

J.F. I'd just like to start out and ask you where you were born and when?

J.N. You see, it was - it sometimes is a difficult question because the time when I was born, you see, there were no certificates issued - I can only rely on the information of the elders, and my sister being one of the people who has been very useful in that respect because she's one of the earliest people who attended school in our area, and so she - she knows more or less about these things - so the - the - the date was also sort of indicated by her and - but I know the place - I mean the place where I was born at Mangeney - at a place called Mangeney - Mangeney Village - that is the - the village of the Mkademenes - in fact the chief there is - is my uncle - actually, you know, my mother comes from the - the royal house.

J.F. Whereabout - what part of....

J.N. It's in Sekhukhuneland, yes - it's an area, you see - if you know Sekhukhuneland it's a - it's a mountain right in the middle of the - you see, Sekhukhuneland is in between the mountains - it's the Drakensburg Mountains and the Lulu Mountains - then it's in - in - it's in sort of a garden, you know, surrounded by these mountains - now the - the mountain which is having the village Mangeney is in the centre - right in the centre.

J.F. And were your parents - what work did they do?

J.N. Well, my - my - my father was a miner, you know, was a mineworker - in fact, you see, I - I don't know him well because he's - he died when I was very young - I think I was about nine or ten when he died, and I think I was - I was a little less than - than ten, you know, when he died because I - he died on 19 - 1936 - I was still - 1936.

J.F. And had he always been working away?

J.N. He was - he - he was actually just brought (?) into the - into Sekhukhuneland from the mine - he got sick when he was there - and then he was brought in - transport was very bad at that time - to come to Sekhukhuneland, you know, there was no buses coming there - they used to be - they used to travel, you know, by - by donkey cart, so it is this form of transport which was used to bring him all the way from - from - from Springs into Sekhukhuneland.

J.F. From Springs?

J.N. Yes, they used to....

J.F. How long?

J.N. I - I think it took almost a month - they were sleeping, you know, in - on the road all the time, you know, until they reached - and I went to see him three days after his arrival and - and after that he died, and of course they had - you know, the - and (?) tribal people - you see, they wouldn't let me know immediately about - about his death - I was very excited about having met him and - but I was surprised that, you see, the - my mother was - was - you know, was - had to be mobbed by a number of people, you know, in the morning, and they changed her clothes and everything, and I noticed that there was something wrong, and I mean it's something which is still in my mind, and then I - I enquired whether I could go and see the old man again, and nobody ever answered that question.

- J.N. Because he didn't actually come into the - into our common house, you see - she stayed - he stayed somewhere else under - under the care of a medicine man who was supposed to be looking after him, and of course obviously he was at a very bad state when he arrived, you know.
- J.F. Your - after your father died did your mother have to support you or what happened?
- J.N. Yes, yes, I was - we - we entirely depended on her.
- J.F. And was she just subsistence farming or what did she do?
- J.N. Well, you see, life in the country - in the country is not like here, you see, the - what we have is we have - we have a field - we have a piece of land on which we must produce our food, and the piece of land which was allocated to my father, which I inherited, was always there, and we would plough and produce all the food we needed from there - and as far as food is concerned there was no problem, except only during the war - you know, in 1942, '43 it was terrible - there was virtual starvation in Sekhukhuneland.

There was virtual starvation, and I remember that, you see, 1942, for instance, you know, my mother used to stay away for - for - for weeks on end in a queue, you know, for the - for the ration of mealie meal which would come - we used to eat this red mealie meal, you know, which was now available during the war.

- J.F. Tell me, your parents - your father, was he just a migrant that you rarely saw because he was always on contract, or did you have much chance to - I'm just wondering if your father had any political influence on you - did he have politics, did your mother have politics?
- J.N. No, no, they - there was no politics that time - the politics which they had could have been the pol - you know, the - just the local politics of their problems and - and tribe and so on, but not the politic - the - the - the political questions which I have to - to come into myself, no, that's not done (?)
- J.F. But people say Sekhukhuneland was such a place - an area of resistance....
- J.N. I will come and tell you about it later on, when we come to that question.
- J.F. So your political back-ground as you were growing up - when I say politics I'm interested in the politics of class and the politics of race and the politics of nationalism, or maybe just class and national, so I'm saying when did you first ever, as you were growing up, hear of the ANC, or when did you first start thinking about the plight of workers, or did you have any kind of influence - did you even have any awareness of whites and their role - did you have much exposure to whites in a far off place like Sekhukhuneland - did you even see many whites?
- J.N. (Laugh) Very interesting - you see, when I left Sekhukhuneland, when I came into town, I had no inclination at all about the question of politics - I didn't know anything about politics - in fact I came in just like any of the boys from that area.

J.N. What we used to do is most of us, you know, even our songs at school, you know, we used to talk about, you know, the - the work, you know, in the homes of the white people and not so much about the factories, and many of the people before us who were in - in - in - who were working in town were domestic servants, and so I wouldn't - I didn't even have any idea about what the political situation - what I'm going to do in relationship to the white people, or even to the other - the other Africans who speak different languages from mine.

You see, I was completely just an ordinary, you know, what'sname - I came to town - I worked as a domestic servant....

J.F. At what age?

J.N. I came to town in 1944 - I went to Germiston - and then in 1945 I had to go back home to complete, you know, my traditional school - that is to undergo circumcision, you know, which is - which is compulsory for all boys of my age in my area - otherwise if you wouldn't - if you wouldn't go there people disregard you completely - you - you have no authority - they won't even invite you to meetings - you won't sit with them - they are men, you are not a man - this is - this is the type of environment.

So I had to go back - my uncle, who's the chief, saw that I comes back - I come back to attend the - the - the school - I did - and when I came back then I came to Johannesburg, with the intention of going back to Germiston - one of my uncles was working in - in Johannesburg in - in Doornfontein - I brought his letter to give it to him - now when I reached his place, you see, at - at the factory I got employed - I got a job - the manager came out and I was - we are mixing up with many people, and he saw me, called me - I went to him, and he says : What do you want - ask me if I'm looking for work - I said : Yes, I'm looking for work, but I brought my uncle's letter - he said : Your uncle is who - I showed him the letter - he says : No, he is inside, but you can come in - I went in, and when I met my uncle I was already working (Laugh) - I was already employed.

So I worked for Harry's Hat Factory from 1946, '47, and at the end of '47 there was reduction of staff - I was - I was a victim of that - then I got a job in a tobacco factory - well, during the time when I was at Harry's Hat Factory my uncle and other people who were attending the night school, so I joined them in order to - to finish my Standard Six, which I didn't finish properly at school, so I joined them - and even when I went to this other place when I got a job now in the tobacco factory, I continued with my - with the night school.

I got a job in the factory which produced the cigarette which used to be known as Max - men of the world smoke Max - you know that cigarette - I was working for that factory - so I worked there, (and there of course I then joined a trade union) - I became a member of that trade union, (and I was - I was elected the shop steward, you see, in the factory, by the workers there) - that is my first contact with the - with trade union work.

J.F. What prompted you to get involved - why did you join?

J.N. No, well, I mean look, we were working there and we were - then we started discussing conditions of work in the factory, and we wanted increment in wages - the organising secretary used to come to our factory to address meetings and (.....) recognise of course, and so he used to come into the factory legally and address meetings with us at lunch time, and we would - I took part in these, and later on I was elected the shop steward.

J.N. Now in 1949 we engaged - we got into a strike - that factory went to strike for wages, and we got a resounding victory and got increment, (20 percent increment in) - in (our wages overall, which was such a victory - we didn't expect it,) we were - we wanted - you see, usually, (and what I got to learn that time is that, you see, when you) - when you want ten percent, twelve percent or 15 percent of increment, you don't start with what you want - you must start above that, so you ask for 25 percent and they'll reduce it to 20 (Laugh) which is what we got.

But I didn't work long after that - again (I was) a - (victimized by this reduction of staff) - I think there was no - there was not so much tobacco coming in, so they had to reduce some of us (and) - well, clearly I think the - the management thought that I was a - (an agitator, because it was only two of us who were not re-employed) - the others came back after a month, they got re-employed - I was not employed - (and then I - I took part in the affairs of that union from outside until I got a job now in another undertaking 1950.

But then during the time, apart from the question of - of the trade union politics in the - in the factory, I was already associating with a number of active politicians outside - one of them was a man who - who (became very prominent) even here, but you know, disappeared during the time of the - of action by - by our movement in Southern Rhodesia 1967 - that was the man, (Cde. Flag Morutle - that's the man) - that's the man (who brought me - who brought me - he used to pay - he used to sell the news - (the Guardian newspaper).

In fact, you know, the story of how he used to deal with me is very interesting because, you see, he used to - he would (come to me, sell me the paper and) - and when he sells me the paper (he would like to read some, you know, area - some important points in the paper with me before he goes) - every Friday I was sure I'm going to get my paper, and you know, it cost something like a tickey - you know what's a tickey, threepence - it was threepence, but we used to call it a tickey - sixpence and a tickey, half of sixpence.

So I said to him: "Look, since you are bringing this paper every Friday, you know, it forces me to come back to - (to give you the tickey) - (what about me paying you for a month or so, so that you just deliver my paper and you leave it on my bed, I'll find it - he said: "No, it's not correct, - correct thing is that I must give it to you in hand, and I must talk to you about some of these things here, and we discuss some of these things, you see) - (that's how he introduced me to politics.)

J.F. What was his position in politics?

J.N. Well, he was already a - (he was already a member of the ANC, very active, and he was a member of the Communist Party also,) and it was - I mean he used to address meetings - (sometimes he would (?) address a meeting outside the hostel where I lived - he would come there and address, (and sell his paper,) and before he goes he would address a meeting, we would go there to listen to him - he would bring leaflets to me to invite me when there are meetings of the party, or sometimes meetings of - of the ANC, (so he did this thing without recruiting me, without doing anything but just keeping this proper (?) (until next time he asked me to join the ANC I did.)

after p. 9 return to pick up here *add from p. 9 **

- J.N. I mean he - he really sort of moulded me in that way himself - it was his - it was his what'sname - and of course he did to me and a few others, you see....
- J.F. Which year was this that he was....
- J.N. (1) (That was 1949.)
- J.F. And which year did you join the union?
- J.N. I - I - I joined the union in 1948.
- J.F. And tell me, just to take back for a second, when you were - how long did you work as a domestic worker?
- J.N. I work - I worked from September, '44, to be exact, to May, 1945 - then I had to go back home.
- J.F. And just to ask you, what - did that shake your perceptions of white people - did you work for whites?
- J.N. I worked for - I worked for a very rich man in Germiston, the owner of the East Rand Clothing Manufacturers.
- J.F. And what was - did that have any political influence on you, working for....
- J.N. It - there was no question of politics that time - it was - I would be unfair to myself to say that - I wasn't - I wasn't politically conscious that time, no.
- J.F. So did you think it was fine, it was a good job, that you had no complaints?
- J.N. Well, you see (Laugh) I - you know, the only complaint I had with them is that, you know, they - I used to work too much - too much, man, so much that I was, you know, at the end of the day, I - I can't even do anything for myself - I can't go out for relaxation - I'm tired, I must sleep, you see, because I - I was working alone and the house was big - the only other person who was working there - of course his children were big, were doctors and so on and the - but they were still living in the house with the old man and - and the old lady - so the only other person who worked in the house was a - was a washerwoman, who was not actually staying there, who was coming from Germiston location at Digatholo - we used to call Digatholo the location - she would come there to do washing and go back home.
- J.F. So that didn't in any way conscientise you about anything?
- J.N. No, no.
- J.F. (2) And back when you were still in the village did you have an identity of yourself that was an ethnic or tribal identity - did you think of yourself as Sotho first?
- J.N. Yes, we were - I mean we - we speak Sesotho - we speak Northern Sotho with all its dialects, but you see, the - you know, the - the Pedi speaking people are - I think we've got about four, five dialects....
- J.F. Of Pedi?

- J.N. (2) Ja) - (for instance, you see, if I speak from my place, Mangeney, and other villages like Marulonengo, Madibong, you know, Makhlala, Makane and so on, those places, we almost speak the same dialect - the people who live at the - at the - the - the main village at Sekhukhune....
- J.F. Khukhume....
- J.N.and (?) Mushaledzi - the village called Mushaledzi - that is where the Sekhukhume (?) the paramount chief of the Pedis, lived - now they speak a slightly different dialect from us, but we really don't need an interpreter - we know - we identify you by what you say, you see - we know that you are from Makhlala, this one is from Madibong, that one is from Manganene and so and so on - we know that.
- J.F. But did you feel that Zulu people were very different....
- J.N. They were very diff - (that time they were quite different - in fact, I - you know, when I left I didn't think that I can speak to them, you know - that time I didn't think I could speak to them.
- J.F. Had you ever met Zulus before?
- J.N. No, no.
- J.F. And would you ever think it would be possible for you to marry a Zulu or....
- J.N. No (Laugh) - no, I didn't - I didn't think so - even - even my wife, my present wife, you see, comes from the - although they speak Setsotho but it's the - it's Tswana, you know - we wouldn't - I mean the - there - there were - I wouldn't even think that I would marry that one, no - it was different, it was - I was supposed to come back home and get a - get married to a girl at home - and of course one of the things just to - for interest's sake, you know, they - one of the problems which I personally had with marriage is that, you see, I had problems of who to marry - tribally I must marry my cousin, either from my aunt, you know, my father's mother - my father's sister or - but the first one is from my uncle, my mother's brother - so we had this problem.
- My mother wanted me to get married to her brother's daughter - I knew her - she was slightly younger than I am - much younger - and my aunt, my father's sister, who was very fond of me, wanted me to marry her only daughter - now I had this problem, you see, to make a choice between them - whether I must take my mother's what'sname or I must take my aunt's - so in order to solve this problem I had to stay away from both of them (Laugh)
- J.F. The reason I ask is it's interesting to me that you accepted the factory trade union so quickly and easily, because the idea that you would join together with Zulu or Xhosa people....
- J.N. (No, the - you see, the trade union - the trade union, Comrade (?) is the simplest thing - in fact you see, at that - in the trade union and (?) in the factory there's no question of Zulu, Xhosa - it's a question of workers, man - we are working together there - I was working with a man, the Zulu Hlongwane, who really took me with his - his - he became the gen - he became the general secretary of the Tobacco Workers Union later.)

