

After Hiroshima, Interview Transcript

Interviewee: PATRICK 'PAT' KINGWELL (P), DOB, 27.02.1950

Interviewed by Christie Woodhouse (C) and Ilias Pantazis (I)

(0:00)

C: *So, maybe we'll just start with um – What do you remember about the beginnings of the Peace Movement?*

Pat: Yeah um, of course because I was born in 1950 I don't remember, clearly I don't remember anything about the actual atomic bomb itself. But I think probably when, maybe as early as, when I was about eight or nine, I can remember it being an issue, the issue of 'the bomb' as it was known to us as a, as a-a-a generation of people. So even as a primary school child you were aware of it, um, it was constantly in the newspapers. I mean I, I came from a sort of family where we, they-they, this sort of working class family that read the popular newspapers like, and in those days it was the Daily Mirror, and the Daily Express - the Sun hadn't been invented erm by then, in those days. And very often the front pages, it seems to me, had sort of dramatic headlines you know big, big prints, you know erm, 'So and so fears *the bomb*', or y' know 'the Russians are gonna meet with the Americans and the British to discuss this so, I was sort of aware of that issue that-that, there y' know the bomb was there as a background erm and a worrying thing. And of course people used to talk about the war. Because it was only in the 50's, it was only ten years since the war, the people that had actually been in the war, people like my Dad y' know and family and whathaveyou. The Peace Movement itself I don't think really sort of came into the con- my consciousness 'til I was erm probably er early secondary school years, erm 1960's, early 1960's. Erm and I've actually got this photograph which you-you're more than happy to have a copy of erm, which is me as a 13 year old boy.

I: *Ooh [laughs]*

P: Wearing...

C: *Fantastic*

Pat: ... wearing a CND badge and this was an official school photograph. So clearly this must have been, yeah, this must have been...

C: *1963*

Pat: ... around in the air at the time.

I: *Yeah of course yeah*

P: So, I think I became aware of it in the early 60's. Erm, partly ah, partly through it-it must of been it was on the news, on in the newspapers and on television. You never had the mass television coverage that you get today – you have to remember this – there were only two television channels erm, and, so when things were on the news they were quite dramatic because you didn't get the information flying at you all day long y' know and you, nowadays you've got so many news channels and whathaveyou that in a sense sometimes it just, it

floats all over you. So I think it must have been round about then, and there were big marches taking place and I can remember in the newspapers, on the television, erm gatherings in Trafalgar Square - that was the big thing. But amongst my, the kids that were a bit older than me, I mean this photograph was of me when I was thirteen, the guys and gals who were like about 16/17 – I can remember them being interested and I think the badge er I would have got from one of those older kids, in the area around the Elephant and Castle where I grew up. So I think that's when I first became aware of it, and I-I mean I must of been aware of it because I'm wearing a ba-badge [laughter] I mean clearly I wasn't a member of a, the a the a the CND at that age, ah and in fact I never did become a member as such. But erm, yeah so late late 50's, early 60's, television, umm newspapers [cough] and the influence of older teenagers I 'spose you'd call 'em.

We were members, we used to go to youth clubs in those days and there was a youth club ah called Charter House, which, sss... I don't know if it exists anymore, in Long Lane which is near the Borough tube station. And there was a mixing of kids of certain ages you know and so the older ones who were 15, 16, 17 – I think that must of been where I got the, probably got the badge from, someone must have been handing them out. [Laughs]

I: *So it was more a s-social thing for you than, er a political...*

P: Yes.

I: *... issue when you were, I mean 13.*

P: That's right yeah. I mean I-I, I didn't come from a family where, my family were sort of trade unionists, my Dad was a trade unionist. But they weren't um overtly political, in the sense that y' know he, he didn't come home and, ah we didn't have discussions about the *bomb*, I mean ok-y' know-ok obviously there would be conversations in the house erm but, they would be of more, probably more of a domestic nature. So I wasn't particularly influenced in that by my parents. What was a big influence, looking back on it now, was my school... erm and seeing that photograph makes me realise they w-would not have, they were clearly happy for me to have an official school photograph taken wearing a CND badge. Where um, I don't know, maybe today would you be allowed to do that? I'm not sure. But the school I went to was called Walworth Comprehensive School in the Old Kent Road and um... it was a very radic- in its day it was a very radical school. It was one of the first um comprehensive schools in the country – the first five, one of the first five that were created and it was created in 1946. And the ethos of the school um was very internationalist and anti-um-totalitarian. Er... the school used to have a sort of code um... like written documents in which you know you would... it was made quite clear to you that you were part of a school that had principles that were about co-operation, um... positive views for the future, everybody contributing. And I can remember, I think quite a lot of the teachers, now I look back on it all these years later, I think there were quite a lot of teachers there that were radically, that were politically um pushed eh motivated. They were certainly, I later found out in years later, I've, there were certainly a number of Communists on the teaching staff. A-although that was never a-apparent at the time. Er and there were a lot of labour oriented people in the school. It was a school in a working class area that looked er to improve sort of a lot of working class kids and social justice, so that would have all been part of it as well. Erm they did, we did a thing called social studies erm which is I s' pose like a combination of history, geography, in which issues like this would have been... come onto the er... curriculum. So th-that's I think where it all started. [Laughs] A long answer to your question.

