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ROUGH DRAFT

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WK: I'm interviewing Albie Sachs in Clifton. He is going to give us his story of his experiences in exile.

AS: Let me start where we are now, ^{with} The joy of the exile returned, because it is impossible to be an exile without the ending, there's a beginning, a middle and an end, ^{and although} the end is not complete yet, but it explains the whole of the middle, ^{that conviction that we had, that total certainty in my case that we would be back, and it was an anchor and a context that saw me right through.} ~~that conviction that we had, that total certainty in my case that we would be back, and it was an anchor and a context that saw me right through.~~

Albie in Exile
5 1/2 page interview
with Wolfie Kodesh.

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against my shins, ^{would say:} wherever I was, whenever I went somewhere for a meeting I said "could we go out walking somewhere?", I just wanted to feel ^{the spiky pressure} that thing brushing against my ankles and against my legs, the ^{sensation} feeling I hadn't even noticed that I had been missing all these years, but somehow because I couldn't see it I wasn't aware of it. I just had that sensation, it came through very, very strongly to me and the ^{it was part of my} craving for the landscape, and the contours and the sounds of South Africa, was very, very powerful and It's still with me and I think it will be with me forever.

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Returning in my case involved such a sense of triumph, and achievement, and
^{and a surprise.} joy, to be back, to be back in South Africa, to be back in our country with
our people - and the surprises were the physical things, the little
forgotten ^{ones.} things, not the big political things. The big political things
we had kept in touch with through the newspapers, through tv, through
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the craving is diminished.

It's diminished now, ^{my} return has been normalised, I'm back two and a half years, effectively, although coming back was done in phases. The first ^{journey} visit ^{on a visitor's permit} and then the return, ^{and the next visit, and the return, and the visits} got longer and longer and eventually I was spending more time here than abroad and eventually I was finally here and long afterwards I actually got my residence and after that I got my nationality restored, my citizenship restored, ^{and} my passport. *When did I really feel I was back?*

Funnily enough the time that I really said to myself "Albie you're back" ^{was when I got my passport} had nothing to do with the passport. The first time I put a cash card into the cash point at the bank, and money came out, ^{I was home} (maybe that's a comment on the modern world), then I felt I'm back, I didn't have to write out a cheque, I didn't have to ask people for money, I was now, like, independent.

One has to clear away ^{some} of these memories of return to get to the memories of exile, and leaping right back before I left (and I'll say a bit afterwards about who I was and circumstances and so on), ^{my memories now} are a kind of sullen depressed anger on my part. I was cross with the home office, whatever they were called, Home Affairs, I think Ministry of Interior in Pretoria because they were delaying answering my request for an exit permit. I was angry with them because they were slow in enabling me to do something that I found like self-mutilation. ^{And leaving was very bitter.}

In a book that I wrote afterwards I said South Africa was my Spain. Spain for many of my generation, ^{especially} young idealistic whites, that was the country of heroism, of people who made their stand in the 1930's on a voluntary basis to fight facism, and it was the test of courage. And here I was asking for permission to leave ^{my Spain. I was} and then being cross with them because they weren't giving me permission quickly to leave, and ^{angry} cross with myself because I was

I was a young advocate, nine years in legal practice, sullen and depressed

cross with them over such a stupid thing. But it was after my second detention, and my experience is you dont get stronger each time you're detained. The first time I was in was 168 days. It was very punishing, very cruel, to this day I dont like speaking of it, decades afterwards I haven't fully got over the humiliation of total solitude, the sense of their power. That was in '63/'64 and in '66 I was in a second time.

After the first time I got through kind of unscathed, I just about held out, I ran through the town to the sea, and threw myself into the waves. I felt triumphant but I knew something was ^{deeply} very damaged inside. And the second time, two years later, my friends came to see me as I was released after ^{ninety days} three months and they said, big smiles on their faces, "Albie, what are you going to do ^{this time} today?" ~~am I going to climb the mountain?~~ I said "No, just take me home", because I was crushed. ~~And the leaving became almost inevitable.~~ ^{Torture by sleep deprivation: I had made someone of a statement. It completely crushed, but something had given way.}

'66 was maybe the... ^{the} period '64 to '66 was maybe the worst period in the life of our movement, we were all being crushed, people were being picked up one by one, the structures, the movement hardly existed and every time somebody left we felt let down and yet staying on was more and more difficult and it was impossible to ^{keep up any} have contact with comrades.

I remember ~~one meeting~~, my last underground meeting, on the mountainside under a tree, with Ray Alexander - Ray Simons, ~~it was so difficult just to arrange the meeting,~~ and I dont think we were together for one minute, it was the shortest meeting I had ever been to in my life. She was banned, I was banned, and it was just a kind of fleeting contact, ~~it was so important at the time, but it was~~ ^{yet} impossible. ^{to sustain} There was no structure. I had lost ^{the} my courage to ~~really~~ fight in the underground, and ^{wrote later} as I said, I was too strong

I dont like speaking of my detentions. Even now, decades afterwards, I haven't really got over the humiliation of total isolation, of being so in the complete power of others. One hundred and sixty eight days... It is easier to talk about the bomb attack than sol. combatment

to go and too weak to stay, and fight. It was a very hard period before leaving.

in between my detentions,

Although I wrote the Jail Diary then, it gave me some sense of dignity and self possession, and fighting back a little bit through words, through the book, and I started having a ~~little~~ ^{I was} bit of a personal life ~~for the first time~~ → even going to restaurants and not feeling guilty, running on the beach and playing cricket on the beach, and playing, we called it ^{I enjoyed games of bridge,} underground bridge, until I was picked up the second time. ^{because each time I called two clubs or whatever, I was breaking my banning order.}

In the meanwhile I had met Stephanie as her council ^{sel.} and we kind of fell in love across the prison table, we never said a word, we just discussed the evidence and witnesses, and all these secret vibes were passing between us. We hadn't even touched. ^{didn't} ^{and fell in love} The first time I touched her, and we already knew somehow that we were going to marry, was after she was sentenced and I said goodbye and the excuse to touch her was to shake her hand, it was the right hand that I then had, just to wish her luck in that rather formal pompous way that advocates ^{use when} have saying goodbye to their ^(more respectable) client. It was the first time we had touched, and we hadn't said a word about mutual attraction but it was clear to me and I think to her that somehow we were destined to be together and communicate and love.

So she came out after about 18 months and came to warn me that the ^{of jail} cops... she had heard the cops were going to crack down on us in Cape Town. She'd been warned to keep away from us otherwise she would be in trouble. And the next thing I was in prison ^a that second time, and I was ^{also} about to be thrown out of practice, ^{as one of the} They had advocates on a list who were going to be disbarred. ^{my banning order} I was restricted to the magisterial districts of Cape Town, Bellville and Wynberg ^{and} where it was like being restricted to paradise! I could climb the mountain, I could go down to the sea, but I couldn't go into any black area which meant I had to park my car in a different place, near

But I had to find a new place to park my car near my Chambers - it was in a coloured group area and I wasn't allowed there

where my chambers were - I had to find a new place to park my car. I couldn't publish, I couldn't write, I couldn't be published. I was very, very weak, it was a most humiliating and difficult time. I kind of just about hung on, and I tried to describe ^{for publication, later} it in the book *Stephanie on Trial* which I think is a little fragment, a tiny sort of splinter of knowledge, of information written just immediately after I got to England about that phase, which was a very hard phase for our whole movement.

We were all being beaten up and smashed and crushed in all sorts of different ways. The big thing was to just hang on. It wasn't ~~not~~ impossible to fight back, ^{really} ~~just to hang on and not to allow the rot and the damage and the breakthroughs to get even greater.~~ ^{All we could do was} ~~To retrieve what tiny little bit was possible of one's political pride and movement pride.~~ ^{through the personal resistance of each one of us we} ~~So eventually my exit permit arrived and that gave me permission to leave.~~ ^{the movements could} ~~The condition in terms of the law was that you were stripped automatically of your~~ ^{I had I was} ~~citizenship, - you couldn't return without permission. It was a criminal offence to return without authorisation or permission. And that would have been August 1966.~~

The boat pulled out and I think that first night on the boat, I had my first good sleep in years. The sense of physical safety was just overwhelming. Going to bed every night, not even thinking about it, but just aware of the fact there might be the ring at the door, you might be arrested, you might be raided, ^{had taken} ~~took~~ a tremendous toll. And so the first months outside were months of just celebration, joy, of being able to sleep, of feeling physically free. I used to lie on Hampstead Heath and watch the kites flying, I always loved kites, but I never loved them so much as then. It was like a symbol of freedom, of security. The green grass, the tranquillity, the ease of the people all around, the dogs barking and no security police, no knock on the door. ~~No possibility,~~ even

when you ~~were~~ ^{had been} enjoying yourself in Cape Town, ^{you had been} thinking, well enjoy yourself because in 5 minutes' time, or half an hour, or two hours or 20 hours you might be whipped off again, ~~that was kind of gone and~~ ^{that feeling was replaced by} an immense powerful total overwhelming holistic feeling ^{of} just physical security.

In the meanwhile Stephanie's trial was proceeding. She had brought a civil action against a sergeant of police. It was ~~Vosloo~~ ^{Vorster} who was the Minister of Justice and Spyker van Wyk who had beaten her up, and through legal process we had got hold of some documents ^{where} and Spyker had told some stupid story that had been ^{good enough for the} ~~accepted by~~ police investigators and the magistrate. He ^{had} admitted in the story that yes he beat her because she had asked him to beat her. We found medical evidence that she had a very big bruise and a black eye, ~~and so on,~~ ^{actually} he'd bashed her head on the ground, so we were definitely going to win that case, but the case took place after I had left. ^{because of postponement} ~~They were postponing it,~~ and so Stephanie and I arrived at different times.

