After Hiroshima
Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Walter Wolfgang (WW), born 27/06/1923
Interviewer: Lindsay Galpin (LG) and Ruth Dewa (RD)
Date: 16th April 2015

WW: You know I was a refugee from Nazi Germany, I don't know whether you realise this. And I came over in 1937. I went to school here. My parents came late unfortunately in 39.

But at any rate in 1945, well er as I say, I wanted a Labour victory, we got one. And I decided that once I was naturalised, I would join the Labour Party which happened in 1946. Now previous to that and after that, while I agreed with its, very much agreed with its home policy, and here and there I would like it to go further, but on the whole I agreed with it, I was getting very sceptical about er its foreign policy stance er which seemed to me to be too closely aligned to one of the superpowers. I would have preferred er a sort of third way sort of thing so to speak, not a non-committal stance which we didn't get from Ernest Bevin and er the Cold War started and I got quite alarmed that although we've defeated Hitler that er you know you might get another conflict.

That feeling was heightened when of course the Korean War broke out, the Russians made a blunder by not attending a crucial meeting, er U.N. was misused (laughs) for purposes it shouldn't have been used to support one power bloc against another and I you know, I opposed the war in Korea. I opposed it here locally **(2:00)**, um, I joined the um Peace with China movement, you know when it was started and there I met Eric Messer the son of Fred Messer who was then the Secretary of Victory for Socialism which was a Socialist fringe group which wanted a Socialist which wanted a Socialist home policy but also a particularly Socialist foreign policy and I joined it.

I then er, together with er, together with er, oh God I keep forgetting the name, I will get her name in a minute, but at any rate with her I wrote a pamphlet in pursuit of peace and then Eric Messer er introduced us to Hugh Jenkins, later Lord Jenkins who actually became a very close personal friend who looked over it and sort of straightened it out you know, was more used to pamphlet writing. So you know the three of us published this pamphlet in pursuit of peace which was actually quite mild you know. It just said it didn't want to support just one of the two power blocs. It wanted to support the principles of the United Nations and bring the two sides together as far as possible. Er it thought that what we're doing wasn't in the best interests of the British people and so on and er at a later stage I mean Aneurin Bevan became interested in it who in fact wrote forward to it so that was that. **(4:00)**

Then um Suez came and victory for Socialism threw out threw up other committees, it established another committee which actually was more important, became more important, namely the Suez Emergency Committee which er didn't want conflict over Suez, er got hold of Trafalgar Square but thank God the Labour Party became committed against Suez so we handed Trafalgar Square over up against the Labour Party and as a consequence of that you know we had as you know Labour Left and Right became committed against the um against the Suez intervention and as a consequence of that, I was adopted as a Labour parliamentary candidate for North East Croydon in 1958, er early in '58 and fought an election in 1959.

Now around the Suez Emergency Committee, a lot of people had become very concerned about the possibility of a nuclear war. Er and so Victory for Socialism threw up another committee which actually was more important in the end than the efforts itself which was um…which was the Hydrogen Bomb Campaign Committee.

Now there were two committees with that name, there was an earlier one **(6:00)** in the early '50s, you know after the explosion, which went but this one, the newer one and so the first thing we did was to have a demonstration on Trafalgar Square addressed by Barbara Castle. Now the members of the committee, well I at that time was not an unilateralist nor was Barbara Castle (pause…has to readjust after knocking microphone) but in a few months time, I became converted. Hugh Jenkins was instrumental and Hugh Jenkins (pause after knocking over microphone again) who was a very consistent unilateralist, basically converted me but I mean you know so was thinking the things through. Now I became an unilateralist and then in, that was in '57 after Suez, and then in '58 um, then in '58 the campaign for…no wait a moment, the campaign for Nuclear disarmament yes was started in '59 wasn't it. In '59, the campaign for Nuclear disarmament was started…which was started by a few prominent people.

Meanwhile also, a lot of women had become concerned about the danger from the fallout and er established the campaign against nuclear weapons tests. **(8:00)** CND when it was founded more or less took it over, the campaign for nuclear weapons tests but outside it there was a Direct Action Committee which actually had held a demonstration and was planning a demonstration at Aldermaston. Er at that time, let me say that um before I was actually one of the organisers of the Suez demonstration, I had never attended a public demonstration at all. The reason was that the mood after the war was that you know demonstrations were old hat, they were a pre war thing, you didn't do, you know, younger people didn't do them. But then of course the necessity arised, I didn't only attend it, I organised it.

That affected the founders of CND who definitely didn't want to be associated…Kingsley Martin I mean didn't want to be associated with anything as um vulgar as demonstrations. So what Peggy Duff, who was the organising secretary of CND, did is she brought together, she brought together representatives of Direct Action Committee and representatives of the Hydrogen Campaign Committee because meanwhile what had happened is the New Left had got established which was originally dissident Communists but then attracted a lot of Labour Party Members and I co-operated very closely with them. And there was a risk **(10:00)** at that time, believe it or not that er you know we founded the campaign and the New Left would organise a demonstration at a pace and then there would have been two demos which would have been a piece of nonsense. Well I met Hugh Brock who was the most distinguished editor which Peace News ever had. You can record that, I mean you know this is my view. And both Hugh Brock and myself were quite determined that we were going to have one demonstration. We decided that it should be Aldermaston er with the help, with substantial help from both Hugh Jenkins and Frank Allaun MP who had then become quite prominent. We persuaded the Hydrogen Bomb Campaign Committee that this should be the case and there was one demonstration which was Aldermaston. And we had representatives on it, the Aldermaston March Committee I was on…

I was at that time between two jobs and the New Left from Carlisle Street, it had a club in Carlisle Street, started a London drive for, we used loudspeakers which er of course hadn't

been done for a long time and there was a cat and mouse game with the police in which they tried to invoke an act of 1844, of 1844 again just to rattle us. And of course, were very keen that (laughs) it shouldn't come before a magistrate because the (laughs) magistrate might say that the loudspeaker wasn't a rabble…so there was a cat and mouse game there. **(12:00)** You couldn't do it today incidentally, you would be stopped and effectively. At time we had a very effective loudspeaker which er you know made a lot of people aware that the march was coming and then it was a larger march, albeit much smaller than the subsequent one, than we expected in 1959.

(Pause) Um ok…um well naturally the CND had been founded from London region, I became a delegate to the London region of CND, I became a delegate to er the Labour Advisory Committee. Er which was then er the Labour Advisory Committee…and then afterwards, later on during the campaign there was an agitation for independent disarmament candidate which of course we opposed. Peggy Duff was in favour of it. Er the result was that they suggested that just in case that should happen, the Labour Advisory Committee should turn itself into Labour CND which was affiliated to um…so in case there was an independent...in case there was a Labour campaign. But at any rate, they managed to avoid CND sponsoring the independent campaigns and Labour CND remained in CND, right. And er **(14:00)** and then of course came the other wave. The other wave was um Polaris, you remember that? And of course that gave a wave to the movement, the Labour Party had committed itself to no further nuclear weapons tests and actually sponsored a demonstration which was very well attended in the 1960s and then we managed to convert a lot of Labour Parties to unilateralism.

