Interview with Jan Clements by Jeff Howarth, 2 October 2013 for the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives Committee project Forward to Freedom
http://www.aamarchives.org/

Jeff Howarth: This is Jeff Howarth, it's the 2nd of October 2013, this is an interview for the Forward to Freedom Anti-Apartheid Movement history project. Can we start by, could you give me your full name?

Jan Clements: Yeah Jan Clements, Janet Clements but everyone calls me Jan.

JH: And can you tell me when and where you were born?

JC: Born in Winchester 1956. 25th of January 1956.

JH: And can you tell me what you do for a living?

JC: I'm working as a lawyer, I'm now a lawyer at the Guardian newspaper.

JH: And can you tell me, have you been involved in any other political campaigning activity apart from the Anti-Apartheid Movement?

JC: Yes, probably before I got involved in Anti-Apartheid I was involved in setting up women's groups, part of the women's liberation movement when it first started and supporting, what was it called at the time, ah Rock Against Racism and things like that around, you know those kind of campaigns. As sort of a young person and a student these were the things that I got involved with then, and part from that probably Anti-Apartheid and issues around South Africa have been the main thing I've been involved in since I did first get involved with that movement.

JH: And what sort of period was it that you were a student?

JC: I went to University in 1976, Sussex University, but before that I'd sort of started getting involved in the women's movement, setting up women's groups locally in Winchester and… you know going to National Conferences and things, and marches and stuff. And… yeah. Sorry, when was I a student? 1976 to about 1980 and what happened at University was I, I did social anthropology in the school of African and Asian studies and that got me sort of first interested properly in Southern Africa and the history of you know colonial struggles, and during that period a friend of mine who was in the Communist Party heard about the Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Information Centre that were looking for teachers if English in Angola. So it kind of fitted with my interests in social anthropology as well and I persuaded them to give me a year out so I could go there and teach English. I think that probably was the thing that got me really interested in Southern African politics and the experience there made me much more aware of what was happening in South Africa and the struggle against Apartheid.

JH: Fantastic, you've anticipated my…

JC: The next question.

JH: Yeah. And so it was sort of your first hand experience that made you feel you needed to do something about it.

JC: Yeah I think when I was there I just sort of heard a lot more about what was happening in Southern Africa and people had had a direct involvement in kind of fighting against you know the South African attempts to invade Angola and the [pause] the organisations that they felt were being sponsored by the West to defeat their revolution in Angola, and I remember one particular thing where we went to a museum of the armed struggle or something like that, you know there was a lot of focus on the armed struggle, and there was, it was all quite moving and when we left this museum they said 'oh no no no you haven't seen the main thing' and they took us to see the Cassinga room which was commemoration of the Cassinga Massacre where the South Africans had murdered, had attacked a refugee camp I mean the South Africans would say there were military there as well, probably SWAPO freedom fighters, and had massacred hundreds of people, Namibians in exile. And that was really quite a shocking exhibition and I think that was quite, one of the things that made me think 'why aren't we doing anything about what's happening in this region' and got me motivated when I came back to England to find out more and get involved.

JH: And what was the next step?

JC: Next step. Ummm, yes I went back to University, I actually didn't really, I suppose I got back to University, I did a report about what I'd done in Angola, I sort of listened out for reports about what was happening in South Africa, I didn't really get involved in the Anti-Apartheid Movement at the University very much, I was very active in still in women's things, when I came to London I really wanted to, I sort of felt you know that's where the head office is of the Anti-Apartheid Movement I must find out what's going on. Because when I finished at Sussex I got a job at the Quakers Friends House in Euston Road in their Africa department so that was great, just as doing an administrative role but it was really very interesting, that must been 1980. And ummm [pause] so [pause] I didn't really know many people in London, I wanted to find out what was happening and I contacted the Anti-Apartheid Office and I was particularly interested coming from a sort of feminist background, I was like I'd really like to know if you've got a women's committee, you know can I get involved in the women's committee, and it was like you know 'oh I don't think we've got one of those' [laughs] and I said 'well you really should have! You know isn't there a women's committee or something?' so I spoke to Sue Longbottom who was working there and was probably, she probably is one of the longest serving admin people, organisers campaigning people at Anti-Apartheid and has become one of my oldest friends actually, and she was I think she just really tired of me phoning up and saying 'well when are you going to have a women's committee? You know I want to come along and it's about time you had one', and so talking to her now she says sort of kept going to Mike Terry and saying 'well you know shouldn't we have a women's committee' and, in the end it was basically you know her and me and a few other women who got one going. And partly thinking there ought to be more emphasis on some of the key women involved in the struggle in South Africa and focussing on [pause] also you know a lot of women involved in Anti-Apartheid didn't seem to have a very high profile and, you know its focus on things like consumer boycotts and stuff made it very, you know there were a lot of women who were very… and I'm not saying it was just women who were doing the shopping but it was a very accessible kind of political movement so it seemed a good one to kind of get more women involved in. Yes so that's… that's how I, that was my first real contact with the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

JH: So there wasn't an Anti-Apartheid Movement at Brighton, in Brighton?

