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Full transcript of an interview with

Charles Martin

on 15/06/2022; 13/08/2022

by Don and Lyn Longo

for the

**Days of Wrath, Years of Hope:
Memories of Protest and Civil Disobedience
in South Australia, 1965-1983 Oral History Project**

Transcribed by: Lyn Longo

Recording available

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Interview Part 1 of 2

Don Longo [00:00:06] This is an interview with Charles Martin, conducted by Don and Lyn Longo on Wednesday, 15 June 2022 at 2:00 pm at Charles's home at [address redacted]. The interview is part of a project supported by the History Trust of South Australia on activism and protest movements in the period 1965 to 1983, though we often extend the time frame into the 1990s and beyond. The ID code for this interview is 40_MAR_20220615. And we should begin by acknowledging that we're one that we're meeting on the land of the Kaurna people, and we want to pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the land.

Charles, thanks for the interview. We're not very familiar with your personal or political background in your youth or since, so we look forward to getting to know you better over the course of the interview.

Charles Martin [00:01:10] Yep.

Don Longo [00:01:11] We know that you've donated a lot of your personal archives to the State Library of South Australia, and we'll consult those in due course. You do, however, have quite a reputation for opposition to the Vietnam War and an equally significant standing as one of the of the early founders of an old Adelaide Institution, the Clearlight Cafe in Adelaide's Rundle Street.

I believe you also have been involved in many other progressive protests and militant movements of the sixties to the eighties. So let's explore your role in some of these movements and more generally to your attitude, to protest and civil disobedience. For the sake of this recording, we will mostly focus on the periods of the 1960s up to around 1973.

Charles Martin [00:01:58] Okay.

Don Longo [00:02:01] So first of all, another one of those formalities for the recording. Can you please tell us your full name, date and place of birth please?

Charles Martin [00:02:12] Charles Edward Martin, 1st of February 1946. Millicent, South Australia.

Don Longo [00:02:21] Country boy. Well, that leads to my first question really. Often people become activists or become involved in progressive causes because of their personal background. Could you give us a brief history of your own background, your parents and your influential relatives? What work they did, and about school, church, Sunday school, things that may have shaped you, and made you into what you are today.

Charles Martin [00:03:01] Boy, that's quite a broad topic. But I think that a lot of it goes right back. Both my parents would have come from nonconformist Protestantism, and so very strong in that, is the idea of the primacy of conscience, in living. It's total primacy of conscience.

Don Longo [00:03:42] Methodist?

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Charles Martin [00:03:44] Yeah. Well, both Mum and Dad were, I think, mostly a Methodist background. I think Dad might have had a bit of a mix of Anglican and Salvation Army in there with a lot of the nonconformist Protestants anyway. Mum used to go to the Congregational Church when they were visiting Victor Harbor. They weren't rigid about---they would see Congregational as similar to Wesleyan or whatever.

Don Longo [00:04:22] Well they amalgamated in the 1970's.

Charles Martin [00:04:31] To me, I just thought really the key to everything is the Sermon on the Mount, which says 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.' And really, that's the foundation of everything in civic life or personal life. And both my parents, that was the way they were. In a way that sounds quite austere, and in some ways it is, and something of the stoic about it. But it's also, although there's that side of it, there's also the side that, like love thy neighbour. And you ask the question, 'Who is thy neighbour?' and basically thy neighbour is everyone.

And so both my parents would have treated everybody they met, rich or poor, down and out or really doing well, the same, and very incredibly fair. For instance, can I give you an example? If one of us brought home a potential partner and they met them, then we decided we didn't want to go with that partner anymore, that didn't change the--- as far as they are concerned, they've met this person and is now their friend, tough luck if you don't like it. They'd be nice about it, but that's the kind of thing. So everybody's important.

And the same with my Dad. For him, the boss's job is to look after the workers, so that's what I grew up with. That's the job of the boss. So, quite austere, quite conservative in a lot of ways. Dad was in the Freemasons, but you see a lot of those people, although they were conservative, they really were quite alien to modern capitalism because my Dad would have thought that it was wrong to say, put more than about 10% as a profit margin on any quote or anything like that. And with people like him, and I met people since who I think, 'Just like my Dad.' So I've had to insist on giving him a bit extra.

And with Mum those sorts of basics in philosophy comes, out as a service. Basically, you're at the service of everybody you meet and with absolutely no discrimination

and fair to everybody. And the other thing is that, if you're doing something for somebody, it's total. Like, you do the very best for everybody at all times, whether they're feeble or strong. So that was Mum's attitude. So she really admired her matron, that she trained with up at Port Augusta. And it makes me wonder now, I think we'd be better if we had matrons running hospitals and not administrators. But anyway, that's going off the topic. But I'm just trying to give you a flavour of that background.

And it's also I've mentioned something like with my Dad, just a couple of little things. We were down at Milang, and he sent a young bloke off to get sand from a nearby sand hill. And the guy came back and he said, 'I found some Aborigine bones.' And Dad said, 'Take them back,' straight away. He didn't harass the fella, he just said, 'Get straight back in the truck and take them back. Put them back where you found them.' So you get those signals.

Don Longo [00:10:29] That's a respect for others.

Charles Martin [00:10:30] Yeah, yeah. And even though he might talk [as a] conservative when it came to [the] personal, meeting somebody, then that all didn't apply.

Lyn Longo [00:10:46] Well, I think that's quite a remarkable reaction to that incident

Charles Martin [00:10:50] Yeah, well, this is in the fifties.

Lyn Longo [00:10:52] Yes. At a time when respect for Aboriginal culture, was non-existent, particularly where I grew up, on Yorke Peninsula.

Charles Martin [00:11:01] Yeah. So my parents were pretty unusual in that respect and the families, that characteristic is in the families too.

Don Longo [00:11:14] What did they do, your father and mother? Were they farmers?

Charles Martin [00:11:18] Well they both came from a very farming, very rural background. So Dad was born in Quorn and his father, and grandfather and that family were all railway workers and teamsters switching between. But my grandfather, Charles Martin, he went on the land and acquired a property at Albury Valley, which is near Pichi Richi. between there and Saltia.

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That's sort of rural and very, very down to earth in a way. I think they preferred to live a tough life, making something out of nothing. This is what some of my aunts and other relatives would have complained about. The Martins seem to prefer to try and make something out of something very unpromising. And I can see that in me too. But I've got some things to show you of my, I think it's Great Uncle Herb with a team of thirty donkeys.

Don Longo [00:13:01] Oh, I'd like to see that.

Charles Martin [00:13:02] Well I'll show it to you. So there's that, and I just remember Mum and her variety of friends. She'd have friends who might be just the wife of one of Dad's workers, had equal status with the wife of a--- so that's what I admire about them.

Don Longo [00:13:43] They were cereal farmers?

Charles Martin [00:13:46] Yeah. Well, mixed and very tough country. Albury Valley, it goes right up to the Dutchman's Stern. It's really stony, no permanent water, but I've got a picture of me and a couple of my siblings and we're standing by the old ruin. But they were teamsters. They used to cut sandalwood, they used to cut firewood. What they were doing was trying to build up a property by cutting firewood and sandalwood and having a few sheep. And the grandfather would take meat into Quorn and that sort of thing.

So and apparently the some of the girls were pretty--- had that same rugged or just that country approach to life. And they would go out with their Dad and cut a cord of wood, equal to the Dad. And just 18 or 20, they really--- very unusual.

Mum's background is more genteel in the sense of her parents are Stacey's. They came from Myponga, and so they were quite well-off and a big family. Grandpa Stacey's idea was to set them all up with a farm or a business. So whether it was to set my Uncle Arthur up with a chaff mill and my Uncle Tom, he set him up with a farm at Bletchley, and that was what it was.

Don Longo [00:15:58] And the girls, he set them up with something as well?

Charles Martin [00:16:01] No, not really but--- it was expected that they would get married or something, but they were able to get educated. Like, my Aunt Grace,

who's one of the older girls, there was about 11 of them, she married Ted Sanders from Strath, and she was a teacher. So that sort of thing was okay.

Don Longo [00:16:47] So they were given skills to be able to make a living for themselves?

Charles Martin [00:16:52] Yeah. I don't know. I think it was just that it was they could --- if they really wanted to they could. A lot of that's before my time. I do know that Mum tells a story about Aunty Grace which I think is pretty telling, and that is that she became a teacher and she was teaching at Sturt Street Primary School, this is 50, 60 whatever years ago and this is a contrast to what happens now, with discrimination. She found out that one of the young girl teachers was being harassed by somebody, and she went straight to the headmaster and said, 'This has got to stop. You must have heard the stories and this has got to stop. If you don't do something about this now, I'm going to go over and talk to the minister.' Because in those days, I think, there wasn't this sort of bureaucratic veil between them.

Lyn Longo A lot more accessible.

Charles Martin But knowing her, she would have marched in and Mum says it stopped. So that's the sort of---

Don Longo [00:18:26] A strong sense of justice.

Charles Martin [00:18:28] Justice and service.

Don Longo [00:18:37] And at Millicent, you farmed?

Charles Martin [00:18:40] No, no. The story is that Dad's father, it's a long story, of course, but Dad's father was killed by an accident with a circular saw. This is the story to do with wood, carting wood. They used to cart wood into Port Augusta from Pichi Richi and that was used for firing Locos. You have to start Locos on wood, or you had to, then. Then they burned coal. And anyway, that happened, and he had a terrible injury. And I think he lingered in Port Augusta Hospital for weeks and then died.

So that meant that the farm had to be sold or Dad was offered the chance to take it on, but he didn't. He was about 16. Instead, he went and worked for a builder and learnt building. So he just learnt all the trades.

Don Longo [00:19:57] And that's what he did at Millicent, was a builder?

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Charles Martin [00:20:00] Well then, this is war time, of course. He met my mother at Port Augusta because she stayed on the farm working 'till she was 26. And then the war came and she went off to do nursing. She tells me that--- well, I think what it was, was that she always made comments that she felt that a lot of women ended up, if they just got married young and just married someone who was available, a farmer, they'd end up a drudge. And I think it was probably true. But that was her outlook. So she wasn't going to get married to anybody that was going to be disrespectful, or take her for granted. So she was still at home at 26.

She went and trained at Port Augusta Hospital, and that's where she was introduced to my Dad, through the church. And so they got married and then he got whatever it was---land [He got requisitioned into what I think was called the 'Land Army'. You had to be available to do whatever. Anyway, the government at the time could instruct people to just, 'You have to go here,' if you were a particular trade or whatever. And he was a very skilled brickie and all that. So they sent him down to work on the--- I think he did work in Adelaide initially, building bricks around to shield great big oil tanks or whatever, that sort of thing. Then he got sent to help build the cellulose, uh, which was a paper factory, near Millicent. And apparently that's when Mum went down and joined him.

And I think what happened is that he finished the work in building the cellulose plant and they didn't have anyone to run it, so they got him---

Don Longo To manage it

Charles Martin Well, not to manage it, but they just asked him to stay on and work. Apparently when the government came back, he must have been doing that sort of interim, and then when the government came back and wanted him for something else, the manager said, 'You can't have him because I can't do without him'.

Don Longo [00:23:24] **So they settled there.**

Charles Martin [00:23:25] They settled there and he built a house.

Don Longo [00:23:28] **How many children did they have in all, how many siblings?**

Charles Martin Five.

Don Longo Now, you said before Charles, that your parents had a strong sense of service. I assume you absorbed those values from your parents. But you went to Sunday School too? You went to Church? You were a pious kid?

Charles Martin [00:23:51] Sort of pious, but in that kind of a--- I don't know, in our family, the piety is less important than--- The piety is actually something to be a bit cautious of. And Mum was like this, 'It's not piety that counts, it's how you treat people.' So, I never had that particular piety.

I have one very strong memory of, and this is probably a to do with Methodism of being in the Sunday School at the Methodist Church at Strath, and I had this poster which was Jesus. Very colourful, beautiful, and it's the Jesus loves the little children. So the poster, had Jesus and he had kids in Chinese dress and African and white and everything, sitting around him, one of them on his lap, and that was pretty profound for me because that's the church telling me that everybody is valued. It didn't matter that they wore different clothes.

In fact I always took that as good. Well, it's saying Chinese kids look really good in their gear, and, the Africans look good in their gear and we look alright in ours. That's just very profound. I don't know why that sticks in my mind.

Lyn Longo [00:26:09] It's a tolerance of difference, but a celebration of it as well.

Charles Martin [00:26:14] Yeah. And in a way it's just neither. It's certainly a tolerance of difference or just embrace of difference. Of course, the propaganda on the poster is one thing, but the behaviour of the people in the Methodist Church was probably another thing, and that's what you find out when you get older. But that was a very profound---

Don Longo [00:26:57] And school at Millicent, or Strath, do you remember any of it? Did you like school? Was there anything particularly special about your school years that you can remember?

Charles Martin [00:27:10] I was never a great lover of school. I didn't hate it.

Don Longo [00:27:16] Yes.

Charles Martin [00:27:17] I just remember being a young kid of about grade two in Millicent and being so--- before we went into school, I was standing at the fence and fell asleep, leaning on the little fence, looking out on the road and suddenly woke up and thought I was a bit alarmed, I might be still in my pyjamas. But so, I just like to

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see the fun in all that, the lighter side of everything, really. And that's what I remember.

I do remember also they had a Catholic school there too, and they would come past and, some of the kids would be shouting out a derisory little poem or something. And then they would shout back, but I just remember that and feeling half like participating the first time and then thinking, and I'm not going to. I didn't like that.

Don Longo [00:28:41] This was a time in Australia where of course the hostility between Catholics and Protestants was still a very real thing. Yeah, the 1950's.

Charles Martin [00:28:49] Yeah, well, that was my experience of that. And of course, I can think of other--- it was there in the culture, although sometimes it was very low key. I didn't realise till later on that certain sections of the public service were more Protestant and some Catholic and that was all--- But that was just a little instance of that tension.

Don Longo [00:29:24] My mentor at the University of Adelaide worked in the public service for a few years as young man, and he got a job on the basis because he was a Catholic and his manager said to him on his first day. 'Well, Austin,' he said, 'We've just got rid of the last Protestant.' (laughter)

Charles Martin [00:29:45] Yeah, it's interesting actually, because later on in life when my Dad, he spoke up against the anti-Catholic or he just didn't want it. He didn't like to hear that stuff. And he talked about the fact that when Lodges were closing around the country, they would often donate old halls to the Catholics if there was a need in a Catholic parish or something. So there was always I think a mix of thought. And the more idealistic amongst the Masons, because that's where my Dad got his education and was very well known for being able to recite four or five pages of---because they had to make oral presentations.

Don Longo [00:30:59] So it sounds like a satisfying happy childhood?

Charles Martin [00:31:05] Yeah, it was busy and---

Lyn Longo [00:31:07] Safe.

Charles Martin [00:31:08] Yeah. Yeah.

Lyn Longo [00:31:09] You knew what the rules were, what the expectations were. You felt loved.

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Charles Martin [00:31:15] Yeah. The parents were there. Not a lot of display, but they were there and 100%. My parents were **very** determined that my sisters would all have a good education. And I think it goes back to that thing of girls needed to have their own independent way of earning a living. So Dad was very strong on that, as Mum was.

Don Longo [00:32:06] **Lyn's father was exactly the same. Three girls out of four children, and each of the girls had to have a trade of some sort.**

Charles Martin [00:32:16] Yeah.

Don Longo [00:32:17] **So that they could rely on.**

Charles Martin [00:32:21] They weren't allowed to go and get a job in a shop.

There was nothing wrong with someone working in a shop, but they had to--- all my sisters had to have some education.

Lyn Longo [00:32:37] **Really, you're describing my childhood.**

Charles Martin [00:32:40] Yes.

Don Longo [00:32:42] **And they wanted *you* to have an education?**

Charles Martin [00:32:47] Oh, yeah.

Don Longo [00:32:48] **And do something with that education? You went to high school, Millicent, obviously.**

Charles Martin [00:32:55] Oh, no, no. We moved to Strath when I was in grade three. And so my main schooling was in Strathalbyn, including high school

Don Longo [00:33:09] **You did well at high school?**

Charles Martin [00:33:11] Moderately well. But I was always a person who wanted to be active.

Don Longo [00:33:18] **Not a scholar?**

Charles Martin [00:33:19] Mm. Sort of, I think I was a scholar. It was just the wrong menu, you know what I mean? Like I was actually very interested in learning. But it was just various times through my life I would--- I wanted to do art in Leaving, but I was good enough at maths and science that I was in that stream. And so I wasn't allowed to do art, I had to do Latin.

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Also I was probably happiest out working with Dad on the building. He became a builder, down at Millicent, and then was building in Strath. Well, he was a builder before he left Port Augusta. He had done several years with another man, another builder by the name of Martin, actually, but not related. So he knew all that stuff. So, no, I think I was just unsure about what I wanted to do.

Don Longo [00:34:54] Well tell us what did you want to do? You finished Matriculation I assume? And your parents must have had some notion of what they wanted you to do?

Charles Martin [00:35:01] Yeah. Dad in particular, wanted me to do architecture, and I actually wanted to do geology, now I recall. And I'm still keen on geology, but I was kind of discouraged, because in the last years of high school, I didn't get good grades in maths, or science, which was I think just the standard of teaching.

Don Longo [00:35:35] Yes

Charles Martin [00:35:37] I remember going down with Mum to talk to someone in the uni about geology, but Dad wanted me to do architecture, so I did architecture. I mean, my parents sacrificed a lot for me. I didn't get any scholarships.

Don Longo [00:35:59] I was going to ask.

Charles Martin [00:36:00] I had to go through uni, they paid.

Don Longo [00:36:03] The full fees.

Charles Martin [00:36:04] Yeah, I worked every holidays, of course. So, you know, there's a sort of a thing there.

Don Longo [00:36:18] So you felt privileged?

Charles Martin [00:36:21] Well, I think I *was* privileged.

Don Longo [00:36:23] I don't mean privileged in the sense of being a privileged part of society. You were privileged in having that education?

Charles Martin [00:36:28] Oh, yeah, well Dad thought, that he wanted me to have something a bit better than being a builder, which is a tough life.

Lyn Longo [00:36:41] And were you aware of their sacrifices at that young age or is it only in retrospect?

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Charles Martin [00:36:45] I think I was, because I do recall that whereas other people would go off and do---my friends at uni would go off and do walking or holidays, I went every holiday I worked, every term. Not just the long holiday.

Don Longo [00:37:12] **So you got to uni around 63 it would have been, more or less? Enjoyed it, enjoyed university, enjoyed architecture and university life?**

Charles Martin [00:37:22] I think I was still not sure where to go. I think if I'd done geology, I would have been pushing into something that I was really keen and interested in. But I just got involved in student life and I went to the---

Don Longo [00:37:53] **Well, tell us about that.**

Charles Martin [00:37:57] What's the name of the--- oh, Lincoln College. So I went to Lincoln College with a whole lot of other overseas students, also country students. And that's really where I started to question. Well, what's a good way to live and--- because you start to run into people who are doing Arts and all sorts of things.

Lyn Longo [00:38:36] **To broaden your experience of life.**

Charles Martin [00:38:37] And of course, very early on I was balloted in. I was in about the first or second balloted intake. [balloted in as a conscript for National Service , available to be sent to fight in Vietnam].

