



The Greens (WA)  
**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Project**  
[1990-2020]

An interview with:

**Mr JAN JERMALINSKI**



**19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at his home in Carlisle**

The Greens (WA) acknowledge that First Nations peoples, as the original inhabitants of this country, have a special cultural and spiritual connection with the land and water. We believe that their rights and responsibilities as owners and custodians must be respected.

We hold that First Nations peoples have a right to self-determination and political representation, and must be partners in the development and implementation of public policies, programs and services that affect them.

This interview was recorded on Noongar land and the Greens (WA) acknowledge that these lands were stolen and sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



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**NOTES TO READERS**

FULL CAPITALS in the text indicate a word or words emphasised by the interviewee.

Square brackets [ ] are used for insertions not in the original recording.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mr Jan Jermalinski (or JJ to his friends and colleagues) was very active in the Western Australian anti-nuclear movement in the early 1980s and was a significant figure in the formation of firstly the Alternative Coalition in 1988 and then Greens (WA) in 1990.

JJ was born in November 1953 in Leicestershire (UK) to parents who were Polish refugees as a result of World War 2. He spent a large part of his early years in New Jersey, USA, watching his parents being exploited while working in factories, and being active union members.

JJ was a member of the ALP in Sydney before moving to Perth in 1974 and becoming active in the anti-nuclear movement. In 1975 he joined the Communist Party of Australia. JJ has been an active union member for the whole of his working career, where he learned negotiating skills he brought into the Greens (WA).

JJ's political journey has taken him back to the ALP and volunteering in Perth to support different religions working together to resolve tensions, many flowing from the politics of the Middle East.

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## TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:46] DW: It's the 19<sup>th</sup> of May [2020] and I'm here, David Worth with Jan Jermalinski who's been known for decades as JJ. And I want to thank you, JJ, for having me in your house and having this interview.

**JERMALINSKI:** No problem.

DW: And I look forward to hearing your stories about the early days of the Greens (WA) and leading up to it. Can we just start with where you were born?

**JERMALINSKI:** I was born in England in Leicestershire in one of the post-war refugee camps, Market Harborough. My parents were Polish from Belarus. My father was born on the Soviet side of Belarus after the Russian Civil War, and my mother was born on the Polish side. Both found themselves as refugees through various routes, and they met in England and they ...

DW: A modern love story coming out of the war?

**JERMALINSKI:** ...and they married in England and I was born in England. So, until ...

DW: Can I ask when?

**JERMALINSKI:** 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1953. Then the following year, we moved to Jersey City, New Jersey. We emigrated there. So about from '54 till almost mid-'72 we lived in Jersey City, New Jersey. And then we emigrated to Australia, had a long ocean voyage went down south, a thousand Ks [kilometres] to Florida, caught the ship in Florida, stayed in England for a week, and then right around the Atlantic Ocean, around the Cape, around the Indian Ocean, and to Sydney. Came to Australia 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1972.

DW: Well, that's a fantastic story, because by then, in your late teens, you would have already done your schooling in America?

**JERMALINSKI:** A lot of it, yes. But then my parents were concerned about my growing radicalism because I had become a socialist in America. And they decided to put me in a Catholic high school in Fairfield. The Patrician Brothers College in New South Wales.

However, they didn't realise the Catholic influence inside the Labor Party, the labour movement, that only deepened it. And one of the brothers there had a very high opinion of Jack Munday. And I was really amazed when I found Jack Munday<sup>1</sup>. He was the second left-wing person that inspired me in my thinking. The first one was Michael Harrington, an American socialist<sup>2</sup>.

DW: And you arrived, if you arrived in '72, it was just when [ALP PM] Gough Whitlam and the Labor Party was taking power after 23 years, or [so in Opposition] ...

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<sup>1</sup> An Australian communist and union and environmental activist who came to prominence during the 1970s for leading the NSW Builders' Labourers Federation (BLF) in the famous 'green bans', whereby the BLF led a successful campaign to protect the built and natural environment of Sydney from excessive and inappropriate development. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack\\_Munday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Munday)

<sup>2</sup> Edward Michael Harrington Jr. was an American democratic socialist, writer, political activist, professor of political science, radio commentator and founding member of the Democratic Socialists of America. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_Harrington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Harrington)

**JERMALINSKI:** Two months before. Yeah. And I knew that was going to happen and I was looking forward to it.

DW: And in New South Wales obviously the Labor Party was very strong there.

**JERMALINSKI:** And we lived in Gough Whitlam's electorate.

DW: Did you ever meet the great man?

**JERMALINSKI:** No. I met his secretary, but I never met the great man himself. But I was a member of his branch for a few months.

DW: You mentioned that you got interested in politics in America, in New Jersey, and that was one of the reasons why your parents wanted to emigrate to Australia?

**JERMALINSKI:** It was also due to the Vietnam War. My parents didn't want me to join the American army and basically get killed in Vietnam. And also, I was actually supporting the [North] Vietnamese by that stage, I couldn't fight for the South Vietnamese government.

DW: Where did your interest in left-wing politics originate in America, because I imagine your parents maybe were a bit scarred by politics, being refugees out of Europe?

[00:04:56] **JERMALINSKI:** My family was right-wing politically, but you had the Vietnam War and that radicalised a lot of people. People began questioning things. I went to high school in Jersey City. Dickenson High School that had 3,000 kids in it, a huge high school. Kids from 14 to 18, and the 17 and 18-year olds was like the more radical ones. And I gradually became, how you put it, more of an American type liberal, small 'l' liberal in the American context with the Democratic Party and all that.

My first demo was in 1970 when the Americans invaded Cambodia and I went on the demonstration. What was the slogan we had? 'One, two, three, four, we don't want your fucking war. Five, six, seven, eight, organise and smash the state'.

DW: And it would have been huge then because it's probably six years into the anti-Vietnam [movement] ...

**JERMALINSKI:** It was like the Abbie Hoffman [an American social activist] type of politics. It was a mixture of sort of 'hippie', 'yippy' type of stuff and small 'l' liberalism. But I also joined the union, the musician's union at that stage. Both my parents were union members. They sort of had semi-nobility background in the old country. What's the body called? 'Szlachta'. About 10% of the Polish population had nobility background.

But come to another country, so what if you're nobility in your own country. Here you're a blue-collar worker. So, they both joined the unions. My father was a member of the Teamsters Union. And my mother was in the AFL-CIO Glassworkers Union.

DW: What type of work were they able to do in America?

**JERMALINSKI:** Factory work. They started out as cleaners and then they would do factory work. Both went on strikes. It was the American way- walking around [during a strike], you have to keep walking around in the circle with a placard. I was an early age when I went on a Teamsters Union' picket line strike with my father, walking around . It

was sort of like right-wing politics, but you joined the union as well. [According to my parents] you had to be extremely stupid not to be a union member.

DW: Before your parents emigrated as refugees, were they employed in Poland, and in Europe before they, or had the war completely changed the situation?

**JERMALINSKI:** Well, my father's family, they were designated as 'kulaks' [class enemies of the poorer peasants]. His father, when the Russian empire disintegrated, was an officer in the Czarist army. But with the Czarist empire disintegrating, he found himself fighting with the [Communist] Red Army.

DW: The Red Army, 1917 around the Revolution?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. In the civil war that followed and Trotsky was his commander in chief. So, my father always had good words to say about Trotsky. That was probably the beginning of the politicisation in the family and the disagreements. My mother's father, he found himself fighting with the Polish nationalists, anti-Communist to the hilt. Later years he was a fascist, and so he had nothing good to say about any type of communism: 'he's a commie, he's a commie, not even Trotsky'.

So my father, sadly, about a dozen of [his family] were killed during the Stalinist purges in the 1930s. I think my father ... joined the German Army and found himself in southern Italy, where they'd surrendered to the British Army. Specifically the Polish Army, as part of the Eighth British Army. And they just signed them up as members of the British Army.

DW: So they swapped sides?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah.

DW: Wow.

[00:09:36] **JERMALINSKI:** And the British officer class, they couldn't pronounce Polish names or anything. It's like, 'This is too difficult for us'.

And they didn't check. Because I have done a lot of history, Polish history, East European history. And the Polish army actually grew [in size] at the front line. They sort of incorporated frontline soldiers on the other side who were Poles, Belarussians, Russians, Lithuanians. They just surrendered to the Poles. And the Poles, 'Well, now you're part of the Polish Army'.

My mother, however, she and her family were deported to northern Arctic Siberia. And then once Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union, they went to Tashkent [in Soviet Central Asia] by train. Then from there to the Caspian Sea, then across the Caspian Sea, spent two years in southern Iran and then from there, another couple of years to southern Lebanon. And from there to England.

DW: At what age was she when she did that enormous travel with her family?

**JERMALINSKI:** She would have been about 10, 11 [years old].

DW: Wow. Extraordinary. One that they survived, and two, that they did get to Britain at the end.



**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. So it was a bit of a journey just to get from northern Siberia to Tashkent<sup>3</sup>. That was a journey in itself.

DW: Extraordinary, extraordinary background. So, the 1970s find you in New South Wales at high school. You then leave high school. Did you have a plan for what you wanted out of your life?

**JERMALINSKI:** Well, I got accepted to Ballarat Institute of Technology, so we moved to Ballarat. We only stayed there a few days because it was impossible to get accommodation there. So, since we were midway, you're packed up and ready to travel anywhere, we decided to travel to Western Australia. And so we arrived in WA in February '74.