JC: There was, there probably was but at that time I just happened to be, I'd sort of hooked into lots of other things that were happening and I, I'm sure I was aware of you know stuff happening around, comsumer boycotts and sanctions and stuff but I [pause] I dunno, it didn't really, I didn't get involved that much it was just in the background, there was a lot of political activity at Sussex University and you know we were very busy doing stuff around the closure of family planning clinics and ummm, 'there are nudes in Gay News' kind of [laughs] we did sort of street theatre and things like that but, you know as well as trying to do some University work. But it's really when I came to London, and also the other interesting I think when I look back like, how it developed was the Quakers were going through this sort of internal debate being a pacifist organisation, about their position about South Africa and not just you know whether or not they supported a liberation movement but whether confrontational activities even like a boycott amounted a kind of aggressive confrontation, rather than speaking truth to power. I'm not actually a Quaker but I found it all very interesting all the debate that was going on and so, so they were quite split about whether they would support sanctions because they've always had an approach, not all Quakers it's a mixed bunch, but that you should be in a position of dialogue with people even your enemies, you know so even Hitler you would talk to, there is God in every person [inaudible], so as part of my job I had to edit a newsletter Southern Africa News and Views, which was quite, became quite interesting because it was like all the feedback from different… they'd actually did a survey of all their different local groups of friends about what their views were about sanctions and whether it was appropriate for Quakers to get involved so, that kind of [inaudible] I sort of kind of developed that because of my interest in Southern Africa, I sort of thought well that's sort of a project I want to get involved in and sort of added to this whole sort of feeling, this is an important debate going on. [pause].

JH: So so, um.

JC: Yes so that was, so first coming to London and then yeah, so [pause].

JH: Did you start volunteering at Anti-Apartheid?

JC: Yeah I did, I went round, I mean those were the days of kind of you know [inaudible] stencils to produce leaflets, and licking envelopes and stuffing envelopes and so you know I would go round there to kind of do my stint of publicising the next campaign by doing all that, in their very wobbly office in Charlotte Street I don't know if you've, you've probably had, do you, do you, have you been involved yourself? No, well anyway, Charlotte Street office was like condemnable I'm sure because you know the floors were straight and, it's a tiny little office and, yeah there'd always be people round there doing their bit, stuffing envelopes and printing leaflets and you know very practical things.

JH: This is the London committee?

JC: This is the Anti-Apartheid Movement's head office.

JH: Head office, executive office.

JC: Yes. Yeah the actual headquarters, it was a very tiny office above a shop or something, I'm not sure what it was above I can't remember now, it was on the first floor in Charlotte, was it Charlotte Street? Yeah. Ummm, and, Mike, obviously Mike Terry, Sue Longbottom, Kate Clark, and, Chris Child who would something be found kind of sleeping at the office because he was you know, he was one of those people who just was a bit of a workaholic. [pause] so yeah a lot of the support work was

really very very practical and then a lot of it was various days of action focussing on the consumer boycott, handing out leaflets endlessly at tube stations or outside supermarkets, ummm [pause], and yes lets think what was it…

JH: Can you tell…

JC: Chronologically I'm not sure how it worked.

JH: I might be jumping the gun here but can you tell me about some of the campaigns, because did you become a member of staff?

JC: No I wasn't a member of staff at that stage; I was just a member of the movement and a volunteer, ummm [pause].

JH: Well then you can tell me about, any sort of campaigns you were involved in?

JC: Yeah let me just think of some of the campaigns, we'll we would do things like we would focus on a particular product even, South African wine, and have kind of like [pause] you know, yes our usual sort of, very much leafleting and talking to people in the streets and then do something dramatic like pour bottles of wine down the drain you know, hopefully not real wine or anything that we'd bought because we wouldn't buy South African products but you know something for dramatic affect.

JH: As part of a staged event? As opposed to something sort of random of spontaneous?

JC: Oh yeah, yeah staged event, or we would plan to go into supermarkets and pile up trolleys with all the goods that had been, that had come from South Africa and then when we got to the check out, which must have been really infuriating for the shop, the shop assistants, but you know sort of make a lot of noise and say you know 'all these products are from South Africa and you know I'm not, we're not gonna buy them' you know basically just kind of be disruptive but kind of raise the issues and talk to people, ummm. There was the Shell campaign which was very important, it was probably a bit later, we at one point managed to, with Kate Clark and a few other people, I think at this stage I was on the London committee, can't remember what happened when, but we went into the Shell headquarters Shell Centre, was it Waterloo? When there was an AGM, must have been a shareholders AGM or something, and managed to get in there and get on the stage and unfurl a banner saying you know 'boycott Shell'. So those were the kind of like, direct action I suppose things we would do.

JH: What was the response to that?

JC: I think, well yeah I think in that case we got ejected from the AGM but not before we'd had an opportunity to sort of take pictures and you know basically, you know we were trying to do events that we could use for publicity purposes as well you know and sort of, get some coverage of it. [pause] We, on the women's committee we did quite, we were quite successful on focussing on, in terms of the consumer boycott we would focus on things like Next fashion, you know clothes shops and I believe, I might have to check this with Sue, that you know through lobbying and campaigning we managed them not to open shops in South Africa. The other things the women's committee did was material aid for women in exile, South African women in exile ANC women in exile, so we would do events where we would collect products that women, I mean it was very sort of focussed on you know women as mothers and their children… this was a campaign which we got the movement to take up as a

whole, kind of lobbied around it, said it shouldn't just be women doing but we should be providing support for women who are refugees basically.