C: *Um, did your parents think much of you wearing the badge at the time in your official photo?*

P: I, I have no recollection of them ever commenting y' know, I mean they were um very supportive parents, lovely um... warm working class parents who wanted the best for their children. Erm I never remember them at all being er c-constricting about saying 'you shouldn't do this, you shouldn't do that'. My dad was definitely, well my mom too, but they were definitely sort of Labour party supporters. Th-they were... come from a poor background and er again you have to remember, putting it in context, today erm y' know people don't associate the Labour party much with um looking after the interest of very poor people. But back in the 1950's erm that there was no other, y' know, that's what they were there for. [Laughs] Erm and so my parents were very supportive o-of everything that I did um as a kid, er never really interfered in a, as I say, in a way they never said to me 'don't-don't wear that badge' or 'don't do this'. Er yeah... I, I mean I can't remember much. When I found this the other day, er, this photo, I realised I must have must have for a period been quite influenced by maybe the older kids because I wouldn't have fully understand the issues y' know I would have just thought 'yeah, we're against the bomb'. [Laughs]

(9:38)

C: *Sure. Er, so you mentioned seeing um content about the bomb on TV and that whole sort of nuclear um influence on... on Britain. What did you feel in response to seeing all of that content?*

P: Well obviously great - it was a mixture of sort of shock and fear and excitement y' know, if you're really honest. Because erm when you saw the images of that mushroom... whether you like it or not there is something incredibly dramatic about what you saw and as a kid you, that was really erm something to remember. Erm and we have to remember don't we y' know it's, it's the only the only one... a couple of bombs had been dropped on people in that way so it was very dramatic and er obviously worrying, erm... because it was in the air all the time. It was like a constant background thing this which... i-it wasn't like you got up every day as a kid and were worried about being [laughs] nuclear bombed but it was part of the context behind you all the time throughout the 1950's and the erm early, really into, yeah even into the well into the 60's that you were aware that there was this thing behind that could actually destroy the human race and you could be destroyed. And even like you talk to your parents about erm what it was like in the war and where we lived around the Elephant and Castle, Bermondsey. There was evidence all around, physical evidence of what ordinary bombs could do. There were bomb sites all around that area which have only some have only really been got rid of within the last 20 years. Erm so our playgrounds were bombsites um so the context of bombs was not... the idea of a bomb wasn't sort of er unusual for us we, we lived i-in an environment where the results of bombing were evident. But when you took it to the next level, when you saw this thing on television erm that you could have a bomb that could actually wipe a complete city out y-you can imagine what that, a-as I say now we're familiar with seeing those images, back in the 1950's erm you... it wasn't that familiar. When you did see the pictures, the live, the pictures on television, all black and white stuff in those days, it was quite spooky you know y-y-you knew there was a threat there that was real. Um so there was... it was like a background noise to when you were growing up. Erm and I can even remember in um there was a big thing that happened in around about 1962 erm the Cuban Missile Crisis and at school, in our secondary school that I mentioned, Walworth, I

remember there was... and at the assembly the-there was a sort of, they talked about we were on the brink of something that could be the end of the world. I mean talk about, thinking about it now y' know [laughs] a really doomy message for the er, f-for the teachers to do but they actually got up er on that day I remember, the th-th-the assembly school assembly, and it was almost like y' know well actually this could be the last school assembly we ever, we ever have. And we went down into the playground erm... as after school break, and boy we were actually... we were quite frightened really and this could this could be it. Er, fortunately that didn't happen but um this could, y' know we felt at the time it-it was quite real. As a background event the Cuban Missile Crisis was erm that was a real worry again y' know all over the papers, all over television and really fearful that something could happen.

I: *So how did you feel about Japanese people, I mean when you realised that the bomb was thrown on them, did you feel bad for them... did you feel sorry for them?*

(14:00)

P: Yeah of course, yeah um. We didn't have much connection with Japanese people er that that would have, y' know that stating the obvious isn't if you lived where we lived. Prior to the war we would have um like we'd have had no real interaction with Japanese people or Japanese society. American society um, our parents used to sing American songs. Films were the big thing so America, the influence of America on us was there in our lives without even really thinking about it. Whereas and... Germany we had a sort of yeah we-we didn't... from the community I came from you had quite a distrust of Germany because we'd been at war with them in 1914. And lots of our grandparents and whatever had been injured or came back and what... but Japan was er like an unknown factor in our lives. It wasn't like we had, you know, you daily talked about oh well, how life was in Japan. So when they bombed... when the war had happened and Japan were involved the only sort of information that you had, you had people in the families or people you knew who-who'd gone on service who erm had been in the war in Japan.

