

Nick BOLKUS

This is an interview by George Lewkowicz with Nick Bolkus, the topic of the interview is politics – Nick was a federal politician – and the Greek community. The date today is 14th November 2007 and the location of the interview is at the Don Dunstan Foundation.

Nick, thanks very much for being happy to do this interview. Can you just talk a bit about your background, your early background, and how you moved into politics and getting to know Don Dunstan?

Sure. Thanks, George, and thanks for the chance to talk about Don and the times of Don, basically.

I was born in the West End of Adelaide and born in Hocking Place off Whitmore Square and lived most of my life in Waymouth Street; went to Sturt Street Primary School, Adelaide High, and did this during the '60s and '70s and most particular experience in those days was that you actually felt as if you were in an alien environment, in one sense. In another sense the west part of Adelaide, the western part of the City of Adelaide, was full of the whole range of diversity of migrants and Indigenous Australians. So we grew up surrounded by Lebanese, Aboriginal people, Italians, very few Asians in those days of course, and a lot of Irish Australians. But it was very much the underclass of Adelaide and you actually felt as if there were two parts of town and, for me, crossing King William Street led me to the other part of town; '60s and '70s there was no real sense of respect for your background, your culture, your religion. I suppose the only way to really sum it up was that you felt like you were a second-class citizen because of the ethnicity but also because of the sort of general class division in society.

Where we grew up there weren't great resources, I think. I jokingly say that there were two local legends: one was George Joseph who was of Lebanese background, he hit the big time, he became President of the South Australian Jockey Club and also Lord Mayor of Adelaide, and George lived across the road in Waymouth Street; and the other one was an old bloke by the name of Mark Langdon and the only reason Mark was important was that he held the world record for drunkenness offences, he made the *News* newspaper and we all spotted his name and thought that was great that we knew someone who was known world-wide. But there were very few role models to follow.

Now, I got involved in politics – – –.

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Just before we get into politics, you said you went to Adelaide High School. What was the background like there and were there any mentors there that sort of led you on to further study? Later on I think you went to Adelaide University and studied Law.

Yes. Growing up in the '60s was a particularly exciting time because there was a sense of change, a movement for change that wasn't just domestic. There was the Vietnam War. There were no real role models at Adelaide High but what there was a spirit where things were boiling and could change and if you actually had an agenda for change or wanted to develop one it was actually a fertile environment to do that. So, as I was growing up, I suppose I had a sense of the injustice and inequity that you could see very starkly in Adelaide, the sense of discrimination in terms of coming from non-English-speaking background; the Vietnam War, which I very quickly concluded was unjust and one I couldn't support; conscription – all these elements stimulated my interest in politics. But being stimulated in politics is one thing; to actually go from having an interest in politics to actually getting involved in mainstream politics was another, and the two people who were quite critical in my development were Gough Whitlam on the national level, Gough with a new agenda for Australia, the social justice agenda as well as the end of the White Australia Policy agenda with all the implications that that involved; and Don Dunstan in Adelaide with his very strongly-presented sense of justice, sense of commitment towards equity, non-discrimination. I can remember Dunstan and Whitlam were the ones who, with Lee Kwan Yu, took on the White Australia Policy and for me they just presented themselves as the great role models of the time, lightning rods to which to become attracted and to be attracted to their political agenda. So it was that.

I actually found myself marching in a single file down King William Street when I was still in fourth year at Adelaide High in one of the first anti-Vietnam marches and, in terms of role models, when I got to school on the Monday morning my teacher – a fellow of Eastern European background by the name of Francis – came behind me with a cricket bat and started tapping me on the head and basically suggesting I shouldn't be doing this again. So there were no real positive role models at Adelaide High but there was a positive agenda that was being developed by Whitlam and Dunstan in particular which was very close to home.

Then after Adelaide [High School] you went to university. Was that unusual at the time for someone of your background?

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There weren't many of us, not many of us wogs in the Law School at the time, and not many in the University in general. There was a smattering of Greek-background students who were still at uni, very smaller number had graduated and worked as doctors and lawyers around town, probably no more than a handful. So it was a different cultural environment altogether for me and, as I can recollect, it wasn't an environment in the Law School where diversity was really celebrated.

