

- J.F. tell me when and where you were born.
- A.P. Well, I was born in a little dorpie, as they say, in Eastern Transvaal - in Southern Transvaal in Schwartz Reinecker in 1940, 25th. December.
- J.F. Schwartz Reinecker?
- A.P. Schwartz Reinecker - it's the same town from which Kathrada comes as well - but we were born there but we moved into Johannesburg when we were very young.
- J.F. When did you say - what year was it?
- A.P. 1940.
- J.F. And where in Johannesburg did you grow up?
- A.P. Well, we started in living in Offerton first, which was a little just outside of the centre, and then we moved into the centre of Johannesburg which is near the Magistrates Court, and that has been the family home right up till now. It's a very interesting place actually because it was so close to all the congress offices - the Indian Congress and the A.N.C. offices that - and near the Magistrates Court, so it became the sort of centre of all social and political activity, so it - I had a good background in which to develop in that sense, and that's still remains up to recently the family home - it's a family flat.
- J.F. They're still there - they haven't been removed?
- A.P. Well, that's the one area in the centre of Johannesburg that has not yet been declared - you know which area it is - it's where the Magistrates Court is between Martin Street and Commissioner Street - those four huge buildings just very close to Anglo American near the Indian Market, and that's the only area, and John Vorster Square on the one (?) side -
- I mean that's the only area where - hasn't been declared white yet in that area.
- J.F. And when you were growing up was it much more mixed - was there a wider area that was mixed?
- A.P. No, when we were growing up, of course, there was what was called the Malay Camp, which was close to that area where these Coloureds used to live, which has been subsequently bulldozed, of course, and John Vorster Square has taken over that whole area, so it was - living quarters in that area were only a very small section of Asians -
- The whites lived a little further up in Mayfair and Bramfontein and - it's a very problematic geographical area - I think it's just a conclave of Indians - enclave of Indians in that one patch.
- J.F. And did you keep to yourselves, the family and the people you mixed with, or did you mix with other people, whites, Coloured, black?
- A.P. No, it's very difficult, as you know, in the South African context for mixing of that sort - until we reached university I

A.P. think we had very little contact with whites at that level except in - because of our political involvement - I said earlier that we grew up in an old Indian Congress family, so because - political involvement at least at a level of politics we met whites, but it would be the white leadership - white leaders who used to come home, or we used to meet them at meetings, but not whites in a general social or other level - except until the late '50's when the Congress of Democrats was in existence, and we then met some of the young white activists etc., but outside of that, no -

With the Africans, of course, it was different because the A.N.C. offices were very close - at a certain stage just across where we lived the A.N.C. offices ran a social club and we were all active in the social club so we met a lot of the youth socially as well as politically, and we had, of course, a football team which task was - it was a sort of movement in - which task was to try to use football as a means of getting into African townships, and so we did use our football team to get into African townships in an order to make links with us and African - our African compatriots on a different level.

J.F. When you say an old Indian Congress family, can you tell me a bit about what your parents experience was politically?

A.P. Well - my dad, of course, was a member of the Indian - the Transvaal Indian Executive Congress and the South African Indian Congress - he's been in the - since the formation of the - not the formation but since his (?) sort of late 20's, early 30's he's been actively involved in the Indian Congress Movement, so he's been playing a leading role in the Indian Congress and therefore served on both the joint councils with the A.N.C. when there was a united front etc. - of course, as I said so -

My mum, of course, didn't participate in any committees, naturally, because she didn't speak English etc., but was very actively involved in different ways, and so she went into the first group of passive resisters who went to defy in Durban - she was - went with the women from Jo'burg to defy in Durban, so she was in that group, and then '52 she was in the defiance campaign as well, so from both sides we had this sort of involvement in the -

It was - we, of course, grew up in that household so we were - joined the Indian Youth Congress at a very early age, and then from that moved on to other aspects of work.

J.F. Now she didn't English - tell me about their backgrounds - their class backgrounds when they came to South Africa when their....

A.P. Well - they came - originally my father came to work in a shop as a shop assistant, and that was also - that's where - in Schwartz Reinecker area - Potchefstroom, Schwartz Reinecker, Wolmarenstad - all these very rural - and he worked there as a shop assistant and later went into business himself.

My mother, of course, given the conditions at that stage, being as it is, coming from India as a housewife, if one can say it that, didn't know English etc., and therefore her work - she never spoke English but her activities, as I said, were manifested in the way I said - so their background was he came from - started as a shop worker - assistant - and then went into business himself.

J.F. So what language did your mother speak?

A.P. Gudjarati.

J.F. And did you grow up speaking that?

A.P. Well, this was one of the problems in our household, that most of us (Laugh) especially because of the background in which we grew up, we spoke very little Gudjarati because we tended, especially amongst us brothers etc., and our immediate groups we spoke English a lot, so we didn't speak, as you say, very good Gudjarati, but we at least managed to communicate on - on some aspects, but we couldn't go through very deep discussions etc., but at least we communicated in true Gudjarati -

Of course my dad spoke some English so that was - we could speak to him in English but to my mum in Gudjarati but not, as I say, very good Gudjarati.

J.F. So they were really the last generation that spoke Gudjarati - your generation has pretty much lost it.

A.P. Definitely.

J.F. Now what about the whole South African thing of that Afrikaaners perpetuate about not losing one's culture - they were political people, they were supporting the struggle - did they instil in you an idea that you shouldn't lose your culture - were they upset that you didn't want to learn Gudjarati or did that just fall away naturally - did you grow up feeling that you're an Indian and a South African?

A.P. Well, you can't help but feeling you're an Indian because of the system - you - you're defined as Indian so you go to the Indian school and - because I was born a Moslem I had to go to the Moslem Religious School when I was very young - but as I said, we I think came through a very different upbringing and therefore my brother and I, for instance, must have shocked the whole community because by the age of twelve we decided we don't want to go to the Moslem Religious School any more - not because we were defiant in that sense against religion, but we just felt that the method of how they were teaching it and what was being - the manner of teaching and the sort of brutality in the religious schools etc. did not accord with our understanding of life and we refused to go to it -

And our parents didn't - although there was outcry from the immediate community, because it was unusual at that young age to refuse to go to a religious school - they didn't put any pressure on us to go to a religious school, so in that sense I don't think we had that pressure in - in - in a very different way, which is - I don't think is very common -

I mean I think it happened to a lot of people who grew up in political families - you tended, because of your political activities, to lose your own cultural identity, and in a very real way - I don't know whether it was a good thing or a bad thing, but it was a reality.

J.F. And do you see that continuing - do you see the future generation becoming less and less Indian culturally?

A.P. Yes, but I think it's a process - I think new generations are growing up in South Africa, they've got no other link, as our parents and grandparents had with India or elsewhere etc., and so the new generation is growing up in a South African context - I don't think they will reject everything that's positive about the Indian culture I mean etc., but I think that yes, they will evolve in a South African culture, which will have manifestations of the Indian culture as well as manifestations of other cultures - I think that - but I don't want to say that's going to happen overnight -

I think that is a process that will develop - I mean of course there's no one Indian culture - the Indians in South Africa have come from so many different areas that you have several different religious groupings as well as cultural differences, so I think that we will find a coming into being of a South African culture at some time.

J.F. Now what motivated and politicised your parents - what were their motivations?

A.P. Well, I think there were probably several factors - I think coming from India, then Gandhi having started the Indian Congress, and their identity with the sort of Indian Congress in the struggle in India for resistance, as well as coming to grips with the specific problems - I will think of the Indian community at that stage - that they were subjected to, and what they found in the - you know, in the environment that they were living in -

And I think the influence of activists - youth and other activists like Dadoo etc. had a very strong effect, because Dadoo and my dad were sort of inseparable personal friends as well as other contact, so I think that helped at least raise his consciousness, and so he through his own experiences I think felt that this is a system that needs challenging now -

I'm not saying that he would have totally understood how far he has got to challenge the system at - and when he started - he was opposed to the discrimination, the lack of possibilities of living where he wanted to, education facilities etc., but I think as he progressed he saw more deeper (Laugh) into the reality of the system, so that - I would think that would have motivated him - his own experiences and the question of the Gandhi influence.

J.F. What was the Gandhi influence - especially with all the kind of popularisation of Gandhi that has been done now - what concretely did they tell you about Gandhi - what did he represent?

