J.F. So can you tell me where you were born and when?

I.M. I was born 8th. March, 1952, which makes me 35 years old, in Kokstad in the Cape Province - actually it's also called Griqualand, East Griqualand - that's where I was born, but I actually grew up in well, a number of places, because my father's home was just outside Qumbu in the Transkei, and he taught in Lusikisiki, and he taught there for ten years, so I left Lusikisiki when I was ten years old and we moved to Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, which is where I spent the rest of my time, but as I'm saying, I mean our youth was - I mean I grew up in the Transkei in Lusikisiki, and I mean I suppose when you speak about this whole thing of maybe attitude to whites, attitudes to Africans, I mean I grew up amongst both whites and Africans, maybe much more closer to Africans - like the school we went to - although it was meant to be a so-called Coloured school, Hillbrow Primary School, there were a number of African children who went to the school, so we grew up in that set-up, I mean speaking both English and Xhosa, which unfortunately when we went to Lusikisiki, being I mean quite young, ten years old I mean, you unlearn as much as you learn languages very fast you also unlearn them, so today while I can understand I mean Xhosa perfectly, maybe I'm a bit more reluctant to speak it I mean, especially when it comes to more of the political language, you know what I mean, because when you grow up as a child I mean you speak, you learn to play, you learn to talk to children, in that sort of atmosphere more in a home, you know, playing atmosphere as opposed to the sort of political language you use today.

Anyway I mean that's - that is that - I mean one of the things is, I suppose from our - the family - from my father's side, on - his grandmother was an African and his grandfather - not - ja, his grandmother was an African and his grandmother - what am I saying - his grandmother was African and his grandfather was white, and it's actually the grandmother who brought them up - she was a teacher - she ensured that they were educated, so I mean we really learned to respect Africans, and I mean he had that, you know, love obviously for his grandmother, but taught us I mean to really respect people, be they black or white....

J.F. So not his mother but his grandmother?

I.M. His grandmother, yes.

J.F. And the grandmother raised them?

I.M. Raised them, ja, which is I mean a thing you always find I mean in African families where children grow up with the grandmother - so I'm saying from that side for me the whole question of maybe, for example, when I go to Port Elizabeth, lots of children that I was at school with I mean they'd never met Africans, played with them, didn't know them - you know, there was that sort of a bridge because of the whole group areas where Coloureds will live in an area, Africans will live - you know, I'm just saying, especially when children were young and maybe when they grew up and started working, you know, or maybe attending university, but particularly when you start working I mean you'll come, you know, into contact with people of other race groups, but I think while you are still young and you are still at school and you're just between home and school it's very much a restricted, you know, life that you are lead - living, and you'll find that you mix more or less with people from that race group that you are from, but I'm just saying from my side, because I think particularly of the background we came out of, I mean we mixed all the time with Africans, with whites - I mean my father had a lot of friends who were white, so there was never that hang-up or, you know, inferiority complex or superiority complex - things like that I mean I - I never ever felt, you know, any of - of those things.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

J.F. Where did you go after you were ten, after....

I.M. To Port Elizabeth....

J.F. Whereabouts in P.E.?

I.M. In Korsten.

J.F. And what kind of - that was a Coloured area....

I.M. That was a Coloured area.

J.F. Was it the Coloured area (?)

I.M. No, it's very much I mean a working class area - what happened in Port Eliza - Korsten was one before the group areas I mean who were introduced - it was one of the mixed - I mean lots of people like Vus Dlamini Aaron Pember - lots of people who actually lived in that - lived in Korsten - I mean it was a mixed - Africans lived....

J.F. So it was mixed....

I.M. Ja, it was mixed at that time up until I mean say, the early '60s - then they really moved out, most of the Africans, but up until then I mean it was also quite a mixed area.

J.F. And your father was also teaching in P.E.?

I.M. My father was a teacher, yes.

J.F. Did your mother work?

I.M. My mother, at one point she worked as a - she was a dressmaker, so she worked in a shop where they, you know - she was doing needlework, various other dressmaking work, but she didn't work for very long I mean - she was....

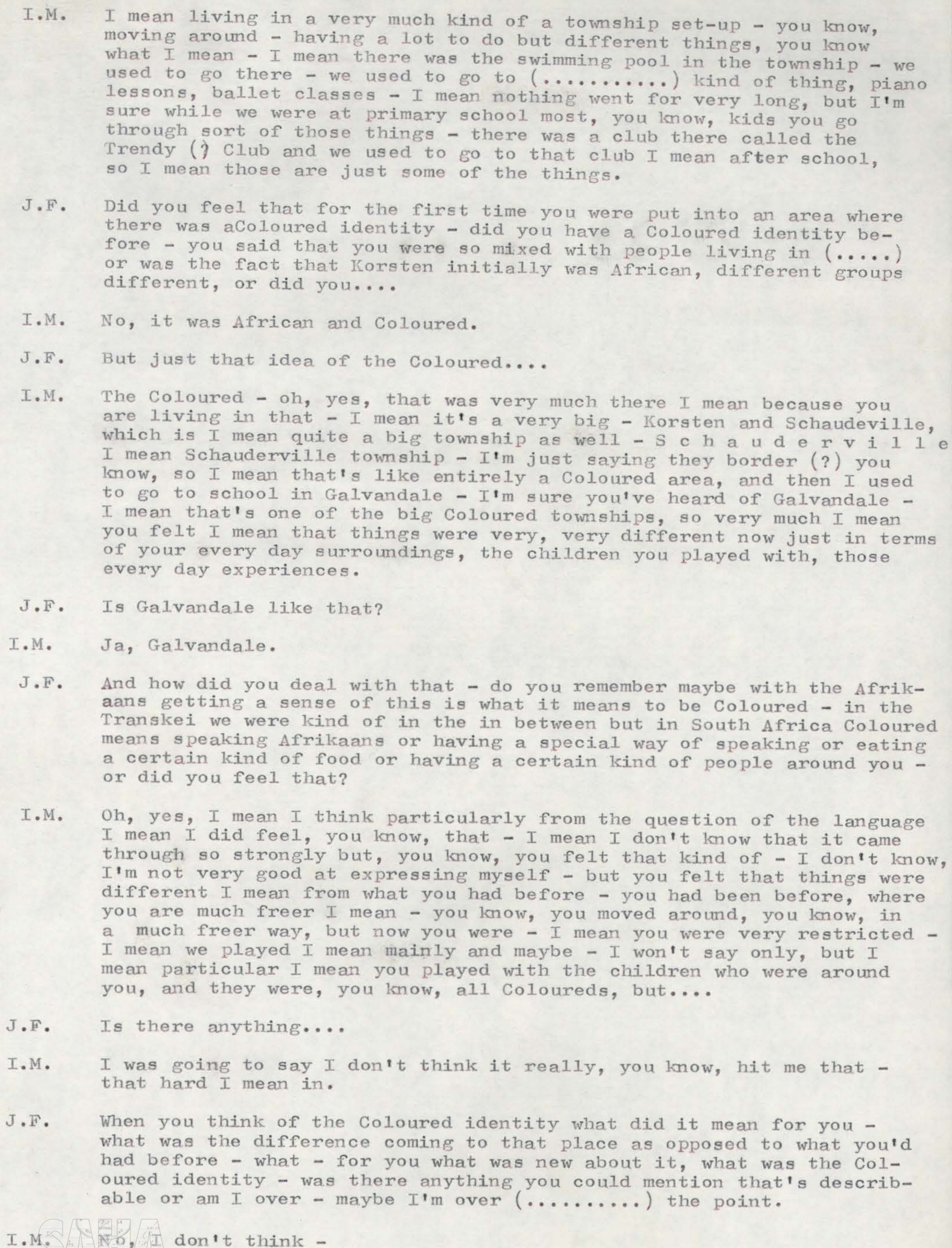
J.F. How many kids in the family?

I.M. Four, three girls and one boy - I'm the second eldest.

J.F. And was it - how did you feel as kids going from the Transkei to P.E. - was there any feeling of....

I.M. Well, I mean for me it was quite a - I don't know - for example, I mean one of the things that I still clearly remember I mean it was when I came to P.E. was like the time that you sort of had to be dressed up in shoes nd things like that, whereas when you grew up I mean - Lusikisiki is just a one horse town - it was very tiny - I mean you know, there were those kind of things - the other thing I remember so clearly is I never ever knew there was a language like Afrikaans up until I came to Port Elizabeth - hat was the first time I mean - I was in Standard Four wen I got there, and suddenly I mean you were in the school yard and you hear all these children because I mean that is the predominant language in Port Elizabeth - most of the Coloureds speak Afrikaans, and I mean you just heard this language and I just thought God, where am I, you know, as though you're on the moon or you in, you know, like on acompletely different planet, but as I'm saying, I mean as a child you learn very fast - I mean you pick up the language, you know, quite quickly, so I'm sure by the time I mean the end of the year came I mean O.K., so we also knew Afrikaans, but I mean that was one of the things that I found sort of really strange, and then just the whole city life I mean as compared to being in a rural area, you know, the -

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE



I.M. I mean living in a very much kind of a township set-up - you know, moving around - having a lot to do but different things, you know what I mean - I mean there was the swimming pool in the township - we used to go there - we used to go to (..........) kind of thing, piano lessons, ballet classes - I mean nothing went for very long, but I'm sure while we were at primary school most, you know, kids you go through sort of those things - there was a club there called the Trendy (?) Club and we used to go to that club I mean after school, so I mean those are just some of the things.