And did you get involved in student politics or the Labor Club at all?

I got involved in the Labor Club, I got involved in student politics in terms of anti-Vietnam marches but more particularly involved in the Labor Club. I wasn't involved in SRC¹ elections and that sort of process. In fact, the Labor Club had become defunct and we kicked it off again in the probably very early '70s, about 1970–71, and gave it a bit of presence on the campus. In that environment being in Labor was – as it probably still is amongst many people – was a very conservative option to take, but we created the vehicle and developed it.

The other issue, I've got to say, at the time that Don had identified with and to me as a law student was quite important was the murder case of the young child in Ceduna.

Rupert Maxwell Stuart.

Rupert Maxwell Stuart, yes. And I thought at the time and I've thought ever since that it must have taken enormous courage for a Member of Parliament to have stood up and argued for a fair trial for what was a drunken Aboriginal who was very clearly linked to the scene of the crime. Don fought for that and that's always stood in my mind as an example of the sorts of things politicians should be on about.

Now, at uni did you meet Don at all, as a member of the Labor Club or – – –?

My first involvement in politics was to actually help Don in the 1966 election campaign and help him with the Greek constituency in Norwood. I remember one Saturday afternoon being dragged out to go and hand-deliver letters written in Greek to everyone on the roll of Greek background so did a few stints doing that. Then I remember the election night party, strange recollection: they had people like – I'm sure it was either election

¹ SRC – Student Representative Council.

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night or a fundraising party where Don had a lamb on a spit at the back of the house in George Street, a huge tent – Doug Ashdown, who later went off and sang songs about ‘Winter in America’, and the Wesley Trio with Keith Conlon amongst them and a number of other local performers, they were all there with – it was a Greek community fundraising barbecue at Don’s place and then there was a similar one on election night which I went to as well, so I got to meet Don as a sort of sixteen-going-on-seventeen-year-old. I maintained involvement with his campaign even though I lived in the city. Don was always fearful of losing his seat so we set up a special Greek campaigning committee and I chaired that for a while in the early days, bringing together quite a number of prominent Greek people around town, running the fundraisers but more importantly getting the message out – in particular Norwood, but also in the broader community.

Who were some of these people, if you don’t mind – – –?

I can remember some. Con Bambacas, who later become a councillor of the City of Adelaide; Theo Palaxidis, Theo ran Theo’s Restaurant in Whitmore Square for a while; there were people in the electorate, a lot of people in the electorate – I think Karapetis is a name that comes to mind; Peter Ward was involved with us, he was almost like the guardian of the group, he was there to make sure it worked; David Combe came in and out from time to time. But the focus was the Greek community in Norwood and I think there were probably three or four of us outsiders who were brought in to work on those campaigns.

Why were the Greeks supporting Don?

For a couple of reasons. First of all he ran that agenda of respect for diversity; secondly, he did that right from the start so in the early ’50s Don was sent to Cyprus by the Greek community and the Greek Cypriot community in Australia – it was Don Dunstan, I think Clyde Holding from Victoria and a couple of others were sent to Cyprus and came back as very strong advocates of the Greek Cypriot cause, to the extent that Hansard records and the Adelaide *Advertiser* records in those days a certain Murray Hill demanding that Dunstan be charged for treason for going over and supporting the Greek Cypriots against Mother England. So Don was pretty feisty on Greek issues right from the start.

He also in government developed the multicultural agenda and I still maintain that the real drive to get ethnic schools in Australia came from Dunstan and the Greek community

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in Adelaide – schools, for instance, in Goodwood, Unley, I think were amongst some of the first in Australia if not the first – and Greeks can be very, very cynical people but he actually came across to them as actually believing in these issues, and I'm sure he did.

Yes, so he was seen as being consistent and not –

Consistent, genuine and strong.

– yes, not an opportunist.

Well, that's it: when you put all these things together – the Greek language, the respect for diversity, the defence of what turned out to be an innocent Aboriginal – strength and consistency and respect for diversity.