Now my dad was a sailor erm and he'd been in Japan and he really liked Japan, so he used to talk about Japan and the lovely things that were there. Erm [coughs] and h-he was particularly interested in er the way they made clothes and all that sort of stuff. So he-he... when he used to talk about his war experiences, very often they were like positive ones and he would talk about Japan as a place that um he really liked, he really enjoyed it when he was there. He came back, I think he was on his way back when the bomb was dropped so he never saw erm Hiroshima or Nagasaki. He was, h-h-he went to Shanghai and places like that. So in the family there was this strange... like in one hand a lack of knowledge about Japan but then you had your dad who'd been a sailor talking about how he enjoyed in Japan. Erm... of course yeah when you saw the pictures of what had happened you'd have to be shocked wouldn't you so there was sort of sympathy, yeah definitely sympathy I would have thought I felt when I was younger. Erm but every now and again you'd hear stories about people who'd been kept in Japanese prisoner of war camps and so it was balanced out with that. A-and at that time I think in the late 50's, early 60's there was a very popular film er in Britain called *The Bridge over the river Kwai*. Which was very, very popular and it showed the... quite a lot of ill treatment of er British and allied soldiers in being forced to build this bridge by the Japanese. Erm and so you had a mixture of feelings about them I think. On the one hand you had, you clearly had sympathy for seeing er cities wiped out like that but there was... there was a feeling well, y' know, they did do bad things to our soldiers. Um, so yeah.

(17:29)

C: *Yes, quite a complex politic for a young person...*

P: Yeah definitely... yeah... yes... yeah [laughs]

C: *Erm... you did mention that you remember gatherings and marching's in Trafalgar Square, erm. I was wondering if you remembered particularly like the Aldermaston marches if you could tell us a bit about them?*

P: Well all I... [Coughs] well clearly I never went on them erm...

C: *Yeah*

P: ... but I do remember them as being a big news thing and Aldermaston was a, a word that was there and you thought well what is Aldermaston what, what is that? When later on of course you get to understand that Aldermaston's a place. And there was a very... a lot of the [cough] 'Ban the Bomb' images would be pasted up on er painted up on, on er bridges, on the sides of buildings. And at the time there was er again, say, television coverage of those marches, erm big demonstrations... but I, I mean I didn't have a personal link to that other than you saw it on television or er in the newspapers. [Cough] And some of the characters involved in it, ah my memory is not very good now for names, but there was a-a-a churchman... a-a-a reverend... and I can't remember who it was now but h-he was a big figure at the time um and y-you did used to have things on television.

In the early 60's there was um the start of television where they uhh... critical programmes where they would debate, programmes about what was going on in society and there were numerous programmes. There was a thing called, a programme called *That Was the Week that Was* which was run by, headed, fronted up by a guy called David Frost and that was a satirical programme. And so you started to get, if you like, more um anti-establishment messages being, coming onto popular television. Before that y-you didn't really, it was very um, television was quite safe [laughs]. And so I... and I can sort of vaguely remember the um, still by then - the ban, the bomb 'Ban the Bomb' um marches were being, I think 60's, '63 '60 - something around about then - I can remember watching those as a young y' know 13/14 year old, watching those programmes on television and just being interested in that debate. Erm... and the other thing at that time was um was quite influential, looking at all that lot there, was erm music. And erm Bob Dylan came into fashion er, or came to Britain and did some concerts in the e-early 60's and he had a-a-a very big song, which was a gloomy sort of song, *A Hard Rain's a Gonna-Fall*. So that was all about nuclear stuff so it started to be the thing that became into pop-pop music or rock, but it wasn't, it wasn't pop, not Bob Dylan, but y' know serious music which later, he later then, as you know, became very famous. So people, there were certain artists who were creating music around that so t-so young people were listening to that. Uh, yeah.

(21:00)

C: *So do you remember um... the Test Ban Treaty being signed or anything about that event?*

P: Yep, again I just, I remember the phrase 'Test Ban Treaty', um and a lot of excitement. Because I think it was after the Cuban Missile Crisis, so you'd got to the brink about where y' know, as I said, y-you literally thought y-you [laughs] might, you might not have a school assembly in the next day. You actually thought there was gonna be potentially

a World War and then I have a sort of vague memory th-that the Test Ban Treaty being signed. I mean later on, I should say later on when I-I grew up and whatever left school I, I went to college and I, I did study International Relations so I sort of learned more later on about all of that stuff. But at the time, as a 13/14 year old I, I y' know I didn't... you knew something was going on erm and y' know that every now and then the prime-prime minster at that time was a guy eh called Harold Macmillan, and he would wander off y' know to a conference somewhere with eh with Krushchev who was the big Russian erm leader, who was quite a dynamic type of person who the British press made him out to be a big, quite a character y' know. Erm so I remember that, the broad brushes of it y' know but obviously not the detail. It just meant you felt like, well, something was being done about the problem because up until then uh, a-as I say i-it felt like it was almost an inevitability that at some point... and people used to say that y' know it will, it will all happen one day y' know. The b-bombs will drop. And then around about th-that period and afterwards you got the feeling they were trying to control it and make sure that didn't happen.

