

p.4
25
12

X@JF@ Where you were born and when?

@BN@ Oh, actually I was born in Alexander township on the 11th of July 1970.

@JF@ 1970. And then you moved to Tembisa, when?

@BN@ In 1972.

@JF@ And why did you move to Tembisa - what -

@BN@ Actually, Alexander, it was now, you know, it was an old place, so and it is more specially industrialised so now they have to remove people there so that they can build industries to some other places and Tembisa, it was actually a new township, it was for the first time it was open in 1972.

@JF@ I see, so, um, you had told me your father did what?

@BN@ Actually my father is just a machine operator at work, but then he is also political - I mean, aware of all the situation at home.

@JF@ So he's always been working as a machine operator?

[[11]]

@BN@ Yeah always. At first - at first he started working as a driver at Putco Bus Company, but then in 1976, then he joined Multotech [?] where he is working as a machine operator.

@JF@ Is he in a union?

@BN@ Yes.

@JF@ Which union is he in?

@BN@ It is MAWU.

@JF@ MAWU? Uh huh. And um, your mother was a schoolteacher teaching where?

@BN@ She was teaching at Alexander.

@JF@ How did - did she have to still commute from -

@BN@ From Tembisa to Alexander.

@JF@ Until when was she a teacher?

[[20]]

@BN@ Left teaching probably in 1978, after the '76 risings then she left teaching. It was because of, I mean, I mean political activities because I mean he didn't left on his own - I mean, on her own, he was dismissed by, I mean, the authorities.

@JF@ So after '76 she was dismissed.

@BN@ Yeah.

Starts on p. 3

@JF@ And what did she do after she was dismissed? Did she work?

@BN@ No, he did work I mean, as a clerk at Johannesburg in a certain office, but then at present [can't understand] it doesn't work anymore.

@JF@ So she's no longer working. And how many are you in your family?

@BN@ Well, our family, we are about six, five boys and one girl.

@JF@ And um now, when you say your parents were political, did they talk to you about politics?

@BN@ They used, because you'll find that maybe during - in the evening, maybe if we are watching TV and then they saw something, we used to ask questions to them and then they give us a clarity about that and even about the situation, you know, in 1960s, you know, the times of Mandela, Walter Sisulu and those others. We used to ask them such questions about what happened and then more especially about in 1961, I mean, about the Sharpeville massacre, We used to ask them about, I mean, that protest against the pass laws and then they answer us.

@JF@ So what - what did you learn about the South African political history?

[[41]]

@BN@ What I actually learnt is that, I mean, our struggle it has went a long duration and again during that duration you will find that many have lost their lives and many have lost, I mean, good opportunities, such as most of the people at present - some of them, they were detained and sent to Robben Island - they couldn't, I mean, finish their school - their school level. Some of them today are paralysed, some of them today are in exile, some them - they - they seen somebody knows who - I mean their parents or his parents long ago till today find that, I mean, he is not hearing - having any word about his or her parents and even the parents are not having any - I mean, any information about their kids, because today there's nowadays, you'll find that, I mean, most of the youth, I mean, most of the youth here, they used to call them young lions, you know - they are leaving the country in large numbers and find that, I mean, parents are not having any information.

[[55]]

So really, what I can say is that, you know, our struggle to have went along and actually it has - it is - our struggle has now proved that apartheid is a disease and I mean, the people in South Africa, they are not prepared, I mean, to live under such a system.

[[59]]

@JF@ Are you one of the young lions?

@BN@ I will say so, actually [laughing], because you know, I mean, what they mean about young lions, I mean, they mean those who are still young, you know, maybe under the age of 21 - they used to call them young lions, so I will agree with you when you are saying I'm one of them, but the present I can't say I'm one of those because at home we

from p. 11

from p. 4

(your parents)

to p. 6

big note this orange not guess

to p. 4

10/23

used to fight and, I mean, we used to suffer in many things, so now - I can't say I'm the young lion but I can say I was because I'm not in exile, now, you see, and the situation in exile when compared to the situation at home, it's a little bit different.

[[67]]

@JF@ Let me take you back - I want to ask you the things as you were realising them yourself. Sso, say when you were about six, you would begin to realise something - I know that's quite young, but when you were six it was 1976. Now what do you remember as a young, young boy in Sub A of what was going on? What was going on in 1976? What did you see and what did you think at that young age, that it was meaning?

[[73]]

@BN@ (Actually, what I remember) I can say (is that during that period) I remember at school, I mean, (our bigger brothers and even us, we used to get a thorough and difficult punishment at school, during those times in 1976 and also, when, maybe, police can hear you talking of Mandela or ANC you were in for it during that time. Then you'll find that, I mean, most of the students from high school, I mean, from high school level, they were coming to the primary schools, you know, maybe, taking those bigger ones and trying, I mean, to - to give them an outline view about what is happening, I mean, during - it was during the time when the government wanted to introduce, I mean, Afrikaans.)

[[83]]

So then (during that time) we find that, (as I was only six years old, I used to suffer a lot - I suffered really sad that day. I didn't know the way from home to school properly; I used to be taken by my bigger brother to school in the morning and then in the afternoon he, I mean, he wait me - he waits for me at the gate, take me back home again, but that day, June 16, 1976, I had to run the whole township because nobody now is left inside the school premises and things were bad, you know: this side it was comrades and this side it was police.) You had - I mean, (you didn't know who were the right people so you have to flee for your life, so I - I was supposed, you know, to [round-up?] (the township for a long time, you know, not finding actually where is my place, till I met somebody who, you know, is the neighbour, fortunately. Then he took me home. Then it was better, but (although I arrived late at home during the day and I found my parents really been worried about my whereabouts, but then they were glad when they see me back.)

[[97]]

@JF@ But at that young age, when you saw all this going on - the police fighting the students, did you think - why did you think they were fighting? Did you think they were fighting to kill the whites - to kill Vorster as it was then - or what was your idea? Did you have any idea of ANC back long ago then?