And did he talk much about Greek culture at all with you or was that seen as being a bit too – – –?

No, he talked a little. Whitlam talked a bit more. (laughs) I remember going into a Whitlam Cabinet meeting as an adviser to Clyde Cameron in '74 with a proposal to set up Australian Consumer Protection Authority and Gough started speaking about the Dardanelles and so on, so Gough was the show-off when it came to that; Don had a very keen respect and affection for Greek art, people like Theodorakis, and we would often talk about Mikis and his music and his struggles.

And that was the time of *Zorba the Greek* and – – –.

It was the time when *Zorba the Greek* was banned in Greece. I went to Greece in '74, July–August '74, just after the collapse of the colonels, and *Zorba the Greek* had just been allowed to be performed in Greece. Don would often campaign on issues against the junta. I think together we were outside the Vogue Cinema in Unley when the film was performing and there was a big lobby then getting signatures and lobbying for the end of the junta. Don was involved in that. He often spoke of Melina Mercouri and other Greek artists and film stars and singers and so on.

Did she come to Australia?

I don't think – – –.

I have some recollection he met her somewhere.

Nick BOLKUS

I think he met her as well, he talked about meeting her, but whether that was in Australia or Greece – I suspect it might have been in Greece. But he did meet Theodorakis when Theodorakis had been exiled I think to Paris or Germany and there was obviously some contact between them.

And was there conflict in the Greek community about some of that?

The Greek community's pretty well divided, but in those days it was very hard to put your head up as a fascist. (laughter) Bit easier now. And the Greeks in Australia are pretty well divided, too, in terms of whether they're monarchists or whether they're lefties or whatever; but on the issue of the junta there was some division and it showed itself from time to time but it wasn't the dominant façade of the Greek community.

So the division here is more a religious one, it seems.

The division continues to be religious, yes.

The reason why I'm asking is Don was said to be – tried to be fairly even-handed: if he did something for one of the groups, the Franklin Street group, well, he did an equal type of thing or tried to balance it out with the other group.

I think the passion in the politics from Don and also from the Greek side was very much with the Franklin Street group. They sent him to Cyprus, they drove the multicultural agenda, they drove the community agenda, they with Don went into the fundraisers and the barbecues and so on, they'd have all the big dances in the Olympic Hall. But his electorate had the Archdiocese church, Prophet Elias in Norwood, and ironically they were the more conservative part of the Greek community and he had to always cater for them – sometimes probably unfairly to the others, but it was a hard tightrope to walk.

So just looking at – we talked about multiculturalism and the ethnic schools; what did you understand by 'multiculturalism' at that time, that's the late '60s, early '70s, and then how do you see it developing, if you like, under the Dunstan Governments? This is as distinct from assimilation and integration, I suppose, is another way – – .

You grew up in an environment wishing that you had blond hair and straight hair and it was never going to happen. But what I saw multiculturalism as being all about was those words of respect for diversity and acknowledgment of the benefits it brings, and I think Dunstan drove that agenda. Dunstan spoke, for instance, of things like the need to diversify the dinner table, to bring in broccoli and calamari and so on, and he got pilloried

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for even suggesting it. I think the *Adelaide News* wrote it up as a front-page joke. But it was part of that broader view of the world that Dunstan had, that there were lots of riches in diversity and a recognition of them was pretty critical to the future of the country. It's what drove him, amongst other things, to try to bowl over the White Australia Policy, he knew where our future was going to be as well as the decency side of the debate. But that's what I always thought of it and when it came to things like ethnic schools that was the State acknowledging the resource that diversity can bring if properly developed. Not only that; I always thought also that if you weren't allowed to have a degree of pride in your past then you're going to be crippled into your future and a very important, powerful part of Don's agenda for people like me growing up in Adelaide was how you can be proud of being a Greek in Australia. You don't have to be sanitised.

And did you – I think in the late part of the '70s the Ethnic Affairs Branch was set up – did you have any involvement with that group? That's in the –

Yes, I had a bit but –

– administration.