2 J.N. That is the man who was dismissed with me when the staff was being reduced, but both of us never got back to the factory - (he accepted me with both hands) - I was working with him, and I joined him as a shop - shop - he was the main shop steward - (I was really apprenticed to him) - (he's a Zulu speaking, but we had no problem about those things in the factory, nothing.)

J.F. But it's interesting that just a few years before you thought you could never marry or speak Zulu....

J.N. Well, that's when I left the country, you see - I - I - because we didn't even - I mean we - I didn't even understand Zulu, you know.

J.F. But you learned it quickly?

J.N. Well, it - when we are working there they speak and I'm listening, you see - I'm interested, I - I learned how to speak - although I really never spoke it well, but sometimes women, especially ANC women used to laugh when I speak Zulu, you know (Laugh) - even now when I was - before the treason trial in 1955, during the congress of the people, I would go to a meeting which when I look at the people, you know, they seem to be more Zulu speaking, then I - I tend to speak Zulu, and although it's not good, but as long as they understood me, you see, ja.

J.F. And why - what prompted you to go to night school?

J.N. As I say, you see - you see, my uncle was already going to the - I found that my uncle was doing this, and it helped me a great deal because I couldn't finish my Standard Six, I had to leave - I had to leave the school, and when I left the school of course there was a case pending against me - you see, at school there was a girl who got pregnant and she named me and I was not, and I was going to be punished for that nonsense, and I didn't like it, so I - I decided to leave - I left the school.

J.F. And what kind of night school was it?

J.N. It was a very good night school because there were, you know, teachers who are actually doing - who are teaching during the day - some of them were teaching in the same school, others were teaching in other schools, but they were coming here in the evening to - to provide these night schools for two hours at the night.

3 J.F. So, from - coming from the Sekhukhuleni (you now were working and joining unions with people of all African groups, - Zulu, Xhosa, whatever, not just Sotho) - were there any - when (did you encounter non-Africans - Coloureds or Indians or whites) - did you find them in the night school, did you find them....

J.N. Not in the night school - (I found them in the) - in the - in the (congress movement) - that's where I encountered them....

J.F. Not the trade union?

J.N. Some of them of course I encountered them on the trade unions, you know, because, you know, the - (the organising secretary, Cde. Malinga, he used to come with people like Anna Scheepers of the garment workers union) - see, now the tobacco workers union was - was (having assistance from them) - from those groups.

J.F. What did you think of Anna Scheepers?

- J.N. No, well, I - she was a very influential person at that - at that time, and in fact I mean she's the one who really used to deliver lectures during lunch time about, you know, how to go about negotiating for wages and so on - she did that.
- J.F. So she - you thought of her as - I'm just wondering when you first saw a white and thought they're on my side - when does that - (that must have been quite an experience for you to see a white person who was positive or progressive or seeming to be helping you?)
- J.N. No, but you see, it didn't - you know, (funny, it didn't shock me, you know) - I wasn't surprised because, you see, these people who were there, especially Malinga and Hlongwane and Max Munakhotla, who was the chairman of the shop steward committee at our factory - you see, they were - they were very open to her and they welcomed her very much - in fact they used to have meetings with her, and I later came into those meetings - sometimes she would come to address the shop stewards, or we will be invited to the office to meet them, you see, and I had no problems - I had no problems (with that).
- J.F. And then you - when you first heard of the ANC it came from Flag Boshielo?
- J.N. Yes.
- J.F. Did you understand - had you heard about the ANC before that?
- J.N. Yes, yes....
- J.F. What did it represent....
- J.N. One of my uncles used to be a member of the ANC - he was a very influential person in the tribe, and he used to talk about the ANC, but we didn't take much notice of him that time, you know - we - we just liked his eloquence, you know - he was a very good speaker - even in the language, our own language, you see, we would like to listen to him - so was Flag, you see - Flag never spoke - he would only speak English with me when we are reading the paper - otherwise when he addresses meetings he speaks in Sepedi, and his Sepedi, you know, was so good that I would like to listen to him speaking.
- J.F. And I'm just wondering your impression from your uncle or before Flag or from Flag, was it the ANC as an organisation of the blacks to overthrow white domination, or was there any sense that it was all the ethnic groups, Sotho and Xhosa and Zulu together, or was it (.....) that it was black anyway, or was it just the whites are oppressing us, it's blacks against whites?
- J.N. Ja, it - at the beginning it was like that, but (it was Cde, Flag who, more than anybody else, told me that, you know) (is - the - the in - in this movement we have got white people who are very close to us and who do everything which we are doing, who agree with us completely) and - and of course (one of the reasons why he wanted to read this paper with me is to try to) - to (sort of indicate that particular concept to me, and he showed me that this paper is written by those white people who accept us, and everything which is in that paper talking about us, about our problems and so on, is written by those people, you see) - they bring this message to the - to show that they themselves think this way - that's how it began - it - it came - (that's how I was conscientised politically.)
- J.F. And then when you were on the shop floor did you ever have - were you ever involved with Coloureds and Indians or was it always Africans?

3 J.N. No, (when I got involved) now, from the point of view of the Council of non-European Trade Unions, (we used to have a lot of Coloureds and Indians, and of course) by then - (immediately I became a member of the ANC. Cde. Flag himself was surrounded by a number of people, whites, Coloureds, Indians, and I got mixed up with them and I didn't find any problem at all, nothing.)

J.F. Did you join the youth league?

J.N. No.

J.F. Why didn't you join the youth league?

J.N. I - I don't know - you know, I - this - (this is a point I can't explain, you know - you see, I think because at the time when I joined, you see, there was some little bit of, you know, not understanding between the youth league and the Communist Party, so there were some sort of hard feelings between them, and having been influenced by a man who was on the side of the party, I - I couldn't then get closer to the) - to the (young people) like me, you see.

J.F. Did you regret not being in the youth league?

J.N. No, I didn't - I didn't regret - I just I mean I - I - I - but I talked to them - even when I was now in the ANC provincial executive, I had very close relations with some of the youth league - sometimes I used to open the office of the ANC in Johannesburg in - in - in (.....) Arcade - I used to have the key of (.....) Arcade....

J.F. What's it called, Bardley?

J.N. Bardley Arcade - B a r k l e y - Barkley Arcade - Barkley Arcade at - at west - west - West and Diagonal - you see West - West and Diagonal collide somewhere there....

J.F. At the bus (.....)

J.N. And now at - there is a - there are toilets here and Barkley Arcade is here - it's destroyed now - they've put up a new building now, very big building - I think it's Anglo American Corporation have that building - that used to be our offices.

J.F. 4 So you - (did you ever ask Flag or did you understand what the problem was between the youth league and people like him?)

J.N. Ja, well, he - he used to tell me about this thing, you see - he used to tell me - he used to tell me he used to have problems with - he used to have problems with - with Godfrey Pitje - Godfrey Pitje was - was - was a teacher, you know - I know him at home as a teacher - he was - he was quite advanced more than we are, many of us, and he is a home boy of Cde. Flag - they come from the same village and - but they differed with - with - with Flag politically because Cde. Pitje was - was more in the youth league, and so he didn't like the communists, you see, so Flag was in the Communist Party and he didn't like him too, because Flag I mean - apparently Flag picked up his alphabet from the Communist Party school.)

J.F. Night school?

J.N. Yes.

J.F. With Moses Kotane and and those....

DIE?

J.N. Well, I think the - I mean I don't know how he came in it - I was not there because I - I met him later when he was already a - you know, a big noise in this thing.

J.F. So - but did Flag ever say to you why he was opposed to people like Pitje?

J.N. N - no, he - he told me a lot of things that, you see, it's not them who are opposed to the youth league - it is the youth league which doesn't want the party, you see, and you know, later on during my work now with Flag, after '52, after the defiance campaign, he personally, he used to take me to Nelson Mandela - we used to go to Mandela fortnightly at his house in Orlando - it was - it - I don't know whether he was - he was asked to do that, but we used to go to Nelson Mandela every fortnight, and he used to take me along.

Sometimes they would discuss a question and then, you know, they ask me to - to - to sit in the other room - they're discussing a certain problem - whether they were discussing me I don't know, but they (Laugh) - I would be there with them, you see - that's how I came - that's how Nelson came to - to work to - to - to bring me nearer him too, through Cde. Flag Boshielo.

J.F. And what years was Flag seeing - taking you and seeing Nelson - what year was....

J.N. That was in - I think it was 19 - it was - late 1952 when he was banned, because he couldn't come to meet us now - he was not attending meetings, and we used to go to - to him.

J.F. And - but didn't you know of Mandela as one who had been....

J.N. No, I know him - I know him....

J.F. But I mean when you....

J.N. I knew him....

J.F. But I'm just....

J.N. I was intro - I was - I was told by Flag, but then Flag was saying that : Look, it's not us who don't want to work with these people - they don't want us, but we - we must do everything to work with them.

J.F. And how did Mandela feel about Flag?

J.N. Well, Mandela was fond of Flag, you know - he liked him very much.

J.F. But politically?

J.N. Well, even there - I mean (that's why they used to meet fortnightly) - I - I don't know what - whether this arrangement of meeting fortnightly was made by them personally or it was made by some higher-ups, but he - it definite - it - it was - it was something which was quite sort of legitimate - what I mean it - it was - it was something which is - which is approved by everybody.

J.F. So did you get the idea that they were exchanging views?

J.N. They were exchanging a lot of views, and they used to argue - sometimes I used to like listening to them - they would argue - sometimes they would argue from the authorities - they would take a book and they will read from that book and talk, and they would argue and (Laugh)

- J.N. (Sometimes I would think they are going to fight, you know, they - I thought Mandela was going to chase us from his house) and (.....) and then - then they are discussing - very interesting discussions.
- J.F. (And what were the areas of disagreement - were they about white participation, were they about communist participation?)
- J.N. (Well, some - (some of the things, you see, was really about the question of procedure,) you know, (how they should be working with these people,) how far these people can go into, you know - into - they would talk about those things - (how far the white people can be involved in) our - in (our struggle, and they would discuss those questions,) you see, (very, very, very strongly,) and....
- J.F. (And Mandela said he didn't think whites should be involved?)
- J.N. (Well, he - he was - he was - he was thinking - he was - (he was of the view at the time that, you know, they - they should be involved but, you know, (they not) - not at all (?) you know - (given them) (so much influence) (whatsname) (inside the movement,) you see - (while Cde. Flag was saying that): No, well, I think it must be in terms of (the what - what they are doing - (the amount of work they are doing,) - (they used to argue over these things,) and so - well, we - I didn't - you - I only, you know, came to learn these things from them, (and that's where then I became interested myself now) - I wanted to discuss some of these things more, you see, and then I was then, you know - also now (?) I was assisted by (Cde. Flag) - he came, he (brought me in contact with people like Ruth Slovo and) - and I worked with her.
- (Later on I worked with her husband, and he also brought me) with - (in contact with people like the late Mike Harmel and) - and people like (Rusty Bernstein - those people.)
- J.F. (Had you ever met whites like that before?)
- J.N. No, no, this was the first time I came in contact with them.)
- J.F. What was different about them - how were they different from Anna Scheepers or someone else?
- J.N. No, well, you see, this time to me (it was very good because now I ^{was}) I - I - I take - I took it that - I mean at - in - in a - in a - in a position to learn a lot of things from these people) - (they seemed to be very knowledgeable,) you know - (they seemed to be very clear about anything they ^{are} discussing, and that is what struck me, you see, because) even (on any question) I - (I raised) the question of the problems in Sekhukhuland, for instance, you know, the - the - the regional organisations, you know, they - (they would not discourage me) - they would - (they would do everything to help me to become effective) in those organisations - we are coming to discuss them later.
- J.F. (And) did - (you didn't have any feeling, as a black person who has recently come from the rural areas, that) they seem to - (these whites seemed a bit sophisticated) or you questioned their motives, (or you wondered how they came to be involved - you didn't have any worries?)
- J.N. ((Laugh) you see, Cde. Flag) - Cde. Flag (used to teach me that), you know, one of the most important questions of the.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. So Flag talked to you about the defiance campaign?

J.N. Ja, he - I mean when he was discussing the defiance campaign, you know, with me he was saying that, you know, one of the - the - the ideas about the defiance campaign is that, you see, so many of our people are getting arrested, you know, so we - we - we want to highlight this question of people who are being arrested for nonsense, for petty offences, and so many people who go to prison, so much - so much so that I mean people get involved - I mean people who had not committed any crime at all just - you know, just become victims of this thing, and so we need people to - not to fear this - most of that - sometimes when people are speaking on the platform, you know, if policemen come there, because these are the people who are wield power they - people should be prepared to speak, even in their presence, to speak their mind.

If you - if I was addressing a meeting and the policemen come I must continue - I mustn't stop because the police are here - so that to get rid of that, you see, the white police, so to speak - and similarly he was saying that, you know, sometimes you must not worry about the colour of the person who is speaking when you are speaking to some of these people - you must worry about the matter, what you are discussing, and don't worry about his colour and - and if you think there is something wrong in what he's saying you must just tell him, you see - you must speak your mind.

In other words, if you think you see anything which is - which is discussing and you feel that it - it - it's wrong you must speak your mind - (you must learn to speak to these people so that they must know what you think) - and he said you must do that, and the defiance campaign was to try to - to sort of mould me to become that type of person, you see - to mix with them, you know, even in, you know, adverse conditions, so that I - we must discuss - begin discussing problems together, you see.

J.F. You never felt shy about saying to ^{someone like} Ruth Slovo that I don't agree with you or?

J.N. No, I did not - I didn't think so - I - (I didn't feel shy at all) - in fact I found that, you know, the - (she used to encourage me a lot to say: 'Look, I'm going to talk to you about such and such a thing, such and such a problem, and I need you to point out some of the problems which you see out of what I'm saying - I will try to be as simple as possible so that you must understand, and if you disagree with me don't be shy, speak, you see,') so that I don't have to come to speak to you about the same matter next time, we must read (?) something else, you see.