DW: You're saying your family came here?

**JERMALINSKI:** That's my parents. I have no brothers or sisters.

DW: You don't have any siblings?

**JERMALINSKI:** My mother was a bad Catholic. She only had one child, me.

DW: Well, I'm interested in coming from Poland and Europe suffering through the war, ending up in America and then Australia, what role did religion play for your parents? Was it still a strong factor in their life?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah, I was actually raised a Polish Catholic nationalist. How would you put it? That was my primary religious faith. The politics is, if you're born Polish, you're political. You discuss politics, religion and sex and everything at the dinner table. None of this, 'Don't talk about these things at dinner time'. You talk about it. Why talk about boring things like the weather when there's interesting things?

As a young kid, I went to the Pulaski Day Parade March. General [Casimir] Pulaski was a Polish general who fought in the American Revolution. There were two Polish generals who fought. He was the founder of the American cavalry. The other one was Tadeusz Kosciuszko, or "Ko-zi-os-ko" as he's known in Australia. And that's one of the things that fascinated me about Australia, was that its highest mountain top was named after an enemy of the [British] state.

Kosciuszko specialised in engineering and artillery, and he fought with the American armies in the revolution in New York State. He specialised in building miniature dams. And when the British came marching in, busting the dams and drowning the British. The British complained this is not gentlemanly warfare. He goes, 'We do this to the Russians when we have fights against them in Eastern Europe. So why can't we do it to you?'

He was also the artillery officer in the Battles of Saratoga. He caught the British troops in a crossfire and butchered a whole heap of them. And he was a militant Republican. So, Australia's highest mountain top is also named after a Republican enemy of the British monarchy. After America, he went back to Poland, overthrew the Polish monarchy, and then waged wars against the Russian, Prussian and Austrian monarchies.

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<sup>3</sup> Now the capital and largest city of Uzbekistan in central Asia.

DW: God. I don't think many Australians would know that history of who our highest mountain is named after.

**JERMALINSKI:** And give something a name like Kosciuszko.

DW: But with that Polish background in America, did that mean that when your parents arrived there in '54, did they have family that would help them settle and make roots?

**JERMALINSKI:** No, no.

DW: You're on your own?

**JERMALINSKI:** We were on our own.

DW: And this is the same in Australia when you arrived here, and in Perth?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. Yeah.

DW: That must have been very hard to resettle and settle again and make new friends and connections?

[00:15:06] **JERMALINSKI:** Yes and no, I mean, having gone through Stalinist purges, having gone through the Second World War, in coming to the United States, Australia was a much better country. I think my father was really amazed when he began working here. He had at that time three weeks annual leave. In America, you had to work maybe 10, 12 years to get just one week of annual leave. Here, this was before the campaign by the AMWU [Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union] had in '74 when they upped it from three to four weeks annual leave.

DW: And what roles today get in terms of employment in Australia?

**JERMALINSKI:** Well, factory work.

DW: Again? So, they used their experience from America to obtain similar work here in Australia. And when they got to WA, was it the same?

**JERMALINSKI:** Same thing, yeah.

DW: In terms of your education, you were admitted to the Ballarat Institute of Technology, which is in Victoria. And you're living in Sydney. Then your family travelled to Perth in 1974. Did you come with them or you came later?

**JERMALINSKI:** No, we came together.

DW: Came together. And did you then still want to go to university or you decided to work?

**JERMALINSKI:** What I did was I did the mature age exam here in WA, went to the Perth Technical College in St Georges Terrace. And then I passed all my units for that. And then I went to UWA in '75 and '76.

DW: So that period also is about Gough Whitlam being deposed as Prime Minister. There would have been a lot of political turmoil as well here then?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes. And I was a member initially at the Mount Lawley branch of the ALP, '74, '75. And then around October '75, I joined the Communist Party [of Australia].

DW: For what particular reason?

**JERMALINSKI:** Jack Munday was one, and actually I agreed more with the party's policies of democratic socialism than with the Labor Party's policies.

DW: Did that involve you in further readings about communism and what the Communist Party of Australia [CPA] stood for?

**JERMALINSKI:** I really knew that. I knew there were splits in the party as soon as I got to Australia. I was really well aware and actually was, when I was in Sydney in New South Wales, it was some friends in the Catholic high school there that introduced me to the Communist bookshop in Sydney. [laughs] And my first attempt at reading [Karl Marx's] *Das Kapital* was in the Catholic high school library. [laughs]

DW: Undercover revolutionary in the high school. But that's the Gould's bookshop was it, in Sydney?

**JERMALINSKI:** Well, it could have been. It was one that was owned jointly with ... there were two, but there was one that was owned jointly by the CPA and SPA [Socialist Party of Australia].

DW: And you've had a love of books and reading since then, about politics?

**JERMALINSKI:** A lot of my books in America I took with me here. And so, I was really well-read about the Vietnam War, I was well-read about American history. I just read, and I enjoyed reading murder novels.

DW: [Laughs]. And in that period, did you develop any friends or mentors politically in the CPA or in your high school or here in Perth?

**JERMALINSKI:** My first real contact with the CPA [in Perth] was in '74 when we got here and I found the Pioneer Bookshop. And I was sort of hanging around there. I met people like Vic Slater, Pat Haynes... Annette Cameron and a few others. I got to know a lot of CPA people and I felt close to the type of politics they were on about.

DW: So it was in that period around the late '60s, early '70s, that the environmental movement also took off and groups were formed like the Australian Conservation Foundation. Did you have any interest at that stage in those [organisations]?

**JERMALINSKI:** No, it was the 'green bans'.

DW: The 'green bans' with Jack Munday<sup>4</sup>?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah, yeah. That I found really fascinating. And that was like my introduction to green politics was through that.

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<sup>4</sup> See [https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/green\\_bans\\_movement](https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/green_bans_movement)

DW: Through the 'green bans', because that brought together environmentalists and unionists?

[00:19:55] **JERMALINSKI:** And socialist politics as well. It also was like a continuation of the Democratic Marxist politics of Michael Harrington.

DW: I'll get to it shortly, but I noticed in some of the things that you wrote in the late '80s, as the Greens are forming, was very much around how groups should be formed and how they should operate. Does that mean you've always had an interest in the ways that organisations work to achieve change?

**JERMALINSKI:** Well, the next big, I would say, how you put it? After UWA in '75, '76, I flunked out of UWA. Too much student politics, but I did, myself and Colin Robinson and a few others, did produce a publication called *Spark*, a communist student publication. And that was my first attempt at editing a publication of any kind.

DW: And that was the days before computers, it would all have been electric typewriters, Gestetner [duplicating] machines.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, but we had a really very flexible political policy, like we would publish almost anything. And we had a mixture of, Trotskyists found this really blasphemous, but we sort of combined dope [cannabis] comics, sex and Marxism.

DW: Sounds like a student newspaper?

**JERMALINSKI:** We thought who's going to read something really ideologically heavy. We'd even publish anarchist articles in it. Okay, it's your point of view, we don't have to agree with it. But that's at uni, there was a period in the Unemployed Workers Movement in CANE [Campaign Against Nuclear Energy].

DW: Okay. That's how you got into the anti-nuclear movement?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. Yeah. That was one project. But before the Unemployed Workers Movement, I was involved... I worked in a foundry for about a year and a half.

DW: How did your parents feel about this progression, flunking university and getting involved in the CPA?

**JERMALINSKI:** Not really happy.

DW: Okay.

**JERMALINSKI:** And they were really difficult years for me as well, because my mother had developed paranoid schizophrenia.

DW: Oh, right. I'm sorry to hear that.

**JERMALINSKI:** Shit happens in life. And so she had to go into Graylands. Actually, I had to get my father to put her there because we could no longer cope at home. So, there was that period. But I think the saving grace was that the CPA wasn't a Stalinist political party. So, if I had joined something like the SPA, the Socialist Party, pro-Soviet, that would have been beyond the pale.

DW: They understood that the CPA was more of a Eurocommunist type organisation?

**JERMALINSKI:** And my father did because he said good things about Trotsky all the time. And this is going back to the family's position during the Russian civil war. And I must also say other family members in Eastern Europe, on my mother's side, also find themselves fighting for the communist partisans in Belarus. And there was one of my grandfather's cousins. And it was like a family secret. He was a Communist Party secretary in north eastern Poland, of a region there. So, there were these communists in the family, but no one really talked about them.

DW: OK. Even around the kitchen table talking politics?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah, yeah. It was like this is an aberration. We don't want young people like me to know about these people.

DW: Unemployed Workers Union into CANE, was that because you had a strong view about anti-nuclear issues?

**JERMALINSKI:** It was both, it was both. A sort of a friend of mine, George Shaw, he was later involved in a big part with the Carlisle Greens. He introduced an anti-nuclear motion at a state conference of the Communist Party here. And we talked it through and the party here adopted an anti-nuclear position. The party in Western Australia was quite avant-garde in terms of the Communist Party nationally. We were the first ones to start selling Trotsky in our bookshop. We sort of went from very pro-Soviet to extremely anti-Soviet. It was quite progressive and there was quite an interesting group of comrades.

DW: I suppose, brought together by a view they wanted to change Australia, make it better. Even though they had different ways that in their mind of how that might happen.

[00:25:10] **JERMALINSKI:** But it was also in terms of introducing to broad politics. I still remember when I joined the ... when I was working in a foundry and I was also with the Unemployed Workers Movement, I was a member of the Communist Party's industrial branch. And how they handled working in diverse organisations.