JH: Could you give us some detail about that, sort of almost going from the beginning, the inspiration to the actual practicalities?

JC: Well I suppose the call for the material aid came from SWAPO you know the Namibian liberation movement and the ANC, and saying that you know in places like Zambia and Morogoro in Tanzania the women there couldn't get hold of quite basic things, sanitary towels or stuff for, you know breastfeeding stuff or you know things like that and that it sort of wasn't being really recognised as a need, so we focussed on that and we had events like we had, we would have fundraising benefits in London you know gigs at places like the Red Rose Labour Club in Holloway [inaudible] run out. Yeah, so we, yeah we would organise fundraising benefits that would be quite entertaining as well like a sort of cabaret night you know with music, comedy, or other things like at the Red Rose Labour Club, and…

JH: With the aim of?

JC: With the aim of, like we'd make some money hopefully from the tickets and we'd say bring along something like toothpaste, soap powder, sanitary towels, whatever, you know have a big box and we'd collect all these things which would be shipped out to places like Morogoro in Tanzania where the ANC had a school and, you know places for people who'd left South Africa.

JH: So these are sort of frontier states that were…

JC: Where the, yeah sort of supportive states where ANC people or others, PAC, SWAPO would go you know into exile, part of the movement and they had a school there, they had facilities to train people, and to provide them with support. So that was one thing, one thing that the women's committee focussed on although we were always very anxious not to make it like a job of the women's committee but something that the movement as a whole should take up, and we also, you know wanted to focus on key women in the struggle rather than always around men who needed support so, that was quite helpful when Ruth Mompati was the chief representative of the ANC here in the early 1980s and she was a very good speaker, you know very good advocate. In 1984 that's when I got involved, I worked full time then, I'd left the Quakers and I'd got a short job with, specifically with Archbishop Huddleston organising an inter-faith colloquium on Apartheid, and I, I can't remember when it started actually, but the colloquium actually happened in March 1984, I suppose I must have been working on it for about a year, the UN supported it but it was based at the, the new Anti-Apartheid offices which were in Mandela Street, I can't remember what it used to be called, something, something to do with Rhodesia was it something like Selous Street or something like, I can't, do you know? [laughs] I can't remember! Anyway that was also a campaign that we focussed on with local authorities, changing the names of key streets and buildings and that was one thing that the London committee did as well, trying to.

JH: With much success?

JC: Yeah quite a lot of success actually, I can't, won't be able to remember any details and give you any figures but yes I mean there were lots of buildings and streets and… you know at all sorts of levels, there was a lot of support from local authorities like Islington and Camden, Brent, and of course we had the GLC at the time which was very supportive, even in terms of providing meeting spaces you know

as basic as that, where does your local group meet, well the town hall will offer you a room for free because it's for the Anti-Apartheid Movement and that's their way of expressing support, the GLC women's committee was very supportive of the Anti-Apartheid women's committee too, so there was that background of support from, from Labour, not not just from Labour but from a lot of London local authorities [pause] and that was one reason why we set up the London committee to sort of try and also operate on a London wide level rather than just the local group level, so that we could relate to the GLC and other sort of London wide bodies. [pause]

JH: You were talking about the colloquium.

JC: The colloquium, yes, that's sort of gone completely out of my head [laughs], ummm, the aim of it was to bring together like… you know the Anti-Apartheid Movement's always been very really really broad and trying to bring together all sorts of different interest groups and had a lot of support from church organisations and I think it, you know the aim was to sort of spread that, there's obviously a lot of support from different communities for the Anti-Apartheid Movement but to sort of look at the way religious communities could work together and Archbishop Huddlestone seemed you know the, it was his initiative really, and so it was bringing together sort of leaders of all the different faiths, internationally it wasn't just UK based, to a forum in, a conference centre in Windsor, to discuss what could be done in terms of you know different faiths, what their stance should be on the struggle against Apartheid. And some very key people, I mean Oliver Tambo was there, the leader of the ANC at the time in exile, and Thabo Mbeki attended, and I think probably a lot of other key people if I could remember their names [laughs], ummm, but as I say I've got these tapes which we really should transcribe because there are some quite important speeches on there I think, I just hope the quality has survived you know 'cos tape is not that great.

JH: Do you think it was important? Do you think it had an impact?

JC: Ummm, I'm not sure, and partly because you know at the time I mean the colloquium took place in March 1984 and I was heavily pregnant by then and I had a baby in April 1984 so probably, you know my life sort of got overtaken by that so I'm not sure what kind of follow up there was, I think it was very significant to bring together sort of quite you know often conflicting groups of people you know to discuss a joint strategy and I think there was certainly quite a powerful joint statement that came out of it, and I think there were other inter faith meetings around that period which I don't know so much about which the ANC instigated and probably fed into the UN, this was a UN sponsored event so I think it probably you know, it must have had some impact on the UN in the long run but I can't remember the detail I'm afraid [pause] what else? [pause]

JH: Do you think it helped legitimise the cause, I mean or raising its profile to either the general public or to politicians and the business community?