(22:52)

C: *I'd like to quickly take you back to um the assembly that you were talking about where the teachers sort of said you know the Cuban Missile Crisis has happened, this is really a significant event. Um do you remember the perspectives of your classmates or people around you the same age? Were they didn't to yours or- yeah if you could speak more about that?*

P: No... Well, I again, yeah I won't remember the detail of it as such but other than... I think the people were genuinely... Yeah it was a worrying thing because um y' know school assemblies used to be y' know 'make sure you do your work' y' know, well y' know 'this is what's going to happen this week' y' know, 'stop mucking around' that type of stuff [laughs] and then s-suddenly at one school assembly y' know you've got people talking about 'this is really very important', erm y' know, 'we're... the worlds entering a very critical phase, we all need to be thinking today about...' y' know and keeping our fingers crossed for a positive outcome. So I think people were like a-as far as 13 year olds and 14 year olds, you get knocked back don't you. It was worrying and then of course you just go on and do everything else, y-y- you think the bomb might go and then you go and have a game of football y' know. So ah... But i-i-it sticks in my mind as a major moment y' know otherwise I, it wouldn't – I wouldn't have remembered would I 'cause we had thousands of school assemblies and I can't remember one of them, a- apart from that one. And that was down at erm... yeah the school was divided into two so that was down in the lower school, down at erm East Street, just off East Street, erm in Walworth. I think we used to have um... like o-our topic i-in the teaching in that school, it's probably worth saying that they, they did try and encourage you to write about stuff like social issues. So I'm sure at some point in that period y' know people would have been writing about the rights and wrongs of er nuclear weapons and what have you. Erm, as well as doing the other things that you might have done on the curriculum but er they, that would, I'm sure, would have been sure been a part of it. Because a lot of the teachers there, especially the English teachers, were um they were very keen on getting young people involved in their community and the wider community. As I say it was a school that had a internationalist outlook. Erm... it did for instance, that school did send, it sent, I-I believe it sent the first school journey to Germany after Second World War when it wasn't um... it wasn't necessary and easy or a popular thing to do [laughs].

(25:34)

I: *Do you remember where, in in which place?*

P: I can't remember no, I mean somewhere in the, in the, back in the archives there's probably t-t-the details will be there but... The school was um renowned for doing things like school journeys and they did do foreign trips. Which a-again would not be at all unusual today but you have to remember back in 19, late 1940's/early 1950's for a group of kids to go from Walworth down o-over the Channel or a group of kids to even go out of London to uh on a school journey would have been er s-something but to take them abroad uh like that... And I know they did used to have, you'd get people coming in, they'd have visiting speakers and y' know people would come erm and talk about issues. A very, as I say, quite progressive. It was a progressive school uh and was renowned at the time for being a model of what you would wanna do and how you'd want to teach kids about society and the issues in society. The nuclear, the nuclear thing would have been in it. I mean it might even have been at school that we saw, that we'd have seen films about it. I know they did sh-show at school years later um... there was a film, again I can't think of the bloomin' - actually my wife may be able to help me here - what's that film that's about um... the war when um... they, i-it happened here was it called *It Happened Here* where they um... thought i-i-it was as if a nuclear bomb had dropped here? What's it called? Anyway I remember they showed that at school erm so...

[Mrs Kingwell] I-it might come to me, I know what you mean. It was shocking wasn't it?

P: Yeah yeah, it was black and white film

[Mrs Kingwell] Black and white film

P: ... was it by David Watkin or someone like that? I-it's quite an important film. Erm, sorry memory's not very good, but the school did actually show that um so it-it-it would be it would be the equivalent today I suppose of showing a-a sort of a-a-a propagandist film about, about the dangers of war [laughs]. They did show it and it wasn't a film that you could easily see on um... I think it was meant to be shown on television and erm, I think there was a bit of hubbub about it y' know like 'uhh... is this right that it gets shown on television' and uh I think the school did actually show it. I think it was called *It Happened Here*. Uhh...

(28:03)

[Mrs Kingwell] You think that was what it was called?

P: By David Watkin. We could check it out though. [Laughs]

C: *That's great. Um, do you remember a difference maybe then between er... the propaganda that was the official line of the time and what you were learning from school? Do you remember any differences or- ?*

P: Well you, again it was obvious that... in a way I don't s'pose you really, we really understood about propa - that it was propaganda because you just uh the [coughs] the newspapers used to come in y' know and t-the big headlines and you'd read them and that's what made the message so um constant and worrying. Because it just y' know like 'the bomb' this 'the bomb' that erm... so and so's discussing 'the bomb' [coughs]. And I'm sure that there was a debate going on at somewhere at another level about this but in those days