Going into exile as ~~I say~~ was a defeat. The principle was that we stayed and fought to the end. ~~The principle was that~~ ^{only} you could leave if you were instructed to ^{do so} leave by the movement. There was no movement around at that stage to instruct me. But even if there had been a movement, I was finished. I was going to go anyhow. ~~That was very hard because I took~~ ^{had taken} ~~that~~ ^{the} decision as I was lying on the floor in the interrogation room, water being poured over me, ^{but weakening all the time,} not completely broken, ^{to myself,} and I just said ok, I'm going to fight the interrogation as best I can, but when I get out, I'm leaving. I'm not going to consult with the comrades, I'm not going to ask for permission to leave, I'm not going to justify ^{my departure} ~~it~~ - I'm going. That was a terrible defeat for me and a victory for the State. ~~But we also overdid~~ ^{our strict rules} ~~things~~ at that stage. We had very ~~totalistic~~ concepts about what one did and what one didn't do. ^{had} We had very little experience of total repression

and our answer had always been you dont say a word, you give your name and address and nothing more, and you dont do a damn thing, total non co-operation, total resistance. The fact was that ~~they~~ ^{they} in 19 cases out of 20, maybe 90 out of 100, ^{at first} were able to break that level of resistance. And then many people broke completely ~~after that~~ because there was no fall back position permitted, no pliability, no bending. The same applied in relation to leaving. I think back ^{on that time} with some poignancy, some sadness, and I dont know if the word is chagrin. Some people organised their own departure, I dont hold it against them, but I ~~hold against the movement the~~ ^{it was unjust} fact that others who were not in the same position to organise it either through lack of contact or through ~~the fact that~~ ^{because} they were just low ranking members, didn't have those possibilities. ~~And~~ I know of at least one fairly senior comrade ^{today} who just organised his own departure, ^{and} made a very big contribution in exile, ^{and} I admire him very much for ^{that} the contribution. But the way he left was not regular. ~~And~~ ^A another comrade ~~who~~ stayed on and was ^{rather} really ground into the dust ^{and} beaten down, ^{at meetings} and now you see him as one of the old comrades around, ^{no one} and he makes his contribution but is not acknowledged ^{in the} for what he did, hanging on those last extra years underground when almost nothing was being done, ^{bravely} keeping ^{fragments of the movement} something kind of together. In that sense history is very unjust, that X should be well known and highly regarded and considered a leader and Y who had that extra courage, that extra determination, went deeper into the underground, ^{only} is known by a few friends and comrades and people of that time.

In any event, these were ~~the very~~ ^{and} uneven, very rough times. I remember when I got to London one of the first things I did. ^{was} I went to speak to the leadership and say look you must have more pliability and flexibility in the instructions which you give to comrades when they are picked up. If it's all or nothing it's going to be nothing in terms of defence and all in

terms of what people give away. Then I was told it's impossible, it's easier to stick to all or nothing, then people know where they stand and they fight to the end. I think that some things could have been avoided like Bram Fischer for example, instead of saying Comrade so and so will never talk, if you say to comrades hold out for 12 hours or 24 hours and then give away something, that's achievable, if you say hold out forever people just get crushed. But our movement didn't have that flexibility and that nuance and that real scientific quality then. I hope we never have to have it again, I hope that we never get back into those circumstances. We used to read prison literature from all over the world and it used to help us quite a lot. I hope there aren't people in other parts of the world who read our prison literature to prepare themselves for prison, but unfortunately there will be, there'll be repression everywhere. So the first period then in England was a period of that thrilling experience of personal safety. Great confusion. I arrived. My dad Solly Sachs, former secretary general of the Garment Workers Union, very powerful personality, a lot of ego built into his politics which gave him immense drive, and a lot of vision in his ego that gave him a very extraordinary human personality as well, met me at the docks. I hadn't seen him since 1954 when I had spent a year with him. He had aged quite a lot, it was a shock for me.. He had a funny kind of a smile that I found a little bit strange. Maybe he had false teeth or something that had changed in the meanwhile. I just found it a little bit unnerving. We drove up from Southampton if I remember correctly, to London. We went straight to the House of Lords where he'd arranged an interview with Lord Gardiner. Now this was just after the Labour Party had won. So it was a quite an exciting period in terms of British politics.

WK: What year was that?

AS: 1966. England had just won the World Cup. We heard it on the boat. And of course the boat trip was something special, it's like 10 days of a wonderful transition period. If South Africa could be put on a Union Castle boat, the whole of South Africa, all 35 or 40 million of us, have 10 days out at sea, that would be great before we arrived at the New South Africa. The crew were listening to the World Cup and when England scored in extra time, we just heard a roar, and it wasn't the propellers and turbines going, it was the crew celebrating and boy they served us well after that! So I was straight into it, and my dad took me to meet Lord Gardiner who was now the Lord Chancellor. I remember being in the House of Lords in this Palace of Westminster and all the flunkies dress up in very elaborate kinds of uniform. The Lord Chancellor just wore an ordinary kind of suit. So I thought the flunkey was the Lord Chancellor and it turned out Lord Gardiner, dressed in an ordinary suit, was the other guy! And of course you can spend... I was 23 years in England, half there, half away, and coming back and all these little distinctions you never really work out.

In a sense I never became fully tuned into England. Although I spoke English as my mother tongue, although I was brought up on English history, culture, the language, although I loved watching English tv and listening to the radio and I literally loved English women and was very close to English women, English men and involved in English life, in English society and I broadcast and wrote books, and got a PhD and went to the rose garden, and went on the canals, drove all over the place and saw a red, red robin, bob bob bobbing along, through the snow at my friend's cottage in the Cotswolds, I never really felt I was English, I never really felt rooted in England. The only thing that brought me really close to England, that gave

me a kind of love and affection as opposed to the gratitude that I felt because England received me. For all that we criticised the government and the perfidy of the policy often in relation to South Africa it was a country where I could go, where I was received, where I could live a new life, where I could broadcast and write and study and teach. Nevertheless the love, the real love, the affection only came after my return from Mocambique on a stretcher literally half dead and being nursed to recovery. The tenderness of the nurses and the support they gave me and the kindness with which they cleaned my body and wrapped the bandages around me gave me a sentimental and affectionate feeling for England as a country that I'd never had before. It was nurses, the touch of these nurses, the physiotherapists, the women, that binds me to that country in a way that I was never bound before.

So the whole thing started at a kind of high. The Jail Diary that I had written in South Africa after my second, between my detentions. Billy Collins had come to see me when he was touring the Collins empire and he came into my chambers in Cape Town, I was an advocate, I was nearly 10 years at the bar. He got a big shock when he came in and said hullo glad to meet you blah blah blah, and I grabbed his elbow and pulled him out without saying a word. He was quite startled as he wasn't used to living in a world of bugs and microphones and so on and I explained to him and he understood and he said - this was after my second detention he came to see me - do you want the book to be published, before that I wanted it be published while I was in South Africa, now I said no, just wait, I've applied for an exit permit, I will be coming out. So the book was published in England.

It meant that I started life there with quite a high degree of recognition. What young South African with my kind of background wouldn't feel thrilled

at the thought of being published in London by a firm like Collins? And of course they know how to treat their authors - with a lot of grace and dignity and a very nice, an aspect of England that I liked very much, a certain kind of a courtesy, and it's not laid on too thick and it's just a very delicate consideration that I appreciated very much. Then waiting for the reviews which was a terrible period, and imagining that the bookshops had nothing better to do than to sell your book, and all the newspapers will be filled. Well it did quite well, and they were quite pleased and it sold quite well and so on. It meant that -the Guardian had an extract- it meant that I came with a certain measure of acknowledgement. I wasn't just washed up on a foreign shore like a piece of seaweed and then having to battle to find a little place, a little bit of identity for myself. At the same time I was getting married. It was a very romantic story, in the best sense and the worst sense. Stephanie and I were separated by the prison table, we couldn't touch, we couldn't talk, we couldn't communicate any affection or feeling for each other or interest in each other. It was all done indirectly. We didn't even know what the other felt. And of course the subterranean emotion was just tremendous. It was all at the level of intuition - the wishing and longing. I know at the time that I couldn't - after I came out of detention, those ghastly ghastly days of total aloneness, I couldn't marry somebody who hadn't been through that experience at that time. It's not a formal decision I took, I just felt it was such a powerful experience that unless my partner was somebody who - she'd been through it herself and she knew what it was - there'd be just this enormous gulf between us. I had seen her picture in the paper, a very beautiful picture, she was very beautiful.

WK: When she was released?

AS: No before, when she was detained. And Stephanie is still very very beautiful. But it was a kind of beauty attached to the courageous freedom fighter. It wasn't just a beauty on its own which I never really loved. It was a beauty related to spirit and choice, and in this case suffering. So we had kind of decided to marry before we had even discussed what movies we liked, let alone made love. And that gave the relationship an immense power but also an immense vulnerability, and we only really, although we had something of a clandestine relationship before we left and we'd formally decided that we would actually marry and go abroad and so on, it was really only in England that we were living together, getting to know each other and discovering each other's personalities, tastes, interests and all the rest, and in a way that's the wrong way round. I don't know what's good for a good relationship, but obviously it's much better if you have the chance of living with someone and if the passion and romance emerges and comes later it's much more secure, it's already based on knowing each other in the broad sense. And it was very harsh for Stephanie. I hope you can interview her independently, I am sure she will give a wonderful interview. It was harsh for her because England was totally out of her mental sort of world view.

I had spent a year in England before, my dad was there, my brother Johnny was there, I had grown up very much in the English cultural milieu. I still remember when the newspapers, the Cape Times used to say "Gales lash Cornwall". We knew more about the weather in Cornwall than we did around the corner in Muizenberg. For her it was quite different. She had never imagined that she would go abroad, certainly not to live abroad. Her father was Afrikaans, very much so, from an Afrikaner Nationalist background, her mother was English but many, many generations, her mother was the daughter of a magistrate. Just somehow it was great disruption

for her, an enormous disruption. So she had to get used to England, she had to get used to Albie, she had to get used to working in an English hospital as a physiotherapist earning almost nothing, meeting physios who would say something like "Oh I do like your Dr Verwoerd" and assuming that because she was a white South African - and that's kind of one of the things I don't like about England, to be nice to someone you say a creepy thing like that even if you don't believe it, you think you are being nice to them.