JC: I think it did, I think the fact that sort of quite, these sort of very authoritative sort of leaders of different faiths met sort of gave it, did raise the profile particularly amongst maybe with people who would not, you know might assume the Anti-Apartheid Movement is a sort of white Western thing kind of thing, you know it reached out to, it made it probably reach out more to ethnic minority communities and I think just sort of built on that thing that the Anti-Apartheid Movement was very good at which was to make it very broad based and as inclusive as possible, you know and you know we were prepared to talk to anybody, it didn't have to be they didn't have to be radical necessarily, I went along with the… I think it must have been

around the time of the Botha visit or something I can't remember quite why but we went, I think it must have been then, we went to meet Rifkind Malcolm Rifkind at the time, [inaudible] talking to, to all political parties about what they could do to support sanctions, ummm [pause] what else? Well in '81 what I've missed out of course is that I went to a meeting on Angola and met George Johannes who was from the ANC, we ended up in a relationship and getting married so I got quite involved in ANC politics, I'm now divorced I have to say but [laughs] and [pause] after I'd finished working on the inter faith colloquium I then went to work at the International Defence and Aid Fund in Essex Road which was the campaign around political prisoners in South Africa, originally a South African organisation that was banned in South Africa and so was effectively in exile in London doing research, the organisation was doing research on political prisoners and publishing books and videos and campaigning around repression in South Africa, and had two separate programs for detainees in South Africa, program one which was looking at providing legal support for people who'd been detained or on trial in South Africa, which had to be done covertly because IDAF was a banned organisation, and program two which was providing welfare to the dependents of people who'd been detained or imprisoned because of apartheid, political prisoners and detainees, and again that had to be done covertly through a network of correspondents here, so I worked in program two for about seven years so that was sort of another part of my campaigning work.

JH: As a program officer or campaigns?

JC: Program officer, that was actually you know nobody knew what we were doing it was entirely secret until probably, ummm, I mean IDAF must have been unbanned in 1990, maybe 1991 [inaudible] but [pause] when eventually the ANC was unbanned IDAF was also unbanned and in the, in that period in South Africa there was a whole process of political prisoners being released and we then set up a small office, me and John Hughes, Bob Hughes son, and a couple of other people were working, we could then have a sort of open bit of program two which was working openly to provide support for ex political prisoners and detainees as they got released from Robben Island and other prisons, because they were literally just released with a cardboard box of a few possessions and absolutely nothing, you know no idea of what to do or where to go, they had some support from church organisations in South Africa, Cowley House in particular in Cape Town supported people coming out of Robben Island but there was no, at that time there was no real program of you know what are these people gonna do, do they need educational support training etc, so IDAF was looking to see what they could do to sort of fill in that interim period, and I don't if this is going to far away from the Anti-Apartheid Movement for your…

JH: How was the Anti-Apartheid Movement connected to IDAF, or…

JC: So there was a formal connection but you know they were all solidarity organisations and did a lot of work together so, at that point me and Peggy Stevens who ran the kind of, the secret program two operation, went over to South Africa once IDAF was unbanned to decide you know could we carry on the work or should it be repatriated to South Africa, and met up with ex political prisoners, met up with the political prisoners actually we went to Robben Island and met the political prisoners committee there to sort of talk about how, what they felt they needed.

JH: So your first visit to South Africa?

JC: That was my first visit to South Africa yeah.

JH: 1989? 1990?

JC: No that was 1990, or '91, I'd have to, I tried to write down some dates I think it was 1990. Yeah. And it was quite intimidating because we weren't quite sure what would happen you know it was the, the first visit from anyone from IDAF in London and it had just been unbanned technically but we really didn't know what kind of perception we would have when we got there, which was probably not so difficult for me but Peggy, Peggy Stevens was, Stevenson was you know in exile and hadn't been back for many years so it was quite, quite an emotional event really.

JH: Could you tell me more about it?

JC: Ummm.

JH: In terms of [inaudible].

JC: In terms of arriving in South Africa I mean at that point very little had changed you know and so you arrived, we arrived in an airport you know in Johannesburg where there were lots of armed soldiers and police and then very intimidating atmosphere and [pause] you know the, segregation was still very obvious, there were places you definitely wouldn't go to if you were black, going to Robben Island was you know on a very small boat, and sort of quite a hard journey and made you realise how difficult it was for people visiting, relatives in the rare occasions they could get to visit them, and you know conditions on Robben Island were very stark and [pause] we met with David Modise (sp?) and Clement Zulu who were, had been allocated, you know been sort of nominated by the committee of prisoners to meet with and we'd brought over a kind of collection of sandwiches which actually one of my husbands relatives had made you know and, they were just sort of, that'll be a bit you know, ostensibly it was our lunch that's how we got it in but basically you know they just kind of wolfed them down quite eagerly, and [pause] it was just quite a moving meeting really thinking that you know we were talking to them about the possibility of freedom and how people, what people might need when they left Robben Island, but at that point they weren't certain you know when they would be leaving or what they future held, and in fact Clement Zulu later when he left he left with his sort of cardboard box of belongings and went back to Natal and at that point there was still attacks between the PAC and the ANC he was killed, eventually killed I learnt later which was very, very sad news, there was a very moving film that IDAF made about the release of Clement Zulu but I think, I don't think it, I think that was, I don't think it touches on his death I think I learnt about that later, I've actually got that video if you want to borrow it, it's a very old it's just video [laughs] I don't know if you watch video but, you know he was a young, I'm not sure how old he was actually just a young man and seemed to be sort of like full of energy and it just seems very sad that so many young people died [pause]. I suppose some of my most vivid memories are those memories of like picketing South Africa house, for instance on the eve of executions where it would be a mix of British Anti-Apartheid Movement people and South Africans, ANC people, and the ANC would start singing, you know very moving very sad songs that are sung at funerals as well as liberation songs, and we all eventually kind of learnt these songs and joined in and, and you know they were really sad moments but they were also the kind of, they did give you the strength to think look you know we've just got to carry on, and, you know that young people were dying at that this was a reality, young people were dying in South Africa fighting for the struggle or fighting for, a, a proper education a proper life, you know or their human rights and it was a very stark reality and the fact that we had such a strong kind of movement in exile here you know very much helped us to do the kind of solidarity work it was it was it was, it was much more emotionally involving than other