And I found this to be very good - it was really good - she - (she ^{was} is one of the - the people whom, you know, one of the white people) whom I spoke to before and who - (who really made me to feel that she wants me to - to - to - to know as much as she does, you see,) and - (and well, of course later on I - I met many other people, very wide range, you know, I - (I had many white friends, many, many, many.)

J.F. (And did you ever ^{support} think in the point of view ^{of} that Mandela and the youth leaguers felt - did you ever think ja, maybe they're right and Boshielo's wrong or?

4 J.N. No, you see, at the time when I came in apparently the defiance campaign crushed that - it crushed that tendency - I came at - when I - I really got involved in active politics that thing was dying out. - Mandela himself became my hero - I - I - I sort of heroworshipped him, and in fact people used to - to call me Mandela Boy - I - I was fond of him because, you see, you know, at one time immediately after the campaign there was a strike at the hostel where I lived, and he came to speak there, and when he came to speak there Cde. Flag came with him, and it was very interesting for me - very interesting because, you see, I knew about him, I - I knew him too especially (?) - I saw him - I think he did take one of our cases of the trade unions when I saw him, but I don't remember which exactly, but I think he took - he took part in one of the cases.

Then that day when he came to speak in the hostel, you know, I thought he was going to speak in English - he didn't, not one word in English - he spoke in Xhosa - he stood up - he actually, you know, spoke and he brought all the people, all the hostel inmates to that meeting - we couldn't get them out in many meetings before, but the day he came they all came to listen to him, so much so that after his address we had to form a procession to take him to the - to the railway station, Jeppe Station, you see - we had to take him there in a procession.

It was so good, very good, and he impressed me as a very, very strong person - of course I met him in the defiance campaign - he was a volunteer in chief - the same night we were - we were arrested he was there and he addressed us - and incidentally when they were arresting us they picked them - they picked him up - he was on inspection - he was - he and Cachalia, Yusuf Cachalia, were - were on inspection.

J.F. What's that mean?

J.N. Inspection - you see, their - they're leaders - I mean they must come and see when we are defying, they must be around, and then the - the - the policemen - there was a - there was a policeman there, Muller, who used to know everybody - that fellow used to be a moving what's-name for the - for the special branch - he used to know everybody - so he saw them and he said - brought them into the (.....) and we went to - to what'sname with them, but they were released the next day.

J.F. And you were active in the ANC from 1950?

J.N. Ja.

J.F. And so what were you involved in - the defiance campaign was '52.

J.N. '52....

J.F. But from '50?

J.N. Well, from '50 we were - I mean we used to organise branches - in fact I think in 1951 there was a big meeting which was held in Johannesburg where they - where this - this idea of the defiance campaign was announced, and then we were told to organise volunteers, and I was one of the people who was to organise volunteers, I - I - where Cde. Flag had already recruited me to be one of the volunteers, so I was also working to recruit other people to join the volunteer corps.

J.F. And you - was your first executive position in 1952?

J.N. The end of 1952 I was elected to the executive, the Transvaal executive.

J.F. And were you all along still involved in the trade unions at the same time?

- J.N. Yes - in fact trade union was my full time work.
- J.F. So you were no longer in factory - you were organising?
- J.N. I was a organiser now - I became a organiser of the Council of non-European Trade Unions.
- J.F. Of the whole council?
- J.N. The council, yes - that is why, you see - that is why when I told you that I kept the keys for - for - for Barkley Arcade - my office was at Rosenberg Arcade....
- J.F. Where?
- J.N. Rosenberg Arcade, which is just up the street, Market Street....
- J.F. Rosewhat?
- J.N. Rosenberg Arcade, corner of Market and Sauer Street - we - we - we - the Council of non-European Trade Unions was there, and then I would just walk down the street in Barkley Arcade and open the office and come back.
- J.F. And you were national organiser of....
- J.N. I was national organiser of the council, but then it was the Transvaal - it was the Transvaal Council of non-European Trade Unions.
- J.F. And how did you combine trade union ^{duties} with ANC ^{work?} - which did you see as most important?
- J.N. Well, you see, I used to work for the trade unions daily - I mean (during the whole day, and) I go to meetings like anybody else, some - some members of the provincial executive were working in the factories, others were work - were businesspeople so on, but (in the evening we would assemble for the meeting - then) I would go to the meeting of the ANC.)
- J.F. (So you didn't see one as more important than the other?)
- J.N. (No,) the - the - they were - (they were just equal as far as I'm concerned - it has been like that all the way.)
- J.F. And then were you at the congress of the people?
- J.N. ^{from p. 22} Oh, yes, yes.
- J.F. (So would you say that you totally accepted non-racialism?) you never - never really thought....
- J.N. It - it - you know, I - it has never been a problem to me, nothing absolutely - (maybe I mean) it's the way which - (which I was brought up in politics, you see, I - I never found any problem at all,) nothing.
- J.F. Because some people might think - if you read some of the analysis by Western people who aren't from South Africa about the PAC, they'll try to say that it was the common labourer, like I read a quite that the Africanists, which was pre-PAC, charged that the ANC did not preach clear-cut nationalism in a political language that workers would understand and accept, that workers felt confused and alienated by the high profile of non-African ANC members.

J.F. And you would be a classic example of a worker from the class who came out and would've, according to this theory, fallen for the PAC because they spoke anti-white, the white man's oppressing you, you can speak in your own language - there weren't whites who you might mistrust.

J.N. (4) Some of them, you know, for instance, you know, they used to - (they used to call me, you see, a - a "bright boy of the Jews", ja, in the youth league, when they were still - before they came out of the - before they came out as PAC - I mean Potlako Leballo, people like) - like, you know, (Andrew Setlhane, who was the editor of the youth league paper, the Lodestar, who was - who used to be more in the ANC office, and he used to dislike, you know, (these white people I used to come in the office with.

There was an old man, Joffe, Louis Joffe - Louis Joffe used to sell all sorts of Marxist literature to - to anybody, and he was going about carrying them, and he would come to the ANC office - sometimes he would ask for me if I'm not there, and he would ask me to - to - to deliver some of these things, and Setlhane used to see me, he says : Look, what are you doing with this Jew - I said : No, look here, this is my friend, you see.

I came - and he - I - I'm sorry I forgot to mention the old man Joffe - that's one man, you know, I don't know how I came to know him, but he immediately became so fond of me that, you know, he used to come to my office and want me to - to - to give him some job to help me, anything - drafting a leaflet in the trade unions and so on, you know, he would - he would ask me to help him in that, you see, and he used to do a lot in - in - in assisting me to organise the trade unions - when I was working for the Council of non-European Trade Unions I - I don't know how I came to him but I - of course he was a friend of a number of people.

He used to go to Moretsela's Restaurant - sometime you would find him there talking with people like JB., like Walter Sisulu and so on, you know, like Dan Tloome - he was - he was a friend of these people, and I used to see him there with them, Louis Joffe.

J.F. Why do you think he wanted to help, didn't he....

J.N. Pardon?

J.F. Why was he so keen?

J.N. No, he - I mean he - I - I took him as somebody who - I mean who has got all the time - he said he was a pensioned person and he's not doing anything, and now that he's - he's prepared to help anything we want him to do, you know - he was very useful, very, very useful - when I later on met people like Leon Levy, people like Piet Belyveld, people like Eli Weinberg and people like Siegfried, people like - there used to be another white fellow who was slightly different from these ones which I've counted, who worked with me in the local committee of - of SACTU in 1955 after the formation, chap called Olsen - he was - he was a trade unionist, but you know, not at the level of these others whom I've counted, but he was - he also had, you know - he had - he was mixing with people, all right, but he was not - he was not a very progressive person - he was working - I think he was - he came from the group of steel workers, the - the white section of the steel workers, and it was at the time when we were saying that the union must be one.

- J.N. I have always been one of the people who has said that the union must be one in one industry, regardless of race, of - or I mean - that has been my what'sname - that's - that has been my orientation all the time.
- J.F. Did you ever have any insight as to how - what motivated those who were so different from you - did you have any insight as to what motivated the people who were anti-white, anti-communist, anti-Indian, pro-Africanist - did you ever get a sense of what was - what made them take - why were they so anti?
- J.N. You know, I will again come to the - the question of Cde. Flag because he was the person who - who was saying to me, : You know, you must not be surprised if some of the people, specially Africans, who have got suspicion on the white people, must not be surprised - it must be your job to convince them why this person is like that, you see - you must not be surprised because indeed, you know, there have been successive white governments and - and even the reason why I joined the movement is because the main thing was to try to change the sort of, you know, life that we are going through, where we have no say, you know, in the - in the laws that govern our lives.
- We have no say, we have no - we have - we haven't even got a right to vote - he says : Now, when some Africans has still got some problems about this, you must sympathise with them instead - instead of attacking them. - you mustn't, you must teach them, show them that, you see, in our struggle, in our this struggle that we are launching, we need support - we need people to agree with us, to come along with us - some of them might even come from there, what's wrong with that - if they come from there it's better, they're strengthening us, you see, but we have to be very vigilant, and our vigilance should not have any, you know, colour in it - should be vigilance on anybody with whom we work.
- There may be people, wrong people here, even - even Africans who would be that side of the enemy - what are you doing with them, they are Africans - now if there could be Africans who are the other side, why there can't be whites from that side to our side - so this was something which I mean helped me a great deal to solve this problem, and I realised that it is - it - I think it's the only way of looking at this thing.
- J.F. And how would you speak - say I'm a worker in 1950 and I said : But look, it'll be quicker, it'll be more effective if just the Africans get together and beat the whites - it's just confusing things by having whites in our ranks and we can't really trust them anyway - communism is a foreign ideology and what is the advantage of mixing with the whites - what would you say to me?
- J.N. No, I would - you know, one of the things of course which I found to be of advantage was that, you see, certain times, specially in the - in the negotiations in the meetings of the - of the what'sname, you know, the - the whites, those who were there, you know, had really a better knowledge than us, you see - they had a better knowledge - I had to watch their - the - the - I had to deal with the sincerity - I had to say : I want to see how sincere he is in dealing with the - with the grievances which come from us, how he's accommodating them, and that - that became the - the main thing which I looked at - I didn't worry about - about him as a white person - I worried about what he is bringing to us, you see - that was - that has always been the thing which....

J.N. And I - I found it much - much - much broader, and it helped me - I'd never had a problem, nothing, throughout - never had a problem of working with all these people - in fact I - even the Africanist I - I never stopped talking to them, personally - I had pers - you know, the - I had sometimes where I - you know, some of them were prepared to talk to me.

J.F. And what about the communism, that line that it's a foreign ideology - why didn't you....

J.N. No, I thought it was nonsense because everything what - what - what - you know, (because I always thought even the Bible is a foreign ideology, it's not ours) - if they accept the Bible why can't they accept communism, that's always been my argument - it's not ours - and the fact that I accepted even speaking in English in our meetings, you know, I realised that I did ask myself why is that we are speaking English with our people there in the ANC - then I was told - Cde. Flag made a very simple explanation to me, he says : Look, when you left Sekhukhuneland you - you spoke little bit of English - he didn't know anything about Zulu or Xhosa or Shangaan or anything - and so the people, Zulu people, also spoke English, so is the Xhosa people and the Shangaani people and these - these other people are speaking other languages - they spoke English also, so if you speak to them in English, you see, you will communicate better than if you speak to them in Sepedi, they won't - they won't get a word, so it doesn't mean anything, so we using this thing just as communication - to be able to communicate.

And in - I - I looked at it and I found that it's correct, absolutely correct - in fact I must say that it helped me of course, I - I had to improve myself in speaking the language, you see - that's why when, for instance, during the treason trial, when I told this background to Cde - the late Bram Fischer, who interviewed me at the time when they were preparing us in the treason trial, he was shocked - he didn't know - he didn't believe that I was a domestic servant, he didn't - when I gave him that background he said : No, you must be formenting something - I said : No, that's true, quite (?) that's just what - what it is.

J.F. Because you had read so much in your home?

J.N. Well, I (.....)

J.F. Did Flag ever recruit you to the CP?

J.N. Well, he did - even those days.

J.F. So you were also a member?

J.N. Ja - he was a very active member of the party, Cde. Flag, didn't hide it - he was, no (?)

J.F. And how did you feel - I asked Dan Tloome about this because Dan had a very unique position in that he was Tlooma's secretary and they didn't like each other politically at all, and that was quite - but I was just wondering of the position of party members in the NNC before 1950 when it was legal to be in the party, but (did you) at all (hide it from the Africanists) or did you keep a bit low profile or did you try to argue and say : Look, join the CP also - how did you....

- J.N. No, you see, I think I enjoyed myself because, you see, at the time when I came in, you see, the party was already illegal, so they didn't have to know.
- J.F. They didn't have to know?
- J.N. They didn't have to know.
- J.F. Was already illegal?
- J.N. It was already illegal, it was already banned.
- J.F. When you went where?
- J.N. When I came in it.
- J.F. Into the party?
- J.N. Ja.
- J.F. So you only were recruited....
- J.N. So I - I - I've never been in - in - in the - in the - in the open, so I - they didn't - they didn't have to know, they had - they only had to guess, you see - some of them only made conclusions - I remember Matlou, you know - there was a man called Matlou, was a very big fellow outside here in the ANC - he went away with a group of eight, Jonas Matlou - he - you know, he used to say that : Man, I doubt you, man, you know, you don't want to tell us the truth, but I can see what you are - you see, he used to say that - he's still alive, I'm sure - Matlou is still alive - he's on London now.
- J.F. And in the underground party structures were there more whites than you had ever worked with before or was - were you finding also....
- J.N. It was the same (?) - it was the same (?) - they are not as many, they are a few, very few and - because I mean we were (?) not just collecting whites, you know - they are a different lot of people, all of them, very different.
- J.F. Did you think that the experience of an African....
- J.N. But I think this fact, this point which we are discussing now should not come out on the - on this thing you are writing until such time - because, you see, we are discussing this question of the - because we touched on some things because I told you the fact that Cde. Flag was a member of the party, and he's known as such, so he's the man who really brought me up and he - he brought me into this thing also - so it's not correct for - for me to start talking to you about it - it must not be published.
- J.F. Back to the trade union work - were you involved in the founding of SACTU?
- J.N. Yes, (I was in the Council of non-European Trade Unions) and we were organising this thing, because, you see, the Council of non-European - there was a council of non-European (because we couldn't be in the Trades and Labour Council, you see, which was the - the (overall body) - now the - (although the Trade and Labour Council had a non-racial clause in its constitution), but (there was no African, Coloured or Indian sitting in its executive.