erm it wasn't, you didn't, although we'd just been through a war y' know where propaganda [laughs] was like one of the chief weapons of the Nazis [coughs] I don't think people easily applied the same, the same critical faculties to the British press. Because they basically looked at the British press and what-what-what got published you actually thought well yeah that's um, that's, we wouldn't we-wouldn't do propaganda would we you know... the Daily Mail wouldn't do any propaganda or... the Daily Express. Well of course we now know years later that erm that's, that's exactly what they do. [Laughter] Erm, so if you want to get a, a true perspective on what happened in a, in a way don't rely on the newspapers. But, but I've, at the time I don't think I-I wasn't aware of that. I think and even at school although they were... they liked you to read newspapers and p- they made you y' know, say, encouraged you to read all sorts of stuff but I can't even, I can't remember much of a debate going on about well, 'is the Western press propagandist?'. Whereas later on I-I imagine that, I mean I imagine that's probably part and parcel of a... any course you do now at school. But back in the 50's and early 60's I don't think w-w-we weren't quite that um, they hadn't quite got to that level um but yeah clearly looking at it now... So images of say Japanese people erm there were a lot there... You mentioned earlier about uh 'what did you think about them?', one of the key sort of images that I have of that period was through war comics. Comics were very important in erm working class kids knowledge and background because generally speaking at home you didn't have shelves of books... um you might read the papers but what kids did do they read comics, comics which um... And in the years after the war for about 10, 10- 15 years there were lots of weekly or whatever little books, they were about this big and, like 6-6 inches by 6 inches, little books, that were like war comics um and they would have stories of the soldiers. Erm and of course they were always fighting the Germans or the Japanese and y' know so... One of the images that always was encouraged through those was the, of the Japanese as being um cruel, the soldiers being very cruel uh and almost sort of slightly out of um slightly out of control y' know um... Or if they were being in a battle, when it came right down to it they would run away um, like the Germans would, they would run away y' know. And in these comics you had the-the picture, the image came over as a more h-heroic sensible British and American forces fighting against the odds and when it came right down to it the um yeah the Japanese and the Germans would be cruel and if they couldn't win through cruelty they would-wouldn't sort of stand and have a fight they would be off as... a-and run away. Th-th-that was very typical what you had in a comic. Of course that was all rubbish wasn't it y' know 'cause there's millions of... what we later know of course is that Japanese were um... probably one amongst the toughest fi-fighters that you could ever find. They were quite willing to um kill themselves in battle and did, they used to just sort of fly in... Yeah, no there was that image that was around the um, what did they call it, the suicide bombings, umm?

(32.43)

I: *Kamikazes. The Kamikazes...*

P: The Kamikazes, yeah. So almost like a sort of... when it comes right down to it they're a bit unreasonable. Y' know, where we-we would fight and we would defend and we would go as far as we could and we'd die for our country but it was they almost had a different way of doing it. They were kamikazes. And that image was quite an important one that you saw a lot of if you saw popular films, [coughs] you know you would somewhere in it there would be a kamikaze incident. Or in a comic there would be that and it... so I don't know what sort of image that-that... it gave you an image of the Japanese as being, I don't know, I s' pose not-not sort of level-level headed people like we like to think we were,

[coughs] who rose to the challenge they were... When it all came down to it, y' know, they were quite... they would go to extremes [laughs]. Which of c... anyone in war goes to extremes don't they but that, I think, that's an image that sticks in our mind, my mind. Which later on you know is wrong because you know th-the Japanese people, y' know, th-their culture is very sort of reflective type of culture where they actually think about things don't they. Erm yeah their religion, there's a very thoughtful type of religion and um... But I'm sure that didn't come across 'til, I think 'til a generation later when the Japanese started becoming our friends er by building factories in our country and employing our people [laughs].

(34.19)

I: *So did you feel that it was justified, the dropping? I mean, in Hiroshima, on Hiroshima Nagasaki, I mean by media.*

P: I know what you mean yeah, oh-oh did the media justify it?

I: *Yeah yeah, yeah, a-any of that. Did you think as well...*

P: Yeah, yeah. Well I think again its only later isn't it when we really ask the questions. It, it wasn't real- I personally don't think it was justified [coughs] but then that's easy for me to say because I wasn't fighting my way up the Japanese islands, erm, like the Americans were. And the Japanese as we now know were uh-uh you know the most, the toughest opponents who would defend their land and that's a decision that the American government took. Now it might have been that they took that because of domestic reasons - they didn't want more Americans dying. But there was a bigger picture which we later know is that they were basically saying to the Soviet Union erm... 'this is what we can do.' Erm y' know we've... and so I think there's uhh there's a long view and a short view and I mean, looking at it now all these years later, y-you think it's a terrible thing that the Americans have got that on their record. That they've y' know this country that took... in so many ways is a great country and allowed people to go to it and give them a new life and there's a land of you know - i-it's a great land, great place - has, has actually got on its record that it did something that even the Nazi's didn't do. I mean the Nazi's would have I'm sure. But erm... uhm... even worse as we know the Americans employed [coughs] ex- Nazi's er to develop the bomb er and that did actually... y' know people who were big in the Nazi regime were sort of shipped out to America to give them the capacity. It's a big question isn't it, is it justified? I think, I think we, for a period of time, it was justified in the British public's mind because you thought they were killing our soldiers, we had to get war over. The Japanese war was slightly, although our guys took part in it, y-y-you somehow sort of still think of it as more of an American war. Because the British were, although they did take part in it, mainly er were engaged in fighting in by and large in Europe and in in the east... in Africa and so... I think we never maybe justified it quite as much in our country as I-I suspect they did in America for many, many years. I mean I suspect for years th-th-they... it took them a long time before they had a close look at what they did. Whereas over here we know already by the 1950's we had people on the streets marching, campaigning against the bomb. Now I don't know in America, there probably was but I can't imagine they'd have been erm... in America it was a much more right wing uh society I think than ours was at that time. So um maybe they justified it erm for longer than we did. I mean as a young person I y' know without knowing all the issues I mean you just thought it was wrong, 'the bomb' is wrong, [laughs] fundamentally wrong [coughs] because it can kill us all. And... **(37:53)**

[Mrs Kingwell] Are you ok with this door open? It's breezy out here.

[Laughter]

C: *It's fine for us yeah.*

[Mrs Kingwell] Do you prefer it shut?

C: *What do you think?*

P: Yeah shut it, sorry it is a bit cold.

C: *Yeah sure*

P: Sorry part of the interview now...

C: *No that's ok*

P: You can cut it out can't you?

C: *We can yes. [Laughs] No worries.*

I: *Ok, uh...*

C: *Um yeah, ok well um. I'd like to ask you then, going back to the sort of 60's when you're becoming aware of all this stuff, do you remember any of the songs or um...?*

(38.32)

P: Well, *A Hard, Hard Rain's a Gonna-Fall* was [coughs] by Bob Dylan was very um that was a big... a big song um and there were... I don't remember any individual song so much but there were a set of singers... I mean it was basically people who came out of the folk, folk movement. Erm... and they were quite important people really because erm the pop industry, as in those days was what is was, it literally was pop music y' know you er... they used to write songs that lasted y' know eh uh eh two and a half minutes and the idea was just to sell songs. The folk movement erm in Britain and the jazz, jazz movement and this was bi... was big movement in London. Erm people who played jazz and people who played folk tended also to have more of a, more of, had more awareness of the social issues and I think you had quite a few folk musicians. Er... there was, there was a very important man in this country called Ewan Maccoll who erm helped develop what they called the folk revival. They got o-old folk songs and started to bring American folk artists over like um Peggy Seeger and um Joan Baez. And Bob Dylan of course was a young whipper snapper at the time y' know h-he was like y' know just and er... oh what's his name now? There was Peggy Seeger but Bob, uh the other Seeger, sorry can't think of his name now... really important man. Um I can't think of his first name er... **(40.13)**

I: *That's fine*

P: Yeah and uhh... they were doing music which did-a did come on television. Um you had... I can't remember like Sunday evenings there used to always be a programme on a Sunday evenings er...

I: *Top of the Pops*

P: Hmm?

I: *Top of the Pops*

P: No it wasn't Top of the Pops, it was like a religious erm... th-they used to have programmes on Sunday evenings which were like of a religious nature. But instead of it being erm just y' know a guy getting up and giving you a message about Christianity or whatever, they put it into a different context where they used music. And I think, because at the time there were a lot of erm Church of England people connected with the CND or had started uh been very important in, in the beginnings of the CND, and also the anti-apartheid movement which was running alongside it, erm there would be things on television which were starting to open up so you'd get these artists. There was a black guy called Cy Grant who I have a memory of who used to sing songs, er Paul Robeson - the great singer used to come on tele - be on television quite a bit over here uhh and he was er y' know he was connected to that and... But individual songs I think the only, the two that I mainly remember are well *A Hard Rain's a Gonna Fall* by Bob Dylan then later on in the 60's um the band Crosby, Stills and Nash did um *Wooden Ships*. There's a song called *Wooden Ships* um which was covered also by a band called Jefferson Airplane. Erm and *Wooden Ships* is y' know it's like post-apocalyptic, oh you probably know it, but it's a post-apocalyptic song, and that was er popular. And yeah... I think a lot of singers, folk singers and singer song writers, had somewhere in their repertoire - they were usually anti, they were anti, a lot of anti-war stuff of course, anti-Vietnam war erm y' know... But I-I suppose the indi... those-those two songs stick in my mind. There's probably some that are so obvious and I'm not, not remembering them [laughs]. The pop world didn't er... like today y' know uhh, big, big rock bands and pop bands they, they would use their - they would use that as a vehicle wouldn't they um but you have to remember of course the big corporations ran, ran the pop industry err and so there was not... it wasn't necessarily something you'd want. I mean people like Lennon, John Lennon later y' know, he was later became quite outspoken and an activist didn't he um... well he could do it because he was big and they, they had to listen to him um er. But before that the pop industry sort of did just produce a product that was there for-for selling, selling records and that was it. A-around about the 6- the mid- uh early 60's, I think it was '62/'63, Bob Dylan came over and he was just dynamite. I mean he was just like um... and I remember [laughs], going off it slightly, but I remember sitting one evening in my parents' home and watching the television and it would be a black and white thing and I was like... My mom came, dad came in and looked at me and I was just glued, I was like my gaze was just sort of completely glued to the set of Bob Dylan doing a solo show. Umm... sitting on a... one of those sort of stools with his guitar and his little harmonica attached to his guitar and of course me mom and dad thought it was the most terrible sound they'd ever heard in their lives but um I was like... heh [laughs]. (43:55)

I: *[Laughs] Yeah.*

C: *It seems from your perspective that it was quite trendy to be part of the Peace Movement at the time or – yeah.*

P: I think it was you know. I think yeah um, it was connected to, to a cultural phenomenon at the time about modernism, well the 'Mods'. A-again I'm sure you must know all this, but in the 60's um teenage culture in this country the... the idea of being a 'Mod' was very important thing for some young people particularly in, I think particularly in London it was a big thing. And it was all about dressing uh and being smart and having a um an anti-establishment attitude but not an anti-establishment attitude that meant you had to... couldn't look cool and smooth and so you had... A-and this is where I remember these guys who were older, like my cousins and others who were older, they used to ride around on um... E-everything Italian at the time seemed to be er important like Italian er Vespa's and Lambretta motorbikes, uh coffees, Italian suits, um very suave sort of finely cut suits but going along with that was a sort of yeah, you would you'd see em wearing the badge. And it was like uh I-I don't know, i-it was an anti... maybe an anti-establishment but we've gotta, we've y' know, we understand what you are- we're doing um... And on the other side of it you've then got people, of course who were maybe a bit older, who were personified more by things like um beards, er... duffle coats. And if you look at some of those pictures of Aldermaston marches in the square, in Trafalgar square, when they reached Trafalgar square there, you get a lot of that y' know people I suppose they were called, used to be called, [unclear] I think was the... And they came from a jazz, err jazz and folk world so there was a style thing going on. And I think you are right it was, there was... i-i-it would have been why I had a CND badge because it wouldn't have been y' know... th-they wouldn't have been giving them away with cornflakes y' know [laughs]. It was, it was, it was a style thing and when you're about 13 or 14 you wanted to emulate the older people. I mean I saw a documentary recently when um Rod Stewart, uhh lovely documentary about Rod Stewart, and he... there's some good footage of him as a young guy um going to those marches. And then he became politicised for a while but then quickly came away from that because of course... And I think for quite a lot of people that what... there was a transience about it um it was a style, there was a style element and once the main thing had gone er y' know y-you suddenly didn't see the badges. And I think the er the real activists, the people who stuck with it for years and years and years afterwards y' know they-they-they were the ones of course who, who have to be remembered and thanked. But there were a lot of people who just jumped in and jumped out y' know once the, I suppose once the issue had gone [laughs].

C: *When would you identify as the issue "being gone"? Sort of a rough period or event where that started the style, the fashionableness of it?*

(47.17)

P: Yeah, yeah... it's interest... it's a good question because I mean it never really went did it the issue was there but it seemed to drift away. Did it get taken over I wonder by other things that um... Vietnam became really important and um and they weren't dropping nuclear bombs on Vietnam they were using well sort of conventional stroke sort of unconventional weapons that were causing absolute mayhem in this little country. Um and I don't know maybe the... that then seemed to be the next focus from my memory and y' know all the popular the culture around that time was all about er anti-Vietnam anti... And then you started to get a development of an anti-Americanism um which I certainly don't think was noticeable um prior to that mid-60's onwards uh... And that did change things for quite a lot of people because um there was a, a bit of a conflict for a while because a lot uh uh, count myself amongst it y' know, I love American uh... lots of American culture – I just love it and it was important to me, music, um writing and all that sort of stuff but then you could see all this going on and you're thinking... yeah that became the focus. CND um well the an... the

bomb, anti-bomb campaign was obviously still there but i-it... the much more ready problem was 'what you... what we gonna do about this' or 'what can anybody do about this' and um... So you then got people maybe not wearing, the CND badge was around, but what you got was a lot more Ho Chi Minh er er Uncle Ho and all this stuff. Y' know people starting to be um pro uh pro-people, y' know, pro- pro sort of communist or very strong nationalists like in Vietnam or in Cuba - y' know Castro and what's-his-name the, the other one [laughs] Guevera people, people like this er you... and uh... CND and the Japanese... I mean what happened to the Japanese sort of I reckon that just disappeared... w-whether it was ever high in our consciousness, it disappeared to a degree because you had a different sorta... different group of people who were being shattered. Erm and the images by then were so much more dramatic as well because um, y' know, you were seeing all those famous images y' know of people being uh bombed and running down the streets with their skin coming off their bodies and y' know... Those were incredible images.