political movements because, you know because you were there and they were there telling you their stories and singing their songs and you learnt about the history of their struggles, and I'm not sure it could happen now, I'm not sure that something like the ANC office would exist in London given then kind of breadth of the description of terrorism in our legislation, you know something that was a legitimate solidarity, a legitimate struggle liberation struggle, I'm not sure that it would be so easy to have a base somewhere like London and to build up the kind of support that the ANC and SWAPO did.

JH: Because of?

JC: Because I think it could easily these days be defined as terrorism, and being a lawyer now you know which I wasn't then and being aware of the legislation that's been drawn up recently, since 9/11, I think it's just, it's so wide I think it might be very difficult to have that kind of base for a liberation movement and all the solidarity work that went with it: legally, and probably politically. Well after all Thatcher did say, did describe Mandela as a terrorist you know, and that was her view at the time well these days you know you might actually get a knock on the door from the police and be arrested and you know face all sorts of problems you know [pause]. And there were very traumatic, the ANC office did get bombed in 1982, you've probably got that on your radar.

JH: No tell me more.

JC: Ummm, now at the time, it was a Sunday and we were demonstrating in Hyde Park and I, I really do think you should interview my great friend Sue and I think she might remember some of the days better but we were demonstrating in Hyde Park and I can't remember if it was to do with the Botha visit, you know campaigning against that, anyway we just you know suddenly there was a ripple through you know people who were from the Anti-Apartheid office and people who knew people in the ANC to say the ANC office had been bombed, the ANC office in Pentonville Road had been bombed by South African agents, [TEXT REMOVED] it did you know damage the building quite seriously and you know it just sent a ripple of kind of fear and anger also that this could be allowed to happen, you know how on earth could this happen somehow and the incident has been considered since by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the people involved applied for amnesty and were given amnesty but they admitted their involvement, and one of the characters Craig Williamson was kind of, became quite well known eventually as an agent and he was running a sort of research kind of organisation called something like, IES can't remember now, which had a sort of, you know which did have some legitimacy and was recognised by some people but it, a lot of people were very suspicious of him and you know as will come out now through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa that he was an agent and he was involved in this incident and probably others too.

JH: Was there any cooperation from the British?

JC: Well that was the big question, you know, this was South African intelligence and could they do this in London without British intelligence bodies knowing about it? I mean it's a question that hasn't ever been answered but you know obviously we were all very suspicious that there was some, must have been some knowledge. And around that time there were a lot of things happening, threats of kidnap and Dulcie September was murdered in Paris – the chief representative of the ANC in France – what date was that? [pause] I can't remember, which was really shocking and

upsetting because we knew and met her, we met her and knew her here, she was… a lot of women from the women's committee knew her well.

JH: That's politically motivated?

JC: Yeah she was assassinated, she was basically shot in the, I think in the head? Going up to the ANC office in Paris and the French Communist Party called for a proper investigation and enquiry but I don't, nothing, I don't think it ever happened it was, I don't think that anything to do with that has come out in the TRC in South Africa, and I think that's still a mystery about who was responsible. But there was this atmosphere of you know fear, there were real threats here and we were aware of security issues, I mean now we're all talking about you know hacking into emails and things well we didn't have emails but we had, we all were quite convinced that our telephones were tapped, we were careful what we said on the phone, I think means of communication were very different you know so if we wanted to organise a demonstration we had telephone trees, you know so one person would… you'd have like five you'd ring, be like a pyramid and each of those five people would ring another five people so you could communicate with quite a lot of people quite cheaply and quickly to say you know we're going to have a spot demo tomorrow outside Shell headquarters or something.

JH: Did you have to code, was there some way of…

JC: Well I think sometimes we did try but we just sort of said as little as possible on the phone, yeah, but I was thinking also in terms of you know how on earth did we manage without like emails and texting and things, how did we get information out to people quickly and that was telephone trees, that was the way.

JH: And can you tell me more about the risks and possible consequences of, either in terms of the actions you took in UK where there might have been consequences from the British public and then authorities, and then I guess South African [inaudible] services.