– I suppose I thought that they were a little bit too conservative, if not a lot conservative. Right from the start I think the Ethnic Affairs Branch was hijacked by the conservative migrants and I didn't have much time for them, really. (laughter)

I can't remember whether there was an Ethnic Communities Council at the time, but I think these days it has a bit of a reputation as being quite conservative.

Yes. I don't think anything's changed. I think, strangely enough, the real activists in the communities are people who work within their own communities. Without being defamatory of anyone, the self-seekers are the ones who channel themselves through the so-called 'peak' bodies, and I think the unfortunate fact of the last eleven years under Howard is that those people have been more concerned about building bridges with Howard and Ruddick than actually pursuing the agenda they should be pursuing.

We mentioned food, people like Michael Angelakis, how did that sort of relationship go? Was that Don being interested in food and – – –?

Michael and I had moved out of home and were sharing an apartment in Childers Street, so that would have been in the mid-'70s, and Don had an interest in food, he was invited to a couple of the Angelakis family barbecues that they traditionally used to have on New

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Year's Day and the friendship developed. Silvana, who's Michael's wife, is in the photograph there. She got on well with Don as well. And Michael and Silvana were also friends with Stephen and – Birgit? Stephen's wife. Or Margit[?].

Margit, right.

And so it was a close relationship. Interest in food was pretty common to both of them and Don loved to learn how to dance Greek and he would slavishly apply himself to it. He never quite got the rhythm right, (laughter) but he knew the music and it was a very frequent event where at a Greek function Dunstan in the 'body shirt' would be perspiring profusely and Angelakis would be leading the chorus line, basically. There was one night I remember where Michael and I had people around for dinner and there was no dessert so Michael said, 'Just a second, I'll ring Don. He's got a recipe in his recipe book.' And he rang Don, he said to me, 'Look, in half an hour do you mind going around to Don's place? He thinks it's too difficult to explain the recipe over the phone to me; he's just going to cook it for us.' (laughter) So I went around and picked up the night's dessert, as organised by Angelakis. That was also a reflection of the genuine way that he related with people from anywhere and everywhere.

Well, some people say Don was a very private individual, but he also had these social events where it seems he was much more relaxed.

He liked to have a bit of fun, in that sense. There was the intensely-engaged politician, academic if you like, professional; but he also loved to – he basically straddled both sides of the Zorba and the teacher fence, and there was passion in him that came out in his interaction with the workers or with real people.

So he could move between various groupings.

He could have a drink in the front bar of the pub and dance with the older Greek women and blokes.

Well, we've talked a lot about multiculturalism, we might come back to that later on, but perhaps we could now just talk a bit about how you got involved. We mentioned politics as a student and a bit later with helping out in the campaigns, but then you became a candidate and later on a Member of Parliament. Can you just talk about some of that progression, if you like? How did you get to run to be a candidate for the seat of Torrens initially?

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Sure. As I said, the catalysts to get me involved in the Labor Party were Dunstan and Whitlam and, as well as starting up or restarting the Labor Club at Adelaide Uni, I got involved in the local sub-branch in Adelaide. I was then living in Waymouth Street, Adelaide. I remember going to my first meeting: Jack Wright was the local Member, Chris Hurford was the local Federal Member and Chris had doorknocked me and suggested I go along to a meeting. He'd known from the Dunstan machine in Norwood that I was interested. So I went to my first branch meeting in the basement of the old Trades Hall and it's one of those events in your life that you'll never forget – like rickety old tables held together by wire, overturned Vegemite jar tops as cigarette ashtrays. Everyone in the room must have been over sixty-five years old and there was only about five or six people in the room. This was real sort of *Power without glory*, Jack Wren stuff, and they're all in there and I came in, I was about seventeen years old, eighteen, and sort of you could see they were a little bit suspicious, and that was an experience in itself; but when halfway through the meeting the bloke next to me – Paddy Ryan, I think his name was – stopped snoring, looked at his watch and put his hand up and said, 'Sorry, Mr Chairman, I've got to go home, I've got to put my mother to bed', I thought this was alien territory. (laughter) But we put a bit of life into it after that.