We had very little money and at first we stayed with my brother Johnny who had a lovely little flat up in Highgate, I still remember the address: 90 Highgate West Hill, and a very elegant address, a tiny flat. The disadvantage was that it was used by lorries going to the great North Road and they had to change gear just outside our flat - that would be about 5 in the morning, so we didn't sleep very much. I must say I slept badly for 10 years in England, ever since my detention. My doctor told me to take a sleeping pill, just to see me through and it was a very harmless sleeping pill, much better than Mogadon, much less powerful and it was called Mandrax. Mandrax in those days was just an ordinary thing you got over the counter, I found it helped me to sleep but I didn't sleep well. It was a combination of everything. Still the legacy of the trauma, the dislocation, the lorries changing gear, all the pressures, the pressures of getting to know Stephanie, the difficulties we had, the two of us. We had wonderful times, we did interesting things. I remember we used to sit down on the floor, and we'd inherited from Johnny a little black and white tv set, a tiny one, must have been one of the original tv sets and we used to watch a programme called Come Dancing in which the North Lancashire used to take on Southern Sussex, and they would do the foxtrot and tango and somebody would give marks, and Stephanie and I would sit there in each

other's arms and we would give marks, to the different groups. I don't know why for some reason I remember that with great affection and nostalgia and I look forward to the day when we have similar programmes in South Africa because our people love dance here, it's a very popular, very communicative kind of thing.

The first year I spent writing. I wrote *Stephanie on Trial*. Stephanie would go out to work. She had to get up quite early in the morning, she went to Barnes Hospital. I would switch on the BBC third programme which after washing and eating and tidying up the place making the bed, it's terrible you know all those years I'd do the donkey work around the place, I never learnt to make a bed properly. I just never did. Then I would write, I didn't type I would write. I don't think I've ever worked so hard on a book as I did on that one. Going through various parts. It was a very sad book, it came out with great difficulty, I wrote and re-wrote, and re-wrote and re-wrote. I haven't read it now for maybe 15 years. The last time I read it I just saw missed opportunities. Something I tried was wrong, I must read it again because it conveys both that last period, those last 2 years in South Africa, of hanging on and also the sadness in England, the security of being safe, the happiness now of being together with someone I loved and admired very much but also the sadness of adapting to life in a foreign country far away, not directly involved in the struggle, doing anti-apartheid work. Stephanie at least was doing underground work right from the beginning. And I had hoped that somehow through her I would recover my courage and my strength and I'd become a fighter again. I never did.

WK: But you didn't have a pre-determined attitude against England did you, as many of our people did?

AS: No, no, on the contrary. Stephanie once made a very strong comment. She said you know we hate England for the fact that we're here. We blame it on England, it's totally unjust. No, no, I didn't and in that sense I always had a sense of gratitude however much I criticised the different governments or institutions, that after all they did receive us, after all I was able to do a PhD which I did in Sussex from '67 to '70, after all I did get a job teaching there, I was able to move publicly, I was able to speak. I got to know London through anti-Vietnam war demonstrations, marching all over the place, I got to know the United Kingdom through anti-apartheid meetings. I travelled up to Dundee, I went right to the extremities of Wales, I never went to Cornwall but certainly to Devon, to speak. I went all over the country and that was very nice getting to know the country in the context of my avowal of South Africa, so I didn't have to repudiate South Africa to get to know the UK. I even went to Northern Ireland a couple of times and I went of course to Ireland. I travelled in Europe quite a lot, not for a number of years but eventually we travelled quite a lot.

What helped me in all these years was the total certainty that I was a South African, which I got through being connected with the ANC and being so fully convinced that I was a South African made it easy for me to immerse myself completely in England without any sense of being torn this way or that or ambiguity or identity crisis or having to make up my mind. It sounds a paradox, the more South African you are the more English you can be, but it's not a paradox really. It's a paradox in form, but the reality is the more secure you are in your identity as an exile the easier it is to absorb everything of the world that you're in and to love doing it and constantly to have the feeling - when I get back you know I'm going to

bring this back with me, I'm going to tell the people, it's going to come back in one way or another.

So I look back on those years in England despite a lot of personal unhappiness, when things started going wrong in our marriage, basically I look back as good years and I certainly feel enormous affection for England, for London in particular, Sussex I didn't get to know very well, Southampton which is the most ordinary, normal, classic middle town, southern English town you can get, but to me was the most exotic strange, weird place you could get it was so English. When I told them that, you know that it was as exotic to me as parts of Africa would be to them, they couldn't understand it because to them England is the world, its the norm, it's your baseline, it's how you measure everything else and of course to me that is what was so quintessentially English. I remember saying to one student when I was lecturing in Southampton, you know one of my difficulties is I just dont find I have any appropriate level in England, everybody in England knows their level, and I just dont fit in anywhere. I get on with people in the government, I get on with trade unionists, working people, clergy, the middle class, everybody, but I dont attach myself or identify with any group. And the student said "Dont worry Dr Sachs, you'll soon find your appropriate level". That to me just typified the fact that the thing that gave me the most pleasure, my freedom to move around, and the chutzpah, the cheek that we had was something that he saw was a problem that eventually I would overcome.

Well I'll end this phase of the interview with the launching of the second book. I am now working on my PhD, we're living in a little flatlet in Chalk Farm near Primrose Hill in a building that had just been converted for students from Africa doing post-graduate studies and that was a very wonderful place to be in because of its proximity to the park and we had

our first child there. Because of the ambience of students from Uganda, Sierra Leone, from other parts of Africa that South Africa never had a chance to meet or see, from Zimbabwe, from Namibia. Peter Katjavivi was staying there and he came to me one day. In those days he used to stutter a little bit which was difficult for him because he was the main media representative of SWAPO and he said "Comrade Albie the BBC have asked me to do an interview on radio and they want to know why Namibia is called Namibia". The sub-council of the United Nations had decided to call Namibia Namibia and he was the SWAPO rep in London and he didn't know why! I didn't know why either but he looked up Ruth First's book on South West Africa and looked in the back - it said Namib Desert, the Namib people and at least he had enough to talk his way through. So that was a very wonderful ambience to be in.

I remember watching the Mexico Olympic Games in 1968 late at night with a surgeon from Barbados and we used to talk quite a lot. He'd been an athlete himself, and he said, something that we agreed on in those days, he obviously wanted any sportsperson from the West Indies to win but in those days they had very few athletes but he said the only thing he wants to see is he wants to see the English athletes lose. And I'm sorry to say that I felt the same. I don't know why, it was an arrogance and a chauvinism in the reporting that just drove us batty. It was our reaction to having been colonised that made us want to see England....

WK: But they'd won the hurdles, you remember, and they must have showed that picture at least a thousand times.

AS: Maybe that's why, that's maybe why. I must say I've softened quite a lot in that respect. When I saw Linford Christie in Barcelona, I was actually there this year, saw him win, I felt a great thrill. But that was

also partly to see the Americans lose. In any event, the book was launched I think when we were staying there.

WK: Which book?

AS: *Stephanie on Trial*. At the same time they launched Nelson Mandela's *No Easy Walk to Freedom* which Ruth First had edited, with a very beautiful introduction by OR Tambo. I still remember the managing director of Collins, surprisingly standing up on a table, he had taken his jacket off, and he proposed a toast to Nelson Mandela with a lot of warmth, he had a lot of feeling and even though my book was being downplayed a little bit it was a great occasion, a very special occasion. And as I say it's a sad book, but that sadness corresponded very much to the moments of exile on the one hand and recovering from the defeat in South Africa on the other. When I do my next interview I'll pick up from there and maybe fill in a little bit more about my past.

WK: I'd just like to ask you one small thing. You seem to have had friends from every other country. Now, in your stay did you never have many English friends as such? People who you could go into their homes and visit and so on.

AS: In London the English friends I had like that were our neighbours who were also in the Left movement and we got very close to them, we fought with them and we got on well with them. One was Gloria Pahad, she married Aziz. There were other neighbours in our little kind of community there. At Southampton University I had very very close friends. Probably my closest friend there was a woman from New Zealand. But I had good friends amongst English people and friendships that are retained. I met some English lawyers.

NB. TAPE 1 ENDS LIKE THIS.

TAPE 2:

THIS IS THE PART FROM THE BEGINNING OF TAPE 2 - THERE SEEMS TO BE A LOT MISSING.

.....I found that a very interesting area to work in because at one stage there was a total resistance to any form of equality with women and then the change came. What was interesting was that the conservative men would accept - what they couldn't accept was that their wives would work and that their wives would be professionals. They could accept the working class women working, they would even accept the working class women voting, but not their wives voting. I attributed it partly to the role that middle class women had working at the home, supervising the household, and creating an area of comfort and security and prestige for the men. By the 1950's and 1960's women were in fact earning a second income. Very few households had servants. Stephanie and I were helped quite a lot by Sir Robert Birley who had been former headmaster of Eton who taught in Soweto for a while, he was a real strong anti-fascist and his biography "Red Robert" still read "Robert, we didn't actually see all that much red???? red ??? there" but he was a very open minded vigorous lively person and was quite generous to us in all sorts of ways. He invited us to his club, the only time I ever went to a club in England and I think there were Ladies nights when Stephanie could go, nice food, we met Sir Edward Boyle, an English cabinet minister, and he said "Tell me in 90 seconds why you should take a stand against apartheid when there are so many evils in the world". He said "At a cabinet meeting I've only got 90 seconds", that was when Edward Heath was Prime Minister. It was very hard to say everything in 90 seconds!

In any event once Stephanie and I went to Sir Robert and Lady Eleanor's home in Somerset, a very elegant 18th century home and there was Sir Robert doing the washing up and there was Lady Eleanor criticising him because he

didn't wash up or stack the plates properly! That was how the English upper middle class lived now so that in that sense women were freed, middle class women were freed from their responsibilities in the home, of supervising the household. There were now labour-saving devices - dishwashers and hoovers and so on and the people who had formerly been the domestics working in a feudal household kind of setting were now cleaners in offices and schools and they were unionised and the relationships were completely different. These factors put the theme of equality on the agenda in a different sort of a way. In the event the book was not completed before I left, it was published after I got to Mocambique. I regarded it as my contribution to English/European intellectual life.

WK: Could they be used in South Africa?

AS: A few copies had come here, very very few copies.

WK: Would it be relevant?