J.F. Did you feel that for the first time you were put into an area where there was aColoured identity - did you have a Coloured identity before - you said that you were so mixed with people living in (.....) or was the fact that Korsten initially was African, different groups different, or did you....

I.M. No, it was African and Coloured.

J.F. But just that idea of the Coloured....

I.M. The Coloured - oh, yes, that was very much there I mean because you are living in that - I mean it's a very big - Korsten and Schaudeville, which is I mean quite a big township as well - S c h a u d e r v i l l e I mean Schauderville township - I'm just saying they border (?) you know, so I mean that's like entirely a Coloured area, and then I used to go to school in Galvandale - I'm sure you've heard of Galvandale - I mean that's one of the big Coloured townships, so very much I mean you felt I mean that things were very, very different now just in terms of your every day surroundings, the children you played with, those every day experiences.

J.F. Is Galvandale like that?

I.M. Ja, Galvandale.

J.F. And how did you deal with that - do you remember maybe with the Afrikaans getting a sense of this is what it means to be Coloured - in the Transkei we were kind of in the in between but in South Africa Coloured means speaking Afrikaans or having a special way of speaking or eating a certain kind of food or having a certain kind of people around you - or did you feel that?

I.M. Oh, yes, I mean I think particularly from the question of the language I mean I did feel, you know, that - I mean I don't know that it came through so strongly but, you know, you felt that kind of - I don't know, I'm not very good at expressing myself - but you felt that things were different I mean from what you had before - you had been before, where you are much freer I mean - you know, you moved around, you know, in a much freer way, but now you were - I mean you were very restricted - I mean we played I mean mainly and maybe - I won't say only, but I mean particular I mean you played with the children who were around you, and they were, you know, all Coloureds, but....

J.F. Is there anything....

I.M. I was going to say I don't think it really, you know, hit me that - that hard I mean in.

J.F. When you think of the Coloured identity what did it mean for you - what was the difference coming to that place as opposed to what you'd had before - what - for you what was new about it, what was the Coloured identity - was there anything you could mention that's describable or am I over - maybe I'm over (.........) the point.

I.M. No, I don't think -

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. As I'm saying, for me the only outstanding thing was the question of language, you know what I mean, because I'm just saying I don't think I really - I don't know how to put it - I mean you didn't really - you weren't that observant - maybe I wasn't, you know what I mean - all that observant that I mean things were all that different, but I mean there was only just the question of language that made me feel that, you know - that things were different, but I - I don't think that there was anything else really that stood out.

J.F. Let me ask you this way - did you feel like some of those kids or some of their parents or older brothers had values or approach or a racialism in terms of their colour consciousness that you hadn't experienced before - it sounds like you were quite non-racial in the Transkei - and did it - were you ever conscious as a kid like oh, they think they're Coloured, they think they're kind of better than Africans but not as privileged as the whites and this is what it means - it's a consciousness I never had before - did that - was that only?

I.M. Oh, yes, I'm just saying that I think that is true that it was there amongst a lot of children because, as I'm saying, when we just moved in there there were still a few African families around and I mean they used to stay, you know, both on - on both ends of our street there were African families staying down there, and while I mean I - I'm just trying to remember the name of one of the young boys who used to be there - I don't know if his name was Dingas (?) - I can't just remember - it wasn't Dingaan, it was De-something - anyway I mean I remember that my brother used to play a lot with him, whereas other kids in the street I mean they didn't play, you know, with African kids, and also I mean lots of Coloureds were actually quite scared, you know what I mean, of - of Africans - there was this whole thing of, you know, oupa-doepa, which is kind of a scare - like a bogey man type of thing....

J.F. What's the word?

I.M. Oupa-doepa - you know, which is like a bogey man type of thing which would be used, you know what I mean, to scare kids, like that's an African - I mean like a black person....

J.F. An oupa-doepa?

I.M. Ja, an oupa-doepa - you know, like oupa-doepa will catch you, you know, if you do this or if you don't do that or if you don't listen or - so I'm just saying it was being referred, you know, to - to an African in that sense, so I'm just saying there is that - I think definitely amongst Coloureds, where they do feel that they are better than Africans.

J.F. Did your parents in any way indicate that that wasn't the way they felt or did they kind of go along with it - did you get a sense that that wasn't the right way to feel or did you think no, this is South Africa, that's the way it is?

I.M. No, no, no, there was I mean - racism I mean was never I mean - I don't think we even uttered such kinds of things or had those sentiments, and I'm sure I mean if kids were playing with us and they came with those sort of things I mean my father especially would really reprimand them - I mean there wasn't any of that, you know, like racist remarks or things like that which were allowed in any way, no.

J.F. What was different about your father - was he very overtly political or involved in stuff?

I.M. Ja, well, which I don't know really if I wanted even to go down, but he was in the Unity Movement, you see, I mean - he was a teacher and he had gone to school in Cape Town, and that's where the Unity Movement is quite strong, and people like Bennie Kies, I mean he was at school with him.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. As I'm saying, I mean I - I'm sure you won't mention it in the book or anything - I mean you won't - I don't think....

J.F. Let me just stop and say.... (Tape Off)

I.M. Because you're asking about my father, so I'm saying I mean he was involved in the Unity Movement as a teacher, and even the time they were in Port Elizabeth I mean throughout that time I mean he was involved, but it's just I mean to my understanding the activities (?) of the Unity Movement were not allowed - I mean they weren't, you know, legal that time - I don't know how - but maybe in the earlier years I mean it was not a problem, but I mean I don't shy away from saying I mean that he was I mean and he has, you know, those - those tendencies I mean - his political understanding and things like that I mean - all, you know, are very Unity Movement.

Well, I mean I met him once in some (.........) and I mean he's the person who actually ensured that I got out of the country - I didn't want to leave home, but he's the person - actually I was detained - should I go - it's very haphazard....

J.F. Let's continue - just to understand again - to make it a more succinct interview to give us time, just tell me what did it mean, that Unity Movement - you grew up with something political that you consider positive and that it was non-racial....

I.M. Oh, yes....

J.F. Just tell me what he imparted to you politically - was it just your dad, not your mom as well or?

I.M. Yes, my father to a greater extent I mean - I wouldn't say my mother was that overtly political - I mean she wasn't against anything, you know what I mean, that was said and that was - but he was really the one who taught us I mean, as I was saying, to respect people, you know - he taught us that what was going on in the country is not correct - you know, that we are living under an apartheid system - this is not correct, and that we should - one of the main things that he always used to stress and which he believed I think was that you need to educate yourself, because once you are educated you can then make your contribution, you know, which I think is something that a lot of older people really stick to, that you must educate yourself and when you are educated and you have something, you know, behind you, then you can make an contribution, which I'm just saying in a sense is - for example, when I decided to go to Bush I mean he was very much against that - I mean he virtually wanted to throw me out of the house, you know, because as Unity Movement I mean they were very opposed to the setting up of Western Cape, all these other tribal colleges.

He attended Fort Hare - he went there for one year - after he was married he went there, but I mean my mother got sick and he had to come back and he finished his degree, you know, through correspondence, but I mean he was - I'm just saying that's very much a Unity Movement, you know - very anti-separate universities.

J.F. Was he in the teachers league?

I.M. TLSA, yes - Teachers League of South Africa, ja.

J.F. There's that kind of general thing, but what about - I take it you moved through it and you rejected it - can you remember what you learned about what it represented and why you didn't go in that direction yourself - what was the Unity Movement about for a young person like yourself in the '60s and in the '50s when you were conscious, or even historically...

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. Well, that's one of the things I mean I remember feeling about, you know, lots of the people that he knew, lots of the people that were - but (?) whom I knew were with him, although he had never said so and so is with me or this one is with, but I knew the other people who were also in the Unity Movement, and I always had the feeling that they were actually very sort of middle class type elements, you know, most of them teachers who were quite well off, you know, in the society, and except for him I mean most of them that I knew didn't do anything, you know, within the community, I'm saying in a constructive way - even if they were involved in sports, in any other organisations, they weren't actually involved I mean - they were there - you knew them as Uncle So-and-so, and I mean even sitting and discussing with them, they were very much against the regime, they were against apartheid, they were against what was going on, but you never really saw what they were doing.