Don Longo [00:38:50] **I was coming to that, that's why I asked about the dates.**

Charles Martin [00:38:52] And so that that was an immediate--- I think in a lot of my life, I'm in, avoidance, just plodding along and following through on doing something and then, getting cornered into, well, in the case of politics, running into people who were saying, 'Well, why are we supporting the US in Vietnam and all that sort of thing?' And being challenged.

Don Longo [00:39:38] **I was a bit curious Charles, if you don't mind me asking. You said you were wondering when you got to university at Lincoln College about, 'What am I doing and what am I doing this for?'**

Charles Martin [00:39:56] I didn't actually feel that strongly. It was just there was a path. I wasn't a---

Don Longo [00:40:07] **I wasn't suggesting it was a rebellion.**

Charles Martin [00:40:08] No, no, no.

Don Longo [00:40:09] **But it was an unease of some sort?**

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Charles Martin [00:40:13] Yeah, but I don't think that was much more than most normal---

Don Longo [00:40:19] **Adolescent boys. Yeah. Was there politics at Adelaide University or Lincoln College at the time?**

Charles Martin [00:40:34] Oh yeah.

Don Longo [00:40:36] **That you came into contact with?**

Charles Martin [00:40:38] Yeah. Well over the next couple of years, I actually tended to gravitate to people doing Arts. My best friends, like Bruce Riley and David Stokes, they were doing the Arts.

Don Longo [00:41:02] **So your Latin came in handy?**

Charles Martin [00:41:04] Well, not really, but I think I probably always had that--- they sensed that I was a---My friend had a saying about me and I wasn't; see a lot of this stuff happens and you're not even conscious, you're just living. And they had this saying. I'd say something, I'd be involved in discussions. They'd say, 'Charlie's of the world, unite,' as a sort of a description of me. So all that time in growing up at school, all that time, I always read papers, always interested in current affairs, civic life.

I was just drifting on a bit with not much direction until I got challenged about society and that. It's actually that probably that all that ferment, that student ferment of the sixties and the people I met and university education that set me on a course. I knew what I could contribute. I thought growing up that it's good to be a good builder. And do good work for the customers. I might meet a nice girl and get married and that would be good. And this sort of thing that was a very---

Don Longo [00:43:20] **Traditional sort of approach, a technocratic approach to life in a way. You do what you need to do.**

Charles Martin [00:43:27] Yeah, well it's just me. There's a thing in our family where I think there's a lack of ambition. Ambition isn't the driver, it's service. So the idea that you become a builder or an architect is so that you can do a really good job for people and everyone, the whole community is better off.

Don Longo [00:44:06] **You mentioned the student ferment. This was before you went to the Institute of Technology. Still at Adelaide University?**

Charles Martin [00:44:12] Yes, I was starting to get into that.

Don Longo [00:44:15] **What sort of ferment was it? Was it of a progressive, was it of a left-wing nature or just debates about current affairs. Can you remember what sort it was?**

Charles Martin [00:44:29] Well, it just became issues and I didn't actually think in terms very much of left wing or right wing. That came on gradually. What it was, that I think my whole life was really---I think, 'I've been balloted in and I'm uneasy about'--- It's a pretty serious thing to agree to learn to take up arms and to join an army. Because basically, that's the track to where you are going to be killing people.

Don Longo [00:45:25] **Well, conscription was put in, in late 64 legislated and the first ballot was in early 65. So were you in that?**

Charles Martin [00:45:41] Oh, I think I was in the second. Yes they were about---

Don Longo [00:45:45] **Every six months.**

Charles Martin [00:45:46] Yeah, I was in about the second.

Don Longo [00:45:49] **About June, July 65. Yeah.**

Charles Martin [00:45:51] Yeah. But we were already, didn't Menzies start to go in, in 62 or something and we were already worried about it. To me that was an underlying worry.

Don Longo [00:46:22] **Was there talk amongst university students in your milieu about the Vietnam War? Before the ballot, this is 63, 64, early 65. you said there was a worry, did you discuss it? Was there talk in the refectory, 'Oh, my God, what are these people doing?'**

Charles Martin [00:46:43] I didn't do much talk in the refectory. It was in the evenings with friends at Lincoln really. I'm actually having trouble remembering. I wasn't being very seriously challenged until about 65. I do remember being involved in some action though, when I was still at Lincoln College.

Don Longo [00:47:28] **Which was?**

Charles Martin [00:47:29] Oh, well I think it was just going to demos, that sort of thing. So I was concerned to that extent.

Don Longo [00:47:42] **Was the concern, if you can remember, about war. Small w war, or was it the Vietnam War? Capital V capital W, do you remember?**

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Charles Martin [00:48:00] Yes, it was definitely **that** war. Yeah, that war. Yeah. I hadn't got to a point where I was having a general pacifist or total opposition to war.

Don Longo [00:48:15] **And why were you opposed to that particular war?**

Charles Martin [00:48:21] Well, it actually happened. It was a process that happened gradually. And there's references to that in here, which you can go through later.

Don Longo [00:48:35] **Charles was pointing to some notes that he made for the interview.**

Charles Martin [00:48:42] I remember early on, I know that I was worried. Basically, that's my state, underlying worry all the time. Low level, just underlying everything. So in 63 or 4, I'm sure I was starting to look for things to get better informed about it, because I think I was starting to be challenged by some friends from the Arts.

And I remember reading a book called, its mentioned in there, *Vietnam Seen from East and West* by Sibnarayan Ray and it said there it had an article from Donald Horne and he was concluding that the war was justified. [It was a series of essays by different authors including Donald Horne – who had greatly impressed me with his *The Lucky Country*] But obviously I was starting to question all sorts of things but that was a pro involvement in the war. But that kind of, I thought, 'Oh yeah well, okay, pretty war's terrible, but we have to do it to stop communism.' I was still in that mode, although I wasn't a rabidly anti-communist, it was just that I'd heard there was a threat and my civic duty, is to do what has to be done to defend the society.

Lyn Longo [00:50:51] **So your whole upbringing then was pushing you into conforming to the expectations of the government?**

Charles Martin [00:51:00] Well, it led me that way. Yes. Later on, and this is where the Methodist Church I think, comes in again and I don't know the year, but I do remember we were starting to hear about monks self-immolating.

Don Longo [00:51:26] **It was 68 I think that the monk self-immolated, I think it was 68.**

Charles Martin [00:51:33] That late?

Don Longo Oh maybe 66.

Charles Martin I reckon it was more like 66, but you can---- I do remember going to that Methodist place. I forget what it was called. Anyway, the churches in the mid-sixties, the churches were already starting to speak out. Right. And, there were organisations like WILPF who you probably know about, and Save Our Sons, and all that.

Anyway, the Methodist Church ran a series of public meetings where well, anyway, there was one where I went and saw a Vietnamese monk speaking. And it was interesting. I find it hard to remember what he said, but what he did communicate was a degree of distress. And the fact that people doing that [refers to self-immolating] incredible distress indicates, doesn't it, in the society? And someone I remember, asked him at the end of the meeting, 'What do you think? Do you think the Americans should go or stay?' And he said, 'He didn't know.' Again, that's a credit to the organisers that they weren't pushing a line. They were just saying come and listen to this person.

So from then on I was starting to think that I should do more serious study. So within a year or two I was reading Joseph Buttinger's you may know of him called *the Little Dragon and the Dragon Embattled*. So what I decided was I had to---the answer wasn't going to be in the now. You had to look back to the source of the terrible conflict. So I read both of those books and really I came to see that really what was happening in Vietnam was not a fight to hold up a domino, it was the culmination of 100 years of the Vietnamese and the Indo-Chinese people seeking independence.

Don Longo [00:54:38] Part of decolonisation, in effect.

Charles Martin [00:54:40] Yeah. And there was just a whole reprehensible history going back most of that 100 years. Since the 1850s to 1947 anyway, whenever the Dien Bien Phu that happened.

Don Longo 54

Charles Martin 54 sorry. You realise that what happens in these things and I've got to watch out, I don't slip into insights I've got later. Things get to a point where being nice to colonisers doesn't work. And then you try moderate nationalism, and then that doesn't work. And then you fight off the Japanese and you think, 'Surely, look what we've done?' And then they bring back France. But the British brought back France.

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So to me, that was really the key thing that I just decided, this is a war for national liberation. And, there's no way I'm going to fight, against that. So they're trying to liberate themselves.

Lyn Longo [00:56:28] So you saw it as an unjust war?

Charles Martin [00:56:30] Unjust, absolutely criminal. And you can find probably video of me saying that, yeah, I think it was criminal interference in a country trying to gain its independence. And there were no good guys, of course, but poor old, Ho Chi Minh who probably would have liked a more moderate road, well, he just got sidelined because there was the intransigence of the British French.

So that's how I saw it, and as far as I'm concerned, there is no taking up arms or preparing to kill somebody or people. That's my conscience. It's a matter of my conscience. It's not the matter for the government. They can have their conscription or not, well I'm opposed to it of course, but I'm more so now because I've got more background knowledge of the role of conscription historically.

Don Longo [00:58:14] So you had a historical appreciation of the conflict, not just a religious or moral or conscience-based opposition to the war?

Charles Martin [00:58:26] Oh, no. I think it was totally conscience based, but you can't make a conscientious decision, if you don't know the full story. And, there's no good guys in these things. And, a lot of people get hurt and it's terrible.

Don Longo [00:59:05] Yeah. What about your friends at university, or the Institute of Technology. Were there debates about this sort of thing? Did you have personal support from your friends and from your milieu for these positions?

Charles Martin [00:59:18] Oh, yeah, but eventually the public sentiment totally shifted not just in the student scene, but the whole of society turned against the war.

Lyn Longo [00:59:41] Probably not at the time when your marble came out in the ballot.

Don Longo [00:59:46] Yes, this would have been 66, of course. You were born in 46, your marble would have come out in 66.

Charles Martin [00:59:53] Yeah, I think so, yeah. It sounds a bit later.

Lyn Longo [01:00:00] So at that stage possibly the university students would have been opposed, but the general public was still, 'The government says this, so we obey.'

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Charles Martin [01:00:11] There was starting to be a movement in the more--- probably based around universities, for instance CPV and Save Our Sons and WILPF and people like that and the Council of Churches were already ringing the alarm bells. And I think by the late sixties, there were starting to be, like CPV was active. You undoubtedly know plenty about them. And I was involved in the Institute of Technology, when I was there in organising for Brian Medlin to come, introducing Brian Medlin and Andrew Jones. We had two successive weeks of debates at the student union.

Don Longo [01:01:11] **At the Institute, this is?**

Charles Martin [01:01:13] At the institute.

Don Longo [01:01:15] **Before we get on to the actual activism against the Vietnam War, you mentioned in your notes here that you gave us, a number of other books that were influential for you, like [Vance] Packard's *The Waste Makers*, and *The Fire Next Time* by [James] Baldwin and *The Power Elite* by Wright Mills. [Also *The Abuse Of Power* by Theodore Draper].**

Charles Martin [01:01:38] Yeah.

Don Longo [01:01:38] **And one of my favourites, *Obsolete Communism*, *The Left Wing Alternative* by Daniel Cohn-Bendit. So there was a bit of an awareness of what was going on in the world.**

Charles Martin [01:01:48] Oh yeah.

Don Longo [01:01:49] **Both in Europe and America?**

Charles Martin [01:01:51] That happened very early in my uni. See I think I've always had an enquiring mind and I was very lucky I suppose to have---- well you just run into things. Like I mentioned I went to a second year of architecture, went over to Perth, there was a student convention. We had Buckminster Fuller, as one of the guest lecturers. I listened to what he said. And he said something about old pirates and new pirates. And I had some inkling then that he was talking about the old colonists. That's the European powers, but the new pirates were the USA. So there's that.

But I had in history of architecture, a really nice man by the name of Mr. Herbert, who was a history of architecture lecturer, and he recommended these books. And one of them was Vance Packard, *The Waste Maker's*. So I was already--- I think I've always taken an active interest in civics, and I was interested

Don Longo [01:03:35] Or the books fell on fertile soil, as we like to say.

Charles Martin [01:03:39] Yeah, but I really like that I've given Mr. Herbert his due credit. And it's interesting that he recommended these books in about the first lecture *History of Architecture*. And someone said, 'Well, why do you want us to read these? They're not about architecture.' And he said, 'I just think It would do you good to read them.' And so I greatly admire Mr. Herbert. [Mr Herbert also recommended Edith Hamilton's *The Greek Way to Western Civilisation* and HDF Kitto's *The Greeks*].

Don Longo [01:04:08] A broader view of education.

Lyn Longo [01:04:12] What a remarkable man.

Don Longo [01:04:14] As producing intelligent citizenry, not just---

Charles Martin [01:04:17] Yeah, yeah. Well, that was the kind of ideal of all my Arts, Law, History, all my friends who tended to be more in that sphere. I think the fact that I moved to those people was just that I had interests, even though I was doing a more technical thing, Architecture. They were drawn to me, because I was interested in African history. And there's a book up there called *A Short History of Africa*, and an African guy called Sam Ammamoo just happened to duck in through my door in my room at Lincoln, and I was reading it. He was very impressed. [Sam stayed and married and settled down in Australia. He supported his friend Duncan Kentish to be accepted as a conscientious objector, successfully].

Don Longo [01:05:21] But Lincoln had a lot of students from the Colombo Plan.

Charles Martin [01:05:28] Yeah, and some of them were not from the Colombo Plan, and they let me know. No, that's just a joke. They were better off students from Singapore or Hong Kong, and the Colombo Plan was for the poor from struggling communities. But that was all right, you get taught a lesson, okay because I'd assumed that they were all Colombo Plan. Wrong!

Don Longo [01:06:10] The late sixties were also---I mentioned Cohn-Bendit because of Paris 68 of course, but there's also the Cultural Revolution in China. Those two were big events whilst decolonisation was going on elsewhere in the world. Were you aware of those two events, and did they have an impact on you? If so, what sort of impact was it?

Charles Martin [01:06:34] Oh, well, Paris 68 heavens. Well, I think by then I'd probably already realised or was aware that there was a lot wrong with corporate

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consumer capitalism and the power elites. So it would seem to me that that was what that rebellion was about. [Cohn Bendit inspired me to look further into anarchism including reading *Anarchism* by George Woodcock].

Actually, I find France and French history and politics quite baffling actually, and I'm still really not sure. What are the yellow jackets about? But I do remember reading that book, because he was sort of a figurehead. Actually, eventually he ended up as a Green in Germany, back in Germany.

Don Longo He still is.

Charles Martin Yeah, I was very impressed with that. But I've always---I think there's always been a thread in my outlook of the people. People in general are actually quite capable of looking after themselves and that we don't need to be bullied by whoever it is that's running the place. So therefore, I was quite interested in hearing about the Diggers and the Levelers and all that sort of thing. And so there's that streak in me of being inclined to thinking, well, rather than being involved in global capitalism and global government, I would rather just be in a community where we had access to some land and a share of the water and we could look after ourselves.

And so regional self-reliance, local self-reliance, small is beautiful. That appeals to me. And I probably would have been a digger if I'd lived in that time. And I can see where it goes back to family background where both sides of where I come from, they could pretty much produce all they needed to live on a family farm. So there's that, but I don't know where that fits in, but it's definitely a thread. It's a type of anarchist, the Daniel Cohn-Bendit. So I did a lot of reading on anarchism too. Is it Prudeaux

Don Longo [01:10:27] Proudhon, and Bakunin and the rest of them.

Charles Martin [01:10:27] And it's interesting that I realised now that at its core philosophy, rather than image, the caricature of the anarchist, the philosophy is you take responsibility for everything you do. Right. That's the core of it. And yeah, I think wow, that just lines up with primacy of conscience. So you can see things as an ideology, or you can see them just as philosophy.

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And so in politics, I might consider myself a socialist, but I'm a socialist by philosophy, not ideology. And so to me, being a socialist doesn't mean that you have to push everybody into---you have to have everything planned and all that. It's a personal philosophy. And as a socialist, I can make a contribution by just emphasising the need for cooperation, planning, whatever, without having to think that everybody has to think like me. So that's probably that same nonconformist thing coming through.

Don Longo [01:12:40] You weren't tempted by more Marxist philosophies?

Charles Martin [01:12:45] Uh, well, I was. No. [I wasn't tempted because I don't consider Marxism a philosophy. It is an approach to political analysis. It doesn't help very much with what to do about it].

Don Longo [01:12:49] That's why I mentioned the cultural revolution.

Charles Martin [01:12:52] No no.

Don Longo [01:12:54] It drove them into a Maoist---

Charles Martin [01:12:56] No. I was kind of just puzzled by the Maoist thing.

Don Longo [01:13:10] Were you still a Christian at this stage?

Charles Martin [01:13:14] No, I think I'd probably left that behind at about 18.

Lyn Longo [01:13:24] There are elements of Christianity that really is the opposite of the anarchist view of taking personal responsibility, because there's a god up there that tells you what to do, and you do it because there's a better life waiting for you.

Charles Martin [01:13:38] Yeah, but is that Christianity?

Lyn Longo [01:13:43] It's an element of it.

Charles Martin [01:13:45] It's one reading of it. You can have a view of Christianity as that God is actually the same as one's conscience. And if you follow the Sermon on the Mount, there's no room in Christianity for anybody in an institutional church to have the right to define what is right and wrong.

Lyn Longo [01:14:24] And so what were you rejecting then, when you say you are no longer a Christian?

Charles Martin [01:14:29] Oh, well, sorry, I yeah, I need to correct that. I'm actually still culturally Christian, but I just dropped the what do you call it, the metaphysics.

Don Longo [01:14:48] **The afterlife and the salvation stuff.**

Charles Martin [01:14:53] I think my Dad actually, was the same, and he would have put it that if there's anything that's left when you go, it's the good that you did and that's it. I think he was quoting a pastor or a minister saying that. But in the Protestant thing it can be---anyway, where I come from, it's not the literal that's important.

Don Longo [01:15:31] **It's good work's, not faith.**

Charles Martin [01:15:33] Yeah, good works. Posturing, and all of that means nothing. It's good works. So I'm glad you picked me up on that, because a lot of my friends, some of my friends who are socialist and environmental activists whatever, still consider themselves culturally Christian. [eg. My friend Gina Kennett].

Don Longo [01:16:06] **The notion is interesting, cultural Christian in the sense that you come from a certain tradition and that the faith and the metaphysics, as we've said, no longer works for you. But the moral and ethical teachings are still there. Is that what you mean by that?**

Charles Martin [01:16:25] Oh yeah, yeah. And I just think that that stands. How inspiring is the Sermon on the Mount. And, yeah, it stands. There's the way to have a good life, and, everyone gets on well together. A fabulous vision.

Don Longo [01:17:07] **I asked before about Marxism, partly to ask about whether you were at all tempted by some of the Communist type parties at the time, but also because a lot of ---- some Communists or Marxists at the time identified like you as Cultural Christians and identified the poor, Christ's poor with the proletariat and the working class. I wondered whether that was sort of in your mind or this was something different.**

Charles Martin [01:17:42] No, I've just never taken to that. I don't want to talk about it too much today, but I later did join the CPA, but that was post Czechoslovakia, and I didn't have to be a Marxist. I've never been a Marxist, and you didn't have to be a Marxist. [CPA policies were centrist not radical left. Strong on the environment, advocates for optional preferential voting. (used at CPA election)].

Don Longo [01:18:12] **We'll talk about it another time. When you say the CPA was it CPA or CPAML?**

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Charles Martin [01:18:17] CPA. [It was not a requirement to be a Marxist/Leninist when I joined the CPA. The new generation of active members were 'New Left,' (Cohn Bendit etc.)].

Don Longo [01:18:18] **Yes.**

Charles Martin [01:18:19] And it's post the break with the Soviet Union and it's post the break with China. And so I'm just mentioning that just--- I've always had more in common with Daniel Cohn-Bendit line. And I even read more about the anarchists than in his book. I read oh, Asenov about the Machnivists.

Don Longo [01:19:06] **Yeah. Which is partly still going on now with Ukraine.**

Charles Martin [01:19:09] Well, we could have another two-hour talk about that.

Don Longo [01:19:14] **Yes, because Cohn-Bendit's *Obsolete Communism*, in fact, refers to the French Communist Party's Stalinist orientation at the time.**

All right, well let's move back a little bit. 65, 66, your number came up?

Charles Martin [01:19:36] Yep.

Don Longo [01:19:39] **How did your parents feel? How did you feel?**

Charles Martin [01:19:42] Um, well, you see, by then I was starting to have quite an underlying worry about the morality of the war, but I'm just a person who probably by nature, tends to just avoid things until I can't get away from it anymore. So it's a sort of avoidance. It's a bit in my nature. So I hope that I'd be balloted out.

And again, I just think I regard myself as incredibly privileged because it was a lot of people who were simply balloted in and then they went, student deferments. Incredible privilege. And that's why I just went. I just don't buy the stuff at all, you know? Well, what some people say, 'Oh, well, what you were involved in was heroic.' It wasn't, it was just me struggling. I was trying to avoid. I knew, I had a deep-down feeling that if it came to a pinch, I wouldn't participate in an unjust war. It was already there, even if I couldn't even articulate it. So I went into avoidance and tried to enjoy the Beatles and, I was involved in this little student community. But you must talk to Bruce Riley about that stuff. Have you heard of him?

Don Longo [01:21:52] **No. Tell us.**

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Charles Martin [01:21:54] Well, he was the one who organised the first communal houses that I went to. I was two or three years in Lincoln, and then I just went out in share houses.

Don Longo [01:22:13] **This is in the late sixties then?**

Charles Martin Yeah. Yes. Yes.

Don Longo Well, tell us Charles, when your number--- when you were balloted in, what happened?

Charles Martin [01:22:24] Well, I just got deferments, and incredibly privileged. Basically what I did, I think I salved my conscience by saying, 'Well, if I'm doing this, I need to---' This is when I got really serious about finding out, well, what is this war all about, and is it justified and whatever? So hence I'm starting to read books like Buttinger and realising that Van Rea was a bit propagandistic really. And you were starting to get those stories about what was happening in Vietnam. Napalm and---

Don Longo [01:23:29] **Did you come in contact with draft resisters at all?**

Charles Martin [01:23:33] No, because I was one of the first in the state. Sorry. I was hearing about them interstate and I knew people that were. I had a friend of my brother, Phil Golding, who you may or may not have come across.

Lyn Longo [01:24:11] **That's who we are interviewing in a couple of weeks**

Charles Martin [01:24:13] He's a minister.

Don Longo [01:24:14] **From Naracoorte?**

Charles Martin [01:24:16] Millicent or Naracoorte.

Don Longo [01:24:17] **A minister?**

Charles Martin [01:24:18] Yes, well, I'm pretty sure he--- people like him were burning draft cards. There was a guy called Bob who Anne [McMenamin] would have told you about Bob Hall, you know that story? He was one of the people around that were---

Don Longo [01:24:40] **He was jailed, I know that.**

Charles Martin [01:24:42] Brian Medlin was in jail. He got three months for some kind of an offence to do with the National Service Act.

Don Longo [01:24:53] Yes. Anne told us about her chaining herself to the Parliament House in protest against the Bob Hall's jailing.

Charles Martin [01:25:02] Yeah. Did she tell you that the story of substituting her sister, probably didn't. She's too serious for that.

Don Longo [01:25:13] Oh, well tell us.

Charles Martin [01:25:16] When she, if you chained or something, you have to go to the loo eventually.

Lyn Longo [01:25:21] Yes. She didn't specifically say her sister did some swaps but she might have, I don't remember.

Charles Martin [01:25:29] It might have been other people.

Lyn Longo [01:25:31] I know there had to be other replacements so that you could have a loo stop.

Don Longo [01:25:38] Yes, actually, Ally gave us a couple of photos when we saw her last week. Anne with Bob Hall.

Charles Martin [01:25:47] Yeah.

Don Longo [01:25:48] One was of the demonstration in support of Bob Hall and the other one was Anne and Bob Hall when he was released. So she finally unshackled herself from Parliament House.

Charles Martin [01:26:01] Yeah. So but anyway, Phil Golding, he'll tell you the story on that, but it was a great story. He was in Cadell for--- I think he burnt his draft card or he refused to register or one of those things and he ended up reforming the prison system because he came up to Cadell when I was in Cadell. I was in there as a long termer, but he was there in the short-term section and he refused to have his hair cut. So it ended up they didn't know what to do and it became quite an issue. And eventually the end result was, he didn't have to have his hair cut. This is Dunstan era and prisoners were allowed to have hair to their choice within reason, beards. I'd let my hair be cut. But not only that, but prison officers they liberalised the hair style that was allowed with prison officers at the same time. But that's Dunstan.

Don Longo [01:27:31] Well, we'll ask that of Phil. He would like to tell us about it, I think. So, Ally set up Provo, which was the Anarchist Centre. And I know Anne often went there too, to print off some of the things that she was doing. Were you---

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Charles Martin [01:27:49] Yeah, I was involved in Provo. Only, my thing was that I think by that time I was already---- I get to a certain stage in it where I thought, 'Oh, I'm not going to be--- I can see what's going to happen to me in three, or four years time. So I'm going to do my little bit in the Moratorium and all that, but I'm not going to be highly active. I'm going to finish my course.' In other words, a bit of self-protection there. No, I didn't want to go on the run like a lot did.

Don Longo [01:28:43] **They did, yes.**

Charles Martin [01:28:46] And there's more to say about that.

Don Longo [01:28:52] **Was it parental pressure?**

Charles Martin [01:28:55] Yeah, well not parental pressure, parental consideration.

Don Longo [01:29:00] **I thought there might be.**

Charles Martin [01:29:04] But. Yeah. I decided that, I could see what was going to happen in a few years' time. I had decided that I was going to, by 68 or thereabouts, I decided that I wasn't going to obey a call up notice. So I thought, 'That's a big thing in my life. That will profoundly affect me. I'm going to just take it easy and let other people do the running now.' Well, but I was, involved in a certain amount of organising and I was involved with a bit of a foot soldier with Provo.

Don Longo [01:30:04] **Doing what?**

Charles Martin [01:30:05] Well, one occasion I remember I went out with them postering in my car. My little old Volkswagen Beetle. Actually, it was with my cousin too, Tommy Cooper. He was in Provo. He was a friend of Ally.

I think we were out there postering all the way up in the eastern suburbs or the north eastern suburbs, Magill Road or somewhere. And someone took my number, and I was living in the what we used to call the Stronghold. That was where the household was living at Kent Town. And early the next morning we got police raided. And I had pamphlets, I was doing stuff. We were handing out pamphlets at the Institute and all sorts of things. And I had them there on my desk, so they came in and confiscated them and I didn't get arrested.

Don Longo [01:31:35] **The pamphlets were anti-war pamphlets, or pro-anarchist pamphlets?**

Charles Martin [01:31:38] No, no. They were anti-war.

Lyn Longo [01:31:41] **Was Lynn Arnold involved with you in Provo?**

Charles Martin [01:31:46] No, I was only very peripheral for a little while. And I think I might have cooled down a bit after the raid. I think I remember going to a factory gate meeting with Ally and John Healey with Provo. So I did a few of things like that, but I basically, I continued, I realised that--- I think I was conscious of the privilege of being at uni and my parents supporting me and that I stuck to, all through that whole period, every holiday working for Dad.

Don Longo [01:32:46] **And did they know about the police raid?**

Charles Martin [01:32:49] No, that was nothing really.

Lyn Longo [01:32:56] **Another page in the ASIO file though.**

Don Longo [01:32:59] **But I imagine that would have been horrified if they had known.**

Charles Martin [01:33:01] Oh, perhaps. I don't know. All of that life at uni was just a different life. And my parents had all my other siblings, they were trying to put through uni and do all sorts of stuff.

Don Longo [01:33:28] **Were they pro Vietnam War, against? Strongly against?**

Charles Martin [01:33:32] I think Mum was pretty strongly against. I didn't talk to her a lot about it because I was trying to--- I think it's one of those tacit things where they know what I'm doing. I'm wearing badges and *still* wearing badges, and it was just better for the family not to---they're busy struggling to support me at uni, and put my sister through uni and brother and everything and just, being builders.

Dad actually suspected what I at close to the end and he just said, 'Look, Charlie, I know what you're thinking, but just go.' I respect him for that. He was just doing it as a good Dad to try and keep his son out of trouble.

Don Longo [01:35:18] **But it wasn't to be. Well, in early 1970, as written here, 'He refused to obey a call up notice.' And what happened?**

Charles Martin [01:35:26] Well, I just didn't obey it. There wasn't any active refusal. I just ignored it and said, okay, 'This is it. I wonder how long it will take them to come after me?' And I thought, 'Well, if I'm going to---- I want to have a bit of money for the future.' So I went and got a job as a carpenter on the new Levels

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Library, for SJ Weir, the builders. So I thought, 'I need to save some money now. I think I might end up in jail. I want to have money when I come out.' So very pragmatic.

Don Longo [01:36:21] Very Protestant.

Lyn Longo [01:36:24] Taking responsibility for your own actions.

Don Longo [01:36:25] Yes, that's right. That what I meant. It was very thoroughly thought through.

Charles Martin [01:36:30] Yeah.

Don Longo [01:36:34] However, in September, you were summonsed to court.

Charles Martin [01:36:37] That's right. Yeah. They sent me another letter. I think some of those letters will be with the History Trust or whoever else I've left stuff with. But most of the Vietnam stuff went to the History Trust and the latest stuff has gone to State Library reference.

Don Longo [01:37:05] And you were hauled before a magistrate?

Charles Martin [01:37:08] Yeah. Well, basically what happened is that I think they sent me another letter, because after a couple of months, they sent me another letter saying--- they gave me another time to turn up. And then I think after another couple of months, they sent a Commonwealth policeman out to talk to me on the job, at the Levels. I thought he was a very nice man. His name was Constable Deeks and he was a very nice fellow. So I explained to him that I knew what I was doing, and there wasn't any chance of changing my mind. So he went away, but I just thought he was a nice fellow.

Don Longo [01:38:17] He was trying to do the right thing for you and the family? Yes, I understand that.

Charles Martin [01:38:22] I think it's good when people in those positions are good people. Then I got a summons to appear in court. I think my lawyer tried to get me a meeting with somebody in the Department of National Service, somewhere in Pirie Street.

Don Longo [01:38:47] I think was Currie Street.

Charles Martin [01:38:48] Currie. And so we went and had a talk with the bloke there. He was a very nice bloke and I just said, 'No, there is no way I'm going to obey

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that second call up notice.' So then that was it. Well, I think what the lawyer was trying to just give me the chance to change my mind.

I was told actually that that fellow in the National Service Department actually changed his mind about the war. (phone rings) And so I heard later that he had changed his mind about the war. But that's an aside.

So then I went to the court. I think it was Wright Mills, who had a bad reputation as being a toughie, rather conservative. I thought he was fair to me, but so it was very short and I went prepared. I knew I'd be jailed. So we went in and Mr. Wright Mills he just said, 'Are you prepared to obey? If you're issued with another notice, will you obey that notice?' I said, 'No'. It was almost as short as that. And he said, 'Okay, well I've got no choice but to sentence you to two years hard labour.' He gave me hard labour because he thought I should benefit from the---if you do hard labour, you get remissions.

Lyn Longo [01:41:14] Even though that sounds tough and mean, it's probably preferable.

Charles Martin [01:41:19] Yeah, that's right. Labour, that's just a term I don't think anybody's cracking stones at all. So that was it, handcuffs on and out to Adelaide Jail.

Don Longo [01:41:38] And you were there for a week. And then to Yatala.

Charles Martin [01:41:45] Shifted to the Yatala Labour Prison. I think they put me in CM, Centre Middle, the wing for recidivists. I think they didn't want me talking to younger newies.

Don Longo [01:42:12] Didn't want you corrupting the others.

Charles Martin [01:42:14] I guess so. It was okay, it was primitive, but you get used to the prison life. Walking up and down the yard to exercise and playing quoits and all that stuff and smoking.

Don Longo [01:42:31] You were there for quite a while, I think?

Charles Martin [01:42:33] Six weeks.

Don Longo [01:42:33] Six week, and then to?

Charles Martin [01:42:36] Cadell.

Don Longo [01:42:38] For the rest of the term?

Charles Martin [01:42:40] Yeah.

Don Longo [01:42:41] Which ended up being the whole two years?

Charles Martin [01:42:43] No, no, I think it ended up at about 13 months. Now, it would have been, 16 months if I'd-- I think you get a third off in remissions if you do hard labour supposedly and I might have got another couple of weeks for being a good boy. Apparently I was a model prisoner according to the bloke at the, I forget his name, the superintendent at Cadell.

But what happened is that at the 13 month mark, they changed the national service period from two years to 18 months. Snedden, I think was the Prime Minister. That then meant that Chris Hurford kicked up a quite a shindy in the Parliament saying, 'Well, that should apply to serving prisoners as well as serving national servicemen.' So the end result of that was that someone must have ordered that I get let out. I didn't worry about who, and so that happened at the 13 month mark. And so I was released.

Don Longo [01:44:27] I believe you got a letter from Chris Hurford, is that right?

Lyn Longo [01:44:33] Or did you say he visited?

Charles Martin [01:44:34] No, that was early on. That was a few weeks into Yatala I think.

Don Longo [01:44:46] And what did they tell you? What did Cairns and Hurford tell you/

Charles Martin [01:44:48] Oh I can't remember.

Don Longo [01:44:51] Well the letters are there, we must read them.

Charles Martin [01:44:52] That's right. Yeah. I'm sorry that's right. But I have something I want to say about getting let out. I just heard one day after work, 'You're going, you'll be going in the morning.' And the PIO, [Prison Industrial Officer who supervised the building and maintenance gang that I was in]. There was a man called Curly Williams, very nice fellow. I was on the maintenance team and I think we got on together well. The funny thing was that he insisted on driving me back. So he drove me in the prison van all the way back to Strath. And Curly Williams is a Lodge

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friend. He was. I'm not even sure if he still around. He's a Lodge friend of Dad.

Yeah, I just thought, I just like to, I think people---

Lyn Longo [01:46:12] Acknowledge kindness.

Charles Martin [01:46:13] Yeah, that's right. He was really good, one of that old school of considerate PIOs.

Lyn Longo [01:46:25] So was there anything you learnt from your prison experience that changed you?

Don Longo [01:46:35] Or confirmed.

Charles Martin [01:46:37] Not really, no. I found that I just appreciated a few of the good things that came of it. I think in any situation there's an opportunity to perhaps-- - well, you can learn things, and maybe do a little bit of good.

Lyn Longo [01:47:11] So did you have access to a decent library, for instance?

Charles Martin [01:47:16] Not really, no. But, one thing I will mention is that it was a good experience for me, having to be in the dormitory situation. And initially I went on the committee and I think I was probably a little bit standoffish, just because of a natural--- I'm not a particularly outgoing person, a bit reserved. I'm a bit of a reserved person. The prisoner's committee elected, they kicked me off and I thought, 'Okay, well, I wasn't being the best.' I won't go into the detail about it, but the funny thing was that later on, when the head of the prison committee at Cadell left, they asked me to take on the chair. Well, I think it's one of the few times I've ever been the chair of anything. Well, first time I've been the chair of anything was in the---

Lyn Longo [01:48:44] Not sure that it's something you'd put on your CV for a job though. (laughter)

Charles Martin [01:48:47] No, but in a way that was a good experience and I think I was able to--- with my education, I was able to do things that they needed. If there's a visiting music group from the local Riverland comes in, they get me to give the thank yous and all that sort of stuff. And I was able to make sure that the Aboriginal guys who were a significant minority there, had good access to, got a fair deal with the sporting stuff and all that stuff.

But one particular thing, which was I think rather amusing, which is also a good news story, is that while I was there, a young guy came up to me probably only early

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twenties, just about to get out. And he wanted to get a job. So he asked me to write the letter. So I wrote what I thought would be a good letter. 'I've done my time and I'm looking forward to participating in society again and will you give me a chance?' So I wrote him the letter, I said, 'You've got to rewrite it yourself.' He sent it and he got the job.

Don Longo [01:50:43] Well, that must have pleased you.

Charles Martin [01:50:44] Well, yes, but the funny thing about it was that I later on heard that **everyone** was using the letter. (laughter) I'm hoping that one or two others got a job out of it. Yeah. So, that's the side of it I like to remember rather than the--- otherwise it was like being in college.

Lyn Longo [01:51:16] Yeah.

Don Longo [01:51:17] Still Charles, 13 months is 13 months. And then you went back to a share house in Norwood. And you speak about the experience in fairly sanguine terms is the way you're talking today. And yet in your notes here you say, 'It was clear to me following the experience that corporate consumer capitalism, the dominant trend in Western liberalism, was morally bankrupt and spiritually empty. Having none of the virtues, of the more old-fashioned conservative, but all of its pathologies.'

Charles Martin [01:51:50] Yeah, that's right.

Don Longo [01:51:50] That's a lot more intense.

Charles Martin [01:51:52] Yeah, but that's not just to do with the prison experience. That's I think that's to do with the culmination of everything I was learning. I'd come to a view that there was something very rotten, almost in, as it says in the---

Don Longo Strong words.

Charles Martin Yes that's right. It was a decision to; do I just go back to the sort of path I was on, which was to become a hopefully a good professional and do a good job and whatever. I think that it was really once I got over the prison experience, I was free to then consider, well where do I go from here?

Don Longo [01:53:21] Yes.

Charles Martin [01:53:24] It was a time for a decision as to whether I go back into the mainstream or do something else. And the decision was to, well do something else or look for something else. And, there was a lot of things that were starting to

happen in the hippie culture and the 'Back to the Land' and all that stuff that was happening in the USA, even in the late sixties.

Don Longo [01:54:02] So the counterculture had---

Charles Martin [01:54:03] Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. The counterculture, even though I think that was--- I prefer alternative culture, actually, because counter is defining yourself by what you're **against**. And I don't believe in defining---I define myself by what I'm **for**. But nonetheless, the 'counterculture,' in inverted commas, was where there were lots of good initiatives and people looking for different ways of--- if consumerism and the liberal dream is hollow and possibly even pathological, then well what do we do? So I took my three months off and started reading about the Essene Code of Life and Buddhism. Alan Watts.

Don Longo [01:55:24] I remember the T.S. Bookshop?

Charles Martin [01:55:26] Yeah. And, uh, and of course, some of the people who initiated the Clearlight Bazaar, the real people who began it, not me, they lived around the corner on Fullarton Road. Oh, anyway, whatever the street was, down towards the Kent Town end.

Don Longo [01:55:57] So the alternative culture was something that was an answer to the bankruptcy of capitalism?

Charles Martin [01:56:06] Yes, the moral bankruptcy. But that that goes right back to Packard and *The Waste Makers*. So the more I knew about armaments and the way what had happened in America with me and the West not being very fussy about who they sell arms to. We're very critical of the Russians and the Chinese about who they sell arms to, but they're not very fussy about who we sell arms to. So there's all of that.