You would have communists who are delegates to the Trades and Labour Council, the predecessor of Unions WA. And they were meeting fortnightly, and you would have communist delegates representing different unions and sometimes unions that would have different political positions. And it was accepted that communists would argue against each other on the floor of the Trades and Labour Council because first and foremost, they had to represent their members. And so, you would have these really good arguments from communists having a go at other communists. [laughs] And that was acceptable practice.

DW: As it should be, a contest of ideas.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. And even though we as a party, we didn't agree with them and at the industrial branch meetings we would have voted for our own particular line, it was just accepted practise that, well, you're representing this union. You'd better do a decent job. Two people that influenced me enormously, apart from Vic Slater, it was 'Rivo' or John Gandini. And Harold Peden, he was an organising officer with the AMWU, when it was known as the Amalgamated Metalworkers Union.

DW: Your interest then, you said, was piqued in anti-nuclear interests by George Shaw with the motion at the CPA conference.

**JERMALINSKI:** And then we developed them further along. I think they had an anti-nuclear collective inside the Communist Party.

DW: I see. And then that collective thought it should make a link into CANE because they were the sort of people's group, community group who were actively working against the plans for a nuclear reactor [in WA].

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. And also, I had dealings with anarchists. I shared a house with a couple of anarchists at that stage as well. And another party member, Mick O'Loughlin. So it was interesting times.

DW: Can you clarify then, your interest in the anti-nuclear [movement] was more about the technology?

**JERMALINSKI:** The technology.

DW: And the way the decisions were made for that technology, rather than the environmental impact?

**JERMALINSKI:** Well, the environmental impact was that the waste would hang around for millions of years. That was the environmental impact. I would have been like a 'soft' greenie.

DW: Right? A 'brown' greenie something like that?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes. Sort of 'soft' green.

DW: CANE was also involved with the Palm Sunday marches. Was that something you got involved in?

**JERMALINSKI:** Later on, after, in the 1980s. But in the beginning of 1980, there was like a break. From February to May of that year, I went on an overseas training course with the Yugoslav, Italian and Spanish communist parties.

DW: Oh my gosh. How did you get that?

**JERMALINSKI:** I think this was the last overseas training trip the Communist Party [of Australia] had for its leading activists. Usually they went to the Soviet Union or somewhere like that, but in the Eurocommunist days, you couldn't really send people to the Soviet Union. That was not the kind of socialism you wanted party cadres to be trained in. So I had a whole month paid for by the Yugoslav party training in Yugoslavia, travelling all around the country. And then about a week and a half, almost two weeks, with the Italian party and a week with the Spanish Party.

DW: Wow. That's a great education for a young person.

**JERMALINSKI:** It was great.

DW: At that stage you were about 26, were you?

[00:29:43] **JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. And that sort of altered my views on a lot of things. The Yugoslavs really talk the ins and outs of self-management. And tied in with that was the idea of market socialism that we have decentralised planning. If you're going to say the workers are going to run an establishment. Well, then you're going to have to rely on market forces to deal with all sorts of problems that one encounters. So, if you have a market socialist economy, you are going to have unemployment and inflation.

Also, the more complex your economy becomes, the less viable is centralised planning. Centralised planning is easy if you're having a very simple economy, like maybe Russia after the civil war with the country devastated and you have a few odd industries, centralised planning in that context is easy. But the more complex the economy becomes, well, market forces play a role. You need to regulate that. But also, if you're going to be serious about workers running enterprises, you're going to have to let them, give them the freedom to make mistakes and to do all sorts of things. And it's also the role of nonalignment in the global politics, the Yugoslavs were very strong about that.

The Italians were strong about democratic processes, and coalition building. But they were also strong about local government. Apart from spending a week at the party school in Rome, I spent some time in Bologna and Padua. Bologna was one the most democratically-run cities in Europe. It wasn't just the council, but the suburbs were sub-divided. They had their own councils. And those councils in that local area determined what was built and what wasn't built. There was a high degree of decentralisation.

DW: And the local residents would have input into those plans?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. Yeah. A meeting of local residents can say, well, you can't build this building. And that was it. And the city council couldn't overturn it.

The Spanish Party, they had just ... emerged legally from the Franco period. Franco had died and they had an interesting approach on... how do you struggle, what kind of socialist politics do you have, under a fascist regime? And one of the things I really found interesting about the Spanish communists is that the fascists set up their own trade unions. They call them the workers' commissions and the communists took them over from within [laughs]. The Social Democrats said you just boycott these unions, set up these alternative unions, which had no legal standing. The communists, 'We'll take it over, we'll infiltrate'. And so, you have these fascist unions run by communists having industrial disputes.

DW: That all meant you came back as a changed person in terms of what you're seeing in Europe. And a changed way of doing politics.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. And that had an impact on the politics within PND [People for Nuclear Disarmament]. I went to uni, then afterwards.

DW: You went back, and completed the same course?

**JERMALINSKI:** No, I went to Curtin Uni and did a welfare practice course. Social science, welfare practice. Because all the years I was with the Unemployed Workers Movement, it was sort of doing welfare work and advocacy firsthand.

DW: What years was that, you were back at Curtin Uni?

**JERMALINSKI:** Second half of 1980 to about '84. Most of that I did part-time. But after that trip to Europe, I was elected part-time paid coordinator for the Communist Party here. But then my other political work, apart from study and party work, was working in PND.

DW: In the office?

[00:34:32] **JERMALINSKI:** Well, helping out as an activist, helping the PND. I think I was probably much more strongly anti-Soviet than some of the other people were. In a sense, I knew the politics of the Australian Peace Committee and the Socialist Party having gone through the kind of struggles you had against the SPA inside the communist movement. It's sort of like, 'No, you really need a non-aligned policy. You can't just be blindly or passively pro-Soviet'.

DW: And those views were reinforced by your trip to Europe and people you met in Yugoslavia, Italy and Spain?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. Yeah.

DW: Well, you must have been involved round that time in the Palm Sunday then as well? Around '84, '85.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes. And first I was involved with the North Perth PND group. And then when we came to live on this side of the river.

DW: In '85?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah, we got involved with the, what did we call it? I think it was the Vic Park PND group. Then we merged with the Belmont PND group and we formed the Southern Suburbs PND.

DW: When you moved to Carlisle in 1985, did you get married about that time? Or you had a relationship. Is that why you moved?

**JERMALINSKI:** I met my wife in January 1984.

DW: And your wife's name is?

**JERMALINSKI:** Ella Scott.

DW: And did you have any children?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. One son.

DW: One son, whose name is?

**JERMALINSKI:** Jonathan.

DW: Jonathan. And you've lived here ever since?



**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, my son's come and gone. He is with us at the moment when he became unemployed.

DW: And around that time in '84, '85, I see your name then starts to be involved in establishing the Vic Park/Carlisle Greens. About '85?

**JERMALINSKI:** Now that has a history. Now in terms of the establishment of the Greens here in Western Australia, there are two processes throughout this whole '80s period. There was an organic process and a centralist process. A bottom-up process and a top-down process. And this struggle or tension existed right throughout the '80s. The Communist Party in the '80s after Polish Solidarity was established and the struggles there, wanted to create a new political party eventually called the New Left Party. Me and the Newcastle [NSW] comrades wanted to change the party's name to the Democratic Socialist Party.

DW: Gosh, this is very controversial, JJ.

**JERMALINSKI:** But I said, 'Well, look, what does the name communist mean in terms of the kind of socialist politics that we advocate?' Communist confuses people. And I sort of based it on, well look [Karl] Marx did something similar. He called themselves 'communists' in 1848 because the other socialists were utopian socialists, they were off in fairyland. He needed to distinguish himself. Then the communists went a bit funny in the head. And so then he and Engels adopted the name Social Democrat. But then Social Democrats in World War supported the First World War. So then they changed it back to communist. I mean, there is this tradition within Marxism that you can change the name when the need arises, or when the name ceases to be ...

DW: Meaningful?

**JERMALINSKI:** Meaningful. And in that context, it caused a stir within the Party [CPA]. We published it in the national *Praxis*. It was an internal party discussion journal. Denis Freney supported it<sup>5</sup>. [laughs] But Democratic Socialist was a better reflection of what we're on about than Communist.

DW: In terms of the Greens and this bottom-up versus top-down [processes], obviously the big issue there is why did you pick the name Greens? You've been talking about how you can just change names if you wish.

**JERMALINSKI:** The party was moving with clay feet.

DW: The Communist Party here?

[00:39:27] **JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. It was like, we want something different. But how different? In an Australian context, the New Left was just like a rehash of the existing Communist Party. I just didn't see it going anywhere. Plus here also at that time the NDP [Nuclear Disarmament Party] was formed and that was bit of a top down process. Jo Vallentine, Annabelle Newbury ... a number of activists from PND formed it. And I thought, okay, you're creating a single-issue party. And there are a lot of people want something

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<sup>5</sup> A member of the CPA for 20 years until its dissolution in 1991. Denis was also a member of its National Committee. He was well-known in the 1970s as the key campaigner for an independent East Timor and for anti-apartheid protests against the South African regime. See [https://www.search.org.au/denis\\_freney](https://www.search.org.au/denis_freney)

more than just a single issue. And I wasn't too happy about it, but then eventually I did join the NDP.

DW: In 1984?