A.P. Well, he was - a sort of - he would have represent - would have been at that stage a symbol of the need not to take what is being meted out to us but to organise and to resist what has been given, although as you know, he - his orientation, his philosophy was non-violent and - but at that stage I mean the general philosophy in South African politics was non-violent - and so it would have given us that feeling of - I think give us confidence in our ability to be able to organise and fight, and we therefore saw it as a - as a symbol, and as encouragement to do it, and I think in that sense they would have followed it -

Of course by the time we grew up it was long after the Gandhi period so we didn't have that direct influence except in the

- A.P. overall heritage of the Indian Congress, but not the specific impact of Gandhi's methods of organising etc. - I don't think we had that at our stage.
- J.F. Was Gandhi an unassailable symbol - as you got more politically sophisticated was there ever any critique of his time in South Africa....
- A.P. I think there's always been critique but it has always been a critique which saw that in the time - at that period - what his positive contributions were - I mean with hindsight in any situation you can always find shortcomings in positions and perspectives, but I think we - as we still - I still accept now - that in his period, at the time when he was there, given his limited political understanding, given his limited orientation, it would have been too much to expect anything else from him, and I think looking at him in that historical context I can see his positive features but I can see why there were some limitations in his understanding of the situation.
- J.F. Now what was your father's work - what was it he began - what did he do throughout his life - what job did your father have?
- A.P. Well, he was a shop assistant and then started his own businesses - he started his own shop, trading, so he was - when he came to Jo'burg in the '40's he opened a shop and it was a sort of wholesale business here and.
- J.F. And did he expect you to go into that or did he expect you to go to university or did it matter?
- A.P. No, but as you know (Laugh) I mean it's a symptom of all societies, especially oppressed as it - that university is seen as a sort of status symbol, and I think everybody looks forward to trying to ensure that their children get into university - I think that our parents reflected that (Laugh) so there would have been this desire if not to push all the time to get through your matric so that you can go to university -

But we had a very interesting early school years because our area, the (.....) area where the only high school was declared a white area initially and therefore Lens had been started as a Indian group area, and to move - to force the parents to move they moved the schools first, and the Ind(ian) - the Congress Movement decided to have our own school, which was a Congress school, so many of us grew up - our education was through Congress school, which I don't know whether it was excellent in its academic and (Laugh) intellectual levels, but in its political levels was really a school of learning -

So I think we passed our exams by and large, which we tend to do in South Africa, by memorising questions etc., but I don't think we had a full academic education in the real sense but we had a political education - I mean people like - I don't think there's any - many of the major leaders of our movement, the A.N.C. that (they) taught us at school, so we would have Molly Fischer, who taught us Afrikaans - we would have had Duma Nokwe, who taught us maths - we would have had - I mean you name the early leaders -

Dan Tloome, who taught us - Hutchinson taught us English, you know, and really it - it's a body count of all the key activists at that time who couldn't get other jobs who were then brought

- A.P. in to teach us at our school - even Michael Harmel taught at our school - he was a first principal of course - so we had a very interesting (Laugh) upbringing in that sense - we say we are a product of the movement rather than anything else.
- J.F. When was that Congress school started?
- A.P. '5 - I think it was '56 - no, no, no, we had to be in Standard Six, so it was '50's - I can't remember it exactly but it was when we just had to go to our first high school after we finished (?) primary school - it was in the early '50's.
- J.F. And what kind of kids were there - was it Indian kids or was it all the kids?
- A.P. It had to be all the Indian kids because education was geared that way so it was all Indian kids, but our staff were all - all representing all section of the community, and in fact it was a first attempt to introduce student staff committees, and students determined in discussions direction of the school etc., so it was a very good educational process in that sense.
- J.F. So you went there from when you were about fifteen or something?
- A.P. No, much earlier - from about twelve.....
- J.F. So it would have been early '50's...
- A.P. Yes - ja, early '50's - I don't remember the date - I'll try to get it for you.
- J.F. And it sounds like your total circle was Congress people....
- A.P. Ja, I would say that's right - I think that in many ways I don't think I can remember an existence outside of the movement - I would say that I think even when we were very young, you know, as I said earlier, our house used to be the meeting port of everybody, whether they came for meals every day or they came for meetings, so even when we were very young we used to be in constant touch with movement people, and when we were young we were also dishing out leaflets everywhere, although we didn't necessarily understand all the leaflets but we used to go out as groups dishing out leaflets and - ja, so it was -
- I think it's a - it's a movement background (Laugh)....
- J.F. And was there - it sounds like you kind of breathed the non-racial environment, but did you ever remember any point in your conscientisation or politicisation where you had - where you were exposed to say, an African or a white or a Coloured in a way that kind of made you realise more that it could work?
- A.P. Yes, I mean there were times when we met up with our colleagues from the African townships, and until then even though our knowledge of African townships could have been more of a academic understanding of what was going on, what the pass laws meant, what - you know, what education meant, what deprivation meant in the African areas - but our contact with the Youth League etc. at that stage and discussions with them would have sharpened our sort of hatred of the system and reinforced our commitment to the struggle -
- With our white colleagues it was very interesting because in

A.P. the '50's - well, late '40's, 50's they used to be pioneer groups organised by the movement in South Africa, and so it was non-racial, and we met then the kids of the Fischers and the Harmels etc., and so we met them as kids at that level, and we got to understand some of their thinking etc., but we only really came into real political activity when we got to university with white political activists -

I must say with the Coloured community I personally did not have that much contact, in fact, excepting on a very social level - on the social level we had tremendous contacts - but on the political level very little contact with Coloured activists so -

Now it's very different, of course, because now there's a growth of Coloured activists in the Transvaal etc. - at that time, for a lack of a better word, relatively there wasn't that much involvement and organisation within the Coloured communities, and even in the Congress Alliance there tended to be these sort of A.N.C., SAIC - the C.O.D. was there but (the) C.O.D. was strong in Cape mainly and not very strong in the Transvaal area -

So I mean that was my experience - I didn't come into very much contact with many of the Coloured activists of my age level.

J.F. What was strong, the C.O.D.?

A.P. Not C.O.D. - the South African Coloured Peoples Congress - it was...

J.F. Right - why was that - was that discussed - what was the kind of understanding of why that was that - it is the case - it's much harder for me to even find people like Reg September to interview (Lots of background noise - sawmill?) - what did people say about why that was?

A.P. I'm not aware whether any deep analysis had been made of that - it might be I'm just not in touch with that - I would think that any community develops and finds its organisational growth etc. according to the specific conditions in which they find themselves -

I think, for instance, at the moment the Coloured areas, be it in the Transvaal and in the Cape, are relatively much more active than - well, some people would say than some of the Indian areas at the moment - and if we are looking only at this time we would say well, why aren't the Indian areas active now, as distinct from why weren't the Coloured areas - I think there are very many factors -

In that time the Coloured community were emerging from a position of very weak organisation - they didn't have a history of struggle in that region I mean as distinct from Western Cape - it was a small community in numerical numbers - I think there was still this fear which all groups would have from time to time about fear of the majority -

There would have been a concept of not having seen their interests and identity with the masses being the leading force in our revolution - the African masses - I think those were factors that would have count(ed) - with us it was different

A.P. in that I think very quickly the Indian Congress, through its leadership, began to get the population whether they fully understood it or accepted it, that their interests lies with the African masses - there is no independent solution to their problems - I think that became very clearly manifested - and this was even I think - the relations with even the Indian government, which consistently made that clear - Nehru all the time put this message to the Indian community - you are not England's (?) - you are of Indian descent but you are South Africans - your future lies in your country -

And I think this helped the Indian community at that stage to quickly come to grips with the realities, whereas in the Transvaal it might have taken slightly longer for that process to unfold - well, that's my view - I don't know whether that's necessarily correct.

J.F. What about that - this wouldn't have been within your own experience of your family but in the wider Indian community that fear of the majority - the kind of "remember 1949" - did that - did you pick that up in terms of other kids who weren't Congress orientated, did you hear that?

A.P. Yes, and this is still the fear that keeps coming up now or (?) in the last Inanda events - it was again a bogey brought up about "remember 1949", and I don't think we have to make apologies in that sense - I mean at that time, too, in '49, it was the intervention of the leadership of the Indian Congress and the A.N.C. who went into Natal and help(ed) - calmed the situation and began to explain the causes rather than the effects of the situation, and I think that the fear is still there amongst many, many people, especially the older generation have this constant fear about, you know, are we going to be swamped -

But it's a fear that we have to convince them - I don't think we can just convince them by rejecting it out of hand - we have to show them why this fear is irrational - why we can understand the fear but why it's not rational in the situation, and that can only be done by pointing to them consistently what the experience has been in our country because our country, despite what everybody says, the A.N.C. even through its early days, despite all the difficulties of the '40's etc., kept a position of non-racialism as its programme -

It has always indicated that the leading role has to be played by Africans but that South Africa is a home for all, and I think this is a situation we were able to understand and explain it to our peers and to other people - I'm not saying that this is now fully resolved, but I think that the fact of the A.N.C.'s correct positions had enabled us to ensure that the Indian community don't, through their own vested interests, find themselves on the other side -

And this is why I think we were able to reject - get the Indian community to reject the votes that were given to them in '46 - I mean - you know I mean the boycott of that totally succeeded - and so I think that is because of the correct leadership of the Indian movement at that time - when the Indian leadership became more radicalised it took it over from those sectors of the Indian Congress that were trying to fight for Indian rights in isolation from African rights and self interest/as group interest theory (?) but the radical Indian leadership came in

A.P. and transformed that, and I think that that would have left, at least on a very big generation, a mark, and therefore I think with many people now, the leadership even which might be regarded as having become radicalised - too radicalised - it's still accepted as the leadership by the Indian people -

I'm talking of the Dadoos and the Naiders and - so their heritage still remains with us.