@BN@ Yeah, (actually the idea which, I mean, I was having, you know, at that time, I only used to know that, I mean, boers are dogs, as we used to say, you know - so actually that's the only thing, I mean, I was knowing during that time and I mean, I knew that boers used to arrest those people who were politics) because during that time, you know, I mean, I was but it was very little, so (that was the only thing I could knew at that stage.)

[[108]]

@JF@ (What did it mean, boers are dogs? Did it mean white people are) to p.4

from p. 3
 (terrible?)

@BN@ [laughs] I mean, they were - (they used to be called) like that because of, I mean, their terror and their brutality: I mean, they are not thinking, you know, (about us and that maybe we are also human.) *back to p. 2*
 [[112]]

from p. 2
 @JF@ Did you ever have any contact with white people?

@BN@ None.

@JF@ Not at all?

@BN@ (I don't even remember, even one day, maybe, working at the garden of a white man or maybe being carrying his bag at the golf course.)

@JF@ (You didn't do any of that?)

@BN@ (No.)

@JF@ (You just stayed in Tembisa?)

@BN@ (I just stayed at home. I get my education,) I also get some, I mean, political discussions from my parents, as such and then, well actually, (the time when I was) now (nine years old, it was) the time when I was actually in Stand - I'll say it was in Standard Three by the way - or - Three or Two - one of the two. Then it was (the time when, I mean, I came to me to realise many of the things, because I used to see, I mean, (some young, I mean, children,) I mean. I mean, you find that, I mean, they're more especially, I mean (the same age as I, you know, you'll find them maybe carrying bags) there, saying 'Today we are going to, I mean (to the golf course,) we are going to carry', but then we'd find that - it's (something I ignored and actually I) - I did (received) - I mean, (good care from my parents so I was not having any problem about) money - (pocket money and everything because at home they used to give me everything,) so then such things to us, ... myself, we thought it was something -
 [[132]]

@JF@ What - and what about - did you see whites when you went to town some time or something.

@BN@ I do see them, yeah.

@JF@ But only from far? You never ever spoke to whites?

@BN@ None. No.

@JF@ (Your parents had no friends who were white?)

@BN@ [laughs] (My parents are not having friends with whites.) No actually, (I started) more especially (communicating with whites in 1984 - the time when I was now fourteen years old during, I mean, the formation of the SRCs at schools and all that. You find that maybe if he is a lawyer, or she is a lawyer, maybe, you know, because during that time then even to our rings, our COSAS rings, we are having some white students from other schools, you see, so it was a time when)

from p. 4
probably I started communicating with them. And not even on social basis but strictly on political issues.

[[142]]

@JF@ How did you get in contact with them? *(these whites?)*

@BN@ Actually, we use - (we used to) - to (go to), I mean, maybe to (town), like that, or maybe - or maybe (they used to come inside the townships, because we are afraid, I mean, to go to white suburbs, you know, so maybe if they are coming to our school or sometimes they were making press statements, or maybe writing letters to our, I mean, to our organisation so .. that I mean they need clarity about what is actually happening about SRCs and all that. Then we'll find that it's where you get, I mean, (a chance for organising them and all that.) And some of them, we get them through others because we find that we meet one and then he's telling us about others, and then we rotate back then, you know, like that with them.

[[154]]

So, it was when I started communicating with them.

@JF@ What kind of whites were these that were communicating with you? Were they white students?

@BN@ Actually, I mean they were, I can say, English, English -

@JF@ But were they students or -?

@BN@ (Yeah, they were students.)

@JF@ NUSAS or -?

@BN@ No, by that time NUSAS was not yet there, I should think, so it was COSAS, the Congress of South African Students.

@JF@ Right. But the whites - where were they from?

[[161]]

@BN@ They were not having any political organisation by that time, because what I remember very well - it was last year when I mean, we started entering Johannesburg deeply now, because even in Johannesburg we have man- I mean, (we have managed to form the Johannesburg Youth Congress there and it is consist of whites. They have managed to form the JODAC, which is the Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee, it - it is also consist of whites (and again, we manage to organise schools, such as white schools there which are mainly multi-racial - even some blacks are there - we managed to organise such schools, because we're having a problem in the townships only to find that sometimes when there are boycotts or what at schools, you find that those who are schooling outside the township, they are going to school, you know, and that, and some others who are inside the township, they are now starting to complain: but, I mean, (while others are not going to school, others are going - this is unfair.)

So then we started even organising white schools in Johannesburg, such as Pace, I mean, (we've organised Pace, the Tarrant ^{Tarrant} [?] Corresponding College, we've organised and the Boscom [?] we have organised.) No, many of them of which others I've forgotten their names (and even today) to p 6

from p. 5
 (they are) participating and they are (affiliates of the Transvaal Student Congress.)

[[179]]

@JF@ So how could you - how did you go about organising whites? Was - was it difficult? What was it like?

@BN@ No. Actually (it was difficult, but then,) I mean, (it was something which you were determined in and it was something which we knew for a fact that it must happen and once starting working we know that,) I mean, (at the end we must, I mean receive something which is fruitful for us, you know, so then you find that some it was difficult for us, you know, I mean, but you find that, I mean, (even the principals)- (the teachers)- (those who are living in the townships,) you know, I mean we are gripping them, (we are putting them into our ranks.)

[[188]]

Then you find that, I mean, students are not - now not having any opportunity. For example, let's say, if you are going to enter a certain school and then we get the pre- permission from, I mean, from the principal. You'll find that the minute you are going to meet the students, I mean, he is not having any right or any opportunity, I mean, to tell us that we shall go out of the school premises. Hence we have get, I mean, the permission from the head of the school.

[[194]]

(And then some of the schools, I mean, if you can look at them very well you'll find that they (are church schools,) you know, (such as Methodist is having its own school or the Romans are having a school) and a church. (So you'll find that the South African Council of Churches) did - (have played a vital role again in helping us to organise such schools.) *to p. 11*

[[199]]

@JF@ Right, now let's just try to - 19 - when you were fourteen, that's when you really started to get politically involved.