**JERMALINSKI:** 1984. That's when the election was called. I think Bob Hawke needs a lot of thanks for this as well. He decided to call a twelve-week election campaign and not just stuck to a normal four to six week campaign. Had he the NDP would not have gotten momentum. But anyway, he didn't do that.

DW: So you've joined the NDP supporting Jo's [Vallentine] run for the Senate. But also about that time set up, or probably after the election, the year after, set up the Vic Park/Carlisle group ...

**JERMALINSKI:** In '85.

DW: Greens?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, the Vic Park/Carlisle Greens. There were things that happened in between. It's like when the NDP split ... that split was actually avoided here in Western Australia. We moved a motion. I know I moved the motion. We had this general meeting before the national NDP that, OK, we can have members belonging to two parties, but anyone who was a member of another political party could not be a candidate and could not be an office bearer of any kind. I don't think that's what Jo wanted.

But, when it came to a vote of the majority of the people at this general meeting, this was a compromise. I said, 'Well, look, I am a member of the Communist Party. The NDP is a single-issue party'. But I could understand the political necessity that you can't have people of other political parties be seen to be running this political party and while they can be members, but they should never be allowed to be candidates, nor office bearers. I had nothing to lose. I wasn't an office bearer, I didn't want to be a candidate. And I said, 'That as a member of the Communist Party I'm moving this motion to these important positions, to self-exclude ourselves'.

That got carried. It went to the national meeting. I suspect it was like, we weren't going to have a compromise. We're either going to crash, or crash through. We're going to have a split. I wasn't at the national conference, but I sort of thought this was a bit of political immaturity as well. People not used to working with a political organisation that had various factions and the tendencies in it, like in the Communist Party, that did have at least three different tendencies. And it's like, how do you deal with this? Same thing with the Unemployed Workers Movement and a trade union movement. You have to deal with people who may be opponents. And so you make compromises. So it just came undone.

And afterwards, there was another group we formed, I think called the Alternate Coalition. It was running by consensus and I thought, no, this is not going to work.

DW: I've seen agendas and so on where you're obviously pretty heavily involved in that group, mainly based in Fremantle, I think the members were?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah, and it was like, I don't feel good. We're not gonna make a decision. And so at that point I thought this is not going to go anywhere. A number of us are going to form the Vic Park/Carlisle Greens. We're not going to pretend to be a statewide

organisation. But there's nothing to say that we can't be a local community political group. And so we did a number of things as a local community group. We actually met, this place was the first meeting we had, we formed here in this room where we're sitting.

DW: In this room?

**JERMALINSKI:** In this very room.

DW: We're going to have to maintain it and put a big plaque out the front!

**JERMALINSKI:** [laughs] And some of the people were from the Communist Party. There was... [interruption].

DW: We've just had a break while I've been introduced to JJ's wife who's come in. We're back now talking about the Vic Park/Carlisle Greens being established.

[00:45:36] **JERMALINSKI:** So. We operated on a number of levels. The activists were like, George Shaw he was living here in Vic Park. We got back in contact together again. He joined. Karl Haynes joined, his partner at that time joined. It wasn't Rowena [Skinner], it was someone else. A few other people from Southern Suburbs PND joined. And we operated on a number of levels. We did join ...affiliate with PND as a group in our own right. So, there was a Greens political presence there. But we also had members who were actively involved in Southern Suburbs PND.

We were involved in the Carlisle Residents and Ratepayers Organisation. We were involved in Sussex Street Community Law Service. We were involved in the Orrong Road campaign because [the Council] wanted to turn that into a major freeway with no island. And that was fairly successful. We put enough pressure to negotiate compromise and compensation for a lot of people.

DW: And what was the approximate membership numbers of that group at that time?

**JERMALINSKI:** Forty.

DW: Forty people. And they're all in the local area of Victoria Park and Carlisle?

**JERMALINSKI:** More or less, yeah.

DW: That's fantastic.

**JERMALINSKI:** Some people weren't in the area, but they joined because this was the only group to join. And we were also involved in, well, myself and Scott Christie, getting together the conference in Perth. Scott and I, we both went to the [Getting Together] one in Sydney<sup>6</sup>. I went there deliberately and not to the Broad Left conference.

DW: Right. I thought you might need to explain that the Broad Left would have been a political gathering.

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<sup>6</sup> Held at the University of Sydney at Easter 1986. See <https://australianpolitics.com/1999/01/01/an-early-history-of-the-greens.html>

**JERMALINSKI:** Of the left, CPA-initiated. But they wanted a New Left Party, but nothing was going to really come out of it because they had a lot of Labor Party people, Labor Party left and it wasn't ... They had 1,400 or so people there.

DW: This is in 1985?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes.

DW: Middle of or earlier in '85?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. Yes. But the Getting Together conference had half that number. But it was much more dynamic towards getting a new party off the ground in Australia.

DW: Sorry, you went to the Getting Together conference in Sydney, aimed at getting a [new] party off the ground?

**JERMALINSKI:** Well, see what's going to happen there.

DW: And then there was another meeting of Getting Together in Perth later?.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah, now that one, it was Scott Christie who was working at Community Aid Abroad, and myself, we had a coffee after the experiences of the Sydney Getting Together conference. We decided to put out the feelers for a Perth Getting Together conference. That had about 300 or so people there. It was quite well attended.

DW: And where was that held?

**JERMALINSKI:** That was held at the high school in Nedlands.

DW: Churchlands?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah, yeah, we had it there. That had a really good range of people involved.

DW: I would imagine that there'd be a lot of people you knew from PND there?

**JERMALINSKI:** No. Jo [Valentine] was not really involved in it. The [Australian] Democrats were involved. Richard Jeffries in particular, who later worked for Jean Jenkins' office. He was an organiser for the Democrats. There were a number of people from the Vic Park/Carlisle Greens involved. There was Mar Bucknell, an anarchist friend, who I used to share the house with him in Highgate. He was involved, and people who were really fairly new were involved.

DW: And I think some of the better known people, like Paul Llewellyn [later Greens (WA) MLC], was probably involved I think in that conference as well?

[00:49:55] **JERMALINSKI:** Yeah, so in terms of planning it and everything we had REALLY long meetings every Monday night. You had to listen to everyone's proposals and everything, and you had to basically politely listen. You just couldn't ram it through. If it was going to work, it had to be owned by everyone. And so that was good.

DW: And those meetings at the planning for the Getting Together conference and in your local Vic Park/Carlisle group, were they consensus-based or was it voting-based?

**JERMALINSKI:** It was consensus-based for the Getting Together [conference] and it was sort of consensus-based here. We only really put something to a vote if we really couldn't get a consensus. But there was enough people ideologically inclined, what you might call your 'red' greens. Vic Park/Carlisle were really like the 'red' green- socialist, labour movement oriented greens. There was another person who was involved in the Vic Park/Carlisle greens. He was more of a 'green' green. It was Dov Midalia.

DW: I've not heard that name.

**JERMALINSKI:** He was heavily involved. And Lindy Beaumont was involved in the Vic Park/Carlisle Greens, and she later went over to the Western Suburbs Greens. She was living around the Nedlands area, but she came to Vic Park, these meetings here.

DW: And then decided to form her own group?

**JERMALINSKI:** We decided strategically we would set up another.

DW: Was there much discussion around the use of the name Greens, which by then was only a couple of years old, based on the German Greens?

**JERMALINSKI:** The Sydney Greens had the legal ownership of the name. But we thought we were not in a position to form a State-wide party. You want something organic; this is the bottom-up approach. You can't just sort of say, 'Here we are, we're a party'. And then there's no substance to it. And that is a problem if there's no substance. If you have ... or if you have a highly centralised, top-down approach.

That was the problem with the NDP and I think that was the problem with, I would say, with Jo's electoral office. It was very closely knit. Top-down, it was close. You couldn't really ... even the Vallentine Peace Group it was, [pauses] it would be difficult to work, to have that as the basis of a political party.

DW: You mentioned earlier that you're a member of the NDP and then supported Jo.

**JERMALINSKI:** And then I sort of dropped ...well that disintegrated.

DW: You didn't transfer across to the Vallentine Peace Group?

**JERMALINSKI:** No.

DW: You didn't support it?

**JERMALINSKI:** No, I just thought ... no we need to have something different. There was the Green Coalition, but that went nowhere.

DW: That was in the Fremantle area?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes. Yeah.

DW: And after a year or so then the Alternative Electoral Campaign [AEC].

**JERMALINSKI:** No, we had a predecessor to that.

DW: Right.

**JERMALINSKI:** The 1987 election campaign was coming up. And so what we did here in the seat of Swan, which Kim Beazley was the [ALP] member for, at that time, for '87. We got together with ... we formed the Swan Alternative Electoral Campaign, SAEC. That included not only the Vic Park/Carlisle Greens, it included the Southern Suburbs PND people, it included students from Curtin University, the Curtin University [Guild] President who was wanting to stand as an independent on education policy. We thought, 'We can make a tactical alliance here', and it included the three left parties, the CPA, SPA and SWP. That was like ...

DW: So it was a grouping of people for the election.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes.

DW: Did it have a constitution? Did you have formal ways of running?

**JERMALINSKI:** No, just a regular meeting. And it also included community activists who were active either in the campaign against widening Shepperton Road and were kicked out of the ALP. It included a whole group of all sorts of people.

DW: A wide spectrum of interests.

**JERMALINSKI:** A wide spectrum of interests. And it was really pragmatic. We weren't trying to have like a theoretical, or theological, whatever unity.

