

**Interview with Hanef Bhamjee by Margaret Ling, 23 August 2013, for the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives Committee project Forward to Freedom**

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*Margaret Ling: It's August 23rd 2013, I'm Margaret Ling. I'm about to interview Hanef Bhamjee of the Wales Ant-Apartheid Movement for the Forward to Freedom Anti-Apartheid Movement History Project and we're sitting in Hanef's living room in Glenroy Street in Cardiff.*

*Hanef, could you give me your full name?*

Hanef Bhamjee: It's Mohamed Hanef Bhamjee.

*ML: And where were you born?*

HB: In Marikana, near Rustenburg, South Africa

*ML: And when was that?*

HB: 1st December 1946.

*ML: And what did you do for a living during the time that we're going to talk about?*

HB: When I came to Wales, I couldn't find much work so initially I was doing part-time teaching at the university. When I'd registered to do a PhD – I may add that I never finished it because I was too heavily involved in other things – that paid a little bit of money and it grew and grew. I was teaching part-time and doing political work. Later on I got a full-time job as a benefits adviser and race relations adviser in Newport. That earned some money, but not a lot. I did have some money saved up through the years and I used it to get this house, thank God, otherwise I would have had absolutely nothing. In terms of actually earning a proper decent wage, that only happened in '96 when I qualified as a solicitor. Prior to that it was all part-time earnings, as I couldn't take a full-time job, I was too heavily involved in Anti-Apartheid and also worked with the African National Congress – but mainly with Anti-Apartheid.

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

HB: Well, in Wales it's almost inevitable that you get involved in various things. One of the problems is that we always had, for example, the support of the NUM [National Union of Mineworkers], the support of women's groups, the support of the health unions, or various trade unions like the steelworkers – so if the steelworkers were on strike, we would go along with our banner to say we are in support of your struggle, because they were supporting us, and our legitimation was that steel was going to – was being – brought in from South Africa, and yes, steelworkers would be laid off here. With the NUM, the history goes back to the '40s, but with Anti-Apartheid since its inception in London in 1958, the NUM nationally was always involved directly or indirectly, but in Wales they were sending money to South Africa in the '40s, I've discovered. But we supported the Miners' Gala regularly and we participated in those activities. I have so far not found clear evidence of the 1940s link. When I was at university in Cardiff there were all kinds of solidarity groupings and basically I was involved in the Iraq Solidarity Campaign, the Iranian Solidarity Campaign, Chile Solidarity Campaign, Palestine Solidarity Campaign. But

the main ones were Iraq and Iran because the Iraqi leftwingers, and the Iranian left-wingers couldn't put their names forward. There were a lot of people who were running the anti-apartheid group at the university who were also on the solidarity committees with these people simply because they couldn't put their names forward, in a manner similar to the South Africans who were going back home, they couldn't rear their heads and it was very dangerous – there were street fights in Cardiff between Ba'athists and non-Ba'athists. But generally all sort of campaigns that supported Anti-Apartheid, we used to support as well, so the Chileans supported us, we supported the Chileans.

*ML: Let's go back a bit, and could you tell me when and how you first became aware of the situation in Southern Africa?*

HB: Well, I was living in a rural area and then I moved to Wolmaransstad, which is in the Western Transvaal, real red-neck territory. And I asked my parents why we had no school, because the schools were for whites-only or there were African schools. My father took the decision to send me and my brothers to an African school, the other Indians didn't do that. So we were in an African school and we got on very well. It was education, and I didn't know the difference from any other form of education. But then they closed that school – sorry, they closed our entry by making the stipulation that we were breaking the Group Areas Act by going to an African school. They then set up a school which was a bit like the old platoon system, terrible, because there were two teachers dealing with various grades of classes. There were 80 to 90 children in there, and one teacher was dealing with us up to Standard 6, he was dealing with those up from 7 to 10. And really, I read about it later on and realised it was the platoon system, which existed in rural areas. And there we were, having a teacher trying to teach us, having to teach four or five different grades of school. And we started asking questions, you know, why have the whites got it, why haven't we got it? And I realised something was wrong. And in the town where I lived it was amazing, I met an African bloke who said to me he was a Marxist and I asked him what that was. He started explaining to me the Russian revolution and everything else. And I was very much against white people at the time and he said, 'You know, the people who led the Russian revolution, they were white people'. And he told me about the Cuban revolution, that Fidel was a white man, that Che was a white man, because I had never seen photographs of these people. Then later on I found out that this man was actually a leading member of the Communist Party, prior to 1950, and he was listed as one of the people. He wasn't a treason trialist or anything, but you know, I met him again much later when I went back to South Africa in '92. He was an old man, but he was still alive, in his 90s, very articulate, and he said, 'Look, we've arrived, it came'. So that's how I got involved.

*ML: How old were you when you first met this man?*

HB: Oh, 9, 10, right? I remember the Treason Trial because he told me about it. And then when we were 12 years old we had to leave Wolmaransstad because my father, since his father brought him initially to Natal, he couldn't stay in the Transvaal. And we kept asking questions, why? why? And we got to Pietermaritzburg, which was my home town subsequently. It was the time of the potato boycott and the tobacco boycott that Ruth First had exposed in the press, in the ANC press – I don't know whether it was *New Age* or some other paper at the time, I know that *New Age* existed but whether it was then or not I don't know. So we would go around telling people not to eat potatoes, not to smoke cigarettes, and it was very successful in the community, much to my surprise. And then there was a meeting in the soccer stadium, and it was packed, very largely African, but there were quite a few white people there and a lot of Asians – Indians – and that was when my first real involvement with the ANC, or the Indian Congress, as we were very young,

mainly youth movement, the Natal Indian Congress started, I started at the age of 12. I couldn't understand what was going on but some of the speakers – I think Duma Nokwe was one of the speakers, an ANC bloke, very well known at the time, he's late now. And then of course I started meeting the local guys in Pietermaritzburg. And one of my teachers and political educationalists was Harry Gwala, and the other was Moses Mabhida. And there was an Asian guy called Goolam Subedar, who was a very very articulate Marxist. None of these people had a formal education. Gwala became a teacher eventually, but he was a leading member of the Communist Party, and so was Mabhida of course. Mabhida was from Pietermaritzburg, he eventually became Secretary-General of the Communist Party in exile, and it was Harry Gwala really who was teaching us various things. For example, there were leaflets we used to issue, we wrote them ourselves, on various issues, largely referring to 'the white man', 'the white man', 'the white man'. And he used to keep these leaflets. And in 1960 during the State of Emergency, he produced all these leaflets to us and said, 'Look, I want to talk to you guys'. Mainly, a couple of Indians and Africans were among the youth movement. 'You're issuing these leaflets, whites this, whites that, and look what's happening in the Treason Trial, look at the number of white people there. Look at these meetings we go to, even in the State of Emergency, there are white people there. You've got to stop this.' We said 'Why didn't you tell us this before?'. And he said, 'Would you have listened?' We couldn't answer that question, but the answer is probably not, because we were young and we thought everything was right and the older people knew nothing and they were too pacific and stuff. And that's when the real political education began. We used to be given books to read and classics to read. I remember getting one, *Problems of Leninism*, and it was a gift from Billy Nair to Paul Joseph, on the inside page, and we had to tear that page out unfortunately, otherwise we would have been accused of mixing with Paul Joseph and Billy Nair. That was in the '60s, 1961. But that early education was very important, because it effectively made the group of us, about five Asians and five Africans, we learned more about Marxism than we did about the ANC or anything else. These guys were talking to us a lot about the Communist Party, Communism and Marxism. Later on of course we came to realise we had to learn more about the ANC, the Indian Congress and everything else.

*ML: When did you come to this country?*

HB: 1965, in August.

*ML: Why was that?*

HB: Well, I came legally because I had a passport in the name of Mohamed Bhamjee. But what was happening – I had become involved in the underground, particularly in the MK units in the Pietermaritzburg area. And one of the problems with Pietermaritzburg and Durban was that almost everybody had been arrested, barring about six people and of that six, five were in Pietermaritzburg and one was in Durban. And they were looking for somebody called H, they were looking for him in Durban. And eventually, I don't know how, they found out that this H was Hanef. And the guys who were in detention sent me a note saying get out, because they've realised you're in charge of units, they're going to kill you, you know. I didn't want to go, but eventually they persuaded me so I left. The idea was that it was going to be temporary, but it more or less became permanent really.

*ML: And how did you become involved in the Anti-Apartheid Movement?*

HB: Well, when I first came to Britain I was told to lay off, to lay low, not to go to many meetings and keep low and things like that, and that the education would be provided by the ANC and the

Party. Later on I learned that of course they had no education classes, it was nonsense, the Party was running no education classes. So off my own back I went to the Marx Memorial Library, there were education classes there. And then we started our own education classes for South African youth, and told them to keep out of the way. But I didn't keep out of the way. I went to the Anti-Apartheid office initially, when I came, on the second day, because I had a message from Harry Gwala and Yusuf Dadoo. Ethel de Keyser said 'They don't work in the Anti-Apartheid office, but in the ANC office'. I was with a cousin of mine who knew London, and he took me there, and I was told that Mabhida was not in town and that Dadoo was away, but I could give my information to the ANC rep at the time, Raymond Kunene. Raymond Kunene and Reg September talked to me and I gave them the information that that was meant for Dadoo and Mabhida. And then when Dadoo came back to London from one of his world travels he called me, and said that Mabhida was not in London, you know, he doesn't come to London often but the information has been received. And he asked me a few questions. There was some vital information relating to Umkhonto and the Communist Party which I wasn't party to almost everything, but I knew really what was going on and I told him what I was asked to tell him and I told him my level of involvement, and he told me to keep away from everything. I couldn't keep away from everything because it was getting boring, so I used to go to the Anti-Apartheid office and eventually went to open meetings. I was involved in the periphery in London, I often used to pick up raffle books from Ethel and would sell them. She was amazed. I used to sell hundreds in the LSE, in the street.