JC: Ummm, well in terms, I mean I suppose there's such a lot of overlap because working for IDAF as well that was a very secretive operation so we were all, we were getting money into South Africa to dependents of political prisoners, if it was traceable they were at risk because if they were receiving money from a banned organisation they were banged up immediately or you know, or worse, in terms of personal risk to us I don't think as sort Anti-Apartheid members maybe we felt we were that much at risk except you know in so much as we were in connection, in contact with people from the liberation movements who were more, potentially more at risk. Definitely you know I mean there were these assassinations, there were, you know the ANC office was blown up there were all these allegations about agents and people infiltrating the movement so there was a certain amount of suspicion and caution and awareness of security, I'm trying to think if there, I think there were some incidents at the Anti-Apartheid office actually, security was a really big concern in terms of you know if there were any break ins and information was taken, and obviously at the higher levels people would be, you know people like Mike Terry and possibly Christabel Gurney as well, would be meeting and discussing strategy and things with you know with people from the liberation movements and it would be information that would be very useful to the South African authorities, so you know I think people were very aware of those issues.

JH: Was there possibly a risk of being kidnapped and?

JC: Yeah there were, there was and there was a list in fact which Scotland Yard had, it was a list which, I'm not sure how it was obtained but Scotland Yard eventually got hold of it, it may have been that the movement hold of it and gave it to Scotland Yard even, of ANC people in London who were at risk of kidnap and we did actually have a visit from Scotland Yard because George was in the ANC, who you know sort of gave us a briefing about security and, we were very aware of things like not doing the same journey everyday, checking under the car for bombs, you know there was very much a heightened feeling of danger at that point when that list was circulating yeah, and particularly with the assassinations as well.

JH: Was there a high point, or was this sort of consistent throughout the period of…

JC: Well I think this was probably early '80s but it was pretty consistent because there were always things happening either you know in, maybe not in this country but you know internationally ANC people were being targeted yeah.

JH: Can you tell me more about the women's committee, and your involvement?

JC: Yeah the women's committee, we did a range of things, [pause] I'm trying, yeah like, right sort of different aims one was sort of in a way tackling sexism within the Anti-Apartheid Movement itself which was I suppose, you know that's what kind of women's groups were doing all over the place you know sort of like raising the issues and, you know we sort of organised things like trying to make sure, make the movement take responsibility for making sure that there were crèches at events and crèches and meetings and things like that, which kind of actually seems really quite, quite unusual now because I mean you know that happens at meetings and you know political events now, but yeah we managed to do that and you know people volunteered to kind of make sure that the kids could be looked after so that women, both parents or you know any parent could get involved in you know the Anti-Apartheid AGM or you know or committee meetings etcetera, so we'd sort of you know, we tried to sort of raise those issues internally and also trying to get more women AAM members speaking, because I mean there was always requests for speakers at local groups, at all sorts you know all sorts of schools or trade unions or you know people would ask for a speaker from the movement to talk about the boycott campaign and other issues, and so we tried to get a panel of women speakers which we did get together, we did manage to get more women doing the circuit and we also tried to do kind of confidence building sessions for women who were nervous about speaking, so we did all of that sort of internal stuff and, and then as I say trying also to raise the profile of women in movement, in the liberation movement, campaigning around people like Bience, I can't remember, Bience Gawana who was a Namibian woman who was detained so eventually she came, she left the country and did a speaking tour of the UK so we, we sort of rallied round and promoted her speaking tour and other sort of leading figures in the struggle, and then we had the material aid campaign which was focussing on women in exile, you know almost like women refugees who didn't, who needed quite you know basic practical support and through that also raising awareness of you know what was happening to them and why they were in exile here, you know talking to people about why the situation had arisen, you know again it's a bit like the consumer boycott it's a very practical thing that people could do, you know give something to help you know who'd left South Africa because of apartheid and was living you know in difficult conditions in exile in Zambia or Tanzania so it was sort of, I think people could get involved politically by doing practical things you know a wider range of people, and then we'd sort of focus on things like as I said Next, you know get them to boycott South Africa, so in a way sort of maybe industries that were sort of aimed at women.

JH: How'd you go about?

JC: Well we did lobbying, again Elaine Unterhalter was a South African woman who was on the women's committee who I think did a lot of this work on Next, she, well we as a committee but I think she coordinated a lot of it, [inaudible] come out, yeah we did.

JH: Do you want me to?

JC: Yeah so yeah, we yeah, leafleting, writing articles we wrote stuff for the paper, we you know met with people from the companies, we did a lot of campaigning round Nestle, I mean obviously there was also these sort of other campaigns about breast feeding so when we could focus on things like Kit Kat and you know campaigning at cinemas and shops and places that were selling sweets and saying you know, using that as a way in to talk about the boycott campaign we did that.

JH: Were you collecting signatures then?

JC: Yeah we petitioned around the issues, [pause], oh the other thing which was quite important actually was around the use of Depo Privera which is you know an injection, an injectable contraceptive which was being used in South Africa, I mean it can be injected and I think it lasts for six months or even longer and it was being used in South Africa sort of against black women you know without their full consent, without them really knowing what was really happening and this was seen very much as part of a sort of racist policy in terms of family planning you know, these women had no rights they, just a way of reducing the black population, so we had a very effective campaign around that and it included the International Planned Parenthood Federation which is a very big organisation around those family planning issues and birth control, we successfully persuaded them to come out of South Africa and to campaign around those issues, I've probably got newsletters somewhere that actually sort of pin down what happened when but you know that was a very important campaign and again it had sort of echoes here because women here were campaigning around issues about the right to control your own fertility, rights of contraception, abortion, family planning etcetera, it was a very big thing here for women so you know it sort of, it was quite an effective of sort of saying look hang on look what's happening, how this is being used in a very racist way under Apartheid. So that was a very important campaign.