You know, I remember that through high school - I don't know if I can say this, but the principal of my school, you know, when I was at high school - I attended Uitenhage High School, Standard Seven to Standard Ten, and he was also in the TLSA, and one of the things I remember, for example, is I mean when we used to have assembly he never used to read out of the Bible, you know - he would always have some - you know, some saying or something that he would - he would like preach to us, but you know, in his way I mean, and he would always be putting across a very political message, be saying something, you know, whether it's that you should work hard or, you know, those who sin against you today tomorrow will be punished, but I'm just saying it didn't come straight out of the Bible, it was things that he had prepared and spoken to us in that way, and he was also, you know, in the Unity Movement, but as I'm saying, for people who were directly involved in the community in guiding the people and giving leadership and direction, most of them were never really involved, and that's one thing that really put me off, of the Unity Movement and of them, because I mean I also saw them very much as a Coloured clique, you see, because - and that's what I always used to ask my father, but, you know, who of all these people I mean - are there any other Africans or anyone else who's involved, you know, in this, and there weren't - I mean he as himself I mean he was involved in sports particularly.

Today he's in the Eastern Province Council of Sport, affiliated to SACOS, and I think he's vice president, I'm not sure, but he holds some position in the Eastern Province Committee, and also he's the coordinator of the primary school, the South African primary schools in the sports, affiliated to SACOS, so I'm saying in that way I mean he is very political - he knows what he's doing, and he is involved - I mean he's always tried to do things, has always been very active in non-racial sport, you know, but as for the rest I mean that's one of the things maybe that made me feel I mean I would never get involved in this sort of thing, and in any case it was only teachers, as far as I knew, who were involved in....

J.F. Were any of your peers attracted to the Unity Movement - did you see any young people - you're saying (..........) well, that's where to go?

I.M. No, no, no, they were all I mean very mature people I mean, like friends of my parents - they were the only ones whom I saw and whom I knew to be in the Unity Movement - I didn't see any young people there at all.

J.F. And did they try to - Tabata's African and Fernando was African - did they ever try to say that or did they admit that most people were - that the large, large majority were Coloured - did they explain to you why it was Coloured - did they have the rationalisa - the thing that always amazes me about Unity Movement is they claim to be non-racial and yet they're the one group that only appealed to petty bourgeois Coloured teachers or Coloured (................)

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. No, he didn't - I mean we didn't really discuss it much I mean, because I mean from when - I mean when I went to Bush was the first time that I really became, you know, I think overtly involved in anything, because then I mean I became involved in SASO, so I mean he wasn't even really around in a sense that I mean I wasn't even in Port Elizabeth to discuss with him I mean what exactly I was going to do, so no.

J.F. What year did you go to Bush....

I.M. '71.

J.F. '71 you left P.E. - and what was it like for you to go to Cape Town - had you been to Cape Town before?

I.M. Well, I think one or two times before that, because my father's two brothers lived there and my mother's sister, so I mean we'd been there to sort of visit family, but that's when I went - oh, I mean I was - I mean after I had matriculated I worked for one year, '69 I worked....

J.F. What did you do?

I.M. Oh, no, '70 I went to Bush - why do I say '71 - I went to Bush in '70 - in 1970 I went to Western Cape - I first started off doing BA - I was going to do a BA, hoping to major in English, either with psychology or geography, but eventually I turned over to - I did librarianship, and I was supposed to complete in '73, which was the time of the strikes, you know - there was the strike because one Indian girl was found to be attending Western Cape and then she was - they kicked her out, and then we went on strike because of that....

J.F. They found....

I.M. They found she wasn't Coloured in her final year - she was doing social work, and they found out that she wasn't Coloured, they found out that she was Indian....

J.F. And how did they find....

I.M. .... and they want - they found out through the security police, funny enough, because she was closely associated with SASO, and she had been transporting - she had a car, so she had been transporting a number of comrades up and down, and I think through following her, through trying to check up, probably seeing where she stays, they then found out - Jamap Chikte was her name - J a i n a p - C h i k t e - so they called her into the administration and they told her that she had to terminate her studies, and she was doing social work, third year, and then of course I mean we just used that - I mean there were many other demands too that were put forward, conditions, hostel conditions, many other things, but I mean that was really the reason that students went on strike in '73, and actually (........................) - what happened was that at the time there were about 1,400 students on campus on the whole of Western Cape, and 1,200 students walked off, and those that remained were mainly the final years and people doing PhDs and, you know, things like that, who weren't really going to give that up, but the majority of the students walked off, and we were then required to reapply and they would select the readmission, and students refused to reapply.

We tried - I mean they tried to open what was then called under SASO, free university - I mean some open university, but which didn't succeed, and then when students tried to enrol with UNISA, most of them weren't accepted - they were asked for certificates of good conduct from - (Child interrupting) - what was I saying?

J.F. You didn't want to reapply.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. Oh, yes, we had to reapply - most of us didn't - students tried to get into Western - to UNISA, and UNISA wanted certificates of good conduct from the previous university, because I mean a lot of us had actually been in our final years and we could have got credits for what you had done, but they wanted a certificate from your previous university, which you couldn't obviously get, so for most of the students it was actually just out - I mean most went to work teaching, so....

J.F. How did you feel about it - did you regret all those years (.........) get a degree or?

I.M. No, no, I didn't, although I mean there was the whole home front to deal with, you know - I'm just saying parents always would be very disappointed, but no, I wasn't - I mean by then I was actually very involved in SASO and I mean I was - I was not in any way upset over what had happened - I did think of trying to complete through UNISA, but as I'm saying to you, there was this whole procedure, which wasn't going to work, so from there I just went to work, and I decided I would work and see what I could do afterwards - maybe do articles and do law or whatever, but I mean I just decided that I would - I was through with Western Cape at that point.

J.F. Where did you work?

I.M. I worked in Port Elizabeth for the newspapers - what was called Eastern Province Herald - it's the Evening Post and Eastern Province Herald, so they were called Eastern Province Newspapers, and I worked in the library there - I worked there from '73 - we left June - I got the job October - up until I left, November, '77, I worked there.

J.F. And when you joined SASO what motivated you to join - what was your politics, how did you get moved, recruited?

I.M. Well, actually the way that we got into SASO - well, I got into SASO was through - I mean I had started - oh, well, imagined that I had some talent as a poet - I mean I was writing some poetry here, there and everywhere, and when we were at Bush I mean there was a drama society and we had, you know, put up quite a number of poetry readings - we also at one stage got involved in a play by Adam Small - you know, the Bruin Afrikaaner - we got involved in that play, which is - I mean my father just gave me hell for that I mean - he just said : You are going nowhere with that play - we....

J.F. Was that before SASO?

I.M. Ja, that was just - just '72 I mean - well, when I say before SASO I mean before SASO really took root on campus, because that's when it really took root, '7 - end of '71, '72, I mean on the campus, but I mean there....

J.F. And what was....

I.M. It was called Kanna Ko huistre, and Johnny Issel played the leading role (Laugh) in the play, so I mean those were the people we were on campus with (Laugh)

J.F. Did you not have a problem with that - with Adam Small or what....

I.M. Yes, we did - we had a number of problems, political problems I mean with Adam Small - we used to -

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. I'm just saying during the course of the play he would come there time and again to watch us rehearse and things like that, and we used to have a lot of political arguments and disagreements with Adam Small - I mean many times I mean he would just break down and cry from the things that we would tell him - I mean we really used to tell him off - but at the time, you know, I'm just saying maybe me, I was still a bit on the - like politically more immature, I could say, or not, you know (Interruption)

J.F. Why did you choose to do that play?

I.M. Well, that's what I'm saying - I mean I just got dragged in in the end, you know what I mean - I mean it was the drama society, but there were people who were maybe more experienced and who I thought knew more than what I did, you know, and I mean this was the (.........) - as I'm saying, there were people like Johnny Issel and I mean they came with this play, but people felt that it was something - you know, the theme was that there was this guy who became - came from a very, very poor background - his mother was a washerwoman, tried to educate him - I mean he lived in the slums with his mother, District Six - he was very intelligent, was able to go away, went to Canada, studied there - could have remained there but chose to come back, you know - I'm just saying it's that kind of thing, and people felt that it was something, you know, that reflected, you know, this - this - the trauma of Coloured people - I mean District Six was pulled down - you know, the alienation - someone going overseas, trying to make it there, not being able to make it - finding it very difficult - coming back - you know, coming back then just to the Cape wastelands because then really there's no District Six left - it's, you know, out in Bonteerville, those areas and, you know, they - we felt at the time that it was something that - that we could put up, and I mean it played in the townships and it was very well received - I mean it was very, very well received.

J.F. Sure, the perception of Adam Small (................................)