AS: Very relevant. The basic themes and occasionally I made references to South Africa where the analogy was very strong. But again that helped me when it came to the theme of sexism in the ANC and sexism in South African society. I had quite a strong, not only intellectual grounding, I had worked quite a lot with womens' groups and been educated a lot by them. Perhaps more in the United States than in England. So that was Southampton.... it was while I was at Southampton that and I might say that I always went up to the offices of the suffragettes and they would be the kind of offices that we knew, always on the top floor, one would go up a lot of winding stairs, a lot of old stairs, invariably these photographs and old books. They just reeked of struggle and I felt quite emotional about that. They were little offices, and just a few elderly people were either daughters of somebody who had been there, a new generation, it was

just a kind of a job. But I tuned in very strongly to the vibes in those offices.

Then in 1974 came the big change starting with the overthrow of facism in Portugal, April the 25th. My vision had always been different, I'd always thought Spain would be the first. Overthrow Franco, then Portugal would follow and then the Portugese colonies would be de-colonised and that would help us. In fact it was the anti-colonial war in Guinea Bissau, Angola, Mocambique that provoked the real crisis in Portugal, the collapse of the dictatorship in Portugal and it opened the way for independence in Mocambique and Angola, Guinea Bissau, and it transformed the whole Southern African scene.

I'm now going to speak about relocating to Africa. Stephanie was very keen to go and the first plan was that I would stay on in London with the children, she would go to Africa. As it turned out, it was the other way around. She wasn't pleased about that. Our university holidays were so long that I could go to teach at Dar-es-Salaam University for a whole quarter during the summer vacation and have a holiday afterwards. So Stephanie and our children, now aged about 5 and 4, went to Dar-es-Salaam for three ^{months} nights. We travelled on Air India, we would go to some funny little booking agent and get tickets at quarter price. Why Air India should be flying in Africa? Or was it Egypt Air not Air India, that's why they were flying in Africa! And the booking agents would buy up a whole plane and sell off literally at about a third of the price. So that enabled me with one air ticket for myself, for the whole family to go out, and we were put up at the Bahari????? Beach Hotel. Not bad, in fact it was wonderful. The kids learnt to swim there and I would go off about 15 miles on terribly bumpy roads to teach every day and come back and strip off and put on my cossie and go down to the pool and to walk along the beach and

have lovely food. It was a very nice break for all of us although our marriage was in tatters at that stage.

Afterwards we took the Tazara railway from Dar-es-Salaam to north of Lusaka, what was the place called - Katiri Mposhe, very strange journey it was, quite beautiful, interesting, but at the border you had to hand over what little local money you had. We didn't have other money, there was no food provided as far as I can remember and then when we got to the other end it stopped about a mile and a half away from the connection, so we had to carry our luggage for a mile and a half. There was no help at all, it was weird. After travelling a thousand miles on quite a good railway line, suddenly we had to carry our luggage the extra mile! No one explained why. In any event we went to Lusaka which was quite exciting, that was our first visit to Lusaka and we are back in Africa, back where the comrades were, linking up, closer to the struggle. We even went to see the Victoria Falls from the Zambian end. The Rhodesian planes were flying overhead, you sensed the danger all the time.

I remember staying with Jack and Ray Simons, we stayed with them in their house and eating pawpaws and guavas, fruit grown in the garden, and this meant a lot, coming back to Africa even though it wasn't South Africa and wearing shorts, and the hot evenings and the space. All spoke very very strongly to us. Then I went on to Maputo and I'm not sure if it was still Lourenco Marques or it had changed its name, that was '76. It was after the Soweto uprising, it was a period of great fervour and drama and it was a tremendous shot in the arm for the whole movement of course. I'd arranged to speak at the Centre for African Studies at the Eduardo Mondlane University and I gave a couple of lectures there and in the law faculty. The law faculty was very interesting, because now everybody was studying. They opened up a law faculty for the first time and a veterinary science

faculty. They got 404 new students, 400 for law and 4 for veterinary science. Young people, old people, people who hadn't been able to study before, it was a tremendous mix and half or three quarters of the lecturers were leaving, a few more were coming in.

WK: Portuguese?

AS: Portuguese mainly, and I just knew that was where I wanted to be. I didn't want to be in London anymore, I wanted to be in Africa, I wanted to be in revolution in Mocambique, I wanted to be at that university. Before I left I asked the Rector of the University what were the chances of coming back to teach there and he said fine, they had stamped the contract and then the next year was my last year in Southampton England, and it was planning to come to Mocambique.

So it was I and not Stephanie in the end who came. She wasn't allowed to come by the movement that felt that, I don't know, it counted against her being a woman, being white, being attractive and being perhaps independent. It was just too much. So she saw other colleagues doing the same kind of underground work which she'd been doing were sent back and she was kept on in London and I think that she quite rightly felt chagrined, that disappointment that she was left out as a result. But the fact was that Mocambique revived me completely. From the moment I landed there.

WK: We all called you the Great Optimist at the time, a lot of us.

AS: Yes, well the optimism about Mocambique was true and misplaced at the same time. I mean now the country is on its knees, a lot later, but there were huge human achievements and again a very, very rich political cultural experience in the legal sphere, in the sphere of culture. I found I used to say that I accumulated an enormous amount of knowledge in England and the United States and elsewhere but I never learnt anything new. In Mocambique every week I was learning something new, everything was upside

down, everything was in turmoil and it revived my confidence and my courage and it wasn't just being in Africa.

It was Africa on the march, self confident, proud to be a third world country in which the poor and the very downtrodden and oppressed really felt they were coming out into their own. They just couldn't manage it and we used to say that there were three causes for the collapse that came afterwards. The first was the terrible colonial heritage, underdevelopment, illiteracy, the second was the war imposed by first Smith in Rhodesia, then by South Africa and the third were the mistakes. Some people put everything on to the first two and just wouldn't acknowledge mistakes.

Certainly I was a great defender of Frelimo. It was partly because they had done so much for me, and I'd recovered my elan and spirit and partly our people were not well informed about Mocambique and what was happening there. We had our own predilections, we liked Zapu, we didnt like Zanu, we liked Angola, we didn't like Mocambique, and it was often done on a very subjective sort of a basis. Particularly when the war got bigger and bigger in Zimbabwe I could see that Zanu was doing most of the fighting. Underdevelopment, war and mistakes all featured very strongly. It's impossible to explain underdevelopment to people who haven't experienced it and tried to work. Because you can never isolate a problem, every problem has problems behind it. There would be the problem of - say you wanted to set up a court system in the countryside, one of the problems: just to get there you needed transport, transport meant a car, a 4 wheel drive, then you had to get the petrol, to get the petrol you had to have the coupons. Just to illustrate the problems behind the problems behind the problems. They were rationing petrol and there was no paper in the country to print the ration coupons that we had. Then the paper would come in, the petrol

would be there but the petrol pumps weren't working because the electricity supply had been cut by the war, by sabotage. So you see Wolfie, the minute I mention under-development, even this bloody machine breaks down! So then the electricity would be cut off because of the sabotage. It was just problem after problem after problem. You needed the resignation of a saint just to survive, just to function or else you gave up and became cynical or else you became bitter and you started blaming everybody there for the failures of the revolution and so on.

What I found very interesting however during this whole period, particularly in the early years was moving from being in opposition, being a critic, being against the public power which I had been my whole life in South Africa, in a different way in England but the government was always seen as somehow "them" you know, the other side, to being on the side of the government. I had never been that in my life before, and not only that a government that had fought, that had set up liberated zones, that had been in resistance, underground, and fought for freedom, and many people couldn't make that transition. They only knew how to oppose and to criticise and to be against, which was very good, but they couldn't now develop the human qualities and the managerial and administrative qualities, the leadership qualities and the contributory qualities that were required for a pro-active policy, a formative policy, setting up structures, establishing systems and organisations and so on. I enjoyed it enormously, I loved it, it was such a relief and a pleasure to be building and not just criticising. Seeing people stand up and assume and take on responsibilities and being able to participate in the process, that was very, very good.

I had many very humiliating experiences - it was a very hard process. You didn't count for anything in particular coming from outside, being English

speaking, being a lawyer, none of that really featured, and quite often I found myself left out of things that were on the go or doing the wrong thing or understanding things badly. It took me quite a while to learn Portuguese properly. That made all the difference. My whole relationship with people there improved enormously when I was able to speak and communicate in Portuguese. I made a point that the only reading I did was in Portuguese. I spent a whole year on one book and I used to read the daily newspapers and weekly magazine, go to the movies and watch. They had a little guy sitting up next to the projector, and he had a roll on which was typed the dialogue in Portuguese, it was always a little yellow thing, black on yellow, and sometimes the dialogue didn't actually correspond to the action, it would be left out or be a few minutes behind, and he would quickly whip through and catch up again. But we all became quite expert in making those adjustments.

They were 11 extremely rich, extremely rewarding years for me of a totally different order to the time that I spent in England in terms of engagement and involvement and learning things and being stretched. I enjoyed it at a purely personal level. I was thrilled by the success of the revolution and participating in building things. We would go on May Day marches and we organised the first South African group after a couple of years.

The ANC's status and position there was always very, very tricky. The first time I arrived I remember speaking to a guy in the Africa Department of Frelimo, Albert Sithole, who'd been previously married to an ANC person but that had broken up many years before. I was complaining that I couldn't get in touch with the ANC representative in Maputo, and I said it's easier to find the ANC in Johannesburg than it is in Maputo and he said to me very calmly, "Well that's the way it should be". So our presence was very very very low profile for quite a long time. I was there

on a contract in the law department. Ruth First came a year or two afterwards although she'd been there before and Rob Davis a couple of years after that again. We formed a little kind of community. Alpheus Manghezi was already there, all from the ANC, and we formed a little community that was there quite openly and our contribution was to work to help build up the new Mocambique, to learn and contribute whatever we could.

We set up a sort of an ANC unit that used to function and meet and discuss what was going on and pass on general kind of political information about Mocambique and how we could improve relations between Frelimo and the ANC. That was like our main function.

I still remember attending the first dance in Mocambique after independence. Dancing for a long time after independence had been criticised as bourgeois and colonialist and reactionary. You could do traditional dances but dancing where you put on nice music and you actually touched your partner, in couples? The youth movement had a huge debate on that and eventually it was Chisano who is now the president who intervened in the debate. He said "You know we had a dance - *marrabenta* - that was very popular in the nightclubs, it was our dance the Portuguese colonialists took it away from us, we must take it back, we must dance, the people must dance".

So the first dance was at the university residence where I was staying and I still remember the president of the youth movement and the general secretary who were a man and a woman, both sat there, they didn't dance once. It was like they were blessing the right to dance, and the music was put on. Just before that the Cubans had helped with some Cuban day, and the curtains opened and suddenly the cha-cha came on and we saw the revolutionary Cubans doing the revolutionary cha-cha as if to say well if the Cubans can do that then it's ok. As I say, people didn't know what to

do, if you were allowed to touch and hold your partner or what, so that first dance wasn't the jolliest dance I've ever attended.

The fact is Mocambicans adore dancing. I used to have this theory that if the Portuguese colonialists had been clever, instead of fighting Frelimo they would have just put on some loud disco music and all the combatants, the guerillas, would have come out jiving instead of fighting. So any attempt to suppress dancing, calling it bourgeois, and North American culture and so on was doomed from the beginning.

They even did battle against Christmas at one stage. Christmas on the basis that it was a fake, it wasn't even a genuine Christian holiday. Christians could always celebrate Christmas, but should it be a public holiday? First they said no, and they tried to build up New Year and they even allowed more food to come out for New Year and less food for Christmas. Then everybody discovered they were Christians. They would all take off allegedly to go to church, the cathedral and so on, so it became a popular holiday, a peoples' holiday anyhow, so they called it Family Day. And everybody would say Family Day/Natale, natale means Christmas. So in the end they kind of gave in. It was stupid resistance.

At the level of culture the Mocambicans had a very all-embracing open policy. Their idea was that the culture should be very much people-based culture, but the people were very diverse people and the people came from all over the country, they spoke many languages, they had many dance forms, but also the people of Portuguese origin were part of the Mocambican people and the language that they used and the art forms and so on were now part and parcel of Mocambican life. I remember the Minister of Culture saying after 500 years presence one can say Portuguese is an African language, its not just a European language. Many of us in Mocambique use it and speak it and it was seen as a language of national unity, the language of liberation

of Frelimo, the language of international communication. Their policy was multi-lingualism, but in fact Portuguese dominated too much.

I found that was also a very useful experience when we started developing our bill of rights for South Africa, and I was, based on Mocambican experience, one of those who very strongly urged a multi-lingual approach without officialising any language but using maybe one language or more than one as languages of official business, languages of record, but not calling them official languages so that the other languages are marginalised and suppressed. We had big debates over culture. I hadn't realised it but the paper that I did had caused such a furore in Lusaka and then in South Africa about banning for five years saying that art is a weapon of struggle, which of course I did with my tongue in my cheek, which was meant to be provocative and it wasn't to ban art as a weapon of struggle, it was to ban saying it over and over and over again as though you had said something important. I hadn't realised it was very much based on my Mocambique experience and in particular one lecture which was given by one of the leading intellectuals, Sergio Vieira, which he gave at a club I think, in which he actually said that the Internationale is a wonderful song that inspired millions of people throughout the world but Beethoven's Ode to Joy is better music. We were all shocked and he argued against kids being paraded up and down like little soldiers, he said "children are children and you mustn't turn them into little soldiers". He argued for an opening up of theatre and culture and ideas and so on, and it was like a slap in the face for all of us.

I'd forgotten that event completely but I think my paper fulfilled a similar role afterwards, but I'd just lived through all this, and I saw how we'd put on, we had a national dance competition in which about half a million people took part, the traditional dancers in all the different

areas. Then the best groups went to the district. From the district to the provincial capital, from the provincial capital each province sent about 100 dancers down to Maputo and every night for two glorious weeks I went and watched the different dancers.

Out of that they developed a national dance and choral group, semi-professional, which then became professional and then put on with the help of ballet trainers, ballerinas and dancers and musicians from Cuba and the Soviet Union, from North America, they developed a dance school for kids and this dance company put on two at least full length ballets while I was there, very creative. And we didn't argue after Samora was killed for example, the dance school put on a wonderful programme. For the first six minutes a thing called A Song for Samora, and the kids black, white and brown danced to the first six minutes of Mozart's *Requiem*. But the style was modern, the feeling was very African and one of the dancers was Samora's daughter. The whole audience, the parents and all these kids some of them from real pandokkies, from shanties, came dressed up in their suits and their dresses and just came to see their kids dancing. The kids not only danced that, they danced - there might be one kid doing the Dying Swan, then the kids would all dance traditional dance from the Niassa province and everybody did everything. So the black kids would do the Dying Swan, the white kids would do the dance from Niassa, they were just kids, they were Mocambican kids. We didn't speak about Afro-centred and Euro-centred, it was Mocambique-centred.

All the inputs and all the currents, all the culture resources of the country whatever their origins whether it was from Asia - and there's quite a big Goanese population of Indian Goan origin - whether from Europe, Portugal or elslewhere, whether from Africa, what matters was it was all Mocambican. We had quite a small but lively film group making

documentaries and short films, we had some wonderful posters. There's a great feeling for culture in Mocambique, much stronger than I encountered in any ex-British colony. And Samora used to joke that many people felt ashamed in Mocambique that they were colonised by the Portuguese and not by the British. He said many Zimbabweans were proud of their oppressors and they said we were oppressed by better people than you were, but the fact there was something to do with the nature of resistance in Portugal linking up with the resistance in Africa that gave a strong cultural dimension to the freedom movement that one didn't find in Zimbabwe for example, and we don't find in the ANC. If Mandela was to write poetry or OR were to write a poem, particularly an intimate poem I think everybody would be very embarrassed. But Neto wrote beautiful poetry, and Marcelino dos Santos, beautiful poetry in Mocambique, and even Samora wrote a poem when Josina his wife died, a quite lovely poem. And all the ordinary soldiers would write poems with mistakes and bad Portuguese but heartfelt, it wasn't seen as being incompatible with being a freedom fighter and a militant.

That came out in all sorts of other ways, a tremendous love for culture, a participatory feeling about culture, very few complexes and just enjoying everything wherever it came from. Breaking away from total Portuguese domination in the sense of the fado and the Portuguese nightclub music, in the sense of dressing little African kids up in Portuguese costumes for folk dance, but not having complexes about Portuguese literature, Portuguese language and about culture and music from North America, from all over the African continent, from Asia, from wherever. To me that was extremely enriching.

In England on the cultural sphere I learnt quite a lot about arts councils, about regional sponsorship and promotion of the arts, of the evolution of state support for the arts and the autonomy of these arts councils.

I should have mentioned in England I had two huge personal intellectual endeavours, this is just a little bit in parenthesis, the one was to watch the ^{cycle} Ringside from Wagner, five nights of English National Opera averaging about three or four hours a night, it was a huge treat for me, sung in English, it was absolutely glorious, I adored it, I became quite passionate for Wagner and that kind of music. And I felt that it was like I had climbed that mountain, there was nothing in music that was now too big for me. And in terms of reading, I read, in English of course, Remembrance of Things Past by Marcel Proust and that was like 1854 pages, night after night after night of this extraordinary, intricate beautiful sophisticated nuance writing, and again it had always been out there as something remote, impossible, that all those other clever intellectuals read, and somehow I had to overcome that barrier, climb that Materhorn or Kiliminjaro, get through it to feel that now I can hold my own with any intellectual anywhere in the world and not feel somehow intimidated. I did that not in my last year, but towards the end of my stay in England, and now I can look any intellectual in the eye anywhere in the world, my South African chutzpah will rear itself and carry me through.

Talking about South African chutzpah, once I went to Vienna to speak to the Chancellor Kreisky who was one of the great veterans of middle European politics, social democrat, a powerful figure in the socialist international, chancellor, he was really like a Hapsburg, he'd replaced the monarchs, he lived in the palace, a shortish guy who was a lawyer, he could be a practitioner in the magistrates court in Bellville in terms of appearance, but he had this tremendous stature and power, and I was sent to him by the office in London to ask him to set up an anti-apartheid conference in Vienna. I went with a Vietnamese, he had something to do with the funding organisation and this Vietnames comrade had been in the

resistance for 20 or 30 years, he was telling me how he had climbed mountains, been in the bush in the jungle, withstood bombing, the lot, but when it came to meeting the Chancellor his knees shook, he was tongue tied, and there was I who had done none of these experiences, and I had no problems speaking to him like he was my old pal. That was South Africa chutzpah that again stood me in good stead.

To get back to Mocambique: so these were ^{intensely} intentionally rich and difficult years. Everything was difficult. I got the most beautiful flat, overlooking the sea, balcony on one side and overlooking a major boulevard on the other side. But I couldn't buy any furniture, there was no furniture, I couldn't buy curtains, there were no curtains, I couldn't buy tea cups, I couldn't buy teaspoons. The search was on for everything. But in the end when you had furnished the place and it took like a year and you had found a carpenter here and I got some old material, the cloth that was used in the textile factory to clean the rollers, would end up with the most beautiful patterns. Then somebody was leaving and I bought some stuff from that person and in one way and another I slowly built up. I bought a lot of artwork and it ended up a magnificent flat with big pot plants and gorgeous sculpture by the best sculptors in Mocambique and lovely paintings and a big wall hanging and mats, and all things crafted by Mocambican people with tremendous feeling for the country and for the creativity of the people in the country. It took a long time, it was difficult but the end result was very beautiful.

Getting food was difficult. We were never hungry, the consumer carpenters played a tremendous role in rationing and distributing basic food supplies on an equal basis. Outside of rice and beans and cooking oil and sugar and salt, getting bread was difficult but we could get bread, you could always get some vegetables, there was some kind of fish around, but more and more,

and the more they tried to control the more and more things went on to the black market. I can still remember one day I was phoned up by a colleague of mine, he was a lawyer, the son of a lawyer who had actually helped the South African underground, Philip Ferreira was his name, and so from quite a bourgeois background, he had studied at Wits, he was used to quite a comfortable life. He'd been in the Portugese underground linked up with our underground his wife Marie Elena was the head of paediatrics at the Central Hospital in Maputo and they had a wonderful flat overlooking the sea in Frederick Engels Avenue and they invited me for lunch one Sunday because their son-in-law had caught a rainbow fish. The son -in-law was a great deep sea diver and he used to go spear fishing and he had brought home this lovely fish. I said Marie Elena, can I bring you, I've got four potatoes and two onions, can I make that my contribution, and she said no please Albie, can you spare them, and I said it would be a great pleasure to bring them. She said are you sure you can spare them, and I said ok, and that was the whole lot of the meal, four potatoes and two onions. It just transformed the meal, so you could get fish but you couldn't get potatoes and onions. And that was a mixture of the world, of underdevelopment but also mistakes, and the whole economic policy was wrong. It was based on the idea that food prices had to be controlled so as to make them within the reach of every ordinary family. All that happened was the market was empty, and all the food went into the black market. The prices went higher and higher, and all of us were in that ugly, horrible position of you either went without, or you paid black market prices and you felt like a traitor. Otherwise you went without. Then the question of money exchange. The offical rate was I think 30 meticas??? to the dollar and the unoffical rate was about 2000. If you changed your money at offical rates it was like giving it away, you could

do nothing with it. If you went for the unofficial rate you felt you were participating in the black market and you were placed in these terrible dilemmas all the time. You would try and work out different sorts of compromises but that was also very unfortunate, very stressful.