And th-the American it was American cameramen, TV reporters who were in amongst the carnage actually reporting it. Now you didn't have any of that from er Hiroshima and Nagasaki really. You had the images, the ones that you always see but unless there's images out there we've never seen... there seems to be a stock, a certain stock of images. But by the time Vietnam came along it was all over every day, y' know, the press. I-it was on the news. And I think the Japanese slightly, they got, they got sort of forgotten because it was the Vietnamese now who were the victims um uhh... And I think, y' know, that... and as I say around about, it was around about that time wasn't it that you started getting Japanese companies started to um... they'd revived. And you started getting Japanese goods in our country and a different perception of Japanese came up, y' know, that they provide goods that were... you couldn't beat them y' know. Th-th-their cars were indestructible just like their soldiers y' know [laughs]. And then y' know they-they-then started building factories or in this country and they become er... So I s' pose the old enemy idea or what had actually happened to them or what did it mean to them [cough] uhh maybe we thought economics would solve all that y' know yeah, yeah i-if they were making money. And people remember, people were sort of saying w-we should be more like the Japanese. That became a-a mantra in Britain because Britain was economically up the creek becau-because ironically the two countries that we'd been to war with, Japan and um Germany, they'd been funded to recover after the war. Britain meanwhile was paying off its debt to America which it took 50 or 60 years to pay off and we, we were bank - pretty much bankrupt. And while these countries like Germany and Japan were recovering with all these wonderful factories and become modernised and economically strong what people were saying to us was well y' know 'you should be more like Japan, you should be more like Germany' and uh so w-we started to get a different view of 'em I think. (52.17)

I: *That's ironic, yeah.*

P: Y-yeah and I mean we-we-we're... business practices in Britain there was a time when it was called Japanisation. If you ran, if you ran business-businesses um worked on a Japanese principle y' know of um... by and large you know you try and keep people working for your organisation, you don't have trade unions because your... which I think is pretty much true in Japan um... You have a, a connection with the company and the company has an obligation back to you to see you through your life and for a, y' know, uhh... and that was a change. I'm going off the subject here sorry but th-that was... but I think the Japanese um, y' know, we started to see Japanese people in a different way. They were business people, and they were tourists. Y' know Britain you started going... when Japanese people started coming to our country which erm I mean I-I can't remember, certainly not in the 50's and

60's - I can't remember seeing many Japanese people but of course by the 70's and 80's onwards they were a core, they were one of our key tourist targets.

C: *Ah thank you so much for all your recollections. Erm, er I guess for a-a last question – Was there anything that you were expecting us to sort of um ask about that maybe we haven't or any strong impressions that you would like to add?*

(53:49)

P: No I don't think so. I mean I've um, it's good that, good that the project's being done. Erm... no I mean I think hopefully you will... for me because of my age - I'm in that sorta slightly strange age hopefully you've got more people who are a bit older who can actually remember um the events. And also if you've got people who um maybe were s-service people out there...

I: *Yeah, I interviewed one this week.*

P: Did you?

I: *Yeah, 89 years old.*

P: I mean I... I worked for, I used to work with a guy who was a Japanese prisoner of war.

[Mrs Kingwell] Excuse me but do you want more to drink, would you like another cup of coffee or a drink?

P: You could have a hot drink, yeah?

C: We're fine thank you.

P: Sure?

C: Yeah, yeah. Thank you though.

[Mrs Kingwell] What about you, do you want one?

P: No, I'm alright. We did- didn't have coffee actually, I've left it on. I mean I've left it...

C: Oh no

P: No it's alright. Yeah I worked with a guy called um... he was a porter in the library I used to work with, and I often quote him actually, I think his name was Wally, Wally Bashem. [Sic] [Laughs] And Wally had been a, a prisoner of war and er... He did- he obviously carried that with him and er... So he was one of the people when I was young probably about 17/18... he talked about what had happened, a little bit about what had happened to him in the prisoner of war camps. So... and of course none of those memories he had were positive ones, erm so in a way it's sort of had that... it helped form that view that I talked about right at the beginning of this is that you had like in some, some ways two views

about the Japanese. Y' know you had a... sort of on the one hand you had sympathy for what happened but you also had this erm... people who you saw come back from the war w-who had been through terrible things and that gave you er an image of... of Japan and the Japanese which y' know probably, probably know was not correct. I think like on the whole the Japanese society wasn't um... it wasn't Nazified in the way that Germany was so I mean I... I think Germany it did go very deep in their society erm I think y' know um... Whereas in Japan a-a lot of the time y' know I don't think we really had an image of what the ordinary Japanese might have been going through during the war years or up to that period. Right.

C: *Thank you so much.*

(56:28)

P: No worries! No worries

C: *Much, much appreciated*

I: *Can we do th-this reading as well, Ruth told me...*

P: Yeah. No, well do you want a copy of this? (Referring to photograph)

I: *Copy of this...*

P: I mean uh whether you...

I: *It's interesting definitely, I mean I-I...*

P: I mean I've got it, I've... I can scan it over to Ruth or to you?

C: *Oh she'd love that yeah*

I: *If it's possible yeah*

P: I mean it's just, n-not in the sense that I personally want to be...

C: *[Laughs] No no, it's a great photograph yeah.*

P: But I think it illustrates, illustrates that there were... in a local school in-in Walworth y' know, Walworth School it actually illustrates that we-we must have... something must have been going on. Yeah

C: *Cool, absolutely. Shall we make a new...in the file? (57.07)*