- J.N. (So when it - it - it - it feared the wrath of the new law which was introduced, the Native Labour Settlement of Disputes Act, which was introduced by the - the Nationalist government, when they - they disintegrated because they couldn't go on with this same as them (?) so we - it was a chance for us to have to organise SACTU, you see - we organised for it, so we were elected to the executive - I was the first national organiser of SACTU.) → p. 49
- J.F. And I'm just interested because there's been a lot written recently by academics about SACTU....
- J.N. No, this - you know, this - you know, this book, this book they call Organise your (?) Staff - Organise or Starve (?) - it's written by some other people, and I....
- J.F. Luckhardt & Wall.
- J.N. and I think about me the - I'm not happy with it at all.
- J.F. Why?
- J.N. As far as I'm concerned I think they insulted me, you know.
- J.F. Why?
- J.N. You know, what they say about me there (Laugh) I - I think the - the - the - they didn't consult me - they spoke to somebody, you see....
- J.F. I can't remember what they said that you are objecting to.
- J.N. No, you know, they - they - they would say that I spent more of my time getting (.....) you know, just - there it is - you see, you look in the index here - there are a couple of pages where they're talking about me - where is it - they were not - I'm not happy with it at all - I think they were very unfair to me.
- J.F. Is it in the back - is there an index in the back?
- J.N. Maybe it's in the back - ja, the pages where they - where you find - the pages which refers to me (Laugh) I - I still have to meet them, you know, to find out from them where they got this type of information, because they really didn't talk about me the way I know what I was doing myself, and some of my friends, and of course nobody ever raised it with me until one friend of mine recently and raised this question - I didn't notice it because I never had time to read it.
- I'll show you the - there are - there are the na - there are the areas where they - they have got several pages discussing me - I forgot them now - I had them when I was - where is it, the - you see, the - the - the - I'm not happy with it at all.
- J.F. Tell me what's the problem?
- J.N. No, the problem is that, you see, when I was actually appointed by SACTU to go to the engineering industry, because it was the task of SACTU to organise the - the metal workers, then I was instructed by SACTU to go to assist organisation of the metal workers, so here they (Laugh) they don't - they don't mention all those facts, and they dealing with the - the time when I was - where is this position, man, because there is somewhere where they're talking about my name actually.

J.N. Oh, I see the - the - I'll come under N - I thought my name should come under N - it - it's - I got this thing - somebody actually took out the pages and gave them to me - there's me - you see now there are the pages - they are the pages where they are dealing with me, you know, 96, 182, 200, 222, 226, so on, so on, so on - now one of these pages mentioned that man, it makes me fed up, I don't want to look at it (Laugh)

J.F. So tell me what it meant - what's the problem of it?

J.N. Well, they just - you see, it's true that at one stage in what'sname - in - in one of the factories in Benoni, where you find that photo - you see, there's a photo of me and the secretary of the - of the metal workers - Simrod Sichake is now in the - is now in the PAC - you see, we - we - we were - we encountered a number of factory workers in the - in the metal industry at a factory called Gramma (?) at Denswaard (?) Benoni - Denswaard, Benoni - you see, this factory installed a first aid inside the factory because there were so many injuries - people were getting injured every minute in the factory, so we had to fight that - we had to fight that, that they mustn't have this first aid - the first aid should be to assist the person to stop bleeding, but after injury he must go to hospital, and then in the hospital he gets what they call a WCA card, Workmens' Compensation, you see, and - and then he - he's going to be compensated, you see, but if he - he's attended by the first aid, you know what they do - they'll just bind this thing and allow him to go home, and send him to a private clinic, is seen (?) by the doctor, is healed - he comes back, they pay him the wages for his work, no compensation.

They pay him the wages which they were supposed to pay him when he's here, that's all - so we fought - that's true we fought that, but that's not what we concentrated on - we found it's one of the problems - now this book says that anybody who reads it, you see, and reads about me and he finds that I was with - taking more of my time concentrating on this - I don't know who - who suggested this to these fellows who wrote, because definitely it doesn't come from them, they don't know me.

J.F. But let me ask you - (there's a lot written historically about SACTU now, especially from the kind of academic workerist school, (that talks about the lessons of the '50s, and the lessons of the '50s is supposed to mean that SACTU was handicapped by its involvement with the ANC) - I'm just interested to know what you think of that analysis?)

J.N. I think that analysis is upset - (they don't just know how SACTU was assisted by the ANC) - (because, you see, a number of us - all of us - almost all of us who were in the - who were elected in the executive at the time, were members of the ANC in our branches, you see, and we were - we were active in our branches - just take Mark Shope, who was one of the people who was elected the very beginning - take people like Uriah Maleka, who is the representative of the ANC in - in Dar es Salaam just now - take people like - quite a number of people, people like Mzibande, who was the - who was the chairman of the ANC branch in Benoni, you know, who was the - the first vice president of SACTU at the very beginning - people like Leslie Massina, the - the inaugural general secretary of SACTU, who was a member of the provincial executive and - and assistant provincial volunteer in chief during the defiance campaign, Leslie Massina, you see - I mean all ANC people, (so there's never been conflict between us and the ANC.)

- J.N. We've - as I tell you, I - I used to have two keys for the - for Rosenberg and Barkley Arcade because I used to live in town - I used to come earlier than anybody who comes from the townships, so I would open the offices for the people who come early at the ANC offices - this was the reason, nothing else.
- J.F. How did you get to live in town?
- J.N. I - I lived in the hostel - I lived in the hostel - you see, the hostel is meant for people who were born outside and who couldn't possibly get houses in the townships, but I was given - when I got work at Harry's Hat Factory I also got a bed in the hostel, you see.
- J.F. And now the line that they're saying is that it handicapped SACTU to have political connections, that if there's politics you don't mix workplace politics with community politics - how did you feel about that?
- J.N. I never found any problem - in fact we were - we - we were urging for that - we were - we were urging for that until Chief Lutuli has to come and, you know, give very strong standpoint that thing - Chief Lutuli who was president general of the ANC, you see - I mean we were - we were - we were urging for that, you know, this - this organis - community, so that in - in - in the meetings we used to have SACTU speakers in the meetings - they would know no problem - I would speak for any of these organisations if I wanted to when I'm in the meeting, you see - and during the congress of the people, one of the reasons why I was elected to the national executive that early is because I used to go to branches of the ANC almost every night I used to spend time in the branches of the ANC.
- J.F. The other thing about non-racialism that is said is that you have these different race groups getting together, O.K. - obviously you even had like joint councils of the congress alliance where TIC, COD and (.....) met together, so on leadership level you had the Nkademengs meeting with the Slovos, the Cachalias meeting the Mandelas, but (the criticism that I'd like you to address is that the rank-and-file still didn't experience non-racialism) - that lady in Fordsburg never ever met with and (?) some person in Orlando?
- J.N. Well, that - (you see, this is - (this is the problem which is - is facing the movement because, you know, it's the problem which faces the whole movement, you see, because sometimes you would find that, you know - (we tried to break that during the congress of the people, where, you know, we would have speakers for the congress of the people in the meetings in the townships, so we had to - to get the - the - the - the other members of the congress alliance - that time it was - there was - before it was synchronised, the congress alliance, we used to have a consultative committee on national, provincial and regional, you see - consultative committees. (levels)
- (And now we used to - (to assign members) of the consultative committee, from the consultative committee to go to the branches wherever there is a meeting, you see, to get some members of the Indian community, the Coloured community and the whites, to go to Soweto to address meetings there, so vice versa, but we didn't have much, you know, room in the white community - (there were not so many whites who were on our side, where we would be called upon as Africans to go to address meetings there - not so many.)

- J.N. There were in the congress, in the - in the - in the Congress of Democrats, but there were few individuals in different areas who would be called to the - to the congress of the - the - the - the Congress of Democrats offices, and there we - they were addressed by the leaders - there was no problem in that.
- J.F. (But that's still the leadership level) - (I'm just wondering how do you see) - how would South Africa - how will (the ANC actually surmount that problem of how will you get rank and file Africans to accept your average white or your average Indian, your average Coloured, if there's only leadership mixing?)
- 8
- J.N. (No, but you see) - but (we never found a problem when) the - when the - the other people, when they - when (we did come together), we didn't find a problem - we didn't find it.
- J.F. But did they come together much - when would the branch members of Orlando ANC meet with the TIC or the COD average ones?
- J.N. No, it was not - it was not all that simple because they were - we were keeping these organisations in that way, you see - we were keeping them, but this - this - even when we introduced the congress to - at the Congress of the People when the - the Freedom Charter was introduced, and this - this was discussed (?) long before we went to Kliptown in the branches, you see - when we went there it was - it was a question of just now joining these things together in public and have everybody endorsing these things and - and I can tell you most of the people who took part in the discussions in the branch level, you know, wouldn't really have the time, that good time to speak at the Congress of the People in Kliptown, no - there are very few who spoke there.
- For instance, I didn't even speak myself - I didn't speak myself, although I spoke in many, many meetings - I don't know how many during - during the campaign - as I say, I mean you know, the whole year 1954 up till the Congress of the People itself came I really never used to sleep on my bed.
- J.F. Why?
- J.N. I used to go out to - to - to areas to talk about this thing, correcting the, you know, the - the views of the people, discussing it with them in their own branches.
- J.F. (And did you find the average people that you spoke to in the branches, did they say to you): "But why are you working with whites," we hear that....
- from p.134
- J.N. I never met that question, no - (I never met that question myself) - I never encountered that question I mean except this - this - this one fellow who was very curious, you know, who I told you about - he used to say so - he used to work next to Mandela in the - in the (.....) - he was a book-keeper, and each time when we are at a meeting at the what'sname he'd say to me : You know, I don't see you properly - saying that - but many people, no, I never found anybody - when the - when the Africanists came open now people like Peter Molotsi and them, you know, I mean I was open to them, I talked to them, I never really found a problem myself - no problem in my life with that question.
- to p.14

J.F. And why did you say that after the congress.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

- J.N. I say - I - I say that - you see, during the campaign I never - I never slept home - I was busy going about every night - during the day I would be working in the trade union, and that's my full time work, like I'm here now, but in the evening when we knock off I go to branches, do you see.
- J.F. That's the Congress of the People - after that you were arrested in the treason trial?
- J.N. Ja, in 1956.
- J.F. And you were there through '61?
- J.N. I - I was - I was there from beginning to end.
- J.F. And can you tell me about - did that limit - that must have limited your organising, you couldn't work in the trade union....
- J.N. I couldn't work in the trade unions any more - in fact it was - I was - I got cut off little bit for that time after the arrest because, you see, now I was in it until 1961 and - and the other people who were arrested with me were released - I and (?) Leslie Massina were - were in the treason trial until the end - people like Shope and Aaron Mahlangu and other people were released and they went back to the - to their work.
- J.F. And did you find that that totally (.....) your political work?
- J.N. Well, it cut me off - it cut me off, because I would jeopardise the other people, because if I go to address these meetings and - but I - you know, the - we - we would be given a chance sometimes when there is a question, an issue, we would be - we would be one of the people to - to be called to - for consultation and things, but by the people who are active publicly, they would be consulting with us privately - we couldn't go to meetings to address meetings and such until the treason trial came to an end.
- J.F. And had you been banned or detained before the treason trial?
- J.N. No, no - I got ban - in fact I wasn't banned during the treason trial, it was only the - the - the conditions of the treason trial, the - the bail conditions, which said that I should not attend meetings.
- J.F. So when were you first banned?
- J.N. I was first banned in June, 1963.
- J.F. And before that you were never arrested or anything?
- J.N. No, I was arrested for the - I was - I - since the arrest in '52 there was no year which passes without me - in June there was no - there's no time when - which passed without the boers coming to do something where I am.

J.F. Why June?

J.N. Well, you see, the defiance campaign was in June, so every June, the 26th. June - every June we would be - we would be making, you know, big demonstrations, campaigns and so on, and so that time they would like to get you away, you see, put you behind bars until the campaign subsides, and then they release you.

J.F. And - but you weren't detained for long periods?

J.N. No.

J.F. And then in - then after '61 to '63 - you missed out on the state of emergency arrests - you didn't have to go underground or anything?

J.N. No, I didn't - you know, the - the - the state of emergency of 1960 we stayed a long time because we were still in the treason trial - the whole group which was in the treason trial stayed in jail for all the time for - for five months - the rest of the - the other people stayed in for two, three months, they were released, and we stayed in for four months, you see - we had to defend ourselves - we had to appoint Nokwe to advocate - Mandela had to be run - to act as an attorney and Nokwe was an advocate defending us.

J.F. So as from '61 you were free?

J.N. As from '61 I was - after the release I was free and I - I - I then got back, but then I was taken by the congress movement - I didn't go back immediately to the trade unions.

J.F. What do you mean you were taken - what did you do?

J.N. Pardon?

J.F. What do you mean you were taken by the congress movement - did you have a position?

J.N. Ja, I had - I was a organiser - I was organising now for the congress movement - I used to - I used to have areas which I must pay attention to.

J.F. But you didn't have an official executive position?

J.N. I was always in the executive of the ANC.

J.F. Since?

J.N. Since '55.

J.F. And in SACTU did you have an official position?

J.N. I was sec - I was also a member of the executive.

J.F. Were these both national executives?

J.N. Yes.

J.F. And in '61 to '63 can you just tell me a bit about the activities and what led to your arrest?

J.N. No, you see, in - in '63 there was this 90 day detention clause - apparently the - I just came back from Natal - I went to Natal in 1963, May, and in June I was in Johannesburg, so about the 23rd. June I was saying to Malinga (?) you know - I was saying to him : You know, when we came back from a meeting in town - in the train I said to him : Look, I don't feel like going home today, you know, I think there's something - something is going to happen - other people were already detained - I used to expect arrest that time from 20th. to 26th. June I would expect arrest - then I was feeling that something is going to happen.