DW: And the name? You didn't stick with the Greens. You went for the AEC.

[00:55:02] **JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. Broader. Not everyone was Green or identified as a Green. We called it the Swan Alternative Electoral Campaign. And it worked. We got our money back.

DW: A good effort.

**JERMALINSKI:** Got over 4% of the vote. We did have a major argument on preferences. But hey, we held together and all those political parties on the left. I mean, the reason we invited the political parties on the left, we wanted some activists who were multi-issue activists. That was really important. If they would like single-issue activists, they can't think beyond their single issue. That is a handicap.

DW: How then did the AEC develop out of the Swan AEC? How did you have to broaden it out after the election?

**JERMALINSKI:** That happened after the Perth Getting Together Conference as well. We had the experience of the Perth Getting Together Conference. This is after the election, and Jean Jenkins became a Senator as well. Jo and Jean. We thought, well this AEC experience was quite good. We could bring together a very diverse range of people, different backgrounds, but on a limited agenda. Sort of saying yes, education, electoral reform, anti-nuclear platforms.

DW: Environmental?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes broadly, and social justice broadly. Didn't have to have a philosophical agreement on everything but on pragmatic daily issues we could bring them all together. So we had a meeting at North Perth. Christabel Chamarette was invited, Jo was invited. They went. But Jean Jenkins was invited. And Richard Jeffries. Because one thing the Democrats at this Perth Getting Together Conference were saying, they were saying they were open to a Rainbow Coalition [of groups].

And how do you deal with that? Do you go around saying, well, you're nothing more than a bunch of liars? Well, you haven't given them an option to prove them liars or not. So we invited them. OK. What form of a Rainbow Coalition? Let's see how you make it. So, it was a very interesting meeting. The left parties came along, CPA, SPA, SWP. The Eco Party came along.

DW: Eco?

**JERMALINSKI:** You know Nadine Laphorne and Laurie Capill?

DW: I've heard of Laurie Capill.

**JERMALINSKI:** They were members of the Eco Party. It was sort of based in Cannington. They came along. The Busselton Peace and Environment Group came along. June Lowe. I had first met June Lowe in the Perth Getting Together Conference. Ella and I did a bit of a trip to the South West. And we travelled to Busselton, Denmark and Albany promoting the Perth Getting Together Conference. There was some networking that had to be done. That's when I first met June Lowe. So they were invited to come along to this meeting. They turned up. Len Howard, who was an environmental activist in Mandurah. He was also a Communist Party member [laughs]. The reds were...

DW: Under the beds.

**JERMALINSKI:** These days, they were probably in the beds! But anyway, so he came. There was a diversity there. So, Chris Williams came along. And about 36 people came along. So everyone agreed on this minimalist platform.

DW: To bring everyone together?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. The other thing we agreed was our decision-making process was not going to be consensus at all. It was going to be voting, but you needed a two thirds majority. I mean, if you got two out of three people agreeing to something, then you just live with it. That's all there is to it. And that was essential because if you had that kind of diversity of viewpoints, you put in consensus-decision making you're stuffed right from the very beginning.

DW: So the AEC has its first meeting. Does that involve the people from Fremantle, the Greens Coalition?

[01:00:11] **JERMALINSKI:** No, that came later, much later. The Democrats sent a rep from each branch, about twelve Democrats branches were there. And Jean Jenkins was also there. The Democrat branches dropped out, wouldn't come to another meeting, but

Jean Jenkins would. They hung in and Jo Vallentine's office would not participate. And I was like, 'Shit, what effect is this going to have?'

However, Christabel Chamarette [later Greens (WA) Senator] said, 'Well, I'm going to be involved'. Chris Williams is going to be involved. Jean Jenkins was going to be involved. The left parties were being involved, the Busselton Peace and Environment Group, was going to be involved and quite a few other people. The Eco Party was going to be involved and they weren't going to run away. They had their own differences with Jo's office. They felt there needed to be the Green Party.

**DW:** With the establishment of the AEC, did the Vic Park/Carlisle Greens remain under that name or ...

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, we remained and the Western Suburbs Greens remained. We were also part of it formally, and the Western Suburbs Greens were part of it. And so we had this very unusual coalition of these far-left parties, a Democrat Senator, two Green political groups, the Busselton Peace and Environment group. It was an interesting time. We sort of developed things. Then what we did, we helped form Green Development. We thought, okay for a State election, the South West is going to be a region in its own right. We were going to focus on [the Upper House region of] South Metro because that's where a lot of us came from.

DW: This was in 1987, later in 1987?

**JERMALINSKI:** '87, '88 era. We were going to focus on South Metro. Trying to stand people all over the place, we didn't have the resources. And we had a really good idea of what it was like to run the Swan Alternative Electoral Campaign. We were going to stand for like a Federal seat. We needed to focus. Polling booths, there's this whole lot of mechanics, electoral mechanics. Letterboxing. And if you want to win something in South Metro, the quota was 16 something percent of the vote.

Well, you needed a capacity to campaign in depth in the region. You couldn't just stand all over the place and do nothing. You do everything, but you do nothing. But we looked at it strategically. The other group of people that could organise an in-depth campaign, had the networks, was the South West. So we talked with June Lowe and we made the decision we should look at setting up an independent and environmental type of campaign team in the South West. But we didn't want to control it.

We had a talk with June Lowe, the Busselton Peace and Environmental Group. And we organised a meeting at Donnelly River. I also talked to Christine Sharp [later Greens MLC]. There was a bit of going down to the South West talking to people about it. I talked to Christine Sharp and I think I might have talked to Louise Duxbury about it to get them to come up, and use their networks to come up. We paid for that camp.

DW: The AEC?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, we paid for it. We provided the food; the accommodation was a weekend meeting Saturday. We said, 'No, we want them there'. We're not going to say, 'Are you really going to pay \$40 to come?' They won't come. It's free, a weekend in the bush. Keith Bostock joined the Western Suburbs Greens after the Perth Getting Together Conference. And he came along, too. And he was also in the initiative, the AEC, a Western Suburbs member. And we said this is the new electoral system. These are



potentials. You don't even have to get 16% [vote], you get 8% something. Then you get in on preferences. And so we had a really good [plan], and we gave them the figures and everything.

DW: That was aimed at the '89 State election?

[01:05:26] **JERMALINSKI:** '89 State election. And that gives us enough time to organise. We said, look, we're not going to impose anything on you. It's up to you. Whatever name you want to call it and up to you how you want to organise it. We don't care. Our hands are going to be full just with South Metro. But we think there is a potential here, a political potential that if we get someone up in South Metro, it would be good to have someone [in Parliament] second our motions from the South West. You want a mover and seconder for any motions, you want some kind of balance of power. We left it at that.

The feeling was pretty good. I think people originally wanted Christine Sharp to be the candidate. But she didn't go through with it. And Louise Duxbury became the candidate and they chose their own name called Green Development. I thought it was a good name. And they ran their own campaigns and we were happy. Then the Green Party was formed.

DW: In 1987, after the Federal election?

**JERMALINSKI:** A little bit later, a bit later. And they were the top-down process. They got ownership of the name 'Green'.

DW: From New South Wales?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, Tony Harris. I had a few chats with him. I met Tony Harris and they [WA Greens] stood everywhere except the South West and South Metro, although Paul Llewellyn did stand as a Green Party candidate in South Metro, which we supported. They stood in the other four Upper House regions. They stood everywhere and they didn't get anything. They just didn't have that in-depth<sup>7</sup>.

That's when we had ... they started meeting in Fremantle, activists. They wanted to stand in the seat of Fremantle and Kwinana, I think. It was against [ALP MP] Norm Marlborough. They wanted to have campaigns there. And I think through Christabel Chamarette, we had a joint meeting and it was like, okay, if you're doing this in the Upper House and we're doing this, let's work in together. We didn't adopt the name Green. We just thought there wasn't enough agreement on calling ourselves Greens.

So we just called it the Alternative Coalition. That's when Laurie Capill left and a few others left to form the [WA] Greens Party. They just wanted a Greens party, whether you had the capacity to actually form a Statewide party or not. [pause] It just wasn't there. So that gave us really good networks right throughout the whole South Metro, we could actually campaign in-depth in South Metro so the South West people can campaign in-depth using their network in the South West. We can do it here. And I don't think the Greens party was game to sort of try to stand candidates against us. This would have been like ...

DW: Warfare, open war...

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<sup>7</sup> The WA Greens received 4,246 votes (0.53%) in the Legislative Assembly and 27,013 votes (3.2%) in the Legislative Council in the 1989 State election. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1989\\_Western\\_Australian\\_state\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1989_Western_Australian_state_election)

**JERMALINSKI:** Oh, yeah, yeah. People would not have... Jo Vallentine sensed that she'd better get on board. And she came to our campaign launch. She was there and so was Senator Jean Jenkins. And Senator Jean Jenkins and her office got in trouble with the rest of the Democrats. They would have to say, 'This was the best campaign launch we've ever been to, but we better not be seen to be part of this, because Jack Evans<sup>8</sup> was really concerned about where this was going to go'.

DW: That campaign launch was for the [1989 State] election campaign?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes.

DW: Late '88 in Fremantle, is that your recollection?

[01:09:58] **JERMALINSKI:** It was before the State election. Yeah, late '88, I can look up the exact date, but it was before the '89 election. It was launched, Jo spoke. It was packed. It was a packed media ... a couple hundred people or something. It just drew people in together all over the place. But it was like a process.

