J.F. So can we start with where you were born and when?

H.I. Yes, sure, O.K.

J.F. So it was 1949?

H.I. Yea, I, you know, and it's one of those sort of ironies of history that I was born on March 21st., 1949, so I - I guess each year that I celebrate my birthday I also am reminded of the Sharpeville massacre, you know, which took place when I was what, about eleven years old, you know

J.F. What area were you born in?

H.I. I was born in Pietermaritzburg in, you know, what is - what is called Raisethorpe, about three miles outside of, you know, the city centre, and at the time that I - I was born the place was undeveloped - there were no tarred roads, no elect - you know, electricity - there was no water-borne sewage.

J.F. And was it - what kind of people were classified to live there?

H.I. Well, that was prior to the Group Areas Act, so that it was really a very, very mixed community - there were people who, you know, classified as white, Indians, Coloureds, so-called Africans, and for - well, for two particular reasons, you know, race at that particular time was totally unimportant - my own - my own family ranges across all the racial classifications in South Africa in the sense that my maternal grandfather was an Afrikaaner, my maternal grandmother was Zulu, my paternal grandfather was Coloured, my paternal grandmother Coloured, my father's sisters married Indians, so that in the South African sense I have relatives from all the racial groups.

The second reason why at that particular time race was not important was because it was, like I said, a mixed community and whites lived in the same areas as so-called Africans, Coloureds, Indians - we - we went to different schools, but then even at the schools at that particular time there were some white teachers - the bus drivers, as I - as I recall, at that particular time were white, and even though, for instance, so-called non-whites had to - had to sit in the upper decks of the buses and whites, you know, in the lower deck, the impact of that didn't really mean very much to me as an infan - or as a - as a kid because, you know, the community was mixed, but then nobody could really explain to us, you know, why was - why was it so that, you know, blacks had to sit upstairs and whites downstairs, except everybody said: "Oh, it was the colour bar."

But then I think that my own sort of political awareness occurred when, you know - when I started school because then what I immediately noticed was that even though we all lived in the same community, we went to different schools, so that my cousins, for instance, went to the Raisethorpe Indian Primary School, which was across the road from Raisethorpe Coloured Primary School, and then so-called African kids had to walk to school several miles away in the so-called Sobantu village - you know, Sobantu village means, you know, African people's township - and then, of course, the whites were transported by bus to schools in the city centre, and I think that from that particular time on I began to, you know, ask various questions, and even though I did not always get answers from elders, I sought them out, you know in newspaper columns - I read very, very extensively.

(the other thing that made me question was about the buses we rode:) → to p. 2

from p. 1

H.I. (1) And at the time that I was in - in the first grade there was a great deal of political ferment in the country and I - I remember in particular there were the boycotts of potatoes because of what our parents and very many of the elders referred to as black people being used as fertilizer on the potato farms" - you know, that was the explanation that they gave to us, but then from some of the literature that was available at that time and some of the teachers at - at our - at our schools, you know, attempted to explain the broader context in which some of the things were taking place, and I remember in particular one teacher who subsequently left the country to take up a position in Malawi, always attempted to provide a perspective that was outside the, you know, particular curriculum at school and encouraged us to read newspapers, listen to the news, and he would always, particularly in private conversations or outside the classroom, just engage us in discussion and debate, and I think that that had a tremendous influence on my own political development.

And I remember in 1960, at the time of the Sharpeville massacre, you know, it was - it was just reported in the Natal Witness at that time and the Natal Daily News, you know, in headlines: 67 natives killed, and then there were pictures of all the corpses lying on the ground, and then when the mass funerals took place there were pictures of all the coffins, and, you know, I - I recall being extremely disturbed for a long time that such a large number of persons were killed by the police for what appeared to be, you know, a peaceful demonstration.

And when the state of emergency was declared there were curfews imposed in most of the black areas, including the areas around Pietermaritzburg, and each night, you know, the searchlights would sort of swing around focusing on all the black areas, and as a kid we saw all that - we saw all the - the armoured vehicles, you know, patrolling all the black areas - and then just shortly after the Sharpeville massacre another incident that really heightened my political consciousness even further was that the government, in an attempt to break the potato boycott, used to send trucks into the black areas - there would normally be one black person driving the truck and an armed white person sitting on the passenger side, and they would go to different areas to try to sell potatoes, but most of the black folk refused to purchase potatoes from, you know, the government suppliers.

And then on one particular day several black women, in breach of the boycott, went to the truck to purchase potatoes, but there seemed to have been some misunderstanding because as the women approached the truck somebody shouted something, and the white guy got out and with his rifle, which had a bayonet attached, immediately started to assault the women, and even though the women started shouting in - in Zulu: "Oh, my God, what have we done?" - he just continued to beat them with, you know, the rifle butt, and to add to the confusion the black guy who was driving the truck then, you know, started the ignition and, you know, drove in the direction of the women, who sort of ran in different directions screaming and - now this took place in my presence and the presence of, you know, a whole lot of other young kids, and you know, it was - it was something that I - I can never forget, that there were women who were going to buy potatoes from a government, you know, supplier, and were assaulted for absolutely no reason and, you know, throughout - throughout subsequent years, I think, you know, my political awareness simply developed, you know, much, much further, and by the time the Group Areas Act began to be enforced one thing that I - I - I noticed was not just the way in which the communities were then segregated but also the manner in which the separation created, you know, what I call, you know, ethnic animosity, as it were, and suddenly, you know, people who were either relatives, neighbours and friends became Coloureds, Indians, Africans and whites.

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→ to p. 8

H.I. The government then began to - to develop, you know, the area that is now called Raisethorpe, which was declared an area for Indian residency - the streets were electrified, water-borne sewage was introduced, the roads were tarred, bus services were improved, and all this created the impression of an improvement in the community, but what it really was, in fact, was the implementation of apartheid and segregation - similarly, what is today called Woodlands, at that time was basically a plantation - it was cleared and developed for so-called Coloured residency - the Africans were then moved far out of town into Edendale and a - a township that was developed at that time called Imbali.

The - the school that I then attended was declared a - an Indian school, and we were - we were then bussed initially from Raisethorpe to Woodlands, and the Woodlands Indian Primary - a Woodlands Indian High School was then declared a Coloured school, so you know, that was just the way in which the Group Areas Act affected, you know, the community in which I lived - after a while we moved to Woodlands, which was the area set aside for Coloureds only. → to p. 3

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And I think while - you know, while in Woodlands I - I saw, you know, the pernicious nature of apartheid, you know, most - most clearly, because not only were there the animosities between so-called Coloureds and so-called Indians, but also animosities and, you know, literally self-loathing, as it were, amongst Coloureds-with so-called lighter skinned Coloureds looking down upon darker-skinned Coloureds, and at the same time those Coloureds who were able to purchase their own homes were very contemptuous of those Coloureds who lived in city council-owned houses.

And a thing - a thing that always struck me, even at that particular age, was - was just the fact that, you know, while Coloureds and Indians literally were looking upon each other suddenly as enemies, and while lighter-skinned Coloureds were looking down upon darker-skinned Coloureds, it was really, you know, the whites who were in control and it seemed - it seemed ludicrous to me, even at that particular stage, that people were unable to - to realise that, and also it reminded me of the success of apartheid in that it had created these animosities amongst people who had lived harmoniously together and who, I believe, were not aware of any differences amongst them, because very many of the so-called Coloureds who owned their own homes in Woodlands, which was a - an area set aside for the Coloureds under the Group Areas Act, had previously lived in the garages and backyards of people classified as Indian, and very many of them were themselves the result of unions between so-called whites and so-called Africans, and even though they looked down upon darker-skinned Coloureds, very many of their own forbears were of so-called African origin.

And I - I think that even though I was not always able to - to obtain the answers, you know, these things became - became apparent, even at that early age, and amongst some of my - my friends at school were children of people who were politically active at that particular time - one of my very, very close friends was the son of Norman Middleton.... (Interruption) → to p. 4

J.F. Was he a liberal or was he....

H.I. No, no, no, he - he was in the Labour Party and, you know, he - he was the Natal leader of the, you know, so-called Coloured Labour Party, and I think he subsequently resigned, you know, when the Labour Party went into the tricameral parliament or something like that, but his - his son, a number of others and I were amongst the sort of, you know, politically active students at high school.

H.I. And each year, for instance, that the school was forced by the so-called Department of Coloured Affairs to participate in the Republic Day celebrations, we always protested. - we refused to join in the flag-raising ceremony - and I remember each year students had to perform in a concert at the City Hall, and that what we did was to purchase stinkbombs at J.F. - J.F. King's (?) Sports Store at that time, and then we would - you know, we would disrupt the performances.

And just about at that time I was - I was then in Standard Nine, which was the year before matriculation - I had cycled to Chase Valley, which was a white area, to visit my aunt, who was working as a nurse at the mental institution, and on the way back there was a police roadblock and I was stopped at the roadblock and one of the policemen then asked me for identification. - I did not have any identification because legally I was under-age. - I did not have to have any identification of any sort, and when I explained that the white policeman then instruct one of the black policemen to deflate the wheels of my cycle because he claimed that I was lying, so I then had to push the cycle some four or five miles to Woodlands, but I think I was livid with rage and decided at that point that no policeman would ever deflate my cycle again, and apart from that incident having, you know, reinforced my own determination to get involved in some way or the other in - in the resistance to apartheid, I decided that one way in which I would do that was by becoming a lawyer, because in my youthful idealism I believed that I would be able to render service to the community and at the same time to fight the system, but more importantly I also swore to myself that I would be the scourge of every policeman, you know, in - in - in court.

After I matriculated the following year I was not able to proceed to university straight away because of financial difficulties, so I worked for a year, and worked first in a - in a shoe factory, but then left after two weeks, - the foreman there insisted that I made tea and when - when I refused, I indicated that look, I was, you know, hired as a clerk and not as - as a waiter, - he said well, if I didn't change my attitude I would have to leave, and so I said well, there was not going to be a change in attitude, I'd rather leave.

I then went on to work as a laboratory assistant in the Natal Provincial Administration Roads Department, and even though it was a very meagre salary, I was at least able to save some money, and the following year went to the University of the Western Cape, which was one of the segregated universities created by the government for - for blacks - people of so-called Coloured origin. - there - there is a reputable law school in Pietermaritzburg attached to the University of Natal, and some of the faculty at the law school had encouraged me to apply for admission there and in fact had indicated that my academic record was such that I'd have no difficulty in getting in, but I would have to apply to the minister of Coloured Affairs for special dispensation.

I did apply and my application was rejected, so I thought well, if I wanted to go to university I had no choice but to go to the University of the Western Cape, and I - I did duly enrol at the university, completed my under-graduate degree in law and psychology and then went on to do my post-graduate studies in law, but throughout the time that I was at Western Cape I was also very, very active politically. - I was involved in the University Christian Movement, which at that time was led by Basil Moore, who's now in Australia - Colin Collins, who's also in Australia - Basil Moore is - I think he was a Methodist preacher - Colin Collins was a Catholic preacher....

J.F. Are they white?

H.I. They're white, both white, and they're both in Australia - I subsequently met them several years later - Stanley Ntwasa, whom you may know, he is still in South Africa - Justice Moloto, who is also still in South Africa - but the University Christian Movement was much more than, you know, a - a Christian ecumenical organisation - I think its importance was that it brought together not just black and white students but also black students from the different universities, because the regulations at all these universities were such that we were not allowed to belong to any organisations with - without the approval of the university authorities.