J.F. So was that - was non-racialism something that had to be articulated and defended and argued?

A.P. Has to be because otherwise we will be living in an ideal situation - in a society like South Africa, well, you know it well - I mean where we are so stratified and so cut off - you know, where all social contact is by and large was limited in that period to us all being in our ghettos etc., there was no possibility of contact across the barriers etc., and very limited opportunities excepting in the political field, and therefore we had to consistently do work on this -

I mean I don't think it would have been otherwise - I don't think that community could have emerged isolated as it was - not have its own fears and even in some cases reactionary ideas about the situation - that had to take the organisation to put across the correct message.

J.F. When I said that I was interested in anecdotes maybe I can.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. concretely - not every person came from a family like yours otherwise there would have been no struggle - you obviously had to deal with people - what did you say - how did you argue it, and do you remember.....

A.P. We were members of the Youth Congress - Transvaal Indian Youth Congress - so in our area we would have to do several things - either hold meetings from time to time to put across Congress view - to distribute broad Congress literature - I mean we had to sell the New Age, and before the New Age the other Congress papers weekly - we produced a whole (?) - but it was a cyclo-styled (?) journal which we used to distribute -

We tried to organise at schools - tried to get, specially on the days of campaigns called by the Congress movement, Mayday, June 26 - well, after '55 but prior to that the Mayday etc. strikes - the "hartals" or stay-aways we would have to go and canvass to shopkeepers to close shops, schools to close down - I mean that would be our - have been our task at that level -

I mean but in general it would have been to try to get the Youth Congress strengthened, the message of the Congress movement put across.

J.F. What was the word you used for stay-away?

- A.P. Hartal.
- J.F. How do you spell that?
- A.P. H a r t a l - Hartal.
- J.F. Is that an Indian word for stay-away?
- A.P. Ja.
- J.F. But what I'm asking is concretely how did you argue that - what resistance did you come up against - what open-minded....
- A.P. Oh, well, I mean the resistance, if I can remember, it would have been what we discussed earlier - are we not better off and safe under the white rule - how can you guarantee that when majority rule come(s) we won't be all packed off and sent to India - and if it was a shopkeeper, how would you - how could he be guaranteed that his livelihood is not going to be affected -
- These were all the basic I mean questions that they would raise, and I mean we would have to explain, and that can only be done by explaining not the programme necessarily at that stage of the movement as a whole, but explaining what we literally believed to be the correct thing - that Indians in South Africa are South Africans, although of Indian origin, and that there's no way their problems can be resolved outside, or the resolution of the overall problem of the African people -
- So that would be our theme - around it we would vary our debates and arguments, but that would be our theme all the time.
- J.F. And how did you find it received?
- A.P. No, I think that by and large there was no hostile opposition - there were people who probably didn't agree with it but didn't oppose it in organised form - I mean that's reflected by the fact that there's never been any sort of organised Indian opposition grouping to the Congress movement - there has never been - even at the moment with the tricameral - it's an indication that they've not been able to - to get mass support for them - and I think that at that stage too it would have been so -
- But I don't want to make it sound that I think that now the entire Indian community is so highly politicised and they fully understand the objectives and direction - I don't want to say that - I'm saying that at least they are not on the side of being co-opted by the regime - that I think we have managed to achieve -
- The question now is how do we move from that to further organisation of them into active participants in a real way against the apartheid system - that's the big question.
- J.F. What did you find was a successful way of moving them in a non racial direction of alliance with the black African majority - what did they respond to?
- A.P. Well, we would - I think, as I say, with any group, at the initial stages they would respond to what affects them immediately, and the Group Areas Act, of course, was one of the biggest

- A.P. problem(s) affecting the Indian community as such, especially in the Transvaal area the Group Areas Act was the main law etc., and that I think - the factor of (?) education would have been an - an important issue around which they could have been mobilised - jobs, of course, were a issue - but I think the Group Areas Act was the main key issue around which they were mobilised on.
- J.F. Was there a difference - or how would you describe the difference between the Transvaal Indian community and the Natal one?
- A.P. Well, Transvaal the Indian community is small, of course, compared to - and in the Transvaal the Indian community tended to be more of the, initially at least, shopkeepers and professional elements, but mainly I think the majority shopkeepers - in Natal, where the bulk of the Asian community are, are by and large the working class -
- I think the majority in the Transvaal at that stage would have been the shopkeeper and the professional element whereas distinct from Natal - Natal was the working class Indian population with a very small, but the bigger merchant group that it - in Natal merchant group is small in numbers but it appears to be stronger in economic clout, whereas I think in the Transvaal they were small, very small shopkeepers and a few big issues - the big businesses, but even those in real terms were not big - they couldn't compete with any of the big white business interests, so it was very small shopkeepers....
- J.F. So many....
- A.P. Traders basically - all traders.
- J.F. So many African or Coloured people I've interviewed, when I've said how did they move in a non-racial direction, what was their first contact with Indians, whites, Coloureds - when I say Indians they always say....
- A.P. The Shopkeeper.
- J.F. the shopkeeper on the corner - how did that work for you personally - again your - in a sense there were so many people through your parents, but do you remember any specific instances where you realised that that was a prejudice that a black person had about Indians that you had to work through?
- A.P. Yes, and - although I never worked in a shop, thank goodness (Laugh) but it was always to us that in any oppressed society the first object of your frustration and anger is the shopkeeper because the - two reasons - one, the community have to deal with the shopkeeper on a constant basis, and it's a question of the shopkeeper, in many cases, is trying to get maximum profits, did in - I think in some several cases overcharge - carry out what we call unscrupulous shopping practices - and their customers are by and large the most deprived, and that would have led to that understanding of the - the involvement of the unions were at the shopkeeper level (Laugh) and so I would have understood many young Africans even then and even subsequently who, when they think of Indians they think oh, the shopkeeper (Laugh)

And I mean this started changing in the late '50's, specially after the Defiance Campaign, the Congress of the People, when

A.P. there was an open manifestation of joint action, but in the '60's, when the banning of the A.N.C. and the decimation of the Indian Congress at that time, once again communities went into their own ghettos, as you say, and that level of contact was again deprived, and I would think that a lot of the post '76 youth had very little contact with Indians on a political level excepting where they meet them on a shop-keeper level, and so it was -

Or at work, where the Indians in the later years, again not through any goodwill of the apartheid system but because they needed labour at a higher level, were bringing in, firstly the Indians at the higher level as the whites moved up - some sectors of the Indians moved into their positions - and therefore even at some work situations the relationship would have been again at a hierachical level - Indians at a higher level, Africans obviously at the lowest level - many cases I would think the Indian would be a sort of supervisor carrying out the Boss' instructions from the top, and therefore would be getting the anger of the Africans as well from the bottom, so I think these are problems that would have emerged, ja -

And the only way you can solve that is by constant action - you can't keep talking of non-racialism and we are fighting, but by ensuring that you are involved in the struggle to change the - I mean otherwise the concept non-racialism becomes an abstract nice-sounding factor -

We say that to make non-racialism a reality, and to ensure that the Africans, or the understanding of the unions, is a better one, it's through what we call unity in action - that's the only solution - there's no other solution to this, especially in the South African context where we live in our own areas where there's by and large very, very, very restricted contact across the groups, unity in action will help solve that problem.

J.F. Do you remember the 1949 riots?

A.P. I was too young.

J.F. Do you remember the kind of mythology that crept up around it - do you remember it being mentioned?

A.P. Yes, a lot, and I remember - I mean we would have raised it because we were very young, but then we - you know, we'd been explained what were the causes and, you know, from that of course followed the Dadoo-Naikar-Xuma pact, and that would have been a basis of, once again, indicating I think even to us who might not have been clearly developed by that stage the necessity of joint activities - yes, I think that we would have sort of wondered what the hell is this (Laugh) -

You know, why are our (?) people attacking us - we are part of the struggle - you know, that would have been the immediate response I mean, but of course, when it was explained to us what were the real causes, how divide-and-rule functions, and of course we were explained to very carefully because we had it in India (Laugh) -

We had it in the Moslem situation and therefore we were able to relate to it outside of our specific experience - we were told this is part of divide-and-rule tactics and we must be aware that this is how it works - it's not just Africans

A.P. attacking Indians but everywhere - in India it was religion, Hindus versus Moslems which was created by British colonialism etc., so we were taught that - actually in a very interesting way we were given that sort of understanding, and not by our parents only - I think by the broad movement - so we began to see and learn that the question of so-called factional fighting etc. has got much more underlying causes to it and we've got to look deeper to begin to understand why it happens -

I mean in the Durban situation (in) '49 what was very clear was the role of the - two things - that given the numbers of Indians, given the position of the Africans there, given the fact that a lot of Indians and Africans were competing for the same jobs even at the very menial level, and given the fact that the Indian shopkeepers problem, as we just talked, it was very easy from that explosive situation for anybody to create - exploit the - some antagonism, some problems, turn it into that sort of riot, so that's the, you know - I mean ja -

But we began to put it into context, as I say, of how it happens and therefore we were - I think we were able better to understand the Inanda issue (Laugh) - you know, I mean - and even at Inanda time we were - explained to people - but what are we talking about - it's not Africans attacking Indians - it is a attack by conservative forces on one side and against all the democratic forces, and it happened to be that Indian shops were attacked initially, but also African shops were attacked, and it was -

We had to look at that context, not just a question of it was an Indian against African.

J.F. You've kept saying you got more politicised at university so....

A.P. No, no, I didn't say I got more politicised - I said at university at least we met politically Africans again but whites - activists - at our time at university it was a very interesting time because the white campuses weren't seen as arenas of struggle for us, so we never really participated fully on activities on the campus - we left NUSAS to its own - and concentrated much more on outside campus activities, but at least we came into contact with activists on the campus and had joint discussions etc. -

When the Extension of University Education Act was passed we were in the forefront of demonstrating, organising for it, so that would have been the politicisation in that sense.

J.F. So where did you go to university?

A.P. Wits.

J.F. So let me just backtrack - I was actually just thinking chronologically - do you remember the Congress of the People?

A.P. Yes - although I was young relatively (Laugh) - too young - and so I didn't attend it, but of course I was in the context of where it was happening so we were distributing leaflets and putting up posters, which was a every second week affair for us, going to put up posters and flag-posting and leafletting, so in that sense - and we would have been aware of the intense

A.P. discussions that were going on - you know I said, for instance, that the house was like a meeting post for Nelson Mandela and Sisulu and I mean all the - O.R. and etc. I mean would have been a lot, lot, lot, lot, in fact (?) at our flat - even, for instance, during the treason trial Chief Lutuli stayed there for a long period of time, so you know, that's the sort of context where we would have been aware much more in that sense but not actively participating in the debates about it - I don't think I was, no -

In fact I don't think - I don't think I was at all involved in the actual debates about the clauses and that (?) - I was only involved in the peripheries, putting up posters etc., and getting the feel of the discussions from listening to others talking about it, but.....

J.F. Do you remember when you first met Mandela?

A.P. Yes - I mean - I mean the thing with Nelson Mandela was that I mean I - he used to be having lunch practically a couple of times a week at our place, so you would just see this towering imposing figure coming in with his smiles and playing around with us when we were younger, and I mean just generally being - was, as I said, a most amazing character, if one can say that -

He would walk in and what would ooze out would be his total commitment - Aziz, my friend (Tape off) - no, so he - he - I mean we could always remember Nelson at that level I mean....

J.F. I guess what I'm interested in is how one comes to accept a person who's of a totally different culture and race group as my leader...

A.P. I'm going to say to you you're going to have difficulty from getting it from me in that sense because - and I don't think I'm typical - I think because of the situation it never occurred otherwise - I mean you know, we were actually were growing up in the situation where it wasn't Fischer, it was Mandela - if it wasn't Mandela, it was Nokwe - if it wasn't Nokwe, it was Tambo - I mean you know, or it was Lutuli, you know -

So in that sense I mean we had no - I mean I (.....) personally but I don't think that's typical - had no illusion about where the leadership comes from, you know, although I - the Indian Congress was there and Dadoo, Like I say, I mean I had to see Dadoo practically every day either in one form or another, and not necessarily politically -

I mean socially he was at the house every day and so we had - I had no problem in that sense - the - the sort of all (?) Transvaal and Natal Congress leaders - Ismail Meer, Dr. Motala - you know, all those who were sort of (Laugh) - Fatima - you know I mean they were at home all the time -

I mean when Ismail was studying at Wits etc. he stayed at (....) house but had all his meals at our place, so - and Kathrada, for instance, I mean grew up with us - he was regarded as our elder brother - so I don't think I had that problem, but I don't know whether that I'll be able to solve that problem - I

You know, I can't find a period when I could have consciously said to myself, now I am accepting an African leadership.

J.F. And you don't remember ever being with non-Congress Indian kids who said : How can you have African people....

A.P. Ah, no, that of course - but then we - we came from a grouping where even in the sports field and social fields our grouping was always seen as the pace-setters, so by and large I mean if there were people who were anti our involvement, given the strength of the constituencies we represented, they wouldn't have manifested it openly -

But I mean we found a lot of times where people would say : Why are you interested in politics or - politics have got nothing to do with us - and we will have to explain it - but there was no open hostile opposition, and I think precisely because the strength of the general groupings we represented socially and politically that - and I think it helped in that sense -

I didn't come across - and that's why I think it will be somebody else that might be better to explain the hostility that they found at earlier periods in their community - I mean as we grew up, because of this enclave that we were in, I mean unfortunately, but we also grew up in huge, as we call, gangs (Laugh) - street gangs etc., and so we had very big street gangs - I mean it was known as the biggest and the most notorious in the (Laugh) - in the whole area, so you know, even if people opposed you politically and they didn't think, you never manifested it in that way -

But we don't think - I don't think for me that was too big a problem. I think we had reactionary people to contend with, but then it will be debates and exchange - I don't think we convinced them all, but that would have been my experience of...

J.F. What about the A.N.C. Youth League debates which led to the break off of the P.A.C. - were you aware of those?

A.P. Yes, I was at Wits then and so - Wits was the stronghold of at least the intellectual break-away and they had a whole series of meetings there with Sobukwe and Raboroko and Leballo and - that's where, you know I mean - so at Wits at that stage the battle between P.A.C. and A.N.C. became a very - manifested itself in a very sharp way and the - you know I mean not surprisingly amongst the intellectual element the P.A.C. (Laugh) - symbols or the P.A.C. slogans attracted sectors of the student community and therefore there was a constant battle between A.N.C. and - and P.A.C. students, so ja -

And we were of course - and we were at (?) all the earlier debates and what was going on etc. - ja - I mean it was an important I mean date in our calendar in our political development, in our political understanding, and the dangers that were facing the movement became very clear with the P.A.C. break away, because we would have been involved in trying to prepare for that strike, the pass burning (?) campaign as initiated by the A.N.C., but -

So we would have been in some debates of what were the weaknesses, what were the problems, what were the dangers from the P.A.C. break away factions etc, and ja, I mean we were aware of it...

J.F. Did you see it as a threat - as a big threat - were you worried that this kind of thinking might jeopardise the position of even Indians in the struggle?

A.P. Yes, but more than specifically jeopardising the Indians in the struggle I think what I would have personally seen the danger of the whole direction of our struggle becoming derailed and identifying the row of targets for attack and therefore neutralising our ability to - to identify our main target to hit at it, and I thought that the P.A.C. slogans, which in our context can be very emotive and can move many, many people because outside of anything, you know, it's just a slogan: "Africa for the Africans" must appeal to anybody who lives under the South African conditions -

I mean if I was a - an African totally living under the condition of South Africa, a slogan like "Africa for the Africans", without fully appreciating what they were interpreting the slogan to mean, would have appealed to me - the slogan of Pogo "Let's go it Alone, Whites to the Sea" - you know, this was the real type of, in reality, the things they were putting out there - anti-whitism - the - under the smokescreen of anti-communism, the anti -

Although in the Indians they were saying they will accept some Indians not others, but it was a broad package that they were putting across, which, if not tackled could have laid the basis of divertiveness from identifying what our real enemy is and getting involved in what I call periphery issues and become very diversive, which it did for a while anyway - I mean it held us back for some years -

But my - the point that I'm trying to make is yes, the P.A.C.-type of slogans will always have an appeal in any situations and especially situations like South Africa, and therefore we cannot ignore it - we've got to make sure that the masses are not moved out of course by those sort of slogans that can come out, and so it's always a danger -

I mean I'm sure today anybody who's standing up and saying: "Our children are being killed; let's kill them as well" - will have an emotive appeal - it will sound very good to some people - some people might say it might even be welcomed in the township shebeens, but we don't believe that that's our politics as well. (?) I mean you cannot work that way - you've got to work on a constant programme and you've got - if you think of the future you've got to - your tactics and strategy must take that into account -

So that would be my view of the danger of the P.A.C. - and it didn't last for that long anyway I mean - in that sense I mean our battles then became different at Wits I mean - you know I mean we've broke into two camps of course (Laugh) and there were times when A.N.C. meetings were being heckled and when P.A.C. meetings were being packed and - but there were no violent confrontations -

They were always verbal - we remained friends in one level but antagonistic politically on another level.