I.M. Ja, and I was going to say at that time too I mean with this whole BC thing when BC was starting Adam Small did, you know, sort of get onto the bandwagon of BC, you know, and in a way moved away from this whole Bruin Afrikaaner theory that he used to have of, you know, we are brown Afrikaaners, and he was more into the whole question of black and what it meant to him, you know, and looking at things in that way, and I'm just saying that was the time that, you know, we used the play, but I mean later I mean as you know I mean basically he's a very confused person - I mean Adam Small politically is very, very confused, you know, and always in some, you know, twist over things, in a dilemma, you know, there's - I don't know that guy was.

J.F. Did he have - initially have this theory that Coloureds were brown Afrikaaners and....

I.M. Oh, yes - ja, brown Afrikaaners.

J.F. Meaning that the culture came....

I.M. Came from the Afrikaaner, ja.

J.F. And how - what were the discussions with him like when he came to watch when you said you gave him a hard time - did you subscribe to the brown Afrikaaner theory?

I.M. Oh, no - God, no-one did, no - I mean I'm just saying at that time I mean we were very much into the question of BC and there was no ways that we were even going to see ourselves, you know, separate as Coloureds, you know - the whole Coloured identity.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. I mean we were out of that completely, you know, and very much working closely even with groups in Langa, Guguletbu, you know, doing drama with them, taking our poetry there, holding workshops, you know, in - in African townships, getting them to come over with us, holding, you know, workshops in places like Elsie's River, Bishoplavers, you know, all the - the working class Coloured areas in - in Cape Town, and also going into the townships a lot, and that is really how I became involved in - you were asking - I think that was the initial question, how I became involved in SASO - it was through the drama society - what we call Dramsoc - and we then became, you know - people like Johnny Issel, Henry Isaacs were on campus at that time, although they were much, much senior to what, you know, we were, but I mean together with them I mean we - we were just rank and file members anyway, but that's when we set up a Western Cape local branch.

J.F. Henry Isaacs was at Bush?

I.M. He was at Bush, yes - he was with us - he was studying law - Johnny Issel was doing philosophy - that's what he was majoring in - and that's maybe where this whole Adam Small connection came in, because Adam Small was lecturing in philosophy - you know, when you ask how did we come onto the play itself - you know, I'm just thinking like in retrospect that it's probably, but at the time I mean I didn't even question I mean where the play came from.

J.F. Can you remember your arguments with him, or is there anything you can remember....

I.M. No, I can't - I just remember the whole question of the Bruin Afrikaaner, you know, that - that was one of the things.

J.F. So that got you involved doing the drama, and then you got - you joined SASO from Dramsoc?

I.M. From the drama society, yes, I joined SASO.

J.F. And what was SASO - who was the head of it then - was it Henry or?

I.M. It was - no, Henry Isaacs was in the national - he was in the national - I think he was vice president at some stage - he held various positions - but on the local was Johnny Issel - was as far as I remember it was Johnny Issel.

J.F. And why did you join SASO - what did SASO represent to you then - what was the attraction?

I.M. Well, I think the whole question of BC which was being spoken about, you know - I'm just saying like lots of the poetry and the things we did I mean we were, you know, doing plays - and material that was being brought by people like Johnny Issel, you know, and I mean we discussed on BC - they brought people like Steve Biko, all those characters (?) - they came to the campus and addressed students - I mean the people who were in the - at the head of things were people like Henry Isaacs and Johnny Issel, you know, and they were trying to introduce SASO to the students, so they brought people there from other regions who came, explained to us what SASO is, the whole question of BC and, you know, there were those discussions, and I think from there, particularly being in the drama, we were able to then also discuss, you know, more in depth what it means, where we stand, you know, how we fit into this, and that is how I came to - because I'm just saying one of the things -

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about BC because I mean some people like to attack it as being like racist exclusivism and things like that, but for us it wasn't that - it was more a matter of, you know, here we are, there are Africans, there are Coloureds, there are Indians - you know, we need to stand together, we need to forge unity, to cement our unity, you know, and we felt that white students I mean - for us especially there was the whole question of UCT, which was right next to us, you know, and there were a lot of student activists who were in the Christian Students Movement - University Christian Movement, I mean in NUSAS, you know - all those kind of students who I think previously did enjoy a working relationship and, you know, some sort of comradeship with students at Western Cape, but now they were being told that, you know, we feel it is important that while you as students, you know, are political, but there's the whole mass of your community which nothing is happening about them - I mean it's very good I think for white students to be able to, you know, while on campus belong to organisations and be able to say and do things while they are there, but once they qualify from there, you know, they then mostly I mean at that stage would just go back, you know, into white society - maybe they would still be political as they are, but I'm just saying there wasn't any input I mean - today you find all kinds of organisations, DPSC, JODAC, you know, various organisations, which at that time you didn't find, and we felt that white students should do something in their community while we as black students are also trying to -

You know, there was the whole thing, black man you're on your own, you need to build up self-confidence, you know - when blacks are together with whites they're always being, you know, overrun by whites because they are more eloquent, they have more skills, they are more, you know- obviously, you know, their education is higher than what ours are, which doesn't make them better educated than us, but I'm just saying, you know, they - they are more capable in terms of skills and that sort of thing, and it was felt that, you know, black students needed to develop themselves - you know, black people, I should say, need to develop themselves - we need to, you know, be able to build ourselves, have that confidence, and from there you will see, but I'm just saying it wasn't an anti-white thing where, you know, there was no contact with whites because, for example, our offices were at the Christian Institute, you know - we had a room there - we used to get a lot of material, you know, from them, be it for duplicating, you know, making leaflets or whatever, but I'm just saying there was a very good working relationship, you know, with - with whites, so you know, I think that there is - especially outside the country I mean - I feel lots of times a misunderstanding - and especially for people who never went through that experience, and maybe because of how they see the BC ending up today, you see - people think it was just racist, but I feel and I really believe and I always say that, that BC was very, very important - it helped us grow, develop - it gave us confidence, which I'm sure otherwise we may not have had, you know, and....

J.F. So that was you - SASO, '70 - '71 to '73 - when you went to work where was your political involvement - you couldn't be in SASO any more.

I.M. When I went to Port Elizabeth there was a branch of BPC, Black People's Convention - there were people like Barney Pityana who were in PE - although he was banned at the time, but I mean Barney was around - he always worked - I don't think the banning orders would have restricted him - and you know, many other people - there were still people like Biko who were in King Williamstown, but I'm just saying from the side of PE there was an attempt to set up a BPC branch there - people like Mamphele, Ramphele - she was at the Livingstone that time doing housemanship - she was also working there.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. So I'm just saying there was a group of BC people who did try to, you know - to organise - I remember there were attempts to have these literacy, you know - they tried to train literacy instructors, you know - I'm just saying a lot of the projects never really took off the ground because I'm sure you understand the whole thing - I mean that was one of the problems I think with both SASO and BPC that, you know, there were a lot of good intentions but lots of the things weren't seen right through, except maybe on the cultural side, because as I'm saying, always on that side I mean there were things, for example, they organised-there was a South Africa black theatre union, SABTU, which when I was still at Western Cape, we went to Durban to a festival there, which was a very big and, you know, successful festival, so I'm just saying more on the side of the arts, you know, they would organise - for example, there was Dashiki - we organised them to tour Port Elizabeth, you know, come through there - other poetry groups - you know, plays, that sort of thing - you know, those things were done more successfully I think, through the BPC presence in - in PE, but in terms of mass mobilisation and that sort of thing, no, I don't think we were very effective.

J.F. Were you aware of that lack of effectiveness, the lack of - are you also saying that it didn't reach more below intellectuals?

I.M. Below grass - yes, yes, I think so, and I think we were aware of that.

J.F. You were aware of it?

I.M. We were aware of the fact that it was I mean a very restricted, you know-I'm just saying it was restricted to - to like a grou - a clique - as I'm saying, there were attempts - I mean people did try - it's not that they didn't try, but it didn't - it didn't get through to the - to the masses at all, it didn't, and I'm just saying particularly for me maybe, on reflection - I mean I didn't think about it then, but now on reflection when I think, you know, for example, in the Coloured townships I'm just saying, you know, it wasn't - I mean people didn't know much about BC, whereas I would find that, you know, I interacted more with African comrades because I mean those were the predominant people - I mean some few friends and people whom I knew closely maybe I would go with them - we'd go to a meeting, we'd go to a play or we'd go, you know, if there are shows, there's some theatre, things like that we'd go, but I'm just saying when it comes to the masses, no.

J.F. So you weren't - I'm confused - were you aware of it then or were you not aware of it then?

I.M. I'm saying I was - I was aware, yes.

J.F. And did you discuss it - do you remember if any - I'm just interested because you're saying a lot kind of speaking in sweeping historical statements, like this is - which is very useful to put it all together, but just to stop and get anything more anecdotal, do you remember discussing it - would you ever have mentioned it to a Barney Pityana or among your friends - hey - and for me in the Coloured community they just don't even know what BCP is, or we're all intellectuals, what about the working class - did you ever say those things or was it more later that you realised....