JH: Could you tell me a bit about sort of how long the campaign lasted for and what the consequences were of the actual, or outcome of the campaign?

JC: It probably, it was probably a couple of years in the, if not more you know sort of mid '80s onwards, again I would probably have to check the dates but we wrote about what happening both in the, we had a women's committee newsletter but also in Anti-Apartheid News which was, you know there was a big membership, went to quite a wide, quite a big audience, we leafleted around the issue, we lobbied in terms of writing to organisations like IPPF and other international sort of family planning focussed organisations. We, we got, I'm sure we, I think it again it may have been Elaine but we got articles in papers we got, we worked with also women GP's who were campaigning around these issues, and I say probably the biggest success was getting IPPF to boycott South Africa and to raise the issue on the, in the international forums you know so, that was very important.

JH: Did it change practice?

JC: In South Africa? Well that's what we, I don't know, I think it must have done because, this might need some sort of like going back to organisations like IPPF because their clinics, or the clinics they sponsored would have been the ones which would have been administering this and I mean how much awareness IPP had about, IPPF had about how this was being used you know was questionable and I think we, you know the fact that we drew their attention to it made, certainly made it increasingly difficult for any clinic within South Africa that had foreign, any foreign engagement to continue administering Depo Privera like this, so it would only be through certain state mechanisms that it would be happening. [pause] yes.

JH: So you're running through the list of the women's committee's…

JC: I may have run out [laughs] I mean we did lots of other things but.

JH: Well then did you succeed in, well tell me about the success of, in terms of changing the culture of…

JC: Oh within the Anti-Apartheid Movement?

JH: Yeah, and whether there was any resistance.

JC: Well I think we, well yes there were some quite, it was sort of never a straight line I suppose, I think our successes were making it easier for women to get involved in terms of you know speaking at meetings and things like that, also actually sort of acting as a kind of magnet you know that some women wanted to have more political debate but you know they would rather come to the women's committee and get involved in that way. In terms of the AAM as a whole certainly having a panel of women speakers you know that we could say look if you need a speaker you know there are plenty of women who can come and speak at these meetings, that was successful yeah, we did meet resistance to the concept of a women's committee at all I think, and although we, when we set it up it was perhaps it wasn't taken that seriously, it was quite ad hoc and it was a few of us getting together but I think as it became more formal and you know perhaps played a bigger role I don't know, it was quite odd because the executive decided that we should actually have a man on the committee [laughs] which seemed a bit odd, and we sort of had mixed reactions to, you know we really weren't that happy about it but Anne Brookes was nominated by the executive to sort of come along and be the token person from the executive on the women's committee and it sort of became a bit of a joke in a way but, it sort of reflected some element of paranoia I think about having something which might have been a more, a bit of an autonomous structure within the movement, and probably completely unnecessary because we were all sort quite focussed on the same issues you know, but.

JH: So there was no risk of you… [inaudible]

JC: Maybe they were worried about, yeah maybe they were worried about becoming a sort of like internal divisive movement or something but we saw it as, and I think it was, very productive because it meant that you know you got a wider range of people, you got more women involved and you know it has a knock on effect you know, local groups would, don't always want to have you know a guy coming to speak to them they would, you know women in those local groups were often the ones actually doing a lot of the work on the streets in a way, you know sort of leafleting and talking to people and stuff like that, you know they wanted to hear from women speakers and so it was good to promote that.

JH: Did that sort of roll, was that rolled out to the rest of the country, were there local women's groups?

JC: I don't think there were, I don't know I'm not aware of any local groups that then had kind of like women's sections or anything, but there, there may have been in the kind of like… I don't know like for instance in Scotland you know, in the sort of regional way that there may have been, maybe in places where there were bigger groups there might have been like women's sections but I think often you know the groups were actually too small to sustain that you know, but it all, and it also meant that we could then get involved in other organisations which had women's sections or women's committees you know so there was a sort of lateral thing as well, you know we could then have contact the GLC women's committee and sort of mutual support and [pause] this was very much what was happening at that time political you know there were women's committees being set up, women's sections, there were also black sections of you know organisations being set up and eventually that also happened within the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and I think you know at times people found it threatening and possibly divisive but actually it usually meant you just reached out to a much wider range of people and it was quite positive in the end. Because I think the Anti-Apartheid Movement did suffer from being a very kind of white movement, you know it was often perceived as a very white movement which was quite ironic when it was around issues of racism in South Africa and Apartheid. We did things like, we had stalls at the Notting Hill Carnival and things like that, [pause], yes what else.

JH: What was your role, did you have a position?

JC: On the women's committee I don't there were, we didn't have a chair or anything it was just the committee, I think Elaine may have been chair or coordinator at some point, I was chair of the London committee for a short period in the 1980s, and that was focussing on as I said like sort of making contacts with the GLC, working on local authorities doing you know twinning and naming streets and hosting events, [pause].

JH: National [inaudible] London.

JC: Yeah, London based yeah, [pause] erm I think I might have dried up [laughs].

JH: Can you describe the dynamic in the women's committee and the London committee?

JC: Well it was, I suppose in a way its quite contrasting really, the women's committee we tended to meet at people's houses, it was quite informal and unstructured, the London committee was more formal and we usually met in you know either a room provided by the GLC or I think Islington Council sometimes provided us with space, [pause] errr, the London committee organised some quite big benefits, fundraising benefits and actually raised quite a lot of money for anti-Apartheid campaigns, and we did a formal structure you know we had a bank account, treasurer, chair, [pause] [laughs].
JH: Can you tell me about some of the fundraising events then?

JC: We organised quite a big benefit and Islington town hall with, I can't remember even what bands I'm afraid I'd have to go back and look at some of my, my memorabilia.

JH: What period was this?

JC: That was probably late 1980s I think yeah, [pause] I've got stuff at home maybe I should just dig out some leaflets and things.

JH: Yeah yeah, [inaudible] details, but yeah that was successful then…

JC: Yeah well we did quite a few but that's one that sticks in my mind that was quite successful and you know raised a lot of money for the movement yeah. I can't for the life of me remember who performed, [inaudible] it's not very useful.

JH: When you look back are there any particular incidents that stand out?

JC: [pause] I think some of the most moving incidents were those when we were outside the South African embassy with ANC people and Namibian people, you know singing, you know on the I remember on the eve of the execution of Motaung Mogoerane and [inaudible] I think, Mosololi, Mogoerane and Motaung yeah, which much have been in 1983 that was you know appealing for their, for clemency and in fact they were hanged and you know that was a very sad and moving moment you know that has stayed with me and there were unfortunately quite a few occasions like that, [pause] but there were also some powerful times when you know we were sort of celebrating victories and when prisoners were being released there was a big benefit in Camden, hosted by Camden Council I think in the Camden centre for the people being released from Robben Island there were eight Rivonia trialists who were released, I think they were mostly Rivonia trialists and it was you know a fantastic celebration and we were all dancing and Toyi Toyi around the Camden centre and you know the whole of my family came and you know it was just amazing, and that must have, I don't know must have been '89 or something, maybe '87, I should have done some research before I did this interview [laughs]. Can we edit and put the dates in later?

JH: I mean I'll write notes into the transcript so yeah don't worry, and looking back what are your feelings about the, your involvement in the movement?

JC: I think it was probably one of the, you know one of the most formative things in my life, I mean it was, not only was it a very powerful political movement which, I think, for some many people had legitimacy, you know sort of confronting one of the, I think probably one of the only countries that had racism enshrined in its constitution, not only was it very powerful from that point of view but it was an amazing network of people, many of whom you know I'm still great friends with and the solidarity was you know stronger than just you know sort of superficial political you know there's a, it was it did become like a family for many of us and we, I think we when we meet now we all feel we have very strong connections and, you know even my children who were young at the time sort of dragged out while I was marching or you know handing out leaflets or something, it's very, I mean they are half South African so I mean obviously it is more powerful in that sense but you know it, the fact of that political history has had a very strong impact on them too you know, it's been quite inspiring to them.

JH: Are they proud of you? I assume they are [inaudible] proud of you.

JC: I think they are yeah, and they're also proud they sort of feel you know that they were involved they were there you know when Mandela was speaking to everybody in Trafalgar Square when you know when he'd been released and, you know yes they're proud and it's very important to them as part of their history and I think, you know they also feel connected to the other children they know that were involved that

you know, it has been like an amazing network. And I think it you know it still affects all of us, the people I know who were involved then you know even if they're not directly involved in political campaigns now you know it's a life long thing, it has affected their view of the world, I mean maybe that's natural you know if you're political involved you don't just shake it off when things have changed but, we all learnt a lot and that will stay with us.

JH: How did it manifest itself following the ending of Apartheid?

JC: Well as I say even those people I know who are not doing anything political I think it's just affected their attitudes, I mean for me you know I'd been involved very much with political prisoners and campaigns in support of political prisoners so that got me interested in legal rights, human rights, and so when IDAF closed down and the Anti-Apartheid Movement finished I re-trained as a lawyer and then got involved in very much you know work associated with human rights whether it, I mean at first it was you know criminal defence work but now I feel my work for the Guardian is very political and it's around human rights issues, it's about freedom of expression, and you know it's a direction I might not had gone in if I hadn't got involved in the Anti-Apartheid Movement and that struggle yeah.

JH: Ok thank you very much, is there anything else you'd like to say?

JC: I'm sure there's lots I'd like to say to fill in detail but I'd have to go away and think about it, lots of things I've missed out I'm sure.

JH: That was comprehensive.

JC: Ok [laughs].

JH: Thank you, no thank you very much.

JC: But if you need written materials and stuff to back up what you're doing, you k now if I've got any would you like me to pass them on to you or are you just going to carry on doing your interviews for the time being.

JH: Ummm.

JC: Like if I've got women's movement newsletters, women's committee newsletters would it help?

JH: Yes it would yeah, well let me speak to Christabel.

JC: Christabel's probably got a lot of material anyway.

JH: Well yeah.

JC: But it's all…

END OF INTERVIEW