



Interviewed: John Brotman

Oral History Clip Title: The Inevitability of Leaving

Theme: Ties to Southern Africa

Interviewer: Gail Freeman

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(John)

Well, as you well know South Africa was a very kind of a sick place when I grew up. There was no mixing of any kind and I hated that from my earliest memory. I just hated it. I always knew I was going to leave. It didn't matter what and when. The fact is, my mother being English, you kind of felt that well England was a good place to go because it was one of the centres of culture at the time. So...South African politics were so distasteful to me in every possible way. I just wanted to be out of there as soon as I could. And so when the opportunity came, when I was at university to leave, I just grabbed it. Subsequently I've kind of regretted that. I wish I really hadn't left as early as I had. I think that one could have stayed and done more things, but that wasn't to be in my case. In England, all my friends were South Africans, but they were through my wife's connections. They were from Cape Town mainly. There were a couple of Jews in that group, but some of them weren't. But they were pretty fierce, fiercely anti-apartheid. There was a family of two or three boys, as I recall, who had to leave. It wasn't quite exile but they had to leave because they would have been picked up. My closest friends, who I'm still friendly with here in Canada, Nana Weinberg, she was a very, very fierce anti-apartheid activist and was a Black Sash and would stand, you know, for days. So, yeah that's the line. But, you know as I say as South Africa has changed a lot, I do often think that if you hadn't left...I don't know.

(Interviewer)

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