@BN@ Yeah.

@JF@ Let me take it back a little bit before, you were - when you were - in '76 and after that, you still were quite young and the only thing you knew was 'boers are dogs'. Now, how did you get to know more than that? Did your parents tell you the specifics of South African history? Did people tell you about the ANC, PAC? Who told you about all these historical movements?

[[206]]

from p. 2
 @BN@ Yeah, (actually I'll say,) you know, (I'm coming from the family of politics,) you know, (because,) I mean, (my father's uncle) - I know, I should think maybe you know him, (it's) Robert - I mean (Zeph Mothopeng, the one who is in Robben Island at presently.) Robert Mothopeng is actually my father's - I mean, my mother's uncle. Then, well (at first he used to be the member of the African National Congress, but then during the dispute,) I mean, (the time of the Sharpeville massacre, then he joined,) I mean, (the PAC.) Then, you'll find that (during) that time, I mean, in 1976 to ('78 till 1984, I was getting) a little, I mean, (little information about that,) you know, (because I used to ask my parents, even my bigger brothers,) I mean: ("why is) our grandfather today in (he in) detention? what happened? what is actually the ANC? what is actually, I mean, (the PAC? - such things. And then I was getting a little bit) *to p. 7*

from p. 6
(of information.) ~~back to p. 2~~

from p. 13
But then in 1984, as I started to be practically involved, now, you find that I was also receiving some, I mean, materials for reading, you know, (historical materials, political books and all that for reading. I mean, well those - (some we get them from the UDF, some, we get them even from the ANC, some ANC materials are there inside the country, so we used to find them and more especially as we are working in the office, you know, and we are the affiliate of a certain - I mean, I mean, the affiliate of the Transvaal Student Congress. We'll find that even the Transvaal Student Congress do also bring some of its materials to rally the students and mobilise them. So that's actually when I started getting more of my politics - in 1984.)

[[234]]

@JF@ And, um, (why was '84) ^(such an important) the year? You just became old enough to be interested? _(for you?)

@BN@ Actually -

@JF@ Was there some event?

@BN@ Actually, it was not - I mean, that I'm interested or what, but the thing is that by 1984 there was nobody who could sit down saying 'I'm not a comrade, I'm not going to be involved.' You know, the way the situation it was, you know, we were maybe (thinking that tomorrow we are going to get our liberation, you know, because things were terrible by that time - the situation was hot. And then you'll find that, I mean, the corporal punishment at school, it was very difficult, I mean, they know for a fact that (the government have, I mean, long ago, even in 1976, introduced its, I mean, (puppet representative of the students, - the so-called prefect systems, and you know the prefect systems, you know - (it was terrible, because, I mean, you have to wear your uniform + - strictly uniform, you have to wear (a tie every day, you know. Even those who were smoking, you know, (if they can find your cigarette you're in trouble and you'll find that, I mean, (most of the children, they are not affording to buy, I mean, (a full uniform and all that. Then you'll find that even the school fees, you know - I don't know how to call it, school fees or school fund - the rate of that, (it was too high, you know, and we find that you are paying a lot of money, but we used to) - we must (buy ourselves books, you know and all that.

[[257]]

So by that time not to say I was interested, but (it was the time, because, you know, if you can look at my age presently and look at the age in which I was born, you can, I mean, (clearly see that I'm a revolutionary child, you know. (I was born in a revolution and even today I'm still involved in the revolution, so I was actually supposed, I mean, (to enter the fight also.)

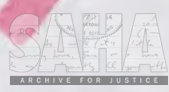
[[264]]

@JF@ This idea that your mother's uncle was Zeph Mothopeng. (What did they think of him? (How did they explain what this guy was doing, what his politics were?) Was he a good guy, was he a leader?

@BN@ Yeah, actually they've explained a lot about, I mean, (my grandfather, Robert Mothopeng, because at first he used to be a principal at Orlando High School in Soweto,

to p. 13

to p. 8



@JF@ He wasn't your grandfather, he was your mother's uncle.

@BN@ Yeah, he's my mother's uncle. He used - he was -

@JF@ Your grandfather told you about him? *from P 7*

@BN@ Yeah. He was, I mean, the principal there and we'll find that (he was also involved in matters of the workers, because I mean, (I understand that he left the work of being a principal) and (go and join), I mean, some - some - (some lawyers in a certain office, so then when they started working for workers, you know, it was during the time of SACTU and all that. So then, well (he was a good person,) he was a kind person and (he was a good leader, because he used to go with Mandela and all that. But then you'll find that the ideology, I mean, (was different, because the time they) - they - they were discussing the issue of their pass, I mean, (campaign, you'll find that, I mean, (in the meeting, some, I mean, (were for an idea that) they should be - (the march should be taken to the police station; some were for an idea that, I mean, (they must use their diplomacy for that campaign), then (only to find that those who want to use diplomacy, they're belonging to the ANC today, and those who have used, I mean, I mean, (the march) to - I mean, they are today belonging to, I mean, the - (the PAC.))

[[295]]

And as the ideology of the P - (as I understand the ideology of the PAC,) I understand that the ideology of the PAC is that, I mean, (Africa is for Africans and whites must be driven into the sea. Then one day I sat down and, you know, (I ask myself, I mean, (why) actually (people like) Robert Mthopeng were for that ideology. Then I reverse my mind back and, you know, (I thought about what my grandfather and my parents used to tell me about him. Well, they used to tell me) - to tell me that, I mean, maybe, let's say, Robert Mthopeng ^{was} is detained, he ^{was} maybe tortured bad, they - you find that (they are using electric shocks, you know - many methods are used - have been used (to torture him - and he ^{was} banished, his children are also harassed and he's having one of) - one of (his children who) is blind even now, he (was born blind,) so he's harassed. (You'll find that his wife also is harassed and the children had) have to, I mean, (to live alone at home.))