Now, in that time there was the 1988 State election in New South Wales. And we heard from Jack Munday's people, because there were two Green tickets. There was a Jack Munday ticket, and I think there was another ticket, more conservative Greens were not happy being represented by a Communist, represented by environmental politics. So what we heard from Jack Munday's people and a few other sources was that the Australian Democrats in New South Wales ... they promised both groups, and everyone else, that they will give them their second preferences. And what they wound up doing was giving the second preferences with the Labor Party.

They went around, they double-crossed everyone. And everyone just took [preference agreements] verbally. So what we did for the [WA] State election for South Metro is we're going to make written ... this is where the history of the written agreement that we made came into being. We will make a written agreement with the WA Greens [Party], with the Australian Democrats.

DW: And the Labor Party, I think?

**JERMALINSKI:** The Labor Party we didn't have a problem [with]. They would honour their word. The other reason why we knew that was that John Cowdell was the preference negotiator for the Labor Party. Now John Cowdell is on the left of the ALP. John Cowdell and I knew each other going back to the late '70s, early '80s. He used to come regularly to the Pioneer Bookshop to buy books and we used to have these long political discussions. So sometimes if you know someone ... it's like we knew each other.

DW: It helps, those personal connections.

**JERMALINSKI:** The personal connections help, and they helped in the 1990 election. So the people we really didn't trust were the Australian Democrats. And Brian Jenkins was organising this coalition of people's parties he wanted to get off the ground. And lets get all these parties, including these right-wing groups, like the Christian Democrats, Grey Power, and everyone else, give preferences to each other.

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<sup>8</sup> Australian Democrats founder in WA and Senator from 1983 to June 1985. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack\\_Evans\\_\(Australian\\_politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Evans_(Australian_politician))

And we thought, this is really weird. Where are you going with your politics, with this one? We said, 'Nup. We'll do a preference swap with you and we'll have a written agreement. Now, it's not legally enforceable, but if you do do the dirty on us, we have it here. We're going to publicise this, basically. This will hurt, you're a bunch of liars.'

DW: How did the AC do in that [election]?

**JERMALINSKI:** We didn't win [in South Metro].

DW: You didn't win that seat but you got a reasonable percentage return?

**JERMALINSKI:** About 5% or something.

DW: In South Metro?

**JERMALINSKI:** South Metro. I think the [WA] Greens Party did worse elsewhere. Looking back at it, had we called ourselves Greens Coalition, then we probably would have won.

DW: And it was that election result, disappointing for a lot of groups, that then gave the impetus for further discussions to bring the groups together?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes. And that was... that was a difficult one. You had two organic groups, that would have been the AEC and Green Development, and you had two top-down groups, the Vallentine Peace Group and the Greens Party. How do you merge, and the Greens Party was saying, 'We don't want any dual party members, none whatsoever. Purge them all'. And we were sort of saying, 'Hold on there. You get rid of people who have done nothing wrong and have acted in good faith and done good work for you. It becomes an ethical issue'.

And we were getting closer to the launch date of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1990. And Jo gave an ultimatum, 'If you don't sign a merger agreement, I'm not going to be your candidate'.

DW: Gave an ultimatum to who, to the AEC?

[01:15:01] **JERMALINSKI:** Everyone.

DW: Everyone, right. Okay. Because originally, I think there was a merger in the middle of '89?

**JERMALINSKI:** It was called the Green Earth Alliance.

DW: The Green Earth Alliance. And Jo ...and there was a Senate candidate ticket with Jo, and I think Paul Llewellyn?

**JERMALINSKI:** Something like that. But then Jo wanted the name Green, and she said, 'Sort it out or I'm not your candidate'. I could have lived without her being the candidate. I mean, those kinds of threats don't move me, [laughs] 'Really? Okay.' And that was just her method of operating. One of the reasons, she also tried doing something like that after she got elected, to get rid of Chris Williams, and that just blew up in her face.

DW: In terms of he was then the Secretary [of Greens (WA)]?

**JERMALINSKI:** No, no it was after the negotiations [in 1992] failed... failed nationally to deal with that SWP inside the Greens New South Wales and create a national Green organisation. Chris actually used four of our [WA] votes to vote with the Trots [Trotskyites - Socialist Workers Party]. But I'll get to that.

So then someone, I think it might have been Chris Williams, came up with a compromise. What we can do is have a limited number of 'grandparent clause' members. Those dual-party members who are currently members of any, like the AEC or Green Development, can be grandfathered into the Greens WA. But that means no other dual-party members can join [later]. But these ones can. So that put in people like Karl Haynes, Vic Williams, Vic Slater. About a dozen. So that was cool.

DW: And that appears at the back of the Constitution, an appendix with the 'grandfather' clause.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes.

DW: Do you appear in that?

**JERMALINSKI:** No, I wasn't a member of any other party.

DW: You stopped being a member of the CPA?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, I resigned from the CPA in '86, I decided, 'Nah, I just really ... it was too depressing to continue'. It was like not going anywhere. My politics was going somewhere, and if I wanted to pursue my politics, it wasn't with the CPA. I wasn't all that keen on the New Left Party. So, I wasn't going to join that.

Now that worked well, The reason we won [the Senate seat], we did some really good preference negotiations for 1990.

DW: 1990, got it in writing?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, there was me and Nadine Lapthorne. We were, I think, the two main preference negotiators. And Nadine wanted to win. Now there's nothing ideologically pure, we just want to win the Senate seat. At that level Nadine and I could speak the same language. So we did the deal. It was a step by step process. John Cowdell gave us their polling figures for the Senate. So we knew the Liberals were just going to win ... they'd get enough votes to win their three Senate seats and only a handful of votes left over. That was it.

So we had that knowledge. So we did the preference agreement with the Democrats, not with the ALP first. That was out of the way. Then we did it with the Labor Party. And that was cool. He [John Cowdell] was happy to do that. The national [ALP] office wanted them to do a deal with the Democrats. But John said, 'No, we'd better do it with the Greens'. We signed an agreement with them.

DW: So the preference deal was that you would give your second preference to the Democrats, and then to the Labor Party, was it?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes. Yeah. In the Senate.

DW: In the Senate, a preference swap. But in the Lower House, you would give your second preference to the Labor Party?

[01:19:33] **JERMALINSKI:** It would preference the Labor Party ahead of the Liberal Party. So we would swap preferences with the Democrats in the Lower House. But the Labor Party just wanted to be put ahead of the Liberal Party. Now, the only place there was an exception to that rule, and the Labor Party was happy about it, was the seat of O'Connor, which at that time was held by Wilson Tuckey<sup>9</sup>, and the Nationals were standing a candidate against Wilson Tuckey.

So we did a preference agreement with the National Party that we would preference the National Party ahead of the Labor Party if they would preference us ahead of the Democrats in the Senate. They were happy to do that. We were happy and we had a written agreement to that effect. So those were the three written preference agreements.

Then we went for the very minor right-wing parties. We said, 'Look, due to philosophical differences, we would have to put you last. We can't really preference you way up high. However, we would like you to preference us ahead of the Democrats, that's all we're asking'. The Grey Power, 'Of course, no problems, we'll be able to do that.'

The Conservative Party [which no longer exists] were so wrapped by our honesty in our approach, they gave us a second preference. The DSP, which the SWP was by then called, they wanted an immediate swap of preferences. And we said, 'No, we can only give you a third. The second one is tied up with the Democrats'. But they gave us a second preference. So in this preference thing, the main enemy was going to be the Democrats. They're the ones we had to defeat. So we had ... the early stages we had both the Trots and the conservatives giving us their second preferences.

[laughs] When you're sitting there, counting with these ticket box votes were coming in. Then what saved us, wasn't the ALP preferences, what put us over the line was the 40,000 National Party votes.

DW: Right, from O'Connor?

**JERMALINSKI:** And elsewhere throughout the State. Had the National Party preferenced [Australian Democrat] Jean Jenkins, they would have won. But they went to us. We did some really good preference negotiations.

DW: With you and Nadine and those deals, did you discuss those with anybody?

**JERMALINSKI:** A very small group.

DW: There wasn't a vote at the Reps Council or whatever?

**JERMALINSKI:** With the Labor Party one there was. We're saying this is what we need, we need the preferences to win. Jo wanted to win. So Jo pushed it strongly. The Stirling Greens wanted us to split our preferences all over the place. This is Kim Herbert and Kevin Edwards. Kevin Edwards was a bit of a person. He was one of the first Secretaries

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<sup>9</sup> A Liberal Party MP who represented the WA seat of O'Connor in Federal Parliament from 1980 to 2010. He angered conservation groups through his support for the forestry industry and in February 2008 was one of six Liberal MHRs to walk out during the opening of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Federal Parliament before Prime Minister Rudd made a motion of apology to the Stolen Generation. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilson\\_Tuckey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilson_Tuckey)

of the Greens (WA)<sup>10</sup>. Yeah, it was sort of like, 'We want to be pure'. You can be pure, especially when it came to preferencing Graeme Campbell<sup>11</sup>. But then it's like, look, we need to win. And Campbell's going to have to support ALP policy, and all sorts of other things as well.