But meanwhile what had happened is that inside the Labour Party, through various factors, I don't need to go in to them now…the whole of the left of the Trade Unions weakened, I mean Frank Cousins of course of the Transport and General had been a tower of strength. But then of course he died. But it weakened and the executive changed and er you know Gaitskell er succeeded Wilson, you know Gaitskell beat Bevan and er Bevan became foreign secretary. Gaitskell of course was opposed to nuclear weapons. Now Bevan before that, we had a Labour Party Conference where we nearly carried the vote but we didn't because Aneurin Bevan made his famous speech that he 'won't go naked into the conference chamber.' Er the reason for that is, is that he hadn't **(16:00)** thought things through you know what I mean. Later on, I think he may have changed his mind but even then he had done it, and later on he was defeated by Gaitskell. And er but then the year afterwards, he carried the conference but then Gaitskell started his campaign of 'fight, fight and fight again.' And we lost.

But in about, the dates are in that pamphlet which I have given you, I think it was in 1990 that we reversed the thing and in fact although the parties' parliamentary party, remain committed you know against capping nuclear weapons, the Labour Party itself was in favour of it and this was reaffirmed up to 1995 when they decided that you er you know that democracy wanted to abolish nuclear weapons so it would be best to abolish party democracy and they did successfully by um in fact establishing the policy forum and all the rest of it, and not allowing, you know having a filter between um the membership and the unions on the one side er and the conference on the other. And er so since then we…at that point, within that period in the '80s, er Kinnock was actually trying **(18:00)** very hard to get rid of the nuclear commitment before he, before the 19-, wait a moment he carried…I am terrible with dates but um, he fought two elections didn't he in 1984 and 1987.

Before 1984, he desperately tried to get rid of it but Garry (?) **(18.27)** and others stopped him and I helped in the process by you know, I co-operated with Eric. I knew, Eric told me what needs done and I got it publicised at the Labour Party Conference in a Labour briefing at the conference which was a sort of bulletin which we had, which was um done in association with the local government Labour journal briefing which is now split into two contemporary issues. But be that as it may…that produced a row with Joan Ruddock who had become the chair of CND…um who actually tried to apologise for it. But afterwards, um you know and at one point Labour CND was dissolved and we got it re-established and all the people who wanted to co-operate were thrown off it and the other people remained on. That meant that Labour CND remained committed er to the full CND policy. I mean there were **(20:00)** a lot of people who I didn't. The late Elvin Cook who I think er performed a sterling service by resigning you know over the Iraq in the end…at that point, tried to go in with Kinnock but then later on you know, Blair went too far for him and in fact he was the only major Labour politician which I have ever had a really stand up row.

But there we are, we won through with that and we've had an effective campaign ever since and you now know we've now got to a position where, A we got to a position afterwards where CND was you know stopped its flirtation or rather the officers stopped it, the membership never had it with Kinnock and Blair and er particularly since Kate Hudson's appointment as General Secretary…as Chair and later on as General Secretary. It was quite clear that we were not only opposed to nuclear weapons but also opposed to unnecessary wars like Suez…like um Iraq. And now we are at the point, I think, of re-getting the Labour Party, it's a very dicey position. Um there was an attempt at the policy from the policy forum which has been loosened up a bit, it's not as bad as it was. **(22:00)** There was an attempt at the last policy forum to get an absolute nuclear commitment policy, this had manoeuvred off, although probably a majority of delegates were in favour of it, and but instead of that, they got a commitment that there would be a defence review in 2016 and nuclear weapons would be part of it. And that is the position...the official position um at the moment. And um increasing numbers of Labour candidates are now committed against nuclear weapons.

I've just recently attended two hustings, I attended my local hustings in Richmond on um peace issues and nuclear weapons when um where our local candidate came out, who was anti-Trident, came out quite firmly and publicly on it. I also attended the Twickenham one last week which the er Twickenham candidate is the head of the legal department of Sainsbury and who could in some respects I think be described as a Blairite and was the past in favour of nuclear weapons but at this hustings…er he said that they were antiquated, they were really a weapon for the Cold War. He had reservations over the Ukraine, he wasn't quite sure yet but he was now getting **(24:00)** to the point where he was beginning to be committed against it. He wasn't giving an absolute promise but he thought that you know we would have to look at alternatives and probably nuclear weapons would have to be scrapped.

He qualified this…but you know this isn't alone, it's probable that the majority of Labour candidates in this election are opposed to nuclear weapons. That doesn't mean to say that if you get a Labour Government, it's not clear whether we'll get one…er either as a majority or er you know as the largest party with or without coalition, it's not clear. But even if we get one, I mean it isn't clear um, what is going to happen but there is going to be a very very strong push um for a non-nuclear stance because bluntly um you see, although…that's making a mistake actually in saying that they'll do anything about it you know…but basically

it's got to spend itself out of the recession. And this is becoming increasingly exclamatised but if you do that you do put a strain on the balance of payments, one of the major strains on the balance of payments (laughs) is the expenditure on Trident and the projected, and a lot of the projected expenditure of one hundred million is in fact in foreign currency. And indeed um, you know even the Aldermaston establishment is now owned by American companies so **(26:00)** er frankly it isn't possible I think to continue with the programme but there we are, we'll have to see. Labour isn't elected yet and everything is to go for.

I am sorry for having been so lengthy.

Chair: Can we just take some details just for our recording records.

LG: This interview is on the 16th April 2015 with Walter Wolfgang. That's how do you spell..W-O-L-F-G-A-N-G. Is That right?

WW: W-O-L-F-G-A-N-G yes

LG: And what was your date of birth if you don't mind?

WW: 27 June 1923.

LG: *That's great. And the interviewer is Lindsay Galpin. That's G-A-L-P-I-N.*

LG: You said that you came over in 1937? Your parents sent you over. How did you actually travel over? Can you remember to Britain?

WW: Er yes, I went to school here you see and I went home for my holidays. And of course in 1938, I was told that um I mustn't come back by the Gestapo full stop.

LG: And then your parents moved over in 39, was that two years later?

WW: My parents unfortunately didn't come till 1939. I don't want to go into this but I mean…you see my father died very early, he died in 1945 **(28:00)** as a consequence of asthma which he got in a concentration camp and he probably wouldn't have…I mean he might have had respiratory pain later but he wouldn't have died that early

LG: Can you remember hearing about the news that the war had ended?

WW: Sorry?

LG: Can you remember hearing about the news that the war had ended? What was the atmosphere like?

WW: Oh yes, the atmosphere was very expectant. Everybody felt that they didn't want to go back to pre-war days. Er the planning during the war had proved that you don't need to have unemployment and the Labour Party was elected on a full employment mandate. You know a full employment policy. Um Keynesian theory had been proved correct and I only wish people took more notice of it today because we do need to spend ourselves out of the deficit now. You know there is a case for the anti-austerity drive…but there was that mood that nobody was going to go back er and that is what carried the Labour into power.

LG: You were with the Labour Party towards the end of the war? What…

WW: Sorry?

LG: What were you doing towards the end of the war? Were you part of the Labour Party then already?

WW: No, I sent a small number…I didn't have much money…I sent a small number of contributions but of course as I say, I decided that I wouldn't do things by half you know and I would rather wait until I was naturalised and everything was plain sailing **(30:00)** and then I would join the party you know without army of reservations so to speak.