(So then), when I compare the two - I mean, the method they were using for detaining him - I mean, the time they detain him and the - I mean, the ideology of which he is in presently, (I could see clearly that maybe what makes him really, I mean, (to join the) AN - the (PAC,) I mean, to have that bad ideology that whites must be driven to the sea,) I mean, they must - (Africa is for Africans, is that, I mean, (he is used to many methods of torturing,) you know, and then they have changed his mind and then he is not having any mercy for them. That's why I should think he is today the member of the PAC.)

[[327]]

@JF@ (Why do you think it's a bad ideology to want to drive whites into the sea?)

@BN@ Yeah, (actually, it is impossible,) you know, it's something impossible, (because, I mean, except the fact that their civilisation and all that - (you'll find that, I mean, (most of the) things and most of

from p.8

the (skills inside the country,) I mean, the opportunity is their - (they have been held by the whites and) a (few are being held by blacks. So then, you'll find that if you are now saying we are going to drive them to the sea,) I mean, every, I mean, each and every race is all over the world and actually not to say you wanted to overthrow the government but you wanted, I mean, the powersharing, you see, so the ideology of driving the whites to the sea, I should think you know - you know, maybe I could say, if, let's say, today I'm taking that ideology also - I'm saying I'm going to drive the whites to the sea, you know: (I'm going to fail, you know, and then my childrens are going to fail also, and even my grand- grand- grand- (grandsons,) you know, (they are going to fail, because it's something impossible, you know,) and I mean, if you can look again at the other thing, you'll find that, I mean, the MK, which is the Umkhonto we Sizwe is just an army, you know, for a - for a liberation movement, but then we're looking at the SADF at home: you'll find that the SADF is a regular army, you know. They're having everything and they can manufacture their own arms and ... on the other side, the MK cannot, I mean, manufacture its own arms.

[[356]]

So it's something difficult and if maybe we could - I mean, we are not very much clear about it, we'll find ourself in a position - maybe we'll find that only a few big - I mean, only a few blacks are being left there in South Africa - all have been killed by whites, because it's something which they are also not going to allow.

[[363]]

@JF@ So - when you heard about him, (were your parents telling you about Mothopeng and the PAC) as - also (as a bad ideology? Did they say to you) - (this uncle of your mother's, he's on the wrong track?)

@BN@ (No, actually, they didn't tell me about maybe he's on the wrong track,) or what, you know. (It's something which I realised myself.)

@JF@ Now, (all the torture that you received in prison - didn't it make you to become anti-white, the way you think it made Zeph Mothopeng?)

[[373]]

@BN@ They didn't because, (you know,) actually (by the time I joined the struggle and by the time the people and the students of Tembisa elected me as the president and as a sectional - I mean, as a sectional (committee secretary,) - (I should think there were some qualities which they've see from) - I mean, they've saw from me, and I shall think there are also some quantities, you know, and some - I mean, (me) - (my dedication to the struggle. So then, you'll find that even I can be tortured, you know, (to such an extent that maybe I can be paralysed,) or what, you know - actually, I don't want to see South Africa only being the blacks there,) you know, but (I wanted to see South Africa all races being living there in peace and harmony. I want to see stability) being taking place in South Africa.)

[[390]]

So that is why I'm not going to change my ideology) and I know for a fact that not all the whites are enemies to blacks and not all the whites are gain- I mean, are working for the apartheid regime. Some of the whites, we are having them in our ranks; some of the whites, (we are also having them in our movement, so, I mean, it's something impossible that I can say, I mean, I'm going to be anti-white,) because (even I can be anti-white,) I mean, (the democratic movements and the non-racial)

to p.10

from
 movements which are taking - I mean, operating inside and outside South Africa, you know, they are in favourable of a non-racial South Africa - then only to find that after liberation, after they take over, I'll be the only one who will be saying I'm anti-whites and although I'll have to live with whites in for- I mean, I'll be forced to live with them, because I should think that they - even after - even, even after liberation if maybe you can do something, an offence against the government, you are not going to say - I mean, this one, he was Comrade Tambo, the President - even Tambo, if he can - does a crime, I mean, after - after our takeover, we can take him to jail also, you see.

[[415]]

So that is why, I mean, I don't want that ideology and I didn't even think of joining such people because I know it's something impossible, you see.

[[418]]

@JF@ Did you know other people in Tembisa or (did you encounter) it, who did support that ideology of anti-white? *(anti-white views in Tembisa?)*

@BN@ (You know, actually in Tembisa they used to be there during the BC time, which means it was '76/'78, but then till progressive move - I mean, since progressive movements have been formed inside our townships, I'll find that most of them - some of them are here today in this conference - you'll find that most of them, they'll see that, I mean, that ideology, it's a useless ideology and have joined the democratic movement, the non-racial, I mean, mo - I mean, organisations. So at present there is none, I can say, because, I mean, if people inside the township can hear you saying I'm a PAC, I'm AZAPO, you'll be in for it, because they'll tell you straight that, 'Look, you say you want to drive the whites to the sea. Where are our childrens today? Some are dead, some are in detention, some are not - I mean, (in exile, some are in hiding') and all that, so they are not for that ideology: they are for an ideology of a non-racial democratic South Africa.)

[[445]]

@JF@ (Did your parents tell you that they supported non-racialism, that they didn't support BC or PAC?)

from p.19
 @BN@ (Actually, I didn't know, I mean, (clearly what their stand is,) because you'll find that during my time when I grew up there was that thing, I mean, there, I mean they were Charterists on the other ^{one} hand, and on the other hand they were, I mean, Azanians. So you'll find that some of the people, I can say, (in the townships, they are just, you know, following, if they can you saying you're a comrade,) you know, they - they won't wait to ask that maybe, (to which party are you following: to PAC, or to ANC. As long as you are singing a slogan and you are fighting against apartheid, they can join you,) but then you'll find that in Tembisa it is more or less difficult because none of them are there and those who are there have now joined the democratic movement. *to p.19*

[[466 - end of side of tape - 488]]

@JF@ - parents were the ones who were politicising you and yet you're saying they didn't tell you where they stood?