DW: Well, that's the tension, isn't it, in terms of being a political party? Obviously your goal should be to get members of parliament in the Parliament, although the Greens being so closely associated with movement groups want to push ideas, and agenda,s and maybe they don't have a great preference for getting people into power.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes. And so, look, I was never a purist. It's like- we need to win a seat. We need to win this. This is what happens. I'm also from a trade union background. You make deals with employers. You made deals with the class enemy. I mean, come on, you know, there's a limit to how pure you're going to be. You can be very pure and you get sweet f-all. But it was good.

DW: And what was the sense [in the Greens] after that election where Jo was successful?

**JERMALINSKI:** It was good. We were celebrating. Then there was trying to work together. It was extremely long Reps Council meetings. It's like the divisions were all still there. You had this tension between those that came through that bottom-up process and those that went through the top-down. And the Constitution, which Chris Williams devised, gave a lot of power to the Regional Groups. You couldn't just impose things on them. They didn't have to follow any preference agreement. They could do what they wanted to do.

DW: How did you feel about the Constitution? And really, it's tied in some important approaches like relying on consensus, relying on Regional Groups to discuss things?

[01:25:17] **JERMALINSKI:** Consensus initially. But if you didn't get a consensus then it went to a vote- a two-thirds vote [for success].

DW: Because those founding blocks are still part of the current Constitution of the Greens (WA) in terms of relying on Regional Groups to discuss things and make decisions, consensus-decision making, the four pillars which came from the German Greens.

**JERMALINSKI:** Now you had the party infrastructure. And this, I think Jo's office found difficult to deal with. I remember the meeting when she resigned shortly afterwards. It was to join the Australian Greens and there were problems. Bob Brown wanted a very centralist, national organisation. We were not that way inclined. We wanted some ... let's have some autonomy here.

And there was an issue about the Trotskyist influence in the New South Wales. Chris got four [local Greens] groups to give him proxy votes and he went as a delegate there. It didn't happen. He voted with the Trots. Annabelle and Jo were really furious about that. They were going to call a general meeting to have Chris Williams kicked out, and to also expel every single dual-party member out of Greens WA, and it included people like Vic Williams.

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<sup>10</sup> From August 1991 to July 1992.

<sup>11</sup> An ALP politician who represented the vast seat of Kalgoorlie in the House of Representatives from 1980 to 1998. He supported uranium mining and opposed native title and would later be connected to far-right groups such as One Nation. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graeme\\_Campbell\\_\(politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graeme_Campbell_(politician))

[laughs] Why? Why are you doing this? So, I went to that meeting and Kevin Edwards went there. I don't think they read the party Constitution. The Greens, for a Greens general meeting, every decision there had to be by consensus. The people you wanted to politically execute, all they had to do was say, 'I'm voting against my political execution'. And that's it. And it all falls apart. [laughs] And it fell apart. They didn't even have a majority wanting to do what they wanted to do. They were in a minority. But, I mean, you only needed one vote to stop the whole thing.

DW: To block it.

**JERMALINSKI:** To block it. And it's like if you're going to do an expulsion then you really need to do it at the Reps Council. Where at least you could go for two-thirds majority. But this ...

DW: From the documents, it seems you stayed involved quite heavily with the Greens (WA) through to '94, '95.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah.

DW: You were a member of the Reps [Council] on behalf of the Swan Regional Group. You were involved in planning State Conferences and so on. So it was an important part of your life for that first part of that decade?

**JERMALINSKI:** And I was also with the Kalgoorlie Greens. But Jo, after that meeting, she just resigned. I think it was like a re-run of what I did at the NDP. It was crash or crash through. And she crashed through, she crashed. But she also didn't like Kevin Edwards. Kevin came in as part of the Greens. He was from the Stirling Greens. Kevin, he was old school. He used to be a party activist with the British Labour Party. He had that union, British labour movement, background. This is what the rules are. I will use the rules. I will just act according to the Constitution, and it annoyed. He was strongly disliked.

But then, like with Kevin, you had to like, okay, you had to come to an agreement about some things. If you act within the rules and things, he can cooperate. But I think I was criticised as well as being ruthlessly ahh ... was it ... arguing or blocking consensus sometimes. But I was the Rep for the Swan Greens and it was my responsibility to represent my Regional [Group].

I think Cheryl Lange, she did a taped interview and I think I had the answer, I had a laugh and said, 'I was 'bloodthirsty''. And I thought I'm representing the Swan Greens. What do you want me to do? Not represent them? I won't stay around very long as a Swan Greens delegate if I don't represent their point of views.

DW: In terms of that original proposal to join the Greens nationally, did you support that or not?

[01:30:46] **JERMALINSKI:** No, no.

DW: You just thought it would be too centralist?

**JERMALINSKI:** Far too centralist.

DW: And were you a member the Greens when they had their second vote?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes.

DW: And did you remain in that position of opposing ...

**JERMALINSKI:** Oh, yeah. The second was great fun. That's when Christabel became the Senator. And they wanted ... Jim [Scott] became a member of State Parliament, for South Metro. Jim, Jim, Jim...

DW: Jim Scott.

**JERMALINSKI:** Jim Scott. And we had a ballot. And all of us got together with about 30 people supporting this really beautiful A3 pamphlet, the 'NO' case. And they didn't do anything, I think after that, they sort of had very simple proposals for 'YES' and 'NO'. But we just carried the ultimate majority of the 'NO' case. And that remained the position for a long time.

But as in politics, you can't just be saying 'NO' all the time. I said there was nothing wrong with us supporting an alliance with the Australian Greens and the Swan Greens put up a proposal, a very simple one, that we negotiate an alliance. Christabel's office opposed it. So did Chris Williams. They were like, 'The national Greens were too impure'. I said, 'Come on, you know, look, there has to be some level of cooperation. You can't just sit there, you know, poking your tongue out at them. You've got to have something that's positive'. Otherwise, you also lose your support amongst the majority of party members.

DW: Can I just clarify? So in terms of that second vote, Christabel and Jim opposed joining the national Greens.

**JERMALINSKI:** No, Jim supported it.

DW: Jim supported it, yes.

**JERMALINSKI:** Jim would've supported anything. He just wasn't into the detail. Jo supported it. But Cathcart [Weatherley- Chief of Staff for Christabel Chamarette] drew up the pamphlet and I said, 'Let's get all these names'. I got Paul Llewellyn to put his name down to it. I probably did some heavy talking. [laughs]

DW: Got your baseball bat?

**JERMALINSKI:** I didn't get my baseball bat.

DW: At what stage during the '90s did you pull back from the Greens and not be so involved?

**JERMALINSKI:** Umm, well I got a heavily involved in my union.

DW: And what was the name of the Union?

**JERMALINSKI:** CPSU/PSU, covered the Centrelink workers. I became a union delegate in Kalgoorlie, was the deputy delegate, and then a Delegate for the Centrelink office.

DW: And what year was that?



**JERMALINSKI:** That would have been '95, '96. And that's when the 'third wave' occurred here in WA.

DW: The industrial action against Liberal Party proposed [industrial relations] legislation?

**JERMALINSKI:** And I was ... my workplace moved the motion at a meeting they had in Kalgoorlie to set up a Goldfields' union group to campaign against it. And because I moved the motion, I was made one of the Convenors of it. [laughs] You move it, you're the leader. That was an interesting experience.

DW: That also had required you to move to Kalgoorlie?

[01:34:59] **JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. And Ella moved, we all moved together. Ella then got a job with mental health in Kalgoorlie.

DW: And what year was that you moved to Kalgoorlie?

**JERMALINSKI:** Ohh... '94, '95.

DW: And was there a Greens group in Kalgoorlie?

**JERMALINSKI:** We formed one. There were some Greens supporters.

DW: So you would have remained the rep for the Greens on the Reps.

**JERMALINSKI:** Robin Chapple, and another guy, Cliff, they were our proxies. You couldn't always get to the meeting, but we could give a proxy.

DW: Robin Chapple and ...

**JERMALINSKI:** Cliff. His first name's Cliff [Holdum]. Robin could give you his name. They were our proxies. [pause] That was cool, but that also meant the union involvement was also interesting. Because there were two factions of the Labor Party. There was a Graeme Campbell/Julian Grill [right] faction and there was a Megan Anwyll [left] faction at odds with each other in Kalgoorlie. And one of the reasons I was made a Convenor, or kept being a Convenor, is I was in the Greens ... I was in neither faction. [laughs] I can work with both sides.

DW: And you remained a Greens member all through that? Are you still a Greens member?

**JERMALINSKI:** No, no, I haven't been one for few years now. Currently, I'm in the right wing of the Labor Party.

DW: Wow, that's a big move.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes and no.

DW: And your changes in views politically, is that associated with any particular moment?

**JERMALINSKI:** It was Middle East policy. It was after the war, the American invasion of Iraq. And I did something which a lot of people on the left didn't do. I had made contact

with the Iraqi Communist Party and the Iraqi trade union movement. I also had contact with Iraqi Kurds. And I got their view of the conflict. And it was like, okay. On one level getting rid of Saddam Hussein, the American invasion is unprincipled. But Saddam was trying to kill us. Are we all that upset that the Americans got rid of him?

And the Kurds had a similar type of view. Yes. Well, that's all well and good. Maybe at one level, an abstract ideological level, you're right, it's immoral what the Americans did. But if you take into account Saddam was actively trying to kill us, too, and the Iraqi communists. A lot of the Iraqi communists sympathised with the Kurdish position, saying when Saddam was after us we went north, and the only people to give us shelter were the Kurds. I can understand that position.