I.M. No, at the time I mean I'm just - no, I didn't I mean - you know, I'm just saying there were meetings and there were discussions and there were always attempts as to how we could get more and more people involved, but for example, one of the things was something like this buy black campaign, you know, which it was felt that we should have such a campaign in the townships, you know, maybe on street to street basis, you know, where you would have - it's like a type of co-operative thing where you'd have a number of families coming together, you know, cashing their money in, buying sacks of mealie meal, rice -

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. You know, I'm just saying the basic things that would be needed in the house, as a way of, but I mean in the end when you went to people I mean you could see that, you know, people weren't really into that and I mean people were prepared to fend and struggle on their own, but they didn't really get involved in those - in those sort of things.

J.F. And this awareness, did that contribute to any disillusionment or were you 100 percent BC when you left the country or did?

I.M. No - well, I won't say disillusionment as such, but I did realise that there was something more I mean to the struggle than just this whole question of BC - I mean I realised that like after you have become - because as I'm saying, for me the whole question of BC was the awareness, you know, the confidence, the unity that it cemented, you know, but from there I mean what - what we were going to do - and I remember writing one poem, which unfortunately I've even tried to look for it and I don't find it, but it was printed in something called Black - Black Literacy Art - Literature or Literacy Arts Congress, which was put out by James Matthews, and there I wrote about the whole thing of armed struggle, you know, but I mean a very small poem - I can't remember exactly how I put it, but I remember I mean that as - you know, at the time, '74, '75, '76, I mean one became aware of the ANC - for me I mean the time when I became much more aware of the ANC was when - you know, when I was working in the newspaper library - I mean its - there's a section archives and I mean in there you could find all kinds of material, and it's when you are reading through those sort of things - I mean I don't remember exactly which books, but I mean I remember seeing a copy of the Freedom Charter.

I remember going through, you know, a lot of the archives and reading up about people, you know - about things, especially Eastern Cape, but I mean even then it didn't really, you know, hit me as anything - I mean I just read and I saw oh, you know, ANC, but during '76 - during - was it before - before I was arrested I mean - no, it was after I had come out - it was the end of '76, beginning of '77, when I received - I'm just trying to remember what it was called - it was a - these leaflets of the ANC and the party that they were sending inside the country - I think it was called Vukani, you know, and - although I don't know if you can put it in black and white - maybe they'll say it, but I think that it was the time that people like Sue and them were involved and I think they were actually the people who sent it - so I was receiving at my workplace through the - I was just receiving these copies of Vukani - well, it was coming through the post, and I read these things, and at the time I was..................................

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. .... so, as I said, the fact that everything's been out in the trial - Raymond told everything, (..........) as well, so - in fact they were looking for (..............) because he also received one - it'll be interesting just to see the response of people who received it - anyway more not in terms of them per se, but you received ANC literature?

I.M. Ja, as I was saying, I think it was from the beginning of '77 that I received this at the time I was going out - at the time I was going out with one comrade who was - he's called Garnet Garden (?) and I mean (...................) so I don't think I will, but he's the person whom I mean we used to share this literature with and we used to read, but they were mainly just (..........) styled, I mean speaking about the struggle being waged, speaking about armed struggle, calling on people to join the people's army, and I'm sure it must have been by March we had decided that we should leave the country in December.

And I'm not sure - I mean I still really meant to ask my father whether he had some suspicion that we had decided to leave, because I mean throughout '77 we just decided right, by the end of this year we are going to leave the country - we are going and we are going to join MK I mean as a direct response to what we had been reading and what we had been receiving through the mail, and we tried to look around at people we knew, and eventually he got one person who was actually initially a friend of mine, and we asked this person whether he could take us out, and he said yes, he could take us out Christmas Eve - he was going to take us to Lesotho, which is what he suggested, that he would take us to Lesotho.

But immediately in '77 - I think it must have been around May - March, April, my father made applications and he was the one who was saying, you know, I think that maybe it's better for you because you wanted to study also after you had left, whereas in Cape you weren't able to study - maybe it's better if you leave the country and you can, you know, go overseas where you want to, set up there and, you know, study, and if Garnet wants to he could follow you, you know - I'm sure you can discuss it amongst yourselves - and we decided just to play along and I said : No, it's fine I mean I'll go - I didn't think that this whole thing would really, you know, work out, because I didn't have a passport, and I had made applications for a passport - I had been refused one three times.

Now what the law says is - is if you've been refused a passport three times you can apply for an exit permit, and I mean the chances are probably 60, 70 they would give you - I don't know that they've turned down an exit permit to anyone, so we applied for a passport, which was refused, and then applied for an exit, but I thought it would just take years and drag on, so I didn't even bother myself about the whole thing, because, as I'm saying, we were planning to leave at the end of that year in any case.

And then at the beginning of November the exit permit came through and I mean I had the - been given asylum in Britain - I would go to Britain, and that's how I left - I left at the end of November - I think gives you something like 15 days or what, or 21 days within which to use the permit - so I left at the end of November and I went to London, and when I got to London I mean I was met by the ANC - I stayed first at the place of Tony Seedat, who's now the chief rep in the - in Berlin in the FRG - and Reg September was the chief rep at the time, so I mean I went there.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. I first started working then for the anti-apartheid movement, and then I worked for SACTU, but I don't know how we got to that point because I think we were speaking something else - I think I've drifted very far.

J.F. Let me get back to when you received that (..........) - there are people who when they see something like that in their mailbox they get such a big (.............) that that's it - they just don't want to know - they figure the cops are going to get them right away - now your reaction was what....

I.M. No, it was excitement - no, it came at work - it came to me....

J.F. To you personally?

I.M. To me personally - marked to me, I. MacKay, Eastern Province Newspapers, P.O. Box such and such.

J.F. And what did you do, what did you think, what did your - reaction did you....

I.M. I just wondered - I - I was very excited I mean when I opened it and I read - I just thought who is this - that - my first thing was who had sent it to me, you know - could it be the police, because at first you think maybe you are being set up, and that was my first thing, and I just stuffed it in my bag and thought I must get home and ask Garny (?) you know, I mean what is this - show him - and I showed him and I mean we just read it, and from there I mean they used to come regularly through the post and I would just take them and read them - we would read them.

I mean we didn't share it with anybody else, you see - I mean that's the other thing I mean, which I mean is a thing I mean like there they would speak about this whole question of setting up cells and, you know, all those sort of things, but I mean I was not going to do any of that - I mean I didn't feel that I had, you know, the - even enough knowledge or, you know, the skill or anything, and I mean what we had hoped throughout was that somebody would try to contact us, you see - we kept thinking, you know, maybe be the chosen few and somebody (Laugh) will make contact with us, but nobody ever I mean made contact up until we tried to organise someone whom we knew who was also, you know, politically very good who had been I mean with us in the BC who was from another part of the country, but who was also in the BC with us, and we asked him to take us out - I mean he was the person - but I mean that was - that was really it.

J.F. And did you ever - I'm trying to think when they - Raymond, Jeremy and Sue were arrested in '76 - in fact they were arrested (?) in late '75, early '76, so did you ever connect that somebody was - did you read in the papers that somebody'd been arrested for sending stuff out, because the very people who sent out (.........) were in fact arrested.

I.M. Which was when - they were arrested in '7....

J.F. I'm just trying to -....

I.M. Because I thought (?) the stuff was coming in '77 as well - the other people that - I'm just saying on reflection when I've thought, although I've never asked them, was I also thought of Steve - remember Tim Jenkins and Steve Lee - you know, I also thought of them.

J.F. (.................................)

I.M. I'm just saying in '77 as well I mean it was coming - that's the time that....

J.F. Did you ever connect reading in the paper that this was happening, that ANC people were getting arrested for it, that there was activity - did you ever - or did you just think everything was so underground....

I.M. That, ja, I - ja, I didn't - I didn't think that, you know - I didn't make any direct connection with their case, although I remember him (?) being - I mean about the case - I mean I remember the whole question of their arrest, Sue being very pregnant, all those things - I mean I remember reading about it, but I'm just saying I didn't at all make the connection.

J.F. But did you make a connection to think oh, these are the kind....

I.M. ANC, yes, that's what I thought, ja - I thought these are the kind of people who are involved in these sort of things - that I did.

J.F. And was it a positive - what was the affect on you - were you thinking well, they're doing something, were you thinking ag, they got caught, or this is scary, I could get seven years too - what were you - what was your response?

I.M. No, no, no - I mean I - I mean it was a positive response, one of admiration - I mean I think that I've always admired people who do something I mean whether or not they get caught I mean - I think that maybe at the time too I won't say we over-estimate, but we do realise that, you know, the Boers are all over, informers, all that sort of thing, I mean they are all over, so the possibilities of someone being caught, you know, is very great - that possibility's very great, so I'm just saying I mean one didn't look at it negatively in any way.