Then the government from having started off with a very positive penal policy of open prisons and re-integration with the community, when the black market got bigger and bigger now tried to crack down and introduce capital punishment for the first time, introduce public whipping, it was so ugly and again it taught me the importance of having basic rules of legality and due procedure and not swinging from one position to the other, and certainly not trying to use the penal laws as the basic means of solving social problems. It didn't work, it was ugly, it brutalised the society and now I'm happy to say that they have gone back to their earlier position but at a very heavy moral price.

One of the things that we learnt there was the importance of good old fashioned legality, the right to have a lawyer, the right to proper criminal procedure with time periods, proper controls, the importance of training more judges and more magistrates. We emptied the prisons in Maputo where we reduced the awaiting trial period from about two years to two weeks simply by training more magistrates. Very practical measures like that were needed to produce practical results. Not just theorising about class struggle and the people, the masses. We used the phrase "the people, the povo", it was very meaningful, it was very affirmative, but also turned out to be very dangerous in many ways because the people became converted into a rather bland homogenous mass and in fact the povo, the people in reality are very varied in social terms, in language terms, in belief terms. There are Muslims, there Christians, there are polygamists,

there are monogamists, there are militants, there are reactionaries, there are conservatives, there are urban people, there are rural people, different cultures and backgrounds and all the rest. The advantage of speaking about the povo was they all had fundamental rights as human beings, as citizens, that was very affirmative and very positive. The disadvantage was you never looked to the concrete needs of particular groups. And we almost whacked out civil society as a goal and one of the leaders said to me one day, he said Albie you know one of the biggest mistakes we made was we thought there was only the working class, the peasantry and the leadership. We had to destroy every other social formation. He said especially in Africa there are all sorts of groups that people create and form for themselves and you cant subordinate them all for the state or the part leadership trying to do that and again. That's one of the strong lessons I bring back with me from our actual concrete experience, not from what happened in Eastern Europe, I visited there several times, and I must say it was hard in many ways, very disappointing in many ways, except Cuba which had a buoyancy and a vitality that I responded to very positively. But the actual experience of living in a post-revolutionary society, participating in it, that's what taught me about the importance of a mixed economy, of a strong private sector, of the state not trying to. ..Samora even said he said we shouldnt.

NB TAPE 2 ends like this.

Tape 3 starts as follows:

....prepare the eulogies and I dont think that any speech in my life had been as hard as that one because it meant acknowledging the death of Ruth and saying something that was kind of valid in relation to her with the tremendous standards that she always demanded and one felt one had to apply at her death. It was a funeral attended by hundreds, maybe thousands of

people, Mocambicans for the main part, and there were soldiers and mamas with babies, and the cleaners from the university and intellectuals and government people and journalists and ANC people and lots of singing. We kind of organised it so that everybody would pass and throw some sand onto the coffin. Ruth's mother was sitting in front and two of her daughters were there, and we were all crying, and Joe was there, his face was absolutely red and his eyes were in a way that I had never seen and haven't seen since and this very beautiful lament and singing African-style taking place all the time as people wound past. We didn't throw sand we threw petals, petals and sand onto the coffin, with two lines, one on each side and hundred and hundreds of people coming through as the choir sang so softly and so beautifully. I think it was Indres Naidoo, I remember Chris Hani, Indres and myself, and maybe it was Alpheus who carried the coffin, we had all been close to her so we hadn't worked it out as a freedom charter kind of arrangement, it just worked out that way.

We attended many funerals. There was a particular section of the graveyard that was set aside for ANC and we had the people who were killed at???? Matola first and then somebody else was killed, blown up near the border with Swaziland, and then Ruth was there and others were also laid to rest there and each time we went we would wonder if, you know maybe the next time the funeral would be for me or for so and so or for so and so. The funerals were very strong occasions, we mourned our dead, we wept for all the people killed in South Africa and blown up in Maseru, massacred in all the different parts of southern Africa. With song, with political emotion, with human solidarity. One day I hope that arrangements can be made either for the bodies to be brought back and buried in South Africa or for some

appropriate monument to be established there with the families being able to go to pay tribute there.

After Ruth was killed I went to the States. I was quite sick then, I had glandular fever which I am sure was brought on by the exhaustion. I remember trying to get security, feeling a year of total terror, all I could get was, I spoke to my friends in New York. What did they know about security? They didn't mix in the world of gangs and mafia and all the rest. The best they could do was to put me in touch with the Human Rights Commissioner for the New York Police, that was the closest they had to this kind of thing. He sent me to the 84th Precinct or something like that. It was like walking into "Kojak" with the people walking in and out and shouting at each other and drinking coffee out of plastic mugs and a constant bustle and movement, very different from the South African or English charge office. I spoke to a guy there who was going to advise me. He was from the anti-terrorist squad. He never got it right. When I said I was from South Africa, he assumed it was a group like the ANC that was trying to kill me. I never got into his head, he was a black American as it happened, Sergeant Smart. It never penetrated into his head that it was a white government that was trying to kill me because I belonged to the ANC. But of course it didn't make all that much difference. He told me about things to be careful of and what to watch out for and I ended up far more paranoid than I had been when I got in there, because he told me - had I thought about a hole being cut into my ceiling. I used to worry about people climbing onto my balcony and smashing down the door. I never thought of somebody descending through a hole in the ceiling. So that just added to my fears. And I said in the end "Well Sgt Smart are you saying that I really must be on my guard all the time?" He said "yes, a little bit paranoid", I said "well I'm that already thank you very much". So I

ended up buying a siren for my car. I suspected the car would be the most vulnerable, the most accessible means for my being killed. The damned thing used to go off, I was in the cinema one day and whaa whaa whaa I had to leap out and switch off the thing. In the end I lent the car to somebody who had it hosed down so it would be nice and clean when I got it back and the water messed up the alarm and I never had it replaced after that. Then I don't remember all the different attacks but I remember one day I had broken up with my companion Lucia and I was staying with ??????Halma Valee in a flat while I was waiting to get my own flat back. Someone came to give me information about a commando attack. Now this commando attack had taken place just around the corner but I had slept right through it, but they had been up to a block of flats and instead of turning left they had turned right. That was something we often got confused with in Mocambique. You'd have an address instead of the flat having a number it would be the third on the right, but was it the right facing the lift or the right with your back to the lift? In any event these commandoes went into the right instead of the left and they killed a Mocambican mother and father who were screaming at them "it's not us, it's not us!", and their poor little baby was in the middle with the blood spurting out all over the place, and they were just shouting and shouting and pleading for help, and meanwhile the comrades in the flat next door apparently just lay low, they didn't do anything, because it wouldn't have helped, it wouldn't have saved the others and they would have been killed as well. Also somebody at an ANC house, a Mocambican guard, who had been warned to leave that place, but he was so desperate for accommodation - he was shot and the house was burnt. So we lived in this atmosphere of constant pressure that every day there could be an attack of that kind, that the people were totally ruthless and merciless. We assumed by now they were coming by boat and

then just rushing up the hill and getting away again. As I say I thought I had a kind of immunity because I wasn't involved in any of this kind of underground work or certainly not MK work and I was doing a lot of public work, I was known as they wouldn't go for me. I was wrong. The other aspect of living there was the impact of the underdevelopment, the mismanagement and the physical sabotage against the electricity and just general disruption. At one stage I was staying with Lucia, we were on the 12th floor of a building and day after day, night after night, we had to carry water up, we would carry a gas bottle up there equipped with gas, in the dark, the lifts weren't working, the water wasn't being pumped out. We would carry our groceries up. This just like became normal, if you wanted to have a book published and I managed to get quite a few books published, you had to import the paper and get funding for that, and that would take ages. You would have to then get the paper out of the customs and that would take ages, and you would have to get transport for the paper from the customs to a warehouse and to the printers, and you couldn't get petrol and you couldn't get a lorry to do that. At one stage when we did a book on the murals of Maputo my friend who was working with me had to borrow his dad's bakkie, a little truck, to carry the lead to the printers, otherwise the book wouldn't have been published. Then you had to watch the proofs and you had to check on everything, and there would be all sorts of interruptions and breakdowns and then the electricity supply would be cut and you know you really had to be heroic to do the most banal simple things. You had to believe in it, you had to get pleasure out of doing it and you had to find the ways and means of surviving and working in those circumstances. Of course anybody who doesn't know extreme underdevelopment even without war, and coupled with war, doesn't know, I'm sure you know what it's like, struggling in those circumstances.

So from that point of view life was extremely hard, it was dangerous. Materially I was never short, we didn't live well but we had beautiful apartments. I could have a holiday every year. I had to give lectures in the States to pay for my holiday and to pay for my children to travel to be with me, so I was overworked all the time. I got hepatitis, I don't know if that was connected, that knocked me out on one of my trips, there was always the threat of malaria, tropical diseases. But generally I was much healthier than I had been in England. When there are no doctors around you damn well have to be healthy. There were only two dentists in the country, one of them was my friend, so that's two dentists for 13 million people, you just stop eating sweets. So those were very positive aspects of living in Mocambique.

The last thing that perhaps was of special interest to me was the fact that Mocambique had been colonised by Portugal, created a totally different cultural matrix and context. I learnt Portuguese language, that opened up Brazil to me Latin America. I could converse with Spanish speakers, I could see movies from Brazil, from Latin America, I could read Portuguese literature and associate a lot with Portuguese-speaking people from Portugal as well as communicate with Mocambicans who use Portuguese as the language of national unity. But a whole Latin world, a Mediterranean world and a South American world was opened up to me, it was glorious, it was wonderful. It meant breaking out of the Anglo Saxon world, and Anglo Saxon points of reference and styles and ways of doing things. I just wish more of our comrades had had that experience because that was very globalising and in particular Latin America is a continent that has an enormous amount to offer in relation to Africa, not just in terms of trade, in terms of culture and problems, common third world experience, establishing national identities and our relationship with the rest of the world. There are

great points of similarity, the role of intelligentsia, the development of popular movements, the role of the community - all these things need to be developed and explored.

Going to Lusaka on the other hand was a totally different experience. I never enjoyed Lusaka. Maybe it would have been different if I had lived there and certainly I made some excellent friends amongst Zambians and no one can take away what Zambia and Kenneth Kaunda in person and ???Unip did for the South African struggle. They didn't suffer nearly as much as Angola and Mocambique, but they suffered a lot. The economy was pushed back, there were psychological stresses and pressures and in all sorts of ways they paid quite a heavy price for us. Going there was like visiting a whole different sort of universe. There was far less cultural sensitivity and awareness, it was far more difficult to have one of those marvellously intense and rich political debates that we used to have in Mocambique about the world, about Africa, about social transformation, development. That I missed very much. The sense of danger was also very strong in Lusaka. What was wonderful was to be close to the heart of the ANC, to go to those funny little offices that always looked so unprotected in a little back alley. I remember you telling me how vulnerable OR Tambo was with his desk next to an office where people could just walk past and take a pot shot there. At first we stayed at Andrews Motel right on the outskirts, somebody once said as a joke that for some people Andrews Motel was seen as the height of chic, they even wanted to have their wedding there. It didn't come through like that to us at all. But the problem wasn't so much the rather elementary service it was the sense of being very exposed and totally infiltrated. Then gradually we moved from Andrews Motel to the Lusaka Hotel in the centre of town and then to the posher hotels. The thing about the posher hotels was not only were they more comfortable and

easier to put up a whole lot of people in but we felt much more secure there. It would have been much more difficult for them to pick us off. A story that's not so known is that when we met through Idasa with the writers, mainly Afrikaans writers from South Africa at the Victoria Falls, I was rather surprised that a clerk at the hotel insisted that I share a room with Steve Tswete. We all liked to have our own rooms anyhow, you could come and go when we pleased, some people snore and others don't. Also Steve is a very heavy pipe smoker and I'm allergic to smoke and he was on the national executive committee and if allowances were made for those things he should have had a room of his own. They seemed rather insistent on this. In the end I was given another room. Then weeks afterwards I was told that in fact the Zimbabwean security had discovered that somebody had come with a bomb to blow up Steve, and maybe the idea was they would blow two of us up together. This was after the bomb attack on me in Mocambique, but they would get two birds as it were with one stone, and maybe it was they bribed somebody in the hotel or just made that suggestion and we were told to be quite cautious. I didn't know about it, fortunately, at the time. And I might say the meetings with Afrikaner intellectuals from South Africa was so heartwarming and so strong, and so confidence building in a way that can't be over-estimated. First with the lawyers in Harare in January 1989 and then later that year at the Victoria Falls with the writers. And to this day long friendships survive. I meet the writers, and I meet the lawyers on all sorts of occasions and we have that kind of bond that we met in exile. And they were very moved at the way we constantly spoke about home, they were surprised. I don't know what image they had of exiles but to us there was no doubt about it, home was home and they had come from home and they were people from home happy to meet us. And so many tears were shed, especially with the writers. It was very

emotional, very strong. I can recall in December 1979 in Maputo I was helping out with the constitutional law lectures at the law faculty and the professor, the lecturer there was one of the Frelimo militants, the veterans, and he said would I like to come to the parliament, I said I would love to, they were having a session just before Christmas. I had a seat at the back and we watched the proceedings. It was very different from anything I had ever seen. Samora would come in and he would sing. I cant imagine the Queen leading a song in the House of Commons or the House of Lords in parliament or De Klerk, or for that matter even Mandela, and everybody joining in. But the idea was you came dressed TAPE GOES OFF

...instead of having some shmuck wearing a wig and carrying a mace to prove how civilised everybody was, it came from singing freedom songs that united everybody and had a very strong Mocambican quality to it. In the event, then he introduced the proceedings and quoted from the constitution, it was all very correct, but all the time Samora is looking out to the left, no looking out to the right, to the wings, as he sat on the platform there. Eventually somebody comes in, speaks to him and he says something, the person goes out, the person comes back, Samora stands up, he leads another song and he says:"The Lancaster House Agreement has just been declared: Peace in Zimbabwe". And the people just stood up and spontaneously burst into the Zimbabwean freedom song. It was a very hot day just before Christmas so the air conditioning was on quite strongly and the room was quite chilled and I started shivering. I was shivering and shivering and shivering, and it was partly to do with the airconditioning, but I was shivering because we were saying Peace has come to Zimbabwe, but peace hadn't come to South Africa. And although I was half crying with everybody else there I was also half crying for ourselves, for those of us who were still struggling. I managed to go later that year to Zimbabwe and

it was quite an extraordinary time because the whites in the centre of Harare looked as though they didn't know what had hit them. They were so confident that old Smith was going to pull it off somehow and suddenly there was Mugabe whom they hated much more than they hated Nkomo, in power. But at the same time things ran very smoothly and there was a sense of an orderly transition and it was quite positive. It wasn't drastic like it had been in Mocambique, there was none of the panic there had been in Mocambique nor was there any of the overt sabotage that we could see. I am sure there was a lot of covert sabotage and physical sabotage through South African agencies later on. I was invited to be external examiner at the university and it was very pleasurable to be involved in constructing and building up and transmitting a lot of the positive things I had gained in Mocambique now to Zimbabwe. I was also external examiner in Maseru and that was a helluva thing getting there, flying in this little plane over South Africa and I could look down and see the calves and the cows, I couldn't see the chickens but I could see the animals and so on and there was my country. I was flying maybe a few hundred feet over my country. I couldn't land, and landing in little Lesotho, surrounded, there was the South African border, so close and then of course all the raids, and once I had to speak to ^{Limpo} Dempo Hani, Chris's wife, she came when she was nearly killed, and again they went to the wrong flat and they killed the neighbours, so she and her two daughters came to stay in my flat in Mocambique. Now she was back in Maseru, I had to see her and the only safe place where I could meet her was in the king's car. The king wanted me to come and sit at his table and be part an audience of bright intellectuals and Dimpo arranged to travel in the car, I was at the university, to be fetched. That was the only time that we could meet without fear of being bumped off.

There was a lot of intellectual activity. I was also external examiner at Dar-es-Salaam University and it meant contact with the universities, seeing the problems, tremendous shortages of books, no libraries to speak of, students, some with quite good backing especially in Zimbabwe, schooling in that sense was quite good and the quality was very high at Zimbabwe law faculty. There were all sorts of difficulties you couldn't imagine in another context. Then shaping new courses, and trying to give an African reality, a presence and personality to everything. But at the same time not to ghetto-ise the thought, so that people would be part of world thought, world ideas, to get that balance right. These were also very useful experiences.

A special pleasure for me was working with OR Tambo especially in the last few years. He had such a delicate way. I would quite often get a letter or sometimes a telex would reach me saying "Comrade Albie, we hereby inform you that you've been appointed to go to Greenland next Friday", or "Comrade Albie this is to inform you that you have to produce a paper by 36 hours", or something and it would be from middle level comrades in the ANC. Here I'm working this heavy day, battling to do everything, almost no time, I would work at night on ANC stuff. It was in that sense a very exhausting, exhilarating, tiring phase in my life and you'd get this imperious command from some functionary in Lusaka. But sometimes the phone would go or I would get through eventually on the phone with someone: Comrade Albie, the president would like to speak to you. "Hullo Albie, this OR here, how are you, how are you getting on. Are you still working so hard, you must look after yourself. Now I know you are very very busy but we've got something or other happening and I was just wondering if its at all possible can you participate, or help prepare something.." whatever it might be. "If it helps at all I will speak to the minister and get permission for you to

come here work on a code of conduct", and of course when someone asks you like that you want to jump up and say "Take me, take me!" whereas if somebody commands you you want to start looking for excuses to get out of it. So on a few occasions I was caught in this and the constitutional committee was set up. We set up a legal department. I was one of those instrumental in drafting the statutes and working out the whole concept of the legal department. I'm happy to say that I strongly supported the appointment of ^{Zola Skeginya} Zolas Wea as the justice officer and head of the department because he showed courage and independence and he had the right kind of spirit that pleased me very much and all of us who were responsible for that I think can be pleased that our judgement has turned out to be very well justified. That's when I got to know ^{Penuel} Maduna, ~~Ben Maduna~~, he fled from Swaziland and he said "Comrade Albie, can I stay overnight?" and he stayed I think for six months. And his wife came, and their baby came, and it was the beginning of a most wonderful friendship. I learned an enormous amount about ANC post my leaving, a whole new generation, and Swaziland and so on. That was also very positive. And Maduna also became a leading figure in the new legal department. There were various others as well. The constitutional committee eventually was set up. I've spoken about that elsewhere, and maybe I can get that document - how we started working on a bill of rights so I don't think I'll go through all that again.

WK: What year would that be?

As: The constitutional committee I think started functioning in about '86 and it was the time of the Eminent Persons group and OR called us together and he said that we are under strong pressure to produce an ANC constitution. We can't just criticise what is happening. And as I say I will get that document and it can be attached to this one. But working with him was always an immense pleasure. He was so courteous and so

helpful, he took your work very seriously, he read and studied everything, made his own input, encouraged us to work together as a collective. We are all a bit prima donna-ish, the lawyers, it's part of our craft in a way, speak well, argue your position and somehow with OR there, he just managed to get us to work together, we all respected him very much. He used Jack Simons a lot as intermediary and Jack also played a very important role in those early years of the constitution committee in just getting us together and he always had OR's ear, so we could get relatively quick decisions on questions.

Eventually I think I was working as a commissioner. We were finalising our report on the ???Tami Zulu case and we were working very hard, there were about five of us. I know I used this phrase, "we were working very hard" quite often, but we were, we worked right through the lunch hour, and then we would just have some tea - there was no milk, and a sandwich with some dry bread, maybe we even had a pie but to save time we worked right through and then we finished just after five. Jobs ^Tobotwana who was chairing our proceedings looked at his watch and said "oh comrades, its ten past five, let me get the BBC", because parliament had just sat in South Africa and we were expecting some possible announcement. Now a couple of years earlier, the time of the Rubicon, a few of us had gone to Rob Davis' house in Maputo to watch PW allegedly cross the Rubicon and he had a little set, black and white, and we switched it on, feeling very uncomfortable (a) bunking, leaving work and (b) leaving work to watch bloody PW Botha on top of it and then he started and we saw the famous finger thrusting out in that arrogant kind of a speech, we switched off afterwards, it was really like back to the struggle. I suppose one consequence of that was quite literally I was it was quite clear they were going to carry on and have at least one more round of trying to demolish us and hammer us after that. So we were a bit

skeptical now, February 2 1990. We switched on and this kind of strongish BBC confident voice that speaks with authority, was saying in the commentary, because Jobs said its after 5 we missed the news but maybe there'd be something on afterwards and the voice was saying: "because of the unbanning of the ANC blah blah blah", so we didn't even hear it as a statement, the ANC has been unbanned, we heard it as a because of. And I remember just jumping up and dancing around the room.

That evening we went for supper to a house that used to be called the ANC Underground house. It was a sort of house that you would stop someone in the street and say can you tell me where the ANC Underground house is, and they would say yes you take the second to the left and the third to the right. There were some young trade unionists who were planning to come back the next day to South Africa and they were stunned and I realise they had never been legal, you and I, we knew what it was like to be in the ANC when it was legal. So it was a return to something that had already existed and I just felt jubilant, I felt it was a huge victory. They were all psychologically geared to do this semi-clandestine kind of work and there I was dancing around. I said "well comrades you know what it's like, we used to think freedom will come on a certain day where we would storm into Pretoria and we take the Union Buildings and we'd put up the ANC flag, and it's not going to be like that". In fact it reminds me of a story that my former wife Stephanie told me. About how she lost her virginity. She said she was going out with this guy and he did a little more, and a little more and a little more, at the end of two weeks she knew she wasn't a virgin anymore but she couldn't say I lost my virginity on Thursday. And this is supposed to be the biggest moment in a girl's life, and she said she didn't know what it was. So I said "that's how we will end up with our freedom. It will be a little more, and a little more and then we'll be

free". They looked at me with eyes so large, so astonished and I assume it was that in terms of African culture people aren't used to talking about virginity, certainly not about one's wife's virginity in that kind of a way. That was the first I heard and now it became a question of.., no let me tell you one more moment before I return. Now Mandela's going to come to Lusaka and the excitement, the bustling, the exuberance, everybody, the euphoria amongst people in Lusaka, amongst ANC people in particular and now all of a sudden everybody wants to be in the front row and that's something we had never had before. Before they often used to beg you to come to an occasion, now all of a sudden there were the people who were going to be on the reception committee, there were the people who were going to line up to be received, and then people, the masses who had to stay right back at the airport, maybe a hundred yards away. So I'm with the people staying back maybe a hundred yards away and I was feeling in absolute turmoil. It's the only time since the bomb that I actually felt I wanted some acknowledgement, for me, I felt a kind of heaviness, a joy and a sadness, because the joy that we were winning but the sadness in a sense that some things were irreversible, some things we leave behind. And this was like marking that moment and occasion, I wanted a hug from one of the leaders. So I just left the crowd at the back and I just pushed my way forward and I didn't come to the reception committee or anything, but I was like the people right in front, the dignitaries from Zambia. Our chief representatives and all the others there. I wasn't out of place in terms of seniority and the work I was doing and so on, there were other people of my seniority and position in the ANC there. I was feeling a little bit uncomfortable that I had pushed my way forward, but I did push my way forward. Finally the plane touches down and the band plays and there's Mandela, and you see him and you cant see him, and he's walking around and

he comes close and I kind of present myself with a huge smile on my face and he looks at me and he doesn't recognise me. I didn't know him all that well but every year when I was a law student, a young lawyer, I would go to Tambo and Mandela at the office, pay my respects, have a cup of tea, push my way through the crowd and so on. So I had something of a friendship, we had met once in the underground. In any event, so there I was and I thought my appearance would indicate who I was, so I said "Comrade Nelson", and he looked at me and I said "Albie Sachs", and then one of those wonderful Mandela smiles, Mandiba smiles and I kind of half threw myself at him, so he had to embrace me you know, but my head was spinning and I was tired and I was weak. It was much closer to the bomb than now of course. My friend from America who was filming the whole thing for South Africa now, said to me afterwards, "Wasn't it wonderful Mandiba said 'Albie', and he embraced you", and I didn't actually say to him, well in fact I drew his attention, almost flung myself at him. And then he stood back and he said "How's Stephanie?" And it was wonderful but it also went right to my heart because in a way that he knew and I hadn't even met Stephanie when Mandiba went to prison, I didn't even know she existed. So I met her, defended her, we were each in and out of jail, loved her, married her, had children with her, divorced her, re-established my friendship with her, all this while he was in jail and my children now are grown up, and he asked me that question. And it was a bit distressing because also one of the sadnesses of the whole episode. Then they had a lunch and I wasn't invited to the lunch and I was hanging around, I didn't even know, I wasn't feeling bad that I wasn't invited, I was feeling bad because I didn't make contact with anybody. The person who actually noticed me at one of the meetings was somebody I hardly knew at all, Raymond Mshlaba. He doesn't know it but to this day I have a very special affection, he actually came up to me and

greeted me. The others all went past, and they were waving and being waved at and greeting people they knew and speaking an African language and so on, and everybody kind of streamed past. Govan whom I knew very well I might have seen, but he just didn't happen to come past so that was a bit distressing for me. The sense of turmoil was enormous. And then the same thing happened again in London with the reception. I was invited, crowds of people, and downstairs, Madiba went upstairs to meet the people and Winnie met us downstairs. She was walking along and somebody said "Albie Sachs", she stepped back and she said "Comrade Albie!", she gave me this wonderful, wonderful hug, she wrapped her arms around me and held me close to her chest and just held me and held me. It came from Winnie, the thing that I had been wanting. And I hadn't even known her before. And that I grant to Winnie. I've been very critical of things that she has done, that I learnt about that she had done before, things she's done afterwards. There have been some difficult moments even at the NEC when I have spoken and addressed her very directly so I think a lot of damage has come from Winnie and I haven't - to her face and publicly, - I haven't held back from criticising her, but I always remember that moment when that very wonderful side of her came out, and it wasn't for show, it was something that came from the heart. That was in London, in some big posh house somewhere in London.

Then eventually the whole thing of coming back to South Africa crops up and again there's kind of turmoil, some people are coming, others aren't coming. There's a lot of edginess, people are feeling very pissed off about things. There is no plan to it all, there is no criterion. A lot of comrades were saying "I'm not rushing back, I'll wait until the movement sends me back". I'm waiting, waiting, and nothing is happening and meanwhile I'm getting lots of requests, comrade you must come, we need you,

we want people to come and speak and eventually I decided well look I'm going to wait for the criteria to be followed. Nobody is even taking a decision, is it the London office, is it the Lusaka office, is it the legal group? And everybody is saying wait wait wait. So eventually I decided the only way to go back is to arrange to go back to get an invitation from the NDM people inside, to inform all the structures and say stop me if I mustn't go, and that's the way it worked. Eventually I was invited by the Community Law Centre at the University of the Western Cape and NDM to come and speak there and speak at UCT. After all this, it was like 23 years and 6 months, 9 months, I am put on a waiting list for the aeroplane, and I didn't get onto the plane from Lusaka, I had to wait 3 days, it messed up everything. The crowd who had been at Jan Smuts airport waiting to shout Viva Comrade Albie, Viva, went there, they heard I wasn't coming. And when I came a couple of days later there were just a few people there and they shouted their Vivas pretty loudly. It was very exciting. It took me 3 hours to get through the Immigration. But I knew that I couldn't lose, if they sent me back they're in trouble because they say that the door is open, they had to let me in. And the guy who was checking and cross checking and phoning and all the rest eventually comes to me and he tested me out, he had first spoken to me in Afrikaans and I could follow Afrikaans, I couldn't speak it. I'd lost it all these years and I might say when we met the Afrikaans writers one of the things that moved me as much as anything else was to hear them chatting to each other in Afrikaans, in an ordinary way, "pass me the salt, look at that nice tree", and to feel this is Afrikaans being spoken by people who had come to meet us and who supported freedom, that was just wonderful for me. Now I was following what he was saying in Afrikaans, but I said "I'm sorry I cant reply", and eventually getting this little piece of paper and he says to me "Welcome

home Albie". It was very lovely. He said watch out for this other immigration guy who is going to wheel you through, he said he belongs to the right wing, and the other guy is saying, Ag no man, and I had to sit for all the time chatting to the other guy but it was also a tremendous re-introduction to another side of South Africa, a kind of white junior civil servant guy. All I had to do was, he said he was from Port Elizabeth, I had to ask him how long it took to drive down to PE and I knew he would tell me a lie an hour and a half, an hour or eight and three quarter hours. Nothing had changed in that sense, people bragging about what velocity. And the next thing I knew about his marriage and his divorce and his new girlfriend and his in-laws and his children, and his interests, and the house he was staying in, what he was earning, just one question and the guy ...this stuff just came pouring out. And eventually he is wheeling my stuff through and I said "look, dont get a heart attack but my comrades are going to greet me". "Ag, no man I'm only doing my duty", he says, and eventually the comrades came up and especially African women kissing me all over the place and shouting "Viva, Viva!", and I didn't care a damn what this guy felt, this was my moment. But I did look round afterwards - he had a huge smile on his face and I said "thank you very much". "Ag, I was only doing my duty", he said. I was back home.

Two days later I was in Cape Town which was my real home and a few hours later I was climbing Table Mountain and I was back.

Walpēē

Ko clerk

interview.