J.F. At its worst did that kind of view give rise to kind of just base racism, kind of anti Indian.....

A.P. Yes, I would say so - I mean - but I want to say that sometimes one must look deeper into that and not take everything when somebody in anger says : "Oh, you bloody Indians, you are always like this (?) you are always oppressing us" - and try to read into it much more deeper racist connotations - sometimes it's an emotional outburst which might have a reflection of some unconscious racism - but I think that we have to be careful not to over-exaggerate that thing -

I'm not saying that - I'm saying that's from some people genuine, but I'm saying that there are other elements who would use those sort of slogans, not Indians mainly because it was mainly against the whites at that stage and white communists mainly and etc., Indians secondary, but who'd use that not - would use it as demagogues for the whipping up of racism -

I would think that there would be some elements - I don't think Sobukwe was like that myself, but I think there were many elements behind the leadership of the P.A.C. who were literally non-starters politically - I mean the Raborokos and even the Leb-allos I don't think had any political foundation - they were demagogues who were thrown in by the situation and used these factors for their positions -

I don't think we can get depth of understanding of that present, that P.A.C. leadership, that'll be worth talking about, excepting for a few like Sobukwe - I mean I still hold to that belief of the P.A.C. (Laugh) - I think it just threw up a lot of opportunist elements and a lot of has-beens politically and they just exploited the situation.

J.F. Let me just get just some of the chronology of what you were.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. '59?

A.P. I think it was '59, ja - I'm bad on dates - we were one of the first few to be banned.....

J.F. Who's we?

A.P. Well, my brother and I were both banned at the same time - ja, I mean we must have been the first hundred - in that category of hundred that were banned around that period, so that's when legal work (Laugh) in that sense by and large would have to have come to a stop - '60 I think I was banned - I don't remember.

J.F. Was it before or during or after the state of emergency?

A.P. Well, I was in hiding during the state of emergency so it must have been before.

J.F. Because of your banning?

A.P. And because - ja, I mean we were party to trying to get things

A.P. organised and (then) (in)....

J.F. And was there a feeling that when the P.A.C. jumped the gun and Sharpeville happened that that was throwing things into total disarray or did you feel that there was work you could do underground continuing to build the A.N.C.?

A.P. Well, the '60's were a interesting period in that we had just emerged I think from about six or seven years of real mass activity, and I think the organisational strength of the movement as a whole, I mean specially the A.N.C., were only beginning to find fruition - you know, we had passed from '52 which had laid a basis of going to the masses, getting mass activities - we had come to '55 which further consolidated that -

We had begun to now transform ourselves, and at that time of course, I'm talking the movement as a whole alliance, into mass organisations, into structures within the community etc., so it was a, you know, relatively long period in terms of our history, but in terms of a particular aspect of our work it was a relatively short period, and therefore I think that the P.A.C. initiative cut short what was a developing process of getting rooted in a different way amongst the people - what we're seeing today anyway -

But at that time I mean it was a process that was just beginning - there was mass support for the A.N.C. but organisationally and structurally we were only beginning to get our act together, as you say - naturally I mean you know, at '52 when we took a change in terms of tactics etc., and so I think that yes, the danger was - not the danger - I mean the problem was that we could see immediately through the '60 period and the banning of the A.N.C. that a very necessary period of growth and consolidation was cut short, and so historically looking I think it would have in a way halted our process of organisational building, because you can't build illegally - you - you know -

In the end, as today shows, no struggle is won illegally only - you've got to have a relationship between the legal and illegal, and that P.A.C. action I think in that sense was more disastrous than anything else.

J.F. And the kind of work that you had to do underground and forced to go into, did you draw on the non racialism - were you only working in the Indian community - was it difficult?

A.P. Yes, I mean in a sense I don't want to exaggerate the extent of underground work I was doing - I mean when I say I was doing underground I was saying that I was doing - I couldn't do legal work, I couldn't serve on the committees, I couldn't speak at meetings, I couldn't go into institutions any more, so we were organising separately, and of course being in an Indian area by and large our activity would have been with the Indians, but given the nature that when Rivonia was there and when leadership went underground when Nelson had come back from abroad and was having meetings I mean we had to attend those meetings and get briefed on what our next programmes, what I was supposed to do, what is the perspectives of the movement etc., so we attended some of those meetings and therefore in that sense, although we might have attended it as a Indian collective, we were getting a national perspective on this issue -

But yes, I would say that our work at that time then would have been concentrated on working in the - within the Indian constituency.

J.F. Was that because it was difficult to work - to continue to work in a non racial way because of the strictures of working illegally or did you end up - I'm just wondering because for example, Wolfie Kodesh told some really interesting anecdotes of how he was hiding Mandela and he was sitting there flaunting apartheid working with Coloureds and Indians, blacks, all over the place.

A.P. Ja, it was a interesting period at that time in that - and still somewhat it's there - that our white compatriots could do what we call service roles in that way - you know I mean if people were going underground none of the oppressed areas as - unlike now - I mean at that time the houses weren't big enough to keep people in, you know, so it was all in - many of us didn't have cars etc., so that service aspect would have to be carried out by what we would call our white comrades in that struggle at that stage, so I think ja -

We weren't involved in that directly because most of the I think hiding places and meeting places then would have moved from the black areas into white areas precisely because it was easier to have meetings in the white areas - there were less security - there was greater possibilities of having a bigger place to meet in etc., so no, I - I wasn't involved in that, and unlike some of my other colleagues who were already recruited into MK by then, and quite a few of my colleagues who I was working with, without my knowing of course, had already been recruited into MK and they were already involved in storing equipment, carrying out - which I subsequently found out - carrying out sabotage attacks, producing illegal leaflets etc., but they had then been moved already into the structured underground movement, whereas I was not moved into the organised underground movement -

I was still left to work in the sort of semi legal way.

J.F. When were you at Wits - from which years?

A.P. I think it was '59 to - I'm so bad on dates - when was the Extension of University Education Act passed - I know I was stopped from going to Wits because of my banning order, so it was from - I think it must have been '62 I think.

J.F. You were at Wits during the Extension of University Act?

A.P. Yes, we were the last black students allowed in - after us then - but now it's changed, of course, but at that time we were the last students in under the old system.

J.F. And your banning just cut your studies totally?

A.P. Well, I had completed my first degree, and I was going to do, as our parents want you to do law or a post grad, I was going to do a post grad, so....

J.F. But you were stopped from that?

A.P. Yes.

J.F. So what did you do - what job - did you work or did you...

A.P. (Laugh) I tried a very funny one - one of our colleagues who was in the first few people who was killed in detention, Timol....

J.F. I know Timol.

A.P. who was run in was a teacher at the school and initially we thought we'll pull off something - he got me a teachers job there, and within half a day (Laugh) the Special Branch came and removed us, so that was my end to that first job as a teacher - I don't know whether it was a good thing I stopped being a teacher -

And then I went to work at a firm as a stock controller - just an ordinary job for some time, and then '64 I left of course, so..

J.F. Were you detained or anything before you left?

A.P. Ja, but not on long periods - I was always I mean - you know, that's another interesting point with us is that you know, every now and then we were raided at home or we used to be detained for questioning for short periods, but I've never been detained long -

My brother was detained for weeks, Essop (?) was - I wasn't detained for that long - but never for long periods - for one day, questioning, chucked out, but that was it.

J.F. So what led to you leaving the country?

A.P. Well, it's - period of '64 arrested then for contravening my banning order - I think the feeling that we were endangering other people in the region - we were not doing any real political work so we should come out and see what can happen from outside - that was the '64 sort of decision.

J.F. Which you got through the underground structures or....

A.P. Well, no, no, no...

J.F. You just - was that just....

A.P. And consultation with - ja - consultation with the colleagues that we were working with - I mean you know, I maybe wrongly came to the assumption that - at that time that there's nothing else people can do now - those that are exposed must leave so that those that are still clean can continue the work without endangering them, but as was proved by the '70's it was again possible to work legally, but I think by '64 people felt that that period had ended and we have to now find different ways of bringing that about and those that had been, as I say, burnt (?) would have to either move out of politics or move out of the country - that was the feeling, maybe wrongly.

J.F. So where did you go?

A.P. I came to U.K. - I went to Sussex University then (Laugh)

J.F. And you got a degree?

A.P. Ja.

J.F. In what?

A.P. International Relations - M.A - I did an M.A. in it.

J.F. And when did you finish there?

A.P. '66, and since then I've been working for the movement.

J.F. In the office in London?

A.P. Ja.

J.F. And did you have a specific job - any position that I could refer to or were you just at the.....

A.P. Well, at that period I was on the Youth Committee and then subsequently became the youth secretary in this area and then continued slogging away, slogging away, and then started working at other committee levels and - but I don't think anything major as a title (Laugh) - I was (.....) musket bearer (Laugh)

J.F. You were what?

A.P. A musket bearer - ordinary cadre of the movement.

J.F. And in June '85 you were elected to the NEC?

A.P. Yes.

J.F. And you hadn't been before....

A.P. No...

J.F. Now just tell....

A.P. No, but I've been so - well, since '66 I've been working at different levels and at '85 somehow or another I got elected into the NEC.

J.F. Had you always worked in London - you didn't go to Africa or the United States?

A.P. No, no, I've been to Africa...

J.F. But not living there - not based there?

A.P. I was there for some time, ja - you know I mean that's what keeps us going is to leave London and go to Africa, and then you get back sent to London thinking what have you committed to be sent back to London (Laugh)

J.F. Now can you - maybe at this point I can just finish up by asking you on a more theoretical level, unless you think there's anything that I've not asked you enough about in terms of your actual work in South Africa?

A.P. Oh, I think it's - I think you've covered that (Laugh)

J.F. O.K. - can you tell me - let me take it - you were out of the country but you saw the rise of B.C. - you probably - did you have contact with people who came over here at times?

A.P. Mmm.

J.F. How did you feel about that - did you see - did you feel that this might threaten the non racial basis of the movement in the kind of ideological position - what did you think of B.C.?

A.P. No, I mean I saw the development of B.C. as a natural phenomenon in the South African context - it had to be - if it didn't happen - South Africans are very used to calling everything unique in

A.P. South Africa - I think that would be unique if there wasn't a growth of the B.C. The B.C. grew at a time when the total clampdown on political activities had to be loosened a bit - the '60 period was a total clampdown - by '70's I think the regime had to - they couldn't continue total repression and political activities were beginning that way - the -

Our youth, our students, our other activists in the oppressed sectors were coming to grips and this emerged mainly from the church groups - I mean the B.C. ideal comes from basically the church people and students and some media activists -

It was clear that there was a need to reassert themselves in a political sense and a organised sense, and where it manifested itself strongly was at the student level, because NUSAS was definitely at that stage under, in real terms, control of what I would say forces that saw the struggle paternalistically - they viewed the struggle as if you know, you still give leadership from the white community and everybody functions, so the battle became sharp at that level with NUSAS -

And the students were manifesting opposition to that - now that, I think, was natural, and one would have expected in the South African context that this would emerge - a rejection of everything white and etc., and the American-influenced students especially from the Young Christian Group had been to the States - they had picked up the rhetoric of B.C., imposed it onto the South African context without fully understanding the dynamics of the American one, I think -

And so I think it was a natural development, and therefore I personally saw it as a positive step in that sense, but of course in looking at it I could see that there were negative and positive features, and that what had to be done was the positive features strengthened and the negative features not just rejected but show where they were negative -

I thought that the concept "black is beautiful" was all right as a slogan at one stage, and you know I mean we all wanted to call ourselves "black is beautiful" as an assertion of our own identity etc., but that as a mobilising fact loses all importance after a while - it becomes an excuse for no real activity, and I thought that that was negative features which were maybe positive initially were becoming negative - were (be)coming a stranglehold on the development of the movement, whereas there were many who started the B.C. movement within a very short time didn't see the battle between whites and blacks as a crisis point -

I mean I don't think so - I think that they immediately saw what they were fighting for and correctly were saying : Look here, we are not second class political activists - anybody who wants to work with us works on a genuine basis - and those were the - I think the progressive elements of the B.C. - and my own view would be that it was those sectors that would have to be given all the support because they were carrying on the mobilisation, they were carrying on activities on the ground -

Those who were still continuing with a very, very narrow concept of B.C. would be left behind by the events themselves - I don't think that they would have posed any major threat, because ideologically you can continue talking of black is beautiful, we as black oppressed etc., but at the end of the day you've got to have a programme of action and you've got to mobilise around

A.P. the programme of action and that must then commit you to sitting down, having base - organised bases in your constituency - you've got to relate to the development of the working class movement, which was growing very fast by that time because the B.C. movement has always maintained must not be seen in isolation - we had at that time a growth of the trade union movement had started in '73, which was at a very high level - the B.C. movement came in around that period, so I - I didn't see it as a total racist thing - neither did I see it as a total problem -

I saw its positive features and I saw its negative features - I continue to do that - I would continue still to be hostile to sectors who want to still use B.C. concepts as - in a negative sense and I - there's no (.....) in this B.C. grouping - I mean what is the B.C. grouping -

We cannot say that the whole nation is B.C. - I mean what is the B.C. grouping - they are sectors of B.C. grouping - they (there) are those who came from different organisations who all lumped together as the B.C. grouping, and I don't think there's such a thing as a B.C. grouping in that sense -

There was a feeling of rejection that was coming out which was very strong, and which was inevitable in the South African situation - I want to repeat that I thought that once that had happened that was O.K., understandable, but if you were genuine and you were politically conscious you moved to raising that understanding your anger, hostility, to something higher -

I think those that have not done it have either fallen aside or continue today to create more and more problems in the democratic movement, and that would be my view on that.

J.F. Let me ask you another area that comes....

A.P. Incidentally, as I say this probably (.....) so it's not (.....-) it sometimes happens that the Indian B.C. element seem to be the most B.C. (Laugh) - I mean - and I don't think that there's - I don't think it's - it's not accidental - I think you know, it's a need to be super (Laugh) black, I think, at times, and therefore I think that that to me reflects a negative tendency - it reflects a failure, despite some of them now using left wing rhetoric, a failure to understand politics as such -

And I say to my colleagues when I see them : Why is it that you Indian people who keep talking about B.C. seem to be the most B.C. than anybody else - and it's a reality which I've not fully understood - I'm not a sociologist I mean but politically I can understand it.

J.F. Let me ask you another area that people often mention maybe in a sniping way but it comes up again and again, and that is the NIC and the TIC, the kind of middle class, even upper middle class, whatever, quite rich Indian element, and people say : petit bourgeois leadership, lack of working class hegemony, just look at the NIC, just look at the TIC; it's a bunch of rich Indians running things.

A.P. (Laugh) That's a very long debate, this - I - in fact I believe that the identification of both the NIC and TIC in a sweeping way like that has today become another smokescreen actually for different problems that they've mentioned, different problems with tactics, different problems of strategy that are emerging -

A.P. Since I come from an organisation, the A.N.C., which for many years have carried this label (Laugh) of being bourgeois dominated and run by the bourgeoisie and etc., I - I don't think myself that that reflects the real position - I think that the NIC and TIC, whatever their strengths and weaknesses, is not a reflection of it being led by rich middle class bourgeoisie -

I think, like any organisation, it's got to work out - it might have - not have (?) strategic tactics of how they got them (?) mobilised in an active way - I mean they've got to begin to look at a question that the A.N.C. has said : Make all areas un governable - and that is what both NIC and TIC have to begin to interpret - they not part of the A.N.C. but they've got to interpret what does this mean, and whatever I would judge their development not whether it's the professionals that are running it - what is the programme of action -

Are they continuing to relate to the real area of struggle - I don't think that they have not - I think that by and large there are weaknesses and generally the democratic movement (?) which manifests itself in different ways - I think the NIC and TIC probably might reflect some of those similar weaknesses, but it's not, as I say, a result of them being bourgeois democr(atic) - nationalist elements -

I don't think that's a well founded criticism - I don't believe so. Like I say, we've been through - I've had this debate since the '70's - I got so tired of it that at one stage I refused to talk to students from white campuses, because I had to debate whether Mandela had two houses, whether Tambo had four houses, whether - who was a working class, who was a professional, and after that I decided : Look, if you want to debate these things go and debate them at home and sort the problems out - I can't spend my time answering to question whether the A.N.C. leadership is a bourgeois leadership - judge us by our programmes and policies and determine that -

So at one stage I refused to talk to a lot of the students because all of them used to come with the same points (?) question : Are you for socialism - you are bourgeois nationalist - our revolution is going to be co-opted.

It was such a standard question (Laugh) that you just became tired of it - you said : No, well, please, we are not willing now to discuss this issue any more - I mean if you want to seriously discuss the perspective of our revolution let's discuss it - let's forget whether Tambo has got two houses in Moscow and three in Muswell Hill and one in somewhere else - this was the basic debate.

I'm not saying this is the same thing but I think some of the - what I'm trying to say (is) that some of the sources of critic of the NIC, TIC is coming from that same direction - is that it's a question of : Are you fighting the socialist revolution today or not.

J.F. I think it comes from more earnest (?) quarters though - I just interviewed this fellow, Devan Pillay, who did (.....) year as it turned out and he's - he did a year for practically SACP and certainly A.N.C., and he seemed like a pretty earnest guy, because you do get it coming from the Sath's Coopers, which I don't think is worth picking up on because he has no mass base, but people involved in mass-based organisation, people involved more and more with the unions - I think what they're saying is : Can we be assured that the interests of the working class will be

J.F. looked after when we see an organisation like the NIC which is so dominated by people who have no interest in the working class.....(.....)

A.P. No, I - you see, the point is that that's what I'm saying that that whole question needs a much more deeper look at it, and I think correctly stated - How do we - and that should be the question : How do we ensure that the interests of the working class is protected.

The only way to ensure that the interests of the working class is protected is to ensure that the working class plays its leading role not only in slogans but in reality. This was the debate that we were having with people who were arguing that the working class must not go into the UDF because then they going to be co-opted by the middle classes -

We were saying to them : Precisely that's where you must be so that you leading it, and therefore the working class interests will be protected by the fact that they will play the leading role in the struggle at all levels, and those other sectors, be they in one organisation or another, who are not in tune with the broad revolutionary directions of the movement, will drop out of the struggle at the appropriate time, I believe so -

So I believe yes, the working class interests has to be protected - that's a fundamental thing about the movement - I mean Mandela in '52 already said : If you do not organise in the working class and do not have the working class as your leading force you lose the battle already - so I mean it's an ohm (?) (Laugh) accepted position of the movement -

The NIC, TIC debate I'm not fully in tune with in that sense - I think it's become to entangled in personality clashes, differences of tactical outlooks, and I'm not fully au fait with the specific debates on that -

I'm just saying that I don't think a professional leadership simply because they're professional will necessarily be non-revolutionary - you know what I'm trying to say - that I think that there are many activists who have played a revolutionary leadership even though they were professionals.

J.F. There's professional and then there's the specific accumulating capital role which isn't necessarily professional - there's - I'm not necess(arily) - I'm just saying this is the argument you get, to say what about those people involved in key positions in the organisation who actually have no interest in the working class except to exploit them because their position is in finance or business or whatever.

A.P. Well, I think that it's up to the people to ensure that that doesn't happen, that the organisations represents the interests of the working class - I mean that is the only answer to that - I don't know which elements in those organisations own means of production - I mean from my look at the leadership corps they were either all youth or professionals but very few major people with factories or finance capital, I think, but I might be wrong.

J.F. Well, I think the poor (^{Mewa Ramgobin}.....) who's involved in some kind of finance - he's a businessman and he's a lending - he lends money.....

A.P. Oh, no, I think - you see, this is what I'm saying what individuals, depending whoever it is - I don't think from individuals we can make a judgment of the entire thing - I think that is always the necessary thing because in any - otherwise we're going to say we're going to find no co-optive forces in the working class, you know, and that there's nobody in the working class that is going to be possible to become - what can you say it - a reactionary or swindles - you know, we've had lots of experiences of that so I don't think that we can use that and say the working class has not - you can't trust them because they - look what they doing - they -

Somebody - person A has absconded with £500 and therefore we can't trust them any more - no, I think if they individuals and they have concrete reasons and examples where we have seen that they have not, and that their actions are contrary to their positions then I'd s(ay) you know, the people must move them out of the places - but it's the broad question that does the organisation as a whole represent its ideology, its philosophy - what does it represent - and I think that needs to be analysed.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

A.P. was one year in the life of people going to prison is nothing - you know I mean if anybody hasn't been to prison for one year I mean you've not done political work in that sense now and so it's not that - his task now is not that he must say he's done one year and now he can sit back and look at things...

J.F. Oh, no, I think he....

A.P. No, that's what I'm saying he must go back in there and go and fight those battles on the ground.

J.F. Why is it that we're always discussing - is it an accident that we're always discussing this issue of working class hegemony with a kind of sniping at the Indian community - I think poor Christmas Tinto or someone or - some one traitor and maybe they say things about Archie Gumede, but basically so often it's NIC, TIC.

A.P. I think what has happened is that it's - as you know, there's this big debate on the Cabal running the (Laugh)- the show etc., and I think it's part of the manifestation - I'm not fully in tune with that so - I would think that this thing is going much wider than the NIC, TIC might be examples given, but this is a reflection (of) the debate on which way forward -

Is it a socialist revolution, is it a nationalist revolution - and I think that's the sort of topic that needs very much deeper discussions - I think that's the - that's a reflection of that much more fundamental political debate on which way forward - what is your future....

J.F. But I'm saying, just to get back to the ethnicity aspect, the fact that so often the personalisation get directed at Indians - is that going to just continue to occur because of the class position and.....

A.P. Well, I - a new (?) stereotype has emerged - I think there has been a very (Laugh) interested (?) stereotype that has emerged just like the Jews are seen as all running businesses I mean, so you talk to anybody and they'll say : What (why) you say you're from the Jewish community they say (.....) you must be in business - I think the same stereotype has emerged with the Indians in South Africa -

I mean it's like it's emerging here - you talk to anybody and they say you from East Africa so you must be a shopkeeper, and I think there's a stereotype that has grown up in the South African context, and like we said earlier, I think that people's experience with people are at that level and precisely what we got to do is to get in now and mobilise that what about the Indian workers - who's mobilising them, how are we mobilising them, how are they coming into action on the question of struggle -

Those are the questions that I (Laugh) would be posing to myself - the TUCSA - why are they in TUCSA still - why haven't the democratic movement of any sort, those that are socialist or not, have made any breakthrough in the - you know, those are questions I would be posing to myself - those would be the real questions that I'd be battling with in my mind - not whether it's run by a bourgeois nationalist here or there but what is it that we are doing to bring into action even the bourgeoisie (Laugh) because they might not be into action now - we want to see areas of the Indian community become ungovernable - that's our call - that's the A.N.C.'s call -

If the bourgeoisie, whatever they call, can transform that let us see it happen - if the socialists or those who say they are socialists can achieve it let us see it being achieved, but let us see action - that's what we are saying now - we are saying that the African areas for too long have been in a position of being isolated now and the other areas have to come out in to allow the grip on the African areas to be relaxed, and therefore our call to take the struggle to the white areas, to take the struggle to other areas, is not just a statement that sounds nice - we are really saying that : Look, the struggle must reach your other areas because otherwise all these debates on socialists - is it bourgeois leadership will become a issue that'll take a lot of our time -

We are saying let us go and mobilise in those areas - frankly - I mean that's my view on the question of what is needed now, is the mobilisation of those communities - we must ensure - in our last call we said the tricameral parliament system must not continue - we have said that, so - and we go on to say those that continue to serve in the tricameral parliament must feel the wrath of our people -

Now I don't think we are saying this glibly - we are therefore saying whoever is organising those areas, whatever the work is, how are they going to make the tricameral parliament inoperative.

J.F. The last area that I'd like to ask you about is to kind of conclude with a statement about non racialism, but I'd like to have you handle the "four nations thesis" - there was so much debate about that when they founded (?) the TIC.

A.P. This "four nations thesis" has confused me more than anything, and I purport to be university educated - I think there's a lot of semantics in it actually - a lot of definitions that - a lot of sociological terms used etc., to come to some conclusion which I've not understood fully - I mean this is Alexander debate, because basically Alexander manifests the argument of the four -

- A.P. the one nation theory...
- J.F. The what?
- A.P. The one nation thesis, isn't it - Nosizwe's debate (Laugh)
- J.F. Oh, Neville Alexander....
- A.P. Yes - I mean is that the one you're talking about?
- J.F. Actually I never read that Nosizwe thing but I....
- A.P. Not the....
- J.F. I'm talking about four nations I guess versus one nation - is that what it is?
- A.P. Ja, well - so what was the (.....) debate that you are in tune with?
- J.F. No, I think exactly what you're saying - it's just that people were critical - they're saying how can four nations - how can we talk of four nations, why would the TIC be refounded in 1983 or '84 - that whole thing.
- A.P. Well, I don't think anybody talked - I mean from my side I mean from looking at it I don't think I could have seen the formation of the TIC as an acceptance of four nations, I mean but we have to accept the realities in our country - we can't wish away the fact that there is this community, there is the Coloured community, there is the majority African community, there's a white community - we have not become one nation yet -

I mean I don't know which country in the world which has overnight transformed itself into one nation that is one culture, one language etc., so it's not a question of the four nations in that sense - the debate on the question of whether the NIC, TIC should have been formed was a long going one there -

Tactically I think those who decided that they needed to form the NIC, TIC because of the need to mobilise the specific groupings cannot be criticised if they have put the correct perspectives, because if they work on the basis which everybody seems to be saying that the Indian community is not yet moving into action what would be the way into mobilising them - the NIC people thought that they'd form - that reforming the Indian Congress would give them the base on which to mobilise, so that was their concepts of it -

Whether we disagree or agree with that I think it's - it's a matter that has to be debated with them and with the TIC people, but I think the one thing we can accept is that they did it from whatever way from an analysis that they came to this conclusion that the communities are not mobilised, that there's a lot of work to be done, and we can only mobilise them under this particular - what do you call it - ticket -

This is the understanding they came to - I think I would judge them not necessarily by the name, whether they are Indian Congress or not, but what is the programme they're putting forward - are they identifying and moving the Indians into action on a non racial basis - are they trying to show to the Indian community the lethargy, if there is a lethargy, is not acceptable -

A.P. that in the end they have to move into action - are they organising - are they creating the structures in the communities to mobilise the Indian community on a non racial basis - I think to date the TIC and NIC programme - they might be weak - might be, I'm saying - people might consider - on implementation -

But I think the programmatic positions have always been to move the community not to see themselves as Indians but to see themselves as part of the broad struggle and the Freedom Charter is the - the programme that they have totally accepted I mean as their framework - so I think that in that sense they cannot be criticised for wanting to move to an Indian, you know, an Indian enclave.

The name I think again is becoming a problem that happens everywhere, where the debate on whether it should be an Indian Congress now or just a congress - that's a thing that tactically have to be discuss on the ground there - I'm talking more of the broad philosophical aspect of this whole political aspect of this question -

I don't know - I mean I know that this debate is a (Laugh) - is a very problematic one at the moment - I don't even know why it's problematic - I'm always saying go and organise the people, you lot; and get them moving - if the other sectors of our community see Indian areas in action they not going to be asking: Are they mobilised under the name "Indian" tag - if they in action in demand of the calls that have been made by the general movement - the strike call, the call for alternative education, the call to make their areas ungovernable - I think if they following that they will be accepted as part of the democratic forces - I mean that's what I would say the answer would be in my thinking.

J.F. What is the four nations thesis - when did it - is there something written in A.N.C. historical....

A.P. No, I - I don't know where this four nations - I have not followed this debate like that - I've heard of it but I've not - I know Labour Bulletin and etc. ran these debates, but I think, like any fad (Laugh) in any country, some debates become a major issue and then, specially those who run the journals, find another issue and that gets forgotten and they go to another line of debate - I've not seen it come up recently -

It was one period and - ja, it was one period when it came up and it - it was like - it reminds me when the big debate was on Althussar, and that became the big debate at home, and it became a debate in the academic journals - I mean I was asking outside of us who are all academics and university students, how is this debate relating to the people that you are saying you want to take to a socialist perspective - I - I couldn't understand it - whether it was Gramsci then, then Althussar - we've been through these periods actually -

So I think that it's healthy - I'm not saying it's wrong - I'm saying that it mustn't disarm us into becoming academic analysts of the situation - in the end (Laugh) if theory and practice is not related - without theory you cannot have practice, but without practice you cannot have theory either - I think there's a connection between the two, and unless we get that connection we can go through what every other country has done, especially Western Europe and North America, where the academic debate

- A.P. about revolution, about struggle, is confined to the universities - it never reaches out to the people that you want to take into struggle and revolution - I mean this has been my problem all the time, that I mean I can sit maybe for weeks debating different aspects of theory etc., but if it's only confined to that, in my circle of debates, in my article, which I have very difficulty in understanding later, it's not helping either the ideological development or the theoretical development or how we put into practice our theory - that's the only point I want to make on that one.
- J.F. What were you saying about Alexander, about what Neville said on...
- A.P. No, he's got the debate on the one nation theory - I mean Neville is - Neville's position is that to - to talk about Africans, Indians, Coloureds is accepting the racist categorisation, but Francis ^(Mali) is our expert on the national questions (Laugh) so I'm sure you'll talk to him about that.
- J.F. I think maybe I can conclude by just asking you to make a statement about how you see non-racialism - do you think it's worthwhile to sit here and talk about it - is non racialism an important issue - what does it mean - what will the future of South Africa be like for (.....) for all the communities?
- A.P. I think non racialism, in my understanding, to me would symbolise our rejection of reactionary politics and everything that South Africa(n) rule and (.....) stand for actually - that would to me mean that - but having said that - I said it earlier - I think non racialism must not just become a - a good sounding word - it must begin to convince me, for instance, that I'm fighting for a society where I won't be discriminated on on the basis of my colour, as one part of discrimination, and that I can have the opportunities with everybody on the basis of me as an individual rather than me as identified as a person of an Indian community -
- So to me that would mean that we put an end to that sort of racist rules, and from that what we emerging to is a society where, in real terms, we start laying the process where we become - which we must work towards - whether how long it takes a one nation - one nation - it must be something we must work towards - where irrespective of what our cultural heritage is etc., we form part of a nation where you wouldn't be exploited or discriminated against because you'd been part of particular grouping - that is to me what non racialism means.
- It would mean that we would remove under our - my concept of non racialism - any question of reactionary ideology, fascism etc. - we would not in a new society I think give, under the guise of democratic rights to everybody, the right to propagate racism and facism - I think in South Africa - new South Africa we should not allow that -
- I think in our text books etc. we should eradicate all manifestations of racism - I mean you might say including sexism etc. - I think that that (will just have to happen) (?) - we talking of racism now - so I would say that that would be my understanding of what a non racial society would be -
- We would concretely, having taken state power, laid the conditions for removing all signs of racism in its real sense, both political and economic - I mean that - that would my understanding

A.P. of non racialism be - why I want to say, and ending on the question of non racism, what I said earlier - I think it would be wrong for any sector of our community just to pay lip service to non-racism - I think it would be wrong for us to say we are for non racism and we've always been for non racism - I think for the sectors of our community, for lack of (a) better word, the non African sectors - that's the Indian, Coloured, white sectors - non racism must move from a statement of belief to a statement of action, and the strongest and the best way of achieving ultimately the climate and the conditions for non racism is for us to be seen actively participating against the system to create a non racial society, and that I think is the - in the end the most important guarantee that this non racism that we all believe in so strongly will become a reality, and I think that the conditions are there -

I mean I would say to anybody without fear of contradiction that the oppressed in South Africa, especially the African people, have shown - I mean people think it's nonsense to talk of patience but patience that is probably unparalleled in the world in terms of how they have suffered under probably the worst form of institutionalised racism anywhere, and yet in all its manifestations they've never gone into racist attacks in the way that one would have expected, and the way that P.A.C. wanted it to happen -

They've not done it, and I think this is a remarkable testimony to the oppressed people in South Africa - if anyone wanted to know of why we believe so strongly that we will achieve non-racism and that the whites won't be pushed into the sea, that is my argument - that everything indicates the total belief of the majority of our people a genuine belief for non racism, because it's not something that they are just pulling out opportunist reasons to make it sound good -

They believe in it and they fighting for it, because in the end (Laugh) you cannot have a country that develops politically and economically if you have still racist rules (?) whether it's whites against blacks or blacks against whites, so that's why what Mandela said I think is relevant today -

You know, he's fought against white racism - I know people say there's no such thing as black racism, but I think what Mandela said is right - if it does manifest itself as racism against an oppression, against others simply because they members of a particular group, we will fight against that, and we cannot accept that anyway - no society can and no - no liberation movement that is fighting for a new society can even have anything outside of that perspective, because non-racialism in the end means this to me (?) - it means a new society totally - a new society both economically and politically - that's what non racism to me means.

J.F. How many people are on the NEC?

A.P. I'm so bad with figures and - I think we are 30 - I think we are 30.

J.F. And it's you and Mac are the two Indian members....

A.P. Indian - Reg is Coloured or....

J.F. James Stewart.

A.P. James Stewart - but the important thing was actually these were open elections and nobody was elected on group tickets - it was secret ballots and people were voted on in terms of how the delegate saw their contribution either to conference or their contribution in terms of how they understood them in struggle -

There was nobody there who was voted on on basis of, Ah, this one must be put on because he represents this sector, this one must be put on because he represents this sector - it was a sheet of people and people voted them on - I mean sometimes democracy does go wrong (Laugh) - I might be an example of that, but that was what happened.

END OF INTERVIEW.