So all of that critique had led me to think, well I'm interested. I'll go with a small is beautiful. And also perhaps there might have been a little bit of well, I'm not sure what we can do on the macro scale, but let's just start again and try. It's not that the Clearlight Bazaar came from--- Pat Thompson told me that it came from SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] people at Adelaide Uni in about 1970 or whenever, just deciding that there was no hope in the--- everything was dying in terms of activism in the unis almost by then and probably that uni was part of the

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problem, like part of the establishment. So they just moved out of uni and up to, what's it called, the old Bowman building. And they launched the Clearlight Bazaar, which was meant to be the new society.

That's what they had in mind. They had a coffee lounge and they had draft counselling. The Draft Resisters Union had a table there with that on the table with Janet Darling, my beautiful friend, sitting there talking to people about the Vietnam orphans and helping them out with contacts. And various crafts, you had a craft co-op. This is Yvette Sunset, she's called now. And I helped her build a vegetarian restaurant in the corner. So it was meant to be---

Lyn Longo [01:59:55] An alternative community.

Charles Martin [01:59:57] An alternative, the beginning of the alternative society.

Don Longo [02:00:02] And the name came from what.

Charles Martin [02:00:04] I reckon---

Don Longo [02:00:05] It's always puzzled me.

Charles Martin [02:00:06] I reckon it might be a--- it's thought that it might be a particularly good type of something, some drug.

Don Longo [02:00:18] Oh, I see.

Charles Martin [02:00:20] LSD or something. You know, Clearlight, I think. But it was also seriously meant, seeing the new way. So that was all churning around in there.

Don Longo [02:00:38] And tied up with some Eastern religion as well.

Charles Martin [02:00:41] Oh, yeah, yeah.

Don Longo [02:00:42] Particularly Buddhism you mentioned Alan Watts but there were others as well. I think Ivan Illich you mentioned here too was very much in vogue at the time.

Charles Martin [02:00:51] Yeah. Well, he was related to the Catholic Christian whatever it was that came out of South America.

Don Longo Liberation theology.

Charles Martin Liberation theology, yeah. That had a profound effect on me. But, you know, there is that luddite thread in Illich where he's saying, 'If you start to get

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beyond about 20 mile per hour in your speed, you start to lose community'. And so yeah, that's still me. I'm still not really with where the world is going is. But nonetheless we can, like a lot of the people here think in the community, we can model what we think is ethical, convivial, community, and a bit of it might rub off on somebody.

Don Longo [02:02:09] I still grapple with his book on *Deschooling Society*, as a matter of fact, which I found really interesting and confronting, I think. Here I am an educator, married to another educator.

Charles Martin [02:02:22] Yeah. Oh, well there was a whole, 'Free U' [It was launched on the University of Adelaide campus - convened by Bob Hall] and all that stuff was happening in that period, and no doubt you know about that. Bob, Anne's friend Bob Hall was someone I remember from 'Free You.' But then probably we were all involved in everything.

Lyn Longo [02:02:49] So did you join the Clearlight Collective as such or were you replacing someone that had moved on?

Charles Martin [02:02:58] Oh no. I am unsure as to how the thing ran. It was very-- - like the main driver of it was the craft co-op. And see this is where you need to talk to Pat Thompson.

Don Longo [02:03:29] Pat was one of the original members?

Charles Martin [02:03:31] Yes. Yes. She was the one that told me about the fact that it was SDS moving out of the established, whatever, out into the streets and to start the new society.

Don Longo [02:03:51] The SDS with the Students for a Democratic Society.

Charles Martin [02:03:53] Yeah. Now, I don't really know anything about them, but I did know Pat Thompson before.

Lyn Longo [02:04:04] And are you able to provide contact details, or contact her for us?

Charles Martin [02:04:11] I actually don't have--- all I know is she ended up as being a headmaster at one of the northern schools, high schools.

Lyn Longo [02:04:26] That's why the name sounds familiar. She was a mover and shaker in Education in the Northern Area.

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Charles Martin [02:04:31] Yeah, that's right. So you'd be able to contact her probably through Julie, Judy.

Lyn Longo [02:04:39] **Judy Gillett.**

Charles Martin [02:04:40] Judy Gillett.

Lyn Longo [02:04:41] **Good thinking.**

Don Longo [02:04:44] **Okay, Judy, would know.**

Charles Martin [02:04:45] Yeah.

Lyn Longo [02:04:46] **So I reckon in the early days, I may have tried anyway, but some of these people have got very old and some don't respond because they're not able to anymore.**

Charles Martin [02:05:03] Well, that's probably why I'm happy to talk to you while I've still got my marbles. I'm just trying to think of---you know on the back of here? It's addressed to Jude Elton, right? [Jude Elton was later with the History Trust] Well, Jude Elton was involved in the Clearlight Co-op. I think so, just check that with her. And Corrie Ancone who's an artist, and very important. She and Andrew Prowse used to live just around the corner when I came out of the clink.

Lyn Longo [02:06:08] **Anne McMenammin was involved too.**

Charles Martin [02:06:13] Uh, yeah later. But that was after 73. So there's a whole new thing that starts and you'll see, here this ends at Chesser Street? And I just remember, I think Anne was with Friends of the Earth or in the NUAUS [National Union of Australian University Students. It was considered too left and shut down by Malcolm Fraser. It was replaced by NUS, National Union of Students] or whatever it was. She was at uni and they were promoting Nimbin.

Lyn Longo [02:06:51] **Yeah.**

Charles Martin [02:06:52] Right. Yes. So I think I met her late in 1973 when she came down with a poster to put up in the Clearlight Bazaar.

Don Longo [02:07:11] **Okay. So what was your role in the Clearlight Bazaar at this time, 71, 73?**

Charles Martin [02:07:15] Well, what happened was I met Yvette, called Yvette Childs at the time. She's now Evette Sunset and lives at Willunga. So she's somebody you could write down as a Clearlight starter. I came in after that. So what happened

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is that I met Yvette down there and Corrie, who's an artist and craft person, lived just around the corner on Fullarton Road.

So I went in, this sounds interesting, and I must have met Janet down there, Janet Darling, who you may know of, and I met Yvette, now Sunset. And she needed help to build the Clearlight Restaurant, vegetarian restaurant. So I helped her with that. That was my initial involvement. And in the course of that, of course, I was going in and out and I'd see Pat Thompson in there. And one day Pat Thompson, instead of just sitting there knitting or whatever she was doing, she had a whole lot of bags of wholefoods, organic whole foods and said, 'Well, I'm sitting here, I might as well be selling healthy food.' And I came by and saw that and thought, 'Wow, this is what we should do.'

So I just helped with that a bit. And then later on organised, a meeting and put up notices and we got a collective together to launch the Clearlight Whole Foods community. I remember talking to Andy Prowse about it and he said, 'Why don't you call it a collective?' And I said, 'No, I prefer community,' but that's---

Lyn Longo [02:09:40] What's in a name?

Don Longo [02:09:41] Yeah, well, Collective was very fashionable.

Charles Martin [02:09:44] It was fashionable.

Don Longo [02:09:45] Very hippie.

Charles Martin [02:09:45] Yeah, that's right. We started running it as a co-operative, as a well it's really a co-operative, a food co-operative that was run there. And it was wholefoods. It was organic, where possible. And it was catering to small producers and bulk self-serve. So it was a co-operative. And we actually got people to invest and that gave us the capital to get the first containers and things and away we went. Some amazing people came along.

Lyn Longo [02:10:33] Us being two of them.

Don Longo [02:10:35] Such as? Who were your clientele?

Charles Martin [02:10:44] It's hard to know, but the names I can remember really are people who were involved like Richard Ivey who's now I think he's ageing like me, jeweler at Laura, you might know of him. We used to use his car, used to use my car to go and get the food from SA Health Foods. Drop it off there.

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We had a few bins for stuff and then after a while we started to--- well we let it be known that we wanted to get organic produce. So I went up and I'd heard about Gavin Dunn through the Soil Association, which was the organic people who I joined. I knew there was a farmer up at Tarlee called Gavin Dunn, Gavin and Rosemary who were doing stone ground wholemeal biodynamic flour. So I went up to see them and we arranged to get flour from Tarlee. So we were the first shop to get Four Leaf Farms.

Don Longo [02:12:21] What about Ally Fricker's organic stall at the market?

Charles Martin [02:12:25] That was later, but not much later. No, that was the same time. Now I remember going, and when I was setting up the whole foods at Clearlight, going and talking to them to see if they would join. First of all, I had to reassure her that we weren't going to be selling fresh foods, which we had no intention of particularly. We were going to sell things like dried foods and the basics. And so, yes it was the same time we were setting up, that same year. So it was probably 73. And I remember her being there with John, John?

Lyn Longo [02:13:16] Healey.

Charles Martin [02:13:18] Healey, yes.

Don Longo [02:13:25] You weren't tempted by, given all this alternative culture or counterculture. I still use the term counterculture.

Charles Martin [02:13:33] Yeah that's okay. I don't mind. I was just explaining my take on it.

Don Longo [02:13:39] And I mention that because Theodore Rozak, *The Making of a Counterculture* had a big effect on me that's why I mention it. But you weren't tempted by the hippie movement to move to Nimbin at all?

Charles Martin [02:13:50] No, because I'm very attached to the polis. If you can understand what I'm saying. Bit like Socrates, very attached to **here**, South Australia, Strathalbyn. Yes, I'm not really the world's my oyster person.

Don Longo [02:14:19] Not a wanderer.

Charles Martin [02:14:22] Not very much. I might have done a couple of hitchhike trips to the Eastern States and that sort of thing. But no, I'm a homebody. And, also just the thing, well I gained all my skills that I applied to this stuff growing up here. So very attached to---

Don Longo [02:14:56] So the aim was obviously to promote permaculture and organic foods and environmental concerns. What about profits? One has to make some profit. Your investors were people from the business community, who wanted something in return? ¹

Charles Martin [02:15:13] No. Well, the thing is that with everything that I was involved in or attracted to was co-operative, right? So it's accepting the corporate entity, but rejecting--- the purpose of a business to me is to serve the interests of the-- - even if you have paid people working for it, you're not after profit. Anything that you might get ploughed back in.

And that actually brings me to something that's really important and impressed me a lot with in critiquing capitalism, is the way that capitalism aggressively demolished the mutual non-profit, entities that I grew up with. I was really angry about AMP, Australian Mutual Provident Society. You see the thing about mutuality, the mutual society that was again could have been the way the Protestant ethic could--- you could look after people's interests without extracting profit.

So, the mutual society, our mutual societies like Mutual Hospital and even later Medibank Private have been looted by their owners, their actual members. So somehow or other, capitalism distorted things so that what were mutual---what about all the co-operative dairy things, the whole mutual sector just got smashed in the last 50, 80 years. Well, all we were doing, and what I've been doing in the Clearlight is recreating a little bit of that.

So that's my take on profit. I do think though, that there are certain things that are like natural monopolies. As a socialist, I believe where it's good for the state to manage. So lots of things can be run as mutual. The great thing about mutual and most impressive thing is that the entity goes on. You can be the first day member of AMP when it was a mutual society and you get the benefits of all of that capital and wealth and then you die. When you die you've had all that benefit, but the wealth remains.

¹ **Clarifying comment from Charles Martin added here.**

No-one was remotely interested in a money yield on investment. All were idealistic shoppers wanting to promote bulk foods, and vegetarian whole foods not contaminated by chemicals, organic farming and saving money by having a self-service shop. Sustainability with re-using paper bags etc.

Don Longo [02:19:10] For the next generation.

Charles Martin [02:19:12] And someone new coming in, I just think that's beautiful. And I've got a line in my song about it.

Don Longo [02:19:24] Which one?

Charles Martin [02:19:25] *The Planet Earth Restaurant.*

Don Longo [02:19:28] I hadn't heard it.

Charles Martin [02:19:29] No well.

Don Longo [02:19:30] Is it on an album?

Charles Martin [02:19:32] I've got it there. You can have that.

Don Longo [02:19:45] Can I?

Charles Martin [02:19:46] Since I did that, I've put in a bridge it, between two of the verses. And it goes '**We can get everything we want at the Planet Earth restaurant.** That's the end of the verse and then it goes: *Mutuality, mutuality, what happened to the M in AMP?* Right. And to me that's trying to--- it's not in the song because this was an early version.

Don Longo [02:20:27] Well the M in AMP became money I'm afraid.

Charles Martin [02:20:32] Well yeah. So for me it was looted. To me what they did with AMP and all the other mutual societies was a looting operation.

Don Longo [02:20:44] It's happened all over the world.

Charles Martin [02:20:46] Yeah. I'm just saying that's how I see the world. And that's what's been done. What's been done has been done. But let's work on things where we work differently. So I'm here in the Aldinga Arts Eco Village. It's a community co-op type. It's not a strictly mutual type thing, it's a co-operative. But at least you can have equal votes, even if your wealth is disparate. And that's at least something.

Don Longo [02:21:36] Charles, I know you want to stop around 1973, so that's about now, but I do have a question before we stop about the Clearlight. Did you as members of the Clearlight Bazaar, sit around thinking about approach, orientation, philosophy, how we should do things and we should not do things, what's acceptable, what's not acceptable? How did you come about a consensus

within the management committee? I assume you had a management committee of some sort?

Charles Martin [02:22:10] Well, it was very--- a lot of the time it was very *un-*management. We just held meetings, and in some ways it was--- The ethos was an alternative society and that defined--- everyone was anti the big corporations and anti-armaments, or profiting from that sort of thing, and just accepted that most of the mainstream was corrupt. Not in the ripping money out of the till corrupt, but just corrupt in like pushing sugar.

For me the fact that that sort of stuff where we actually call ourselves a health system, right? Even the word is corrupt. We supposedly have a health system. It's not a health system, it's a medical system or a disease, trying to fight disease system. But so much of that was just a whole lot of people got together and I think we just left behind--- and I think there was various people having conversations all over the place, but I don't remember---

Don Longo [02:24:06] **No conflicts?**

Charles Martin [02:24:07] There wasn't anything, well no one said, 'Oh, no, you don't want to set up a food co-op.' They'd say, 'Wow this is great. Wow, what a fab idea.' But I mean, that could be critiqued and said, well we were just charging ahead and bulldozing a whole lot of people into stuff. But actually, it was just one of those times when for people who were attracted to it, they were after something different. And here it was. And we just got on with organising a food co-op.

Don Longo [02:24:57] **The excitement of creating something new. And I can hear it in your voice. You become much more animated, talking about the Clearlight Bazaar.**

Charles Martin [02:25:07] Yeah, that's right.

Lyn Longo [02:25:09] **Obviously a highlight.**

Charles Martin [02:25:10] Yeah, well just a great thing to be part of. And it's interesting, when I go into the Singing Cricket Co-op in Willunga, it's got echoes of what Clearlight was like. It's not the same, but it is a community co-op with a lot of volunteers.

Don Longo [02:25:38] **All right, I'd like to talk further but you wanted to stop. So, Lyn, is there anything else?**

Lyn Longo [02:25:43] **I'm looking forward to part two.**

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Charles Martin [02:25:47] Okay, there's a couple of things that I'll show you perhaps briefly before you go, including something about Jim Cane, who you did ask about.

Don Longo [02:25:57] Yes. Thank you very much, we'll come again.

Charles Martin [02:26:01] Great.

Interview Part 2 of 2

Don Longo [00:00:05] Today is Saturday, 13 August 2022, and Don and Lyn Longo here again and continuing our interview with Charles Martin that we started from the 15th of June. So it's two months already. Again, we're at Charles's home at [address redacted]. The interview is part of a project supported by the History Trust Australia on activism and protest movements in the period 1965 to 83 in particular, though we often, and certainly in this case will extend our time frame to the nineties and beyond. The I.D. card for this interview is 40Continued_MAR_20220615. And we begin, as we did last time, by acknowledging that we are meeting on the land of the Kurna people, and we pay respects to the traditional custodians of the land.

So Charles, we got about halfway through our interview two months ago. And at that time, we talked about your family background your university studies, the Vietnam War and your resistance to the draft and the attractions of the counterculture and the establishment of Clearlight Bazaar in Bowman's Arcade. I think we got to around 1973, 74, so perhaps you could take it from there. That is the story of the Bazaar, other progressive movements you were involved in during the seventies, eighties. In particular, talk about the environment and energy sustainability.

And perhaps you can address the matter of any political affiliations as well. We've got some broader questions to put to you as well about activism and protest, but we'll get to that in due course. So Charles, as we got to the establishment of the Clearlight Bazaar and the rationale for doing so and the attractions of counterculture, which you were closely aligned to. And about 1973, you were at Bowman's Arcade and then you moved.

Charles Martin [00:02:16] 72, 73.

Don Longo [00:02:19] So can you talk about the development of Clearlight Bazaar.

Charles Martin [00:02:24] I wanted to say one thing about it. I wanted to make a point that I don't mind being considered in amongst the spectrum of the stuff that was happening in the counterculture, but I just wanted to make the point that I'm not really counterculture.

Don Longo [00:03:01] A fellow traveler?

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Charles Martin [00:03:02] No, I'm alternative society. And if you look through the stuff I've provided, you'll see what that means. That that just means that---

Don Longo [00:03:13] **Oh, can you tell us a difference how you see the difference between---**

Charles Martin [00:03:16] Well, it's very important then and increasingly ever since I believe, that we define ourselves by what we are *for*, not what we're against. Right? Absolutely crucial. And you can waste a lot of time just banging your head against a brick wall, opposing, the mainstream. And what you'll notice is that a lot of the activists who you've probably talked to, a lot of them, they didn't worry about continuing to do that. That's important, but you can waste a lot of energy and get very little from that. So the important thing is you work on the alternative. So what I said about consumer corporate capitalism.

Don Longo [00:04:15] **Yes**

Charles Martin [00:04:17] No hope. But so therefore, the Clearlight Bazaar was an attempt to start again on a new economy, a new way of living. And that's what it was about. There are probably people that could explain more about the very beginnings, like Pat Thompson or Andy Prowse or, some of the others. Even, who was it? Jude Elton. To me, direct action is a lot wider than having a sit down or whatever the protest is.

Don Longo [00:05:07] **Sit in I think they used to call them.**

Charles Martin [00:05:09] Yeah, well it was a sit down in the Moratorium. We'd sit down in an intersection, but that kind of thing, but it encompasses setting up communities. So we're actually living the new life and I don't see it as a counterculture and the mainstream culture. We were starting again, but with the hope that by setting up models, you can actually, when people are ready, some people might take it up. And so it's a different way to a militant protest, which I don't think is **always** inappropriate. So that's the spirit that I see at the Clearlight. Well, that was my approach to the Clearlight, and the same with Anne.

Don Longo [00:06:17] **So it's a parallel society that grows within the old society and it slowly hopefully, supplants the old.**

Charles Martin [00:06:26] I just think you get on with it and move away from the mentality. So you're getting me not anyone else's. If you move away from defining

ourselves in terms of what we're against. We are for, and this is what you're going to build. And so, you look at the features of the original Clearlight in Bowman's building. Did I talk about that at all?

Don Longo [00:07:05] You talked about Bowman's building, and the basement that you were in.

Charles Martin [00:07:08] Yeah. Well, it had the Clearlight Restaurant as an entity within and it had a whole craft co-op of clothing, candles, all sorts of things.

Everything that the--- well, it had the ambition of being a little Clearlight Bazaar, in other words, almost like a centre for a new economy where you'd have organic food, a lot of it's in there if you want to check in the notes.

Don Longo [00:07:52] These are the documents that Charles has provided us with today.

Charles Martin [00:08:01] What happened very early on is that Pat Thompson, who you've probably met. One day she was looking after the co-op shop, the craft co-op, and she thought, 'Well, okay, seeing as I'm here and I'm not very busy, I'll sell a bag of wholemeal flour.' And I came in because I was involved with helping Yvette set up the Clearlight Restaurant, I thought, 'Wow, what an idea, bulk whole foods, organic. So let's set up a co-op.'

And that's what's in one of those little pamphlets about the Clearlight Wholefoods Community. So it was still gathering things at that stage. By the time we moved to Chesser Street, we had the bulk whole foods thing running. And the other stuff moved with us from Bowman's. We had people doing clothing and the craft co-op all moved to Bowman's. Draft counselling, Janet Darling had her draft counselling little stand in there and big notice boards. It was the alternative. This was the centre where you went to if you were involved in any of the alternative stuff.

Don Longo [00:10:04] The counselling is interesting. It meant that you had tied yourself to other protest movements as well.

Charles Martin [00:10:10] Yeah. Although, it's funny, I didn't really see it as separate in the sense that I think it's the same reason that we were involved in a what I regarded as a criminal interference in Vietnam. We were also our food system was--we'd abandoned just the basic healthy foods, basic whole foods probably decades

ago. That's all part of capitalism and consumerism, over refined food. To me, it's all part of the same.

Don Longo [00:11:14] Charlesing profits, Charlesing more and more consumption.

Charles Martin [00:11:19] And also, I think, there'd been a trend, and this was already appearing in the seventies where the old co-operative institutions were being trashed by, 'modern business' in inverted commas. So you had the AMP, which was actually set up as a mutual society gradually--- well, I was already worried about as a member of AMP as a young person, and there was already worries about what it was involved in. So the ethics that stood behind the old co-operatives and mutual societies was even then being eroded. And of course, it's all part of the same process. Consumerism, waste.

Don Longo [00:12:25] So, yes. You wouldn't recognise the AMP now, of course.

Charles Martin [00:12:29] No. Well, the final end of the AMP was that they persuaded the policy holders to loot the--- that was a mutual society and it was a beautiful idea where you could join. You were in it for life. You got all the benefits of the wealth of the society. And then when you died, or ceased to be a member, it was there available for the next generation coming through. It's a beautiful idea. And we I think we only have one major institution like that now. It's the RAA.

Don Longo [00:13:16] Yes, yes. The AMP's now been taken over by Corporate, international corporate interests.

Charles Martin [00:13:20] Oh yes. Yeah.

Don Longo [00:13:21] It's not what it was at all, but the name remained.

Charles Martin [00:13:24] They sold it. They, actually persuaded the members--- they de-mutualised it by giving it to the members and actually that's a travesty of the vision of the originators. That's a process that's been happening all through the seventies, the decline of the dairy co-ops and privatisation.

Don Longo [00:13:57] It's what Adam Bandt has called the neoliberalism of the 1980s.

Charles Martin [00:14:01] But it was already, we could see it and it was already happening in the seventies and deregulation. The seventies was the era of the corporate raiders like Brierley and people like that Skase and so on, were beginning.

And they were allowed to loot. What they used to do is they would buy up things and then strip the assets.

Don Longo [00:14:37] Corporate pirates.

Charles Martin [00:14:39] That's right. Raiders.

Don Longo [00:14:42] So back to the Clearlight, who were the clientele and what was the response by the general community and by your clientele to the Clearlight Bazaar?

Charles Martin [00:14:55] Well, it really operated as---you did mention the word parallel and in a way, it was. There was a lot of young and probably people like me, who'd realised what was wrong with society in the sixties who just---That's why we set up shop fronts and that, so that we could just indicate that there was another option.

Don Longo [00:15:43] So you got good responses?

Charles Martin [00:15:48] Well, there was just a very committed clientele, but we didn't see it as clientele. We just saw it as people of a similar---

Don Longo [00:16:11] Of like mind?

Charles Martin [00:16:12] Yes like-minded. And it certainly had elements of the counterculture and hippie ideas. But in a way, a lot of that was becoming mainstream by then anyway. And so there was a lot of people just gravitated towards it. And a lot of them were students, and also the people that had been radicalised by the ferment of the sixties.

Don Longo [00:16:52] Did you get the opposite? Did you get scorn or been dismissed?

Charles Martin [00:16:57] Not really, no. Because we were just--- see we weren't trying to---There could have been scorn, but we were too busy. What we were doing was out talking to organic farmers and people like Gavin Dunn up at Tarlee.

So, you know, there's a business called Four Leaf Farms. It's a big organic and whole foods supplier. Well, it was Clearlight--- I went up actually and spoke to Gavin and Rosemary Dunn and said, 'We'd like to get stone ground flour.' He had this little first mill he built, which was running off a tractor in the shed. So we got him to send wholemeal flour down. He sent down wheat so that we could have it for people to

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feed the chooks. We were too busy to worry. I didn't even notice any scorn, there might have been. There was just too much, too busy with CANE and all the other stuff that was happening.

Don Longo [00:18:24] We'll get to that in a minute. Sure. I guess there was a lot of permaculture movement to that started in those days. I know Graham Brookman started up The Food Forest near Gawler.

Charles Martin [00:18:36] Yeah. But that didn't really take off until the late seventies. When we were starting in 72, 73, it was all happening under the Soil Association, of which Gavin was a member. We used to go out to individual organic farmers, we'd go out to individual honey producers.

Don Longo [00:19:08] To source all the material.

Charles Martin [00:19:09] Oh, yeah. And we went up to Auldwood, and got apple juice and cider vinegar,

Don Longo [00:19:16] It's a lot of work.

Charles Martin [00:19:17] Yeah, of course it is, but---

Don Longo [00:19:21] You were fighting the good fight. No. I understand.

Charles Martin [00:19:24] I just thought it was great, we're actually doing it. But we were also buying food from SA Health Foods, a business that was a wholesale business at the time. And the Clearlight was one of the very first places to have bulk self-serve. Well, that's the standard in any health shop.

Don Longo [00:19:56] Yes, Goodies and Grains still has that at the Central Market.

Charles Martin [00:19:57] Yeah. And there were a whole lot of places that followed it. Well, we were the ones that started that, almost the beginning of it. There were a couple of other little businesses. Sanitarium used to do a bit of that. And I used to go to Sanitarium in the late sixties.

Lyn Longo [00:20:20] Can I read something from amongst the papers that Charles's given us? This is a really good summary. I thought of. Of the Clearlight. 'The Clearlight Wholefoods community exists for the benefit of those who want to get off the consumer treadmill and become part of a cooperative economy with human growth and development as its goal, rather than a competitive economy with bureaucratic or corporate growth and industrial development as its goal.'

And there's a couple of newsletters from the early days. The first one, which I presume was when you'd only just set up where they have -\$11 in the kitty and the second one where they managed to be \$64 in credit. And I was just highly amused by this. How much stock value there is, cash in hand and that they were owed \$10. And I don't know if it was you or Anne that's got in brackets. 'Imagine someone owing us money.'

Charles Martin [00:21:34] I think that would be Anne. You can see that whole newsletter I was involved but that's Anne's work. [Anne didn't become involved in Clearlight until late in the time it was in Chesser Street].

Lyn Longo [00:21:43] **There's a lot of detailed information in it. And so anyone reading it would be assured that you were committed.**

Charles Martin [00:21:55] See that's a couple of years after. This is very early, this might have been even Bowman Buildings that first one on the top of the pile you've got there by me.

Lyn Longo [00:22:08] **Yes.**

Charles Martin [00:22:09] And then the other one might be a year or two later by Anne. So the Clearlight was doing a lot of things other than the food and all that too. But that became the mainstay. That was really what made it economically viable. [By that time Rob Ranzijin and Glenda Glazbrook were important in maintaining the Clearlight as a business. Also Danny, Paul and Martha Pactson. Martha still lives near Nimbin. Three siblings who came from USA were a huge amount of help minding the shop].

Don Longo [00:22:26] **And it was economically viable. Lyn just read out some figures, it paid its way.**

Charles Martin [00:22:32] People paid a yearly membership to become members of the co-op and then they got a discount. Same as at The Singing Cricket in Willunga.

Don Longo [00:22:46] **Yes.**

Charles Martin [00:22:46] You've probably passed it. Well it looks like Clearlight except it's a bit more smart. If anyone says where did Clearlight go, Singing Cricket really. I mean I'm a bit tongue in cheek but--- And of course, where did the people that were using the Clearlight in the sixties?

Don Longo [00:23:12] **Indeed, where did they go?**

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Charles Martin [00:23:13] They went to Willunga. They're refugees from all that urban stuff, and went to Willunga. Yvette who started the Clearlight Restaurant, she lives in Willunga. Yvette Sunset, and Wendy Avery. [Wendy's sister 'Pebbli' Beach is in Willunga now too. Wendy was Wendy Wildflower.] She works in the Singing Cricket, and I used to work in the Singing Cricket. So in a way, there were a lot of successes. As far as I know, the Clearlight seemed to last until about 1989, 90. But as I said, I think it didn't--- it's like Joe Hill, it didn't die at all. It's living on.

Don Longo [00:24:09] **In other incarnations.**

Charles Martin [00:24:10] Yeah.

Don Longo [00:24:11] **So were you involved right to the end?**

Charles Martin [00:24:14] No, I left in about 1980. I left Adelaide. 83. Sorry. I went up to the Village Community Co-op it at Kuitpo.

Don Longo [00:24:33] **That's another one, that's right. Do you know why it folded? You weren't involved then obviously.**

Charles Martin [00:24:41] No.

Don Longo [00:24:42] **I was always curious and regretful, personally regretful.**

Charles Martin [00:24:48] I just think it had done its job. Bulk organic whole foods, is all over the place now. And in a way that would have been part of the demise also. And a lot of the people that were involved at that time had moved on too. Some of us moved to the country. But no, I don't really know why, I just think that ---I'm more amazed that it lasted until the late eighties, actually. It had many iterations, styles of management.

Don Longo [00:25:45] **And the last incarnation of the Clearlight Bazaar was in Rundle Street.**

Charles Martin [00:25:50] 201 Rundle Street. [Into the basement under 'Don Giovanni's' Pizza Bar

Don Longo [00:25:51] **So why did it move to Rundle Street?**

Charles Martin [00:25:56] That was just mainly to do with redevelopment. Bowman Building had been--- the old Bowman's arcade on King William Street that had basically been more or less decommissioned. They'd vacated and all the people who were tenants there had moved elsewhere and it was just sitting there ready. It

was really ready for redevelopment, but we were allowed to use the basement for about a year. We were happy.

Don Longo [00:26:50] So you say you understood that it was a temporary arrangement and that you'd have to move eventually?

Charles Martin [00:26:56] Yeah, and then after about a year of that, we had to do that. And then so we went to Chesser Street, a basement in Chesser Street. And just moved everything because of course it was fairly shoestring. So there wasn't huge logistics involved.

But at Chesser Street that was where Anne came down from Friends of the Earth, Adelaide Uni or was it, no sorry AUS. Well I think she was in both but representing NUS and Nimbin and the, what is it called, the Aquarius Festival. [Anne McMenamin was with NUAUS, (not NUS that came later) who sponsored the Aquarius Festival at Nimbin].

Don Longo [00:27:58] Yes. Yes.

Charles Martin [00:28:01] Things had gone pretty dead at the uni by about 72, 73. And she came down with a poster because all of our clientele who were either ex or non uni people, used to go to Clearlight because it was a communications centre. It had big notice boards and coffee lounge and stuff. So that's her work, that's Anne. And so out of Clearlight we organised groups to go to the Aquarius Festival, Nimbin. That was the NUAUS. [National Union of Australian University Students]

Don Longo [00:28:52] And so did you go?

Charles Martin [00:28:56] Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Don Longo [00:28:58] Tell us what it was like.

Charles Martin [00:28:59] What was it? Well, I was just busy.

Don Longo [00:29:03] You're always busy. (laughter)

Charles Martin [00:29:06] It was pretty amazing because there was just a whole lot of other like-minded people. And the idea was to actually have set up the alternative society at the festival. And also it was to be unstructured. Very unstructured in terms of, no headline entertainments. You just had all sorts of things. So it was like the bazaar idea, applied to a national festival and the idea was to set up all sorts of

temporary things. A lot of it's described in the pamphlet, so I won't try to---in Anne's pamphlet.

Don Longo [00:29:59] Tell us your feelings about it while you were there. Can you evoke your feelings while you were there for us today?

Charles Martin [00:30:09] Well, I think I was probably, being one of the key organisers, I was probably in a fairly, fairly stressed state most of the time. And in a way, it certainly wasn't exactly fun, but it was really creative. I just felt it was very satisfying, but I don't think there was much elation, because we'd had to really battle to put together the group that went over and we had the old trucks and made canopies and all that sort of thing. Even took over a stove. We were going to bake bread over there. But I do remember one of the groups, the Indian type spiritual groups walking around singing in the mornings.

Don Longo [00:31:46] Not the Hari Krishnas?

Charles Martin [00:31:47] Well, it might have been, could have been the Hari Krishnas, yeah.

Don Longo [00:31:51] Sounds like it.

Charles Martin [00:31:52] Let the long-time sun shine on you all love surround you. And the pure light within you, guide your way home. (Charles singing)

Don Longo [00:32:03] Impressive, you remember that?

Charles Martin [00:32:04] That would happen? I think there's some nice little memorable snippets that I can think of. But yeah, I was fairly full on engaged in trying to--- being one of the organisers.

Don Longo [00:32:27] Yes, the Eastern religions were very much a part of this alternative society. And not just the Hari Krishnas, but also TM was becoming very popular, and other gurus and going to ashrams and so on.

Charles Martin [00:32:44] And Ananda Marga was involved in the Clearlight. So that was in the time at Rundle Street.

Don Longo [00:32:55] So the connections are actually interesting, to see how Provo had an eastern religion aspect to it, as did Clearlight, as did Nimbin, as did all sorts of other smaller societies.

Charles Martin [00:33:12] Yeah, but there were all sorts of other things were involved. Do you know of--- there's a very famous collective or community over in

the southwest of Western Australia, started by Fred and Mary Robinson. [Universal Brotherhood] Oh well I'm unable to think of the name of it, but it was way down in the south. It was set up to be a bit like The Farm in the US. And I remember Fred Robinson--- so the Clearlight was a venue for him to hold recruiting meetings, and join the community. And they ended up over in that part of Western Australia and there's a friend of mine from here [Cam Waters who lives here at the Aldinga Arts/Eco Village] who was in that. He didn't get recruited there, he got recruited in Sydney.

It was great to just be part of something where all that was happening. So a couple of truckloads of us went over, as organised out of the Clearlight Bazaar.

Don Longo [00:34:51] To Western Australia?

Charles Martin [00:34:52] No, to Ninbin.

Don Longo [00:34:54] Oh to Ninbin, yes. And what was the aftermath of the Aquarius Festival? Were there some impacts, lasting impacts? Was there a legacy to the festival that you can remember, for yourself, but also for the general movement?

Charles Martin [00:35:25] I just felt very encouraged that---But I was always too busy, getting on with the next thing to reflect too much.

Don Longo [00:35:45] But reflecting now, do you think it had an impact at all, on what I've called the counterculture, what you've called the alternative society?

Charles Martin [00:35:57] Yeah, if you look at what came out of the Aquarius Festival in Nimbin, well there's a whole ongoing community. You had the Tuntable Falls community set up. There were several co-operative communities set up.

I remember there were meetings. I remember on the daily noticeboard there'd be Tuntable Falls. People were proposing, this community or that community and that all started there. And look what came out of Nimbin, the Rainbow Power Company, one of the pioneering alternative energy.²

Don Longo [00:37:00] That's a big impact.

² Rainbow Power Company a very early solar business and solar equipment manufacturer.

Charles Martin [00:37:02] Yeah. And but the rest of us, the people that went from here, I think we just think, 'Oh yeah, that was good.' And then came back and we're doing the same thing over here.

Don Longo [00:37:19] **Can I ask you about just about Eastern religions, just to finish off. I know you've come from a very Christian background. You told us last time and the word temptation is rather Christian, but were you ever tempted by TM and ashrams and eastern religions of any sort?**

Charles Martin [00:37:39] No, not really, no. I think Anne I would have in common, not being---but we were very comfortable with those people. 'Wow, they're great.' I've got a different approach to spirituality. I was attracted to Zen, like Christmas Humphries and all that stuff. Zen and then, the ideas in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and all that stuff.

Don Longo **It's a great book.**

Charles Martin That and I was very impressed by Krishnamurti and basic Buddhism. [*Buddhist Meditation For Beginners*] Yeah, but see I've got a particular outlook on things where I don't see any distinction between the spiritual and the material. No, there's no meaningful distinction between the spiritual and the material in my universe. So that's quite unusual, I think.

Don Longo [00:38:55] **And what did you find attractive in Zen or Pirsig?**

Charles Martin [00:38:58] Oh, because it was liberating in thought. That was the key thing I got out of the Zen is that you have to break away from constrained habits of thinking. So hence that little statement in the beginning of the book when given two alternative you choose the third. Well that's Zen. [The book referred to is my book *Jobs Energy and Environmental Harmony* by EFFE (Environmentalists for Full Employment)].

Don Longo [00:39:23] **Yes, I was going to ask you where it came from?**

Charles Martin [00:39:25] Well, I don't know whether I've discovered that in Zen, but that's the kind of--- if you're going to be the real you, your authentic you, you have to break away from any imposed guidelines. But I don't think that means deserting logic. I just think it means---

Don Longo [00:39:59] **Transcending it, I think is what they used to call it, certainly in Pirsig's case. Well, speaking of Pirsig, you didn't ride a motorbike, did you?**

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Charles Martin [00:40:11] No, but I had a motorbike as a young lad. I think they're fab fun? But the key thing in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* was and that really, I don't know what the word is, but what really impressed me in what that person was putting, is that commitment to quality in everything you do. And that's what I grew up with. So I grew up in a family where the idea of doing a second rate job in your employment, was alien. It was unheard of. So commitment to quality, which is a great contrast to a lot of people who say, 'The job is just a way of earning money.' There are understandable reasons. In a capitalist thing, you don't get rewarded for taking an interest in your work. So that was the key insight to me. It struck a chord.

Don Longo [00:41:51] **It's a wonderful metaphor that of the motorbike that Pirsig uses I must admit. You might like to know that that's been corporatized now. There's a quality assurance movement that started in the late nineties in Australia and one of the readings that they used was Pirsig. So I have been to conferences where they talked about Pirsig and quality assurance in corporate Australia. I won't go into that because it will just depress you.**

Alright, so can I ask about in the seventies other movements that you were involved in. there were things like anti-apartheid and the Springboks and the nuclear disarmament was a very strong one of course. There was CANE, Campaign Against Nuclear Energy, there were Indigenous issues and there's environmental issues which we'll deal with in a minute.

Charles Martin [00:42:47] Well, I was very involved in CANE.

Don Longo [00:42:51] **In what way?**

Charles Martin [00:42:57] Oh well I just saw, the nuclear power, as an incredible threat. I could understand the danger to people in nuclear weapons, but nuclear power for somebody whose outlook is to do with maximising self-reliance in everything and healthy living, just basic healthy living, the idea of something like that is just quite horrifying. You could approach it from a logical scientific point of view. I thought it was madness, because if you're creating products that, say might have a half-life as a quarter of a million years or a hundred thousand years, even if you develop the perfect containment, how do you know that--- look at what you're doing. You're imposing a burden that has to be supervised for---- so do the people who are getting the benefit from the energy now, do they pay for that supervision or is it for---

Don Longo [00:44:55] **100,000 years that needs to be supervised.**

Charles Martin [00:44:58] However long. It just seemed to me to be crazy and so I thought it was very damaging.

Don Longo [00:45:17] **You joined CANE did you?**

Charles Martin [00:45:17] Oh, yeah. I was on the committee for most of the ten years from 73 or 74, when it started. I think I must have got involved with it when I ran into Bob Giles. He was the secretary of the Plumbers and Gas Fitters Union, and he was later the Secretary of the Public Service Association. And in the beginning, I was in there quite early.

Because you see the other thing is that it's a dreadful thing partly because, not only is there all the inherent danger in it, but it's going to drain wealth and capital away from what I thought was useful things. I didn't think then and I don't think now, that we need that kind of stuff. People have always been able to if they've got access to water and land, to look after themselves quite well. And it's only the exploitation of elites that makes people poor, or the capture of wealth by an elite that leads to poverty. So, I'm very cautious about anything that's technologically very complicated.

I think there's a place for some of it, but not the---we've got all that wind and sun and plants grow and they produce energy. To me, life in amongst living things, seems a lot better prospect than a consumer society. And then you've got all these huge nuclear plants like the one in the Ukraine, not the Ukraine. Ukraine, now

Don Longo: Chernobyl.

Charles Martin: No, it's the other one. That's right, oh, yeah, Chernobyl.

Don Longo [00:48:07] **And Three Mile Island, of course, was in this period 1979 wasn't it, or 1980 when Three Mile Island almost had a meltdown.**

Charles Martin: [00:48:17] Yeah. So I just think that was ringing alarm bells for me. There's a whole lot of different reasons, and some of them are philosophical, and some of them are just plain pragmatic. Like, this is stupid from a scientific point of view, this is crazy.

So in a way that led me to do a lot more reading on energy and realise that natural renewable sources were potentially cheaper in terms of the investment needed. They

provided more jobs and they were less damaging to the natural environment, hence the book. So in a way that alarm about nuclear power was a spur to---

Don Longo: [00:49:29] Researching this book. And the book is called *Jobs, Energy and Environmental Harmony Towards a Sustainable Economy for South Australia*, published in 1981. We'll talk about that in a second. I just want to ask you about CANE and were you happy with the functioning of CANE. We went to many of the rallies of course.

Charles Martin: [00:49:50] Okay, did you?

Don Longo: [00:49:51] One of the newsletters featured a photo of our daughter, as a matter of fact, which you've probably seen, but you won't remember. We were happy as participants only we were not organisers. We were happy with the rallies, the marches that we went onto. From the internal perspective, were you happy with the way it was run?

Charles Martin: [00:50:18] It was mainly good. Yeah. I thought it was a mainly good, and what I thought was very good is that we were able to really make a strong statement without getting into--- we took it as far as we could in terms of civil disobedience without that kind of a slipping into violence and stupidity. The culminating event was the Roxby blockades. Right, 1983.

Don Longo: [00:51:21] We were overseas, but tell us about it. We weren't here, so we couldn't participate. And how did it come about and what happened?

Charles Martin: [00:51:34] Oh, my goodness, that's a whole other story.

Don Longo: [00:51:36] But an important story, I think.

Charles Martin: [00:51:41] Well, through the seventies, CANE just grew almost organically because I can remember one of the first rallies where we were pushing the amplifier in a baby's pram, at the head of the procession through the mall. But it was a big crowd.

I just thought CANE, there was a lot of good in it and it was incredibly well organised. It had local convenors, and they worked away at getting local councils to declare non-nuclear areas. And in the latter part with the Beverley, no the Honeymoon Mine, there was a protest in the late seventies. That was a big protest. Well, I was involved in that and that was way up on the Honeymoon out in the desert, on the Broken Hill Road.

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I was happy with the organisation. There's a lot of different threads in it and that was the first time I came across, the Eco Feminist people, and that was a different take on things. The idea of that is that it was no good unless you dealt with the issue of patriarchy, then it was going to be futile, and that the patriarchy was part of the problem. That led to questioning of meeting procedures. They were very strong and still are, because I know some of those people. Consensus decision making and they brought in training, non-violence training.

So all of that was happening, but it's just too big for me to encompass. But I do remember we had one episode where we were starting to get ready, I think, to go to Roxby and someone came up with a pre publicity poster. And it didn't actually get done, but it went to the committee and it had all these people in almost semi military; like visors and shields and that kind of an image on the poster. Well, some of us had to move to--- I just thought that was the wrong thing. It was encouraging people who if you want a confrontation with the police, that's the kind of--- and you want to attract people who want a confrontation with police, that's the kind of image you promote. I think it came from Japan. And I got them to just get one of the photos from one of our previous times, which showed a whole lot of different people from all walks of life, kids on shoulders. But lots of organisations would have run into that debate. That succeeded and that was dropped, that image of the protest was dropped.

Don Longo: [00:56:26] Did you get many people going all the way to Roxby Downs?

Charles Martin: [00:56:29] Oh yeah. I think there were thousands I mean it was--- you'd probably have to look up all that material, some of which I donated to the History Trust or the State Library.

Don Longo: [00:56:58] I've tried to contact Friends of the Earth, actually, to try and get the archives of CANE, but I haven't had much response. A man by the name of Roman Ostransky was that [right]? I don't know if I pronounced that properly. Anne I think, recommended that they get in touch with him and we tried, but he just wouldn't respond to our email.

Charles Martin: [00:57:23] You know that I left a whole lot of stuff from CANE with the State Library?

Don Longo: [00:57:32] I've seen it in your papers. Is there a lot there, a lot of newsletters and things?

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Charles Martin: [00:57:36] Yeah, there's a lot. And I actually have here my correspondence with History Trust and State Library reference about that, which you're welcome to have a quick look at when we finish, because I took in, I must have taken in a half a shelf of a filing cabinet of stuff from CANE newsletters and stuff, but a lot of it might have to be gleaned from newspapers or whatever. But I was on the committee right through the seventies but I tended to be not a central, because we were getting busy with EFFE. Environmentalists For Full Employment.

Don Longo: [00:58:36] **Yes, we will come to that in a second.**

Charles Martin [00:58:38] And I was again on this same thing of, I thought that it was bad for CANE to be primarily oppositional. The opposition is indispensable and incredibly important, but you have to promote the alternative.

Don Longo [00:59:15] **The alternative yes I agree. That is very important. Otherwise, you come across as negative all the time and people who are sympathetic, will get turned off.**

Charles Martin [00:59:25] Yeah. So I think in the very long that's one would be one of my things re concerning activism that I think to succeed in the long run you really need to be focusing on what you're **for** and you have to be strong on the oppositional and protest. I think it's a turn off when there's nothing being offered, hence EFFE. I used to be involved in the renewable energy collective of CANE and the renewable energy collective raised money and actually planted trees out at Kuitpo. So that's late seventies.

Don Longo: [01:00:22] **Yes. I didn't know that. And the trees are still there?**

Charles Martin: [01:00:26] Yeah, well, it was a woodlot, so it's carefully managed and it will be replanted and selectively felled. It's a woodlot, not a pure conservation. My friend round the corner here, her veranda posts came from those trees.

Don Longo: [01:00:52] **Lyn and I were in the Port Adelaide CANE, because we lived there and our house became a bit of a focal point for the nuclear free zone movement in Port Adelaide. We were the first actually to get it going. We had to fight against a certain mayor who you know, Mayor Martin, and he was extremely conservative.**

Charles Martin: [01:01:14] Yeah.

Don Longo: [01:01:15] **And eventually we achieved it and we got 4.000 plus signatures on a petition. That really floored, Martin to some extent.**

Lyn Longo: [01:01:26] A lot of door-knocking.

Charles Martin: [01:01:28] Yeah.

Don Longo: [01:01:29] So I guess the reason I mention that is not just talking about us, but to ask what the connection was with Central CANE and some of these nuclear free zone movements. The Port Adelaide one was the first, but there was also one at Unley.

Charles Martin: [01:01:48] Oh yeah, I think there was one at Elizabeth.

Don Longo: [01:01:52] And the Unley people came to see us, to talk about strategies and what we were doing. So was CANE itself supportive, the Central CANE that you were on?

Charles Martin: [01:02:02] Yes, absolutely, but you see the philosophy in the central--- I didn't even see it as Central CANE, but we were just facilitating and leaving the local groups to---

Don Longo: [01:02:23] Do our own thing.

Charles Martin: [01:02:24] And only getting busy when there was something important like the protest. at AMDEL. [Australian Mineral Development Laboratories] I don't know if you remember those, late seventies.

Don Longo: [01:02:38] That may be just when we went to France, I suspect.

Charles Martin: [01:02:39] So that's the South Australian nuclear regulator of the time. Well, we locked the gates, we had a little action there and locked the gates on them for two days. I was involved in that. [I was the one who snapped the chain and padlock on the gate].

Don Longo: [01:02:59] And the object of that was?

Charles Martin: [01:03:01] Just to highlight that AMDEL was working in conjunction with setting up a nuclear industry in South Australia at the time.

Don Longo: [01:03:18] You actually went there and put a padlock on the gates did you?

Charles Martin: [01:03:21] [It was me]. Sat down and wouldn't move, but we ended up leaving. We'd made the point and I think they didn't want to--- but someone must have told the police not to arrest us

Lyn Longo: Didn't want martyrs.

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Charles Martin: Well, yeah, that's right, no martyrs. So we left after two days. We locked it, oh well, it was me that snapped the lock, but we went there at about five in the morning, and stayed there. I think we stayed all that day and all that night. But CANE was involved in other things like that.

Don Longo: [01:04:20] The Roxby boycott?

Charles Martin: [01:04:23] CANE used to run protests at BP service stations, in some cases blocking or you might be just placarding. Just people coming in, do you realise this company is going to be wanting to mine uranium? Well, some of them actually blocked driveways. An interesting thing is that BP ended up getting out of Roxby, and it actually began making solar panels. So BP Solar.

Don Longo: [01:05:22] Be nice to think that the protests pushed it in that direction.

Charles Martin: [01:05:29] I think it was a contributor, minor perhaps. But there might have been a whole lot of other action happening all over Australia and overseas and BP thought---

Don Longo: [01:05:46] Not worth the trouble.

Charles Martin: [01:05:49] Better think again yeah.

Don Longo: [01:05:51] You continued with CANE to its end as it were, or did you move away from it?

Charles Martin: [01:05:59] I stayed with it, right 'till the Roxby blockade.

Don Longo: [01:06:05] That's 83.

Charles Martin: [01:06:06] Yeah. And that was pretty full on. But I think that what actually happened is and this is where some investigation into the other politics is that there was a vote in Parliament as to whether the Roxby, it was like a legislation, enabling legislation. I don't know what the correct name is. But it's like a special act to cover a particular mine. That was looking like it would pass. But then a Labor man in there in the Legislative Council crossed the floor. I'm trying to remember his name. Anyway, that meant that---so that was after 1983. By that time, I was wanting to move on. I wanted to leave Adelaide. I went up to Kuitpo.

Don Longo: [01:07:33] Okay. And you left CANE.

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Charles Martin: [01:07:35] Well, yeah, but I didn't ever resign or anything. I just wasn't on the committee anymore and CANE definitely lost momentum once that Roxby whatever it was act was passed.

Don Longo: [01:07:57] **And you went to Kuitpo, why Kuitpo?**

Charles Martin: [01:08:01] Oh because it was a place where--- it was like a community living.

Don Longo: [01:08:10] **So like here?**

Charles Martin: [01:08:12] Yeah. And, community cooperative.

Don Longo: [01:08:16] **Was it an eco-village like this one?**

Charles Martin [01:08:18] Well, it was a 'would be,' but it never quite made it. And there's a whole story there. The Village Community Co-operative was actually set up in Adelaide and its members were, if you look at Friends of the Earth Adelaide Uni late seventies, the initiators were, the drivers were the same people. Rob Hall, Sandy Pulsford, I don't know if you've heard of any of these people.

Don Longo [01:09:01] **Rob Hall I have, but Sandy I haven't.**

Charles Martin [01:09:04] Dave Clark. Well, they were heavily involved in supporting CANE. But what happened is, again, that a lot of people, including myself, we don't define ourselves as what we're against, what we're for. So that it was very important to make a beginning on alternative community. So Village Community Co-op was set up and it was based in Prospect with the ambition to have a country place. That country place ended up being in Kuitpo. They tried to get--- what's one of the horse race, famous horse racing persons stables and property up in--

Don Longo: **Oakbank?**

Charles Martin: No it is in the Barossa. Anyway, they failed. I think that locals must have heard that there was this community group or environmental group was trying to buy this place in the Barossa, might have been Angaston and they were blocked. They couldn't seem to get it in touch with the real estate and all that. So they ended up looking elsewhere and they ended up being Kuitpo.

Don Longo: [01:11:05] **And you were there for a while?**

Charles Martin: [01:11:07] Yeah, I was there from 83 to 89, and I'm still a member.

Don Longo: [01:11:15] **Still a member? And you came here then afterwards?**

Charles Martin: [01:11:18] I bought a house on a town block in Sellick's Beach. It was weird, 1989 in this area, house prices were incredibly low, but there was nothing on offer. Which makes sense, doesn't it, because no one wanted to sell on a---- Okay, but I did manage to find a place after, it took me about six months. I wanted to come here Port Willunga, Aldinga Beach, but there was nothing on offer. So a couple of things came up at Sellicks, so I took one of those. Bought one of those.

Don Longo: [01:12:08] **And that was before you came here, obviously.**

Charles Martin: [01:12:10] Oh, yeah, I moved away. I actually went and lived on the same place with Wil Heidt.

Don Longo: **At Willunga?**

Charles Martin: At Willunga, but then they needed to move on, so I went back to Sellicks. And then I was there for another ten years or so. And then finally I couldn't--- personal reasons, I couldn't continue by myself at Sellick's. So I had some health issues and so I just looked around for somewhere with other people.

Don Longo: [01:13:16] **And you didn't know Keith Darwin at Kuitpo?**

Charles Martin: [01:13:21] Keith Darwin. Now I know a Keith Darwin, but that's from---

Don Longo: [01:13:27] **I'm just wondering whether you knew him, that's all, because we've spoken to him as well. Can we rewind a little bit to the early eighties and the genesis of this amazing book. As I said to you off the record before reading your book, *Jobs, Energy, Environmental Harmony*, I thought it was printed yesterday because many of the themes, I won't say 100%, but many of the themes most of the themes are still relevant today. It's incredibly prescient. And I wondered, it made me think about the Radical Ecology Movement of the mid-seventies and which became the Environmental Movement. And it made me wonder whether, given your involvement with CANE, I wondered whether the Radical Ecology Movement had an influence on you. And if so, how?**

Charles Martin: [01:14:22] Oh, well, I think there's a there's a strong link between the Radical Ecology Movement and that book.

Don Longo: [01:14:30] **Well, tell us.**

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Charles Martin: [01:14:35] In 1973, 74, a whole lot of us from South Australia went over to something called the Radical Ecology Conference.

Don Longo: 75.

Charles Martin: Yeah. And that was in Melbourne. And I think that also Bob Giles³ who was with the Plumbers and Gasfitters I think at the time. I don't know whether he'd moved to become the Secretary of the Public Service Association by then. I remember him being very fired up. I must have met him there, and I remember him being very fired up about the Green Bans. Oh, what's the name of the fellow in Sydney? Jack Mundy. Jack Mundy and the Green Bans. And so yes that's my link. We went to the Radical Ecology Conference.

Don Longo: [01:15:47] Can you describe what it was like there? The reports I've read about the Radical Ecology Conference come from Tribune, the CPA newsletter.

Charles Martin: [01:15:55] Oh yeah.

Don Longo: [01:15:55] And they're quite extensive actually, to give them their due. But I wondered whether somebody had been there and what your personal experience was?

Charles Martin: [01:16:08] Oh it's pretty much a blur really? (laughter) I think Jack Mundy must have been there. I don't have a---

Don Longo: [01:16:27] Well, if you have no clear recollections of the actual---

Charles Martin: [01:16:33] Proceedings.

Don Longo: [01:16:34] Proceedings, why did you go and what was the impact on you? Do you remember that?

Charles Martin: [01:16:40] Well, I just think it was in line with the way I was already going, and we were just looking for--- well, it was really just looking for direction. There are all these environmental crises that were seeming to be looming. Going there was an exercise in linking up, seeing who we could link up with to further what we were doing.

And as I said, I think that's where I really got to know Bob Giles. So it was really peripheral. I don't remember much of the proceedings of the conference, but I

³ Bob Giles was Secretary of the Plumbers and Gasfitters Union.

remember that that's where I met Bob Giles and he was very involved in the ACF I think it was, and very keen about what Jack Mundy was doing. So that's the significance for me. And when I came back, I just remember Bob going and seeing Alf Hannaford. I think he's got another name, but anyway, the artist. And he came up with all the cartoons, Bob, that you can find. And, that was somehow involved in the launching of CANE, but I'm very vague about it.

Don Longo: [01:18:57] Because CANE started in 75 76 and, and it struck me that the Radical Ecology Conference had just happened as well. And there must be a connection of some sort, but the connection I'm not clear on it yet.

Charles Martin: [01:19:10] Anne would probably have a better, sharper---

Don Longo: [01:19:15] Yes.

Charles Martin [01:19:16] I tend to be not a good traveller and I'm more worried about surviving these things and getting home and getting on with the real work.

Don Longo: [01:19:27] Well, we'll talk about the real world, as I said before, this is a terrifically relevant book still, I think, the one you did in 1981. Can you tell us a bit about its genesis and what you are trying to achieve by it? Its impact and its distribution?

Charles Martin: [01:19:59] I just remember talking to Bob about alternatives to nuclear. And just deciding that--- I reckon that Bob was keen to start something out of the Radical Ecology Conference on alternatives. And I think that fired me up because I tend to want to pursue what I'm **for**, not **against**. And if you're against nuclear and horrified by it, then there's--- so, and I had a background in engineering and science, constructions, that kind of a mathematics. And I just got keen on studying all the pathologies of nuclear energy and also the potential of--- so I just started myself, on a private study.

Don Longo [01:21:21] It wasn't commissioned at all. It was just---

Charles Martin [01:21:23] Oh, yeah. The book, the final book was commissioned.

Don Longo: By whom?

Charles Martin: By EFFE.⁴ (Environmentalists for Full Employment) And this is where you can see in the front of the book, that book owes a lot to Barbara

⁴ EFFE was modelled on something launched in Melbourne about that time and John Andrews was very prominent in that organisation. Very inspirational for us.

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Shepherdson, who was---I think she had an important, I forget what her position was. So this is in the Public Service Association and Bob was the secretary and she might have been an accountant or had an administrative position there.

Really, it was their enthusiasm for, 'Yes, if we're going to make any progress, if we're going to have any hope, we have to push the alternative.' So that's the beginnings of EFFE and Bob and Barbara, and their contacts in the union movement particularly were the genesis of that. And at the time I had been studying thermodynamics, or energy policy and thermodynamics. And there was an incredible amount of good work being done by Friends of the Earth, USA. In particular the work of Amory Lovins. And he produced a couple of books and a lot of that work was being published in the Friends of the Earth magazine, which is actually, I think I acknowledge it in here, Chain Reaction.

So we were in that kind of a thing where I'm sure Chain Reaction people, were at the Radical Ecology Conference and we were reading those magazines and they were publishing synopses of what Lovins and the Friends of the Earth USA were doing. So, that was a very influential book and I'll try and find that a bit later. (Charles looking unsuccessfully for the book.)

Don Longo: [01:24:25] Yes, Charles has just gone to his bookcase to try and find it.

Charles Martin: [01:24:27] But I think it's something Energy Strategies but, I'll find it later. So basically, that led me into fairly intensive study of thermodynamics. So we were reading *The Poverty of Power*. Who was that famous guy went for Vice President?

Don Longo: [01:25:07] Who's Vice President, I guess?

Lyn Longo: [01:25:09] Al Gore?

Don Longo: [01:25:16] Al Gore was Clinton's Vice President.

Charles Martin: [01:25:17] Anyway, I'm a bit hazy about a lot of the names, but I was reading, basic books on thermodynamics, and there was one called *The Poverty of Power*. Really important book, because the answer was in thermodynamics, that's at my level as a technician and scientist. [Barry Commoner wrote *The Poverty of Power*, the most inspirational book for me at the time. The key thing was relating the

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laws of thermodynamics to economy and politics. The name I was looking for was Barry Commoner, not Al Gore. Al Gore wrote a great book but that was much later].

What we tried to do was ---I think what we realised when all this was happening as a result of the stuff we were getting through from Amory Lovins, was that there was an opportunity and it expressed itself in, we've got a problem with people having meaningful work. We have a problem with toxic energy systems, we've got a declining environment, and maybe by focusing on renewables, you can have a solution. You can offer something, a thesis for a better future.

Don Longo: [01:26:58] What really impressed me about the book was not just the histograms and the stats and the facts and figures that you gave, but that you associated energy usage and the environment to moral issues such as the notion of harmony and the notion of to quote, 'socially satisfying work,' which I thought was actually really interesting. It's not just about having a better energy future, more efficient, more effective, less environmentally damaging. It's also about the social consequences of that, have I read it properly?

Charles Martin: [01:27:40] Yeah, that's right. Well, I think there's something intrinsically better. Renewable energy tends to be decentralised, and I think there's better possibilities for convivial living, like going back to Ilitch. In systems that are decentralised and you have reasonable, local self-reliance and a degree of autonomy and independence. That's really perhaps just an expression of my outlook, my personal outlook. And I think it's the outlook of a lot of people and say going back to *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, it's quality and liking what you do. And if you're in a nicely integrated regional district or economy where your work is convivial and small enough in scale to be convivial and close enough to nature, hopefully that is the prospect for a better life. That's the central thesis of it.

Don Longo: [01:29:30] It's that connection between the moral and technical, which I thought was something that's missing in a lot of our current thinking and talking about energy usage and energy changes. You've managed it really well to weave the two together all the way through the book, which I thought was good. So congratulations.

Charles Martin: [01:29:53] I think it was just me, it's my own background and philosophy just coming through.

Don Longo: [01:30:03] But it was endorsed by the Environmentalists for Full Employment so they adopted it?

Charles Martin: [01:30:10] Yeah. Oh well I think they're all similar, they're all fair minded, compassionate people. Isn't that what we want? That was just a fabulous committee to be with and **all** of them.

And so what happened is that EFFE just worked away. Barbara was good at raising money in the office from her workmates. So we just raised a lot of money and eventually we went a substantial way towards financing the book. But in the end, the way that it was financed was that I had produced a draft and, and it needed to be turned into a book. It needed to be rewritten. So I said, 'I can't do this, Bob, Barbara. I'm trying to earn a living as a builder and I'm involved in the Clearlight and everything else.'

So what I ended up suggesting---well, they said, 'Well, we'll pay you, we'll find a way to pay you.' So basically I said, 'Okay, well, if you can find the money to pay me the dole for three months, I'll go and do it. I'll do it.' And that's what happened. But also, in order to print it, we applied to the Minister for--- can you pass me the glasses--- the Minister David Watton. And so we made an application, I think it went via the Environment Centre. So here it is, 'coordination, fundraising, Barbara Shepherdson and Bob Giles.'

But all these people were really fabulous. Just what a mob to do something with. The final couple of thousand that we needed to publish it, we made an application, I think it was through the environment grant system, to the Minister for Environment for a grant, and that was David Watton.

Don Longo: And you got it.

Charles Martin We got it, yeah. And I'm disappointed that he didn't get acknowledged. I think it is acknowledged somewhere anyway, because he was a nice man, David Watton, a really--- he's a liberal guy, Minister for Environment.

Don Longo [01:33:50] Yes, this was post Dunstan obviously.

Charles Martin [01:33:52] Yeah. And, just a very nice, reasonable person, so I was very impressed with him.

Don Longo [01:34:00] And I see that Jim Cane--- Jim Cane's cartoons are always good, but he illustrates most of this book. He was on the committee as well?

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Lyn Longo [01:34:10] I wanted to comment about one of the cartoons that just shows how much foresight you had. It shows a garbage processing machine that's getting a whole lot of junk fed in and a lot of power to be separated into organic type of metals and plastic. And a woman says, 'Why makes it in the first place?' And in the last ten years, the councils are providing the bins to do just that. And here we are back in the early eighties and a sort of prediction is happening. It's remarkable.

Don Longo [01:34:49] Yes, reading it through, I thought, 'Well this was done yesterday surely?'

Charles Martin [01:34:53] Yeah. Well, anyway, yeah, you do what you do.

Don Longo [01:34:57] And Jim, you said that Jim---

Charles Martin [01:34:58] Jim Oh, see the connection with Jim was that at the time I was living in the same house with Jim, just a shared house in--- oh, I forget where.

Don Longo [01:35:31] So you're saying that there was a process by which you came up with the cartoons?

Charles Martin [01:35:35] And you're gonna ask me about politics anyway, aren't you? Yeah, well, Jim and I were both in the CPA.

Don Longo [01:35:41] Ah, you were. That was going to be my next question.

Charles Martin [01:35:42] But we were living in the same house, shared house. And I would have known him from the CPA. Again, lovely fellow. So the natural thing was to ask him to--- so we just sat down with the draft, the final draft.

Don Longo [01:36:22] The text.

Charles Martin [01:36:23] The text. We sat down with the text chapter by chapter and just worked out a series of cartoons. A bit whimsical, but trying to inject a bit of humour into a fairly dire subject. Oh, there's one Cobb one there, I don't know whether we ever asked about that. But it was good fun doing it.

Don Longo [01:37:15] As I said the book is very impressive, but there's also two other books that you gave me which were written in the eighties, both by Geoff Lacey, one for Friends of the Earth, called *The South Australian Energy Future, the Sustainable Option*, and the other one called *What Technologies Are Appropriate* by Geoff Lacey, which was tied up with the Christian movement, I think Catholic, but I'm not sure. Perhaps Christy and I wondered whether there was any connection between Environmentalists For Full Employment and the book that you wrote in 81 and Lacey's arguments, which are very similar.

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Charles Martin [01:37:57] Yeah, well, I was on the committee. I went to a lot of the discussions for that book. I think that what they were wanting to do was they wanted to put the thing out, **again** before the public, later on in the eighties. This is already *Jobs, Energy and Environmental Harmony* had already had its print. And in a way, it's rather idiosyncratic, I think.

If you look at what's in here, for instance linking in things to do with animal cruelty, and I just think that there would be things in here that a lot of people would question. A lot of people who were keen on the general idea. I just think that it was really that the FOE people wanted something fresh to put forward, and would update the kinds of things that were used in the EFFE book.

Don Longo [01:39:40] **Yes. Yes, I was interested to read how later---**

Charles Martin [01:39:43] But I was involved in the discussions, in the committee with Jeff Lacy. Jeff Lacy came over for about--- I forget what year it was, but he came over for six weeks or something and we---

Don Longo [01:40:01] ***SA's Energy Future is 1986 and the other one, What Technologies is 1989.***

Charles Martin [01:40:10] So they wanted something, just to put out there again, because they probably thought, well, there hasn't been a lot of notice taken yet of the EFFE book.

Just one other thing on the EFFE book, someone I know who actually lives here now called Michael Vawser and he remembers reading the EFFE book and because he was an engineer when he was a student I think, and it made an impression on him. He went over to England, started working for a wind power company called Wind Prospect. Then he came back and established a couple of the first wind farms here, including the one I think, down towards the bottom of the Fleurieu.

Don Longo [01:41:28] **Must be satisfying for you.**

Charles Martin [01:41:30] Yeah, it was just one little thing where there was almost a direct connection, because Michael actually came from the same district as me too, the Eastern Fleurieu.

Don Longo [01:41:49] **Was the book distributed to schools or to government instrumentalities and. what was the distribution?**

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Charles Martin [01:41:57] Oh, it was done by, Ari Mulders, which is probably not mentioned here. It was distributed by someone who had a special little business distributing books to schools, a man by the name of Ari Mulders⁵, who's actually in here under forestry in another guise, the one with the gas producer.

Don Longo [01:42:42] Oh, yes.

Charles Martin [01:42:44] And so he undertook to take them around and give a free copy. We just asked him to distribute them. So he distributed them free to every high school.

Don Longo [01:42:59] **There's a price of \$3 written on that one, it retailed for \$3. You sell a few?**

Charles Martin [01:43:09] Yeah, but in fact, we sold quite a lot just here and there, just to organisations and environmental groups and energy fairs and just events. We were selling them ourselves at demonstrations and rallies and events and so we ended up with enough money, and I think that we actually ended up with a least \$1,000. Anyway, it was quite a substantial amount that we got back for it and we gave it to---

Don Longo [01:43:57] **Friends of The Earth?**

Charles Martin [01:43:58] Yeah, to finance, the Geoff Lacey book.

Don Longo [01:44:04] **That's the 1986 one. Okay.**

On EFFE, Environmentalists for Full Employment. How did that come about? Again, there's environment and employment connected together.

Charles Martin [01:44:19] Oh, do you mean where did the name come from?

Don Longo [01:44:23] **Well, the name, but also as an organisation.**

Charles Martin [01:44:27] Oh, that came about. That's again the Bob Giles connection. He and I were involved in the early days of CANE, right? We probably hit it off, similar trade background. He was a plumber. And I just think once the idea of maybe promoting renewable energy came up, he introduced me to Barbara and the other people that he knew, through the union, that were interested in, thought it was a good idea to promote.

⁵ He had a Dutch ancestry and he made the wood gasifier in the illustration.

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Also, we knew of, both Bob and I knew of a fellow called John Andrews. In a way he was a bit similar to me, in Victoria, who was doing energy policy work in a similar scene. And I think the organisation he was with in Victoria was EFFE, Environmentalist for Full Employment. So that's where the name came from.

So it sort of got cooked up by Bob and me and his friends and unionist friends. Of course, you noticed that in the end it was published by the Public Service Association, and that was great too.

Don Longo [01:46:33] Well getting their endorsement was good.

Charles Martin [01:46:34] Yeah, that's right, and plate making Peter Walker. So it was all printed. He made all the plates. We had to do the layout ourselves.

Don Longo [01:46:54] What else did EFFE do apart from some research?

Charles Martin [01:46:59] Well, we used to go and when there were events like energy fairs and things, that CANE used to do, or any rallies on uranium, we would go and be a presence. And we had something similar to some of this, that we would have on display boards. So it actually had a life, before a book, not nearly as comprehensive.

Don Longo [01:47:26] And so when did it start, then EFFE? It started in the mid-seventies?

Charles Martin [01:47:35] Oh, yeah.

Don Longo: Oh, it started quite early.

Charles Martin: Anyway, I just remember John Andrews, I just remember Bob. I think I must have expressed some doubt about proceeding with anything like this. And I think I might have said, 'We need John Andrews,' or something. And he said, 'Well, *you're* going to have to be John Andrews over here.'

Don Longo [01:48:13] And you were. But again, the name is important because it connects the environment to industrial relations, which is important. To my mind, in my recollection, a lot of CANE's work didn't connect with industrial relations. It was in the abstract, it was a guard against something, uranium mining. Never for anything in particular, except generally the environment. This one was work and environment go hand in hand.

Charles Martin [01:48:45] Yeah. Well, you see, that goes right back to Jack Mundy. Bob's basic thing that the environment is an issue for working people, and that's the way I see it, too. And that's why Bob admired Jack so much.

Don Longo [01:49:09] **They should be reminded of that too nowadays, because sometimes working people and the environment and environmentalists don't always get on.**

Charles Martin [01:49:16] No, but actually over time, I think they're beginning to get--- like you could say, well, farmers and environmentalists in the past were thought to not get on. But actually, I find I can easily--- there's a lot in common with lots of farmers. More and more farmers are on the sustainability thing.

Don Longo [01:49:47] **Yes. I guess I was thinking of two elections ago with the Adani mine and Bob Brown going to Queensland and getting a lot of hostility from working people, who didn't like young environmentalists coming there and telling them what they should do.**

Charles Martin [01:50:05] Yeah, well, I mean, that was a story we got. I just thought that that was a very bad thing, it was just the wrong thing to do to. I would rather we went up there, environmentalists went to these places on an ongoing thing and not just go up there, **bang**. I didn't think it was very constructive, actually.

Don Longo [01:50:53] **Yeah. The votes showed it was not constructive. But another thing was I wanted to ask you about political affiliations. You said before that you were a member like Jim Cane was, a member of the CPA. Could you tell us what attracted you to CPA and not CPAML or SPA or others?**

Charles Martin [01:51:22] Well, my political outlook was shaped by the thinking of someone like Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism, the Left-Wing Alternative*. To me, both Stalinism and Maoism, those sides, they're the obsolete. Right? And I wouldn't have joined prior to 68. By the time I joined, there'd been a break with both the USSR and China.

Don Longo [01:52:17] **62, 63.**

Charles Martin [01:52:20] And why I was attracted? Well, the thing is that I was already aware by the late sixties that--- well sorry, by the early seventies, and particularly heading up to the mid-seventies, I was becoming increasingly aware that both Labor and Liberal were deserting a centrist. Because the centrist, what do you call it, policies.

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When you think back, I grew up in a state where we had a Liberal government, but we had quite a good public housing policy, and a whole lot of other things. We had good regulation, even if people grumbled about it, we had well-regulated banks. We had government banks. Well, I think they're part of effective regulation. And I call that centrism and basically, by the mid, getting toward the mid-seventies when I joined the CPA, it was obvious that Labor in particular was deserting that. And there was a huge push on, to--- the neo liberal thing was starting to express itself, and it looked to me like Labor was deserting it's actual traditional centrist values, where you're not extreme. You have regulation via *actual* regulation and via government involvement in industries like banking. And it was in say petrol refining, Telstra, all those things.

But even by the time I met Bob and came in contact with the Public Service Association, they were starting to bring in things like cuts to National Parks staff. So all of that thinking about--- To me, the only party at the time that was actually putting forward what I think of as centrist policies was actually the CPA.

Don Longo [01:56:08] Which followed a broadly Euro Communist line.

Charles Martin [01:56:11] So it's interesting that I had to join a nominally Communist Party.

Don Longo [01:56:24] That's why I ask. (laughter).

Charles Martin [01:56:26] Yeah, but I think that I'm probably more of a natural Green. But the Greens didn't as a party--- I hadn't heard much about Greens at that time.

Don Longo [01:56:49] In the mid-seventies, no. Did you feel yourself a Marxist in the mid-seventies when you joined the CPA?

Charles Martin [01:56:58] Only in the sense that I have the same view as I think Ashley Campbell has expressed that Marx is very good at telling you about, what's **wrong** but Marxism it's not really very helpful in working out what to **do**. So I take the same attitude. So I'm actually quite conservative.

My views really haven't changed. You live your life according to the Sermon on the Mount, and there's other things that are associated with socialism, to do with regulation, and a lot of state control that are actually nothing to do with socialism.

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You can find that in in monarchies or ancient strongmen type things in ancient Greece or wherever. So yeah, that was just somewhere---and the CPA at the time was really good on environment.

I was part of the environment collective that participated in the Redcliffe Environmental Enquiry. We were putting arguments, a whole series on them, and a nice balance about all the different problems with the Redcliffe Project. As wide ranging as the environmental ones of having tankers with ethylene dichloride. Vinyl chloride monomer going up and down the coast to transfer pricing. We were arguing that there'd be very little benefit through transfer pricing. So, that was a kind of a party where you could---they were in the Jack Mundy mold of environment. It's a working-class issue. In the end they weren't quite enough. There wasn't quite the commitment, but that they were the best around at the time.

Don Longo [01:59:57] In the mid-seventies we used to define socialism in two ways. The hardline economists usually defined it as the socialisation of the means of production distribution and exchange, as you recall. And the others would adopt that, but also take it further and say that the inequalities of wealth and power should be redistributed as well.

Charles Martin [02:00:18] Hmm. Yeah.

Don Longo [02:00:21] Do either or both of those definitions of socialism resonate, did they resonate with you? And if not, why not?

Charles Martin [02:00:33] Well. I think I would have just had an instinctive feeling that to have a good society, you have to have equality of opportunity. And as soon as you've got capture of the wealth by some sectors, whether it's a whole class or an elite, then some people are going to miss out. To me that's wrong. Everyone ought to have a reasonable opportunity in life. So that then means that you have free state education. Education by the state is critical and looking after the people that fall through the cracks. So you have a good public housing. But I don't think I've quite answered the question. You had two sides of it didn't you?

Don Longo [02:01:50] Well, one was about addressing the inequalities of wealth and power.

Charles Martin [02:01:58] Hmm.

Don Longo [02:01:59] The other one was about the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Some people define socialism as one, others

as the other, some as both. So I guess my question was about did you feel yourself a socialist at the time, and what did you understand by it if you did? That's an easy way of answering the question, I think.

Charles Martin [02:02:28] Yeah, I was definitely a socialist, but I also think that I was. Yeah. I think it was one thing or the other. I can see the advantages of--- the sort of socialism that I think is good is where the government intervenes to regulate and it intervenes to redistribute wealth. That's my definition of socialism. And that's more in line with the Sermon on the Mount, not some theory.⁶

Don Longo [02:03:39] **You seem to have joined the CPA at the time or around the time of Gough Whitlam's dismissal.**

Charles Martin [02:03:45] Yeah.

Don Longo [02:03:46] **Is there a connection?**

Charles Martin [02:03:49] Oh, no, not really. No, I think it was probably before. When was the dismissal?

Don Longo [02:03:56] **In November 75.**

Charles Martin [02:03:58] So, yes. 75? No, it wouldn't have been. In fact, I think I joined before then, before the dismissal, because I can remember I was already in the party when they were going--- there was a whole lot of activism against Fraser. A lot of demonstrations.

Don Longo [02:04:38] **And give Fraser the Razor.**

Charles Martin [02:04:40] Give Fraser the Razor. That song, that was around. So, it must have been about 74 that I joined.

Don Longo [02:04:57] **Were you a supporter of Whitlam? And did his dismissal have an impact on you, as it did amongst a lot of our generation.**

Charles Martin [02:05:11] I was a little bit torn because I'm one of those people that whenever you're in a movement, there's always the prevailing conventional wisdom

⁶ **Some clarification added by the interviewee**

I am a socialist by philosophy but being a socialist to me doesn't mean imposing socialism on people or society. It means putting the case for regulation, a degree of state enterprise and redistribution of income to avoid an elite class. Capturing all the wealth by means of argument, example and non-violent direct action.

Labor is now right of centre – it looks 'radical' because we have been hijacked by neo liberalism for 5 or so decades. What the CPA was advocating in the 70's was quite moderate. It would look more like Tom Playford policies than modern parties.

that Fraser was a total arsehole, and Whitlam and Labor had been duded, and I think there's some truth in that.

But, I don't know that they helped by---there was the Khemlani Affair. I think that all sides of politics could have gone in for that sort of thing, like dealing with shady characters. A lot of the corporations are considered to be pretty shady characters, but I just think I wasn't as totally--- I think I could see there was bigger thing. I think I was focused on bigger things like environment and sustainability.

Don Longo [02:06:52] Which in those days, the Labor Party didn't really address in any meaningful way? It was just too early for them, I think.

Charles Martin [02:07:01] I mean, the Medibank.

Don Longo [02:07:05] Medibank it was.

Charles Martin [02:07:06] Yeah. That was a fabulous thing that Whitlam did. There were just some fantastic things that he did, or they did.

Don Longo [02:07:16] Yes. You said you there was no real Greens party at this stage of course. By the mid-eighties there was a Greens SA movement run in South Australia by Ally Fricker and Bob Lamb, before it became subsumed under the Australian Greens. Did you know about that?

Charles Martin [02:07:39] Yeah. Oh yeah.

Don Longo [02:07:40] Were you involved with it in any way?

Charles Martin [02:07:48] I was just so busy with---there was the campaign against the marina and to save the Wash Pool. So I got to know all of those people. Well, Ally Fricker, I knew from way back.

Don Longo [02:08:14] In the Vietnam War days?

Charles Martin [02:08:15] Yeah, Provo and all that. What was the question again?

Don Longo [02:08:25] Well, in the mid-eighties, I can't recall the precise date when it was. Ally and Bob set up a Greens party. It was a South Australian branch of the Greens. There were parties in Sydney and Perth, and there was a South Australian part of that party and it was called the Greens SA.

Charles Martin [02:08:52] Yeah, that's right.

Don Longo [02:08:53] And by the mid-nineties that became subsumed under Bob Browns Australian Greens.

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Charles Martin [02:08:58] It basically got blocked. I think they actually had an argument about the use of the name and so that was illegal. And the South Australian people lost out. I was sympathetic. I knew a lot of the people that were involved in that; Bob and Ally and Sue Regione and other people because they are good friends with again Gina Kellet and Jim Cane [Carter Street, Thorngate in the late 70's just when she was getting to know Dave Nurton] and Friends of the Earth, people in Willunga. So Friends of the Earth, Willunga, that was where my energy that I had to spare went. [Gina and Dave as well as Zara Lupton and Chris Davies were the backbone of FOE Willunga, through the campaign to stop Willunga Council's Marina, and reinstate 'The Washpool' during the 80's. The four of them were and are dear friends of mine, to this day 21/04/23. Also good friends Ally Fricker, Bob Lamb and Sue Reggione].

But, yeah, I was disappointed when Ally and people lost out. In some ways I always think back to that when I think of what happened with Kevin Rudd in the---what's his policy that they voted against in the Senate?

[The Federal Greens carried out a hostile takeover of the SA Greens].

Don Longo [02:10:37] **There were a few.**

Charles Martin [02:10:38] No, but it's the one that they call the perfect getting in the way of the good.

Don Longo [02:10:48] **Yes, the perfect getting in the way of the good. Well, the Greens are blamed for it. It was about the climate policy.**

Charles Martin [02:10:56] Yeah, that's right. So it was Rudd's climate guarantee or something. And I just think there was something about the manner in which the eastern states party, pushed out the other state-based parties. And I thought, yes, it doesn't surprise me now that they took that attitude on that policy, because here, when that happened, there was a whole lot of people here, who were Greens members and supporters, who wrote to Bob and said, 'Please pass it, you must pass this.' And, I'm still angry with him over that. That contributed to a decade in the wilderness and it would have been much harder. That allowed the Liberal and Country to wedge Labor.

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It was a terrible thing. What's wrong with passing something that's weak because two years later, something better can be passed. I felt some of that same anger coming back when there was talk of the Greens, in recent times, voting against, or setting up a lot of blocks against the current policy. And it was funny, someone from the Greens rang me, because I have been a supporter, I still am now. Some nice young man who was asking me to support them in the coming months with their new agenda. And I gave him quite a talk. I was pleasant, he was a nice, young fellow, but I made it really clear that I wasn't happy about what they did to that Rudd policy. And I told him I left the party, and I've only been a supporter ever since, and I didn't commit myself to anything in the way of ongoing support. I'm just saying that because that's the level of frustration that people feel over that. And I think they must have got the message this time, because that would have been the end for me if the Greens had substantially blocked, they'd never get a penny from me again.

Don Longo [02:14:38] I think Adam Bandt understood that.

Charles Martin [02:14:40] I hope so.

Don Longo [02:14:42] Has it gone through the Senate yet?

Charles Martin [02:14:44] No, but I think it will. I mean, it's sounding--- all the right noises are being made.

Don Longo [02:14:50] Which is good. It might end the climate wars. But they'll take another form, perhaps.

Charles Martin [02:15:00] I thought it's sounding hopeful. It was very interesting the way that my hackles raised with that latest---

Don Longo [02:15:12] Given that you're still with the Greens, are you still sympathetic to the Greens.

Charles Martin [02:15:15] Oh, yeah, yeah.

Don Longo [02:15:16] You're still hopeful for the future. I'd like to get onto broader issues now.

Charles Martin [02:15:21] Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

Don Longo [02:15:22] Sort of reflecting back if you like on your life of activity and activism as much activity as activism. You're a busy person. I.

Charles Martin [02:15:32] You know, I just don't see it as activism. It's my *life*.

Don Longo [02:15:36] Yes.

Charles Martin [02:15:37] But yeah.

Don Longo [02:15:39] Are you optimistic?

Charles Martin [02:15:45] Actually what I've decided to do is going back to more my own philosophy. I take the attitude that it's not possible to save some people from themselves, and it's not possible to save---one can hope, but it may not be possible to save the world from itself, the global humanity, from itself. So the attitude I take is I want to do as much as I can to model and promote a better way of living and better policies and sustainability. I'm not going to even buy into---at one level I hope for the best.

[Consumerism - The 'globe-trotting entitled' are as great a threat to world peace and environment as is global warming. 'Live simply so all may simply live'].

Don Longo [02:17:07] But expect the worst, as the saying goes.

Charles Martin [02:17:12] Yeah, but to me, winning the issue is not important, it's the way you live. And that's more important. I like to be hopeful. I'm a little bit hopeful, but not very, but the important thing is living live well and trying to make things a bit better for being around. Whether it will be enough, I don't know.

Don Longo [02:18:00] None of us do. And being an example I guess to others, in terms of having different way to live and it being possible.

Charles Martin [02:18:11] Yeah. But I could be a bit of an extremist in a way of living because for instance, I decided a long time ago I wasn't going to do any more long-haul airline travel unless it was dire family necessity. Really dire. Not just, I haven't seen my sister in three years, so I'm going. So, again, like Ashley and Annie, there'll be a time when we can do that kind of thing when we've sorted it out. So I'm not doing any more long haul. I haven't been in an aeroplane since 1989 and that was to go to work somewhere. The boss flew me to Kata Tjuta. [also known as the Olgas].

Don Longo [02:19:16] That's a good place to go.

Charles Martin [02:19:18] It was good fun installing compost toilets at Kata Tjuta.

Don Longo [02:19:22] Oh, well, that's a useful thing to do as well.

Charles Martin [02:19:26] Yeah.

Don Longo [02:19:29] Well, cautiously optimistic I'd say then.

Charles Martin [02:19:34] Yes, that's right. There is some hope, perhaps in the way people's attitudes have shifted just even in the last election. So there's a little bit of hope there.

Don Longo [02:19:57] Do you think that's shifted along the lines of the alternative society that you were dreaming of in the seventies?

Charles Martin [02:20:06] No, not really. That's a lot more radical.

Don Longo [02:20:13] Has there been progress in that direction? I ask that because nowadays and, I have it within our own family, people look at Nimbin and the hippies of Nimbin and so on and they are all almost figures of fun really. Which I find annoying.

Charles Martin [02:20:33] Yeah.

Don Longo [02:20:34] But nevertheless the millennials tend to look at older people generally and people of that hippie generation, if you like, as figures of fun.

Charles Martin [02:20:46] Yeah.

Don Longo [02:20:48] So given that you were wanting in the seventies and into the eighties, an alternative society, working in parallel, I think was the term I used before.

Charles Martin [02:20:56] Yeah, but I don't think---

Don Longo [02:20:58] Have you shifted at all?

Charles Martin [02:20:59] No, because I just think that hopefully in any future society, there's room for a diversity of, some diversity of lifestyles. I just would just prefer to grow my own food and be involved in a nice, almost subsistence local economy.

Don Longo [02:21:37] We don't all have to live in the way that you want to live. In other words. People can live differently.

Don Longo [02:21:51] But I'll ask a different question. You said, 'It's been your life, not your activist life.' Nevertheless, there's been protests. You've gone on protest, you've organised protests. And I'd like to talk about protest generally. You've also spoken about civil disobedience, and there were times when you came close to, you pushed civil disobedience to its limit.

Charles Martin [02:22:23] Well, yes, although when I say it wasn't me, I looked at it as the CANE and the anti----

Don Longo [02:22:32] The movement you were part of.

Charles Martin [02:22:33] The movement I was part of. Yes. I just felt we took it as far as we could, without it getting destructive. And a lot of us moved into things like going into business.

Don Longo [02:22:56] Yes.

Charles Martin [02:22:58] Setting up some of the first solar businesses in the state.

Don Longo [02:23:03] Have you thought about the place of civil disobedience and protest, in what we now have a liberal democratic society. And I usually give an example of this. I'll quote Lynn Arnold if you don't mind. He wrote something, which Lyn and I have thought about. He said, this is with respect to the anti-Vietnam movement, but it applies to others. 'The value of the work of the Campaign for Peace in Vietnam, and other anti-war movements around the world has been eroding the rights of governments to make arbitrary decisions and prosecute wars in whatever way they see fit and ignore public opinion when it suits them.' Unquote. I remember the rally in 2003, you might have been there too Charles, against the Iraq war.

Charles Martin [02:23:59] Yeah, I was there.

Don Longo [02:24:00] I'm sure you were. And we were there. And 100,000 people, 10% of Adelaide's population.

Charles Martin [02:24:05] Yeah, that's right. Well, it was 10% of Australia's population.

Don Longo [02:24:10] And around the world, not just Australia. Nevertheless, our liberal parliamentary democracy represented then by Howard, just thumbed its nose at us and went and joined the Coalition of the Willing.

Charles Martin [02:24:27] Yeah.

Don Longo [02:24:29] Grandiose term. And that upset me a fair bit. And in some ways the genesis of this project goes back to 2003. It got us thinking, what is the point of protest when the majority of the population of a country manifestly, is against the prosecution of a war, and yet our elected representatives just ignore it and go ahead and prosecute the war anyway. What was the point? Have you---?

Charles Martin [02:25:07] I have, I have.

Don Longo [02:25:09] Please, share your thoughts because it's something which worries us about what the point of it was and is.

Charles Martin [02:25:25] I just think that it's just important that--- it doesn't really matter whether it's a liberal, whatever the system of government, it's a duty of a good

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citizen to speak truth to power and to me it's very disappointing if you're not listened to. It would be much more awful if we never--- I'd be horrified if we never spoke the truth. Like, I just think it's a proud tradition of and you can apply it to the individual or the whole movement. I think also they get more cunning at, if they want to prosecute the war, they wouldn't have dared conscript anybody to go to Iraq and that's really tragic because that means that we get our soldiers sent over there to destabilise a whole region. And then we treat them like rubbish, very poorly treated when they come back. It's awful. I think we **have** to. It's disappointing, but we **have** to do it. So I'm sorry, I'm not really sure that's an answer.

Don Longo [02:27:44] Yes. Well, it was a difficult question, obviously, and there's no solution that we can devise around this table today, but it's something that we need to reflect on, I think. And maybe the forms of protest need to be different.

Lyn Longo [02:28:01] But maybe it also was the beginning of the end for people admiring and looking up to our political system and ultimately has led to the sort of election that we've just had, where people are starting to wake up that those old forms of government are no longer applicable and no longer just.

Charles Martin [02:28:28] I'm not sure how much people have woken up. It's a bit like, you might have thought that with the coming of Whitlam. I just welcome what we have. But I just think there's probably a bit of a tendency to backslide again. So my main hope is in vigorously promoting what we're **for**.

Don Longo [02:29:06] That's admirable actually.

Charles Martin [02:29:07] But, you can see that there's a bit of the stoic. It's a family [trait]. Sometimes you have to choose to do the right thing and pay the price, or whatever consequence. [Question – Is happiness or integrity more important?]

Don Longo [02:29:37] Is there some way of engaging people more? Or rather there's a prior question to that? Do you think people are more or less engaged now than they used to be, back in our day, if I can use that term?

Charles Martin [02:29:48] Well, I can see some promising or encouraging signs, but it's mainly at a local level down here. I do think in our local civic discourse, there's a lot of people that **don't** seem to come from my stream, like refugees from the sixties, hippie, probably a bit, socialist minded, who I've been working with for a long time here. And just getting things done.

Don Longo [02:30:53] We were talking to Wil Heidt before coming to see you Charles, and he was telling us about some of the grassroots movements that he's been involved in. Very impressive and productive, it seems to me.

Charles Martin [02:31:06] Yeah. Well, you know, he probably told you about LETS⁷ and all that. Well, I'm in LETS. [Local Employment Trading System].

Don Longo [02:31:12] Oh, are you?

Charles Martin [02:31:13] And, there's quite a diversity of people, that come to LETS markets, and I'm thinking, 'Yeah, look what we've done.' Well, not by me mainly, but people like Wil and those. They worked away. They created What's Happening? It's a local currency. We have created a local currency, and okay, it's at a very small-scale level.

Don Longo [02:31:47] But acting local can be immensely satisfying and productive, if done properly.

Charles Martin [02:31:53] And one of the things that I believe I **had** to do when I left Adelaide and left the CANE and CPA and all that activism, I found that life is very unsatisfying, almost bleak, as an activist in a political party or any movement.

Don Longo [02:32:32] In what sense, why is it bleak?

Charles Martin [02:32:34] Oh, because, everything is about people positioning themselves and getting their agenda accepted.

Lyn Longo [02:32:51] Is it also what seems to be very strong for you, that it's all about telling the government what's wrong, not what can be done about it. That it's all negative.

Charles Martin [02:33:05] Well, it tends to be.

Lyn Longo [02:33:11] Yeah, I think that can be problematic for our young people if we are talking too much doom and gloom about the planet and the future and climate change and all the disasters that are about to befall us, it could easily be young people thinking, 'Oh, well, we might as well go and live the high life because there is no future'.

Charles Martin [02:33:37] Yes. Well as I said what I've learnt is that a lot has been achieved in this district. The campaign to save the Wash Pool, that's a whole other story.

Don Longo [02:34:00] I don't know about that one.

⁷ In effect it operates as an alternative currency, entirely on the honour system too.

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Charles Martin [02:34:01] That's a fantastic thing of the Friends of Willunga Basin group, has had some tremendous achievements in civic planning and Friends of the Earth, Willunga by setting the agenda. So if you're protesting against something, your working to someone **else's** agenda. So what started out in the very early days, like 1984, alarm at the marina being proposed for the Wash Pool, a beautiful bit of remnant wetland. What Friends of the Earth did, and then later Friends of Willunga Basin is we put forward a plan. We put forward our **own** plan. And it got in the paper, to turn it into a conservation park. And somewhere here---

Don Longo [02:35:30] **Charles is rummaging through archives, trying to find a document.**

Charles Martin [02:35:34] But it's actually a newspaper clipping that features the Friends of the Earth Willunga plan for the Wash Pool. And that was in about 1988. And we've worked away ever since. And it's now been only last year it was secured, as a conservation park. So now the Washpool Wetland Lagoon has been added to the Aldinga Conservation Park.

I believe Friends of the Earth and the Friends of Willunga Basin succeeded at that because *we* took the agenda. We opposed the marina, tooth and nail, to the point of having a thousand people down there protesting at one stage. It was me that drew the plan up, but we all worked on it. We had a committee, we came up with a plan for the Wash Pool.

And the other thing is that Friends of Willunga Basin with the incredible work by a couple of committee members, John Laurie and David Gill, we were pretty instrumental in forming an alliance with the local tourism people, and securing the Willunga Heritage area. It excludes further urban development in the Willunga area. There is one for Willunga and there's one for Barossa. So, that's the stuff that has kept me---

Don Longo: Major wins.

Charles Martin: But it came about because, to really get somewhere, I think you need to set the agenda, set out the plan. And in a way, that's what this is, *The Jobs, Energy, Environmental Harmony* is not just opposing Roxby, and vaguely say, 'Oh

we think solar energy would be good.' So that's where my hope in that kind of civic activism is. I'm very hopeful a lot can be achieved.

Don Longo [02:38:38] So any advice for younger people in the local area or the broader state about how to prosecute their own protests. Speaking as a veteran.

Charles Martin [02:38:56] I had something written down about that.

Don Longo [02:39:06] But one, two, three, go.

Charles Martin [02:39:10] How to survive as an activist. I'll just say it as I've scribbled it down. Look after your own health. You are not responsible for saving consumer capitalism from itself or people from themselves. Define yourself by what you are **for, not what you are **against**. Recognise when you are being hijacked by others agendas. Of course, working to someone else's agenda can be very beneficial to one's development. So it's got to be, look at the bigger picture and make sure you document everything, because sometimes if **we** don't tell our own story, it didn't happen. So that sort of is personal advice and a general rave.**

Don Longo [02:40:26] Good advice, actually Charles. I've come to the end of my questions. Lyn, do you have any questions of your own?

Lyn Longo [02:40:34] No not a question, just a comment. Very recently we had a discussion about the sort of grassroots local action that you're talking about. And the person we were speaking to expressed some annoyance that he had [received] a bit of scathing attitude to his own community involvement as compared to perhaps the bigger, more upfront behaviour. But to me, there are so many spin offs from that local action.

We live in a society that's very different to 50 years ago when there were strong bonds in families and where several generations shared the same space. Loneliness is a huge problem. And I think that the sort of action that you've been involved in has that wonderful spin off of making links between people, creating new friendships and giving people who maybe felt. I'm at the end of my life, I have nothing to contribute, a really valuable purpose and how wonderful it is to celebrate achievement or to support each other if you're not so successful. So well done.

Charles Martin [02:41:57] Yeah, well, I couldn't agree more. And I would go back to how I felt about activism in the big scene in Adelaide. And really, I think I would say it was an arid life. Yeah. And I have to take some responsibility for that too. But for my own health, I had to get into a scene where it was more local and convivial like I've been in ever since.

Don Longo [02:42:44] Thank you Charles. Is there anything else that we've omitted that you want to say before we close off?

DAYS OF WRATH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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Charles Martin [02:42:55] Oh, well, probably various things went through my mind, but no, it's all a blur. (laughter)

Don Longo [02:43:06] Well, thank you very much. Oh, terrific.

Charles Martin [02:43:08] I'll contact you later.

Don Longo [02:43:12] Thanks very much.

Charles Martin [02:43:13] Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW