

Interviewed: Percy Skuy

Oral History Clip Title: Not Long Before the Police Arrived

Theme: Politics and Apartheid

Interviewer: Naomi Raichyk

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(Interviewer)

Where you in any way ever politically involved?

(Percy)

Well, growing up in Vryheid of course, not at all. When I went to Johannesburg, my one experience was with the government was now bringing in these very rigid, anti-apartheid laws. There was a group called the black sash of women who would get together, wear a black sash, and protest against what the government was doing to take away the few rights that the blacks still had. And so, it was a Sunday night in Johannesburg, the day before I was leaving after my apprenticeship had been completed to go down to Durban to do my final year in pharmacy. And the role I volunteered for was to put up posters which were considered to be anti-apartheid, anti-government posters. It was arranged that I would have a partner who would put the white wash [sic] the glue on the...wall and then I would put the poster on. And then my colleague and I, we went down together. We each had a partner to help us. And it didn't take long before the police arrive, "officially" arrested us because we refused to give our names and address, walked us a couple of blocks to the main police station, and where I gave them a false name and address and the very next day, went off to Durban. And that was the end of it. It wasn't serious at that time. It was a good story, but in hindsight it could have been quite sinister.

(Interviewer)

Have your [sic] have your South African politics you experienced in the country affected your political views today?

(Percy)

I...defied the principle of apartheid. And there I was as a ten-year old kid, had to write a pass for our maid who was probably in her 30's or 40's because in this town at 9 o'clock a siren would go off and all blacks are to be off the street unless they had some note. So this ten-year-old kid could give permission to this woman to allow her to come back late from a movie or so on and I knew that was wrong. Absolutely it was wrong.