@BN@ Actually, I mean, they wre politicising me, but not to the effect *do p.11*

from p. 10
of the ideology.) I didn't know of their ideology, you know, because because, you know, by - by that time ~~was~~ I've already said, that there were two parties working, you know, but what I know actually now is that, I mean, (I and my parents are now following into one ideology which is, I mean, the ideology of a non-racial society in South Africa,) you know, (and they are also believing and also following) I mean, the policy of the Freedom Charter. → to p. 2

[[500]]

@JF@ But do you think they didn't say to you at the time because they were used to not speaking politics - they thought if they said too much, you would think, 'Oh, yes, they must be ANC' and that would cause trouble? I'm just wondering what - what their motivation was for not saying 'Come, let me tell you. This is the one we support - Mandela's the one' or this or that. Do you think it's just the question of, you don't speak too openly because then you might be detained and say 'my parents support the ANC' or something?

[[505]]

@BN@ No. You know, by that time, you know, what I - what I - what I, I mean, I've realised is that maybe they were afraid that I'll reveal the information maybe to some of my friends and they will also be detained, so that's why they were telling me just a little bit and not about their affiliation, but when, today, since I've grown up and now, you know, I'm having that idea, because we used to discuss the time I was - I'm imprisoned at home - they used to tell me which, I mean, party they're [in for it?] and you know, all of those things, you know, but the most very important fact is that, I should think during my time when I was still young they were afraid of that maybe I'll tell - I'll go telling everybody that, don't tell me, my parent is a ANC supporter and all that and they will find that I'm putting them into trouble.

[[514]]

@JF@ Sure. Okay. Um, and since you said you were in Tembisa, you had no contact with whites, do you remember the first time when you were fourteen years old and you saw whites in the democratic movement? Did you think it was a bit strange or did you want - want to maybe see what they were like, or did you just think 'oh, that's fine'. I mean, I'm just wondering, it would seem to me you might, the first time you heard of Joe Slovo, think 'Gee,' you know, 'who's this white guy?' - or the first time you saw some white person coming to the Tembisa congress or something, you might think 'What is their business here?'

[[521]]

@BN@ Yeah. You see, actually, the contacts, you know - maybe I've taken your question in another way - maybe I thought you were telling me about the contacts with - I mean, with whites, those who are not even politically involved, you know, but then I came to realise that, you are, I mean, you are talking about people who are politically involved, you see. So now, I mean, people who are politically involved, then, since 1984 at the time when I started, I mean, seeing them and introducing myself to them, introducing - and also them introducing themselves to me - then you'll find that, as most of them by the time they were ^{at} lawyers ^{at} by that time because most of the students were detained, and some of them, they were - they were (working for the Red Cross, even the DPSC) as such (because, I mean, there were so many casualties in the, I mean, in the township, many - and during the unrest) that, I mean, you'll find that some of the students also, they are forced to leave the country because, I mean, if I remember very

well, during the uprisings of 1984 thousands and thousands of our fellow colleagues left us - left us inside the country and come to join the ANC here outside.

[[535]]

So then, when I started seeing them, you know, I - well, I didn't become, you know, I mean, surprised that - what are they looking for? - they are enemy agencies, or what, because I - I already read, you know, I mean, political, I've already read the political materials and all of that. I did know that there are some and I've already read the materials about the ANC - I did know that Joe Slovo is there in the ANC, Ruth First was also there in the ANC, you know - many of the whites who were there. Then I was now used to them and they were not seeming like strangers to me, you know. I was just taking them equally, you know, as people, you know, not - and not differentiating that, I mean, my colour is black, theirs, it's white and all that.

[[545]]

@JF@ And do you - I mean, I don't want to push it if you don't know, but if you remember the first time you actually got to know a white person being involved and thought 'Hmm,' you know, 'they're involved in a progressive way' or whether you first were a bit suspicious - if there's any example. I mean, I don't want the name as much as do you remember how you felt? Can you remember when you first saw a white -?

[[550]]

@BN@ I can remember, yes, because one of them who I can remember very well, he's now working with the United Democratic Front - he's a lawyer, we are having the - it's - he's a lawyer - it's Mahom - I mean, Mahomed Bham. I don't know if you know him - he's a lawyer, he's working, he's a lawyer acting for the United Democratic Front and I used to know many of them, but unfortunately now - unfortunately I've forgotten the name because it's long ago and I'm not having any information about what is happening about them presently at home.

[[559]]

@JF@ But when you first saw him did you think - (were you a bit suspicious?)

@BN@ (Actually I was not) sus- I mean, having any suspect (because) I mean, you know, in our executives, you know, we used - if - (if) somebody's, I mean, something is going to happen or somebody is going to come, we used to hold an executive meeting and plan that, I mean, if they can come with such questions, how are we going to answer them? I mean, you know, plan our strategies, how, you know, maybe if we want to organise him, how to organise him and all that, (so by the time) I mean, I see them, I was already knowing that, I mean, I'll meet such people at such a time at such a place.

[[567]]

@JF@ (What about Coloureds or Indians? Did you ever see them before you were politically involved?)

@BN@ (Even Coloureds and Indians, I saw them just in town, and all that, but since I was politically involved I met many of them.)

@JF@ The whites, before you knew them, you thought, boers are dogs. What did you think of Coloureds and Indians? Were they - what did you think in those days before - ?

from p. 12

@BN@ You know, (I used to take Coloureds and Indians as one), you know, (and group them as blacks, especially those black Indians).- I used to say, these are the people because you'll find that in most cases such as - if you know Alexander township - (you'll find that in Alexander township) even at present there are whi - I mean, (there are Coloureds living there, there are blacks living there and there are Indians living there and they are living together, you know, so I just group them as one, as blacks,) you know, (or maybe as Africans.) → *to p. 7*

[[578]]

@JF@ (Now, when you started getting involved in 1984, did you hear this word 'non-racialism'? Was it very important or was it just some small point?)

from p. 7

@BN@ (It was very much important.)

@JF@ Do you know why?

@BN@ Because you know, actually I'll say we - if -if - if you, I mean, we are going to push our struggle, you know, (actually it was a call, I can say,) you know, (from our movement, that even whites must be organised to our ranks because our struggle is non-racial. Because what I knew is that, I mean, (we blacks,) being black - (being blacks alone we can't reach, I mean, (our goal) being blacks alone in South Africa - difficult for us, you know.

(So we have to) - to - to (have all people of all races so that our struggle, I mean, it can be a mass-based struggle, you know, and I mean, even the international community can see that I mean, those people, they are not playing, what they - what - I mean, what they - they are fighting for, it's something reasonable, you know. Neither than you'll find that, I mean, only blacks are fighting and whites are not there, because (we believe not only blacks are oppressed in South Africa, but all races) which are there in South Africa (are oppressed by the minority apartheid regime, so that is why the point of the non-racialism, it was a very much) point - I mean, very much (important point during those times.)

[[596]]

@JF@ Well what if somebody said to you 'Look, why is it such an important point? Why did COSATU not let these Azanian Azactu come in, or CUSA come in? Why did - why did COSATU say 'No, no, they're not non-racial, they can't come.' Why does your students congress not say 'Okay, we'll let people who don't believe in non-racialism and people who believe in non-racialism come? Why - why do you not want to work with people who don't believe in non-racialism? Why make such a big point?)

[[603]]

@BN@ Yeah, (because,) you see, (for example,) let me quote that - let me quote the MK, let me say, let's say maybe (the MK is giving one of its guerrillas, I mea, (a mission that he must go and bomb a certain installation of the SADF at home. Then you'll find that that man, or that guerrilla, he can't just enter, I mean, (those SADF installation except if he is having somebody who is working there,) you know (and you'll find that most of the people who are working there) - there (are whites.

[[611]]

to p. 14

from 13

So if maybe we are anti - I mean, anti- rac - I mean, anti-[national racialism?], you'll find that if things are becoming difficult and - I'll like to tell you first, that, if our struggle was not non-racial, I mean, the duration of it - we are not supposed to be here today - if our struggle was not non-racial, if it was maybe a racial struggle, you know. We are not supposed to be here. You know, the ... of our struggle was not supposed to be here. I mean, today somebody can say now within five years' time - six years' time - six - six years come - six years' time to come we'll be having our liberation. Most of the people used to say that. What really makes them, I mean, to say that, the fact that they can see everybody now inside the country it's ripe - everybody has been organised now, but then, what was going to happen if only blacks were going to - to - to fight their own struggle? You see, there was, I mean, going to be some more difficulties and we are not going to be - to - to get our liberation really, you know.

[[626]]

@JF@ So you're saying, non-racialism is good because it - makes the struggle succeed?

@BN@ Not actually make the struggle succeed, but it makes our struggle to be a mass-based and, again, it is giving us the international commun - I mean, it is giving us the international support, you know. And also more especially, don't forget the point that I've said: we are having a belief - well not actually a belief, but that I mean, I - I don't know how to call it, but that not only blacks in South Africa are oppressed. All the races which are living there, you'll find that they're oppressed, because there are some whites in South Africa who are just living like blacks; there are some whites in South Africa who are just treated like blacks, you know. You know, it's a little bit different to a non-racial - I mean, I mean, let me say, to a multi-racial society and a capitalist society. South Africa, it's a capitalist society: only money talks there and not all of the whites are having money there, (so it seems they are also oppressed,) you know, (and you'll find that,) I mean, the - the profits, you know, the profits, you know, the - I mean, (the products which are supposed to be shared by the people of South Africa, those more especially are - which are coming from our minerals, they are being taken by the - I mean, (Reagan and Thatcher administrations, you see,) so that is why I am saying, not everybody - I mean, not only blacks are oppressed: even whites are oppressed because they - I mean, the monopoly of the country, we need to share it, be in together,) you know. Our money, I mean, (our profits and our minerals, they need not to be taken by Margaret Thatcher and nor Ronald Reagan. They belong to us, they need to be shared by us, you see.)

[[649]]

@JF@ (Did you discuss ^{the} issues that you're talking about now) - class, those kinds of issues? Did that get discussed (in South Africa?)

@BN@ (I'll say so,) I'll say so.

@JF@ And in what way? I mean, how did you hear about the issue of class? Do you think it's important? Did you debate about it?

@BN@ You know, actually, I like history (at school, you know, I like history very much. Then you'll find that) during my Standard Six - (when) *to p. 15*

from p. 14
 (I was doing Standard Six,) I mean, (at the age of fourteen,) my cla - I mean, (my class teacher was a politician and we used to close schoolbooks,) you know, and open political materials, having some discussion. You know, when maybe we are studying about, I mean, (the French revolution you'll find that) - ~~even at~~ - at France there were some classes there so, you know, to make a simple - I mean, to make things be simple for us and to make us to be more understanding, I mean, to understand the - the, I mean, the topic more, you'll find that he is closing, I mean, the book about the French revolution and we are coming to ours - I mean, (we are coming to South Africa. Then we'll find that, I mean, the classes, those which were) in (French and those who) - (we are having today in South Africa,) - (they are more or less the same,) they are not so much, I mean, (differating, you see.

[[669]]

(So then, I mean, (the class struggle) actually even, I mean, (we ^{were} are having some historical material) is (talking about that,) you know, so it is - every day - (so at home, you know, people are reading (excuse me) - (people are reading about it in materials, people are discussing it) about in, I mean, in - (in their meetings - and more especially the workers,) - (they're the people, I mean, who are producing the wealth of the country. You'll find that most of it - most of - of COSATU, I mean, I mean, it is just - they're - it's something they are talking about that,) I mean, the wealth of the country, it's belonging to the people, not to Margaret Thatcher and Reagan administrations.

[[681]]

@JF@ So what - (which issue was more important?) (the idea of non-racialism and everyone participating) and the kind of (equality) - (or having the working class being dominant?)

@BN@ Can you repeat yourself?

@JF@ I'm saying, you were talking a lot now about non-racialism, saying that whites and blacks must relate as equals, but do you think that the working class should be more dominant, more equal and have more emphasis, more stress? Do you think the working class should be the leaders and over any whites or any non-working class blacks?

[[690]]

@BN@ So you see, (what can I say is that the workers) - I mean, the South African workers at home, (being alone, they can't liberate our country.) (Workers only) at home, (they can't liberate our country.) (Students being alone can't liberate our country.) [Womans?!] (alone, they can't liberate our country.) No, there's no party which is working alone, which can lead itself, you know, but then, if we can unite, you know, (and be determined, you know, have a sacrifice and you know, make our struggle to be mass-based.)

[[699]]

You know, our struggle must not be, you know, you'll find that our struggle is ending just at Johannesburg and Cape Town, but nothing is happening about rural areas. Today you'll find that people today there in rural areas, you know, they are resisting today, people there. You'll find that the ... and the .. back there, you know, they put him in the line now, I mean, they are not having any opportunity - people are now being - refused to be led by such people. Magope, that side, in Bophuthatswana, people there are fighting against him, they are refusing to be - to be led by - by - by Magope. People today know

Mandela is their leader, know Oliver Tambo is their leader.

from p. 15
[[707]]

So you'll find that no party can just lead the struggle being alone and liberate the country, but we shall go there to our liberation goal being all, being united.

@JF@ (How far did you get in school when you had to leave?) Where were you?

@BN@ Actually, I didn't write my high ... (examinations last year, so I was repeating Standard Eight.

[[713]]

@JF@ Okay. Um, okay, I feel like I could keep asking you so many questions. And your father being a member of MAWU, um, (did he speak about that? Did you get a sense of the unions being important?)

@BN@ Yeah, he's - (actually something which he is also stressing every day and talking about every day, because I mean, (they are working very hard there but then they are earning very little, so it's something which I mean, (the workers are crying of it and it's something which I mean, (they are stressing it every day that) I mean, (the wealth must belong to us. We are the people who are producing)- I mean, producing the wealth.)

[[726]]

@JF@ And did you think that the unions should be joined with the UDF? Do you think that, you know, there had been this debate how does the unions relate to the UDF? what did you think about that? 2N1>+2%'vx*,<>np[]hj\$,
dff

) to p. 17

from p. 6

X@BN@ So, (you know,) the union, I mean, with the UDF, they are two different, I mean, organisations. You'll find that the UDF, as it says, it's just a front for all organisations, and the UDF, it's only, you know, it's having the ideology, I mean, the polic- it's using the policy or I can say, the ideology of the P - I mean, of the Freedom Charter. Then you'll find that even in other - in other countries there's no, I mean, other, I mean organisations which I can say they are the alliance with the UDF, but then you'll find that when coming to COSATU that, you know, the workers have been rallied all over the country, than youth congresses. You'll find that here in Zimbabwe, for example, there's no student congresses here, which is political and representing the student politically, you see, so that, you'll find that (the UDF is just a front, representing all) political - all - all (political organisations inside the country,) you know, (but welcoming) to workers - workers are all over, I mean the world, all over the world and they are having their legal organisations there, they are having their legal offices there, they are having unions there, so it's a little different thing - COSATU and the UDF.

[[754]]

@JF@ Um, (when you) got outside South Africa, did you know you would go to the ANC?

@BN@ (I know that.)

@JF@ Um, so can you speak a little bit about um how people feel about the ANC inside the country?

@BN@ Well, (most of the people there) (inside SA) (are demanding the ANC be unbanned) inside the country, and also (they recognise the ANC as the only) liberation movement which can free them inside the country, because you'll find that in most of the mass funerals which are being held at home, ANC flags have been raised there each and every time. You'll find that the graffiti in the streets - it (is written) in the streets: ("ANC must be unbanned".) And you'll find that most of the sections, streets and also schools, they have been changed - names have been changed now. You'll find that most of the streets, sections and schools, they have been named after the leaders of the ANC. So really, the ANC is the movement of the people and actually, the people at home, they believe that when talking about the ANC they are not talking about some people who are outside the country, but they are also talking about themselves, because it's representing them, you see.)

[[774]]

@JF@ (So did you feel that you are already ANC when you were in the country?)

@BN@ Well, (inside the country) (I did - yeah, I did feel, you know, (I did) felt that but that (I'm) also (a member of the ANC, although I'm not) having maybe - I'm not (registered,) maybe, let me say, in their membership, to be an MK guerrilla or maybe to be a student at SOMAFSCO, but I did know for - that - when talking about the ANC they are also talking about me, because it's the African National Congress and I'm also, I mean, an African, you see.)

[[783]]

@JF@ (So you've joined the ANC now?) *to p. 18*

from p.17
 @BN@ (Now I've joined the ANC.)

@JF@ What about (when you were inside the country),- (how did people talk about this issue of communism and the SACP?) What did you use to discuss about communism and the SACP?

@BN@ In the SACP? Yeah, actually there is - (there is a confusion, but not with the people), I mean, (with the regime.) (The regime believes that), I mean, (the SACP, it is infiltrating the ANC, but we as progressives and as Africans, what we know is that), I mean, (the ANC and the SACP)- (they are just an alliance and there is nothing like) infiltration taking place inside the ANC or maybe - I mean, (communist infiltration into the ANC.)- there is nothing like that. (What they are having is just an alliance,) because if you can look at ... that went very well, you'll find that they are also believing, they are all believing in the Freedom Charter, and the Freedom Charter was not only drafted by blacks in South Africa, but all races of South Africa come together in Kliptown on 26th June, I mean, 1955 to draft this Freedom Charter. So they believe it's one - it is just an alliance, there is no infiltration taking place.

[[806]]

@JF@ And what, when you were inside the country, what did you know about the SACP and how did you feel about it?

@BN@ I did know (when I was inside the country,) about the SACP, although I didn't know very much about it, but I only - (I only knew that), I mean, the SACP, it's a communist - I mean, it's representing - it's (the South Africa Communist Party,) and it is banned and it is now in exile and also, you know, people there, communists there, I mean, (they are actually dealing more especially with the economy of the country,) you know, and that's the only thing I knew, I mean, when I was inside the country. (And even now, I'm still on the procedure of researches and also on matters of political education and also political discussions to get clear and to get more about the SACP, because maybe - I don't know - maybe) (in the future I could find myself being their member also.)

[[824]]

@JF@ And with all your support for non-racialism, do you ever worry that when you let whites into organisations, they tend to dominate?
 [lot of background noise]

@BN@ What?

@JF@ Do you ever worry - (you say you're supporting non-racialism, but do you never worry that when whites are in your non-racial organisations,) they try to dominate or (they tend to dominate because they speak good English, they've had better opportunities, and that might be a problem?) Or is that not a problem?

@BN@ (No, it is not the problem.) Why I am seeing the ANC is because if you can look at our struggle very well you'll find that, I mean, there are policies in our struggle, and also, I mean, there are those beliefs, and then, you'll find that, I mean, if a white - if a white person came to join our organisation he finds everything been ready there, he find has been there and he finds that - they are now starting, they've even - they've been starting to join our

19

from p18

organisations, you know, it's not - [it's?] long period, you know, they have started joining very - I mean, very soon, now they are - they are starting to join and you'll find that is it impossible for them to come and change our policy or to dominate to our - I mean, our organisations, because they find us being ready. We are al - already having policies and all that and - of which our policies and, I mean, our ideologies, it's something which you cannot submit to change, such as the Freedom Charter - we could not submit or surrender the Freedom Charter: it must just be implemented as it is. → to p10

[[854]]

@JF@ And when you were detained, what were the police → ^{from p10} why did they detain you? What were they trying to get from you?

do you think that the SA see police detained you?

@BN@ Actually, long they suspected, maybe I could say, that I'm working underground for the ANC and, you know, because more especially you'll find me in public meetings, addressing people there and popularising the ANC also. So actually, the point is, they were suspecting that maybe I might be a trained personnel of the ANC, because I - in - in the interrogation I was also asked about the ANC - what I know about Mandela - and the minute I started telling them, I mean, that I, what I know about the ANC - this and this - then they said, "Yeah, which means you wanted also to push the line of the ANC, so you must be removed from the people. You are dangerous". So that is why you find that even in detention I was not with other, I mean, prisoners, you know, detainees. I was alone in my cell in solitary confinement. From the place they took me till I was released, I was in solitary confinement. And even when I was released, I was having conditions that, I mean, I should not move with more than four people, so if you look at that thing it shows that, I mean, there is something actually they are suspecting about me.

[[880]]

@JF@ And when you were trying to organise whites - or people on a non-racial basis:, Pace, or whatever, what did you say to them? I mean, here's a black person trying to speak them - how did you tell them about why they should support the struggle?

from p10

@BN@ Actually there are many ways, you see, because you'll find that most of them - let me say, for example, those who own - who own shops, those how are having factories and all that, you find that they are receiving the consequences which are supposed to be received by the government - they are now being received by them. You'll find that some are having businesses inside our black townships, but now it is difficult now for them to come and run their businesses and it is difficult for them, again, now, you know, to get more profit as before, because you'll find that, some of them, they have been - their shops have been boycotted and all that, you know - consumer boycott have been ... into their shops. So that thing, it gives them the problem.

[[904]]

And actually not to say, I alone was the only person who was, I mean, organising whites, you know. Everybody in South Africa is trying to organise whites to our ranks, and, I mean, it's something clear even before their eyes that, I mean, if they are looking, I mean, at the point in the duration of our struggle, they find themselves have been refusing - I mean, been receiving the consequences which are supposed to be received by the government, and actually they can even

to p. 20

from p12

hom 7.19
see that, I mean, such as (those who are) - I mean, (conscripted to go to the army: you will find that they are just frustrated there at the townships. some are keen, you know, because, I mean, (there is a fight continuing - it's a war actually in the townships, you know. You find that SADF's at the townships,) they are de - (they are being disarmed, their Casspirs are being thrown by petrol bombs, some have been blown by grenades and all that.)

[[924]]

(So, I mean, you see that - (they see that), I mean, (they can't protect a system which is killing people - a system which is a disease. So that is why they are also turning against the government and now supporting the people,) because, more especially you'll find that even their parents - those - because in the SADF now you'll find that even 18 years - 18 years of age, they are there now - you'll find that, I mean, most of them, they are killed, they have been disarmed and all that. You'll find that, I mean, (their parents, they are now crying that, I mean, there is nothing you can go - I mean, (there is nothing you can do there in the army except to be killed), all that, (and to be hated by the people.)

[[938]]

And another thing, actually, is that you'll find that in the townships they can see even (clearly that) I mean, (sometimes) you know, (they just receive orders that to go and kill those people. You'll find that) people, I mean, (having) a peace - peaceful demonstrations, you know, not violently, you know, (peaceful demonstrations,) but then you'll find people - (people have been killed there,) you know, (people have been fired with teargas there and all that and it's something they see that - I mean the government, (it's cruel and it's terroring) for (the people of South Africa. That is why, I mean, (they are now joining the struggle and they can see clearly that some of the people, they'll avenge maybe after the liberation, (that's) - maybe - that's - maybe, you know, another effect, is that some of them, they are afraid that if they are not, I mean, (participating in the struggle now, in the future South Africa) when the people, I mean, are -

[[961 - end of tape]]C-N1>+C==F

(they will ~~not~~ suffer.)