And so my local branch, the first branch was the ALP sub-branch in Adelaide, I got involved with Young Labor, and then when Jack Wright came in I got the introduction to people like Mick Young and then Clyde Cameron, because Clyde was the Federal Member for part of Jack Wright's seat of Adelaide, so living in Waymouth Street, Adelaide, meant I was part of Jack's broader Adelaide seat of Adelaide electorate. I became campaign director to Jack, which introduced me to Clyde, then Clyde and Mick decided I'd make a reasonable candidate so I stood for Torrens, and that was the election campaign that we almost lost – or did we lose it? – in '74.

State-wise?

State-wise, yes.

We won, yes.

We won, but that was the Loans Affair election campaign where Don had to put on – – –.

Sorry, 1975.

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Yes, '75. That was the 'My government's been smeared and it hurts' performance that pulled that out of the fire.

Yes.

I actually got a swing to me in Torrens in that election, and I think there were only two seats that had a swing to Labor: one was mine and the other one was Don's. So Mick and Clyde decided after that that maybe I should look at the Senate; and I had a struggle with Mark Harrison a couple of times, industrial lawyer, so I got number three position in the '77 campaign and number two in the 1980, then I took a place in the Senate in July 1981.

So, just going back to the early '70s, you worked for was it Clyde Cameron as an adviser?

Yes, I initially worked for Reg Bishop –

Reg Bishop, right.

– February '74 I worked with Reg, I went to Canberra on about 17th February 1974 and within four weeks they called a snap election, double dissolution, in May which we won and then the subsequent eighteen months were pretty rocky, but in July '75 I went to work for Clyde and life became a lot more interesting working for Clyde.

In more ways than one, yes.

That's right. (laughter) In the office at the time were John Stubbs, long-term journalist and social commentator; John Bannon; Milton Cockburn, who turned out to become a senior federal public servant for a while. And Clyde kept his staff like a family, so for a long time afterwards we used to have family staff reunions.

Did he ever talk about Don at all?

Yes. I don't know if you've spoken to him about Don, but –

Yes, we have.

– Clyde used to often tell the story of how he got Frank Walsh to stand aside and the older Clyde gets the richer the story gets –

Yes, right.

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– but it was a pretty good story right from the start. (laughter) He also tells the story of Don and the horn-rimmed glasses and sending him off to go to a gym to put some weight on. Now, Don used to laugh about this story but he never denied it so I suspect there's probably a bit of truth in it. But Clyde was the sort of character who could pick talent and he obviously picked Don right at very early days.

And yourself, of course.

Well, I'll retain modesty – which is unusual for me. (laughs)

Did Clyde or, say, Reg Bishop, did they talk about Federal–State sort of interaction politics and policy or was it generally sort of separate governments doing their own thing?

I was probably a bit young in those days to actually be involved in those discussions, but between Clyde and Mick in particular on one level and Jim Toohey and Reg Bishop on, in a strange way, the non-left side of the Party, they often discussed the State Party. And we would have a custom, coming back from Canberra on a Friday morning, we'd finish up at a restaurant called Chinatown in Hindley Street where there'd be a group of Feds who'd spend the week in Canberra having lunch with the odd trade unionist and some State Members of Parliament, State secretaries, so it was a good networking process. This kept on going for years. State secretaries would always front-up, so yes, there was engagement from the Federal and State level. It helped a lot that these guys – Cameron, Toohey, Bishop, Virgo – were all there when the testing times of the split hit the Labour Movement and between them they actually managed to keep the Party together, probably more to do with Clyde's craftiness and Machiavellian nature that did that, but they all felt a sense of pride that they actually were working together. So I kept close interest in the State Branch.

Did they ever talk about the Catholic Church and its role in – – –?

Clyde often did. Clyde often did. And Reg Bishop never did, though Reg was probably closer to them than Clyde ever was. Mick used to have a very cynical approach to the way Catholicism operated, both in a social sense and political.

But Clyde would often tell the story of how he wrote the charter that controlled the groups within the State Branch of the Labor Party, which essentially was the way they did

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it. They allowed them to live within the Party but they laid down parameters for the conduct of their affairs and probably through that they managed to avoid the split.

Yes. But there was a slight breakout with Mark Posa, but apart from that there didn't seem to be any major things.

Mark Posa and Frank Moran.

And when there was Reg and Clyde trying to get their changes implemented in Canberra, did they ever talk about how Don was doing the reforms here and any lessons to be learnt about reform processes, change processes, or any observations you might have made at the time?

I think it's probably the best thing to say in terms of the way Don's remembered that they didn't really learn much from Don.

Right.

(laughs) I think Clyde had been waiting since 1949, twenty-three years, to actually implement his industrial agenda and he was not the only minister who had a long deliberation period and, unfortunately for all of them, Gough was as enthusiastic as the rest of them so there was no really cohesive mechanism. It was bowl them up day after day. But in a funny way I suppose it's the government we had to have as a nation to shake it out of the '40s and '50s.

And can you recall at the time just looking at South Australian politics and how things were being changed and were there any secrets or trends that you were picking up in your own mind?

I picked up a trend I thought was pretty critical to Don's success and that was that he would only talk about the things that he thought would resonate and balance them with the more progressive agenda, but it would never be all of one and none of the other. I think Hawke did the same thing, just sent out a balanced message, and Hawkie would do Aboriginal affairs one week but then he'd spend the next three weeks doing the bread-and-butter stuff, and I think Dunstan did that. Dunstan said to me once – I think he used to say this to a lot of people – that you don't in politics have, you shouldn't allow yourself the indulgence of gloating over anything, and he pointed back to the seat of Murray in an election that he did lose by one seat where he skited about some of the 'born-again's' in the electorate and they waited for a couple of years and they made the difference two years later when he needed the seat.

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That was Gabe Bywater's seat, I think.

That's right, yes.

So, just talking about political campaigning and, as we talked about earlier, you went for Torrens, what were the main threads of the campaigning style that Don had picked up? He was an early advocate of polling and an early advocate and good user of the media.

Yes, and he was also in the vanguard of 'personality politics', though in his case and in Whitlam's you could say 'personality with substance'. But it was so much centred around Don and it needed to be in a way because the party that he was dragging along was very much horse-and-buggy in terms of where the society was then. But you're right about polling: he had people like David Combe and Mick in Party office. They were either national players at the time or soon to become national players and they were picking up the more sophisticated trends out of the States, not only out of the Eastern States of Australia, so I don't know to what extent polling was used before the '70s. But it wasn't used to get instant snapshots; I think given how much it cost we were lucky to do one poll every ten days or so.

Yes. Rod Cameron I think was involved.

Rod Cameron was involved with ANOP at the time and he developed a friendship in those days with David Combe.

And what were the sort of messages you were given as to how you ought to operate – – – ?

I reckon if I were to try and get into politics now I probably wouldn't get to first base, because in those days you weren't tightly-programmed. People didn't say to me, 'Say this' or 'Don't say that': there was no instruction that I couldn't say certain things. You'd pick up what the campaign themes were. But also in those days between saying something and it getting published there were light years; these days you just say in the morning, some obscure child care centre in the middle of Eden-Monaro, and then it becomes known all over the world.

That's right, yes. (laughs)

And there was a lot more tolerance in those days for people saying things that weren't on cue. As I say, I reckon I would have had heaps of problems trying to get in now.

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And can you recall some of the major policies of the time or was that – – –?

Well, there was Chowilla, the water; there were railway lines, Gough would come to South Australia and give us hour-long lectures about standard- and other-gauge railways. Standing up for South Australia was a consistent theme, whether it was doing a deal with the Federal Government on the takeover of Australian National or money for water. The car industry was a perennial.

Tariffs, yes.

Tariffs. Heritage issues – Adelaide has been saddled with heritage issues from those days. It's very hard to think back – like that's the irony of politics, issues that were so critical – – –. Uranium, of course, was an issue. When we had our anti-uranium policy Don was overseas trying to sell it to somewhere in Europe and that became a bit hot.