*ML: How were you living at this time?*

HB: When I came, my parents were sending me £30 a month. It was more than adequate in those days, rent was about £2.50 a week, I wasn't much of a spender, I didn't smoke very much in those days, didn't drink very much, I managed on that. I then went to college, first in London. Things didn't work out and I went to Birmingham, and lo and behold when I was in Birmingham I got more involved with Anti-Apartheid at university. And one of the first people I met there was Mike Terry, he was president of the union there, and he told me about his exploits in Zimbabwe. So we became very close friends. And then there was an occupation in Coventry, and at that occupation they found out a whole lot of information about student activists, Mike Terry's name was on it and much to my amazement my name was on it, I couldn't figure out why because I wasn't really that well known an activist. I used to run the Anti-Apartheid Society at the University but beyond that, I wasn't involved in anything. But that's where the anti-apartheid thing started. In addition, there were a large number of South African students in places like Leicester, Walsall, studying things like A-levels, Birmingham, either A-levels or doing some courses like textiles, or peripheral courses of a similar nature. And I spoke to Yusuf Dadoo at the time and he said, 'Well, try to get them together into some sort of education classes'. So I started education classes amongst the students in Birmingham, Walsall and Leicester. There was a big crowd of South African students in Leicester, all studying to be textile technicians, and they were receptive to education classes and we were holding them weekly, every Monday night, which was a bit difficult for me, because having to get from Birmingham to Leicester was one thing, but to get up in the morning to be in Birmingham by 9 o'clock was always difficult and I remember missing tutorials regularly at 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock. I got penalised for that by the university, but that was it. Then Birmingham University had a long relationship with the Medical School in Zimbabwe and Mike started a campaign to sever links with the Medical School in Zimbabwe. But it eventually became clear that we needed the views of the Zimbabwean students at the medical college. And there was a Zimbabwean woman there, white woman, whose name I'll have to dig out, she was going on holiday to Zimbabwe, but she was good, she was not involved in the Anti-Apartheid Movement but sympathetic. She was not a member of ZANU or ZAPU or anything like that but she had a lot of information on Zimbabwe which she made

available. She was going on holiday home and she took a letter from the students union there to the students in Zimbabwe, asking them for their view on the question of breaking links, because we were always accused of breaking links and speaking on behalf of the students there and we had no right to do so. But they wrote back and said they wanted to break links in line with the policies of both ZANU and ZAPU, and wanted a complete boycott of the regime. And they sent that letter signed by all the medical students, literally all, with a proviso that the names would never be revealed and never made public. And that letter was eventually filed somewhere, we don't know where, I don't know if it's available. The only person who might be able to tell us that is Mike, but of course Mike is deceased ... [break in recording, move to recording part 2]

[Recording part 2 continued]

HB: The university was so reluctant, but eventually they decided to break links because the whole of the university was on our side. And the Anti-Apartheid Movement from there just took off in a big way in Birmingham. The medical students took the initiative on this and then there was a bit of an issue that arose about accusations. We kept attacking the head of the Medical School, and one of his colleagues stood up and said, 'Look, this is terrible, you guys are attacking the wrong man. I want to point out that he was nominated for the headship of that Medical School and he turned it down on the grounds that he didn't want to give succour to the Smith regime. So I think all of you owe him an apology.' And the meeting just burst into applause. He then got up and said 'We will do our very best to break links, as this letter was very clear'. He kept the letter in his pocket – oh my god, yes, maybe he's got the letter, I don't know. But there weren't any repercussions on any of those students, so we assumed nothing happened. And then of course Mike Terry and I worked very closely together, and I just carried on with anti-apartheid work in Birmingham. I got involved in the town branch as well at the time, because they needed speakers from time to time and the South African students who were there, even though some of them were openly exposed, and one of them was an ex-political prisoner, I can't remember his name at the moment, he eventually ended up in Wales teaching at Atlantic College. He refused to speak, I couldn't figure out why because he had nothing to hide, he was not going to go back to South Africa, and still refused to speak, so I was the only one around in the Midlands willing to speak at meetings. Eventually of course, when they could afford it, they used to invite people from London. Speakers from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau were invited, and fund-raising dos were held for both the town and the university branch. So that's how it began. But I was still very heavily involved with the South African students, and some time in the early 1970s Ahmed Timol went back to South Africa and of course he was arrested and murdered by the South African security police.

ML: Sorry, who was that?

HB: Ahmed Timol. They threw him off John Vorster Square building and said he jumped. But once that happened, they suspected there was a big network. And his brother Ahmed [*sic*, HB meant *Mohamed*] Timol was in Leicester and he was picked up, and so were all the students with any connection with Leicester or Birmingham or Walsall, and my name was all over the show – my name and Gulam Mayet's name. Gulam Mayet and I were friends in South Africa, he was in the Transvaal Youth Congress and I was in Natal. So we maintained our friendship and we still are friends and he's now in Durham. He goes back and forth to South Africa, but his home is now in Durham. And our names were flying around throughout – people were talking, you know. I don't blame them, because they were being tortured. So now a position had come where we couldn't go back legally, so I just started doing anti-apartheid work openly and continuing with the other work among South African students.

In '72 I finished at Birmingham, I had no money, so my friend Gulam was in Cardiff and said 'Come and stay with us until you get sorted'. So I stayed with him for a few years – I was teaching part-time – and was very heavily involved in Anti-Apartheid then. And much to my surprise, there was no Wales Anti-Apartheid in existence. There were branches in Cardiff, Swansea, Newport. There were units, pockets of people in different parts of Wales, north to south, and we were talking about forming a Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement. But Dai Francis, who was secretary of the NUM and had just retired as secretary and was still an active politician, he put me in touch with Bert Pearce of the Communist Party, Charlie Swain of the Trades Council, and through them, we got a lot of people who were either members of Anti-Apartheid or sympathetic. And Gulam Mayet of course had built up a whole lot of contacts, mainly in the Cardiff area, and we started writing letters to these people. And much to our amazement the response was amazing, largely from the left. And then we approached the churches and support was overwhelming. The Welsh Council of Churches was very supportive from the outset. But what Dai Francis said was 'It's too premature to form a Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement, let's form branches in more parts of Wales, then we'll form a Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement'. Ian Campbell, Mick Antony and most of the people agreed with this view.

*ML: Do you know why he said that?*

HB. Yeah, what he was saying – I asked him why – 'We have to convince the unions, and then the Labour Party and the Communist Party – but not so much the Communist Party, the Liberal Party, we have to convince them that we are an all-Wales party, organisation. So unless we have branches in north Wales, in mid-Wales – at the moment we are entirely based in south Wales. We've got all these contacts, you guys are even mailing at the moment. You're mailing them from south Wales, but you've got to start saying 'Welsh Committee'. Of course we got in touch with London, and they had some names, Anti-Apartheid in London had some names of people involved in Wales, we used all that and set up branches. So at the time of the formation the main branches were in Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, Wrexham, and that was it. But there were lots of individual groupings of people, in Carmarthen, in some of the valley areas, the Rhondda, that we knew, and north Wales, places like Flint, west Wales, Aberystwyth, university towns – Cardiff, Aberystwyth, Bangor, Coleg Harlech in the north, Trinity College in Carmarthen, were all places that we could use for printing, for postage, etc. And from there we used to move out to the branches. And one of the difficulties was that people asked for a speaker, and largely they wanted a South African. I initially used to make those trips from here all the way to Wrexham, and I said, 'No, this is ridiculous'. So I got myself a car, and eventually what we used to do is, if you're going to Aberystwyth, for example, you would link up with other units in Machynlleth, Newcastle Emlyn, towns nearby, and cover a series of towns, and also get the local committee to arrange meetings in churches or local unions or trades councils, and that made the tours worthwhile. We did the same in north Wales, and the same to a large extent in south Wales. South Wales was not too difficult because I was in Cardiff and there were a few very good people in Swansea, at one stage a South African guy who I've lost contact with, Steve Fluxman, was in Swansea, so between us we could cover south Wales area without difficulty. It was north and mid-Wales that had to be built. And I used to take these tours. And I persuaded NUS Wales to undertake a tour, and that was very successful, as we went to colleges from Cardiff down to the south, mid-Wales, north Wales, for a month on and off, covering large colleges, universities, and little colleges, polytechnics. And in each of those, either a branch emanated or committees emanated. And so, around 1979–80, we began to call ourselves the Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement. We only formalised in 1981, in a joint meeting with CND. And Abdul Minty came down from London, Mike didn't come, I don't understand why, I think the logic was you can't have both Mike and Abdul talking, with each covering the same

ground. Dai Francis was chairing the meeting, and he wanted to close the meeting at 1 o'clock, but without explaining why. And I said 'What's up?' And he said, 'There's Wales playing rugby this afternoon, what's the matter with you? How can you call a meeting on this day?' Oh God! Anyway, we didn't close the meeting, some people did leave, Welsh trade unionists and NUM left, because they were going to see the rugby. South Africa wasn't playing, or they wouldn't have gone. But Wales were playing someone. Anyway, we carried on with the meeting and a committee was eventually going to be elected, but we couldn't do it there, because we hadn't set up ideas of who was going to be on the committee and how we were going to run it, and eventually we did. So after the meeting we had a meeting with Abdul Minty, Dai Francis – because the rugby had finished then – and we decided on how the committee would be structured. We called another meeting with all the groups from different parts of the country asked to come along, and if they couldn't afford it we'd pay their fares. We had a collection from that meeting and we had some money raised from various branches. All the work was centred here, in this house.

*ML: What was your role?*

HB: I was initially just co-ordinator, and assistant secretary, because the first secretary was Chris Wilkerson (now deceased). We wanted a trade unionist as secretary so we put him in. He was in the National Union of Railwaymen. But within a year we had spread like nobody's business, and I used to issue all the press releases and do the interviews, so I was beginning to be Mr Wales Anti-Apartheid, and eventually I became secretary the next year. So I became secretary in 1982, and I've remained that ever since.

But from then onwards the Movement really began to grow in various parts of the country. We had speakers regularly prior to '81, mainly at universities in Cardiff, Swansea, Aberystwyth, Bangor, but now we had meetings in town. And we invited various speakers. We had some of the real big names from the three movements coming down, we had no difficulty getting speakers at the beginning. But as the Movement spread from '80, particularly after '84, after Soweto, things began to really hot up, and trying to get speakers to come down was difficult because they were in such high demand both by AA and by ANC. I remember you, Margaret, coming to a meeting in Swansea on a Saturday, and I asked this guy why did he arrange a meeting on a Saturday, but he just did, so it wasn't very successful. But from there a branch started in Swansea, and you provided a hell of a lot of information to this guy, which was different to what I was providing him, I can't remember his name but he'd cropped up, he was chairman of the union, chairperson of the students union at the time, and of the Anti-Apartheid group. So Swansea became a big branch.

But the big problem then was the issue of speakers. Everybody who wanted speakers after 1982 were asking for me specifically, and it was becoming very difficult, so you get invitations sometimes from Merthyr, Aberystwyth at the same time and one or the other had to be postponed. And what we used to say to them was 'Look, time is of the essence, so I'm not travelling to Aberystwyth all the way, you've got to arrange other meetings in the surrounding areas', which they did, successfully. So we stayed two days in Aberystwyth, for example, you'd do at least six meetings, one at the university, one at the church, you'd meet some trade unionists, the local college, maybe a trades council meeting, and that fitted quite well. If you went to Wrexham you'd also fit in Llangollen or Coleg Harlech, which was the equivalent of Ruskin College, or you'd fit in another town like Mold, all within travelling distance. You'd have a base with one of the people in the Wrexham area, and from there you'd either be driven or you'd make your own way.

I remember on one occasion going on a north Wales tour, you'd have to spend a fortnight in north Wales, and I took a whole lot of books and pamphlets in cardboard boxes and we spoke to the local ASLEF branch of the union, trade union, drivers and things. And I got to Cardiff station and the man was waiting for me on the platform. He was actually the driver of that train that was going straight to Wrexham, and he and his assistant, the equivalent of conductor, assisted us in putting the material on the train. And when we got to the other side, there were members of ASLEF waiting for me to assist in the unloading. It was very impressive the way it was done. And they said, 'Any time in the future'. We used to contact them, and I had a good contact's name, and we did that from time to time. That's how a meeting was done in Cardiff, and one in Swansea, where you covered various areas within a short space of time.

And from there the Movement just grew from strength to strength. But after '84 it really was beginning to pick up, the State of Emergency, and later the detention of 1,000 children under the age of 14, 15, which was given a hell of a lot of publicity in Wales. We had a demo in Cardiff at the same time London had a demonstration. There was some disagreement with London because they wanted everyone to come to London. And we said, 'Look, we can pull 6–7,000 in Wales, which in proportionate terms would be 100,00 in London. But we're not going to get 6,000 people from Wales coming to London, at the most we'd have five or six coaches.' So anyway, we had a meeting in Cardiff which was described as one of the biggest political rallies ever. The police estimate was about 6,000 people, our head count was a bit more, but 6,000 was fine. And somebody came up with the bright idea that we'd release balloons in the air with the gas you'd call ...

*ML: Helium?*

HB: Helium gas. And the balloons would go up. And Myrla Eastland, she was then assistant secretary, she always had very good ideas. She came up with the idea, we would get young children, we would give them 20 names, and rehearse their story with them for a few days and those children would know who they are, detainee children. The names were provided by Anti-Apartheid London and by IDAF. So we'd get, for example, a child called Hanef Bhamjee and some kid in Wales who's about 10 years old would wear that and would become Hanef Bhamjee for that day and would speak up at the rally. And at a particular point when the rally gets going these balloons were released, you know, calling for 'Free the children' and that evening on the national news, although there was big demonstration in London, very big, I don't know how many thousands were there but it was huge, the balloons that we'd released in Cardiff was the first item on the news. And the guys said, 'London's [*sic*] stolen our demonstration!' [*laugh*]. And there was a young girl from Soweto who spoke at the rally, her father was a student at Cardiff University, a mature student. And she went down brilliantly 'cause she was from Soweto, and she just talked about her experiences as a child and she talked about what had happened in 1976, she said she couldn't remember very much because she was only about 5 or 6 at the time, and now in '84 she was about 15 years only. And the media interviewed her, and TV interviewed her, and she made world history, well, history for the Anti-Apartheid Movement, in the way she spoke, outstanding. But of course it was the first time ever she spoke. Later on when I asked her to speak at universities or colleges she couldn't do it, she was too nervous. She spoke at that rally. And henceforth we were set up as an organised movement.

I remember later in that year the South Africans were playing in the Arms Park and Police Superintendent Derek Siddall came up to me and said, he was actually in charge of the march that day. And he said, 'Look, I think it's a bit of a problem, I'm going to give you some advice. I hope you haven't got people in the ground, because you don't need that, you're winning. You've got 6,000



people out here in previous demos. Now you've got thousands, we don't know how many. You've got members of parliament, you've got archbishops here, you've got trades unionists, you've got working people from all walks of life, educationalists, children, you've got a few nuns there. Don't invade the pitch, you don't need to, you've got the support.'

Of course it was the days, we had no mobile phones or anything, we had those daring guys in the ground. I sent a message by pager, and all that did to the guy in charge, and told him to abort the invasion, don't go on the pitch, so they came out. And one of them came up to me and said, 'There's no way we could have invaded the pitch, there were cops right round. We wouldn't even have been able to get to the pitch. But we were going to do it.' I said, 'No, we've agreed with the cops that we won't do it'. And it was all very successful. But as usual, when we said the demo's over now, a group of guys got themselves, broken away from the march, the disciplined grouping, and went outside the Arms Park and started shouting at the police. We didn't like that because quite frankly on that day the cops were very very good, as they had been on every other demonstration since about 1981. But we couldn't stop these guys so we just left. The terrible thing of course was that the following day in the press, the rugby demo that was so disciplined was hardly mentioned, but the break-away group was mentioned as disruptive, abusing the police and all sorts of things. And that was it.

After that the demonstrations against the Welsh Rugby Union increased, there was a year, I think it was '85 or '84, when the youth teams were here, and on Christmas Day I got a phone call telling me they're going to be on Boxing Day on so-and-so ground in the Gwent area, it could be Newport, it could be Ebbw Vale, we don't know where. I phoned around people telling them there was a demo on Boxing Day and the general reaction from almost everyone was 'Do you know what bloody day it is? It's Boxing Day'. 'OK', I said, 'I'll tell the South Africans to rearrange their fixtures, and tell our friends the WRU to rearrange their fixtures and not to have anything on Boxing Day'. Anyway, much to my surprise, the coach from Cardiff was full. We couldn't get another coach, so people took their cars and we had about 200 people in total on Boxing Day – amazing! And in the end I think they played for five minutes in the dark, because it was completely disrupted. We sat on the pitch so they couldn't play, there were more of us than there were cops. The police were sympathetic to our position, so they didn't call for reinforcements, and we assured them there was going to be no violence, no invasion or anything, no smoke bombs, we're just going to sit on the pitch so they can't play. And cops said 'Is that your word?' And I said 'Yes'. And they said, 'OK, that's good enough for us'. And we just stuck to that. So about 10 minutes before the end, they saw that it was getting very dark, we decided to leave and they played a bit of rugby and that was it. But the important thing from that was the extent to which people had become so committed, there were MPs on that, a Euro MP, Wyn Griffiths, who was vice-president of Anti-Apartheid, future MPs like Paul Flynn, Rhodri Morgan, Alun Michael. We were amazed people had turned up. People from all walks of life on Boxing Day, including some priests from the Gwent area. 200 people on Boxing Day, it was amazing.

But the other thing was, even before that, we could call up people on very short notice, through what we used to call a telephone tree, which we learned from CND. We were told on one occasion that the South Africans had come to recruit a rebel tour in the Hilton Hotel. And we phoned around and within the hour there were 200-odd people at the Hilton Hotel in Cardiff. They were furious, because they didn't expect that number of people, they had no security, no police. Eventually four or five coppers turned up and asked me what our intention was, were we going into the hotel to stop the meeting. Of course we had no such intention, because we would have been hammered. And one thing, we didn't want any more was arrests, because each time somebody was arrested it

used to cost us a lot of money, not in terms of legal representation because we had enough lawyers doing that pro bono or charging only their expenses. But the fines, the fines were punitive.

And later on, as life went on, when Anti-Apartheid became like a household word, then they weren't fining us too much. But initially, like just running on a pitch, £250, £300 fine. At one demonstration in Newport, the police were sort of, they hemmed us into one corner, the old kettling thing, and they had barriers all around, and people just couldn't move out. Eventually we broke the barriers down, and moved on to the street to demonstrate. In terms of getting into the ground it was unsuccessful, but at one stage, the police gave charge, and the guys ran, and unfortunately in the direction of the police vehicles, and two of them were charged with damaging police vehicles, and found guilty. Criminal damage to police vehicles. And it was not their fault. They were running away from the cops. Anyway, the defence at that time was Chris Short and he raised it – Chris Short was a solicitor and the chairman of Anti-Apartheid – and he defended them, and he said 'They were running from the police'. But the judges would have nothing of it, the magistrates would have nothing to do with it. Of course later on we found out that some of the magistrates were pro-rugby, or pro-WRU, so we had a problem.

*ML: What were the main organisations at that time that were supporting Wales AAM?*

HB: Apart from our branches there was generally speaking several unions, and in the forefront was the National Union of Mineworkers, and NUPE, which is now part of UNITE [*sic*, *NUPE became part of UNISON*], the National Union of Public Employees, the Wales TUC, Wales Labour Party, Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Language Society. The Liberals came on board, but reluctantly, especially when it was over rugby, because some of them were trying to use the rugby thing to grab votes from Labour, but that was not successful. The Council of Churches was very supportive. But almost all trade unions locally would support us, they'd join local branches or they'd affiliate to Wales Anti-Apartheid. One of the difficulties we had, of course, despite the support, were unable to get money from the trade unions, simply because the union funds generally were held by central unions and the central unions' argument, with the exception of NUPE, ISTC (steel workers), Transport & General Workers Union to some extent, and National Union of Mineworkers, who held their own funds, they were giving us some support financially. But the rest would say 'We are giving money to the national Anti-Apartheid Movement, and you've got to get money from them'. And trying to get money from national Anti-Apartheid was like trying to get blood out of a stone, because they had no money to give to anybody. But finance was always a problem for the Movement nationally and locally, and in Wales, always a problem, but somehow or other we managed to get by. And if things were really bad, all we did was send out an appeal to say our coffers are dry, please send some money, an open letter to all the members, supporters, sometimes an appeal through the newspapers or if it was called on television or radio, and it was live, that was what I would prefer, we could always sneak in a question or sentence about we need some funds to carry on the campaign, and funds used to come in. What we found of course was that if there was a campaign, the money used to come in regularly, but if there was no major campaign, the money would dry up. We used to do a thing called Charter Against Apartheid, almost every year after 1981, we used to print it in the Western Mail. The charge was not that expensive, but we would charge a fiver, or a tenner, or ask for a donation, from individuals and trade unions, and if the advert cost us, say, an arbitrary figure of say £500, we used to make about £2,000 from donations from that. And that often used to help cover the forthcoming demonstration or leafleting campaign, etc. That's how the funding was obtained, largely through public donations. We did have a grant from the Council of Churches once, £3,000, and also when we launched a

poetry book ...

*ML: Was that the Wales Council of Churches?*

HB: Yeah, sorry, the World Council of Churches. Now once we had money from the World Council of Churches, we circulated everyone to say we've got this grant and asking them for further funding, because the demands had been coming in, much to my disagreement, for the setting up of an office. I didn't like the idea, simply because I thought it was going to be a headache for me to raise the rent for it every month, and that's exactly what happened. You know, campaigning was a priority, but you had to pay rent, you had to pay gas, electricity, you had to pay for telephones, you had to pay for the telephone bill at the end there which was crazy. A lot of telephone calls were still coming here (my house), because people had this number and had the office number. I used to be in the office round the corner, and come in here when things were quiet, and pick up messages from my phone. But nevertheless people wanted this office, so we set up the office, run by volunteers as usual. But the number of people who came there were not anyway higher than the number that used to come to this house. Really it was a burden, it was a burden we had to undertake because people wanted it, a majority at an AGM prior to that agreed and went to the idea of a meeting, and the only people who opposed it were people like myself and some people on the Executive because we knew it would be a burden raising money. We had to get it so we got it round the corner, the landlord was fairly sympathetic, an Asian guy round the corner, Abdul and his father were members of the Movement, so you know, we could delay the rent and stuff like that, but it was a hassle. But you couldn't delay it for ever because otherwise you would have had a propping up and propping up. It was £200 a month, it was a three-room office. In one of them we had a computer and the membership guy used to carry on. One was for the books and T-shirts and everything else was there, the saleable stuff and also leaflets and posters which were required. The other thing we started was educational packs, which were in great demand by groups or by individuals who were interested, and also by students, college students or school pupils. And we used to write to the headmaster and say, 'Look, we're giving your pupils a large file which is in excess of their needs, but have it for keeps in your library, we'd appreciate a donation if possible'. And always a donation would come. And if the BBC or ITV or a local radio station wanted an interview, generally we'd ask them for a donation. We didn't ask for a fee, I think that might put them off and you could lose the opportunity to be on radio. But if they were interviewing somebody sympathetic to links with South Africa, then we'd want one of us to go and we'd ask for a donation. And they'd always, they wouldn't send much but they'd always send the odd £10 or £20, sometimes £50. We'd ask them to make it payable to Anti-Apartheid but they wouldn't, they'd make it payable to the person who did the interview. And almost everyone, yeah, almost everyone, would then pass on the money to us. They included local MPs, councillors, church people, you'd have a cheque coming for £40, £50 from someone like Rhodri Morgan or somebody from the Council of Churches saying 'I did this interview on Anti-Apartheid, here's the money they've sent me'. It wasn't much but it was good enough coming through.

And one of the problems we had really was that a lot of the time we were getting publicity only for things that got into the media, which would be stuff like the rugby demo, eventually for the consumer boycotts as well. But the only time that the consumer boycotts were really getting into the press was that we disrupted a Tesco branch or another supermarket somewhere, because you know people would tie themselves to the tills, the usual stuff, get the South African goods, put them at the bottom of the pile, get the tills to count up the money in the trolley and then say 'I'm sorry I don't want this because you're selling South African products'. And people kept putting the South African stuff in the trolley, somebody in Barry got himself handcuffed to a till once, refused to move,

and he refused to provide them with a key, so they had to wait for the police to come and cut the handcuffs off. That was a regular thing. Somebody did that in Caerphilly as well, at Carrefour. And the guy who did it had a beard, he didn't look anything like me, he was a Welshman, but a dark-skinned Welshman. And they came out and said to him 'Mr Bhamjee you are banned from this supermarket' and I phoned them up and they told me I'm banned from Carrefour. So I phoned the management up and I wrote them a nasty letter saying 'I was nowhere near Caerphilly at the time, I was just demonstrating in Cardiff, how dare you ban me?' And they said, 'Well, you weren't there but you are banned from this shop'. They didn't say it in writing, they phoned me, so I can't prove it. So I was banned from Carrefour in Caerphilly. But when we used to do this on a national scale, the branches in every town would do it with a particular supermarket, that got publicity in the *Western Mail* or the *Echo* or local press or local radio. And at that time Radio Wales was phenomenally good at reporting things because, one, they needed the news. I also think some of them were sympathetic, because I knew them. Similarly with the *Echo* and *Western Mail*. There were sympathetic reporters. I think with all newspapers, you build up a relationship with people, either because you're newsworthy, or because you build up a rapport, a friendship with them. And that would get publicity. But things like the banks, if we'd do a certain picket of Barclays, to try to get that into the media was pretty difficult. We'd have a picket of Barclays on a Friday throughout branches in Wales, from Carmarthen, Aberystwyth, Swansea, Wrexham, Flint, were boycott Barclays pickets, but very little publicity. If we demonstrated for example, outside a steelworks on the grounds that they were importing steel from South Africa, that will get publicity but generally in the local press, it wouldn't be in the *Western Mail* or the *Echo*. It would come sometimes, and a lot of this stuff was acting on information received. I had a knock on the door one day, a guy looked at me and said 'Are you Hanef Bhamjee?' I said yes. 'May I come in?' I said 'Sure, sit down.' He said, 'Look, I need a drink'. I said 'What do you want, do you want a beer or do you want a coffee?' He said 'A beer would go down nice, thank you. I've got some friends of mine waiting in the car as well.' I said 'Invite them in.' They sat down, I said 'What's it about?' They said, 'We work for Berox Machine Tools in Pontypridd.' I said 'What is that?' They said, 'It's a machine tool parts factory. But we had a secret communication from South Africa, and here it is, we printed it out for you.' Now, it was basically just making spare parts, tools, but we didn't know what it was. Anyway, I took the information from them. They asked to be anonymous, obviously. All sources were anonymous, particularly WRU sources were anonymous or anybody from any organisation that passes information. There was a request for secrecy to protect them, and we respected that throughout, never gave anybody's name away, never. And so I took the stuff down to London and Mike Terry said, 'Well, it so happens that Abdul Minty's in town.' So Abdul took the stuff off me, and then a couple of days later he rang and said that the tools in question have been described by some military man we know as a 'tool to assist in low-flying aircraft particularly Impala jets', which were being used at that time particularly in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia. So that was blown sky-high and every newspaper covered it. It went national, on BBC 1, it was on Radio Wales, *Western Mail*, *Echo*, and eventually the *Guardian* picked it up. It went national, BBC Wales had something on it, I'm not sure whether BBC national picked it up, but it caused a hell of a crisis in Wales, because it's now proven that these machine tool companies were not innocent, they were in collaboration with the South African military, and there was an admission to a large extent from the company that there were secret communications from this company in South Africa, but they didn't know what this tool was being used for. Now whether that was true or not we've never been able to figure out, but the workers in question told us they were suspicious because of the secrecy of the communication, you know there was a closely guarded area where this communication used to come through, it was the old-fashioned fax or email, paper that piles up and he brought it here, and after we saw it, discussed it and everything else, he asked me to destroy it because it had his prints all over the place and to ask the guys in London to destroy the photocopy. I think that photocopy

was destroyed because I haven't heard of it since. If it's kept now it will be fine because it's so long, such a long time ago, I don't even know if those people [*inaudible*] sitting in the room are alive or dead. But certainly they provided that information, which is very very good. All kinds of information used to come, the resources we least expected.

*ML: Do you think that Wales has a particularly strong tradition of internationalism?*

HB: I think there always has been, but not always positive. I mean, it's been positive in the sense that a large contingent of people from the South Wales valleys, mainly the NUM, went to Spain with the republicans, and fought alongside the republicans. Many other trade unionists also did the same. Some poets and writers went to fight on the republican side. That was very strong.

*ML: Was it relevant to Wales Anti-Apartheid?*

HB: Not at the time of the Spanish civil war, obviously, but later on, when we were formed, even prior to the formation, the support came very largely from the people in the valleys, many of whom had an international approach. One of the strongest things I found was that the Welsh miners had their own library, every mine had their own library. All of the stuff has now been deposited with Swansea Library, but they used to read phenomenally, the National Mineworkers members. If you went to a meeting, addressing say the joint lodges meeting, at a special occasion, say the annual general meeting, the questions there were very deep questions about South Africa. Now the NUM used to have a relationship with the South African NUM, dating back to the 1945 [*sic, the African miners strike took place in 1946*] miners' strike, when the black workers went on strike in South Africa. The miners from here sent people over. And I even saw a communication from Peter Heathfield to Mike Terry. At that time there was an issue of links with South Africa, and the NUM said 'Look, we've had this link, started by the South Wales NUM in 1945, and we're not going to break it now because you have sanctions against South Africa. Sanctions are sanctions, but we are not breaking sanctions, we've got fraternal links with the South African NUM, predominantly the black one, and we're going to maintain that.'

And I remember one year when Cyril Ramaphosa was here, this was now coming up very much to 1990 or '88 or something, Cyril Ramaphosa had come to speak at the NUM conference in South Wales, and a year later the South Wales area asked me to facilitate the transfer of some money to the NUM in South Africa. So indirectly, with somebody who was going home, I contacted the NUM in South Africa and said 'The guys in South Africa [*sic – HB means Wales*] have got five grand for you. How do they send it? Or should we send it with a student or whatever?' He said 'No, the Wales miners are on strike, tell them to keep it. We've got enough money here.' So the message came through and I wrote a letter to the NUM president here, Emlyn Williams, or was it Des Dufield? I think it was Des Dufield at that time, Emlyn had retired, saying this is what the South African NUM has said, it's a message direct from Cyril. And they said 'Fine'. So I returned the money which was at that time held in the Anti-Apartheid account, I returned the money to them and that was it. But they always used to send money to the NUM in South Africa and keep it very quiet. It was a relationship that existed for many many years. And they used to tell us they were often sending fraternal delegates to the NUM in South Africa. There was a similar relationship with NUPE. NUPE used to send workers to the NEHAWU, which was their equivalent of a health union in South Africa. And they were sending funds direct. And I know that because Derek Gregory who was the secretary of NUPE in Wales told me that. There was also a very strong history among the National Union of Seamen. One of the founding members of Anti-Apartheid in Cardiff, and who generally worked very closely with us, was a man called Tommy Hanley, who was a white

Welshman, very very radical, Christian communist he called himself – a member of the Communist Party as well as the Catholic church. And the other guy was a guy called Musa Nogan, of Somali background, born here, but from a very militant Somali family, very radical. And rumour has it that they helped smuggle a printing press into South Africa in 1963. Now whether it was the South Wales National Union of Seamen, or the National Union of Seamen nationally, I've never been able to fathom out. But certainly the printing press, of East German make, was smuggled into South Africa in 1963. And that was true, because I remember it being picked up by the authorities in '65 when they arrested, among others, a bit earlier, the rest of the second high command, including Mac Maharaj, Wilton Mkwayi, Dave Kitson. The arrests were in Johannesburg, and one of the things they found was this printing press, the size of which amazed the Special Branch. I remember it very clearly because I was in South Africa at the time. The arrests of the second high command was really a body-blow because they were just regrouping in 1963–64 after the first unit was arrested, which led to the Rivonia Trial. When they picked up the second high command, one of the things they found was this printing press and they just couldn't believe it, it was the size of half this room and people had smuggled that into South Africa with the help of the National Union of Seamen. And of course the National Union of Seamen was always very good. In Cardiff, for example, they used to stop ships carrying South African goods, and refused to transport the South African goods, and would tell the T&G [Transport & General Workers Union] drivers not to carry them. Sometimes the fruit used to rot in Cardiff Bay, because the T&G refused to transport them and the truck drivers were either members of the T&G or similar unions and wouldn't transport. I don't know whether the same took place in Southampton, but I've heard of similar stories in Liverpool as the guys in Cardiff and it was largely the work of Tommy Hanley and Musa Nogan.

But generally speaking, what was interesting about all these things is that it was information received. There was a time when a Welsh person, male or female I don't know, sent me a letter to this address, saying that you may be interested to know that the South Africans will be entertained in the Welsh Office on so-and-so date. It was a Tory government at the time but we didn't think they'd be that blatant, asking them to come to the Welsh Office. So we contacted the T&G, sorry, the TUC, and David Jenkins at the time said, 'Well, we'll go direct to the unions there.' So he contacted the civil service unions, the National Union of Civil and Public Servants were affiliated to WAAM, we contacted various members of theirs, one of whom was Bob Walker, who worked in Companies House. And they were there, and so were members of the National Union of Civil and Public Servants picketing outside. The meeting didn't last very long because they changed the venue, that's the effect it had. To this day I don't know who that individual was, because he or she never came forward. By and large we find out who they are, but some people just don't, they're not that way inclined. They may have been members, we don't know. But the information comes through like that.

There was a guy called Stuart Weaving, one of our enemies. Stuart Weaving was a Jersey-based millionaire who claimed to be a great friend of Vorster, a great friend of South Africa, always organising rebel tours, trying to organise rebel tours, and was in cahoots with all these rebel outfits of one sort or another. He tried to organise rebel rugby tours, didn't get great teams together, but he did manage and they used to go. Then he was trying to have an eisteddfod in South Africa. Most of the Welsh choirs boycotted it. He then got a 'Jones Choir' together, where everybody was called Jones. But we managed to get the names of every one of them, and the information came from members of the choirs. It started with Morrision Orpheus. Now Morrision Orpheus, I don't know whether you're aware, was a choir that performed at Princess Diana and Charles' wedding, and they contacted me direct, by telephone no problem. The conductor contacted me and said, 'This guy is recruiting members for South Africa, and the following people from our choir are going'.

The Cwmbach choir was based in Aberdare, a great mining valley. Tyrone O'Sullivan, who was Tower lodge secretary, who eventually, you know, after the NUM crashed, the mining owners were trying to close the pit, re-opened it and ran it as a co-op in the '90s, actually ran it successfully for many many years. Tyrone O'Sullivan was from Aberdare, and he found out the names of all the Cwmbran choir and somebody rang us up regularly, and in the end we passed all the names to the United Nations. But all this was on information received. On the UN Register. And much to our surprise many of them subsequently wrote to us asking for their names to be removed because they didn't know what they were in for when they went to South Africa, and if they had known they wouldn't have gone. So we were delighted with that and that got us publicity, so-and-so-Jones, so-and-so-Jones, all of them were known as Jones, requesting that their names be removed. So we removed the names from the UN Register, we used to write to the UN and tell them, you know, these people have asked for their names to be removed.

Rugby players didn't, they either went or didn't go. What was amazing was that several rugby players wouldn't go to South Africa, or wouldn't play in matches that included South Africans, but very few of them would be willing to come out and say 'I'm doing this because I'm opposed to apartheid'. John Taylor was a captain of the Lions one year, went to South Africa, and he came out openly, he was Welsh, and he came out openly. He said, 'I'll never go back to South Africa and I urge my fellow players not to go'.

Ray Gravell, who was a member of Plaid Cymru, said he wouldn't go to South Africa, but he wouldn't say why. Carl Smith used to play rugby for Cardiff, a black player, very very good, outstanding player, was tipped for better things to come. But when he refused to go to South Africa, or refused to play South Africa here, life became a misery for him so he left and went to Pontypridd. I remember on one occasion falsely accusing a friend of his, a Welshman, of having gone to South Africa, his friend went ballistic with me because he said, 'I've never been, and I never would go because I'm a very close friend of Carl Smith and his wife Lorraine, and how would I ever look at them in the face if I ever went to South Africa?'

Others would refuse to go on the grounds of business reasons or whatever. And I used to ask some of them, I said 'Come on, I know why you're not going, you've *told* me, why can't I print it?' 'You don't know the WRU, mate, sorry, you can't use my name.' And we couldn't. We only used names where we got permission to use them, but we often used to get telephone calls, sometimes anonymous, sometimes on the record. The vice-president of Llanelli Rugby Club used to ring me up regularly, would openly tell me his name. 'Ieuan Evans from Llanelli Rugby Club, they're playing so-and-so date, I'm opposed to it, their meeting will be held on so-and-so date, we need information, can you send it to me?' And we used to send them information. OK, they had a vote in 1984 to sever links with South Africa and we were smashed, only 71 clubs voted in favour of Anti-Apartheid, or in favour of severing links. But by 1989 the vote was the other way round, something like 37 clubs voted to continue links, everyone else voted against. And that was largely because of perseverance by supporters and members of Anti-Apartheid who were in the WRU. Although we did a lot, but at the end of the day it depended on those clubs. Some of them were very sympathetic, I did quiet meetings for them, or some of the committee members, trying to persuade them not to go, the rules were very clear, 'Come alone'. I'd often say, 'Some of us from the Committee will come.' 'No, you come alone or we won't have the meeting.' And the meeting would be in a secluded pub, or sometimes in an open pub depending on the area. But we could never use their names. [*inaudible*]

Even now, I'm writing a book on the Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement, and I've asked several of

them if I can use their names. The answer is no. 'Why not?' They said, 'You don't know how long the arm of the WRU is.' 'But', I said, 'you're retired, man, you retired as a player, you retired as an administrator.' 'No, you can't use my name, and I'm telling you, not even by implication.' 'What do you mean by that?' He said, 'You can't say I'd I spoke with the secretary of the so-and-so rugby club in so-and-so year, you can't say that, 'cause they'll know who it is.'

David East, who was secretary of the Welsh Rugby Union in 1989, now he said I can use his name. Now David East, who was secretary of the WRU, was former chief constable of Wales, and 1989 was a hell of a period for us because we were very very busy, speaking at engagements, but we were over the moon, everybody would just ask for speakers and largely they wanted me. And it used to be difficult to be all sorts of places. Some people from London used to come down but they wanted more of a Welsh dimension and stuff like that. Steve Fluxman from Swansea, a white South African, he used to go to places, but he often used to say to me, 'Look, it's better if you go, man, a black guy comes across far better than a white man.' The other black students who were here just wouldn't go. Either they were afraid or they were going home, or just downright not interested, even though they had British Council scholarships and said they were members of the Movement, etc., but ask them to do anything, they wouldn't do it. But when in 1989, again acting on information received, we heard that the invitations to the rugby players who were being recruited for South Africa were coming in via a solicitor in Gwent. It wasn't difficult for me, because I had a lot of contacts in the legal services and lawyers' fraternity, to find out who that lawyer was. I phoned David East up, and I went to see him, and there was a meeting with him and Clive Rowlands going on at the time, but David asked to see me alone. 'So what is it?', I said 'The information for these South Africans is coming through this guy, and the information is also coming via this guy, and I think it's 20 grand a man.' He said 'So, OK, what do you want?' I said, 'I want you to break links with South Africa, I don't care about anything else. Break the links, because that would be such a major step. It'll be a kick in the teeth for the rugby, for the WRU, idiots who are very very right-wing, almost bordering on racism, and it will be a kick in the teeth for the South African Rugby Board and Danie Craven in particular.' And Danie Craven was a man who when he was here in Wales in the early '80s said, 'A black man will never wear a Springbok jersey', and now he's supposedly trying to be multiracial in South Africa. Anyway the Welsh Rugby Union was so horrified that the South Africans were going behind their backs in trying to arrange a tour that they called an extraordinary general meeting, at which point of course David East and Clive Rowlands, the president, secretary and president of WRU, had resigned over the South African link. It was unprecedented, in Welsh history, in any history as far as I know where the president and secretary of the sporting body would resign. But this was on principle, one, the links with South Africa, and two, the surreptitious manner in which these links were being passed through. And they broke links, after the vote that was held. Now, as I said earlier, on the previous occasion in 1984 when they had a similar vote, we only had 84 votes in our favour. This time it was over 470 or something in our favour, and they broke links. Danie Craven even went bananas. He never forgave me for that. In fact in 1992, when I went with Claire Hudson and Elis Owen from HTV Wales to make a documentary on my life in Wales and in South Africa, one of the things that they arranged was a meeting with Danie Craven, an interview in other words between Wales Anti-Apartheid and the South African Rugby Board. And he made it clear in an interview ... and I need to deposit with you, a copy of that DVD, on radio, sorry, it's a video, we can get some DVD copies. The horrendous nature in which he behaved, outrageously. There was no love lost between us, but he behaved really outrageously towards me. And he did say, 'They broke links, it's up to them if they want to talk to us.' He hated the Welsh Rugby Union for breaking links with them and yet he loved them all the way before. No-one had broken links with South Africa, you see, though that was it, that meeting was not very nice but it was given publicity. It's on that DVD which I'll have to find for you, get a copy to your project.



The other idiot who would always speak up for South Africa was Wilf Wooller. A big name in Wales, you know he was captain of Wales and he was also a cricketer for Glamorgan. He always used to speak up in support of apartheid, in support of links with South Africa, or accuse me on that same DVD, on that same TV interview, of being a Russian agent and of getting money from Moscow, gold, that I had thrown paint on his car in 1968 or something. I wasn't even in Wales then, I'm sorry, I was in Wales then – in 1972. He claimed that someone had thrown paint on his car in 1969 during a rugby tour of Swansea and Cardiff. I wasn't even here then so I couldn't have thrown paint on his car, but somebody did. Incidentally, the 1969 rugby tour, and especially the game in Swansea, was one of the most violent in British sporting history. Rumour has it that some person who had very strong links with South Africa had hired skinheads to beat up anti-apartheid demonstrators – and they were beaten up. There was something like 200-odd people injured in fist cuffs, those who ran on the pitch were brutally assaulted. And the cops just picked them up and threw them into the crowd generally, but in the crowd where they knew the thugs were, and the demonstrators were really beaten up at that demo. We had some photographs of that, which I provided to Christabel Gurney. But at the moment I'm hoping to get some interviews of people who were actually there who will tell us what happened to them or what happened to other demonstrators who they'd seen. But it was described as one of the most violent in British sporting history. I don't know whether ... I know Craven is dead now, I know Wilf Wooller is dead. When Wilf Wooller was dying, the BBC interviewed me and they asked a question, which was done, I think, as though he was dead. And they rang me and said, 'If we were to interview you now and say Wilf Wooller had died, what would you say?' And I said, 'Good riddance to racist rubbish'. Next, Wilf Wooller had died and the radio was on all morning, Radio Wales, and 'Mr Bhamjee, secretary of the Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement, said 'Good riddance to racist rubbish'. I got some nasty phone calls from various people and nasty letters to the editor, nasty calls to *The Echo* saying 'You've no right to print this' and whatever. But they didn't print those letters. But they did print other, horrible letters. There was a letter during the Shirley Bassey campaign, when somebody wrote a letter to *The Echo* saying 'Next time you see Mr Bhamjee in the street, kick him in the gutter' – expecting a reaction from us, but nobody even treated it with respect. One person wrote back and said 'We're surprised that you printed that horrible letter about kicking Mr Bhamjee in the gutter, it shows what gutter press you've become'. And after that there were no letters that they printed. But that was, oh horrible.

Talking about Shirley Bassey, well, we got both Tom Jones and Shirley Bassey to say they won't go back to South Africa. But Tom Jones was open. Him and his agent, an American gentleman, whose name I'll have to provide you with, I can't remember it at the moment, we met them in a hotel in Cardiff on the way to Newport, it was the top hotel at the time, before the Hilton was built, and he asked us what the purpose of the meeting was. 'We've been asked by the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid who ask you whether you'd be willing to come off the UN Register and whether you'd sign a document to that effect.' They said, 'Well, what would the document be?' I said 'Well, I haven't got a copy of it.' 'Write one now.' So I just wrote out something very simple, 'I, Tom Jones, who previously went to South Africa, which I was referred to as Sun City, hereby declare that I will not ever go to South Africa again until the dismantling of apartheid. I regret having gone to Sun City at the time, whatever year it was.' And he signed it, I was with Christopher Short, the chairman, and Sanjai VEDI, who was youth organiser, student organiser for Anti-Apartheid. So Tom Jones signed it without any difficulty, and his agent said, 'That's it, we won't go to South Africa'.

Shirley Bassey, on the other hand, there was a demonstration in about '86, massive crowd outside St David's Hall, I think there were more people at the demo, even though the hall was full. I remember that Tom Jones and Shirley Bassey would pack a hall in south Wales because people

would want to hear them. Well, Shirley Bassey went and the picket was huge. At one stage her family turned up to me, I didn't know who they were, a group of black people. 'Excuse me, Mr Hanef, can we have some leaflets?' I gave it to them and they were talking all kinds of things. One of them shouted, 'Auntie Shirley, shame on you, you're a cousin and you've never given us a free ticket'. So I went up to them and said 'What's up?' They said, 'No, we are relatives, we helped her go to America, and she never invited us to any of her concerts. If we went we had to pay for them. So we hate her for that. But we also hate her because she supports apartheid.' That was press publicity according to the newspapers. The other person who surprised me was Ian Grist's wife. Ian Grist was the local Tory, and she was there, she was a student at Cardiff University. I knew her, she was going by her maiden name, so I didn't know her as Ian Grist's wife. But she was a supporter of Anti-Apartheid. I don't ever know whether she joined the student branch, but she wouldn't have used the name Grist. She was giving out leaflets there as well, with such enthusiasm. And we got wide publicity for that.

Well then, a couple of years later she was coming back to St David's Hall. By now of course our strength in the Council was huge. The chairman of the Council was a member, other members of the Council were leading members of Anti-Apartheid, including Dave Reynolds, chairman of the Council, chairman of the Labour group, Alun Michael, who was quite senior in the Labour Party, he subsequently became an MP and is now Commissioner for Police in South Wales. And they didn't want Shirley Bassey to perform in St David's Hall unless she signed a declaration. So we met with her agent, and he started off by saying she'd never been to South Africa, she only went to Sun City which is an independent country run by a black president. That's the information that we put in a leaflet we produced about Sun City and about that area, saying it's not an independent country, it's a slum. For five miles away from Sun City is one of the biggest squatter camps in South Africa and everything else, no running water for people.

Well we went up and down to Shirley Bassey and said to him, 'Look, you sign on the dotted line or she's not going to perform, right? End of story. It's not me saying that, it's the Council telling you that.' In that tone. So he signed it on behalf of Shirley Bassey. So I said, 'No, I want her to sign it.' She had to sign it. She didn't come down to talk to us. Then she issued a press statement: 'I've signed a statement to say that I'm not going back to South Africa or to Bophuthatswana, but I want to make it clear that I did not go to South Africa but I went to Sun City which is part of an independent country.' Oh god. So we issued another statement to the press on it, saying if she doesn't retract that statement, she won't perform in St David's Hall. They went to her agent and told him that clearly. Next day she retracted it. In other words, whereas Tom Jones was openly clear about it, because he'd got a lot of flack from some of his friends in Pontypridd, she, despite what everybody else in the black community in particular was saying, was still hesitant. But all that the UN wanted was for her to say she won't go back. So she signed it, and both their names were removed from the UN list.

And what was interesting to us was the level of support and also denial at the cultural level. For example, Llangollen International Eisteddfod, which is based in Llangollen, north Wales, always invited a South African choir. It was formed in 1948 as an anti-fascist outfit, and the first big person they invited there were South Africans and a choir from Franco's Spain, which didn't make sense in terms of their anti-fascism. But in 1972 when I got here it was one of the areas which we targeted, and as time went, people like Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Ann Clwyd, who were vice-presidents of Llangollen, resigned in protest - both Dafydd Elis-Thomas and Ann Clwyd were members of WAAM. Dafydd Elis-Thomas was in fact vice-president of Wales Anti-Apartheid from its formation days. Ann Clwyd was a very very committed member, both nationally and locally. Both of them

were national and local members, when I say local I mean WAAM members. And Dafydd Elis spoke at Llangollen to the committee, but they said they won't break links. In the end they did break links, but that's because we threatened to disrupt it. We tried once, we weren't very successful, but the Welsh Language Society said they were at war with Llangollen. The Welsh Language Society and Anti-Apartheid mounting joint campaigns would have been very formidable for them, so they stopped links with South Africa then. But even there, they said 'We've stopped links with South Africa but we want to make it clear that we've always had multiracial choirs from South Africa'. They couldn't see the fact that these multiracial choirs were actually ones that the South Africans were sending. It caused some confusion, because some of the people who were providing accommodation, many of them were members and supporters of Anti-Apartheid, used to provide accommodation for these people, not realising that they were actually doing the work of apartheid. Eventually they did break links.

The National Eisteddfod on the other hand was a completely different ball game. The vast majority of the National Eisteddfod goers were totally opposed to apartheid, largely because the Welsh National Eisteddfod was founded as a nationalist grouping thing, for the preservation of the Welsh language. So we had a built-in support there. But even there there were problems, see, because they used to invite the South African Welshmen, as they did Welshmen from America or Patagonia, where there's a very large Welsh following in Patagonia, a big group of Welsh people. And these were now the South Africans coming in as 'South Africans in exile', Welshmen 'South Africans in exile', it was called the 'exile community of Wales'. So we asked them not to be invited. They said they couldn't do that. Anyway, that same year when in negotiation with them, a Welsh South African guy flew the South African flag on the stage, and horrified the audience. A meeting was immediately held the same day with the committee, and present with me were Labour and Plaid MPs, and some of the writers in Wales, about four. About two MPs and four leading writers in Wales, and the poet singer Dafydd Iwan and the writer Menna Elfyn. So a Plaid MP, Labour MP, all Welsh speakers, I was the only non-Welsh speaker in the meeting, and they decided they would not invite the South Africans again, or not mention them by name. They issued a statement similarly on the same day, they would never allow the sale of South African products for as long as apartheid remains in force, and will campaign wide and as far as they can in Wales against apartheid. So there was always a firm foundation there. But in a way that exile helped us by waving his flag. So that issue was interesting. But with the choirs that I mentioned earlier, it was amazing how these choirs, whose members were going to South Africa, would write back to us and say these choirs, these choristers are going, openly, no problem. They say, 'I'm the secretary of so-and-so choir, these guys are going to South Africa, you can tell them I gave you the names'. So there was this formidable grouping of people, in various parts of Wales, who were very supportive. They didn't like racism, or didn't like apartheid. OK, some people would argue there's racism everywhere, there's racism in Britain, racism in Wales. Yes, but it's not legalised racism. Apartheid was legalised racism. That's the argument we constantly used. And if they did argue about multiracial tours of whatever, we said, 'Look, it's nonsense. You know they bring Cupido down here to play rugby, Errol Tobias to play rugby, but quite frankly when Errol Tobias or Wilfred Cupido go back to South Africa, they go to a black township, or a black residential area, they don't go to South Africa anywhere they can go to'. And eventually people saw through that argument. And they used to say we brought politics into sport or into music, and our argument would be 'Hold on, you're bringing it in, the apartheid government, The government brought it in, why are you bringing in these black guys to South Africa now, you're playing the apartheid game, from South Africa, you're playing the apartheid game, 'cause they're trying to get credibility by pretending that multiracial footballers or multiracial rugby players'. And that was it, the links stopped.

A further attempt to take the Jones Choir never materialised, and of course the attempted rugby tour, after the 1989 debacle, just didn't work. They tried, but it didn't work. Individuals may have gone, very surreptitiously, but if we found out, they wouldn't go – end of story for them. They tried all kinds of other things, they would invite individuals, or if they knew that they couldn't get much support from things like athletics or boxing, they'd try individual artists. They tried a rugby footballer, a boxing black guy whose name I can't remember, a friend of mine and a support of Anti-Apartheid, world bantamweight champion. They tried to get him there and they didn't succeed. He just wouldn't go, and made a statement to that effect. In fact when we tried to produce a rugby booklet some years ago, we had ... Pat Thomas was his name. We had Pat Thomas and Carl Smith using their names, we could use the names of John Taylor, we could use the name of an Irishman called John Ward, who said they wouldn't go to South Africa. But white players in Wales that we knew were totally against apartheid, who had made statements that they won't go there, wouldn't allow us to print their names in the booklet, wouldn't use their names. So we just used the names we had. It would have been more effective to some extent if we could use the names of some of the people who even now I can't name. But it was generally that problem we had, that people don't want their names revealed. I don't know why, but they won't. As one mentioned, that you don't understand the long arm of the rugby mafia, they're everywhere. So they don't want their names mentioned. But people in the artistic world, or music world, no problem, mention their names.

We had one problem, with the world discus champion, it was a black guy, much to our surprise, Johnson his name was, and he went to South Africa. We didn't know. And when I took this up with him when he came back, he's from Cardiff, his father knew he'd beat me up, that I wasn't big enough for him, and he said 'You want war with me do you?'. I said, 'Eh, eh, hey, you say you're against racism, you should be against apartheid. What's your son doing in South Africa?' He said, 'Oh, he didn't go to South Africa, he went to Sun City', usual argument. Couldn't argue with him anyway, put his name forward to the UN, didn't like it, make a statement that you won't go again. Which affected these characters because when they tried to go elsewhere, they couldn't. I mean, Tom Jones I think genuinely signed his statement, Shirley Bassey I think signed it for mercenary reasons. There were these characters who signed for mercenary reasons. In rugby we didn't get many people signing up to say they won't go, although we knew they won't be going.

*ML: How did it come about that the material put out by Wales AA was bilingual?*

HB: What had happened was that we had built such strong links with the Welsh Language Society, and such strong links with Plaid Cymru and to some extent with the National Eisteddfod. The National Eisteddfod had a rule, you couldn't print leaflets in English only, full stop. So we would always print them in Welsh and English, or sometimes just in Welsh. But we found that there was such strong support in the Welsh communities, far afield and nearby, Welsh speakers in Wales were very impressed when we produced things bilingually. So at one stage somebody said WAAM produces more leaflets bilingually than Plaid Cymru does. We took it up with Dafydd Williams, the secretary of Plaid at the time, and he said 'Don't quote me but it's true'. So we were producing things bilingually, even minutes of meetings, sometimes really painful because we didn't have much money and we had to realise the difference between cost-effectiveness and political effectiveness. Because politically, it was effective to produce things bilingually because people would send money in, people would respond. I mean, when we tried to get a poetry book together, a bilingual poetry book, the difficulty was, they made me editor-in-chief, I know little about poetry, but the reason they made me editor-in-chief – there were other editors who were writers and poets, like Gareth Miles, Toni Bianchi, Menna Elfyn, and Mike Birtwistle, these are big names in Welsh writing – but they said, 'The chief editor is Hanef Bhamjee'. Simply because if they left out

somebody, they could blame me, and they wouldn't take the responsibility. But when we asked for that book to be published the problem we had was that the poems were coming in, generally all very good, but we were limited in space for the amount of money we had, and also being realistic about sales and what we could achieve. But there were some of the top names in Welsh poetry, Welsh writers who write in Welsh only and others who wrote in English and Welsh sent in their poetry. That book went down brilliantly, sold all over. We had a request from South Africa for that book, and the question now was do we send it or do we not? We didn't take it to London to ask for permission, because we knew they'd say no. I remember an argument in Anti-Apartheid AGM once, and I spoke in favour of the people who wrote the amendment, which was a women's group, a women's collective in London, who were printing a lot of books on feminism and women in society, and they were arguing that it's wrong to boycott their books because the only people who'd be reading them would be the right type of women. And we argued similarly with the poetry book. So we had a request from individuals and also one from Cape University and one from Natal University, Pietermaritzburg branch, now that might have been because of my connection with Pietermaritzburg. We sent it, in fact they asked us for an invoice, but we didn't invoice them, we just said, 'Look, it's a complimentary', simply because if they were going to import products like that they might get into trouble, so we just gave it to them. But the poetry book was very very successful, in fact we more or less sold out. The irony is I don't have a copy, I've been trying to look for one, and we were left with some copies and for some unearthly reason, towards the end, we gave them away. We'd have kept quite a few, because people kept asking for them, even now.

And when Mandela came to Cardiff in 1998, to get the Freedom of the City, people were asking us for Free Mandela T-shirts. Well of course we had a few hundred left because it was repeatedly printed bilingually, with the Welsh in front and the English at the back, 'Rhyddid i Mandela' at the front and 'Free Mandela' at the back. But we were selling them for 99p after 1990, and now in 1998, when he's here, it was the European Summit so he was given the Freedom of the City at the same time, people were asking for Free Mandela T-shirts. We took a decision not to print them, because it would cost so much, and we may have been stuck with them. In those days it was relatively cheap, and we could sell them. We used to buy them for about £2 and sell them for a fiver and they were going like hot cakes. In the end we just gave them away for 99p, what else could we do with them? But now people were asking for them. We couldn't reprint.

*ML: How did it come about Wales AAM had such a strong national identity?*

HB: One of the problems we had with London was trying to convince them that we have to go national in order to elicit that kind of national identity and get more people involved. Now we discussed this with the Labour Party, the Welsh Labour Party, with Welsh TUC, with the NUM, with Welsh NUPE, and they all said 'You're going to have formidable opposition'. And there was opposition, because what Mike Terry and Chris Child said, 'Be a committee, like the Scottish Committee'. But in Wales the guys were saying, 'No, it won't work. You have to have a Welsh identity'. And part of the problem was they've always had this fight, CND had it, the NUM had it, the Wales Labour Party, the Wales TUC, they wanted an independent Wales political identity. But what was happening in London was it was too closely associated with the issue of nationalism, it had nothing to do with it, it was just a kind of a Welsh identity, NUPE did the same. They all won their arguments, and of course we won ours. But we were not going to argue with AA, we just wanted them to agree. In the end they agreed, because they realised that, I mean, when Abdul came to that meeting in '80-81, he realised that there was a strong Welsh presence there. And some of the people were speaking in Welsh, and then translating what they wanted to say in English. But that helped us really, quite, because in 1981, there were committees and branches, but it really sprang

like hellfire, and the presence at say, the Eisteddfod, addressing the Welsh Language Society, addressing the NUM, addressing the unions, addressing the Welsh Labour Party, I mean, we were invited to conference after conference after that. We were surprised that the Liberals never invited us to speak, but we were invited to provide a stall to all these organisations. They never charged us, they charged everybody else but not WAAM because, one, we said 'Look, we can't afford it the fee, we haven't got the money' and one of them said, 'Well, you always raise money at the meetings, you always have a collection, we'll allow you that and you can pay through that' and we said, 'No, that's for other purposes. We're not raising the money to have a stall, we're raising the money to campaign'. So they used to allow that. But the process was really painstaking, we did it, but slowly and gradually, we didn't expect anything overnight. To try and get to speak at the Wales Labour Party meetings was just ... you wouldn't even have had a fringe [meeting] in the late '70s, early '80s. But then, once the momentum grew, when the TUC came out openly, and the Labour Party came out openly in support of sanctions and the armed struggle, that was when things began to change.

The actual support for the armed struggle from the Council of Churches, Labour Party, TUC, Plaid was phenomenal in actually raising the stakes, because we could go to meetings and talk about the armed struggle, and openly say 'We as an Anti-Apartheid Movement go along with the movements in Southern Africa'. We couldn't take the line of supporting only the ANC, although we did, because there were people around who said 'You can't, you must support all groups in the country, who are you to choose?' Like AA, I mean they never actually chose between PAC and ANC, although we all knew where their sympathy was. They had to do that, and after 1990 even, I would say up to '94, people still treated things as if apartheid had not gone, you know, for example, with the Boipatong Massacre, it was in 1991 or '92, massive pickets in Cardiff, Swansea, Aberystwyth, Bangor. We had one at the Aneurin Bevan statue and MPs turned up, Rhodri Morgan and everyone else.

*ML: Looking back, what would you pick out as the high spots and the low points?*

HB: I'd say low, the very low was 1984, because we were predicting, given the level of support we had, that the WRU would not vote against. But the point is, I think they silenced the opposition, at that meeting in '84 and we lost that vote. The high point of course, in terms of WRU, was 1989 when they broke links. Low points was that the support for us financially, from the trade union movement nationally, with the exception of the NUM and to some extent NUPE, support for us financially was very low. Wards or local branches would send in money, £50, £100, sometimes a bit more, and an NUM lodge would sometimes send £100, maybe more, branches would send £40–£50. But the national grouping as such, very little money. We depended a lot on raising the money ourselves or going to conferences to raise money, but actual financial support was a really low thing. If it hadn't been for things like the Soweto Walk, benefits that we used to throw regularly, where the bands would never charge, they'd just charge their expenses, no band ever asked us for money, and even folk groups, the Cardiff Red Choir used to sing regularly in the streets and raise money, almost every Saturday – they're still going strong now but they're raising money for Palestine, and other causes, but for Anti-Apartheid, every Saturday morning, more or less, I would get £80–£100 from the Red Choir. The folk singers like Dave Burns and his groupings always turned up, no matter what day or night it was, if you asked them, they'd find a way to come, and would perform without any costs. We had a concert once in St David's Hall with Peggy Seeger, who was a friend of the Anti-Apartheid Movement for yonks, and I met her in London in '66. She and her husband were very close friends, and also became very close friends of Anti-Apartheid. They did a couple of tapes on Anti-Apartheid, and the proceeds went to Anti-Apartheid. Peggy Seeger came down, regrettably Ewan had passed on by then, Ewan MacColl, in St David's Hall.

Peggy Seeger, Dave Burns, and the Cardiff Red Choir. It wasn't as successful as it was [in earlier years], but it was good. It was successful, one of the high points. The other point really would be the fact that if you went to any place like the meeting of the Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, the Welsh Language Society, or if you were in the Eisteddfod for a week, you'd come back there having paid the costs of your travel and coming out with some money made, because the Eisteddfod could not give us a stall free of charge, they couldn't, because there were too many worthy causes, they made that very clear to us. We'd have to pay the same rate as other voluntary or non-governmental organisations paid, a bit cheaper than the commercial organisations, but we had to pay. And when we became bigger, we had to have a double stall. That was £400, leave alone expenses. Expenses were not much, but you had to hire a minibus to go up, a minibus to come down, we had to pay volunteers for their food, lunch and supper, or at least their lunch and coffees and things, 'cause many of the volunteers were young students, Welsh speakers, or school kids, you know, sixth formers. And we had to give them something, we didn't give them money, coffee, biscuits or sandwiches or paid for their meal and things. But that was always a high point, the National Eisteddfod. Llangollen, a very low point, because we couldn't persuade them, you know, some very good people on the committees. We had to persuade some of their committee men to stay on, and some women, because otherwise we'd have nobody there. And they used to tell us, 'The guys are not racist, they're just stupid. When it comes to looking at apartheid, they don't realise the difference between a choir that's an African choir that's being used by the apartheid regime, and asking for a genuine boycott of South Africa.' They could never tolerate what we're talking about, we never succeeded with Llangollen, in contrast to the National. And the real disappointment was that we just couldn't figure out how some of these people could go to South Africa, sell their souls, and incur the wrath of their communities, not so much in rugby but in the choirs like those Jones boys. I know that many of them when they came back to their communities in the valleys, they were shunned. That's why some of them wrote direct to me asking me to use our influence to remove their names from the UN list, and then publicising it to say they won't go back to South Africa. But to do this, I don't think the Jones boys were paid a fee over and above their expenses. OK, they were treated like kings when they went, they didn't have to pay for any expenses there, no hotels, no food, nothing, all that was provided, but unlike the Rugby Union guys where they came back with 20 grand or 10 grand – the exact figure has never been revealed to us, but we know that all of them, when they came back from South Africa, came back either with cash or payment in kind, and all these stories about gold statues and Rolex watches and all kinds of other gifts given to them, or gifts that they could sell on. But with the ordinary characters, we couldn't figure out why, you know, you come back and incur the wrath of your community.

On the other hand, in the miners' strike, some miners came to see me and said 'Look, we're going to South Africa to work, I'm sorry, we just can't afford to be on strike, what do you say?' 'I don't want you to go there but I understand your problem, understand your belly, I understand your wife and kids'. But a few years later they were back, I mean one guy couldn't last a year, he came back and he sat here and he said, 'What! We're downstairs and I'm sharing a sandwich, we're all covered in coal dust and I'm sharing a sandwich with a black guy and his white colleagues are telling me how dare I eat a sandwich with a kaffir'. You know, words to that effect. He couldn't understand how ... I mean, they knew all this, but they couldn't understand how you say to a guy after work, 'Let's go for a pint' and a fellow worker is saying to you 'Hey, man, don't you realise this is South Africa? You can't come to a pub with me.' Because in South Africa the reality really hit them hard, and they couldn't stomach it, they came back. All the offers that were made, you know, about housing assistance and extra wages, they couldn't stomach it.

*ML: Looking back, what are your own feelings about Wales [AAM]?*

HB: Well, somebody described us as the most powerful pressure group in Wales. I think it was, you know, in contrast to, say, CND or animal rights or even the Welsh Language Society. The Welsh Language Society is a powerful pressure group, but unlike WAAM, where ours was a single campaign to isolate apartheid South Africa, we did other things, we raised money from time to time for various projects in South Africa under apartheid and post apartheid. But the fact that you could describe it as the most powerful pressure group in Wales including the WRU – they hated us, because they knew that we were a thorn in their side, and that what we were saying was true. They'd never been under attack, they didn't understand it, 'cause they were like gods. The WRU was like the government of Wales, you know, nobody could attack the WRU, but their pig-headedness in terms of South Africa gained us a lot of support, because we persevered. And this issue of being the most powerful pressure group in Wales was I think just an accident of history that happened. You know, the Mandela campaign for example, once the release started, we went whole hog, because we knew it would catch on. And we used to go to schools, ranging from primary schools – I developed the art of being able to speak to kids in primary school, to kids in secondary school, sixth formers, trade unions, churches and everything else. You know, I just managed it. Some other people of Welsh origin also managed it, but the difficulty was they wanted a South African speaker. I think that's what made us, that we had no hesitation in mixing with everybody, any time, anywhere, any request. I don't think I've ever turned down a meeting, I may have postponed it, I've never said 'We can't come'. I've said 'We can't come this week, we'll come next week' or 'Can you please change your constituency meeting because everyone seems to be meeting on the second Sunday or the second Thursday or whatever'. So we never refused attending a meeting. And I also think we had a problem as there was nobody apart from me, I'm a South African so there's a problem ... you know, I have my own agenda, but some of the Welsh people involved, you know, they're still there. You know, they were involved before I came. I came in '72, some of the people involved now are sort of the generation of the '70s and '80s, but there were people involved in '65, '60, who are still around. I'm interviewing quite a few of them to try to get all their stuff together, like you are doing, before they pass on, for want of a better word. But the people who were with me, after '75, are still there. And some of them have gone on to do other things, you know, like the guy who's currently head of Greenpeace in Wales, sorry, in the UK, the chief executive, John Sauven, his politics came from Anti-Apartheid in Wales. Before that, he was just a middle-class kid. Eventually he joined the Communist Party, he joined CND, but WAAM was his big thing. And a lot of people involved in all kinds of things, there were people from Malaysia, India, all sorts of places, went back to their country and never forgot the links with Anti-Apartheid in Wales. And the student unions and trade unions, you know, if they didn't provide money, at least they'd provide facilities, meeting rooms or printing facilities. We could ring a union up and say 'Look, I want 500 leaflets, 5,000 leaflets, can you help?' 'Yeah, come on Sunday', and they would do it. Particularly NUM, particularly T&G to some extent and NUPE. So we could get things done, but we had to do it in their time. The student unions in Cardiff, Swansea, Bangor, Aberystwyth, very useful from that point of view, meeting space or printing. Direct money was difficult, but might as well get leaflets printed as having the money. Our AGM leaflets were often printed by a student union depending on where the AGM was. Postage they assisted with, but with postage you had to put in different unions, you know, they couldn't take all because at one stage our mailing list was 2,000 or more so we had to pay for it a lot of the time. And the other problem was the mailing list was not just like the ordinary 1st class, sometimes there were quite thick, and if they were bilingual they were even thicker. So the postage was a big expenditure. We tried, but the unions wouldn't buy that. They'd take 50, maybe 100, or they'd say 50 but you could take it to a sympathetic person and get 100, or some sympathetic legal firms were doing that. Thompsons have always been very generous, partly because at one stage Chris Short, he was chairman, he was working there, Mick Anthony, he was treasurer, he was working there, and half the staff were members or



supporters, they were all members of the GMB and GMB was an affiliated union, so that helped. We still get that kind of assistance if we need things done for sponsored walks, printing the leaflets, we can still count on them. But the support for things like the sponsored walk now... you know, whereas we were collecting 10 grand or 20 or even more in the '70s and '80s, now we're lucky if we get £5,000. But people still donate, I mean, if I take £5,000 every Christmas period to South Africa, I consult with the local groupings, so most of the money is used in Pietermaritzburg, in Durban, KwaZulu. And then I had a request from one of our people, who was part of the D&A [*Defence and Aid Fund*] outfit, you know, where I give somebody money, or D&A will then give them the money, and they send it to a political prisoner's wife. When D&A was banned, when IDAF [*International Defence and Aid Fund*] came up, they would get names of people, Welsh people, Scottish people, English people or whatever, and they would be sending the money, so for example, I'd give you £300 for this family every month, every two months. You'd be sending the money as though it's come from you, because you're a person sympathetic to the cause, you've heard about the plight of their husband or their wives or their children, or you've heard about their legal defence, you're sending them £500. Some of these people were doing it regularly, and some of them have actually visited South Africa to see these people. One of them is still very much in touch with this woman whose husband was killed, he was an Umkhonto man, and she set up a creche for schooling, for pre-school going children in the Eastern Cape. And they said, 'Look, can we raise some money for her?' I said 'We don't have that much money now, so it should have to be raised it'll be a name in the pot'. So one year I went with 7 grand, £7,000 sterling, the exchange rate was at about 12 to the pound, we got an arrangement with the bank that we know quite well, so they didn't charge us interest rates, or they lower the bank charges on the exchange, and then we send the money through them, so it's OK. And I sent her a thousand, oh, she was over the moon. But now we send every year and I take it with me when I go, say if it's £5,000, we divide that between five, eight charities, it depends, charities or non-governmental groupings, even football kits or whatever, small amounts. But people know what it's about, in publicity and newsletter, tell them what we've done with their money, so they contribute.