The University Christian Movement itself was not allowed to function at any of the segregated universities - all the activities were off campus, and insofar as the Western Cape was concerned all our activities were at the local Anglican church, St. Johns in Belville South - we held regular meetings, seminars, and in that way we - we - we met - we - not just students from the University of Cape Town or Stellenbosch University but from the other centres as well, Rhodes, Wits, and then Fort Hare, Turfloop, the University of Natal and the other black universities.

I was also active in NUSAS at that time, although not in any leadership capacity or anything like that - NUSAS itself was - was not allowed to operate on campus, so NUSAS activities were also largely off campus, and at that time Neville Curtis was the president of NUSAS - we held seminars and attended very many of the other activities off campus, and one - one particular time there was a seminar at St. Nicholas Seminary in Stellenbosch - amongst the participants there were Bernard Chamberlain and - no, not Bernard Chamberlain, Robert Chamberlain, and Robert Mercer - I think Robert Mercer is today in - in Matabeleland somewhere.

But on that particular occasion the security police raided the seminary while, you know, most of the participants were there, and I remember at - I came out of a shower at - it was about six thirty in the morning to find, you know, security police in the corridors, and the one uniformed policeman, you know, came and stuck his pistol in my ribs - I mean I had a towel around my waist and he stuck a pistol in my ribs and said: Well, yes, you people are sleeping with white women here - so I mean I expressed surprise because (Laugh) there were no women at the seminary and, you know, it just seemed laughable at that particular time that there we were, students participating in a seminar and the police were concerned about our, you know, sleeping with white women (Laugh)

Anyway it - it was just part of the sort of ongoing harassment to which we were all subjected at that particular time - while - while participating in all these and various other activities, we began to feel a great deal of frustration for - for various reasons - the one was that the white students were concerned about issues that were largely irrelevant to us, issues of academic freedom - now not only did we not have any academic freedom, we had no freedom as human beings, and it seemed to us more important to be concerned about the broader issue of freedom as human beings than about the limited, you know, freedoms, you know, of students at an academic institution.

And the second thing was that despite our participation in organisations like NUSAS and the University Christian Movement, the organisations were not able to offer any protection either from victimisation by the university authorities or harassment by the security police, and we began to question, you know, the - the usefulness of continued participation in organisations that were unable to offer any kind of protection.

H.I. This was particularly noticeable after students were expelled from Fort Hare and from the University of North - or university of the north - the reason that they were expelled was that they had decided to seek affiliation to NUSAS, and when they approached the university authorities the university authorities denied - denied their approval, and when students protested the university authorities reacted by expelling every single student - NUSAS was unable to do anything except issue statements of condemnation.

J.F. This was - what year was this?

H.I. This was around '68, '69 - and then in late '68 - not late '68, mid - mid-'68, particularly at the University of Natal medical school, Steve Biko and others were, you know, arguing in favour of black students establishing their own organisation that would cater primarily for black students whose interests were not - not really in conflict with those of white students but whose interests, you know, could not - could not be met or fulfilled in organisations like NUSAS and the University Christian Movement.

These discussions and, you know, debates continued, you know, back and forth, but they were always within those particular organisations - at Western Cape there was really only a very, very small group of us who were politically active - amongst them, you know, was the - is - is the current rector of the University of Western Cape, Jakes Gerwel, and while very many of the black students were - were afraid of breaking old ties, as it were, some of us argued forcefully that well, look, it was really no point for us to continue to get involved in protests about academic freedom and the right to participate in peaceful demonstrations and things like that - we had a far more important obligation to the black community at large, and that what we should begin to do is to look at ways and means of fulfilling our obligations to that community, and rather than seeing ourselves as an elite coming out of that community and aspiring to positions that would enable us to become part of an elite, we felt that it was much more important for us to place our skills and education at the disposal of the community.

It meant very little for us to - to become lawyers, doctors and whatever the case might be while our parents were not just - were not merely labourers, domestic workers and, you know, other workers in the South African society, but they were subjected to - to devastating humiliations in their every day lives. - initially those of us who argued in favour of establishing a - a black organisation that would - that would play a more active role in the struggle for liberation, you know, we were - we were a relatively small group, and I think that at that particular time there could not have been more than 14 or so of us.

But several things then began to happen that I think swung, you know, the mood in favour of establishing a black organisation - amongst - amongst the incidents at that particular time were the - the government's decision who forced the University of Cape Town to rescind the appointment of Archie Mafeje as lecturer in - senior lecturer in anthropology... → to p. 7

J.F. Mafeje, the one who's ANC now in - the one who's at the farm or something in Lusaka, because there's also a Mafage - is that the....

H.I. No, Mafeje - he is teaching at an American (?) university in Cairo.

J.F. Is he - he published an article recently in Mandaza's journal.

H.I. Probably, yes - yes.

J.F. Are you sure it's not Mafege because....

H.I. No, Mafeje - M a f e j e - the University of Cape Town then, you know, bowed to the government's demand that they rescind the appointment - NUSAS then organised a sit-in demonstration at the University of Cape Town protesting what they called the infringement of the university's academic freedom, and very many of us went to the University of Cape Town in - you know, in solidarity with the students who were demonstrating.

The reaction of the government to that demonstration was to us an eye-opener - students were not assaulted by the police, they were not expelled - they were allowed to stage their sit-in demonstration for more than a week, and except for the security police taking photographs of all the demonstrators as well as those of us who went there to express solidarity, nothing - nothing happened to those students - their careers were not truncated....

J.F. Those white....

H.I. Those white students, and - and, you know, it - it just seemed to us to be ludicrous that there we were as black students demonstrating in support of academic freedom at a white university, and yet when we demonstrated to affiliate to the organisation that had staged that demonstration, hundreds of students were expelled, other were assaulted by the police, and careers of all those students were literally, you know, terminated, and amongst - amongst them were some of the individuals who subsequently became leaders of - of SASO, amongst them Barney Pityana, who is now in London, Harry Nengwekhulu, who is in Botswana....

→ to p. 11 (16th line from top of page)

J.F. Is he still in Botswana?

H.I. Yes.

J.F. Can I take a pause here and interject with some questions and then we can pick up chronologically, but I just think at a certain point I want to get in - taking it way back, just a few things to clear - the break-up of the communities in Pietermaritzburg you were talking about - when would that have been that the Coloured school, the Indian school, the kind of - what time about was that taking place?

from p. 3 → (the segregation of the schools began)

H.I. That was around - that was around 1956, but the actual implementation of, you know, the - the removals accelerated after 1960. → back to p. 3

J.F. And your own identity - you've talked about how it was so crazy to see yourself as a member of any group and that there was so much mixing up in your own family, but what was your - did you ever feel you had a Coloured identity - you had to identify yourself as something, or the people around you - did they think we're Coloured - did you have people in your own family who said : We're better than them but we're worse then them - how was that kind of - what did you go through in terms of how you perceived yourself, how your parents perceived - I didn't even ask about your parents - were they at all political, what kind of work did they do, how did they describe themselves - were they both Coloured?

H.I. They were both Coloured, but they were not political - my mother died when we were relatively young - I was around 11 years of age when she died - my father was a - a shoe repairer - he had his own little store where he, you know, repaired shoes, and he was not political - he - you know, he discussed various political issues with us - he read newspapers and encouraged us to do that, but we did not - we did not have any political debates or discussions or anything of the sort, so I would not class them as being politicised or political.

J.F. Did he call himself a Coloured person, did he see himself as a Coloured in a Coloured community?

H.I. Well, I think subsequently, you know, they - they all did, but initially I don't think it - initially I think that even though they were then all forced to - to take out identity documents classifying them as Coloured, and I think that that took place about - around '56, because, you know, I still remember very clearly when, you know, everybody started talking about : Hey, now we - you know, we have to apply for identity cards - I think it was - it was only at about that time that people then began to - to see themselves as belonging to these different ethnic groups.

J.F. And.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. .... was there ever any consciousness of you shouldn't see yourself as Coloured or did that come later for you - did you see yourself as anti-white but - would you have ever, once you were in the separate areas, thought of allying yourself with blacks who were classified as Africans- did you go through a period yourself when the reality was you had a Coloured identity document and you thought well, this is who I'm with, these - we're called Coloureds?

H.I. I - I do not think that there was any - any conscious decision to ally myself with so-called Coloureds - it was more a - a reality that well, we were forced and it was always, I think, insofar as I was concerned the attitude always was that this was something being forced upon us - it was under protest, and I think that that attitude was - you know, was one that - that I retained throughout, so that even when I went to a so-called Coloured university - I remember even when we had the very first sort of orientation lecture being given by white lecturers, and this particular lecturer asked each of us why we - why had we decided to come to university and, you know, I remember stating very clearly that it was under protest and that if I had had the choice I would not have gone there because it is a segregated university that is a product of the system, so I think that throughout I - I - I had the - you know, the very firm awareness of this being something imposed upon us.

J.F. Do you speak Zulu?

H.I. Very fluently.

J.F. How did you get - where did you learn that - how did you - was that from your childhood from the kids you played with or was it....

H.I. From childhood - I mean every single member of my family speaks Zulu very, very fluently....

J,F. Because of who they deal with and their (.....) - did you speak it at home as a - did your mother or father speak it to you as a little child or was it the you played with, that you dealt with?

H.I. We - we spoke it at home and, you know, outside.

J.F. Because most Coloureds wouldn't speak it in the home even - I've met lots of people classified Coloured who speak it from Natal, but very few unless they had a Zulu mother or grandmother would speak it at home.

H.I. Yes, particularly in later years, and - and again one of the reasons - one of the reasons for that was precisely because they did not want to be identified with the so-called Africans, so it was more a case of self-denial rather than anything else.

J.F. Why do you think you didn't have that self-denial - there were people who have talked about their politicisation and admitted and said it was part of their background that they - it was like you're better than the Africans, you're not like them, you don't speak Zulu, or even if it wasn't any kind of false pride it was more like we aren't like them, they are different and yet - do you think it was because of living in the initial setting with Africans or did you have a close?

H.I. Well, it might - it might have been that, but then also some of my - you know, my very earliest experiences and my own recollections of those earliest experiences were of a great deal of closeness with and affection from people classified as, you know, so-called Africans - for instance, my - my father had an - an assistant called Shortie because he was very short, and he had an old bicycle that was his only means of transportation and travelled some, you know, ten miles back and forth from - to and from work, and each day, for instance, he would give me, you know, a ride on his - on his bicycle and I was - I was very, very, you know, attached to him probably throughout my - my infancy and - and even - even beyond - beyond that, so that even, for instance, at the time that I went to university he was still working for my father, but then I - you know, I still remained very, you know, sort of close to him.

J.F. But tell me - maybe I should focus more when you got to UWC and then you started looking away from NUSAS and the white student movement led - as a solution or as a way forward - why were there so few - you said there were only about 14 of you - was there a "Coloured" mentality you encountered at Bush that was different than in Natal? - what was it like for you to get out of Natal and come to the Western Cape where no matter how political people later became or had been in the past, there was a kind of Coloured - there was nobody who spoke Xhosa the way you guys spoke Zulu in Natal....

H.I. That's right - I mean there was - there was a very, very strong so-called Coloured mentality and it was not just - it was not just - it was not just a question of - of race, you know - it was also a question of class. - very many of the students who went to Western Cape at that particular time were the children of either preachers or teachers, but children who in the so-called Coloured community were the children from middle class backgrounds, for one thing, and education to them was a vehicle for upward social mobility. - they did not get involved in political activities for fear that they would be expelled, and if they were expelled or victimised in any way, not only would that put an end to their own aspirations but it would also be a - a social stigma for the families. - that was the - the way they viewed it.