Actually I got back to my - to - to where I was staying - I was staying with somebody in his house - I didn't have a house of my own in Soweto - I was not allowed to remain in Alexander, I got - I was taken out of - I was forced to leave Alexander - so I come home and I say to my wife : You know, I think something is going to happen today - and she says : What, you want to go to - do you want to go out - go, don't come - why do you come here - why did you come here after all if you felt you - you're going to sleep out - then I felt it was not a very good, you know, what'sname, her reaction - I said : O.K., I'll stay - I stayed, I slept - eleven o'clock they were there - came to pick me up.

J.F. And how long were you detained?

J.N. I was - I was supposed to stay 90 days, but before the end of 90 days, the first 90 days, we were charged.

J.F. And what were you charged with?

J.N. We were charged for sabotage - apparently when - when they detained me at the beginning they thought that I might know where Sisulu was - he was underground, and it's true I used to work with him very closely, but I - I - I tell you that I didn't know where he was - I didn't know so - but they never asked me that question - what made me to think of this is because, you see, after his arrest - after Sisulu was arrested then even the, you know, three groups of - of - of police cop chaps (?) came to tell me that : Now we've got your boss and you - you are in - you are in hell - actually one of them starts saying this to me, he says : You - you (.....Laugh)....

J.F. Meaning?

J.N. You are going to hang - was saying that to me - they were so jubilant, you know - they just told me about my boss who's arrested, I was wondering - then I had no news, nothing - later on in the evening on the - this policeman who was - who was conducting tortures in what'sname came to me and - why do I forget this notorious man - he came to tell me - he said : We've got Sisulu....

J.F. And was it true?

J.N. Ja.

J.F. But was it before Rivonia?

J.N. The - the - the - that's when they got them.

J.F. At Rivonia....

J.N. At Rivonia, July - July, 11th.

J.F. '63?

J.N. '63.

J.F. And were you....

J.N. I was already in detention.

J.F. And were you tortured in detention?

J.N. No, the only torture which I underwent which came after the arrest of these people is when I was changed from - from the cell where I was in Fordsburg, then I went to a - the police station Erasmia - it's on the way to Pretoria - half way Pretoria - and in that police station, you know, they opened the window, it was cold - the window was open day and night - I couldn't close it because there was only a hole - I could get my hand, but I couldn't bring the window back - it was tight there, it was kept open all the time, and I was cold - I think they thought I would freeze to death, and of course I couldn't - I - I saw that, and then, you see, when I was in Fordsburg they used to - they never used to take my blankets - I used to do more sleeping than anything else, you see, in Fordsburg, but here I wouldn't sleep because they would take the blankets and bring them late at night.

When I'm cold and I get in the blankets, you know, I try to warm myself - just when I become warm I begin to sleep, sunrise and they come and take - they come to take them out - this happened for seven days, and it made me very stubborn - I was very stubborn - I realised that they wanted to kill me, because they took everything of my warm clothes, put them in a - in a - in some bicycle shed at the gate when I came in.

And so when the first magistrate came to see me he helped me a great deal - he didn't know that - because, you see, I have decided that I'm not going to die anyway, I'm going to resist it, and I'm prepared, if they kill me I must fight before I die - so when he came there this magistrate insulted me, you know - before he spoke to me he just looked at me and started looking - and started saying things, you know, insulting me in Afrikaans, called me (.....) and all that nonsense, and then I was very furious with him.

When he came into my cell I looked at him, you know, I didn't know what to say to him - started telling me that he's a magistrate, he has come to see me - I said : Look here, I think I don't want to waste my time - don't want to waste my time with people like you - what do you want - and he said : No, I'm a magistrate, I came to see you - I said : Nonsense, I don't know - I know magistrates - I don't expect a magistrate to behave like you.

And then there was an - a - a - an interpreter who came - who used to be in the treason trial - I knew him, a white chap who speaks Sepedi, you see - he urged me to talk to him, he said : No, he's the magistrate, you know me - I said : Look here, tell this friend of yours let him just fuck off, I don't want to talk to him - you must send a magistrate to me.

J.F. So what was the purpose of the detention?

J.N. No, well - and then of course I mean the - as I say, I - I believe when they detained us at the beginning with me maybe they wanted to - to find out about Walter Sisulu - before they asked me that question the - they got him - that is why I saw so many of them were coming to boast to me about the fact that they've got him.

J.F. And then when were you tried?

J.N. And then - and then, you see, after refusing to speak to this magistrate, then the chief magistrate of Pretoria himself came - he went back to report that I refused to speak to him and - and that I was very stubborn, I was annoyed with him and so on and so forth, and he didn't tell him why he did this thing - so the chief magistrate comes, you see - he comes with that interpreter, he comes with other people, you see - then he comes to the door, he looks at me and greets me and says to me : I am the chief magistrate of Pretoria, so-and-so - I came to talk to you - I send my man this morning, you refuse to speak to him - I said : Now I can speak to you, because you tell me who you are, and you greeted me nicely - that fellow had (.....) injury - you see, if you just look at me, my condition, I - I - I've never been like this in my life.

I said : Touch my hand - I did my hand like this - he touched it, it was cold - I said : This is the condition in which I am, and I wanted to - to speak to somebody about this fact, and that one started insulting me from the beginning when he came here, so how could I speak to a person like that - so he says to me : Oh, is that so - I said : Yes - and he called me out of the cell - I stood in the sun - you know, when I went to the sun I couldn't help it, I had to scratch myself because, you see, my - I was dry and cold - now when the sun gets to my skin it itches, I had to scratch, you know, and the chief magistrate he couldn't talk to me for some time.

He said to me : No, you must come with me - I got into his car - I showed him where my clothes are - I said : They dumped them there - there's my warm clothes which I should be - overcoat and warm (....) they just chucked them in there and left me with a skipper (Laugh) you see - then he took me with my warm clothes, took me to Pretoria Prison, and said to them they must give me a warm shower - I must settle down and he'll come to speak to me in the afternoon, you see - when I got in there they took me to a warm shower, I got into a warm shower, I bathed all right, and they gave nice food, I ate, then he came - in prison he came, and then he asked me what - what - what was wrong - I said : No, I don't know, I don't know what it is (?) this thing - I said : I've been like that for seven days, you see - that was the only time when that type of torture.

J.F. And then you were arrested in June, and when were you tried?

J.N. We were - we were charged and I think our trial started in September - we were charged - we - we stayed in Pretoria Prison all that time - we were judged (?) in September, and the case went on, and in the trial the - the - I mean I was not connected with the - with the people they charged me with - I had no connection with them whatsoever, except they were - they were boys - I mean they are - they are congress people, but you see, the evidence against them I - I - didn't affect me - you see, they - they brought two - three young chaps from Middelberg - Middelberg is supposed to be my area, you see - I mean it's my area, so these boys were supposed to know me, and three of them didn't know me - they didn't know me, they knew somebody....

J.F. From Sekhukhuneland?

J.N. Ja, from - from Middelberg Town - we used to address meetings at Middelberg.

J.F. So were you going back to Sekhukhuneland....

J.N. Not before - I used to go to Sekhukhuneland - I used to work there.

J.F. When?

J.N. I - the....

J.F. From....

J.N. From Johannesburg, ja - from Johannesburg we used to have committees, you know, which (.....) Sekhukhuneland.

J.F. In the '50s?

J.N. Ja.

J.F. In even the '60s?

J.N. Ja, until we were arrested for treason.

J.F. So tell me about the trial, the charges?

J.N. Then I was - I mean this - this - this - these chaps could - and I - we were charged for sabotage - it was a case of sabotage, and then there was no evidence against me, because the evidence of these boys who were saying that I was responsible for them, you know, were smashed because they didn't - they couldn't even identify me, you see, they - they identified somebody, and each time three of them didn't say they identified the same person, not me, and then the lawyers would ask me to stand up and ask them whether they know this one - they said - they said no - then they - then it's not me, it's (.... ..) they were - they are supposed to identify, so I - that's why I came out of that case.

The only - the only evidence which was dis - destructive for me in that case this thing, tape recorder - when I was in Durban I spoke at the meeting in the YMCA condemning 90 days detention clause, and I didn't know that somebody had a tape recorder recording my - my speech and - and they brought it, they put it in court and - but then it has nothing to do with this case, so they - they discharged me from that case - I went out - when I wanted to go on the front door they forced me to go at the back door (Laugh) - I got out - in the yard at the back I was rearrested same time, you see, and then I was now recharged for the ANC - for belonging to an illegal organisation, and then they convicted, they used that - that - that record - they didn't have any other evidence except this record.

J.F. And in the recording were you saying I am ANC?

J.N. No, I wouldn't say - I refused to - in fact it's interesting in that because, you see, when we went to the case I told my lawyer that I wouldn't like to speak in the box and he said : Why, you're facing a serious case - I said : No, this is not serious - I was in a serious case with much younger people, new people in the movement, and they have been given very heavy sentences - I don't think in this case I can get that sentence, I don't think so - and the one thing which I want to tell you is that, because I'm sure they will ask me about my position in the ANC, you see, which I'm not prepared to - to - to denounce - I wouldn't say I'm not a member of the ANC, so if you want to - if you want to avoid that question don't just put me in the box, fight it out (?) - let them do what they want to do, I don't want to speak to them - because this fellow is going to cross-examine me on this question - I can't say after, you know, people - some of the - I don't know whether they are even members of the ANC - they've been convicted now - they were given ten years, 20 years, 15 years, and then I come there, I'll tell the world that I'm not a member of the ANC - I can't do that, you see.

J.N. And he agreed with me and actually he went to - he told me he went to speak to - to - to Nelson and Walter and others and he asked them - he asked them - he said : This is what Nkadimeng is saying about this thing, what must we do - he says : Well, if he's not forced he's right - if it - I mean he's not facing a very serious case, so fight it out without putting him in the box, let them do what they want to do, you see - and indeed, you know, and I got - I got - I got two years - two years - and then he says appeal - I said : No, please, what nonsense are you talking about.

You know, the other people who were charged with my speech got six years - now I got two years - now I must complain about two years, that's nonsense.

J.F. What were the people charged with your speech?

J.N. No, they - they - my speech was brought to the meeting - they were present in the meeting when I spoke and this - this record was played - they said : You listen to this man, you heard what he said, did you agree with him - they said (?) : Oh, no, no, no (?) - so it was used there with people like Steve Dlamini and - and he was not in the meeting of course, but he was in that case, and others in Natal - some of them were given five, six years.

J.F. So you got two years?

J.N. I got only two years....

J.F. And that was....

J.N.and when he wanted me to appeal I said : No, I'm not, I don't want that, it's - it's - it's - what is two years?

J.F. And it was '63 two years - was that Suppression of Communism Act?

J.N. Ja, it was - it was Suppression of - it was the question of Suppression of Communism Act, you know, in....

J.F. For membership in the ANC?

J.N. Ja.

J.F. And so you went to Robben Island?

J.N. No.

J.F. Where did you go?

J.N. We went to the Free State - we went to the - you see, at the time when we were convicted now in - in - it was in May, 1964, so the Robben Island was already full, so the - the prison department had already decided that those people who are serving less than five years, less than five years, they must not go to Robben Island, they must go to any prison outside Robben Island - Robben Island is from five years onwards.

J.F. So what was your experience of the Free State prison - were you with political prisoners only?

J.N. Ja, we were - we were given our own - our own sort of prison.

J.F. And how many were you?

J.N. We were many - we were many - we were over - over 300 - we were over 300 because, although a number of - more - some of them were - there were more PAC than us - there were more PAC in the - in the prison where I was.

J.F. And how did you handle that - did you speak to the PAC?

J.N. I spoke to them - we spoke to them - we spoke to them, man - I really never had problems with them, and most of them used to like to talk to me, you know - I never had problems with the PAC, except what they are doing, and I'll tell them what I think of them.

J.F. Ideologically?

J.N. Ja, anything, any way (?)

J.F. Did you discuss that in prison....

J.N. We dis - and you know, when we were now in Stoffberg - you know Stoffberg - Stoffberg there used to be an Afrikaans school, an - a very famous institution, Afrikaans institution - actually the - the - the best one in South Africa, Stoffberg, for the African - for African people - they turned that school into a prison - because of Bantu education people didn't go to that one because it was more Afrikaans than anything else, so the people boycotted that one - so they turned it into a prison, and when we went there we were, I think, the first people to go there where other people who were with Sobukwe and so on, the PAC people, the first people to go to that - to open that prison - and then we went to that place.

When we were there we were - we - we were having discussions - some of our people, young people in the - in the ANC who had - who were now prisoners, they were saying to us : You know, these people are insulting us, man, they keep on call us Charterists, you know, communists and all these things, and we know that some of our very highly respected leaders are members of the Communist Party, why don't you tell us about this thing - why don't you talk to us about it because....

J.F. Who was saying that?

J.N. They were - they were young people from East London, specially from the Eastern Cape, they were asking these questions, so when they brought it to us, you see, and they brought it to me - I was the - the most senior of - of the people who were there - I was actually the chairman of the - of the prisons - of - of our committee, you see - and we sat down to discuss it - we agreed that we must give them discussions - we must discuss it - in the cell where I was I - I was staying actually with Zephania Mothopeng and - and other PAC people, top chaps in the PAC, we were in the same cell.

And then, you see, after agreeing that we will talk to them, we needn't plunge straight into talking pure Marxist lectures as such, but I preferred to tell them the - you know, briefly the history of the ANC and so on and the - the association, you know, of the ANC with the party and so on and - and what I know - I spoke my experience, and after two days of addressing them there was question time, which also took two days - after this question time now it was Mothopeng to speak, and he couldn't speak - he didn't say anything.

J.N. He said what I said was - is what he knows, and they haven't got the type of history which I had been talking about, which was - which was true - even when I talk - even when I spoke about their slogans, because I said to them : You know, the slogan no bail, no fine, no defence, which was a very, very, very strong slogans of the PAC in 1969 - 1959 when they actually came out - I said : Look, it was seven years, seven years after the defiance campaign of 1952, and during the defiance campaign in 1952 we were not paying bail, we were not paying fine, we were not being defended unless the case is such that, you know, they bring some funny things - the lawyers must come to explain these - we can't - they must explain the legal position, you see, that's all.

So we were not paying fine, we were not paying bail, we were not being defended - where the case is clear - if they just charge you for - for (.....) - what we did we were prepared to go to jail - we were prepared - I said now in - during my address I said : They - this - when they came out of the ANC and coined these slogans they - they did not see that the ANC had experience, seven years already, on these questions - this was the - the line of the ANC - they couldn't challenge that, it was true - some of them were - were in the defiance campaign, you see - I understand that Sobukwe himself was - was in the defiance campaign 1952.

J.F. So you didn't try to tackle them, why anti-white or anti-communist issues?

J.N. No, I - I - I tackled it - I tackled it - I showed them, I - I told them that even in the treason trial the people tried the - the - the regime, the whole regime, made the - the - the Freedom Charter a communist document and they - they ended up saying it's not a communist document - I said : It's funny that our people are still in that - even this regime in its own courts could not succeed to call this a communist document - it's made in Kliptown, man, how does it become a communist - it's got nothing to do with - it's made by us - and they were in it too, you see.

And I - I came to this question of - of - of the Charter, I said (?) they're right (?) we are Charterists, we made it, it's ours - then they left it (Laugh) - they didn't call us Charterists any more, you know that.

J.F. And did you feel that you were able to have a good affect on the younger people?

J.N. Very, because many of them - many of the younger people from - from the PAC, many of them, you know, I used to have audience from these young people at lunch time - I - I wouldn't sit alone - they would come and mob me and ask me about this, ask me - they wouldn't ask them, because they said in a meeting that they didn't have this type of history, you see, which was correct, and in - and the young people from East London were enjoying this thing very much because this is what they wanted - the question of them calling us Charterists stopped completely - I said : You are absolutely right - you mustn't think you are insulting us, it's correct, you see, because we made a Freedom Charter, we are proud of it, you see.

J.F. So you spent two years in the Free State?

J.N. Yes.

- J.F. And was it only Africans or was it Coloureds and Indians?
- J.N. They - they were mixed, ja, but they - there were Coloureds and Indians.
- J.F. So how did you find - you've spoken a lot about whites, but over the years in the '50s and '60s how did you - did you ever work with Coloureds and Indians?
- J.N. I worked with a lot of them - I worked with a lot of them - I work with them now....
- J.F. And in prison....
- J.N. The - the - the treasurer general of this organisation is a - is a - is an Indian....
- J.F. Who's that?
- J.N. He was here just now when you came in, Kay, and we've got people like Ilva, your friend - we've got others - they - many others who are in the - who have been working with us all the - all these years.
- J.F. But is Kay currently treasurer general?
- J.N. He's - he was the treasurer general, he's just - he's just - he was - he just resigned recently - he wants to go for something else - he wants to go somewhere.
- J.F. And among those young people of the PAC, did you find that they were anti-white, anti-Indian?
- J.N. Oh, they were - they were very very - they were very strong before, but after this, specially after the - the discussion of the treason trial, you know, which was an experience for them - they didn't know, you see, and they began from that time - I mean they were asking me questions about this thing, you see, and they began to see, you see - I'm glad to say that, you know, the - at least the three of them, very - which were very strong people - three of them actually came to me to - to - to congratulate me for - for having managed to - to - to deliver that type of stuff to them, which they didn't know, you see.
- And some of them have got relatives among us just now - I don't know what their position is at home, but when I met them at home - when I was still there in '74 - '74, '75 I was still inside the country - I met some of them, two of them - there was Ephrim Mogakala - he was - who was - who was a very - you know, he was - he - he was a militant - you know, very, very militant PAC chap, but after the - after that he was one who was very vocal about Charterists, you know - after this, hey, you know, he said : Well, you know, you really took the - the weapon out of our mouth, it's - he was very honest, he said : Look you took our weapon out of our mouth, do you (?) accept it because we thought we were using it - I said : No, you are right, you are absolutely right, you see.
- J.F. What does he mean you took the weapon out of....
- J.N. No, they were using it - they were - they were thinking that we get had when they say : You Charterist, Charterists - I said (?) - because they were saying it, you know, they were thinking they were - they were thinking they're insulting us when they say we are Charterists, you see.

- J.N. And then he came - he came to confess to me to say that : No, you took bread (breath) out of our mouth, because we were using it, really using it, and now - now that you accept it we can't use it any more.
- J.F. But did he change?
- J.N. They changed - they changed, except I mean I couldn't recruit them.
- J.F. Why?
- J.N. I couldn't recruit them.
- J.F. Why is that?
- J.N. No, I would recommend other people to recruit them, and I wouldn't recruit them from that point.
- J.F. Why?
- J.N. I would only recommend when I'm outside to say to somebody they must go and see them - but you know, when I met Polosi and this fellow Mogakala - and Polosi has got relatives in the movement just now here - he was a friend of Mogakala - they used to go together - they were - they were an intellectual group of - of the PAC when they were there, but much younger (?) - I met them outside - each one of them would not - would never like to part with me after meeting, you know - they would like to relate to your experience of prison.
- Only I - I couldn't succeed to bring them to my home, although they were - they were anxious to come, but I was - I was reluctant to bring them home, but I met them a number of - sometimes I would meet them over the weekend, we'd have a drink together, and they were - they would enjoy drinking with me and talking to me.
- J.F. Did you consider that two years in prison to be a waste of your time or did you think you did some work there?
- J.N. No, I think it helped - it helped me a great deal to know a lot of things and - and in fact I must tell you that, you know, during that prison life - during that prison time there's not a time when I've - I've been very off - you know, very, very official than there (?) because there was no other thing to do except to be here and be among the people....
- J.F. In prison?
- J.N. and when they wanted - and if they wanted anything they would come to me, you see.
- J.F. So you saw it as political work?
- J.N. It was a very - it was - it - we really lived a political life.
- J.F. Did you regret you didn't go to the Island?
- J.N. No, I - no, no, I - I - I thought it would (?) have been necessary for me to be there with my colleagues and so on and see them and know what is happening, but that - I didn't go, it doesn't matter.
- J.F. And then you were released in '65?
- J.N. I - I - '66 - I was released in '66....

J.F. Where did you go?

J.N. and I was released much later because I got arrested for some nonsense, you know - an old man came to me - he had his son who was working in Johannesburg, and he gave me the address of his son, you know, and I - I had - we were - I was with the students, we were studying, so in my books (Laugh) I took the address of that man - put it in my books - they came to search and got this thing - and the day I was released, when my wife and everybody were there to pick me up, I was rearrested for this thing and taken to another prison in Sasolberg to stay for another month waiting trial - I was convicted six months and given a fine....

J.F. Convicted of what?

J.N. Convicted of taking these things in prison.

J.F. What crime is there in taking an address?

J.N. No, the thing is that look, they say that you are not a - you are not a prison authority - who gave you authority to - to - you can't administer the prison - they chucked (?) me for that - I mean they just wanted something to throw in my face - there wasn't - there wasn't - there was nothing in it, there was just nonsense.

J.F. So how long were you in prison for that?

J.N. Well, they gave me six months, but then there was a fine, and I came back to the - to the same prison - then my colleagues who were - who were with me in that prison paid my fine - they had money and they paid my fine and I went out.

J.F. And then you went - in '66 you went where?

J.N. Then I went to - I went back to Johannesburg, to Orlando.

J.F. And what did you do?

J.N. I - I found a job - I worked.

J.F. What kind of job?

J.N. I worked for a - for a firm of patent attorneys (?) - Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys, Spoor and Fischer (?) - I worked for them for nine years.

J.F. And you stayed in Jo'burg the whole....

J.N. I stayed in - in Johannesburg, ja.

J.F. And (how did you find the political climate when you were released?

J.N. You know, the - the - the - (the situation was very interesting for me because) I found that again there (was quite clear that there was a vacuum) - I was forced to - I didn't want to do any active political work, but I wanted to do more backroom work, which I succeeded to do a great deal) and....

J.F. You succeeded to do?

- J.N. I had to do, but - but it came even more - I became more active in '74, '75 leading into '76, because I left in '76 after the....
- J.F. So I'm confused - in '66 you thought - why did you think you shouldn't be - you thought you were too hot to do open political work?
- J.N. Ja, (I was already banned then, you see.)
- J.F. So when you were released they banned you?
- J.N. No, my ban started when I was in detention in June, 1963, and since then it was on, you see - I came out of prison with it still on and I was made to report every Friday to a police station - to nearest police station.
- J.F. And so you decided that it would be best if you did behind the scenes work?
- J.N. Ya.
- J.F. But (how did you find the ^{political} climate)....
- J.N. The climate was good, was very good....
- J.F. Were people saying it was a lull (?) - people were scared, the ANC was smashed, there was no activity....
- J.N. No, they making a mistake - I - the people knew me and I found they were - they were - there were more people who came to me for consultation, more - many - some of the people whom I just knew but I didn't expect, but I was very cautious about it - I was very cautious because, you see, in fact when I came out Yusuf Cachalia did say to me I must be careful - I mustn't even talk to him - I don't know him any more (Laugh) - I mustn't think that I know him because....
- J.F. Why did he say that?
- J.N. because many things have changed, many of - of our friends have changed - some of them are on the other side.
- J.F. So were you a bit nervous about getting back into things?
- J.N. No, we - ja, I was - I mean I was very careful - (I was very, very careful) - I worked with some people after - after I convinced myself - (if a person comes to talk to me I would listen more than talk) and - and (then I will make consultations without saying anything to him for some time and when I'm - (I'm satisfied he's a genuine person, then I'll call on him - this is the thing which made me to survive all that time, otherwise I could - I don't think I could have, because, you see, there were so many people) - some of them, you know, I can't even remember today, who came for consultations - some with force coming into the place where I stay, even when I discourage them, and such people I would really treat with a lot of caution.)
- J.F. Because they could be setting you up?
- J.N. Ja, because I wouldn't understand why should a person who knows - because (the other genuine people would say to me): "Where can we meet you, you see - and I had my own instincts, then we meet, not at - not coming to where I stay, because I mean whether I could be found with them any time, and I'm arrested and I go to jail for meeting these people - I would really resent - I was resenting that type of thing - most of them I used to chase them away when they come to my place where I stay, you see, but there was a lot of - I never - (I never felt the lull, you know.)

- J.N. ① Yes, the - in - I knew the ANC was banned but underground I think it was very active, very active.)
- J.F. You're saying it was still going on?
- J.N. They were still going on.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

- J.F. So then - I'm just interested - you were working with people '66, '67 - '69 was the BC really coming into its own - did you find it - you had left in this early - in the '50s and '60s you'd been arguing with PAC - was there any more PAC around?
- J.N. ① No, there wasn't - I didn't - (I didn't feel PAC at all - I felt this BC group, which was - which was-I mean) sometime their - (their case was legitimate) - (we need to handle it with care,) you know, and - (but they used to accept - you know, the people who went with me, whom when I've instructed them to the - to the meeting, supposing they come to consult me on what they must do at the meeting if they are going to a meeting, and (I would find, you know, my advice very authoritative) (?) (to them, and they would come back and be - and thank me very much for the - for the line I gave them) - I had - I was - I - (I found it very useful, and I found I was - in fact when some people suggested that) why - why shouldn't (I come out, I said: (No, man, I've got more work there, man)....
- J.F. In the country?
- J.N. Ja, I was - I had more work there - (you know, people would come to me and consult with me.)
- J.F. (Even BC?
- J.N. Well, they - they were - they - (there were a) (?) (few young people who'd consult with me on this thing - I didn't have to meet them - I didn't have to meet them, I would send these ones who are closer to me.)
- J.F. And what about their arguments - how could you answer their arguments - their arguments were you failed in the '60s....
- J.N. No, they - nobody ever said that....
- J.F. What did they say?
- J.N. Never - never to me - some of them would say to - what was the problem - and some of them of course recognised the fact that, you know, the ANC was building up a momentum, and that is the reason why the regime had to ban it, you see - they - they - they were already conscious of the fact that, you know, I mean some who were there themselves might have to suffer the same fate, you see, so I never encountered that - that type of argument, no.
- J.F. (What argument did you encounter?)

J.N. (Well, the - the - I - I only encountered the - the type of argument where, you know, (some) of the people would talk as if there's never been anything at all, you see - there's never been any political organisation - I would say to them: No, don't use that type of argument because, you see, look, there's - there is - there's - there's the - (the congress movement, which created history in this country, and that history is very important for you, you must use it, you see, and you must - (you must look at that history) - study it seriously, it's yours, you see.)

(And I would even to go the extent of saying that: You know, people used to say communism is a foreign thing and so on because it emanates from somewhere, but this one, the congress history, is yours here - can't say foreign, it's yours. - Kiptown Freedom Charter in your country, so that's a very important thing for you.)

J.F. (And what did you say about (when they would say): Look, we need to be on our own - black man, we're on our own, we need to develop our own away from the whites, that kind of thing?)

J.N. Ja, I did - I - I would - I would use a very strong argument to say to them: You see, it would be a farce for you to deny people who will say yes - you stand on a platform and raise on top of your voice what you think should be done - this is wrong, that is wrong, that is wrong, that is wrong - and when you sit down you have applause and some people stand up and support you - they're not all of your colour of skin, they support your point, what would you do with them - they support what you are saying, they say you are right, what do you do with them - would you say to them: Go away, I don't care - I don't want you to say that, I want my people to say this - would you say that? - then they get into trouble - they never thought of this.

I said: Now, you see, this is what we have to do: - (those who say to you): Yes, you are right - take it, work with them, but see how far they go - just like you are sitting here being black the same argument I - I told you earlier this morning - (some of the people who are - who are a danger to us are not necessarily the white people, they are our own people - they are that side of the enemy, they are working for wages and things like that there - they come and take information here, they give it to the enemy, ban (?) (burn) our people (being our people (?) - so they are - they are still - they are a danger, yet they're your (?) people, so you don't need to harp on this question of colour, no - you take the person on the basis of what he says, you see, and see him (?) work with him. (?) prove it (Traffic) he might even be better - he can give you a lot of things which you may not get even from the people who are with you here.

And all of them, after looking at this question, they said: Ja, I think that argument is correct, you know - that argument is correct - I - I really - I've never found anybody who - who would - whom I would feel astray, you know, in talking to on this issue, nothing, really nothing.

J.F. You mean you felt they responded to your....

J.N. No, they responded - responded - I didn't find any - any - any opposition to speak of, nothing, and you know, I mean I - I found them to be more loyal and more listening than anything else - even the big - even the - the senior people, you know, after knowing my position, you know, and they - I speak the - the - the - they think I'm speaking from some source, you know, so I just spoke with authority, you see - always - I found it very useful, you see - it was very, very -

- J.N. It was useful for me, you see - although it was slightly different than in jail, you know, because well, I was not alone out here and I mean in jail I - I mean in the area where I was I was - I was the most senior of - of all the people who came there from the point of view of the ANC, you know, because I mean I was a member of the national executive, and there were one or two people who were members of the national executive but not in the same position as me.
- J.F. So you remained in the national executive?
- J.N. Yes, they would always regard me that - that way.
- J.F. Were you harassed by the police from '67 to....
- J.N. Oh, yes, I mean you know that - that I - I - sometimes I had to go to jail - in 1967 my mother came and visited me, you know, and I used to report every Friday, and the Friday was the 26th. December, Boxing Day, so I was (Laugh) - I was busy deciding what about this thing, you see - we started Christmas on Thursday, Friday was the 26th., and Saturday and Sunday I clean forgot, man, till Monday I had to go and report, and I went to jail for that.
- J.F. For how long?
- J.N. Well, I was convicted for six months suspended, but I had to serve one month in Modderbee for that, for failing to report, but I came to report - they didn't arrest me, I came to report, but they later on brought the charge.
- J.F. And did you find that people were aware of the non-racial history of ANC or was there a bit of a blank that they just didn't have their own history - was it something new you were saying when you were talking about the ANC and its non-racialism....
- J.N. No, they - the - no, they - I found that they - they were more receptive - as I say, you know, I really never found anything - I mean I think we have done a lot of work during the time - during the time we were in the open - we did a lot of work.
- J.F. And during those years were you still dealing with whites, with white people in....
- J.N. When, in?
- J.F. In Jo'burg?
- J.N. Of course I did - my friends I mean they some - some of them who were there I mean they - they all - they helped me a great deal, I - I can say even the job that I got I mean was - was - was found for me by them, because I mean they spoke to the people they know that there's this type of person, he's just come out of prison and he's looking for work and so on and they - they - they helped me to find that job.
- J.F. And the (BC was quite strong in the late '60s and early '70s - were you worried that it might have a strong....
about its long-term impact?)
- J.N. 9 I never thought that - I never thought so - (I always thought that, well, I mean they - they must start from somewhere, but it is our business to go and tell them that they must know that they didn't start from the vacuum, you see - they started in something, you see - they must follow in the footsteps - they can't do anything different from that.)

- 9
J.N. It's true they must fight for their colour - it's true they must fight for their right as human beings, they must - they must not be degraded because of the colour of their skin - that they must fight for, it's right, correct, but they mustn't use it as policy of the organisation, because we have got the experience of that - they may stop any people anywhere in the world having to agree with them, having to accept them (.....) because people want to know exactly what your policy is - how do you oppose this one - you want to replace the white government with the black - once I put questions like that I never found it a problem. P.47
- J.F. And what about people really taking a risk say, to join MK or to go out of the country, do you find that because of the harsh sentences given to the Mandelas and even to yourself (?)....
- J.N. No, I wouldn't - I wouldn't deal with people who want to do that - I would do politics and I would find if there is somebody who is I - I would advise them - I would advise them - I don't discuss those things - if they want to go they must go and find some - some people somewhere.
- J.F. But were they as brave about going then or was there a bit more - I'm just saying the idea of taking that step - did you think that was a bit back because of the situation in the '60s?
- J.N. No, you - I - I didn't encounter anybody who wanted to do that because every - after looking at people I would talk about them to - to some other people myself, without them having to come to me on that question, so that some of them really never knew what happened to them - you would just see somebody coming to call them - because I would be observing them, I would be looking at somebody - he comes to talk to me, we discuss these politics, I listen to what he says, and I'll stay with him for some - for some time, I - after I have finished assessment of this person then I - I - I sent word to say : Look, there's so-and-so - they come and take him - he(?) will never even think that it's me who's responsible for that, no, because I didn't tell him - I didn't discuss anything like that - I was just discussing politics with him, but I see the militancy.
- J.F. You promised me you'd tell me about Sekhukhuneland being such a strong- you kept saying I'll tell you.
- J.N. Well, I was saying that, you see, the Sekhukhuneland became very active when the - when the Bantu Authorities Act was now implemented, where they started, you know, introducing limitation of stock - that is culling of cattle - because, you know, generally the Africans, especially in the rural areas, you know, used to regard the cattle as their bank - the cattle is their bank, because if they want money they just sell the cattle. - they didn't need to go and work, those men who have - who had cattle, they don't need to go and work - what for - they've got cattle - some of them go to work in order to buy cattle, so that they can breed them and they can live, you see.
- 10
Now when the regime now took the line of introducing stock limitation, that a man must only have one cow for milk, another one a bull, and two cows for this bank (?) you know, to pull the small waggon - four - that infuriated the people - there was a fertile soil for us to incite them, good (.....) - when they wanted to - now to - (they talked about soil erosion) - (some lands must be left narrow (?) - I mean fallow for some - for some time so that they can recuperate, because they felt that the ploughing it now and again, you know, causes this soil erosion - we said : No, it's not correct - that's not correct.

J.N. The correct thing is that the farmlands most fertile areas, which we were using, are now declared farms - some of them are state farm - it's what they call trust - trust farms adjacent to Sekhukhuneland - they know that - where there is water, where there is a lot of trees, you know, where big rivers - they take these - those areas and they call them farms and then the people remain on the barren land - (we said: There's nothing wrong with this land - what's wrong is that we are cramped on this, so we must begin fighting for land.) - (good incitement) - very good incitement, - good - the people understand simple - I mean it's very simple for them - they can see with their own eyes.)

(So even when they wanted now the - the - the chiefs to agree to accept this Bantu Authorities, you know, in order to implement fully, you know, these regulations, Sekhukhune, Paramount Chief Morwamoche Sekhukhune refused) - he had to be deported) - he had to be deported - that is after the - the people in Sekhukhuneland took decision to get rid of what they call rangers - I'll tell you about the rangers - Morwamoche Sekhukhune - this is the son of Sekhukhune - he's one who was, together with Godfrey - and if you ask anybody in the movement about Godfrey Sekhukhune they will tell you they know him - he was a famous ANC man in Sekhukhuneland before us - we found him there - Arthur Sekhukhune, Stephen Nkadimeng, my uncle, George Nkadimeng - after these people were deported and the people were so furious.

(People were so furious that, you know, they - they now went for what they call the rangers - the rangers are those people who used to work for the government in the - in the implementation of the stock and in putting up the fences, in doing the roads and so on, and they - they started going for them) - those people who agree with this system, they were to be eliminated, and indeed some of them - my uncle, the chief, Sibek Nkadimeng, was - was attacked, and three people from - from my village were killed by tribesmen daytime because they agreed with the - with - with - with the government, and they were very open about it - against the majority of the people and....

J.F. What year was all this?

J.N. 19 - 1958.

J.F. Was that the cattle stock limitation?

J.N. Ja.

J.F. And was it brought in?

J.N. Ja - it's actually the - the - the - (the campaign actually started in 1956 when we were - when - when I was already in) - in the treason trial - when we were at the drill hall, and at one of the meetings - for instance, when I was at the drill hall, you know, one time I had to go and address the fellows in the hostel while banned by the treason conditions - I - I consulted with Cde. Slovo, who advised me, with other lawyers that, you know - Harry Bloom was my - my lawyer - Harry Bloom advised me that, look - and he consulted with Slovo - I was present - they said to me: Look, go inside the building, get a loudspeaker - when the people are outside and you are in the building, you are not in the meeting (Laugh) - we can defend it in court."

J.N. I went inside the build - inside the building and a loudspeaker was put here, then I was speaking to them - they only - they saw my head - they didn't see my body - and they were sitting there - and that worked because no-one ever - ever refused that and they took a decision and they collected a lot of money and they did certain things since that time - that - that - that thing was - was - because I used to be their chairman, I used to be with them - now I can't come and speak to them - they knew I was arrested for high treason - they didn't even know that I was coming to that meeting - they were many (?) they were full in the hostel, they were there - I got in the building and - they couldn't sit in the hall because if they were in the hall, I could have been outside and speaking to them with the mike.

But then because they couldn't go in the building, it was too small, they went into the yard, they were sitting here in the open, so I got the chance of getting into the hall and speaking through the window - it worked a magic, man, because it was very good for them.

J.F. Which year was that?

J.N. That was 1956.

J.F. (So since you went to Jo'burg did you always go back to Sekhukhuneland?)

J.N. (Yes, I always went) - I always went.

J.F. Because people in - there's a kind of a myth ^{Some say} that the people in rural areas are a bit docile and not political.

J.N. (No, the - it depends what you - what (area) you - what - what (you are) dealing with, you see - if we were dealing with those things these are - these are the - (this is the fabric of their life, man, you know, the land and the cattle, - otherwise how do they live without these things,) you see - I mean (if you defend those things then you are the man.)

J.F. Was it only Sekhukhuneland that had stock limitations?

J.N. No, the - the whole area of - the whole Transvaal - it happened in Sekhukhuneland Zeerust at the same time....

J.F. But why was....

J.N. In the Transvaal - but Sekhukhuneland was very militant because, you see, they - I mean I tell you they went to - they went to several - there were about six villages which were affected - you know, the rangers were under attack from the people.

J.F. (But why was it so militant in Sekhukhuneland?)

J.N. Well, I don't know - (I think it's because, you see, ^{of} the paramount chief himself,) you know, they respected the weight of - and he was not a speaker, you know - he's not a man who speaks a lot - he - he - he's used to giving judgments - he'll listen to his counsellors speaking, and after they have spoken, then somebody summarises and they ask him to give - to pass judgment, and he does that - he has always been - so when the - the - (the government wanted to meet him) they met with him, and well, we were already working with him, you see, and they - (they called a very big indaba in Zebediela)....

J.F. In?

J.N. A meeting.

J.F. In Zebediela?

J.N. Big meeting in Zebediela - you know Zebediela, the citrus farm - (the citrus area of Slezenger) - Slezenger's Citrus Farm, orange, in Zebediela - they called a meeting there, and they called him with all the - most of the chiefs, to come to Zebediela - that was in 1954 - to tell him about this law, you see, and when he came he found the big meeting, and when they wanted him to go to the - to where they were sitting he said: No, they must sit where they are. - he wants to sit there under the tree, under the marula tree. - then we organised chairs for him, he sat there with his counsellors, and a number of these other chiefs were sitting there on the platform with the - with the government, and Dr. (.....) and Rev. Mosley and others - (Dr. Verwoerd, you know, they were sitting there, and then, you see, they - they said to him they have gone all over talking about this law is the best thing - they have received acceptance of this thing, this law - then he says to them - when it came to him to reply he says no, he is a chief of the people - if his people say he must take it, then he will take it - they must convince the people.) (.....)

(10) (They couldn't control the crowd) - (the people loved him) (?) - (the chief has spoken - that was all.)

J.F. And (when you went up to the rural areas from Jo'burg they were talking land politics) - (did you try to bring in congress alliance politics?)

J.N. No, (they knew that congress) is - (wants our land back - we were singing, you know, the congress songs, "we want our land back" - they knew about this thing - (people like Godfrey Sekhukhune and Stephen Nkadimeng, the men there) (?) (they were members of the ANC, they were working in Johannesburg themselves) - Stephen was working in the O.K. Bazaar for many years as a member of - he was even a - I believe he was a member of the party even.

J.F. And (did they have objections to whites?) - (they never saw whites except for these Mosleys and these....

J.N. No, they - they - they - they had some whites - people like, you know - there was - (there was some whites of the Anglican Church, you know, who used to be loved by the people, especially at my village at Manganey - Father Blake, a friend of Father Huddleston, who was stationed at Jane Furse Hospital) - Jane Furse Hospital is (the mission hospital in Sekhukhuneland) - Jane Furse - I think Jane Furse was one of the best, you know, what do you call, the Wayfarers, or the pioneers of the - of the mission hospitals in - in that area, so that hospital is named after her, Jane Furse - it's there, it's in Sekhukhuneland.

So the - there was a miss - there was a mission school, a mission hospital, a mission - I mean the mission, big, very big, and I mean it's the main hospital in Sekhukhuneland, Jane Furse - so from this there used to be this - (these ministers and the nurses) and, you know, they used to go to the villages there and see the sick people, always calling them to the mission school, and they were accepted) - there was nothing wrong - (in fact, you know, Father Blake was) - you know, was a - was (an idol of the people) - when he goes to the village, you know - because he would come there and want to see all the people who are sick they must come there, and he must see them himself and go and talk to the doctors, send the - the - the - the mobile unit to go to the village and cure the people - and that was an organising thing and it - they could see - I mean they befriended people in that way.

J.N. And this was something which started a long time ago - even when I was still at school, the school which I left when I came to town was this one - that's where I came - I - I - I - I - I attended - I did my Standard Five.

J.F. At an Anglican Mission school?

J.N. Anglican Mission school.

J.F. And (what about Indians and Coloureds, did you have them up there?)

J.N. There were - there were - there are shops there.

J.F. But didn't that - that meant....

J.N. No, they didn't - there - there are Indians there, you know, who - who have got - (who have got big stores, you know, and I mean they treat the people very well there - they respect the chief, the - the - they are very loyal and they - they - they get mixed up with the people and when there is a wedding they bring their gifts and they're always there, you know, and they were accepted and there was no problem with them.) - from that point of view this is how the.

J.F. Just a few more things - you didn't tell me how and when and why you left South Africa.

J.N. I left South Africa in 1976, July - that was (in the heat of the - the June 16th. campaign) - now - well, (by that time I had already left employment - I was now doing full time work,) although I was selling some soft goods, (but I - I had - I - I got to know that I - I noticed that something was being done by the regime, I'm sure they were) - they were (trying to) build a ring around me, and there was - they were going to (spring something big against me,) and then I - I felt it and I left.

J.F. Was that at the time that Gwabi got....

J.N. No, that - that's when I - (Joe Gqabi ^{had} just ^{come} out of prison and I - I ^{had} just started working with him and - and ^a few others) - we - we had a committee which was working - in fact I can say, you see, (one of the things which disturbed me was that we used to have a committee, of which I was the chairman, and we used to meet in different places, not one place, every weekend, and one day I made arrangements to meet at a - (at a certain place, and the man who had a key at the building was not present, so we couldn't meet in the building, and we couldn't be together because I was banned, and some of them were banned also, so we had to disperse,) and before we dispersed we planned to go and meet in some house in Doornfontein, in Indres's house.

We went to meet - we - we went to meet there - although I - for many years I avoided going to that house, although I was very much friendly with that family, but I was - I - I had at the back of my mind that that place was watched because it's too - it has been there since - and we were - we were using it most of the time for meetings, so the boers knew (....) something about it - (so when this fellow suggested and insisted that he does go there sometime himself to meet people, I said: "Hey, man, you know that place is well known for many years - I didn't go there myself since I came out of prison - I never went there - I meet with that family, but outside, not in that house, because I know if I go there I would be - I (will be seen,) - they will have to - they are coming to ask me about it - we went (?)

- J.N. And indeed I met with many people now, who were not supposed to see me in the company of these ones - then I noticed then that the cat is out of the bag, I can't hide anything any more.
- J.F. So then you left in '76....
- J.N. On Saturday - rather on - on Saturday of that - because (we met on Saturday - on Sunday the police went to the house of one of the people who just came out of Robben Island who was meeting with us,) not - not Joe Gqabi - (an old man, Martin Ramakgade,) who was also charged with Joe Gqabi - they went to him and called him to John Vorster Square, and they asked Ramakgade direct question - when last did you see John Nkadimeng - fortunately he didn't - he didn't ref - he didn't deny that, he said : I saw him on Saturday - where - they didn't - once he said he saw me on Saturday, they didn't want to ask him where and why and - and how - they just left him.
- They called him from Alexander - they went to take him from his house to John Vorster Square - he was asked this question - when last did you see John Nkadimeng - he realised if he's going to say, specially after the people, we have met those people and we were seen in that house, it's not going to help him - (so when he left John Vorster Square he came straight to tell me) - he came straight to tell me that I met - that I - I was called at John Vorster - (and I found that almost all those people that we saw in that house were called, all of them being asked the same question: - "when did you see John Nkadimeng?" exactly (?))
- Now what they asked other people we don't know, but this one, Ramakgade, came to tell me that - it was quite clear that - and they didn't come to me - they're asking other people about me, they're not asking me, so (I realise) something - (trouble is coming, so I left) - because I - I did something which was against me, going into that house I - I - I - not because I hated the people - I knew people go there, you see, and that family has been like that all the time, popular family, receiving everybody the night we (?) - right from the time while the old man was still alive - the old man I used to love and work with that old man, Naidoo himself - he was - he was dead (?) - he was the chairman of the Transvaal Indian Congress, Naidoo.
- J.F. So you left and you went....
- J.N. I left - I left on the 24th. July, went to Swaziland.
- J.F. And did you stay in Swaziland?
- J.N. (I stayed in Swaziland for some time, until the Swazis got me out, and I went to Maputo) - I stayed there also for - (for a year or so and then I came here.)
- J.F. And (did you go right into SACTU when you came here?
- J.N. Ja, I used to attend SACTU meetings when I was in Swaziland.
- J.F. But why did you go into SACTU structures instead of ANC structures?
- J.N. No, I went into the ANC structures....
- J.F. So you were in both?
- J.N. When I was working there I was working in both.

- J.N. (Before I became - I became - before I was elected to - to be - to be the secretary - (general secretary) now I was chairman of the - of the - of the - of the PMC, the - the - the Political Military Committee - I was the chairman of that committee.
- J.F. Here in Lusaka?
- J.N. Ja.
- J.F. And so you - were you PMC from '77?
- J.N. No, no, no, there was no - there was no PMC in '77, PMC came in - in - in '82.
- J.F. So you were PMC from '82?
- J.N. Ja, I - no, no, no, we were - I was the chairman of the senior organ in Maputo before I came here.
- J.F. The senior organ?
- J.N. Senior organ - senior organ which - which does the work which is done by the PMC now - we were doing all work, you know, combining the political - political military, so to speak.
- J.F. When did you become head of - chairman of the senior organ in....
- J.N. When - when - when - I became senior organ in I think it was the end of '81 - end of 1981, the whole of '82 I was there, and the end of '82 changed the whole thing.
- J.F. And you came here?
- J.N. I came here.
- J.F. And became head of PMC?
- J.N. Ja.
- J.F. Was it called chairman or?
- J.N. I was chairman of the Political Committee.
- J.F. Political Military Committee?
- J.N. Ja.
- J.F. And then until when - when did you get into SACTU?
- J.N. Well, in - in - in August, '83.
- J.F. And you left PMC?
- J.N. I'm still in the PMC.
- J.F. But not as chairman?
- J.N. Not chairman.
- J.F. Just an executive member?
- J.N. Exe - I go there.
- J.F. But then in '83 you became executive PMC....

- J.N. I then - this is my full time work.
- J.F. You were SG of SACTU from '83?
- J.N. Ja, ja.
- J.F. Who did you take over for?
- J.N. From John (.....) ?
- J.F. What happened to him?
- J.N. No, he - he just retired.
- J.F. And then you became SG SACTU since then?
- J.N. Mmm - we don't say SG....
- J.F. What do you say?
- J.N. in SACTU....
- J.F. What do you say, general secretary?
- J.N. GS, general secretary - SG is in the ANC (Laugh)
- J.F. And I just wanted to ask you if you could say something about the theory that we're talking about, because I think we've talked about so many specifics - I'd like to ask you if you could tell me - do you think it's worthwhile someone coming and asking so many questions about non-racialism - do you think of it as a kind of a peripheral issue or do you think of it as a central issue - do you think of it as an ideologically central issue or do you think of it as....
- J.N. I don't think so - I don't think it's a central issue any more - I think our people have accepted....
- J.F. I don't mean an issue in terms of being contentious or controvertial but do you think it's a central pillar of the struggle or do you think it's a minor pillar - non-racialism, is it important to discuss, is it important for people to understand and accept? - for example, COSATU refuse to have CUSA and ACTU in their structures because they refuse to accept non-racialism.
- J.N. No, it's not - it's not COSATU who refused them, they refused - they refused to go there - they refused to compromise, they said they are not going to go when they are doing this thing, but they are doing it in a different way, which is very foolish for them, you see, which - which - which destroys them in fact - I mean shows that they are not - they are - they don't know what they talking about, you see.
- J.F. But tell me some - just if you can give me a statement about non-racialism - do you think it's an important point....
- J.N. No, as far as we are concerned, you know, we - we - we think it's an important question because, you see, our people must understand that we - we - we - we - we're not going to punish people - I mean isolate people on - on the basis of their race or their colour or anything of the kind - we - I mean we have - we have been talking about this thing rather too long.

9
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p.39

J.N. Our people have accepted it now, and that our people are accepting it and we don't see why we should be wasting time talking about it, because many people know us as such and - and it is this policy which really destroys the - the racist regime in South Africa which makes us, you see, what we are, which makes us have (?) no alternative - nobody can replace the racist regime, it doesn't matter what his name is - if he doesn't - if he doesn't champion this position which we are championing, you see - you can't replace the racist regime with racism, you can't - this is - this is the very important point - (if you want to replace the racist regime, why do you preach racism of another kind) - why do you think racism is all right if it's preached by you, and not all right when it's preached by that one - this is the questions which - which you - which - which must confront you - our people and our friends all over the world accept us on that point, you see, and it's the only one.

J.F. Lastly you're married and you have kids?

J.N. Of course I've got (Laugh) - what do you expect....

J.F. How many....

J.N. From 1927 until today I couldn't get married (Laugh) - I - I've got children, I've got a family.

J.F. How many kids do you have?

J.N. Well, I had - I had seven kids, seven children - one of my sons was - was killed in Botswana recently - he was active in the what'sname - he was actually holding a position in SACTU in Botswana....

J.F. I actually interviewed Jackie at (.....) conference.

J.N. Did you interview her - that - that is his widow - now - and the others are still alive - one of them came here when you were here already.

J.F. So are some of them in the ANC as well - they followed your footsteps?

J.N. All my children are in the ANC and I - you know, an interesting thing, you know, I never spoke to them, I never organised them, nothing - I don't organise them, they just follow.

J.F. And I just wanted to - just a couple of little points.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. wondered what people were saying about the non-African comrades who were arrested like Goldberg, Kathrada - do you think that they were - that there was understanding of them in the same way as - Mandela's a hero, what about Kathrada and Goldberg, how did they....

J.N. No, they were - they - Kathrada - you know, Kathrada was my colleague throughout the treason trial - I mean Kathrada himself and with people like Bernstein who were there also - they were all there, and all these were stalwarts of the movement, man, they - they knew that, and I don't think there was any hitch about them.

J.N, There was - they were - they were accepted as - and more so that I mean they were found in Rivonia I mean the - they - of course they knew that the - the high command, you know, of the - of the - of the MK is - is comprising of - of all races, and those people who are prepared to go all the way with us, and nobody got surprised (?) on that, it was just - I mean they were - you know, the - Fischer himself, you know, and - defended them, and he has - I mean he has won the admiration of - of the people through his own actions for many, many years.

I tell you when I was - when I was going with him, you know, you wouldn't feel you are talking to an advocate, you know - that was a human person - you know, he's - he was as - as simple as anything - you know, he would - he would go from Pretoria wanting me to say (?) and tell me and discuss a lot of other things I mean about social, you know. life and so on, and asked me one question about the case, one, all the way (Laugh) and he was really a very simple person, and we loved him - we really loved him.

When he - when he stood to - to talk in court, you see, we knew that he's - because I mean he - we knew he was in the - in the - in the movement, he was in the Congress of Democrats and he was - he was - he was a very important person - you know, his advice, even on the what'sname, you know - he told us from the beginning that we - we are going to - he said that, you know - he did say to us at one stage that, you know, Pirow is not going to survive Pretoria - he's not going to survive it because they are going to dominate that court at the beginning - he is not going to speak, and indeed he didn't speak.

You know, first of all when they came in there, you see, they attacked the court - they asked one of the courts to - one of the - the - the judges to recuse himself, which he did....

J.F. To recuse himself?

J.N. Yes, he had to recuse himself, Rudolph....

J.F. Rudolph?

J.N. Rudolph had to get out - that's when they brought Bekker (Baker) and during - during this argument, because they started, you know, when there was the - the whole world press here for the (?) treason trial it was not Pirow, it was us - then Rudolph left - when Rudolph left they brought - the court adjourned until the (.....) again, they did, you see, and when they did they started with the indictment - three months they (?) never spoke - they chopped the indictment to pieces - by the time they finished, what is he going to speak about - all those things - those things which he was used to say at the drill hall, he had no chance to speak about them now because the indictment was no longer that type (?) finished, so I mean he - he - he had this - he had a foresight about these things - he told us that by - by the time they finish Pirow will be - will be a mess because he was - he was told - I understand he suffered from very acute blood pressure and they told him that he mustn't go into this - doctors told him : Don't go into this thing, this thing is going to kill you - and it killed him - it killed him, Pirow, Oswald Pirow, who was the - the man who's really behind the - the treason trial.

J.F. Just two other questions - in that you're in SACTU, I wonder if you could answer, the interest - the working class interest, the desire for working class hegemony - how do you respond - people say : Well, how can whites be general secretaries of trade unions, accepted in COSATU, accepted in SACTU - how is that going to ensure working class hegemony - whites are not the working class, how can they be there?

J.N. Well, if - I suppose if anybody from COSATU at this point in time, white person, becomes general secretary of COSATU, I think the people, any people from outside, should never try to question that question, because this is the highest point of organisation at our (?) time, so it would be out of serious consideration by the trade unionist down ground (?) to choose the best man among them, regardless of what colour pigmentation - that's not important - what's important is his contribution in the work of the workers, organisation of the workers - he would have won the love and respect of the workers in terms of his own dedication, and they - they can't just pick up anybody who comes to speak very good English there - they would expect a man who has been working with them, whom they know.

J.F. But I'm saying (theoretically how do you explain that whites can be involved when you, especially in SACTU, are working for the interest of working class hegemony? - (how do you answer when people say : Well, whites don't represent... Working class?)

J.N. No but - but we're saying that the workers are the same - their grievance - their problems are the same - we - you see, the - the - (the regime is using this) colour skin and they - I mean this (colour issue to divide the workers and make them weaker and) the - the workers - we - (we are saying that the white workers have been bought, they've been bribed, you know, to - (to keep on electing a white government) exclusive, you see, and (if they accept the fact that they have no future, you see, in - in a South Africa, you see - they have no future in - (in a South Africa without the black people,) they - they - if they accept that fact, (then we take them - we take them and we want to see what he's doing - I say it is out of - it's not a question of convincing those people - we tell them : Whom could you get better than this one - just as - just as - you see, I'll tell you something which is a fact.

You see, in the - in the last consultative conference of the ANC - the last consultative conference of the ANC, where for the first time in terms of the Freedom Charter we elected to the top leadership of the ANC people from all walks of life - those men who have won their position with their own - with their own sweat and blood, we have elected them to the executive - when Slovo, Joe - when he was elected, when his name was called - when his name was called after election our young people carried him shoulder high and jived around - they were mad with this man - they know him, they know his commitment to their struggle - they have always seen him - he has never gone wrong, he has never misled them, so more than anybody, more than all of us - we were all there, but when his name was called they went under him, man - he was also shocked, you know, he - he had to (Laugh) - he got - he got into gear and in the middle I saw him (?) (.....) - they were mad, mad, mad, mad - now that is the type of thing which we are dealing with it in South Africa when we deal with our people, you see - man must prove himself here (.....)

J.F. Just a couple of spellings - Ramakgade?

J.N. Martin Ramakgade, he's still at home.

J.F. Some of the names you mentioned.

J.N. Martin Ramakgade was - he's still at home - he just came out of Robben Island after seven years, because he got arrested after that with Joe Gqabi and - Martin Ramakgade is still at home, he's - defence and aid knows very much about him, if you ask them they'll tell you - he was in Alexander Township - I don't know whether he's still there.

END OF INTERVIEW.