*ML: What does it mean for you personally, 20 years on?*

HB: Well Anti-Apartheid is still there, I'm glad in a way that ACTSA is doing things. It's [*ACTSA Wales*] only doing things in terms of fund-raising, not campaigning in any way. But a major disappointment actually, in terms of what's going on in South Africa, horrendous disappointment, I mean, I still maintain my links, and therefore I can criticise. When I was given the Gandhi Satyagraha Award, in, what was it, 2009, given every year, around June, so I went down, and I asked my brother beforehand, I said 'Who's done this?' So he told me who's instrumental in pushing it, it's a childhood friend of mine, who I introduced him to the youth movement and eventually into Umkhonto and the Party, very good guy, he went to India, Kalapen Moodley, and was organising the students in India. But he actually went back to South Africa. Surprisingly, he was never arrested. Very powerful guy, because he became chairman of the Chatsworth branch of the ANC after the disbanding, and he was very well known in the country – of course they never made him a chairman, sorry, never made him an MP or even put him on the list – anyway, at this meeting, the Satyagraha meeting, I spoke out, and I mentioned various factors, the leading thing of course was the corruption, I criticised the list system because it was disenfranchising people, I said these politicians were too distant from the people. What I was saying effectively was what everybody in the ANC feels, what a lot of people feel, but I'm the only ANC bloke who's ever said it in such an august body of meeting, where there were eight members of parliament and about eight members of regional parliaments sitting in the audience, the VIP seats, and lots of ANC top-notch had come to that because it's a major event. On this occasion it was major because they were

giving the international award, they only give one international award, to an international person, such as the year later they gave it to Reddy [Enuga Reddy], but on this occasion it was to Aung San Kyi [*sic*] of Myanmar Burma, but of course she couldn't come so her family came down from America to pick up the award. So it's always something that's heavily attended. And I made a major, major criticism of the government and the ANC. And it went down like a bomb, African workers and trade unionists, Asian, came up to me afterwards and said 'Congratulations. Nobody's ever said this before in public, we've never heard a man who's known for his commitment saying this, you must speak up every time you come'. I've been doing this since 1992, when I first went back. And every time I do it, I get criticised, and the message eventually, somehow to Shell House, and through the grapevine I'll hear that Thabo [Mbeki] was very annoyed, or so and so was very annoyed with me because I singled him out or something like that. But I've spoken out on every occasion.

I remember in 1989, no '99, I took a Manchester United football, which they had auctioned, and in the auction the South African banks, SAB, paid 250,000 rand for the ball, which at that time was like about £20,000 in our money, and that went to the AIDS Foundation, Shosholozza AIDS Foundation in Pietermaritzburg, and somebody was then saying in that meeting 'One of the problems we've got in this country is, there's no money' and I was speaking in the context of the WAAM contribution, no sorry, no, ACTSA contribution, financially and also the ball, and the money raised, and I said 'Why are people talking about a shortage of money in this country when we've got gold and diamonds, fruit and this and that, and our MPs are paid just as much as European MPs are paid, what kind of nonsense is this?' And another point I made was that we're going to celebrate the millennium, there's nothing to celebrate because there's starvation and AIDS in this country, why don't we boycott the millennium celebrations, there'll be plenty of people to feed. And oh my God, uproar! How can you say that? Blah blah. But in that Gandhi meeting, one of the Cabinet ministers came up to me and said 'How dare you?' I said 'What do you mean, how dare you?' He said 'You can't criticise so openly'. I said 'Why not? Maybe that's what you need.' And that's what I think is one of the biggest problems and biggest disappointment, in that by having the list system, they've shut people up, very very good people, from COSATU, from the Party, from the ANC, hold similar views but would not express them if they're MPs or parliamentarians, local councillors or whatever. To become a member of the local council now means big money. Not only where you're paid really over the odds, you get transport provided for, you get a bodyguard provided for – councillor – and MPs, bodyguards, payment, expenses paid, travel wherever they want to. MPs, free car. One of the MPs was telling me, he was told to get rid of his old Volkswagen, small type Volkswagen, and either buy a big BMW or a Merc. Otherwise he's bringing the parliament into disrepute. My brother was told the same thing, when he was a central MP, so you had to get rid of the old car and buy a Merc, because they were paying for everybody to have a Merc. I mean, it's just outrageous nonsense, the amount of money spent, uselessly. And, when you go to a funeral, or a meeting, you know, every Christmas they have these meetings, for example, Zweli Mkhize will have a meeting, to say how much he's doing as chairman of the provincial ANC, and as head of the Natal government. He'll have this meeting, where there'll be gifts of all kinds, like hampers for elderly or whatever. Each of those hampers is donated by Asian or white businessmen, largely Asian businessmen, who are given the honour of being members of the ANC and sit on the platform. Some of whom will have had tenders from the movement, provide various services and for that they come every year, and provide these hampers. Or they make the meal, provide the meal for all this big meeting that Zweli's having, or the ANC's having. It happens throughout the country, your local MP welcomes everybody, he provides these hampers, but not one of those hampers is paid for by them, it comes from the local community, local business community. And they separate themselves from the people, they don't eat the same food as the

people, they have a private gathering in those functions. And I went to one of those private gatherings, and refused to go to any more. I was just horrified, I said 'Why are you having separate food? And why is this food so high class compared to what those people are having? Those are your voters, those are your members.' They don't say 'Shut up', they don't say 'Piss off', they can't do that, 'cause if I was an ordinary member that's what they'd do, but you know I'm quite well known in the area and I'm known to speak out. So if they tell me to shut up, I'll go to the newspapers. And they don't, they listen, but they tell you 'Cool it'. Or, one of them whispered in my ear, he said, 'You cool it, else your brother loses his job'. Because my brother's district mayor. But he can't lose his job because he's wiped out the corruption in the area. But he did tell me once, he said 'Hey, look man, cool it, you can say what you like in public or a press conference, but don't say it at their function, like this. What you did at the meetings are fine, they can't touch you, but don't say it here, because, one, you could get a hiding, two, and had a go at me.' So, I don't want to say it, that's how fearful people are of them. It's a major major disappointment. But what is regrettable, leave alone the disappointment, forget even the shooting at Marikana of 49 miners – incidentally that's my birth town, where I was born [*laugh*], Marikana, not far from where these miners were killed, because my mother's family was from Marikana and by tradition you go to your mother's family to give birth. So that's where I was. But the poverty in every town is sickening. I mean, years ago I used to get on platforms here in Wales or elsewhere, if AA in London asked me to go and speak in some town which was nearby or if I happened to be in the area I'd do it, I remember once I was in Birmingham, and Birmingham AA asked me to speak at meetings as I was there. So I spoke as representing AAM London, AAM UK. And I used to say things like '8 million people live in squatter camps' – I can't quote that figure any more, it's more like 16 or 20 million. It's horrible. And, even there, you see, there's a hell of a difference. You can go to one squatter camp in Khayelitsha – I don't call them informal settlements, I refuse to use that term – they call them informal settlements because it sounds nicer – you can go to one informal settlement, you can see people are growing crops, cleaning the toilets, you know, everything's tidy, you go to the one next door, filthy, sewage running all over the place, people don't clean up or whatever. So what's wrong? It depends on the strength of the local branch of the ANC or local community branch, often the local community group, or local ratepayers' association. Unless it's a genuine good ANC branch it's not them normally doing it. And now the tradition has become, like here, the Labour Party only comes to you during election time, the ANC only comes to you during election time. They've lost it, they've lost their power of dealing with the people. Now people are talking about going back to the old days, of what they used to do, street committees. In Pietermaritzburg they're forming street committees, whether to try and get people involved, they can't get them involved via the ANC, so they're going to do it via the street committees, so you complain about the street, then you take that to your local council. Pietermaritzburg! Where they've returned four local councillors out of four in the Indian area, sorry, in the vast majority area which is Indian residential, now, they'll be lucky if they get one. People are voting for the DA, in one of the strongest ANC branches. In Chatsworth, the DA is getting councillors, in an area which was 90% ANC, because people are pissed off. And I believe it's happening all over, you know. It won't happen so much in an African area, because the African areas are all overwhelmingly African and by tradition they vote ANC. But in the area where I live in Pietermaritzburg, there's a huge informal settlement community, where we shouldn't lose an election, but we're losing elections, because people are either not voting, or voting against. The level of disillusionment is now spreading across the country, and it's very sad. The MPs don't visit them, the constituency meetings are few and far between, the local constituency MP who's responsible for Pietermaritzburg does not come to constituency meetings, so people like Yunus Carrim, who's a national MP, and his constituency is somewhere in the Eastern Cape. If you live in Maritzburg your constituency in the Eastern Cape! So he comes to meetings and they think he's their MP. And there's no power of recall of councillors or MPs. So people are very very

disappointed.

Of course, there have been improvements, houses built, but then generally, the cost of living is horrendous. We did a thing together with an outfit called PECSA. PECSA is a community-built organisation, it's now called Pietermaritzburg Action for Social Concern. It used to be Christian Community Awareness Campaign, now it's Community Awareness Campaign, they've dropped the word Christian. They had the word Christian during the apartheid days. They did a campaign of checking the prices of food in South Africa, in different areas and supermarkets. I brought that back one year, and looked at the prices in the UK. And my god, proportionately, the items are as expensive in South Africa as here in the UK, ranging from toothpaste to chickens. Outrageous! The cost of living is high in South Africa, and the wages are not increasing. When you think, I mean, I discovered this by chance because I ran out of Gaviscon which I take, even prior to the operation because I've got gastric problems. Gaviscon, I've got to take two or three times a day. And, when I bought it first, it was the equivalent, with currency into account, an £8 bottle here was £12 in South Africa. So that set me ticking, I started looking in that chemist, which was one of the cheaper chemists, and everything I was looking at was expensive! From Dettol, to toothpaste, to ... a whole lot of things. So through the aid of Tesco's I made a comparison of various items, comparing the ASDA, Sainsburys items, and then priced them on average, and then took that list with me to South Africa. We did some research here, with that list from South Africa and that list from here, and various people were doing various pieces of work, people like members of ACTSA here. I took that home and they were just horrified, the standard items were as expensive in South Africa as here. Medication, any kind of medication, even of the lowest type, like Dettol, is more expensive in South Africa than it is here. Everyone was outraged.

The other, very important thing, nobody at ministerial level wants to listen to criticisms. If they are alone, they listen, and they tell you at the end of it, 'You're knocking your head against a brick wall'. They've been doing that since '94, since they got into power. Some of them we're criticising now, 20 years on! The die is cast.

*ML: We must have been at it two and a half hours! I must stop you, it's fascinating.*