The second reason was that very many of them were from cons - very conservative backgrounds anyway - very many of them came from small rural communities where the prevailing attitude was that, you know, the - you know, the system was - the system was - was preordained, (Laugh) as it were, so they did not challenge or question anything. → to p. 10

H.I. Another - another, you know, reason why so many of the students did not engage in political activity at that time was that they obtained scholarships from the government to pursue careers in teaching, social work, and what were - there were three - and librarianship, and after completion of their studies they would then be bonded to the government for the number of years that they had received their scholarships, so very many of them were afraid to engage in political activities for fear that their scholarships would be, you know, withdrawn.

J.F. So tell me something about - given those constraints of class and just financial set-up that you're talking about - the fact that they came out of a Coloured identity much more than people in Natal or say, the Transvaal - how did you as the beginning of the BC movement get those people into a position, or how did you see their move, or how did you yourselves move to be in a movement that accepted and embraced working with African people, that saw Steve Biko as a leader, that saw Sobukwe and Mandela and people along with Peter Jones and that kind of thing - how did that process come - was it difficult - is that the reason that there are a few so-called Coloureds historically - one of my kind of things that I have to accept and deal with and explore and try to understand is why the Coloured People's Congress was so small, why there aren't that many Coloureds in - historically in the movements - it is a small population, one can't forget, so is Indians, so is whites - I'm just interested in your thoughts on that - I don't want to dwell too much on your own particular experience because it is unique - I interviewed one other guy who was from Natal and it's a really unique situation viz-a-viz Zulus and the whole thing - it's also not representative dominantly - mainly the Western Cape's where the Coloured community came from and Eastern Cape, so tell me a bit about that - what it was like - maybe something anecdotally about moving people - there were some big real important leaders that have come out of there, yourself and Johnny Issel and people who subsequently have roles, but how did you folks down there - did you accept that there would only be 14 - did it grow bigger than that?

H.I. No, it - it grew much - I mean it grew much bigger than that, and I think (Interruption)

J.F. .... it grow - how did it grow - why didn't it grow to the same proportions as Africans and that kind of thing?

H.I. Well - I think that when - when one, you know, views it historically, I think that, you know, the movement did grow considerably, particularly in - in the Western Cape, and it was - it was helped by a - a variety of particular circumstances: - for one was just the bitterness amongst so-called Coloureds in the Western Cape over their removal from areas like District Six and other places, and also there was a great deal of bitterness amongst Coloureds over their rejection by the whites - I think very many of them saw themselves as, you know, "brown Afrikaners" and had hoped that they would be absorbed into the white community, and when that did not happen very many of them were very, very bitter, and what we did was that we worked out in the communities, - we worked particularly amongst high school students - we began to organise regular leadership training seminars for high school students in different parts of the Cape Flats and began - we began to inculcate in them not just the idea of all persons who were not white being subjected to a common oppression, despite the apparent, or the seeming privileges that so-called Coloureds enjoyed, but also to make the - you know, the young understand that there was a particular historic - you know, historical role for young people to play, and that is that all of us had grown up only under the system of apartheid and that we had known whites only as oppressers, whereas very many of the older generation had grown up at a time when there was still a great deal of - of racial mixing, liberalism, if you want to term it that, as an ....

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H.I. .... ideology was fairly pervasive, particularly in the Western Cape, and very many of the older generation still harked back not only to that particular time but they also saw that as a possibility for the future, whereas to us it was just very clear that look, change in South Africa was only going to come about through the actions of the oppressed people, and that was - that was the area, as it were, where we had to concentrate our effort.

J.F. What element of race and colour was at work here and what element of class - way back in the beginning you said that you saw that there was the kind of light and dark Coloureds but also it was the have and have not Coloureds - what factor was at work there - was there the unity of the oppressed people, i.e. the black people or was it the unity of the people who don't have, which might even mean that the teachers and the upper strata wouldn't join the struggle because of their economic situation, or did you at that stage in time mobilise around colour?

H.I. We mobilised around colour at that particular time - we - we were aware of - of class differences, and I think that even - well, at that particular time my own particular political development was - was such that I understood very, very clearly the nature of class oppression in South Africa - some of the - some of the people at that particular time, like Rick Turner, who was assassinated in Durban - I mean after his return from France, together with a whole lot of other people who belonged to the - you know, the remnants of the Unity Movement, were still fairly active in the Cape area - we exchanged a great deal of ideas and we were constantly involved in discussion and - and debate over the whole question of class and race in South Africa.

J.F. So you were exposed to the Unity Movement in the Cape?

H.I. Well, at that time they - they did not call themselves the Unity Movement, but we knew that, you know, they belonged to the old Unity Movement and to APDUSA, for instance.

J.F. And Turner was in the Cape at that stage?

H.I. No, he was in Natal but he came to the Cape very frequently, and I remember for probably about a month he conducted, or he led the major discussions in a little garage somewhere in - in Elsie's River - I'm just providing this kind of background, you know, to - to demonstrate the cross-fertilization of ideas that took place.

J.F. At the same time that you were being disillusioned with white NUSAS, did it bother you that Turner was white and he was there or was that not a factor or was that....

H.I. No, that - that was not a factor - I mean like I said, it was not just - it was not just Turner - we had very, very close personal friends with a whole range of whites - I mean - I mean till (?) today, for instance, Basil Moore, Colin Collins, Neville Curtis and all these guys are very close personal friends - we - you know, we sat down, engaged in discussion and debate with them over the whole - the whole question, and they themselves, for instance, recognised that it was essential for the black South Africans to provide their own leadership, but that, you know, this did not deny a role for whites in the liberation struggle, and I think that it was - it was principally because individuals like those that I've mentioned saw very clearly the need for, you know, black unity, black leadership in the struggle that the BC movement initially was not - was not racist, nor did they themselves see it as racist, and I think that if you were to read the earlier works of people like Curtis, Basil Moore, Colin Collins and others, they themselves said that there was a need for whites who were concerned about the struggle for change in South Africa to make the white population aware of the oppression and exploitation of blacks in South Africa.

H.I. In other words, they themselves argued in favour of a white consciousness movement.

J.F. Did you read that stuff at the time or did you hear it from Rick Turner or?

H.I. No, no, no....

J.F. You said if you read the early documents of Curtis and that - is there something I could read - did you read it or is it more talking to Curtis than to Turner?

H.I. They wrote about it - there're probably some of the earlier NUSAS documents, position papers and others as well as the works of Turner do - have all the stuff - it was the product of a great deal of discussion and debate amongst us - they - they then wrote about it, they conducted seminars for white students, and I think that if you were to read, for instance the report of the Schlebusch Commission, at that particular time it was one of the - it was one of the charges levelled by the government against the eight white leaders who were banned, that namely they were working towards the conscientisation of white to prepare them for revolution or some such nonsense.

J.F. So you accepted an idea of a need for a BC movement and of a white consciousness movement but you felt that they should be separate, that whites needed to conscientise the whites and blacks, blacks - would that be fair to....

H.I. Yes, that would be fair to say.

J.F. Tell me, just in a brief way because I think I want to explore what's unique about it - I understand BC - you moved then - you were leading up to saying you went into the BC organisations - did you particularly found anything or - I can get all this later, but just briefly where did you specifically get into in BC structures first?

H.I. Well, I - I was involved in SASO right from the time that the organisation was formed....

J.F. Did you have a position?

H.I. I was initially the Western Cape regional organiser - subsequently I was vice president and then president of SASO.

J.F. What year were you president?

H.I. '73 - I was vice president in '72 and then after the bannings of Steve Biko and others, including Jerry Modisane, who is the president, I was then acting president, and then in June at the annual conference was appointed president, and shortly thereafterwards banned in '73.

J.F. And after your ban you had to no longer be an office bearer?

H.I. That's right.

J.F. And then what happened - what did you do after?

H.I. I was placed under house arrest and restricted to Pietermaritzburg.

J.F. You had to go back up there - had you gone back?

H.I. No, I had to go back up there.

J.F. So you had to stop your studies?

H.I. Yes.

J.F. Without having a degree by then or?

H.I. Well, I'd completed my, you know, arts degree - I was just five months away from completing the LØB.... LL

J.F. You couldn't finish it?

H.I. I could not finish because I then could not enrol at any university, and then the University of Western Cape refused to give me a certificate of good conduct, so I could not register with UNISA.

J.F. You stuck around in Pietermaritzburg after that?

H.I. I stuck around in Pietermaritzburg after that until December of '74 - in the time that I was - I was banned I still maintained close contact with, you know, all those who were banned like Steve, Barney, Geoff Strini in Durban and others and continued - continued to work clandestinely in the trade union movement that was beginning to - to develop in - in Pietermaritzburg - it was more - it was more in terms of research and providing information.

J.F. The trade union movement meaning black (.....) - what was it called then?

H.I. Black Allied Workers's Union, but in - in Pietermaritzburg it was more the - what was it - the Metal and Allied Workers' Union and the Construction Workers' Union - I don't know what the subsequent acronyms (?) are.

J.F. And what happened in December, '74?

H.I. I skipped the country then.

J.F. Was that directly because you couldn't work or did something happen that prompted you to leave?

H.I. Well, I had been - I was charged with, you know, breaking my banning order and I was given a suspended sentence, and then following the pro-Frelimo rallies during that period of intense repression it became very clear that some of us were - were going to be implicated in - in one way or the other, and it then seemed wiser to - to leave the country rather than remain, because not only would there be the, you know, fresh charges but also the suspended sentence would then be sort of enacted.

J.F. So where did you go?

H.I. I first went to Swaziland for about six weeks and then proceeded to New Zealand to take up a scholarship offered by the New Zealand University Students Association.

J.F. And how long were you there?

H.I. So I was in New Zealand for about three years, so I completed my law degree at Victoria University of Wellington, but even then I was more interested in continued involvement in the struggle rather than in - rather than in study and while - while in New Zealand I was, you know, very actively involved in the anti-apartheid movement.

J.F. And then you - after New Zealand where did you go and when?

H.I. Then - while in New Zealand I travelled back to Southern Africa at the end of each year and during that time made I mean contact with - you know, with all the liberation movements because, you know, despite my own position in the BC movement, I had friends in all the liberation movements and retained, you know, those close personal friendships so that, for instance, when I returned to Swaziland at the end of '75 some of my closest friends were ANC people - some of my former colleagues in the BC movement, however, at that particular time were involved in discussions with the PAC about a united front, and I then attended a meeting with the PAC central committee - I think it was at the end of '76, when these discussions were carried further.

But then we all recognised the fact that the PAC was - was weak, but then we had this mistaken belief that if the PAC could be injected with, you know, young blood and talent from the BC movement, the organisation might be revived so that it would, you know, once more become a viable factor in the liberation struggle - and while I was still in New Zealand the PAC central committee then appointed me as their representative in Australasia, and after a great deal of sort of soul-searching and also discussion with a wide range of, you know, former colleagues from the BC movement, I decided to accept the - the position. You know, with hindsight, you know, I have had some (Laugh) - some regrets, but that's not a matter for discussion here - but anyway I returned to Tanzania in June of '78 to take part in the PAC's second consultative conference and at that meeting I was appointed to the central committee and appointed director of education and manpower development, so that was how I came into the PAC and into - into the leadership of the movement.

J.F. Then where did you go?

H.I. Well, I remained in Tanzania, and then in '79 after the assassination of David Sibeko I was appointed their observer at the UN and director of foreign affairs and maintained that position until my resignation in March of '82.

J.F. Will the book tell me a lot about that so that I can (.....)

H.I. Yes.

J.F. Let me ask my questions because as curious as I am, I think I want to continue with my framework - inside - going way back - you're born on the Sharpeville day, you remember it strongly, people talked about it, it struck you - what did Sharpeville mean - did it mean PAC, did it mean something to do with the ANC - had there been talk as you were growing up of these organisations, of the PAC, of the ANC, of the Africanists, of the people who broke away?...

H.I. No, no, no, it was just there was talk of, at that particular time more of individuals; Lutuli, Mandela, Sobukwe, but then, you know, always very, very strongly - I mean Mandela, Tambo, or Lutuli because, you know, he was from the Natal area I mean, you know, he - he was always - and he was always mentioned both in the press and also just, you know, by the people in - in conversations, word of mouth, whatever.

J.F. So how was it - but then of course by the time you got conscientised the movements had died down, there was the lull - what was the explanation - these ANC people couldn't get it together, the PAC had Poqo but then it didn't work, or was it just kind of a fuzz that it wasn't discussed much?

H.I. Well, it - it was - it was discussed, but not in any analytic terms. - it was just discussed in terms of, oh, you know, the people tried but the whites were too powerful, and then at that particular time there were, you know - there was a great deal of resistance in the rural areas, like even in - in Natal around Harding and other places like what was called Mabovini, means, you know, the red - red place, but anyway - and Pondoland, you know, which is not - not very, very far from Natal, but anyway, you know, with the movement of people back and forth, and I remember that at - at that particular time quite a few of the so-called Coloured people from Kokstad, the Transkei, began to move into Pietermaritzburg and Durban, more for economic reasons, but they spoke about what was going on in Pondoland because, you know, they were from the area they - they knew intimately what was going on - they spoke about the resistance, they spoke about people actually, you know, violently resisting and, you know, they - they spoke about people using hand-made guns and fighting the police, so people spoke about it.

J.F. What year did you go to Western Cape?

H.I. I went to Western Cape in '68.

J.F. When you got to Western Cape - you've told me about your background, you wanted - what you wanted to do - with what view of the liberation movements did you come - you were a bit beyond the they tried but the whites were too strong, and as you got there what kind of view did you have towards the ANC, towards the PAC, towards the Unity Movement?

H.I. You see, when - you know, when I got to Western Cape I was then able to - to read a great deal - there was a great deal of literature circulating in the underground which was banned literature, some - some of the older activists, people who belonged say, to the Teachers League of South Africa, APDUSA, some of the old ANC members, still had some literature that they did make, you know, available and we were able to read - read that. - I - I remember also while still at Western Cape I had very, very extensive discussions with an old ANC member who used to live in - in Worcester, you know, which is way up in - in the hinterland, Hennie Ferrus. - he subsequently died, which is why I - I'm naming him, but....

J.F. Did he tell you that - you knew he was ANC, because to most people it only came out when he was killed at his funeral.

H.I. No, he told us and, you know, he - we knew why he had gone to prison, and in - in discussions with him, you know, not only did - did he give us a lot of background, you know, about the movements, about conditions on Robben Island, what people did on Robben Island, what - you know, what the discussions were about, but with him and various other individuals, we also attempted to - you know, to find out why the movements failed in '60, you know, and, you know, one can say confidently that they - they all agreed that the reasons that they - the reason for the failure of the movements was their inability to - to mobilise mass popular support, and then of course the fact that the people were unarmed. - I think that, you know, they recognised that.

J.F. So where did you go after that? - what were your thought then - you had a sense of what the failure was about - what did you think was the next step in trying to develop something that wouldn't lack popular support and wouldn't lack an army?

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H.I. Well, we recognised then that we had got to do two things:- the one was to revive resistance, and for that it was necessary to mobilise mass popular support, but also there was another important element, and that was to prepare people psychologically for confrontation, because in the period after the crushing of the PAC and ANC there was a great deal of fear within the black community, and even the thought of getting involved in politics once more just inhibited a great, you know, many people, and so what we attempted to do was to make people aware of the fact that political activity was not illegal, even though it was accompanied by a great deal of risk, and so in that - in that sense I think what we - what we then had to do was to demonstrate by example that, you know, we - we could not be, you know, deterred by personal risk or by threats of disruptions of academic careers or whatever the case might be.

J.F. Let me focus it more - I understand the need to revive resistance and I can imagine the challenge of doing that in the late '60s and early '70s.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. .... we get into the kind of core issue of getting involved and wanting to revive resistance but why you moved in the direction you did - you had contact with APDUSA and Teachers League - those were people who very overtly were concerned with class - you had later a movement into PAC, which was very race and colour oriented - you haven't told me if there was any early contact there, and then I'm just curious about your image of the ANC - they discussed both race and class, but you had Ferrus - was there a - what was the appeal at that stage in the late '60s and then moving on to the early '70s as you saw yourselves reviving resistance, having success with the BC movement - did you feel we're doing it, the ANC can't, or did you have any bad experiences with the ANC was trying to say this is no good or how did you move in the direction that you did viz-a-viz - or did you at any point just think we're going to do something new, we don't need PAC, ANC or anything else?

H.I. No, let me say right from - right from the outset we - we, you know, did not - we did not see ourselves as usurping the role of the ANC or the PAC, and in fact we saw ourselves as keeping, you know - keeping - keeping fires alive, as it were, while they were outside, and even at that particular time, you know, while we were in the country we all had the idea that the ANC and the PAC were making preparations outside to return - that was the - the impression we had - it was an impression that we had gained not only from, you know, the sympathisers of both movements in - inside the country, but it was also an impression that was conveyed by the media that well, you know, the ANC and the PAC are busy training - training freedom fighters, and of course there were the odd, you know, political trials, for instance, which also conveyed this impression, and then '6 - '67, '68 where(?) the joint ANC-ZAPU military operations in Rhodesia of course, which again reinforced this impression that well, at least despite the fact that they were not present on the ground in the country at this particular time, they were making preparations, they would be returning.

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H.I. Within the BC movement discussions at a private level, particularly in the early '70s, did centre round the questions of well, O.K., after mass mobilisation, what then, but at that particular time the consensus was that we should not do anything to endanger the continued existence of the movements because we - of the BC movement, because we felt that we had not completed the task of mass mobilisation, and any talk of armed struggle would invite, you know, retribution that would set back whatever mobilisation we had done.

Some individuals argued that well, sufficient work had been done, now students had to move beyond rhetoric and talking - they had to leave the country, go and take up military training and return to fight, but then it was left to the individuals to take such, you know, decisions, rather than the organisation - you know, SASO or any of the other organisations that emerged - having made such decisions.

J.F. And what about the kind of perceptions you had of the different organisations - you're acting as if it was quite value-free - had you....

H.I. No, I - I do not think that it was - it was value-free within - within the country at that particular time and even from discussions with some of the ANC persons, the perception we had of the ANC was of strong white involvement, and that even though it were a - it were an African organisation, there was white leadership and, you know, behind-the-scenes influence far out of proportion to the small number of whites who were actually involved in - in the struggle.

J.F. Where were you getting that - were you just reading it in books that were like textbooks or were people arguing this case?

H.I. People were arguing - arguing the case.

J.F. Do you think subsequent - now do you think it was argued factually - do you think it was argued in an anti-white way that distorted it - do you think it was - how do you see it now - how do you see what you were picking up and believing then?

H.I. Well, I - I think it was - I think it was exaggerated, there's no doubt about that - I'd be the first to admit that, and we were - we were probably susceptible to that because, you know, the movements were themselves not present in the country, and even, you know, the - the former members and sympathisers were not really familiar with what was going on outside - you know, one or two individuals who were arrested after their return to the country and who served prison terms and then were released were probably themselves coloured by whatever problems they had had within their, you know - the organisation....

J.F. You mean ANC people?

H.I. ANC people.

J.F. So this was ex-ANC people saying they're too many whites in it?

H.I. Well, there were some ex-ANC members who said that, yes.

J.F. But also PAC?

H.I. But also PAC people.

J.F. How do you think it was that you were susceptible, as the word you used - I'll never forget the first time I had been in South Africa for a few months and came back and you heard people shouting Mandela - that started already long ago - then you heard people shouting Tambo.

J.F. But the first time I heard like young really black militant kids shouting Slovo I kind of did a double-take because it just seemed in a sense so incongruous, and yet it would be Oliver Tambo, Joe Slovo, toyi-toyi kind of thing - that's a whole different crowd from you guys - nobody would have gotten to the first - anywhere with Slovo, right?

H.I. I think that the situation now of course is - is totally different, and I think that - I think that also when one looks at the - you know, the political climate in which we operated and the political climate in which people subsequently operated, there is a significant difference, and I think the difference is that up to '74, '75 the contact and communication with developments in the region were very, very limited, and you know, ANC and PAC were to us movements in Tanzania, Zambia, right - there was never really any - any sense of proximity - it was not like, for instance, the generation say, of Soweto that was able to, you know, just go across into, you know, Botswana and in the mall (?) just meet with (Laugh) you know, a wide range of ANC personages or whatever the case might be - you know, that's one - that's one reason for.

And I think also from about '74 onward and I - I would actually time it around - around September, '74 after the pro-Frelimo rallies, in that particular time, there began to be a flood of - of ANC literature into the country, and I remember in particular in - in Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Durban, there was a great deal of ANC literature freely available, - people began to speak far more openly about ANC, you know, in particular, and I think that around that time also there began to be a - a revival of the SACP, you know, and I know about that for a - for a fact, so I think that that explains to some extent the reason for the - you know, the - the popularisation, as it were, of the ANC, the SACP in - you know, in subsequent years.

But then I - I do not think that that is as important as the fact that the ANC was able after that time to establish lines of communication to infiltrate, you know, men and material into the country, and this was because of the - well, some of the debates that took place amongst the ANC people themselves abroad, that the organisation had concentrated too much on international solidarity at the expense of creating structures inside the country, and they began to - they began to address that problem, and I think it was facilitated by the political developments in the region so, you know, there's been a confluence of factors that have resulted in, you know, the resurgance of - of the ANC.

J.F. Right, all of which is academic because in '74 you left and by '78 the PAC had really (.....) recruited - you tell it as if they saw someone they really wanted to get in their ranks and you were kind of drafted into it and you were (.....)

H.I. I don't think it was only me - the BC movement in a sense revived the PAC for - now to give you just one example, when I met the de facto representative of the PAC, Mkhwanazi, in Swaziland, where he was working for Coca Cola, I....

J.F. What was his first name?

H.I. Joe Mkhwanazi - he's now the administrative secretary - I asked him, for instance, about - about the PAC and why was it that the PAC was not actively involved in the country - there were a few former PAC members and sympathisers, and then he argued that well, the PAC was busy making preparations, they were busy training people militarily - I then asked him, well, O.K., I don't want any of the details but what is - what is the estimated size of the PAC armed wing?"

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H.I. And he then told me: Oh, we have about 20,000 men in training right now - and I - I was immediately sceptical - I said: Well, I do not believe that any movement would have that large number of people, you know, just lying idly in any camp - but I genuinely believed that have a sizeable number of people either in military training or people who had already completed military training but were waiting for the opportunity to return.

J.F. This was when?

H.I. This was in about December, '74, January, '75, you know - you'll have to bear in mind I was only in Swaziland for six weeks - on the other hand I also met various ANC people, all of whom also made exaggerated claims about what they were doing in the country, where for instance, they were claiming that I mean things of which I was aware, for instance, were not the work of the ANC that they were claiming credit for - but then also a former ANC - a former SASO member whom I knew very, very well had joined the ranks of the ANC and he was trying to claim that well, SASO was really a creation of the ANC, and I said: Well, look, I - you know, let us - let us not engage in that kind of dishonesty.

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But then when I subsequently got to Tanzania at the end of '75, you know, when I came - I'd come back from New Zealand, the PAC in Tanzania at that time literally consisted of about 22 old men, most of them quietly involved in agriculture and poultry farming, - the ranks of the - of the PAC were swelled by BCM people who had fled after the repression that followed the pro-Frelimo rallies in '74 and in '75 the expulsions of students of Lovedale and Healtown in the Eastern Cape, so it was not - it was not so much - it was not so much, I think, the PAC - how can one put it - I think the PAC tried very hard at that particular time to recruit BCM people because they - they saw in the ideas that were being propagated by BCM people an ideological affinity with what they were themselves saying, but then later on they began to - to argue that the BCM was really a continuation of the work that they had started, which was again both historically and, you know, academically, un - untrue.

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J.F. (Tape off).... kind of take it up a bit from where we left off but also- so let me just start more getting specifically into my area of non-racialism, so I think my questions'll be more directly focused - I think you kind of gave me a sense of where you moved to and everything, although we didn't get all the way into how you moved away from the PAC - let me take it back to some more specific questions and also bearing in mind that my - that I will be looking to quote (?) answers that are concise - it doesn't hurt that I focus and then (.....) keep asking questions, but feel free to take off if you think that you want to pursue something I'm not emphasising - can you tell me a bit about the view of the PAC and ANC during the BC days from when you were at UWC through when things heated up in the early '70s - when you sat around and talked about things what did people say, what did you say, what did Steve Biko say about the ANC and the PAC, or did you just not discuss them much, did you discuss them much?

H.I. We did discuss both organisations fairly extensively - we were - we were critical of the ANC for two major reasons: - the one was that the organisation had been in existence for so long but had failed to effect any meaningful change in South Africa - we appreciated the difficulties under which they operated, but our major criticism was that the leadership of the ANC had in fact restrained the membership, and throughout the history of the ANC, as we interpreted it, the leadership was really afraid of preparing or mobilising the masses for - for confrontation with the system.

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H.I. For this reason, I think that amongst very many of the early activists within the BC movement there was greater sympathy for the PAC, which within a short period of its existence had precipitated a confrontation which resulted in the Sharpeville massacre. - this did not mean that we blindly supported the PAC or accepted very many of its basic premises. - for one, we were aware of the black racism of the PAC and the fact that insofar as the PAC was concerned, it regarded so-called Coloureds, Asians and whites as foreign minorities, despite whatever occasional rhetoric there might be from one or two individual leaders within the PAC.

The second major criticism of the PAC was the fact that it provoked a confrontation without sufficient preparation, political preparation having been done, so that after the detention of the major leadership and the proscription of the organisation, it in fact ceased to exist. - but I think that the major attraction that the PAC offered at the time was the whole emphasis of black leadership in the liberation struggle, and the second aspect of the need to free blacks psychologically from the feelings of inferiority that were in fact a product of their domination in South Africa.

J.F. And with (?) that attraction for you personally, did you have any problems, did it - was it a factor to you that there was this line on Coloureds and Indians? - there had been historically anti-Indian very overtly - did you know about that - and there had been - like Sobukwe had to go through a definition of yes, Coloureds can be accepted because, but it wasn't a kind of - it was African and then they had to have a line on the minorities - did you know about that or did it matter to you?

H.I. No, I - I knew about that, and in fact we did debate that very extensively amongst ourselves, and in fact at one conference of SASO at Hammanskraal in 1972 the issue did come up again very strongly: - a small section of the student activist population from University of the North argued that so-called Coloureds and Asians were not really black and the term black should be defined narrowly to mean so-called Africans, but that argument was - was rejected after very, very, you know, extensive debate.

J.F. Were there any particular figures who pushed that line?

H.I. Ironically, one of the persons who pushed the line, as I recall it was Terror Lekota, who is today within the UDF, but I - I do want to say, though, that at that particular time he was not a leading political activist - he happened to have been one of those expelled from Turfloop following the - following the expulsion of Tiro and the subsequent protest - he was not only not a leading political activist but he was also not very, very articulate as a political ideologue, if you want to term it that, so I think that it was more a case of emotion and perhaps personal experiences in their own particular areas rather than any very carefully thought out political position.

J.F. Was any of the analysis of ANC viz-a-viz (versus) PAC rooted in or influenced by a response or (?) rejection of white involvement? - was the factor of the whites for you or for others an issue - the fact that the ANC was seen to be working with whites, the fact that the PAC definitely didn't, did that mean something to you guys?

H.I. Yes, the whole question of white involvement in - in the struggle did play a major role in our thinking at that particular time. - we had come out of the University Christian Movement and NUSAS, as I explained, and our rejection of white leadership in the struggle was not really a rejection of white persons per se but more a rejection of the paternalistic attitude that - that I think was represented more by the white liber - you know, the Liberal Party, the Progressive Party at that time and very many of the white liberal organisations that did a great deal of welfare and charity work within black communities.

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H.I. Our view at that particular time was that, despite their good intentions, such efforts had the effect of increasing black dependency, and we felt that what was more important was for black people to begin to take responsibility for - for the solution of their own problems - in this regard also we were influenced to a great extent by the teachings of Pallo Freire, who in his development of a theory of under-development in Latin America coined the term "assistentialism," which he defines as a policy of doing things for the exploited and oppressed so that the exploited and oppressed are then denied the responsibility of solving their own problems.

J.F. When you read Friere was it as a person of colour in the third world that you saw him or speaking for?

H.I. No, I do not think we saw him as a person of colour in the third world as much as we saw him as a theorist, an analyst, and very many of - very many of the arguments that he put forth could be applied to some of the problems that we were confronted with at that particular time - for instance, his whole argument that people should not only be taught how to read and write but that they should also be taught to think critically and ask themselves the questions well, why has it taken so long for them to see the light - in other words, it was not sufficient merely to teach people the mechanics of literacy, but more importantly to teach them the politics of illiteracy - in other words, the active teaching should also be accompanied by a political process of heightening awareness.

J.F. With Freire he - I don't want to just make any - a value on what he was saying that in context of, but in South Africa with kind of "assistentialism" whereby the oppressed are denied that experience of self help, of "black man, you're on your own" or oppressed person get it together yourself - did you see any agenda from those white liberals, from those who were in their helping that was more insidious, that was more destructive as opposed to innocent - what - was there any feeling that these - was it mainly look, the whites have helped us and the UCM came out of dealing with whites, but now we've got to be on our own because we need to, or was there a feeling that they've got a hidden agenda to keep us down, and for that reason as well we have to reject white involvement - how did you feel and how did others feel and what were the debates about it then?

H.I. There were - there were two - there were two aspects to the debate at that particular time - there were very many of us who felt that there were very many sincere whites who were concerned about the situation and who genuinely were working for change in South Africa and who, regardless of the biological fact of their whiteness, would adjust easily to - to leadership or governance by a black majority - this was particularly the case amongst very many of the academic and student political activists with whom we - we interacted and whom we came to know very well, you know, as - as persons.

There were others, on the other hand, who did not really do what they did for any sinister purposes, but whose activities were perhaps innocent and in many cases purely naive - it was a case of, I suppose, a welfare - a welfare colonialism, if you want to term it that, because they felt that what they were doing was really very good for - for the black majority, and in this respect I would simply cite one particular example.

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H.I. There would be organisations of white South African housewives who felt that they needed to teach black South African housewives how to budget, and so what they taught them was that they should make do on the meagre salaries they had at their disposal, so that rather than, for instance, purchase meat, vegetables and other foods that had the required nutrients, they should make do with synthetic foods - now that I do not think was due to any sinister motives on their part, but we looked at it in the broader - in the broader context - it was more important to teach those housewives to ask themselves the question, why did they earn the meagre salaries that they did, or why did they have the small amount of money at their disposal, in contrast with say, white housewives or white families of similar size.

So I think that we - we did not categorise, you know, all - all whites - we did make those kinds of differ - you know, distinctions, but then at the same time, when - when we looked at even those radicals whom we believed would, if necessary, lay down their lives in the liberation struggle, after their political involvement with us, after all the discussions that we had, they went back to their homes, which were in white-whites only suburbs and, regardless of their own political convictions, were beneficiaries under the system, despite their political convictions, and, you know, their own wishes.

J.F. So did you work with some of the people who were involved, like Horst Kleinschmidt or some of those - Neville Curtis - you mentioned them....

H.I. Yes, Horst - Horst Kleinschmidt, for instance, was very active in the Christian Institute - he and Peter Randall, for instance, were instrumental in the whole study project on Christianity in an apartheid society or Spro-cas, which resulted not merely in various publications that were, I believe, the first, you know, attempts to begin to look at alternatives - Spro-cas also resulted in the establishment of Ravan Press, which I think has done a magnificent job in terms of publishing materials that at that particular time were not popular or that all the commercial presses refused to handle, and I think that in - in that respect Ravan Press and the whole Spro-cas series of materials were very important to the subsequent political developments in - in the country, in that I think they stimulated a great deal of - of debate, discussion, and also I think demonstrated a commitment by some of the white progressives to move beyond theory and rhetoric to actual - you know, to actual practice of what - you know, what they believed in, and very many of them paid very, very dearly for that - they were banned, some were assassinated, you know, Rick Turner amongst them - others were forced into exile.

J.F. Did you consider and make any difference - just give me a sense - if I'd been listening in on the discussion you would have been having in the early '70s, what was the feeling of - let's get specific - a Bram Fischer and a Patrick Duncan - did those particular names mean something to you - did you have a different sense of what those two were about and a different assessment and acceptance or non-acceptance of their role?

H.I. Yes, we - we certainly did - very many of us, for instance, were very clear that there was a - a distinct difference between a Bram Fischer and a - and a Patrick Duncan - Patrick Duncan, for instance, from the Liberal Party, was attracted to the PAC not because he was committed to the struggle for liberation but he was attracted by the anti-communism of the PAC, and he then sought to strengthen that anti-communist element in opposition to the ANC, which he perceived and described as being communist-influenced, so that his motives for involvement to the extent that he was involved were far different from those of a Bram Fischer, who in a very real sense was a traitor to his class in the - in the classical Marxist sense.

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H.I. Bram Fischer not only deserted his class and his - and his ethnic group, if you want to term it that, but he then also went very much further in abandoning a profession, a lifestyle and everything else to undertake the risks and hardships of a life underground, and I think that not only was - was that difference between a Bram Fischer and a Patrick Duncan recognised but there was also - there was also a - a - a great deal of admiration for - for Bram Fischer amongst activists in the BC movement in the early '70s.

J.F. I thought there was - I didn't know that - I thought there was a feeling that the communists were whites who were infiltrating to take over the movement and there was suspicion - I was surprised - I thought I'd be surprised to ever hear that there was any admiration - I thought - surely you're not leaving aside the issue that there was some kind of suspicion, antipathy, non-co-operation between BC and anything that seemed to be SACP, or you tell me what was going on between the two.

H.I. I - there was - there was not antipathy towards the - towards the SACP because it was a communist party - the suspicion amongst very many of the activists within the BC movement in the early years was that members of the SACP were attempting to pursue the objectives of the SACP through the ANC rather than as an independent entity, and I think that this was - this was reinforced by a feeling that very many of us had at that particular time, that rather than disband in 1950, the SACP should have taken the risks of continued existence as an underground movement, just as communist parties had existed under equally repressive conditions of fascism in say, Portugal and Spain.

Now that - that view might have been - it might have been erroneous, it might have - it might not have been based on any accurate analysis of the concrete conditions that members of the SACP faced in 1950, but then it was - it was the view that - it was a view that was held within sections of the BC movement, and I think that to - to some extent this view was reinforced by the - by the absence of, you know, discussions with say, members of the SACP or - or the ANC at that particular time, - if for instance, conditions permitted a free discussion of such - such issues they could have been clarified.

J.F. But still it - all this presupposes - when you're saying the SACP should have worked on its own, there was a rejection by the BC of the communist theory and of the SACP, is that right?

H.I. No, there was not a rejection of communism or of a communist theory - there was a criticism of the particular practice of the SACP in South Africa, and like I said, it was a criticism of what was perceived to be the attempt by the SACP to pursue its objectives through the ANC, but I do not think that there was a rejection of communism or a rejection of socialism - a discussion of - a discussion of the theories of communism and socialism was made difficult by the conditions under which we operated: - there was the Suppression of Communism Act, for instance, that we constantly had to - had to sort of skirt.

It is for this reason that discussions about an alternative socio-economic system were always couched in such vague terms as "communalism". - I think there was an awareness of the need for an alternative system, but there was a fear, if you want to term it that, of spelling out in precise terms what exactly was meant for fear that that would be seized upon by the government to either ban individuals or, more importantly, to proscribe the organisations, because that was what the government at that particular time constantly argued; that the BC movement was merely a front for one or other of the banned organisations.

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J.F. But do you - were there - do you think there were different tendencies in the BC movement where some people were more leaning towards a socialist or even further to a communist and others were not, or do you think that generally you could really say that BC was socialist in its ultimate direction but just was trying pragmatically to not be banned in moving there?

H.I. No, there were - there were definitely different tendencies, and I think that as in any mass movement, there are bound to be various tendencies, and I think that if one were to accurately describe the range of tendencies that existed within the BC movement, they would have ranged from tribalism through black racism, through, you know, pro-capitalism to socialism, just as within, you know, the earlier political organisations the ANC, the PAC, there - you know, there were similar ranges of political tendencies.

J.F. Do you think that.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. Do you think there's any truth to that - do you feel that as the organisation moved and SASO as opposed to maybe BPC, that there was a tendency towards the early to mid '70s and moving towards the later '70s until the bannings to be more socialist and more that the tendency of socialism, the tendency of left analysis was on the ascendency or did you not see that kind of shift....

H.I. Oh, no, there certainly was - there was a qualitative development in black political consciousness and also in ideological clarity within SASO in particular - I think that by the mid '70s they began to very clearly see the connection between - between race and class exploitation, so that some of the analyses that developed from about 1975 began to - to define in far more precise terms the relationship between capitalism as the prevailing economic system in South Africa and the exploitation to which the mass of people were subjected.

And at the same time I think there also began to be a far greater awareness within the BC movement, but particularly within the ranks of the student movement, that far greater emphasis had to be placed on the role of workers in the liberation struggle - this was - this was expressed more in - in terms of the rhetoric, but I think that the efforts to then move beyond the rhetoric were hamstrung by the fact that SASO was essentially a student organisation, and SASO and BPC were predominantly urban intellectual movements whose influence, though, was fairly extensive through, you know, the ideas that were propagated and the views that were expressed and which were then sort of popularised in black political culture. → to p.25

J.F. In the kind of more clarification that began to evolve of political views and in the kind of readings of history that were possible given the constraints was there ever any more specific critique of the ANC and the PAC on the issue of explicit socialist doctrine - I'm thinking of the seeming that the historical just putting the PAC into perspective historically and that statement that seems to be borne out by fact of the PAC's early founding and the USIS connection and that kind of thing - did that come out at the time - was there a sense that that wasn't true or that that was irrelevant or was that not known?

from p. 24 (Was there an awareness in BC circles of the view that the PAC and BC are more acceptable to the west than the ANC?)

H.I. (2) There was an awareness of the allegation of American involvement in the formation of the PAC, but it was rejected as a smear, and I think there was - there was an awareness of the kinds of, you know, charges and counter-charges that were levelled by the different organisations - and even though there was an awareness that Leballo, for instance, one of the founders of the PAC, was employed by the US information service, the attitude that - the attitude that prevailed at that time was that to him it was probably a means of a livelihood, - it was a job - rather than his having been employed as - as an agent or whatever the case might be, so I do not think that - I do not think that much credence was attached to the allegations at the time that the PAC was created by, you know, the Americans to counter what was perceived to be Soviet influence in the ANC. → (2) end

I think that the history of the organisation and those kinds of ideological struggles that were taking place within the ANC from as far back as the '50s just - you know, just disproved that allegation.

J.F. Maybe I should just move on - I'm talking about all these debates - you ultimately left, you went to New Zealand, you - take me to the time when you were deciding where to go - was there a sense when you went out that you as an important leader would have a kind of responsibility to see where to go - had people had a sense of a consensus that BC should be a third force and that ANC and PAC had failed and that you should move somewhere to establish a BC movement - had you felt no, there are these two organisations, one of them will get our support and we'll rejuvenate it - and then of course you leaving '74, '75, then '76 happened and perhaps that changed things - just tell me if you can give your assessment of how you moved from an important BC figure inside the country in '74 to joining the PAC or almost being drafted into the PAC central committee, as you explained, but not rejecting that - accepting that - how - what was your movement - but because I don't want to see it too much individualistically you can relate that to the BC movement.

from p. 14 (3) (Can you tell me a bit more about your evolution from BC to PAC? When you first left SA, did you have any plans to establish an external office of BC?)

H.I. No, certainly at - at that particular time there were - there were two schools of thought within the BC movement as a whole - the one school of thought argued strongly - strongly in favour of establishing the BC movement as a third force. - that school of thought argued that the ANC and the PAC had failed and that nothing further could be expected of them, and that the BC movement had established itself as a viable entity within the country and that preparations should now be made to take the struggle one stage further and that the BC movement should begin to establish a military wing. - that was the one school of thought.

The second school of thought argued that it would be divisive to create a multiplicity of organisations in exile and that there were already these two liberation movements, the ANC and the PAC, which not only enjoyed international recognition but that they had their roots in the country and had been forced into exile by, you know, the South African government which had banned them in 1960, and that to begin to - to begin to challenge these movements outside would be a - would be a reversal of a policy decision that had been taken way back in the - in the '60s already, that the BC movement recognised the leadership of the ANC and the PAC and would not and did not challenge their role as the representatives of the oppressed people in South Africa, but that in - in their absence from the country, the BC movement was merely there to keep the fires of resistance aflame.

My own position at that particular time was that we were bound by that policy decision, and for any creation of a third force there would have to be a very clear policy decision taken internally, and that since people had repeatedly stated inside the country that rather than create a multiplicity of organisations, an effort should be made to unite the various progressive forces. → to p. 26

H.I. It was both politically and historically incorrect to then come out and, for whatever reasons, to begin to establish a so-called third force, and I think that that view was - was strengthened by the struggle that took place in Angola, where a multiplicity of organisations then created favourable conditions for external intervention, particularly Western intervention that was aimed at preventing the accession to power of the best organised, most progressive movement that had very clearly spelled out its own vision for a liberated Angola, that is the MPLA.

And in - in the subsequent debates that - that took place around '75, '76 very many of the older members of the BC movement, that is those who were there say, when SASO was - was founded and who, you know, had subsequently been forced into exile, we maintained that position that we could not be party to any attempts to create a third force.

J.F. So you went out with that predisposition - did you go out and did - with any predisposition as to which of the two existing forces you would align yourself with?

H.I. No - no, I did not, I - I kept an open mind and I also kept the options open because I did not want to take a position that might then be interpreted as an organisational decision, and like I explained, initially I maintained very cordial relations with the ANC and PAC through individual members whom I knew. - by the beginning of 1976, however, my former colleagues in the BC movement were involved in discussions with the PAC about the formation of, if you want to term it a - a united front, or at any rate, discussions about co-operation between the PAC and the BC movement.

I did not participate in any of those discussions because I was at first in New Zealand and then subsequently, even when I returned to Southern Africa at the end of '75, the beginning of '76, I was not in Botswana, where the major groupings of, you know, former BC members were - I was in - in Swaziland, and even though I, you know, communicated with them and learned of some of these discussions, I did not have a major input.

At the end of '76, the beginning of '77, I met with some of the BC members then in Botswana and learned from them of the political arrangements that they had had with the PAC regarding the recruitment of personnel, the military training, and also the problems that had - that had arisen in the process, and I was then one of the members of a delegation that participated in discussions with the PAC central committee at the beginning of 1977, you know, regarding future co-operation between the PAC and the BC movement, but even while discussing those arrangements, which basically envisaged the BCM retaining its autonomy and, you know, independent political identity, I - I remained critical for - for two - for two reasons:- the one was just my own - my own view of not creating a multiplicity of organisations in - in exile, but then the second was a more important practical consideration, and that was if the BCM were to retain its independence and autonomy, how - how do you control a situation where the PAC was certainly the smaller and the weaker of the two entities, yet was recognised internationally as a national liberation movement and was going to make possible access to certain political military facilities by the BCM, and yet after the completion of military training by members of the BCM or whatever, they would then be released to the BCM? - if, on the other hand, it were argued that they would still be members of the BCM but be under the control or authority of the PAC, how then does one - how does - how then does one expect the PAC to - to exercise that authority when those members could claim quite correctly that they were not members of the PAC? and in fact such problems did arise, and I think that some of the problems that took place within the PAC in '77, '78 did have - did have the origins in some of these, you know, vaguely defined co-operation agreements that were negotiated by PAC leaders as well as former BCM leaders.

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H.I. And even in this respect what is important to understand is that the BCM leaders who were in exile did not really have any very clear authority or mandate from the internally-based organisations, but what happened was that they were transposing into the conditions of exile the positions of leadership that they enjoyed within the country, so that individuals who were either leaders in the - in the black people's convention or in SASO then attempted to exercise the same kind of leadership in exile.

You see, the fact that I had been president of SASO at the time of my banning didn't mean that, you know, two years later when I left the country I could go out and claim to be president of SASO or act in a manner that either bound SASO or would, you know, compromise the organisation's security internally.

J.F. In light of the time maybe I can just ask you if you can summarise briefly your movement into the PAC and then out - you don't have to get very involved because I'm going to read that in the book that you'll let me have, and then I want to come back at it through my kind of prism of this word non-racialism and kind of get back and ask you if it ever meant anything to you then and now and early days, so can you just give me the kind of really short version of moving into the PAC and then up through '82 and after - to just sum it up - I think I understand a bit, but I can also flesh it out from your book that I'll read.

H.I. Well, like I explained, in '77 the PAC central committee appointed me as the organisation's representative in Australasia, and after much consultations with very many of my former colleagues in the BC movement, I decided to accept the position in the hope that I could make some contribution towards the unity of both, you know, the BC movement and PAC-oriented political tendencies, and secondly also to make some contribution towards strengthening the PAC as an organisation so that it would play a meaningful role in the liberation struggle.

I served in that capacity until '78 when I left New Zealand, first for Australia and then for the United States, where I worked in the PAC office for probably about two or three months assisting at - at the UN, and then went to Tanzania to participate in the second consultative conference, - at that - at that particular conference very many of us were caught up in a power struggle between factions of the PAC, the origins of which we were totally ignorant, and I'd be the first to admit that.

We - we were then made to - we were then placed in a situation where we had to make decisions based on evidence presented to us at that particular conference, and even though we - you know, none of us really was interested in siding with any particular faction - the result of the conference, though, was that we - you know, we emerged as members of a particular faction within the PAC, and that particular faction was the Leballo faction of the PAC.

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Well (while) I continued in the leadership of the PAC for - for several - for several years and attempted during the time that I was there to - to do two things: - the one was to link the PAC very firmly with the political developments in the country. - after having been in the PAC at that leadership level, I became very, very much aware of the fact that the organisation existed purely as a small number of people in exile who had no connection whatsoever to what was going on inside the country, and whatever links or contacts there were were individual contacts with individuals in the country, that there was no programme, if you want to term it that, for the execution of armed struggle in the country, despite the rhetoric.

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H.I. The second thing that I attempted to do was to try to encourage the, you know - the formation of viable structures within the PAC, because one legacy of the PAC's short history within the country was the fact that it had failed to develop any organisational structures in the country or in exile.- it existed basically as a conglomerate of individuals, and I think that that largely explains the perennial problems within the PAC and also its ineffectiveness.- it had failed in its 25 years of existence to develop any viable revolutionary structures, and that remains, you know, its problem still today.

What - what I under-estimated was the capacity of an organisation that had existed for so long in that state of confusion to reject or to resist any change, particularly by, you know, old - older leaders who had no means of an independent livelihood outside of the PAC and whose sole means of support, as it were, or livelihood was the continued existence of the organisation, and what they resisted was any effort, particularly by the younger members, to bring about any changes that would threaten their positions, so they reacted ruthlessly to any efforts by the younger leadership to bring about any meaningful changes within the PAC, and what they did was they either appealed to host governments to detain and deport individuals, and very many of the generation of '76, for instance, who joined the PAC, and very many of the BC movement who joined the PAC ultimately ended up either in prison in Tanzania, following the assassination of David Sibeko, or in refugee camps in Tabora and other places in Tanzania under the auspices of the UNHCR.

J.F. Let me take it to an ideological level and ask you, because I think that again I'll get from your book and doesn't enlighten really what I'm trying to look at as much, and that is how do these rifts (?) - how does the ultimate lack of cohesiveness of the PAC relate to the issue of non-racialism to the tenets (?) of BC, that debate, because ultimately today - you might not have even predicted it a few years ago that the National Union of Mineworkers would endorse the Freedom Charter, that CUSA would be left the small group because COSATU would say non-racialism, we're not compromising - that's all out in the open now - just tell me from your perspective how it relates, how it was a factor- can I just ask you about non-racialism and take us back - did that word even get discussed in the late '60s and early '70s - as you were involved in PAC politics in the mid to late '70s into the early '80s, how did the ideological debate around the issues of race and class, how was that a factor?

H.I. It was a factor in the sense that - and I think that we should not confuse means and ends - there was - there was no doubt in our minds within the BC movement that ultimately we were striving to create a society where race would not be a factor - in other words, just as say, the ANC and the organisations that were part of the congress alliance pursued a strategy of establishing - well, I don't want to even call it multiracial alliances, because it creates an impression of organisation on the basis of race, but what they attempted to do was to organise these different political structures, for want of a better term, that were created by members of the different racial groups like the - you know, there was the South African Indian Congress, there was the Coloured People's Organisation.

Now even though those organisations were called Coloured, they were called Indian, if one - if one looks at their political objectives, they were striving towards creating societies that would - or a society that - that was non-racial, but because of the particular circumstances of South African society they were forced to organise in that particular manner, so that I do not accept the argument that was put forth by the PAC, for instance, that the ANC was committed to multiracialism - it was not.

H.I. The ANC was committed to creating a non-racial society, it was very clear from the outset - in exactly the same way, I do not accept the argument that is put forth by say, supporters of the ANC, that the BC movement and the PAC were working towards a creation of say, black racist societies or black dominated societies - they - both the BC movement and the PAC adopted BC, and in the case of the PAC, orthodox African nationalism to create non-racial societies themselves, and I think that if one were to look say, at what has happened in Zimbabwe, one sees a similar development in the sense that ZANU, for instance, repeatedly stated that leadership in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle had to be provided by Zimbabweans and ZANU, you know, was repeatedly accused of racism and of splitism etc., yet nobody can - nobody can deny the fact that ZANU has attempted very seriously to create a non-racial society in Zimbabwe, and I think that in the South African context the argument that was put forth by the BC movement, that black people should provide their own leadership did not mean that the organisation rejected the ideal of a non-racial society - that ideal has always been there.

J.F. But what I'm saying is the PAC, as you apparently have documented, is falling apart or whatever its position is that it's not very healthy today and the ANC has been - benefited (?) from a resurgence of support - does the position of the two movements today, does it - is each of its position on non-racialism a factor, do you think - does the breakdown of the PAC - I understand that there's no point in criticising overly the PAC because they do - to just say they're a bunch of black racists - I'll accept that, but I'm saying its refusal to accept non-racialism - in fact if you look at CUSA, AZACTU viz-a-viz COSATU, that kind of determined resistance to non-racialism doesn't seem to be the dominant view - is - maybe you....

H.I. No, it - it certainly is not the dominant view and I - I think that to - you know, to put it - to put it in perhaps more concrete terms, Neil Aggett, for instance, was a medical doctor - he left his profession to work as a secretary for a trade union, the majority of whose members were black - it cannot be said that he wanted to lead that trade union movement - he was an official, a functionary - he died at the hands of the South African security police - in such a circumstance it becomes very difficult, or in fact you cannot deny a role in the liberation struggle to a Neil Aggett.

The only argument that you then have is that you deny him a role because he is white, in which case that is racist - in exactly the same way, a Barbara Hogan, who at great risk and sacrifices, was involved in activities in furtherance of the liberation struggle, as a result of which she was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for treason - you cannot deny a Barbara Hogan a role in the liberation struggle simply because she is white, and I think that people involved in the liberation struggle have to constantly assess and analyse the situation on the basis of the concrete reality rather than on the basis of emotion and sentiment, and the reality today is that there is a growing number of white South Africans prepared to take the risks that even very many of the blacks in the liberation struggle are not prepared to take.

The young white woman, for instance, who walked into police stations and planted bombs did something that no black had done, so that to deny a role in the liberation struggle, even if it is at the level of leadership simply because they are white, is racist and, you know, there is no other argument for that.

H.I. And I think that the fact that there is this growing number of whites who have taken such risks and who have paid the price for it, and the fact that the ANC has established its primacy in the liberation struggle through its military and political activities, has strengthened the - the ideological tendency that argues unequivocally in favour of non-racialism, and I - you know, I hope that that has provided some adequate explanation.

J.F. Was that a factor - again I haven't read the book, I don't know, but a lot of what you were saying when you were giving your quick summary of how you parted ways with the PAC had to do with other issues, individuals and power politics, but did any of your parting of the ways with the PAC have to do with what you've just stated, that there - their refusal to move into that area and their continued denial of a role in a sense for whites?

H.I. Well, that certainly is the case, but you know, more particularly the failure of the PAC to - to face the reality of the political developments on the ground, and I think that as far back as 1980, for instance, I presented to the PAC a memo, you know, and it - it was titled "The Internal Situation in South Africa and the need for a PAC response", in which I drew specific attention to the fact that the ANC was enjoying a resurgance in the country because it is the - because at that particular time it was the only movement that was seen by the masses to be fighting the enemy, and that increasingly the Freedom Charter was being debated, and I pointed out, for instance, that it was significant that students at the University of the North, which was a BC movement stronghold, debated and accepted the Freedom Charter and, you know, the argument that I put forth was well, what then is, you know, the response of the PAC going to be? - is the PAC going to continue to argue that the ANC is a creation of the white liberal media and the Soviet Union, or whether the PAC was going to attempt to come to grips with the political reality in South Africa by being seen to be a part of the resistance, and I argued at that time that it was not, and that we should have both the political maturity and the honesty to address that fact very clearly.

J.F. Do you now, and looking back, see any evidence or logic or relevance to the theory that a black exclusivism is actually - can play into the hands of the status quo in South Africa and in the West? - I think there's a quote in my book from Harold (Pakendorf...) long ago, saying BC is just like Afrikaaner or white consciousness and we can handle that - you hear - I've heard from people who were detained that the security policemen would say to them : Look, I don't know why you're so interested in the ANC, BC, black man you're on your own and stick with that - do you think that that's true, do you think it's relevant?

H.I. Well, not only is it true, I think it's very, very relevant, and as I've repeatedly argued and as I've repeatedly - and as I've written in my book, that that is one of the greatest dangers facing the resistance in South Africa today, namely that the PAC in particular, and all that it represents, has the capacity to play the role of another UNITA in South Africa - at the present time what is happening is that the South Africans as well as conservatives in the West are looking for an alternative to the ANC, which they portray as either communist-influenced or a Soviet proxy, and if one looks at the strategy that is being pursued by the South African government one would see that it is the UDF that has been hardest hit by the repression - the leadership of the UDF at all levels has been detained - the UDF was prohibited from receiving funds from abroad, and in addition to that the organisation that has been affected by all the South African cross-border raids, by the assassinations of representatives and other leaders, has been the ANC.

H.I. Internationally if one looks at the United States, for instance, in 1982 the Senate sub-committee on the security and intelligence cond - you know, conducted an investigation into the ANC's communist links and Soviet influence - the 1986 anti-apartheid Act in this country also had a provision for congress to conduct an investigation and present a report on the alleged influence of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union in the ANC.

Even spokespersons for the U.S. State Department have repeatedly stated that they wanted to enter into a dialogue with the ANC with the view to creating a split between the so-called nationalists and the communists, so that one sees that there is a very, very definite effort on the part of the South African government, on the part of conservatives in the West, to destroy the political tendency that is represented by the ANC both internationally and in South Africa.

But I think that it is not - it is not just say, the South African government as well as Western governments like the United States - it is also within independent Africa - the only reason why the OAU, for instance, continues to recognise the existence of the PAC as a national liberation movement is because of the concern amongst very many of the conservative African governments about the alleged Soviet influence in the ANC, and I think that I can say that very, very confidently because I've been in the leadership of the PAC, I've been involved in discussions with representatives of these African governments at all levels, I've been involved in meetings of the OAU at all levels.

There is a general awareness within the OAU, but more particularly amongst the frontline states, that the PAC is not involved in any armed struggle, that it does not even have the capacity to infiltrate its literature into the country, let alone infiltrate men and materials into the country, but they continue to recognise the PAC as a liberation movement and provide support, and the reason for that is because of their concerns about Soviet influence in the ANC.

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. .... leave you and the PAC, but where did - where are you aligned at this stage - you left the PAC in '82?

H.I. Yes, I - I left the PAC in - in 1982 - at this particular point I have not joined any - any particular organisation - the position that I put forth is that progressive forces internationally, as well as the mass of people in the country must support those who are fighting, and those who are fighting at this particular time are the UDF, which is waging a political struggle in the country under extremely difficult conditions, and the ANC, which is also waging an armed struggle under very, very difficult conditions.