LG: Can you remember the news that the atomic bomb had actually been dropped?

WW: Sorry?

LG: Can you remember hearing about the bomb being dropped over Japan?

WW: Oh yes of course. I mean when the bomb was being dropped over um Hiroshima and then later over Nagasaki as well, I mean one realised that it was a tragedy for the people concerned. However, you had the bombing of Dresden, you've had the terrible bombing here and one also knew that um there had been a competition, a somewhat unequal competition, I was also aware that it was a little bit unequal between the um you know the Nazis and the allies as to who was going to get it first. Er this side got it first but I don't think…I personally did not realise the full impact of it at the time, nor did most people. Some people did, very few. As I say, I was getting worried about certain foreign policy trends already then you see what I mean because…you know they seemed to gang up against the Russians and so on and so forth. I mean at that time you know the Americans said at the time that they needed this to end the war which actually seen in retrospect is a lie. It didn't. It is an outright lie but we didn't know that at the time **(32:00)** And I then think I realised the full impact of it. I did realise the problems which er a one sided foreign policy and a polarisation between two powers did mean. As I say this gradually grew on me you know in the process I've described.

LG: What were other people's reactions like? Were they similar to yours or were they different?

WW: Sorry?

LG: The reactions of the other people? Were they similar or were they different to your own.

WW: Well um, as far as the bomb is concerned, the majority of the population just thought that this was just part of the war you know the war had crept up on them, so on and so forth. Er a lot of us did realise that you know that it was quite a grave development but as I say I think the overwhelming majority of the population didn't realise its full impact nor did politically conscious people realise its full impact. You know the impact on the politically conscious…basically came after women were concerned about what it would do to the birth and things, because that is where it propagated. And that this is um consciousness in the Labour Party and indeed in fact throughout the spectrum.

LG: When was it not until Suez that people fully realised the results?

WW: Sorry?

*LG: The impact. When was it fully realised, the impact of the bomb? **(34:00)** Was it not until Suez or was it earlier than that?*

WW: Well as Korea developed, I realised that this was part of the picture and that er possibly at the time I didn't know the full facts but possibly it wasn't necessary to use it to end the war. Possibly or possibly not. But um, I was beginning to very much realise that this was part of the power conflict. And something would probably have to be done about it but I didn't see it as a prime focus till later. You see what I mean.

LG: Was it as a result of the Hiroshima that you got into the campaign against nuclear weapons or were there other factors involved in getting involved in the peace movement.

WW: Well the two things went together you see. One gradually became aware of the various facets of the power conflict and nuclear weapons were one of them. So nuclear weapons and the power conflicts couldn't be separated. You see what I mean, that realisation grew, **(36:00)** it didn't mean immediately that one went naturalist. That came later on but it grew out of that realisation and I think this is what happened not just for me but for a lot of people. On the one hand you had this process and people became aware of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, not only women but predominantly women became aware that this weapon, a little like chemical weapons but even worse, that this weapon…that even if this weapon was never used er, the mere testing of it might have terrible results. Now that I honestly, the testing aspect… I became aware of through the women's campaign. I'll be quite honest about this. But I mean there are other links. One of the organisers of the women's campaign was a Miss Fishwick and Miss Fishwick later on became Secretary of Victory for Socialism until she died. You know the linkages are there.

LG: Can you remember what the press coverage was like of Hiroshima, the events in Hiroshima?

WW: Sorry?

LG: Can you remember what the press coverage of Hiroshima was like? The newspapers and the radio etc? How did they…

WW: Well they presented, I mean you know look at…mind you I think the coverage at the time by the radio **(38:00)** and the news was possibly better…I mean today it is terribly slanted, but it was very slanted at that time as well. I mean at that time nuclear weapons were just part of…the West had to defend themselves against the Russians and er and nuclear weapons were there and therefore you had to have them. That theme was propagated all the time not just directly but indirectly.

LG: In what kind of ways?

WW: Well it was just said that you know that there was an enormous Russian threat and of God knows what. And er therefore the West had to have nuclear weapons. It was never stated whether the nuclear weapons ever actually stopped anything.

LG: Were you satisfied in the way that it was being covered?

WW: I certainly wasn't satisfied about the way the power conflict was covered, no. And that extended to this you see. And certainly there was a tendency to try and downplay er the aspect of the damage which the tests could do. Don't forget that at that time…the tests could do more damage than later because you know there were no precautions whatsoever.

LG: Had you heard about the Lucky Dragon incident over…

WW: Sorry?

LG: Had you heard about the incident with the Lucky Dragon trawler ship when the Americans tested it over in Bikini and Eneu island? **(40:00)**

WW: Sorry?

LG: The trawler ship that caught up in one of the tests. Had you heard about that?

WW: Oh yes, I did hear about that yes.

LG: What was your reaction to that?

WW: Well my reaction to that is, is that the military took undue risks. This was parallel to the undue risks which the politicians were taking in er you know the power conflict. That it wasn't justified. That in general they put military advantage before national security. I mean that was my reaction.

LG: What about the other people around you? Did they react to it in any way?

WW: Oh yes definitely. The reaction er was definitely that you know that within the military aspect of the power conflict people were not cautious enough and so on and so forth. I mean it wasn't one for lack of caution but you see it wasn't always specifically linked to the nuclear aspect, you see what I mean. I mean if you didn't have nuclear weapons and two submarines collided which has happened, I mean you would look at the you know.

LG: Was there an understanding of what nuclear power could do before the bomb was dropped?

WW: Well nuclear power wasn't available. There was an understanding that of the very enormous destructive power. But **(42:00)** what that meant wasn't understood and I don't think, and certainly the press deliberately downplayed the damage which the two bombs did to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. You know they sort of treated it like another Dresden attack you know which it wasn't. Really it destroyed whole populations.

LG: How did you feel about the effects?

WW: Well as I say, you know I was um concerned. I thought it was possibly the military had gone further than necessary. I didn't at that time realise that the war in Japan was almost at an end you know what I mean.

LG: Was the war with the Japan reported…

WW: You see that, I'll give you a parallel now. (pause while WW blows his nose) Now I'll give you a parallel. I was very concerned about what was happening to um Arabs in Palestine before a lot of people were concerned and a lot of people around me, Norman Bentwich and the late Victor Gollancz formed a Jewish society for human service um **(44:00)** which basically er did a lot of medical work. Basically because it used facilities for hospitals, you know it had very small resources for use and so on and son. But it maybe that Norman Bentwich who knew the situation quite well realised that there was something going on. I and most of the people concerned like, I mean like Rubinstein and so on and so forth were very concerned and thought that the Israelis were probably getting tougher than they needed to be and so on and so forth. But didn't realise the full extent till um you know Avi Shlaim and

other people wrote their books. But the concern was there beforehand and I think the same is true for the nuclear issue.

LG: How did you understand what had happened in Hiroshima?

WW: How I understand it now?

LG: At the time when you heard about it?

WW: Well I thought the destruction was awful. I mean everybody else thought that. The destruction was awful but it had stopped the war you see what I mean. As time went on one began to doubt whether it was really necessary…but the proof for that came later.

LG: So can you tell me about how you got involved in the peace movement?

WW: Yes. Um as say I was concerned about Korea. **(46:00)** I got myself elected as education officer of Richmond Labour Party and I persuaded the Labour Party to organise an open discussion meeting on Korea…er the local Labour Party. What then happened was that er the regional organiser came down and you know not only prevented it happening, he called me a Trotskyist. I had only known one Trotskyist in my life who was a Richmond Labour Party member Charlie van Gelderen. At that point, I hardly knew what it was you know what I mean. Um, and er the meeting was stopped and you know and the Party became a bit divided and er and so then after that you know as I say, I joined Peace with China among other people. I also tried to stop the um very right wing parliamentary candidate that we had at that time of saying that…of supporting a Korean war was a plus you know. So I mean you know the process were outside my concern and my political activity. As I say, I mean before that you know I was a bit innocent politically, I wasn't thereafter.

LG: Can you remember the earliest actually involvement with a protest or anything within the peace movement? **(48:00)**

WW: Yes

LG: What was that?

WW: What I have just told you.

LG: Oh ok (laughs). How did you get involved then?

W: Well as I say, as I said, you know I was concerned about this and this I thought was a good thing to do. I mean you know for instance the party had a record on it …um the coalition government, I mean the coalition government before 1945, that one...had intervened in Greece and had done a lot of damage in Greece which incidentally accounts for the trouble that Greece is in today but I won't twist that screw. And the local Party actually mounted a meeting, a protest, which was addressed positively by Jim Griffiths who wasn't later on a champion of the Left particularly but he was quite good. Er and frankly what had happened is, as I say, I got naturalised. I then applied to join the Labour Party and I applied to join the Fabian society and the Fabian society wrote back and I joined that. The lady who got my letter in the Labour Party was of course the woman I became quite friendly with her later on, actually lost it (laughs). But as I say, I became quite friendly with the lady later personally, there was no bad intent. It was just that her husband was ill and various things. Well so they organised this public meeting. I went along to this public meeting and I actually at this public

meeting protested against Greece, the er British intervention in Greece. I joined the Labour Party **(50:00)**

LG: And you got involved in the Labour Hydrogen Bomb campaign? Is that right?

WW: Sorry?

LG: The Labour Hydrogen Bomb campaign. You were involved in that?

WW: Yes.

LG: Yes. Did you attend the Trafalgar Square rally in 1957? Were you there for that one?

WW: Well yes, that was the rally I referred to yes. I certainly not only attended it, we were instrumental in encouraging the party to hold it. And then there was…oh no, the rally in Trafalgar Square in '57 was the one addressed by Barbara Castle. We organised it sorry. It was the later one which was the Labour Party one. Yes of course, I did attend it. I helped to organise it at that time with the then Secretary for the Movement of Colonial Freedom.

LG: What was it like being at the rally? What was the atmosphere of the people?

WW: Well the atmosphere of the people was that…which rally are you referring you? I am getting confused again. The Hydrogen Bomb Campaign rally?

LG: Yeah in…

WW: There was a big problem. Um had been with the atom bomb and now with the hydrogen bomb which was much bigger and more people were conscious of it. And something had to be done about it and people didn't do enough about it you know.

LG: Were there any songs at all at that particular rally or did songs not come into that kind of thing just yet?

WW: The songs came in with the Aldermaston march **(52:00)**. And they came in because we inspired poets and people and in the recruiting afterwards after all. It was a new thing and the songs came in with that. There weren't any songs I mean to sing. The '57 rally was a Labour Party rally…well it wasn't a Labour Party rally but it was ran by Labour Party people and I think we sang the 'Red Flag' at the end or something like that but don't keep me to it. You might find out that we didn't sing anything at the end. But I think it is quite likely that we sung the Red Flag but otherwise there wasn't. I mean there may have been some in existence but I don't think so. I mean Brunner I got to know quite well. I mean I hadn't heard of this stuff then.

LG: Did you go to the Brighton Party Conference?

WW: Did what?

LG: The conference at Brighton in '57. The Labour Party where the motion to support…

WW: The '57 conference where Aneurin Bevan… er yeah. Well I was attending…as I say I had been a delegate to the Labour Party in '51. But I mean I was attending the 57. I wasn't attending the full '57 conference but I was attending one or two days, but I certainly attended that date.

LG: How did you feel when the motion got defeated?

WW: Awful. Well I felt awful before because I knew that it was going to be. One knew what was going to happen and I felt awful and very disappointed. You see Bevan was a very great man in many respects. I mean he founded the National Health Service, he had enormous instincts. **(54:00)** He was also very hampered by a disease in his eyes I mean you know. And I was very friendly er with the chap who was then the head of the International Department of the Labour Party and who was on the Left, Ian Campbell. I don't know whether he's any relation of the objectionable councillor or whether he is even his father. But I mean you know he was a very nice person and er he had written Bevan's speeches and Bevan drove him to the edge of despair because Bevan you know was in some respects lazy, he sort of didn't read the thing beforehand and so on one occasion read one of his speeches and got to the bottom of it and said, 'wasn't that all read over.' So you know he wasn't Lawther who argued it with Bevan who was a miners' leader, you know who was very narrow and very limited but was a sort of person who did his homework. He did his homework and he had his arguments there, that's how it happened. So um you know yes of course it was a terrible disappointment but we managed to change it the next year. But then the changes you see, the change wasn't just a Labour Party thing. The media were very strong in helping the change towards conformism. Just as the media were instrumental in getting Tony Blair elected as leader of the Labour Party. **(56.00)**

LG: What were the usual meetings of the Hydrogen Bomb Campaign…

WW: Sorry?

LG: What were the usual kind of activities of the Hydrogen Bomb Campaign within the Labour…

WW: What were the…?

LG: Usual kind of activities or meetings like?

W: Oh yes, I'll tell you more. As I say, the first thing which we did in was this famous thing in '57. Then um I started co-operating with the New Left. I mean everybody knew about this, it was you know all quite official. And um, and then CND was founded, there was all this talk about a demonstration on a missile base and then as I say [unclear] brought er…brought the editor of Peace News and myself together. Today of course you have an apparatus, you didn't have an apparatus. You know when um I went to the '57 rally, er the late Hugh Jenkins…when I said yes there is a deficiency (laugh) with a microphone but I was getting it prepared. He was reassured when I told him er that I was getting him to prepare for a representative of the electrician's union. Because he knew jolly well that I knew nothing about wires (laughs), a major wireless system would have been disastrous. **(58:00)**

LG: Is that how you got into the CND movement then through…

WW: Sorry?

LG: Is that how you got into the campaign for nuclear disarmament through the Labour Hydrogen Bomb campaign?

WW: Well yes as I said active in the Labour Hydrogen Bomb campaign and we knew of course that the campaign for nuclear disarmament had gone on. It was highly publicised in

the *New Statesman* which at that time had its most brilliant editor which it ever had, Kingsley Martin. Since then the *Statesman* has gone down and down and down. There's been a little bit of variance but it has never had these heights. So er one knew about it and one expected it and of course I knew Peggy Duff. I mean Peggy Duff was the organising secretary of *Tribune* before that. I knew Peggy Duff alright. I knew Peggy Duff in connection with the Hydrogen Campaign Committee and knowing the editor of *Tribune* and God knows what.

LG: What was campaigning like in those days? What were the meetings like?

WW: Well no it was a small committee which met in the House of Commons. You know Michael Lawn was calling it and Michael Lawn was then an MP don't forget. But as I say we co-operated with the movement for colonial freedom which was actually better organised at that time and called that meeting.

LG: Speaking of meetings, did you go to the CND's first meeting?

WW: Oh yes definitely. And of course, there were overflows. Now that was held in what was called the Caxton Hall**.** It doesn't exist any more, it's been pulled down. **(1:00:00)** But er they had to overflows meetings in it you know. There were overflows in smaller rooms and even outside. They didn't expect as many people.

(1:00:19)

LG: How did you feel when that many people turned up?

WW: Well I thought it was a good thing. I thought it was a good thing but I thought at long last something was going to happen about nuclear weapons, you know about a British campaign against nuclear weapons. But we did think in terms of changing British Policy within a year or two. We didn't realise what a long haul it would be. We literally thought, you know, or I'd have said back in '57 [unclear] in '58, you know and you would go on from there err but err as I say I mean once the Establishment realised what it was up against the Establishment got going. The Intelligence Service got going! Our Intelligence Service had a lot to do with the election of both [unclear] and Tony Blair.

(1.01.28)

LG: What was the mood at that rally like? What was the atmosphere even?

WW: The atmosphere was that at long last something was starting to do something about nuclear weapons. But don't forget that CND at this point wasn't committed even enough to them either. It was series of demands mainly stopping tests.

(1.01.57)

LG: You've mentioned a few different organisations so the Direct Action Committee and the CND. Were there any tensions?

WW: Sorry?

LG: Were there any tensions between these different organisations that you're…

WW: No they weren't any tensions between the Direct Action Committee and erm…Bomb Committee err they were no tensions between Direct Action, and it's very peculiar this I'll explain in a minute, and Labour Party activists. The tensions mainly existed, I mean, you know, I had my reservations about Direct Action because err you know you use Parliamentary means and so on more with some of Establishment people erm but I had some reservations err but more with the sort of people who had formed the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament err people like err Charles Taylor and Kingsley Martin who has a lot of reservations about Direct Action. This is where the conflict was with Canon Collins actually possible leading towards the Establishment actually trying to keep a balance, you know, he's been very unfairly criticised I think by err Direct Action people because he wasn't as hostile to them as they think but he err but as I say it was this sort of semi-Establishment element. Now for instance err the late Stanley (?) who was err against nuclear weapons was very much in favour of Direct Action. I mean later on when he became a Government Minister he became somewhat conventional, you know err didn't give up his beliefs but he didn't push them so far and so on and so forth. But erm as far as Direct action was concerned he was in favour of it! You see? So in actual fact we didn't have many difficulty with Direct Action Labour Party members but we did have them semi-Establishment erm supporters of CND err you know Right Wing Labour people, all sorts of people who were more, not so much on the radical side.

(1.04.47)

LG: You were involved in the Committee of 100?

WW: I wasn't a member of the Committee of 100 but what had happened is as I say I'd been Labour candidate in Croydon North East and but then in '58 was the first Aldermaston March err and a few youngsters got away and you know formed Young CND which was the biggest CND youth group in the whole of London, in Croydon and err basically I tried to keep the case between them and the adult group which was a tough time mainly dominated by Quakers, now the Chair unfortunately had to retire so I became Chair of Croydon CND and the main chair after I ceased to be a Parliamentary candidate, you know So although I was a resident in Richmond I remained Chair of Croydon CND erm well into the '60s until you know until it more or less folded but it err and err but the thing is we were basically led by the youth group and of course the youth group was very much in favour of Direct Action and one of its more prominent members err nearly got jailed and I went to court and I helped them and so on and so forth so I was very close to them but erm unfort-…well it's another matter, I don't want to talk about it but he committed suicide later.

(1.06.51)

LG: Did you take part in any of the protests organised by the Committee of 100?

WW: Well as a sort of act of solidarity I set up with them in London protest which they had, I think it was outside of I think it was in Trafalgar Square, we sat down and you know i went to erm I got fined a small amount but that was the only Direct Action I've ever done to be honest. But after that I became a bridge you know, I sort of erm didn't support the people who opposed Direct Action and of course most of the groups erm didn't. See most of the people on the group didn't. The opposition to Direct Action came from the politicians, you see what I mean? The people who weren't err politically committed and came into the movement didn't have this sort of ideological obstacle.

(1.08.06)

LG: Did the police get involved in the protests much?

WW: Oh yes! The police just lifted you off

LG: What was it like being lifted off…?

WW: Well not particularly pleasant. But I mean at that time the police weren't particularly rough then. They were rougher at some other places.

LG: What were they like? Can you tell me about those?

WW: Well they're useless, I mean, you know, they just err they just lifted you into a van.

LG: Can we move to the Aldermaston March? Err can you tell m much about the first march?

WW: Yes…The first march was from London to Aldermaston . The subsequent marches were the reverse way, Aldermaston to London so we got more people in Trafalgar Square than we expected, about six thousand or seven which isn't a lot of people by modern terms but in that terms, you know, it was Suez size…well Suez size was fifteen thousand…but it was large and it was quite unusual. People marching out not just to Downing Street but Turnham Green err a car hire firm err stopped the Treasurer of CND using a car hire err the err as I say, we were surprised by the large numbers. I was even more surprised by the large number on day four which was about eight hundred people. Now, eight hundred people you might say is not a lot but you see err Aldermaston was in the wilds, you know. People most people had only heard of it in connection with the nuclear base. And my expectations was that by the time the march would get to Aldermaston err well I mean the march would be there and that would be it. But there were eight hundred people there before the march arrived and and and and what happened then was a big surprise. And it was a big surprise to the press. It was a bigger surprise to the press then the larger marches later. Because you know we weren't, we weren't used to, you know, well alright people will go to a base but you wouldn't expect many people to do it, but they did.

(1.11.00)

LG: Where had the idea to march to Aldermaston come from?

WW: Sorry?

LG: Where had the idea to do the march?

WW: Well the chap who had organised the…a chap called Steven, who was in the Direct Action Committee organised a demonstration in the Atlantic had this idea first and the Peace News and Hugh Brock took it up and then engaged a young woman called err Pat Arrowsmith to organise it and they'd already done that by the time I talked to [unclear] and so on. But err thats how it came about but Direct Action Committee had existed for sometimes before that but was quite small and was at one time exclusively pacifist. It wasn't later.

(1.12.07)

LG: We're you involved in the planning process of that march?

WW: Sorry?

LG: Were you involved in the planning of that march?

WW: Aldermaston? Yes.

LG: What kind of planning…what was the planning like?

WW: Well basically, you know, I mean erm I was involved in the planning but my main involvement was in the London campaign to get support for it, that was my main involvement but I was in the planning in as much as one…you know I was on the thing where we said we would march on day one to Turnham Green and then far as far as I remember Turnham Green to err Maidenhead the next day then the next day we would march from Maidenhead to Reading and the of course to Aldermaston. Now I was involved in planning the stages in what was going to be one, what was going to be done it too many people turned up and plans getting back East, things like that.

LG: What were you doing when you were in London? How did you get people involved?

WW: Sorry?

LG: You mentioned you were in the London kind of…

WW: As I said we'd…what I did as I say in between jobs I didn't have a car but a car was put at my disposal and I used it for a loudspeaker drive. I remember using an old Bentley for a loudspeaker drive and you know you had to sit and and then a Rover! You know the battery was below the seat, I don't know whether you can remember these very old fashioned things? And at any rate you know erm there we were but you know we did a loudspeaker drive as well as we could and you know try to organise leafleting, other meetings which took place.

LG: What was the reaction of the public to your kind of attempts with the loudspeaker?

WW: Some of the reaction to the loudspeaker was "Go home to Russia!" Err you know? Some of it was very friendly. Err but I mean there were people who definitely were hostile, definitely were hostile, some people were hostile to loudspeakering but I mean you know one had to take that into account so you had some you have some hostile comments. It's later that the hostile comments stopped basically.

LG: Why do you think that was?

WW: Sorry?

LG: Why do you think they stopped later?

WW: Well because people accepted it was happening, you see what I mean? People expected it was happening and err and some of them had become more sympathetic even if they haven't travelled the full distance.

LG: What was the first day…

WW: And also the thought, you know, there were a lot of people there who were sympathetic to the march and didn't want to antagonise them but, you know, but on the first march they certainly thought the majority of the marchers were stupid.

(1.15.53)

LG: Why do you think that was?

WW: Sorry?

LG: Why do you think they thought the marchers were stupid?

WW: Well because they were erm weakening the countries defenses. So they thought anyhow.

LG: What was the first day of the Aldermaston march like?

WW: Well you marched from Trafalgar Square down to Turnham Green and, you know, and then they were a lot of concerts, a lot of bands and err, you know, and it was very gay and very confident and people were pleasantly sur…and the fact that people were pleasantly surprised so many people were there helped but I mean so did the bands and so did the singing.

LG: Can you remember any of the songs from that day?

WW: Well the "H-Bomb Thunder" is the most prominent one of the lot. And, you know, some of the others err and err a number of them. The "H-Bomb Thunder" certainly almost a hymn of nuclear disarmament at that time. But of course also erm the parody on err oh dear on a well-known American song erm the parody on "The Way to Tipperary".

LG: Do you have any particular memories from that day?

WW: Sorry?

LG: Do you have any particular memories that stand out from that day?

WW: Any?

LG: Particular memories? Any encounters or anything from that day that really stand out?

WW: Well what stood out on that day was my surprise to see so many people there basically. And also I was pleasant…I knew we were going to have, I mean we decided we would have music and so on but I didn't realise just the full impact it would have so I was pleasantly surprised. And what surprised me, I was very pleased about, that was the confidence of the

marchers. You know, the marchers had found each other because they found each other they thought British policy would be changed in a year or two.

LG: Did more people join on the way? Or was it, apart from at the end, did more people join as you went along each day?

WW: Oh yes! I mean some people did join on the way Some people looked on and the impressed joined it. Quite a lot of people, you know, didn't make it to the Square but joined it on the way, you know, Chiswick or somewhere, no, no, near Chiswick, but I mean Chiswick is before it but joined at Hammersmith or something like that. Always on the way, everywhere on the way people were standing and err you know, and err clapping and err some of them then stepped out and joined it.

(1.19.47)

WW: Well look, what happened with me is Turnham Green is very near here erm you know, if you come to Richmond, so obviously I went home for the first night and *coughs* it so happened that erm that was the first night of Passover anyhow, the Jewish festival, so I didn't go the second day. I rejoined it on the third day when it went from Maidenhead to Reading and then of course I slept in a tent in Reading.

LG: Were there any provisions that were made for people that were staying on the nights?

WW: Well there were, you see, late [unclear] organised some catering for people on the march. Now as far as the evening was concerned, I mean people could go and get snacks and so on as necessary but it was all a little but ad hoc because in one case I think, I don't know where it was, one hall, we thought we had was closed and had to go to another one but then they had tents. We had tents in, had tents in Reading anyhow. But I think there was in Maidenhead or Reading, there was a hall which didn't work or something 'cause, as I say I wasn't there at Maidenhead.

LG: Was the weather particularly good for the march?

WW: It was good on the first day, one of the days was very rainy.

LG: Did that effect…?

WW: Now wait a moment. It was raining on, I think it was raining when I was going from Maidenhead to Reading, which is day three.

LG: Did that effect the mood at all?

WW: No. I mean people stayed, if you see what I mean.

(1.22.04)

LG: Did you partake in the march the year after and like the subsequent ones as well?

WW: Oh yes, yes the subsequent I partook in everyone of them.

LG: How did they compare to the first one?

WW: Well I mean the second one was much much larger. It was outwards, you know, it was coming in from Aldermaston. But it was larger from the start. Because people, you know, the movement had caught on. You see, I mean, when I said the publicity for the first one, the problem was to get people who would potentially come, aware it was happening at all.

LG: You led the revival of the Aldermaston march in '72 is that right?

WW: What? Yes.

LG: What made you kind of, what prompted you to revive the march?

WW: Well I was in the [unclear]. But that time I was a bit older erm I could never sleep in tents because, you know, in '72 I was…twenty-three…by '72 I was nearly forty-nine wasn't I? So I at that point I didn't sleep in tents anymore, I just took my car to the starting point everyday, marched to where we were going to then took public transport or a lift, whatever I could get back to my car. But I was there all the time, I was there everyday unlike the first one where, as I say, just happened to coincide with Passover.

LG: How did that later one in '72 compare to the others?

WW: It was very large. You see the initial you know the first march was the breakthrough but it was small compared to subsequent ones.

LG: Was it hard work on the body?

WW: Well yes, I mean today I couldn't do it. But err I didn't mind, I mean I'm basically I am, I'm a very persistent, a very slow walker so I was very…on a long march, you know, I may have started at the front but ended up at the back, but I would be there. Here and there I had to have a lift to catch up, particularly in the '70s, more later than the '70s.

(1.25.29)

LG: Where you involved in making any banners for the marches at all?

WW: In what?

LG: Making any of the banners at the marches?

WW: Oh no I wasn't. I've never been any good at banner making err and err there was a lot of banner making.

RD: I was just going to ask you how…what you think the main differences are between the way you campaigned back in the '60s and the way we campaign now? Because so much of it is online now.

WW: Well certainly the internet has come on but I think the erm demonstrations are still on, still attracting people so the difference was between the post war period up to 1957 or '56 and afterwards that's where the real difference was. You know, as I say, I think people would,

you could get enormous people out on demonstrations and so on and so forth. Where there is a difference is that erm sometimes people prefer to go online rather than to go to a small meeting locally. That's where there is a difference. Would you agree?

RD & LG: Yeah

RD: But also about the kind of spreading the word and getting people interested, I feel like so little of that is done face-to-face and, you know, currently

WW: Yes erm well, you see, for instance, I mean that Croydon Youth Group never had a proper, you know, it was all mouth-to-mouth but it was very effective and of course now you'd have the internet as well, you see what I mean? And where people haven't got internet then mouth-to-mouth with someone whose got it, so it increased not decreased. But that's how the Croydon Youth Group was organised, it hardly ever circulated their circulations were incomplete anyhow err but err it was a sort of they saw each other and knew what was going on.

(1.28.39)

LG: Were you involved in the protest outside the Soviet Embassy in 1961?

WW: Yes

LG: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

WW: Well I mean it was a protest outside the Soviet Embassy, 1961 and some Communist Party members disagreed and came along and said they disagreed, that's all.

LG: I found somewhere it said you put a milk bottle outside the door?

WW: Sorry?

LG: I found in my research that you put a milk bottle outside the door of the Soviet Union with the label "Danger Radioactive"?

WW: Sorry?

LG: I found in research that you put a milk bottle outside the door of the Soviet Embassy. Is that true?

WW: Sorry, can you say it again? I didn't hear you.

LG: There was a milk bottle placed outside the Soviet Embassy with the label "Danger Radioactive" on it. At least that's what some sources I've found say. Did that happen?

WW: Erm…no…They didn't come out of the…as far as I remember we weren't received by the Embassy but I may be wrong on this. It may be that they sent a small delegation but I don't think so. I think they didn't open up, that's what I think but I…better check on that. Some people would know. My recollection is there wasn't a response.

RD: How did you feel when the Test Ban Treaty in '63 got passed?

Well, the Test Ban Treaty in '63 was an enormous step forward. And an achievement for the Wilson government in part.

RD: Was there a feeling leading up to the signing that it would get passed?

WW: There, there was a lot of feeling, I mean this was in response was a feeling that….After that activity was reduced, because, you know, people were thinking that this was the, the major thing, but it wasn't. But it was progress.

RD: Are you friends with Pat Arrowsmith because we're interviewing her next week?

WW: Yes, I am. You're interviewing her? Oh, you've got her telephone number and everything? Yes, I am.

RD: And so could you tell me a bit about the kind of friendships that formed within these movements? And the kind of, camaraderie, or….

WW: Yes, oh yes, I mean people on the whole were friendly to each other. I think if they've gone through things together..

RD: I know that Pat has been arrested many, many times.

WW: Yes.

RD: Is that just a different style of demonstrating that –

WW: Well she was predominantly a Direct Action-ist first, you see, and she was arrested many times as you say. I mean, as I say, I later on supported direct action as an aspect, not as a main aspect, but as an aspect of campaignin, I didn't initially. But, um, I was converted by my youth group, basically. I know, I know it's just kind of amusing this, because as I say this is, er, there were a lot of Quakers in the adult group, but it is interesting, in one case I … I got a letter saying…I was corrupting youth! Um, from a CND member. I was corrupting youth by allowing them to go to pubs and so on and so forth. In actual fact perhaps they had been corrupting me, I don't know...But, er (laughs).

RD: And what was your relationship like to this youth group?

WW: Very close, very close. I was very, I was friendly with all its leading members. That was the thing, you see, they differed a lot among themselves but I was friendly with a lot of them. I was a sort of bridge between them. But I was always the bridge, between them, between them and they were the more staid, you know some staid laid back Quaker members of um, the CND campaign. Very doubtful, you know, about the way we were demonstrating and the fact that they were drinking; often drinking quite a lot.

RD: And did you feel quite responsible, did you take on a responsibility role outside of the CND and just, kind of, everyday life with them as well?

WW: Yes, yes I did. As I say I was friendly with a number of them. But in one case their was a tragedy.

RD: Did you kind of separate your friendships; did you kind of think "I'm friendly with this person, in, kind of, my own sphere, and friendly with these people in a political sphere". Or did it all merge and become one?

WW: Well, with a lot of people you just merge. With other people I am friendly who don't share my politics. You know, I have got friends who don't share my politics.

RD: Have you got any "flashbulb" memories, that really stand out in your mind as momentous occasions, or something that you can kind of feel now, still, about this period of demonstrating, up until the Test Ban Treaty being signed?

(1: 36: 18)

WW: Oh yes, um, well I mean it was you know, sort of on the first day, having – I knew that the bands were coming, but actually hearing and taking in that scene – the large number of people taking photographs and so on, and so forth, yes. I didn't expect that. Well, I obviously expected some of it, because I knew the bands were coming but I just didn't realise….But I hadn't seen it before, you see what I mean, you had a band there, a few people there, it just went right through.

RD: Were these bands that you then followed in the future?

WW: Yes, they did. They did, I mean they were improvised many of them. You know? Youth Group had its own band. Wouldn't have competed in a band competition, but it was all right on the march.

RD: So there was the spontaneity of musicians coming together?

WW: Oh yes, musicians did come together as well. Sorry, was that what you…?

RD: No, no, that was it.

LG: Have your views on that period changed? Looking back from now, have they changed at all?

WW: The period up to '63?

LG: Yes.

WW: No, I think they were very formative, and as I say the Test Ban Treaty was an achievement, but it was only a step on the way, and, er, but as people who started campaigning on nuclear tests probably in some cases used that as a resting place. But in actual fact it was only beginning. And I had realised very early on, that it would be a long haul. I mean I didn't realise in '56 or '57, or even '58, but I mean once [unclear] I realised that it was going to be a longer haul and I realised also that the establishment was going out, you know, and was having all the guns on it. And I realised it then, I realised this wasn't a Labour Party thing, the American and the British intelligence services were involved.

RD: Were you disappointed when the peace movement lost a bit of momentum and a following after the treaty was signed?

WW: Yes, I was. Um, you know, I didn't expect this. I mean, later on I could explain it. And of course, you see, one of the causes was that people thought it would be a short, sharp campaign.

LG: Why do you think people thought that?

WW: Why did they think it was a short, sharp campaign? Well, the nuclear weapons was a new weapon, and people hadn't realised how dangerous it was to the atmosphere, though now, you know, they are now realising it, this danger to humanity. And we realised it and we thought other people would do this very quickly. And once you'd got a British government, you know, which actually abandoned it - . What we underestimated were the vested interests, um, which we challenged, those – not just in the military, but the industrial sphere, the whole defendants of the established order. And all this went against us and we didn't realise it. And they were worried about CND to an extent that they - they thought they'd neutralised the Labour Party but they thought they hadn't neutralised CND.

RD: I've just thought of something that I'd like to return to, actually. The peace movement very naturally brought together lots of different religions. Can you just explain the dynamics of these different religions working together?

WW: Er, Yes. Um, well, quite obviously, you know, the Hebrew prophets envisaged a time when war could be abolished. Er, if you look at history you find that you can see that as technology improves, there is, there is a challenge to mankind. Basically human technological progress has outpaced modern progress. Now something like that, the possibility of that in a sense is [unclear] on the Hebrew prophets. Er, and therefore both within Judaism and Christianity there is this push towards a world free of war. There are also other pushes. I mean, you know the Christians being one, have been affected by the fact that the, that Christianity was founded by people who thought that the end of the world had come. And, er, in the case of Judaism, the formative years were, where it took it's, you know sort of post-third century form, were years when Jews didn't have any political power. And therefore tended to push this consideration of ending all wars a little bit into the background. But coming to the fore again with it, I think that made co-operation between religions easier. The other thing which has made it easier, um, I think in modern times, er, is a realisation of the universal perspective, which has very often got lost. And, and the fact that we need to redefine, both redefine theology, and a bigger awareness of the limits of theology. Again, thus drawing you back to these fundamental things which you have to be aware of. I don't know whether that satisfies you?

