



Interviewed: Brynie Lacob and Steven Silver

Oral History Clip Title: Political Activism

Theme: Politics and Apartheid Interviewer:

Miriam Borden

Date: 31 Aug. 2016

Oral History Number: AC 437

(Steven)

At home there was very little politics discussed, whether it was South African politics or discussions around Zionism. I had members of my family who were more politically aware and with whom a great aunt, who I became very close to, who was quite, kind of, politically savvy and I would talk to her a lot about politics. But the school I went to—King David High School, which (inaudible) must be familiar with by now— even though in a sense was quite a conservative school, there were pockets of it that weren't. And it did allow—in a country in which there was almost no freedom of speech—it allowed for a certain measure of that kind [sic] some of that discussion could take place. So I have vivid memories of a—he was Jewish actually—an activist—a white activist—who had been detained without trial and tortured in detention by the South African security police. And some of the students who were older than I was at the time, maybe in their last year of school, managed to get the principal to give them permission to help this detainee to come up to campus and talk to us. And I remember that being very fortunate because here was someone who was white who had taken a stand to the extent that they had been arrested for it and in fact had been tortured for it. So yeah. So I wasn't very active at school apart from some small things but when I got to university I joined the National Union of South African Students, which was the student federation on the campuses—on the, at that point, the predominantly white, although at that point already changing, campuses—and I worked for NUSAS for close-on six years or so. (predominantly white) campuses in South Africa. I worked for NUOSAS for six years of so.

(Brynie)

He was the president.

(Steven)

And then I became president in 1991, a few years before I came here. And then I had joined the ANC in about [sic] just after it's unbanning, so in, say, 1990. I worked for the ANC regionally in, well, in 1990-1991 and actually in 1992 as well. So I became [sic] so that a lot of my identity is also bound up with, you know, not, you know, [sic] certainly Canada forms a part of that identity, being Jewish does, but a very significant part of my identity is bound up with that part of my life.

OJASALP.ORG