J.F. So you're not aligned but you believe (?) your statement at that level, which seems to be supportive of the ANC?

H.I. I - I'm supportive of the ANC and what they are doing, which, like I said, has been a tremendous job under equally very, very difficult conditions and circumstances, both internally and internationally.

J.F. Are you - would you join the ANC, would you change that position of non-alignment? or is that not on the horizon at all - have you ruled that out?

H.I. Well, I have not - I have not ruled that out, but at this particular point I'm involved in several - several projects whose independence I do not want to jeopardise, but at the same time I think make it very important, you know, for a person like myself to very, very clearly dissociate myself from any reactionary tendencies in the liberation struggle, and I certainly believe that at this particular point the PAC represents not just a reactionary tendency but a dangerous tendency for the liberation struggle.

J.F. Non-racialism, how do you - how did you stand on it, if you could sum up your political development - how did you stand on it from the late '60s through to the present and how did you change over that time and where does that leave you now?

H.I. Well, I think that throughout I've maintained a very, very steadfast position of non-racialism as the ultimate political objective in South Africa - I have not changed that position at all - insisting - insisting on providing our own leadership in pursuit of that objective was not - was not a rejection of the principle of non-racialism - I - I think though, that it was important for us to - for us to stress that position since - since then the political circumstances within the country have changed to the extent that I think black people in South Africa can very, very confidently deal - deal with whatever level of political participation there is by whites in the liberation struggle - I do not think that that is or should be an issue at all.

And I think that if one were to look at the argument that is put forth by very many people - well, not very many people but by the PAC, for instance, that the UDF is dominated by whites - I mean it's absolute trash - if one looks at all the affiliated organisations within the UDF they are all organisations the majority of whose members are black - if one looks at the overall numbers within the UDF, you know, of the estimated 300 members, you know, belonging to some 700 different organisations, the UDF is a predominantly black organisation, so that that argument is - you know, is - is just really not only in - invalid - I think it is just also dishonest.

J.F. When you said that we have to worry about it becoming a future UNITA, do you think there's already some penetration, some work in that direction from the reactionary forces - I don't know if it would be the CIA or Western governments looking for an alternative - do you think that's already happening or is that - there is the African American Labour Centre which there has been some suspicion about to the extent that unions in South Africa won't deal with them mainly - there is CUSA moving in one direction, COSATU moving in the other, one is very pro (.....) for the West and the other has refused to be ICFTU - is it something you'd say could happen and you don't want to make any charges now or do you think there is already something going on in that direction?

H.I. No, there - there certainly is something going on in that direction right now - if one looks at the USAID programme, for instance, the principal beneficiaries of USAID assistance have not been UDF affiliates, for instance, and I think that this was best summed up by a remark that was quoted in an article in the Los Angeles Times in November of 1986 by a USAID official when he said very clearly that the US does not want to create another Bulgaria or East Germany in South Africa and then implied that, in the provision of assistance to black South Africans in the country they were not going to support organisations that were....

H.I. .... UDF affiliates or organisations that the US perceived to be influenced by the ANC.

J.F. Was Biko moving towards the ANC and is that why he killed them - do you accept that?

H.I. Well, I would not say that he was moving towards the ANC, but at the time that he was killed, for instance, Biko was working - I mean it's well known within BC movement circles that he was working for the unity of all the progressive resistance forces in the country, and that included the ANC, whose - whose primacy in the liberation struggle he recognised.

J.F. You have a way of summarising the shift in a way that has intellectual - it makes sense and it sounds good and you've moved with it, but do you worry or do you think that there may be those who came out of BC who just somehow have - maybe it's the romantic emotional almost - it's nor really the anti-whitism but there's just something there where they can't move in that direction and they come up with all kinds of ideas of African working class leadership - or no, it couldn't be African because Saths Cooper supports it, but kind of working class hegemony - there's all kinds of words - there is a resistance, there is the conspiracy theory of what are these whites doing - there's something that somehow prevents some people who come from where you came from to moving to where you are, and where do you - what do you think that is, or do you just think it's not worth discussing, do you think it's such a small minority, but I think of the Saths Coopers, the current leadership of AZAPO, AZACTU and the CUSAS and it's - how do you explain that- if somebody would say to you : But not everyone in South Africa feels the same way as you do - there are blacks who don't accept whites involved in the movements or they don't like the term non-racialism - they fought for anti-racism - do you just say : Ag, it's a tiny minority with no base - or do you say : It's worth analysing, it comes from this?

H.I. It is worth - it is worth analysing because, like I said, because of the dangers that these divisions present for the liberation struggle, and I think that, you know, I've attempted to - to analyse just one - just one such argument that the UDF is dominated by whites, you know - it clearly is not - similarly, for instance, if one were to look at the argument that was put forth by AZAPO leaders at the time that Ted Kennedy visited South Africa in January of 1985, and I discussed with very many AZAPO leaders - they argued that Ted Kennedy was representative of US imperialism or monopoly capitalism - they were then demonstrating, as they said, their opposition to US monopoly capitalism.

But then Chester Crocker has been flying in and out of South Africa literally every two weeks since 1981, and AZAPO at no stage staged any demonstration against Chester Crocker, who was representative, or a representative of the Reagan administration, which in turn is representative of unbridled US monopoly capitalism, so I think that when one begins to analyse some of the arguments and some of the actions there is really no intellectual basis for the positions that are put forth, or even any ideological bases, but they are based on a sentiment on one level and the second is just a, I suppose, probably a personal or personality differences that - that, you know, individuals maintain for - for their own particular reasons.

J.F. So you don't see - you read these articles by Patrick Laurence and I'm sure Benjamin Pogrund's writing in Britain in the anti-Labour (.....) paper or whatever, but you get these articles saying - and I get it at speeches where people say to me, and I'm not even pushing any line but because I'll talk about the support for UDF they'll say : You know, there's a lot of support underneath in South Africa for Africanism and don't write it off, and look at this new union - there's some union and this guy is an Africanist and that's his line and all that, and they'll say : You don't know, you know, I've studied South Africa for 50 years, all those whites (?) and there is a sentiment of Africanism that runs deep and it's going to rise again and I'm wrong, they say to me, in not seeing as a force of the future - how do you answer that?

H.I. Well, if one - if one examines the ideological bent of those who put forth that argument - and I do not think that they are just unbiased journalists - there is a very - very strong ideological commitment on their part, and that ideological commitment is one of anti-communism, first and foremost, and they see the position that is put forth by the UDF as being - as being one that will ultimately lead to the ascendancy of the communist tend - or socialist tendency in South Africa.

There is no doubt that Africanism has a long history in South Africa - it dates back to say, the - you know, the first manifestations of it having been the emergence of the - of Ethiopianism of the independent churches - it was only say, in - in the late - or in the late '60s and early '70s, with the BC movement that it became a sort of a dominant political tendency, and

But I do not think that one can argue right now that it is a strong ideological - it is a strong ideological force - it may be - it may be latent, but I think that what has happened is that the ANC has strengthened its position to such an extent that it - it is - it is - it is likely to be the dominant force in the liberation struggle for well into the future, unless the South African regime take such strong measures to - to crush the ANC externally and the UDF forces internally, and equally strong measures to resuscitate anti-ANC, anti-UDF forces, and I think that to some extent that has already happened - the South African government has certainly cracked down on the UDF and ANC and not on, you know, the opposing political tendencies, and internationally there is already the evidence of particularly Western intervention to - to revive alternatives to the ANC.

J.F. I can understand when you - maybe I was actually wrong in leading the question - sure, we know why Patrick Laurence or whatever would do that - not to knock him particularly because he does some of [illegible] stuff (.....) but whoever pushes that with such vehemence we can see where they're coming from when they're white and when they're foreign, but when you hear the president of CUSA, AZACTU or when you hear a young student who's studying in the States who you might come across very passionately pushing this line, which is anti-UDF and anti-ANC, but perhaps more constructively to examine is pro what they see as Africanist - where do you see that coming out of - in someone is too new at it or too - maybe it arose - has come through something but we won't say : Oh, that person has long been involved with the ALC or whatever - but do you - or do you say to me : Look, this is a small number of people in MWASA in the Southern Transvaal who aren't - are not really very important to the grand scheme of things - or do you ever think to yourself look, I'm Henry Isaacs, I came out of BC, I can understand a bit where these people are coming from - this is what their problem is or this is what their bent is or this is why they aren't moving - I can't understand it really, but maybe you can, and I don't want to just dismiss it.

H.I. No, I don't want to dismiss it either because, you know, I can - I can understand it probably because, you know, I - I also deal with them literally on a day-to-day basis, but then they find difficulty in - in arguing their positions with me, because I'm able to refute everything they say - in the final analysis what it - what it really comes down to is either personal diffidence - you know, the lack of confidence through perhaps a lack of contact with - you know, with whites at a personal level - the second is just, you know, pure or pure racism, you know, anti-whitism.

For instance, very many of the youngsters, you know, who (Laugh) come out and, you know, put forth these positions say: Well, you know, we don't want to work with these whites because all that they want is to control the leadership of these organisations. - and I say: Well, look, if you are so afraid of that, if a white activist comes into the office at six a.m., you make sure you get there at five a.m., and if a white activist leaves at six p.m., you leave at seven p.m. - in other words, you work harder than he or she does, and then in that way you would be certain that he or she cannot gain control of the leadership of the organisation, if that is your major - you know, your major concern."

But there isn't anything really specific because, like I said, when - when questioned about specific arguments or specific allegations say, of white domination of any particular organisation, the arguments break down because in reality it is - you know, it is not there.

J.F. Does their argument tend to converge with a non-socialist or an anti-socialist or an anti-communist or non-clear ideological point of view, do you think - do you think the ones who are so anti-white are actually not so clear on their socialism?

H.I. Well, very many of them, yes, but others are more politically sophisticated, and what they have done is to have spun a whole - a whole new theory, you know, which - which again is a subject for a much lengthier discussion - I mean the whole idea of racial capitalism - capitalism is capitalism, you know, so they've spun all these - these new concepts of, you know, racial capitalism - you know, the ruling class, and if one analyses all these concepts very clearly, again one can refute, you know, all - all the arguments.

At one time, for instance, the argument was that well, the ANC claims that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, both black and white - now if, for instance, one argues that the ultimate political objective is to establish a socialist society or a communist society in South Africa, communism rejects the idea of private ownership in of the means of production, and in fact there would then not be individual title to land, and if that is the case then why should the question of ownership of the land be such a divisive issue? so the point that I - I am trying to make is that I think there is - there is need for very many of these issues to be discussed and - and debated, but hopefully in such a manner where it can be done unemotionally, and I think that, you know, in the crucible of struggle in South Africa this is - this is not possible because, you know, passions are inflamed and emotions aroused and the differences are - are exaggerated.

Now I think that - it - it's a daunting task but one that is - that is necessary because very many are (?) very, very good people who can play a positive role in the liberation struggle can in fact be lost or - or possibly even, you know, sidetracked into a potentially reactionary role through maintaining a vehemently emotional or sentimental attachment to a position that in fact cannot stand up to debate or - or - or, you know, scrutiny.

J.F. One last question - do you remember which book you found most of your (.....) from Freire or - the one mentioning assistantialism?

H.I. Let's see - Pedagogy (?) of the Oppressed, that was the one.....

END OF INTERVIEW.