And I also began to make contact with the Israeli left. And I thought some of the complexities of the Middle East are such that the Greens and the Australian left don't really get the complexities of dealing with a 17-sided chess game, where pawns move forwards, backwards and sideways and kill on all four angles. That's Middle East politics. For a while, I did join Friends of Israel, but I'm no longer a member of that organisation. I sort of think it was like too one-eyed, just as one-eyed as the Friends of Palestine.

The reason ... the thing that actually when I didn't renew my Greens membership, and it wasn't an angry resignation or anything like that. I wanted to support [ALP candidate] Bob Kucera in [the State seat of] Mount Lawley.

DW: The Labor candidate?

[01:39:16] **JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. I like Bob. I worked with him in the Friends of Israel and, he was a very good community person, very community-centered ... fingers in all sorts of community groups. And I thoroughly despised the Liberal member for Mount Lawley, really, really despised him. And I wanted to help Bob. And I was told that it's either Bob or the Greens, one or the other. So I thought, okay, I just won't renew my membership, and I'll help with Bob.

The right wing of the ALP was no longer as right wing. It was shifting, changing. And I didn't have to follow a faction line. In the left you had to, if you joined the left wing of the ALP, you had to really follow the faction line. The right wing, and I knew a lot of the right wingers on a personal basis, through the Friends of Israel. They were nice people. And the one that was my immediate factional warlord, so to speak, said, 'Look JJ, okay you're not socially conservative because you support abortion, gays and all that. We can live with that. Not a problem. If you're going to have to vote against something that we want, just tell us in advance and just don't pull any surprises on us and we'll arrange something'.

I could live with that. So it was like, yep.

DW: And looking back on your long history, helping develop the Greens and then being involved with the Greens, what do you think was a high point or the thing that you really most enjoyed?

**JERMALINSKI:** It was the 1990 election.

DW: Winning the Senate seat?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, that was really fun. I also played a role eventually then in the internal conflict, with Christabel Chamarette, and helped form the first internal faction in the Greens.

DW: I haven't heard of that. Tell me about it.

**JERMALINSKI:** Green Growth. Christabel sort of went down the path of Jo Vallentine. It was like imposing her views on the Reps Council. She had a worker there called Cathcart Weatherley. He was, how do you put it? He was really one-eyed. And if you disagreed with him, he would actually literally lose his temper. And they would go into the Reps Council meetings and they would virtually push their point of view and use the consensus process to argue against things they disagreed with.

And I was there for one meeting and I sort of observed and I went for a beer afterwards with a lot of the delegates from different Regional Councils. And they were all over the beers, moaning, saying how powerless they were. And I said, 'Really? Really, you're powerless? Let's see how many Regional Councils are here. One, two, three, four, five, six. We've got almost two-thirds majority here'.

If push comes to shove, you don't get a consensus, you go to a vote. This table has the numbers to win it on a vote. Plus, you get a few swinging Regional Councils. You've got the ultimate majority. You need to organise. We need to meet. We called this 'Greens Growth'. We had a meeting. Robin Chapple was there. Cliff [Holdum] was there and said, 'We just need to meet before the Reps Council, go through the agenda'.

DW: And determine your position?

[01:43:25] **JERMALINSKI:** That's right. And that was the beginning of the end. Then during the '96 election campaign, Christabel completely lost it. She wanted to put out this leaflet and we saw it in Kalgoorlie. So we sort of stared at it and it was like this really flaky thing, 'Our goal in life is to walk gently upon the earth'. Well, in Kalgoorlie twice a day KCGM [Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines Pty Ltd] mining company blows up the earth. The whole city shakes. You're going to hand out a leaflet about walking gently upon the earth, when twice a day Kalgoorlie shakes with this massive explosion?

Let's talk about, we are not going to hand out a leaflet like that under any circumstances. We wanted things that are more specific, like on the GST and some issues, something that people can very easily relate to as 'bread and butter' issues that would go down well in a Goldfields community. We just put our foot down and said, 'No, no way'. We told that to Robin Chapple [Greens (WA) MLC for Mining and Pastoral region]. We want our own pamphlet and in this pamphlet, we also want Dee Margetts to be pictured in the ads as the other Senator. Because what the Democrats were doing, they were promoting themselves as a team.

Well, we've got a team. We had Jim Scott and we had Dee as the other Senator. Why can't we have not only Christabel but Dee? They reluctantly agreed to Dee. And they wouldn't have Jim, which I thought was a mistake, but anyway. Then one meeting, it really came to a head. They were discussing preferences and Robin and I were consulting over the phone. And you could hear Cathcart's voice, and he was yelling and screaming about these dastardly Democrats. I'm not going to go yelling and screaming at other [people]. And I basically ... could you turn it off? [Interruption]

DW: Just paused there briefly and back on line with JJ.

**JERMALINSKI:** So basically, as I said, Robin, look, do what you need to do, basically.

DW: How was your relationship with the other Senator, Dee Margetts?

**JERMALINSKI:** It was OK. It's always been a bit cool because Dee [and I differ personality-wise]- we were both members of Southern Suburbs PND.

DW: So you'd known her for some time?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes, [since the mid-1980s]. I wouldn't say it was close, but it was a proper relationship. But Christabel, as far as I'm concerned, it's sort of like, she picked everyone in the office that would just listen to her point of view, and it was like a closed group. And that's a real problem to me, because if you're going to be in politics you've got to carry everyone with you. And it's not, 'This is what I want'.

DW: How would you reflect upon where the Greens are today in a sense, they've got two Senators in Canberra. They've got four members of the [State] Upper House. They regularly get around eight, 10, 11% of the vote. How would you reflect on that over the last 30 years?

**JERMALINSKI:** I think that's good. I think the issue that we're going to have in the future is how to go beyond that 11%. And that is when I think the problems you'll be seeing less of a movement and less pure. But it's going to be how much more pragmatic are you going to become? And that's going to pose its own tensions within the party.

DW: You've got to bring people with you as you become more pragmatic?

**JERMALINSKI:** If you grow, if you incorporate more people who are more conservative, you're going to eventually have the same problems the Labor Party has. The Labor Party has this problem. You have your social conservatives in it. You have people on the left. But the bigger you become ... you can be on the left for so long, but then how do you carry a broad electorate? And that's the problem the Labor Party has. To win government, it has to convince right wing people who vote Liberal and National to vote for it.

DW: Do you think the climate change challenges and the dire predictions will help it grow and move in that direction?

**JERMALINSKI:** Don't know. I could also see a fascist movement arising in Australia on the right against climate change, against a lot of the social liberation issues.

DW: Well, those tendencies have always been there.

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah, but I could see that becoming more formal. More formal and ...  
[Interruption]

DW: So just recommencing after a short break with JJ and we're just wrapping up here in terms of your involvement with the Senators Christabel Chamarette and then Dee Margetts. Have you got any reflections on other Parliamentarians you've dealt with? You were talking about Robin Chapple, working with him.

[01:50:14] **JERMALINSKI:** I think Robin's doing a very effective job in the North West, Mining and Pastoral [region]. And I think Alison Xamon is probably a very good leader for the Greens in the State of WA. I don't really have strong views about the other two current Senators, because I'm doing other things with my life.

DW: Such as what? What are you currently involved in? You always seem to be involved with the community level in something.

**JERMALINSKI:** Well, I'm a member of the Vic Park Community Forum. It's like a resident's group here in Vic Park. I'm involved with the Town of Vic Park. I'm sort of involved with the Labor Party, my local branch, but also on the International Committee, especially on Facebook and into Facebook politics. About four Facebook groups, I'm sort of involved with. One is the Interfaith Social Democratic Network.

DW: And that group's bringing together people from different religious faiths?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yeah. And two or three atheists as well. But it's social democratic in a broad context that we will accept members of the Labor Party and the Greens to be members of it and different factions of the ALP. There's four of us as Co-convenors. A Jewish one, there's a Muslim I'm working with, there's someone from the Anglican Church and a Buddhist.

DW: That's fantastic.

**JERMALINSKI:** And we're going to be launching a political project.

DW: Out of the religious group?

**JERMALINSKI:** Well, a post Covid-19 project we want to get off the ground. But I sort of do things on the Jewish Perth Covid Facebook. And I participate on a right-wing Jewish Facebook putting up all sorts of left-wing stuff on it [laughs]. And doing a lot of reading and stuff. Keeping busy and composing music.

DW: That's obviously a love as well of both you and your wife?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes.

DW: Is there anything at all, we've covered quite a range of your involvement in the Greens and your personal things. Is there anything else I haven't asked you about?

**JERMALINSKI:** Mainly my activities with the Asian Trade Union movement. That's a Southern Initiative on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights [SIGTUR<sup>12</sup>].

DW: That was through the TLC or Unions WA?

**JERMALINSKI:** Yes through Unions WA, but I was my union's representative on that committee and everything. I sort have made contacts in the Middle East with various groups and things. And probably where I've sort of continued is I haven't followed the correct line, anyone's correct line.

DW: Anyone, anywhere?

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.sigtur.com/>

**JERMALINSKI:** Anywhere. Like I was in the Communist Party and never followed the correct line. And at this stage in my life, I don't think I'm about to take up that habit.

DW: Well, can I thank you JJ, because obviously in terms of the Greens, what you helped establish back in 1990 has existed and developed and grown over the last 30 years. And it was a fabulous commitment on your behalf. So thank you once again for participating in this interview.

[01:54:03] **JERMALINSKI:** Okay.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**