But as I'm saying, for me, you know, which is something that I would've-like we always say that with Garny, like we wish people could just come and say to us do something or, you know, teach us exactly - you know, for example, I'm just saying in the field of writing or thing (?) that's something that I felt I could do, you know, if I were asked or I were told or, you know, instructed as to how to go about it I mean - how do you do the stuff, how do you get it out, that sort of thing - I mean we did have that - that is why I mean initially I - we didn't want to - we didn't really think of leaving I mean.

J.F. You thought of working in....

I.M. Of trying to do something, but when you felt that there was really, you know, there was nobody coming in, because like, as I'm saying, the letters when you first got them like we - I thought maybe I'm one of the chosen few - someone will come to me soon and ask me to do something or give me something, but there was nothing and I mean I wasn't going to ask anybody I looked at, you know - even try to look at them more closer to see is it possible that this one, is it possible that that one, but afterwards we just said : Right, let's just leave, it's better to leave the country.

J.F. Didn't you think of the people like the Pityanas and the Bikos, the Mpowanas (?) - you didn't think there was any chance they would be moving towards the ANC or that - did you have any sense that other BC people were thinking no, armed struggle's the solution - or you just thought it's - I just wonder what you.

I.M. No, I didn't get the whole stance of ANC from - one of the problems is that I had never been to any of the what's called general students councils, the GSC, where I'm saying a lot of the deeper, you know, political discussion had gone on.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. And apparently where people like, you know. Keith, who was then I mean one of the big heads in the BC and who today I mean is in the ANC....

J.F. Keith?

I.M. Keith - I forget how his surname's pronounced, but he's the brother of Aubrey....

J.F. Makwena?

I.M. No, not Makwena - who's still in the BC - I just forget - but I'm just saying, you know, where such people made statements, you know - in GSC he used to say, you know, I think we've reached the end of the road and we are leaving the country now, you know - we are going to learn how to fight - I'm just saying those sort of discussions I think took place in a different, you know, set-up - I mean at GSC there was much more in depth discussion on such things, but from the people I knew I'm just saying even the time when Steve is arrested when it was - it's now been revealed that he was supposed to have been brought out to meet the ANC - remember the conference that was said by O.R. - I'm just saying I was actually around - I mean I was - '77 I was also arrested after Biko was arrested for trying to organise buses to go to his funeral, because we were in P.E. at the time, so I'm just saying I mean we were actually there at the time, but from my - I mean I didn't know Steve all that intimately, you know, in that sense, but I'm just saying through my experience in the BC I didn't -

You know, maybe there was an inner circle I mean who discussed a lot of these issues and it wasn't discussed with all and sundry, but I didn't get the feeling of them, you know.

J.F. You didn't think they were in that direction?

I.M. Who were in that - I didn't feel that they were against I mean the ANC, especially someone like Barney, because one thing I remember Barney saying is that I mean he grew up in the tradition of the ANC - that was something, you know, that he had said - I mean obviously I'm sure he wouldn't directly say : I am an ANC member - or - but he says that he grew up in that tradition - I mean so I'm just saying there was no anti-ANC sentiment I mean amongst the people I knew at that time....

J.F. And - I'm just thinking that that's such a leap to go from BC - black pride to saying : No, the next step is armed struggle - was it the very next step - how did you - I think you've glossed over that a bit - you - had you before you got the pamphlet thought of it or did you look at the pamphlet and thought : Armed struggle, that's the solution - how did it go?

I.M. Ja, which - ja, which (Laugh) - yes - I mean I hadn't - as I'm saying, I mean I had written poetry and I had thought that there is something more, you know, and that there is more that has to be and can be done than just what we were trying to do, because really I mean there wasn't even much, as I was saying, that was being done, and I felt that we were getting to grips with - and I mean on the question of armed struggle I very definitely thought that, but I mean I just didn't know how - I think for many, many people I mean I'm sure 99 percent of people whom you'll - you know, whom you meet today in the ANC and I mean who were in the BC then, I mean comrades didn't know which way to go because I mean the organisation was very much an underground organisation, and many of us never had any contact, you know what I mean, in the sense of being approached or being, you know, in any discussions or groups with people as such.

J.F. You figured it was happening but you didn't know where to find it?

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. Where to find it that - that's what I'm saying.

J.F. Did you never have - some BC people who've moved have said that their initial view of the ANC was it's finished, it was smashed, it's older generations, they've failed - did you have that feeling in the early days of SASO or before you joined, before....

I.M. I didn't know much about the ANC when I, you see - I didn't know much about the ANC at all, you know - you just knew there was the whole question of Mandela, that he was on Robben Island, that he was, you know, leader of the ANC, that other people had left the country, but I'm just saying like in depth, no, I mean one didn't know.

J.F. And then you didn't remem- you knew that there had been an armed struggle launched in '61?

I.M. Mmm - I didn't even know when - I just knew that there - there was armed struggle, but I mean I didn't know much....

J.F. What did you think - you knew what had happened many years before, a good ten years before you - almost 13, 15 years before you received the pamphlet - did you have a feeling that that effort at armed struggle had failed but this one was working, or that it had carried on all along, or you just thought....

I.M. No, I was - no, I mean I was just - I'm sure you can say it's very much like an emotional response where, you know, you were reading about the possibility of overthrowing the regime through guns, learning to fight, coming back, and I'm just saying in that I mean there was a question of learning to fight and to come back to overthrow the regime, you know, so I'm just saying when we were leaving you didn't think that you were leaving the country, you know, and that you would stay here for years I mean - you - it's immature - I mean it's total political immaturity like on our side where, you know -

And I'm saying like the political understanding was very low - I mean mine - really when I came into the ANC - I mean I came straight into the ANC and I didn't - I mean there was no question of me going to the PAC or to the BC or anything else like that - I mean I came straight to - to the ANC.

J.F. And did you think as you left on an exit permit - did you fly out?

I.M. Mmm, I flew out.

J.F. Did you think I'm coming back with an AK and....

I.M. Yes, yes, I did think that.

J.F. .... in six months?

I.M. You know, when - yes, when you left you did - I mean as I'm saying to you, I mean I left my boyfriend behind, because he was still (.......) and he did leave in that way, you know - I mean he did leave in that way - as I don't know if and when you want to transcribe and you want to write that, our possibility would be to say that thing (?) because I mean today he's in the ranks of the movement and I mean I'm using his real name, but he was known as Leonard (?)....

J.F. (........................)

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. But I'm just saying that - that when we left (Interruption)

J.F. So you really thought as you got to London that they'd move you to a camp?

I.M. That I would be able to get back, that I would be able....

J.F. That's quite unusual - did anyone - did you ever think gosh, maybe I'll be the only woman in the camp, or was that an issue at all?

I.M. No, no, I never thought....

J.F. You thought there must be women....

I.M. Ja, I thought that there should be and there would be.

J.F. When you - with your disillusionment with BC, did it have anything to do with any political ideological questions like buy black as opposed to socialism, black capitalism?

I.M. No.

J.F. Did that worry you about BC?

I.M. Should I just say one thing about BC - I'm just saying even up until the time I left the country and even when I was in the ANC, I never thought of BC in a negative way, you know - I'm just saying even today when I speak about BC I think that and I still believe that it was, you know, a very positive - at the time that we went through it I think that it was very positive, and I'm just, you know - it's just the way that it has turned out today, you know.

J.F. How do you explain how it's turned out - don't not - explain that - you've explained how important it was, but why....

I.M. But I'm just saying, you know, their - you go through so many changes - I'm just saying in society I mean nothing - nothing's static - we don't remain at one point, and for us I mean that was my initial political experience, the whole question of BC - you know, identifying as black people - I mean we know all, you know, that was said about that - and from there, as I'm saying, you then have to - because BC we never had any programme, I mean political programme or, you know, plans - what we would do, how we'd, you know, work out things in the future, and I thought that I mean once we had reached that point of cementing the unity, making black people, you know, more positive, that from there we would have to move, and I think that's how a lot of people saw it as well, which is why there was no contradiction for people to join ANC, you know, from the BC organisations - I mean when people left from the BC there wasn't a contradiction in joining the ANC because we thought like it's a very natural step -

I mean here is an organisation, it does have a programme, it, you know, has embarked and it is carrying out armed struggle - I'm just saying even if it's true that there were a lot of, you know - I mean you know about PAC and BC, how they would, you know, slash the ANC that it's just diverse, it's defunct, it's not - you know, it's exiled or, you know, all the - I'm just saying of course there were such things being said, but I mean what we felt more important is the policies and, you know - the policies particularly of the organisation, which, as I'm saying, for me when I was much younger I mean I grew up in that mould of non-racialism, and for me it was something, you know, that I did believe in and that I thought was correct.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. And when you found the ANC again and you found that, you know, this is what the organisation was standing for, you know, I mean it - it was what I thought was correct I mean.

J.F. Tell me about your arrest - you were - when Biko died what was the reaction obviously?

I.M. Oh, ja, I mean - what did you want me to say about?

J.F. I'm just saying when Biko died the reaction was - was what - just tell me about your arrest - what led to your arrest?

I.M. What led to my - what happened is that some comrades had come to ask me to organise, to help organise in transport for the funeral, and that's how I mean I became involved, and about a day after that I was arrested - just arrested for about - I can't even remember if it was seven or fourteen days, and released after that - I mean just kept in a cell - no questioning, nothing, just locked up during that time - so obviously it was just to prevent any participation in, you know....

J.F. So you didn't....

I.M. ....in arrangements, so I didn't go to the funeral, no.

J.F. Had you been to Sobukwe's funeral?

I.M. No - no, I had nothing.

J.F. Then you arrive - you arrived in the UK in '77, you were - when you say received by the ANC, were they expecting you?

I.M. Yes, they were expecting me - ja, they did know that I was coming.

J.F. And what was your reaction to them - just tell me briefly what happened next in your.

I.M. Well, I mean the first - my first question I mean if you knew - I mean I really hated being in Britain, that was one of the first things, because that's not where really I wanted to be - I wanted to be in Africa, that's the first thing - the second thing is the whole - I mean I found myself - I felt very alienated in Britain I mean - it was just for me, you know - I mean they were so far away from home, the cold - you know, the set-up there I mean - I didn't know anybody - I mean I didn't know - there was - the only person I knew there was actually a cousin of mine who was just on a working holiday there, and he was going to go back home, you know, but other than that I mean I didn't know people, especially within the movement, so it was really, you know, trying to get through to people, and I mean while a lot of people were open and warm, you know, but also there's a lot of reserve, you know, on the part of some people, so I found it very difficult actually being in Britain.

But I mean the whole question of the ANC I mean you became very quickly involved in units, in branches, in the work, in meetings, addressing meetings, and I think especially because you are new, you've just come, so they want to use, you know, a fresh voice maybe, so I'm just saying in terms of work I mean there was a lot to be done and, you know, quickly you became very....

J.F. What about getting you into a training camp - did you ask about that?

I.M. I did mention it but I was told : But you can't - you know, I'm just saying there are a lot of things that you can't really....

J.F. (........................) - you've mentioned....

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. No, I'm just saying well, maybe the nature of the work in Britain I should say that it's different, you know - the work there is mainly dealing with the international community.

J.F. So you were just told this is where you're needed?

I.M. So, you know, I was told that : Right, now this is what you'll be doing, you'll se about other things later.

J.F. Were you disappointed?

I.M. Very disappointed (Laugh) at that time, ja, I mean while I was there for two years - I think it was '79 - I mean I first came down in '79.

J.F. To Lusaka?

I.M. To Lusaka.

J.F. And you've been here since?

I.M. No, I went back again, worked in SACTU for for two years, '80 - '81, '82 - came back in '82 and I've been here since then.

J.F. And did you just get transferred to SACTU, or how did you....

I.M. Yes, I just got transferred.

J.F. And why was that, since you hadn't been in the union in South Africa?

I.M. Well, I had working experience I mean in terms of the criteria of SACTU I mean....

J.F. In terms of what?

I.M. The criteria, recruiting I mean in SACTU is people who have worked, people who have been in unions, or trade union leaders, I mean those are all people who are eligable - but with me I mean at the time there was a desperate shortage of personnel for SACTU in London - it was also at that time unfortunately, when I mean of that whole expulsion of the Legassick - remember that Ingaba clique, when they were expelled, so that was immediately at that time - I was still working at anti-apartheid then and I was brought in, into the office to assist.

J.F. So were you glad to get back to Africa permanently?

I.M. Ja, although I'm just saying that's another thing that - but I'm sure lots of these things you won't I mean write, because I mean I'm not supposed to be on terms (?) - I carry a British travel document, so in terms of that I'm supposed to be living in Britain, otherwise I could forfeit my document, so I'm just saying I'm not regarded as living here permanently in that sense - that's why I do - like, for example, I go back one, two months in a year, at least to get that stamp in the passport, but - but oh, yes, I'm very happy here (Laugh)

J.F. The last thing I just wanted to do was to get back to the dreaded Coloured question again - this is my focus - just a couple of points - I don't know if this sounds - maybe you'd reject it (?) but I think there're say, young whites who would feel if they see Marion Sparg, that that means whites can be involved - there is that aspect - did it mean anything to you to see Reg September and x number of African comrades - did you have any worries or thoughts about will I be the only Coloured in the movement or do they have lots of them, or was that an issue to you ever - did it matter that Reg was who he was?

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. Ja, no, it was never really an issue for me I mean who else or what else was around in terms of colour - I mean I think that I wanted to join the ANC, I wanted to learn how to fight, and I wanted to go back home - that was like my sole motivation - I mean I've learned a lot I mean politically since I've been out here, but I don't think for me that that was a starting point at all.

J.F. Not a starting point but....

I.M. But - you were saying did it give me confidence or did it....

J.F. To see Reg, did it mean anything - did you have any little thought of he's in a pretty high position, or do you think that you just expected to see Coloureds in high positions and that wasn't a factor or?

I.M. Mmm, because I mean I knew that the ANC's open to everybody, so I mean I've always believed that whatever position people hold it'll be because of their merit, their ability, you know, and their commitment and sort of thing, so it didn't - I mean it's never ever - and actually I mean I know that in London, for example, there's a hell of an imbalance in terms of colour, if you want to say that - I mean it's predominantly white, there are a lot of Indians - you know, maybe quite a substantial number of Coloureds, you know - very few African - so I'm just saying even in their terms there's - you know, you can get a very wrong idea of what the ANC is if you have to - I'm sure -

You've been in London, ja - you know, so I'm just saying I mean if you have to go there and you think is this the ANC I mean, what's going on here, you know, where, what - so I'm just saying, you know, those things - I mean luckily for me I mean it never really bothered me.

J.F. And what about the issue that there weren't anyone but Africans on the NEC until 1985 - how did you feel about that - when you joined in - when you arrived in '77 up until '85 there were Coloureds and Indians and whites, but they weren't allowed to be on the NEC - was that ever discussed....

I.M. Well, I was going to say initially somehow, you know, you just accepted it as I mean there's - this is one of the laws, because I mean really it was one of the things I mean that the NEC was closed only to African members, and as far as I remember it never really became an issue - the first time that I ever remember it being raised was when I think it was Cde. Jack was once addressing a meeting and saying, you know, I think it was - was it the memorial for Doc (?) when he said : Don't you think that this man deserved to be on the NEC - I think something to that effect.

You know, somebody saying that was really the first time, but you know, subsequent to that I mean I don't think that it was really, but when it was opened up for discussion, of course it's amazing, but I mean the view of almost the overwhelming majority of the ANC was that the NEC must be opened - I mean just for example, here in Lusaka I mean 99.9 percent, you know, of the entire membership, there was no question I mean the worst (?) in the camps I mean, there was no question about that at all, you know, as to whether or not the NEC should be open -

I mean it was like - almost like a non-issue like why didn't people think about that in '69, you know, why - why is it that it's only becoming an issue now, so I'm just saying it wasn't even debated (Laugh) - you know, it was hardly debated I mean that thing I mean at any level.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

J.F. Lastly - this is kind of a devil's advocate question, but the line to the whites from BC was that you must go work in your own community, you must conscientise whites - was - and you had said that BC wasn't reaching Coloureds - did you ever think that means we must actually work in the Coloured community, because you said you'd worked in Guguletu and Langa and that it politicised you, but was there ever a line where people said : Hey, if you want to get more people maybe Coloureds should work with Coloureds the way whites work with whites and Indians work in the Indian Congress, or was it different for Coloureds or what's the story?

I.M. No, I don't think it's only different for Coloureds, because I'm just saying when it came to the whole question of blacks - you know, the whole BC I mean we saw it very much as, you know, one solid entity, and I'm saying the work that was done when we did plays, I mean it's obviously because of the racial segregation that existed that we had to go to Elsies River on one night and the next night to Langa - but I'm just saying the plays we took - we took to the townships I mean - we took them to Coloured townships and we took them to African townships, you know, and there wasn't ever a question of us having to, you know, only concentrate on working in the Coloured townships, although obviously that is where I mean we did most of our work, I think correctly, but I'm just saying there was never just - I mean if you had say, a play to put up and you had to put it up over five nights, you know what I mean, you would spread it out that, you know, two or three nights would be in the African townships and time played in the Coloured townships as well.