RD: Yes, that's very good thank you.

LG: How did you feel about the Test Ban Treaty in '96 ? Was there a feeling that you were getting close to really, kind of wiping out nuclear weaponry?

WW: Wait a minute, you meant to sa - the , er, Test Ban Treaty was '63.

LG: There was another one in '96, was there?

WW: What happened then was that you had the er, you had the er, establishment of the um, you know, the er, you had the nuclear um, the um oh god, anyway it was the nuclear treaty which, basically said that there were a limited number of nuclear states, and that new states had joined it, basically put an obligation on nuclear states to disarm, and on non-nuclear states not to become nuclear. That was the nuclear treaty of '96. And that was a very, very significant step forward. I think a bigger step than the Test Ban Treaty in '63. The '96 one was a big step forward, but since then the er, you know, particularly American policy has gone back on it, and consequently everyone else has gone back on it. And the trouble is, the nuclear powers haven't disarmed and you have had a certain amount of proliferation. A positive thing has been that South Africa, has refused, has, you know, abolished its nuclear weapons and you have had, you have got a nuclear free zone in Africa, and elsewhere in fact.

(1:46:46)

LG: What do you think about the current situation in terms of nuclear weaponry, do you think we will ever get to having none?

WW: Well frankly, the whole thing is a race against time. If nuclear weapons are not abolished, then ultimately there'll be a major catastrophe. It doesn't mean to say that the whole of humanity is at an end, but a large proportion of it. If, on the other hand, um, the drive towards nuclear disarmament is getting , is gathering strength, if the non-nuclear nations got together and they are pressing for a nuclear arms convention now, which goes beyond the 1996 treaty. But I actually have a plan of phasing out nuclear weapons altogether. Now if that wins out before we've had a catastrophe , we're all right. There is one thing which has to be realised; this is a political problem. It is not a technical problem. Because you can in fact, technology is available which makes it evident if somebody's got nuclear, nuclear capacity or not. I know they, I know that for political purposes , you know, you're being told that countries can have it without being noticed; it's a lot of rubbish. You can't. I mean you can't. This is something you can't hide, you can easily inspect it. The question is one of political will. That's what we've got to generate. It is a question of political will.

LG: Do you think then, that something like Hiroshima could happen again?

WW: Well you've got to, well bluntly it could be worse. Because you've got a hydrogen bomb. That's the sort of….what I think you cannot control, you cannot prevent human beings losing their cool. This is a problem. As long as somebody is in control of these things, and can press a button, that person may lose control. Now, I mean, you know, Cuba - Kennedy very nearly did you know. After the – Kruschev kept his nerve much better actually, and then afterwards Kennedy caught up and that very nearly did it, and god knows what would have happened then. So frankly it's not just Hiroshima, Nagasaki again. A bigger catastrophe could happen. Or it could happen that you have got a reign of tactical nuclear bombs, about forty tactical nuclear bombs this country is finished. It doesn't exist anymore. You see, so in other words until you've actually got a, an international treaty banning nuclear weapons, and an international inspection system there is a danger, er, once you get near to that system – see, you're not near at the moment - and consequently some countries want nuclear powers, they say they want it for industrial purposes, this is rubbish. Because you actually, you actually have to use bogus accountancy to justify it. You have to say that, that er, that if people acquire nuclear powers from nuclear weapons there is no cost, which is rubbish. That, but once you get near it, then there will be a problem with people, of the superpowers before

they actually disarm completely, um, demanding er, limitation, and ultimately an elimination of all nuclear power. And that would be quite difficult. So the last stages would be quite difficult. Because I think they will insist on it, at the moment they pretend it's not a question but it is a problem. But it's got to come. So whether we'll win out or not I don't know. We shall have to assume that it's possible to win out.

LG: You mentioned Cuba. What was it like living in that era, with the cold war era? Was there a strong feeling of immediate nuclear threat, or did it affect everyday life?

WW: Well, they, they're trying to stoke up the same thing now. I mean, you know the rest of the, first of all NATO, then the European Union, a country like Ukraine, has followed a policy of encouraging ethnic divisions. Expanding into it by encouraging ethnic divisions, because in a place like Ukraine there isn't a tidy frontier between Ukrainians and Russians; they're mixed. And, you know, you've got to do the best you can with your frontier. And the best thing is to leave them alone for a time and then they can settle down. But instead of that this has been prevented. And some people, you know, are trying to start a second cold war. So the atmosphere is quite similar to that now, only it was worse, you know, people thought that er, well, there were people that were sceptical, like I said but what the media tried to say is that the, um, you know, there was a terrific danger from the Russians and no danger from anybody else.

RD: Just from what you said earlier about how you came to realisations of some of the problems through the role of women and the way they were questioning what would happen to birth etcetera, would you say that the role of women was prevalent and almost equal in the peace movement?

WW: Well, women have played a leading part in these, in the peace movement. And in the peace movement there is no problem. You see what I mean. You see, for instance, [inaudiblesentence]. But you know, it took, it takes discrimination at selection conference and so on to get to it. And in the peace movement there isn't that problem. Because women and men are first of all, the first push on, on, nuclear tests actually came from women. But after that, both women and men shared equally. There is no problem. And in that way, the peace movement is actually a model for the rest of society. But the rest of society hasn't got there yet but the peace movement has.

RD: That's great, thank you. Is there anything that you thought that we would ask you about, that we haven't asked you about?

WW: I don't think so, no.

RD: Or anything else that you want to add about your experiences back then, as part of the peace movement?

WW: Well, I think, you see, as I said, before it's a struggle against time and it is a long haul, it is a long haul. You see, even if you get rid of British nuclear weapons, and er, then you get rid of - at a later stage you get a reduction in the Russian , American, Russian and Chinese nuclear weapons, er, they will then be very reluctant to reduce to zero. There will be pressure from outside. And it will take time. And the next step at the moment, is to confine it, to say, to those three countries. Before we move, and to see that nobody else can do it any more, and a tight inspection system. But er, it is going to be a long haul. But I can't put a time

limit on it. But I think – you see if we now get - we've had South Africa termin-, South Africa refusing, actually abandoning its nuclear deterrent. It had a nuclear deterrent of sorts, just a - but it wasn't independent. But ours isn't independent either. No nuclear, no nuclear weapons - well, the French one may be independent in a sense, but only in one aspect, not in others. Um, the next step is to confine it to two or three coun – but then, the rest of the world will have to press on, and they will then press back, and as I say, although at the moment there don't seem to be problems, you know there'd be a problem with nuclear power and god knows what. And that will take time. So, it will take time before, before humanity is out of that period. But once you've got rid of nuclear weapons and nuclear war, and basically major war, then I think a world which, which the vision of the Hebrew prophets, this becomes possible. Before that it isn't.

RD: Thank you very much.

LG: Thank you.

RD: We're just going to stop this recording.