Right. You weren't involved in the meeting where Peter Duncan spoke or Don paid out Peter?

No, no, no. (laughs) I've heard of that in more recent days, actually; they tell me Peter was very lucky to have survived. There were those issues of social politics – law and justice, discrimination, sexuality issues. I always maintain that Dunstan was the groundbreaker, he created the waves, together with Hudson and Virgo for solid substance and then Jack Wright. But it was very easy to swim along with the tide and some of the ministers had their pathways created for them by Dunstan. A lot harder when Hawke and Keating are going in the other direction.

And, just reflecting back on the Dunstan period, what do you think his major legacies were then and are now?

Well, I'll never forget him for what he did for race politics in Australia, and I suppose you could say on the Party level he transformed the Party and brought it out of the Dickensian days. At the State level, he made the State a really attractive place to come to and to enjoy life. We haven't mentioned arts, but arts was obviously critical background to that agenda. But, in terms of an issue of principle that he always stood for from the days of wanting to get rid of White Australia and supporting Indigenous Australians, it was the issues of race and he had this very clear and principled position on race and respect for diversity and I think he and Whitlam changed Australia forever in that respect.

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And when you got into Federal Parliament – this was in 1980 – what were the Eastern Staters thinking about South Australia and Don and the sort of things he was on about?

I suppose they used to think of us as being ‘frills only’ because they would see – it was the Festival State in those days and Don was a bit of a drama performer so they used to see that, and they also used to see us from even those early days, probably because of the car industry, as a bit of a basket case that they had to carry. So they were paying the bills while we were having fun, and that stayed for a long time. When you compare a Dunstan to an Unsworth or a Bolte or an Askin or a Bjelke-Petersen, Charles Court, you get a real sense of how Don was different – and thank God he was! (laughter)

All right. Well, thanks very much.

There’s one last story, though.

Yes, sure.

He was, for me, peculiar to the end, like the guy who I always admired for the greater issues of the day, and the last time I saw him alive was in a restaurant called Ding Hao in Gouger Street, Chinese restaurant, and Don was there – I don’t know who with; I was there with my wife and my daughter who was about six years old at the time – and for some reason we started talking about the attributes of chicken feet, and I had to explain to him no, I didn’t really want one because I’d never liked chicken let alone chicken feet, and he then spoken at length about the texture, the taste and why it’s such a delicacy. So he’ll always be remembered for the big issues and the smaller ones, I suppose, but that was Don’s approach: food and music and religion, it’s all part of the diversity that he really enjoyed.

Yes. Just a general observation I think we’re making is Don as a person but, importantly for this project, as a political leader and reformer seemed to have a whole vast array of ideas, but they were very coherent.

Yes, right.

There was democracy, there was diversity, there was design, there was advancing South Australia through the creative industries if you like – and industrial democracy, for that matter –

Yes.

– and you can see a bit of a pattern, like there were connections –

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Sure.

– as distinct from what doesn't seem to be happening today.

We barely talk about productive diversity, the advantages in having such a diversely-sourced country and workforce. But Don had a framework that really acknowledged that, he could see where that could take Australia. But we're talking, what, thirty years ago –

Yes, that's right.

– and it's been dead for the last ten, twelve years and no-one talks multiculturalism now, you look through Hansard in the Federal Parliament and it's a word that's never spoken; but it's very much part of the fabric of this country.

Yes. Just while I remember, Don had a few forays into South-East Asia but I'm not too sure whether you came across them.

No.

But again he seemed to be well in advance of his time on that, and you mentioned Lee Kwan Yew and White Australia, but did you ever get involved in any of that?

No, I was only inspired by it. (laughter)

Okay.

I remember front-page splashes in the *Adelaide News* about 'Asian invasions' and Lee Kwan Yu being offensive, but he seemed to be saying the things I liked. So I never got – I was too young at that stage.

Good. Well, thanks very much, Nick, that was very rich and informative.

Thanks, George.

So end of interview.

Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW.