said I see, okay. So at the next meeting we duly reversed that decision. You learn as you go along.

JH: *Could you say, would it be indiscreet to say what the decision was?*

DH: I've absolutely no memory of exactly what it was. It would have been probably something very small and would not have made the greatest difference in the world. But I think there was a sense, at that time there were a lot of different groups out there. And of course you had the AAM aligned with the ANC and you had other groups who were aligned with the PAC (the Pan-African Congress)... So I think what was important to understand was political discipline. You know, we are in support of the people in South Africa whose fight it is, it's not our fight, it's their fight... But whilst they don't have a voice and whilst it's extremely difficult for them to broadcast their voice, our job was in anyway we could to assist them. And I think it takes a little bit of time to understand that that's your role... Because to begin with you go, this is bad and I'm against it. Ok that's a good entry point for anything but you have to then start to learn the dynamics of it, and gradually of course as I got to know more and more and got to know the other groups that were also jumping on the anti-apartheid bandwagon and understanding why they were doing that, that you realise that it was important to be disciplined, but obviously I think on occasions we were probably a bit pedantic [*laughs*].

JH: *So what were the risks if you don't hold discipline, that somehow the message... you get distracted by?*

DH: Well the risks are more to do with other organisations wanting to take over your group, so entryist... and then have them do things that are not aligned with what you're trying to do... we didn't face too many difficulties in that regard. I mean other groups definitely did and were, you know, fighting off forces who wanted to become the chair or get the officer positions and take the group into doing things that were not consistent with what the AAM was doing. That was the purer relationship.

JH: *More radical groups?*

DH: I mean if you look at the RCP (Revolutionary Communist Party) and the RCG (Revolutionary Communist Group), these were groups that were... I think it was the RCG who ran the picket outside South Africa House. Very impressive actually, they maybe did more than 3 years, and it was a non-stop picket. But they had a different agenda they supported the PAC... And, I mean we would turn up outside the embassy for certain occasions and they would just make a hell of a lot of noise and we would be standing at the back slightly more calmly holding our placards, and probably having an informal meeting, trying to cover business that we'd failed to do at another meeting... So I mean, to all intents and purposes and to the general public it was all the same thing, yet they would have had different agendas. For them their agenda was a broader revolutionary anti-imperial agenda, and they were using the anti-apartheid South Africa situation as a means to try to follow that agenda.

Whereas as for the AAM it was a much purer thing, it was about SA it was about the people of SA and *their* freedom. And it was working alongside the ANC who were at that time in exile or in jail, and so very much we felt that we were the legitimate campaign, but I wouldn't say it really was too much of a distraction. The only time we *really* did have an issue was when one of the people who came to work at the Hammersmith group, was a SA guy, who said he had escaped from SA and this, that and the other. And quite quickly he wangled his way into working at Mandela Street. And I'm not sure for how long before he was kicked out and they were fairly clear that he'd been sent in by the SA security forces. But you know, that's what happens! They were bound to be doing that. And you're never sure how. His name was Cobus, or that was the name he gave us... I'm sure it was his name... *[laughs]*.

JH: *What year was that?*

DH: That would have been ... all of this would have happened between 85 and 90 when Mandela was released. I would have thought it was quite early on. Its likely to be in 1986... Some one else might remember.

JH: *And he would have been SA secret police?*

DH: Almost certainly. SADC or... No, he would have been, I don't know what the exact role would be called, but he was sent in as a spy, to try and find out as much information about what was going on.

JH: *Were you aware of any other secret police...?*

DH: Every now and again we'd come across people who would ... *[pause]* Who would satellite themselves on... I only noticed this once or twice... and they'd be coming up with messaging that was clearly wrong and undermining, and you'd end up having a row with them basically. And then often they'd disappear. *[laughs]* As if they could get away with selling you like the Bantustan policy, like, "surely it's OK to have a whole load of little homelands all around the country, all those are going to be self-determining homelands, and that would be fine, you know, that would be a good solution.". You know, and you go, "no, that would be a terrible solution. That sort of compromise is totally unacceptable"... And after a while they would tire of this and go away. So there were efforts that would happen, but I can't say they were particularly serious. And these people you would be involved with for a little time, for a few months, and then you'd find that curiously they'd sort of .. their interest had fallen off and they'd gone away. It didn't happen that much, but there were clearly different forces at work.

JH: *Can you say a bit more about your role, you were chair?*

DH: OK, I can't... I was immediately the person that did the Shell picket at Fulham and Hammersmith. The Fulham and Hammersmith Group. The Shell picket was in Hammersmith, the Fulham Palace Road, the one with the Charing Cross hospital on it... And I don't know whether I ended up with any other role, I may have ended up as chair, I'm not sure, because I was clearly at that group for quite a while. But I quickly moved on to be on the London Committee, and as the person responsible for the Shell campaign there. And then became part of the more general Boycott Committee... And so I would have been the specialist on Shell, if you like, but I would have been giving opinions on all of the various boycott stuff whether it was on fruit well not so much finances as it turned out... but more on stuff that involved street campaigning - so if it involved supermarkets, if it involved travel, if it involved Shell. So I was more involved with how you do... street stuff.

JH: *And this was voluntary?*

DH: Yes.

JH: *Could you tell us about the Shell campaign?*

DH: Basically we were probably the first actual picket of a garage...Or at least one of the first, if not the first. And the weekly frequency, although it was a taxing thing to do... Well firstly it worked because we had people at Charing Cross Hospital, someone in our group and it meant that we could store all our picket materials in Charing Cross Hospital in some shed somewhere. I don't think I actually saw where [laughs] it actually ended up... But this of course meant we could have a big banner and have all these things and literally walk 2 minutes and put them away again afterwards. This proved actually to be extremely useful [laughs]. With all our placards or whatever. And actually we would regularly get 10 to 15 people to do this thing every week [laughs]. That then got spread through *Anti-Apartheid News*. We then found that there was one, two, three four five..ten... there were various different ones, turning up with a different frequency, some did it once a month etc... And then on special days we would make sure that everything was happening on one day and that Shell really knew about it. Then we decided, once we got to 6 months or a year, then we would have a birthday cake, we would have the local media down, and we would use any opportunity that we could to turn it into something and therefore project it.

Then we got into this thing of doing motorcades, because we thought that might be quite an interesting thing to do. So it was a way of also getting other groups to join in to do their first Shell one. So to give an example of that, and we must have done quite a few of these, so we would meet outside Shell House and we would have perhaps... we might have, between 12 and 16 vehicles, and we would decorate the vehicles with Shell posters... "Shell fuels apartheid" kind of posters, we would drive around Trafalgar Square a few times in convoy and then we would split into four directions and go off doing north, south, east, west to go to say three, four petrol stations to meet with the groups and go in and blockade their petrol stations with their cars... And we would have photographers lined up. And we took to holding funerals on the forecourt. So we would take with us a wreath, and much to the consternation of the people running the garage we would very seriously be holding a funeral on the forecourt with cars blocking, so people couldn't come in. And of course the owner or manager would come rushing out... and we'd go "Shusssh! It's a funeral."

You know, Shell was fuelling apartheid, they were fuelling the South African army, there was a direct correlation with the apartheid state killing people and their vehicles being fuelled by Shell. And of course all of this stuff was quite, you know... you could get lots of photographs of people putting the wreaths down, people standing solemnly, standing there with one little poster that actually told the story and this just covered the local media and we were able to get it.... you know... So I would say that it was really interesting when we found that the germ of this had been picked up in the United States. That there were Shell boycotts going on in the United States. And when one of the states, as a result of this, refused to renew Shell's contract for a turnpike, which cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars, we started to realise that this was actually biting. And it is quite interesting that something can start very small but through simply just sustaining it, and it being fertile ground, that that *will* grow and become a much, much bigger thing.

And again coming back to the first thing, there was a huge amount of camaraderie. I mean one of the reasons why we did the motorcade was that it was fun, it was fun. And it was great to meet to arrive at the stations and people were cheering you when

you arrived [*laughs*]. You know, and then we'd get on with the business of it. So, yeah, that was kind of what happened.

JH: *Brilliant. So did you get quite a bit of press coverage? Could you say a bit more about that? I mean, did you get national papers as well?*

DH: We got national coverage when we... I think we might actually have been at the beginning of it... Where we bought some Shell shares and we went to their AGM, and it would be interesting to know whether, because I think we were one of the first groups really to do this and, they were so not expecting it... They had no idea it was going to happen. We were dressed up quite smartly... They started to get a number of different questions... So that every time, it was opened to the floor, and each question asked was about South Africa and [Shell's] involvement in South Africa. Even some of the, when I thought it was going to go to somebody who wasn't part of our lot, it turned out to be a really smart person who *was* part of our lot but I didn't know who he was! [*laughs*] And yet another question! And after they'd had 4 or 5 questions, they said we're not taking questions on South Africa, and that was our cue... that if they stopped taking questions on South Africa we would all go to the front and would start singing 'Nkosi Sikeleli'... and that's what we did, and they didn't know what to do at all, so they adjourned the meeting.

JH: *Could you explain the significance of the song?*

DH: 'Nkosi Sikeleli' is sort of the anthem of the ANC. And we were able to perform that suitably well, enough to stop the meeting. I think after that they came up with tactics about what to do. We probably had someone in from Lawyers Against Apartheid who were really good with this, because when security came as soon as they were about to lay their hands on somebody a lawyer would say "I'm a lawyer with these people, I just want to say that if you touch them, you will be done for assault." So because they'd had no briefing about what to do, because it was new, they didn't do anything. So there was nothing they could do, the meeting was brought to a halt. Now you have to consider questions about national coverage reporting Annual General Meetings of corporations has got to be one of the most boring things you can do. The journalists loved it. It was fantastic, it was full of interesting image and interesting story. So we had a field day on that. Now of course, around that time, we then looked at what we could do with the next one. They were extremely keen not to have a repetition so that gave us leverage on the next meeting. They couldn't turn us away because we were shareholders [*laughs*]. They really didn't want a repetition. So we went what can we get for not wrecking your meeting. I think Dennis Goldberg had just been released, he was a Rivonia trialist with Nelson Mandela. He was a white guy. He'd been in a different prison, under apartheid. But he was released earlier and so the difference between the first AGM and the second AGM was that we said if Dennis Goldberg can address the shareholders and explain from the ANC perspective what the problem was of Shell's involvement in South Africa and fuelling apartheid, if you would give him a platform to do that, which we knew was incredibly newsworthy and doing exactly what our mission is to give the legitimate voices of South Africa a platform and they went "OK, if you won't wreck our meeting we will do that", and of course that was covered. I look back at that because I think it was interesting, I think that was one of the first kind of forays into using your ability to go to an AGM by simply buying a share.

JH: *That's fantastic. In terms of members, did you have a fluid pool of members and activists, a core of regular people attended? You said you could call on 300 people from across London.*

DH: I think there was a great loyalty. I don't recall there being problems with the amount of members. I don't think we had vast quantities but we had a good lot. Although I kept up activities in Hammersmith, that was my group, I would say the majority of my activity was with the London Committee. And then the Boycott Committee, and that's where, of course you had people from all over, I didn't take such a lot of interest in the Anti-Apartheid AGMs, the kind of really big meetings. I started going to them a bit later on. Obviously I knew the likes of Mike Terry and Alan Brooks. And they would have known who I was but I would say that mainly I was more an activist on my patch and left the national stuff to the national lot and of course I knew the officers pretty well, I mean I knew people like Gerard and Mick. There would have been people I'd have seen very regularly I would have popped to Mandela Street quite regularly. But the focus of my activities was very much at the local level, London level anyway.

JH: *Could you say something about the dynamic in the Hammersmith Group?*

DH: I think the dynamic was...the Hammersmith group was small. We're talking about a maximum of about 10, 12 people coming to a meeting. I'd say the more important locus was London where we could talk about ideas like the Mandela concert, we could talk about bigger ideas. Of course that would be an idea that would happen from national. The second Mandela concert, probably at least one of the sources of where that started from would have been London Committee, we would have discussed it there, should we not have a second concert now he's free, wouldn't that be an extraordinary thing to do...

And I remember not long after that, meeting with Jerry Dammers somewhere and saying what about a second concert and he said we're already talking about it. I seem to recall now just more about London, and that's really because the meetings would have had 25, 30 people in them. The things you could talk about and then go "well let's do that. Let's get this many people doing that or let's choose that particular day that we're going to hit the supermarkets across London." You started to move to a new much broader canvas and yes I kept my activities going on the Shell picket and that was what I did locally. But I think that I moved on and was interested in that broader canvas where you could do these bigger coordinated joined up activities. In answer to the question my memory now is far more about London Committee than Hammersmith.

JH: *And your role in London Committee Boycott Campaign?*

DH: I was the Shell person. I became completely identified with the Shell Campaign.

JH: *And you were on the London Committee from say 84 to...*

DH: I would have been on the London Committee right until the London Committee stopped. I could easily have been on that committee until 94. The activities changed quite importantly in 1990. And I remember talking to one or two people as we came into 1990 and saying our role is changed now, which was absolutely right and natural but [laughs] you go "oh, yeah it has. It's going on legitimately in South Africa." The ANC of course became unbanned in 1990 just after the time Mandela was released from prison but we still had a lot of work to do. We still had a lot of solidarity work to do because they wouldn't win till 94 when we had the election but I would have thought - and I can't remember in detail - but it was definitely changed by that. And I've no idea how that got reflected in less numbers attending or less frequency - I don't really recall - but it would have changed.

JH: You might have already covered this but when you look back, are there particular incidences that stand out?

DH: The one that really stands out is when... I was also interested in the travel boycott... Well there's two that stand out... OK on the travel boycott there was one, where at Olympia there was the World Travel Market and South African Airways had an absolutely enormous poster and our slogan was "Apartheid is No Holiday". And we thought, myself and an activist, thought that it would be quite a good idea at night to go and graffiti this poster with a massive "Apartheid is No Holiday" spray painting, get a picture of it, and try and get it into the press. So I'd gone there and I was with my girlfriend at the time who wasn't particularly activisty to be honest, but decided to come along, just as well she did actually. And this guy.. can't remember his name... it might come back to me... So here we are, it's dark, it's at night, street lights, it's outside Earls Court, massive poster, we had this guy, I think his name was John. He was doing the graffiti, we were standing lookout, we were standing looking at the road to see if there are any police cars or anything and he's there doing "A"... "P"... "A"... and then at one point he yells out "is it EI or IE?" *[JH laughs]* "It's EI!" Cor-blimey! Right so he gets to the end of it, gets "Apartheid!" gets to "Holiday" does the "Y" and out of nowhere 4 police cars turn up and screech to a halt in front of us, jump out, they grab the guy, "you know, where have they come from?!" They bundle all of us, there are quite a lot of cars, they bundle all of us into the back of one car. But we decided beforehand that if anything goes wrong he would deny knowing us, so he then just went "hang on a second," I don't know these people." and they went "oh, don't you know him?" and we went "we were just trying to flag a cab", and they went "oh! so you don't know him?" and we went "no, we've never seen him before in our lives!" "oh, so you'd better get out then." *[laughs]* so we get out of the car, he gets bundled off and I go...right, OK, well let's just go to our car, get the camera, and take some pictures . So we got pictures and then 2 or 3 hours later John turns up... and we were back at his house, we set off from there...and he says "oh, it's alright, they charged me with something or other." But of course he got off because we claimed it was political because they charged him with criminal damage and we went it's not criminal, it's a political act. And you can pursue it if you want, and they went: "no we won't pursue it." So we ended up with a photograph...and I think we got it into something. I don't know, I don't think we got into the national press, but we were able to use the photograph and by about 9 o'clock the next morning it had been painted out. So it was just as well we didn't go off in the police car, we actually got the photograph and were able to use it. I might be able to find that photograph somewhere.

So, the other story was, again it was involved with the travel thing. This involved another guy called John Bowling. And he was the person who mainly did travel. The main thing we wanted to do was get information in order to carry out the boycott. What we needed to know was which were the retailers that were selling holidays to South Africa. Because then we could use our extensive local group network to actually mount pickets outside of their shops. ...To find that information was a actually a bit difficult. John Bowling found out that there was going to be a travel market in South Africa House. The plan was could we get into South Africa House to basically get hold of this information... Now John Bowling had decided to pose as a journalist. And in fact Gerard was going to pose as another journalist. The activists were going to be outside just generally shouting about it. And I, not knowing anything about this, went there as an activist and was holding a placard when Gerard comes to me, and I really am standing right outside the place, and he says "um, I don't think I should go in it might look bad if I'm caught because I work for the office. Why don't you go in?" And I thought, "Oh great, oh great, it's great that you're talking about it to me right now. I'm holding a placard, I'm standing outside, perhaps, I'll put this placard

down and perhaps we'll walk to the side and perhaps talk about this." Now I was wearing a jacket, because I was doing some kind of job in town. And I was wearing a pager which meant that would be a reasonable outfit. And he said: "Look, I've got this letter, that says I'm this journalist, and whatever." And I said "Look, this is not ideal given the circumstances, but what I'm gonna do is I'm just going to walk round the block which is just this tiny triangle, and I'm just gonna go straight in. Because if I think about it, I probably won't do it. So I'm just gonna go for it OK?" And he said, "Look John Bowling will be in there, obviously don't recognise him" And I said "I know, I know. Obviously we're gonna be just two completely different journalists, we won't recognise each other". So I go in and I'm thinking "Wow, here you go, this is it. Infiltrating the South African embassy." So um, I go there, I say I'm a journalist covering the thing. I don't even use my letter, I thought I would use my letter if I have to but I won't if I don't need it. And they go. "Uh fine, well you're not down on the list" and I went "Oh is that a problem?" and they said "No no, I don't think so. Go and sit over there."

So I go and sit down opposite a guy who I recognise. It's John Bowling, and after a while somebody comes down to talk with us and says, you know, "Why are you here etc." And we say, you know, "We're covering this for the trade journal of such and such", some sort of cover story we were told, and they go "Well, I think that seems fine then er OK." So the security then was once you're approved you went through a really heavy security door, past the big heavy glass lined office.... So you're now in a no-mans-land between the big heavy security door and the door that actually lets you into the building itself.

So we're standing there and then they release the second door and we go in and we are *in* the South African embassy. And I don't know how many people are outside of it, but we are *in*. And there's no one else around so were just looking at each other going, "Fucking hell, we're in!"... And then we follow the signs and we went on down the spiral staircase and we thought we were doing quite well and then suddenly there's this voice; "Your names?" and we're absolutely frozen. "Your names!" [Pause] "For the raffle!" [laughs]... "For the raffle!" The raffle! "Err! OK! er No, its alright we don't have to do the raffle"...

Now we're in, we're properly in, and we're in the basement area of South Africa House and there's loads of tables lined up with all the wholesalers with all their brochures of all the holidays that they are selling to the retailers. And then a sort of table that had officials from the embassy that could give you information on this, that and the other. [pause] As we were going down I said: "Look, I'd do the wholesalers. I'll just pick up all the brochures." He said: "I'll try to get a list of all the retailers." Now we thought it was unlikely they'd give us this list but he would go for it.

I've gone round the tables and my job is easy. I've gone and picked up brochures without having to chat to anybody to you know, to get all their stuff. So I've been there for about ten minutes and umm he comes up to me umm quietly and he goes: "umm...I've got the list". I said, "Huh? What?" and he goes, "They've photocopied the list of all the retailers. [pause] And they've given it to me." I said, "You've got it now?" and he went "Yes" and I went "Well, go go go! I'll meet you in the pub".

So [pause] I then took a moment to just walk down to the end of the kind of room where they had these trays of wine and nibbles and things and just sort of took in the scene. Urm, and then I err did what I was really not supposed to do, because you know, the wine and everything was under boycott, but I had a cheeky glass of wine [interviewer laughs], standing as an activist *inside* the South African embassy. and then um, took my leave of the building. And I went out to the pub where John Bowling was and we jumped about like school children, having got away with a prank. And we had got all the information we required for the boycott.

JH: *Fantastic. Were you shaking?*

DH: No. no. I was very adrenilised...

JH: *I mean afterwards I mean, the sort of the adrenalin*

DH: I don't know actually. I was adrenilised , my heart was pumping and no, there was obviously a clear... a big buzz that we had got away with it. so er yeah. That's one story I remember [*laughs*]

JH: *Yeah, yeah absolutely fantastic.. and then you went on to use the wholesalers, the retailers as the core of your boycott...*

DH: John Bowling, he had that, I mean I concentrated on [*inaudible*], so but as far as I know they were able then to roll out umm the activities. I mean, you know, it wasn't just in London, it would have been retailers from across the country... and you have to check with John how exactly they got used. You know, my job of the night was to get the intel they required to roll the activity out.

JH: *That's a great story. Thank you [pause] again you may have covered this, but can you describe the high points and the low points of campaigning and your sort of activities?*

DH: [*pause*]. I suppose the high points are these kind of, you know, when you are able to do the kind of things that I just described I would say, that I met a lot of really amazing people. There was a lot of life to the campaign, umm and so although these aren't high points, I think qualitatively it was very rich in terms of the, um I don't know, just the doing the meetings and having the drinks afterwards and the conversations you'd have

I think the low points were when things really were... when you started to despair about what was going on in South Africa. .. Clearly when Chris Hani was assassinated, was a real moment where people went, this could be a blood bath, this could be a complete disaster.

JH: *Can you briefly say what he...*

DH: Chris Hani was head of the military wing of the ANC... And I think it would have been 93', so already quite a long way into the ANC being unbanned... See, the government in South Africa were buying themselves time. I don't think when they unbanned the ANC and they freed Nelson Mandela, they ever thought that they were going to lose white minority power. But they were... subject to, such serious international isolation economically and culturally, and I think that there were many forces. You know, I'm not going to go into the whole geopolitical analysis, not in answer to this question anyway, but what was incredibly frustrating and difficult was the sense that, how do we actually get to the general election, when the political forces are doing everything to obfuscate and just make it really, really difficult... But the death of Chris Hani was kind of... he was a real hero of the struggle, and for him to be assassinated at that point... everyone sort of connected to the struggle knew that that was incredibly dangerous and the combination of the frustration of not getting anywhere, and then having someone like Hani be killed was a recipe for this whole thing to explode.

And I think the government realised that they were now on an absolute knife edge and the good thing that came out of it was that they were pretty well forced in having to name a date for the general election that ended apartheid.

So I think, for me, although I think that was a real er... well along the way there were... you know its hard for me... you know at times there would have been

somebody who was on death row and then they *were* executed... and then all around there would be moments where you hoped someone would survive and they didn't survive, so, like with any of these things there were highs and lows but I do remember very markedly the death of Chris Hani.

JH: *Ok, sorry it might be a bit of a difficult question, but how hard did people take the deaths then?*

DH: Oh I mean I think obviously it would depend on different people... But I think you know especially if there were massacres... I mean, people identify with, you know, different aspects...and it wasn't just that... See around that time, there were a number of different things that happened culturally like 'Cry Freedom' came out, and people were then brought...

JH: *The film?*

DH: Yeah, the Richard Attenborough film and people like Steve Biko were brought very much to your attention. Now this was something that became a very well known film, it became something that of course we then used. As it went out, we would leaflet cinemas, we would do this, but it meant that activists became extremely conscious of how people were under house arrest. Whether they were white voices who were speaking out,... often of course black voices - just brought in touch with "*this is the nature of this state, this is how it does stuff...*" So I think that's an extremely important thing. I think that kept cementing the reason why, in the popular mind, why this was completely unacceptable. It just happened to be, a number of us went further... and really wanted to do more and more, until it came to an end.

JH: *Looking back, what are your feelings about the involvement in the campaigns?*

DH: Well I'm, as I said at the beginning, its clearly one of the most important things I was ever involved with, totally formative to who I am, and what I've ended up doing. So I just wish I could remember it all a little more clearly, I think age is catching up with me! [*laughs*]. But you know, for me it's absolutely intrinsic... And not for everybody. I mean I have, I was very matey with a guy called Chris Burford, unfortunately he is no longer with us, er, he was the chair of the Boycott Committee, and he devoted loads and loads of time and energy to Anti-Apartheid and then when it ended, he said, that's it. I don't want anymore to do with this, that's it. So he was not actually involved with Action for Southern Africa, he was not involved with you know the later things that happened it was, [*claps*], that was that, done, thank you very much.

Whereas a number of others took a strong interest in what happened afterwards, and for me that was particularly important, to look at the legacies of Apartheid. As I said, that took me to landmines, and that took me to where I next went, if you like, and that's when I first started to get paid as a campaigner, whereas all of this was of course entirely voluntary.

JH: *And that's what profession you did?*

DH: Well I was involved up until I was thirty with...I was involved then with theatre, with bands, with the arts, and would earn money doing various sorts of market research, mainly qualitative research in fact, and then, er I did various different jobs in the retail sector, I can't quite understand why now... and then from about, the mid 90's I started to work in the campaign sector, and with the landmines campaign.

JH: *Your vocation...*

DH: ...Yes, it turned out to be.

JH: *so do you stay in touch with other campaigners. ... is there much of a culture of, sort of...?*

DH: I think there was, by 95, I joined the National Executive of Action for Southern Africa, and then served on that executive for I don't know, 12, 13, 14, years; and was the...I was vice chair for a number of years. I stood down because I'm now a trustee with War on Want. I stood down from being an officer and then er then eventually I stood down from the NEC... but you know in my time there, ACTSA had its ups and downs financially, and everyone was sort of brought in to do what they could on fund-raising. And then one of my ideas was to set up the annual fund-raiser at South Africa House, and so I think, because I will always attend that, and because as I say I was on the NEC for so many years, and I have, I still keep in touch with Dave Kenvyn er, up in Scotland, and Gerard is a good friend, yes so I've got a number of friends from that time and there are a number of occasions, at least maybe one or two occasions in a year where we're likely to run into each other. But whilst I was on the committee I would actually run into them every, however regularly they met, quarterly at least so, so yes the answer is for me, they are very much, people that I still meet... And even those that weren't involved with ACTSA, there have been many Anti-Apartheid contacts, people I've met through Anti-Apartheid, that have proved immensely useful in the campaigning life that I've subsequently had and so... there's stories in there [*laughs*]...because you know, I think that there was a cross section of people, who were politically animated or just animated that have gone on to do things in many different walks of life. So these connections just turn up from time to time.

Even in what I'm doing now with the Robin Hood Tax campaign, We recently or about a year ago we launched the American campaign. And the key organisation there was National Nurses United, and the guy that I liaised with there Ken, had been an Anti-Apartheid activist. So immediately we had you know, when I first met him... and started to explore ideas, we immediately had very, very strong things in common... When I explained to him I did stuff on the Shell campaign, he was like, I did stuff on the Shell campaign! You know? And so it is very interesting that there is a sort of tapestry of these connections.

JH: *So we've come to the end really, but is there anything else you would like to say?*

DH: No, no, not really I think I shared all of the main things that [*laughs*] err... come to mind especially the, the stories. And there are many, many stories, [*laughs*] I just, you know, scratched the surface.... I'll tell you one story, which I thought was quite interesting, where when I was doing the retail stuff, one of the things we were doing was... We were right at the beginning of taking photographs, and printing them on badges, and my boss at the time, had clearly met somebody from South African Airways, and told us that we were going to have a special commission, that we were going to set up the kit, on the South African Airways stall at the world travel market to help promote South African Airwaves. And the problem with this is that I was on the Boycott Committee that was planning the activities to disrupt that very stall and so I found myself with what might be called a conflict of interest.

So I thought that I would let my boss know that I really couldn't work to promote it and I would let the Boycott Committee know that er, on this occasion I couldn't be involved.

And before I did this I had a word with Chris Burford who was the chair of the committee, and he said, "You know what. I can see where you're coming from and I can see that's a very principled position But I think that we should talk through the pragmatic. The pragmatic thing is, do you have to, in your job, do you have to be on the stand? Do you have to be there? And I went, "Well no, I don't suppose I have to... I can probably allocate someone to go in and do it and make sure they have stock"... and he said, you know, one thing that would be really useful would be to have people in there, have all the intel to mount the boycott. Have say the phone number of the stall itself so we could phone them and disrupt their activities. Umm, and perhaps one way of doing this is perhaps to not say very much.... to not be involved particularly actively, but share all the intel so that we can mount the most effective boycott, because you're in a quite privileged position. And I went, [*laughs*] you know, Chris, that's a very good way of looking at it! [*laughs*]

And it was the right thing to do, and in fact I think the thought processes I had were the most important thing. But I think you know at the end of the day you got to look at what are you trying to achieve as an activist and, you know, that's why I deferred to my chair, and he gave me the right advice. I thought that was also quite interesting.

JH: *Yes, it is. OK, brilliant thanks very much. That's, what can I say, really useful, thank you.*