But where I was saying I noticed this was in Port Elizabeth, you know - this is where I really felt this thing, but that is really because while on the one hand we - it's known I mean historically that Port Elizabeth has been such a strong, you know, political - it's been a political stronghold of the ANC, you know - there's always been a lot of political activity and unrest and organisation in that area, but I felt that particularly amongst the Coloured community there wasn't, you know - there wasn't much work being done, you know, even in terms of the BC groupings there wasn't much being done, and I mean I'm sorry to say that, you know, even I didn't, you know, contribute much to the work, particularly in the Coloured townships - you know, because I'm sure then you look for the easiest way out and, you know, there's a lot of organisation in New Brighton, so that's where we - you know, we organised.

And while we did try I mean once or twice, you know, to - to put up things - for example, the workshop, the literacy workshops we had, were actually held, we made a lot of use of the churches, you know, in churches in - in Galvendale - you know, so I'm just saying there was that attempt, but as I'm saying, it wasn't very successful at all - I mean I didn't think it was successful.

J.F. So you're saying there is a place, just like there is a place for the Indian Congress - there is a place for concentrating on your own community just to - if there's a lack - you wouldn't have said at that time or now : Look, I'm not going to work with Coloureds because I refuse to just work with Coloureds, that's politically incorrect?

I.M. Ja, but as I was saying, I mean as the organisation you belong to it wouldn't only be a Coloured organisation, you see, which I think is a different - I'm just saying you're speaking about BPC, or even if say - unfortunately there wasn't a SASO branch there, but if there was a SASO branch you would be talking about Coloureds, Indians and Africans working in the Coloured community and doing more to organise theem, you know what I mean, as opposed to just, you know, one person as a (?) Coloured, you know, organising within that, but I - I would say no, I don't have any problem, you know, as a Coloured organising Coloured people....

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

J.F. Have you even spoken to like Reg September about CPC and SACPO?

I.M. Little - little, ja....

J.F. Do you think that was a correct strategy to have those kind of separate organisations of Coloureds?

I.M. I think that at the (Interruption) - I think that at the time I mean, you know, they found that it was the correct strategy to adopt, you know, and as I'm saying, I don't have anything against it I mean - I don't think - I mean I don't think it was particularly wrong, but maybe because of this whole idea of having been brought up in the BC movement I do, you know - I do find difficulty in the separate identity - I don't know how to put it across, you know - you know, these separate organisations - I mean I've spoken to people and people say : No, you know, as an Indian, you know, Indian people had very traditional ideas and, you know, you couldn't maybe as an African man go and sit in a house and talk to an Indian woman, so as another Indian man I had to come and speak to her - so I'm just saying, you know, there were actually reasons I mean very, you know, concrete reasons why people had to work in this way, which I'm saying I mean I'm not opposed to, but I think at the point where we were, you know, we had reached a higher point, you know - there was a time of Coloureds only, Indians, whites.

We had reached a time of BC which was bringing all blacks together - now you know, there's the non-racial - I mean there's, you know, UDF, which is open to everybody - and I think if you start actually right at the bottom it was the formation of the ANC which at the time, you know, was formed for Africans only, you know, and you have gone through these stages - I don't know if that answers - I'm not answering your question now.

J.F. It's a really tricky issue because you get into - with the Indians you can say : Well, look, there was a history (............) Gandhi we all know we (.............) armed struggle - he was in the passive resistance, but we use Gandhi, people understand it - we use the Congress - people know NIC, they know TIC - and you can get into whites and JODAC because of the position of the people who happen to be closely related to the oppressing class and make sense - you reach white liberals - they've got the power to change something in a limited way - and then you get to the Africans, obviously that made sense initially as well, that you'd be having African leadership, working class leadership - whenever you get to the Coloureds somehow - first of all what I always say is : You can't argue with, it's not going to work - if you try to say : Tomorrow you're going to have a Coloured organisation in Jo'burg - you're going to just be - have you lynched....

I.M. You know what Boesak said - did you interview Boesak?

J.F. No.

I.M. When people were speaking about the need at first - I think it was before UDF was formed and they were saying that we should form an organisation for Coloureds, you know, only, in the same way that there's the Indian Congress and, you know, all these other organisations you were speaking, and Boesak said : You know, the Coloureds have always stood on the sides of the Africans in the struggle, you know, and they have always regarded themselves as part of that struggle, so for - if you now in the late '70s, early '80s want to start an organisation for Coloureds only you'll be taking us back in the struggle - we have to move forward.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

I.M. And this is why he was totally against the formation of any, you know, organisation - I'm just saying - and that's a person who's practically involved in, you know, day to day struggles inside the country - and I'm just saying that's the way I felt, and maybe that's also the way I grew up, where always I mean I've identified, you know, with the struggle, you know, being waged by - by the Africans - by black people, you know, and I mean I've grown up in that environment, and I would find it very difficult, you know, this whole question of a Coloured organisation, but as I'm saying, you know, when you speak about the time of Cde. Reg and them, you know, you speaking about Uncle Reg and them in the 1950s, you know - maybe '40s, '50s, and it - it's a completely different era, and I think, you know, they were at a different level - from the ANC, coming then to the separate, you know, for Coloureds, Indians, and from there there was BC, and today I mean you - you are at the level of UDF, you know, internally, so I don't think you can go back.

J.F. That's a great answer - one last thing, the fact that you've married an African person, does that mean anything - has that ever factored into your views - does that make you even more non-racial, does that make you....

I.M. No, no, I don't think so (Laugh) - I mean I know Mandla from home - I know Mandla from '72 - I met him during this time of, you know, theatre, which I was speaking to you about - drama and all that I mean - and I've known him just as a very powerful poet and, you know, person involved in drama, and when we came out here we met again I mean and, you know, we've had a very good relationship, and it's so (?)....

J.F. I meant....

I.M. So I'm just saying I didn't even look at him in terms of - you know, for me I mean I really and - I mean I don't know how to explain it - I'm sure a lot of people are always looking with funny eyes (?) but I don't see people in terms of, you know, Julie's white and this one is Indian and that - I mean I never think of people like that, ever, you know - it - you know, even when you ask me to explain so-and-so I mean I can say he's fat or he's thin or, you know, but I very seldom - and sometimes when I'm even pushed, you know, because sometimes I can see a person who's trying to push you to say, you know, Julie I mean what is she - I say : No, she's American - but they actually want you to say she's a white American or, you know, she's a bla - and I - you know, I just don't find those things very easy - I actually find it quite unpalatable to be describing someone as, you know, this or that or, you know, in terms of race and - I mean I see Mandla just as another person - I don't think it makes me more, you know, liberal or liberated or revolutionary than anyone else because I'm married to him.

J.F. No, I meant the fact that your being married puts the lie to the whole classification system - when you were in South Africa what were you classified....

I.M. Coloured.

J.F. But what was the - were you other Coloured?

I.M. Other Coloured.

J.F. That ridiculous system absolutely falls to pieces with your children....

I.M. Mmm.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

J.F. And I'm just saying in a sense those kinds of situations are the new South Africa, where people are going to marry whoever they want, and you're not going to be able to classify....

I.M. Them at all, ja....

J.F. You'll just say - just like if you marry into a different nationality it ceases to become important, it does - you can't even classify any more because you've screwed up the whole system, and I'm saying in effect you've screwed up the whole system by your way in conducting your life, so that kind of reinforces your non-racial outlook, that's all I was saying - I wasn't saying....

I.M. I thought you were asking me a question (Laugh)

J.F. I'm just wondering if that ever made you explain things to people better or gave you a - did your little daughter ever - is she - does she talk about colours - does she....

I.M. You know, in Za - she doesn't - I don't know - she doesn't know what colour she is, you know - that's the thing - like I mean at one stage she would say she's pink - now she's burnt quite a lot and she's the same colour as me, so she says she's brown - but I'm just saying in Zambia I mean I remember one day she came and she asked us : Mummy, to which tribe do we belong - and she's going to Grade One now, and this is what they ask the kids in the class I mean, you know - are you Bemba, are you Nyanga, are you - you know, I'm just saying those kind of things, so in that sense, you know, and I felt so freaked out - I - at first I didn't know what - what are you talking about, Nseki - No, Mummy, to what tribe, you know - they asked us to what tribe - you know, they asked the children to what tribe - so I'm just saying in that sense, but she doesn't know what it means, you know, and she was asking I mean what - what tribe, so I said : No, Nseki, you are a South African - you only tell your teacher you are a South African - your mummy's South African, your daddy's South African, full stop, there's nothing more to it.

So no, I mean we stay I mean - you've - well, you saw where we stay - I mean we are surrounded by, you know, ordinary Zambian families I mean - we don't stay in a low density area - and Nseki plays with those kids I mean day and night, and she's in and out of those houses eating (?) and nshima and Delela and, you know, kapenta - my neighbour always says to me : Your daughter really loves delela and kapenta - I mean she's just like that and, you know, she doesn't have a notion of.... (Interruption)

END OF INTERVIEW.

SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE