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

R.S. I come from the suburb of Wynberg suburb of Cape Town - I was born in 1923. My father was a carpenter, my mother a housewife. I went to school in Wynberg, a primary school, and my secondary and high school was at a sort of a Wesley Methodist School, and finally at Trafalgar High.

After that I went into the building industry for a year - subsequently went into the shoe industry, where I served an apprenticeship, and from the shoe industry I was asked to participate in organising the trade union movement in Cape Town.

J.F. O.K. - let me just backtrack - what was your parents kind of political background - did they speak of politics - was it an issue in your home?

R.S. No, hardly - they were conservative Christians who, you know, coming from a fairly comfortable - comparatively comfortable background - in the Cape Peninsula. They were Christians - Methodists. My father was a keen sportsman. In fact, very well known sportsman - and they played their part in the church.

J.F. Did they describe themselves always as Coloured - there wouldn't have been any doubt....

R.S. Mmm, of course, as we all did.

J.F. And the Wynberg area were there - was it a mixed area or was it totally a Coloured area at that time when you were growing up?

R.S. Patches of it were totally Coloured - no - trying to think about it now - but in our area - in our section of Wynberg it was a bit mixed - it was white and Coloured - but other parts of it were almost totally Coloured - there were - no, there were still some whites mixed - fairly mixed, yes - yes, it was fairly mixed - mmm, fairly mixed.

J.F. And did you relate to those - when you say mixed you mean Coloured and white?

R.S. Yes, yes, yes - we didn't have the privilege of meeting Africans socially.

J.F. And did you mix with those whites in any way, or did they keep their distance or?

R.S. There were a couple of white kids in the neighbourhood when - because as - I lived in Wynberg until the age of about six, then we shifted to Kenilworth, which was also a mixed area - we played with a couple of young white kids, yes - lived next to whites as well.

J.F. And did they show racist attitudes to you or their families - did that lessen as they got older?

R.S. Well, as the - when the young lad's elder sister came home he had to run away from us and he had to go home, you know, and steal away as quickly as possible - he couldn't be seen playing with us - it was accepted as normal practice - he wanted to play with us and - this double standard is something which we understood, you know, mmm.

J,F. And did you have any sense of the history of the Coloured people - had you - would your parents or school or anything have taught you about the Khoisan or the Griqua people and the uprisings they had?

R.S. Oh, no - no, no, no, no - the only time that this became part of my life was when I went to high school - went to Trafalgar and met with people like Chris Seevogel, who was the librarian at the Hyman Lipman Institute, when we started to talk about things like this in class and - and there were debating societies in Cape Town which many of us participated in and so on - discussion groups - and later on when I met Moses Kotane and met Alex' father - because this is where a lot of it took place, in District Six itself - District Six meant a great deal to us, you know.

J.F. And that was when you were older?

R.S. Yes, age of sixteen - or fifteen, sixteen.

J.F. Just before we get there, I didn't ask you what your home language was.

R.S. English.

J.F. English.

R.S. Mmm.

J.F. And did you speak Afrikaans also?

R.S. Very slightly.

J.F. It just wasn't - you didn't mix with Coloureds who spoke Afrikaans in the home that much?

R.S. In the South Peninsula it was English, mmm - no, the only time I came across Afrikaans speaking youths was when I went to Trafalgar again, because I had friends who came from the Northern Province - Northern suburbs.

J.F. So when you were growing up say, before you were 16 did you ever see Coloured people as part of the struggle - had you heard of Jimmy L uma or the A.N.C. or the African political organisation - anything political - and did you ever see Coloureds as being a part of that, or did you just not hear of it?

R.S. No, at the time when I became exposed to that kind of thinking was when I went to Trafalgar - Trafalgar High School, yes - but when I went to District Six, when I went to - when I met people like Alex' father, Dr. Gulam Gool of the National Liberation League - Alex' father, Chris Seevogel and Moses Kotane - these were the men who influenced me at that age, at school.

J.F. And how did you happen to get into the - to meeting them - what politicised you to meet them?

R.S. It was within walking distance from school....

J.F. District Six?

R.S. Yes, the - the offices of the Liberation League, the offices of the Umsebenzi, where Moses Kotane was, the library which Chris Seevogel ran - these were within walking distance of the school, and we made a point of going there at lunchtimes, in the ....

R.S. .... afternoons in order to meet these people, participate.

J.F. And the first ones you met would have been Coloured people, and then did you meet Moses K tan later or did you meet him at the same time?

R.S. No, after I met the chaps at school - chaps - one or two chaps at school who took me to the National Liberation - one chap in particular - one friend (who) subsequently committed suicide, Myson Hanna, he took me to Liberation League office and to Moses K tan and from there I met Chris Seevogel as well - went further and met Chris Seevogel.

J.F. And this is when you were 16...

R.S. Fifteen or sixteen, yes.

J.F. I'm just interested because - to find out what the prevailing attitudes were and what you might have to break out of - weren't there a lot of..... (Tape off) - so what I'm asking is was there a feeling among many Coloureds, just in the general community, that you didn't get involved with Africans - that they were a different class of people and they - there wasn't a solidarity between Africans and Coloureds, or did you always feel that - you weren't exposed to them even in Wynberg, even in Kenilworth in terms of.....

R.S. Yes, well, the - I think the first Africans that I ever had the opportunity to speak to was in class at Trafalgar - we had - were fortunate in having had one chap at school - as a community we are not exposed - we were not exposed to the African people because the African people are separated from us and from the community in Cape Town -

It's partly the legacy of the whole segregation system which dates back far beyond even the apartheid system, but this is what we grew up with - and in the Western Cape in particular, you know, if you're not careful you can fall into a trap of thinking that this is the - the Western Cape is the - is South Africa - but of course things have gone a long way since then.

Yes, it's true, of the people in the - in that area of the southern suburbs they knew nothing about the African people - they had very limited knowledge of the African people. The only Africans that they would have seen were the Africans who were the labourers on the building sites - that's what my father's association would have been limited to, and he wasn't participating in say, the anti - the African Peoples Organisation, which had by then more or less died down and it wasn't playing a very active role at that stage - but at least in the old days during Dr. Abdurahman's heyday he raised the question of unity between the Coloured people and the African people in South Africa - he used to - he understood this, and he presented this position very forcefully in the Coloured community - the need for unity with the African people for the future of the country - otherwise, he said, we are going to presented with insuperable difficulties in the country - we're not going to be able to win through - this was his case, as it is in fact ours.

J.F. So had you heard of that - I'm just trying to understand whether getting to Trafalgar and meeting those people was breaking through any kind of prejudices or lack of experience that you'd had - was that totally natural for you to see a solidarity with Africans - was it something that your mother and your friend, your milieu in Wynberg or Kenilworth might ....

J.F. .... have disapproved of or thought a bit strange, or your dad?

R.S. No, they - they were - this was very new for them, this whole concept of taking the African into account was something very, very new for them - they just went about their own lives, looking after their own cabbage patches, as indeed was the case with most of the people in the community in the area in which I lived.

The first time that my parents ever had an African in their home was when I brought Moses Kotane home - they'd never had that opportunity before - it was a new experience for them.

J.F. How did they react?

R.S. Very well indeed - oh, yes, very well indeed - they were learning by then (Laugh) - we were helping them, you know.

J.F. And had you heard of Jimmy La Guma before - had your parents heard of them....

R.S. No, no, no - no, they lived quite an isolated existence - let me say, you know, Jimmy La Guma and the National Liberation League during its earlier period concentrated a great deal of its energy on the poorer section of the Coloured community, and it met with success.

As time went on the bulk of the community were drawn into the struggle, because the community was then faced with a very important issue - what we can call the equivalent of the Group Areas Act, which was being introduced by a man by the name of Stuttaford (?) - R.S. Stuttaford, who was then Minister of Interior at that time - he was introducing the Servitude Bill, which would have given provincial councils the right to introduce and apply the equivalent of the Group Areas Act, even in 1939 already - 1939 already -

Had it not been for the tremendous struggle which was put up by the National Liberation League we would have had it then. Two things came into play - first of all the National Liberation League struggle, which harnessed the energy of the people against the Servitude Bill, coupled with the fact that there was an outbreak of war and they needed the services of the Coloured community to fight, and they had to withdraw - they could not proceed with the Servitude Bill - it was a tremendous victory for us - tremendous victory -

And this was the - the - our practical introduction to political struggle - young people like Alex and myself, this was our practical introduction to political struggle, when we were youngsters at Trafalgar and our real association with the Liberation League - National Liber(ation) - NLL as we used to call it then.

J.F. And did that lead into the non European United Front conference in '39 - it was...

R.S. Yes, yes - well, then it meant, you know, that you had people afterwards coming down to Cape Town - in particular, of course, a man who - who then opened my eyes, and not only mine, I'm sure, but many of the others, to the prospect of the struggle not only of the people of the Cape - as I explained, this was very largely a Cape issue, the struggle down there - but to the possibilities of a non European United Front - a United Front ....

R.S. .... with the African people and the Indian people, and the man who brought this message down to Cape Town was Yusuf Dadoo, and this had a tremendous effect on young people like ourselves, because instead of struggling on our own in, you know, with the restricted perimeter of Cape Town, we then saw tremendous prospects of struggling on a nationwide basis together with the Africans.

J.F. And that by then was quite acceptable - people were ready for it - the idea....

R.S. I can't speak for the bulk of the community yet - I mean that - at that stage - it was a concept that was being introduced by Yusuf Dadoo and his colleagues - it's something which had to be experienced by the Coloured community - this is something that takes time - there's a gap - it takes time.

J.F. Had you ever had any exposure to Indians before you saw Yusus Dadoo, in any meaningful way in terms of had you worked with them or been with them in a community or been at school or?

R.S. Indians? No, except, there's the shopkeeper on the corner, that's all. I don't think we had any Indians in our class - maybe we did - not that I can remember, apart from the shopkeeper.

J.F. Now when you said this is how we experienced it and you talked about the campaign around that legislation, is there any experience or anecdotes you could relate where - which might have been a watershed or an important first experience of actually working in struggle with someone from another race group, or was it just meeting Moses KOtané maybe, or was there any time when it was really kind of crossing a threshold for you and realising that it could be done - because you said quite clearly it happens in practice.

R.S. Mmmm....

J.F. I just wonder if there was any particular experience that may kind of made it come together for you or was a stepping stone towards accepted non racial unity in actual....

R.S. Well, you know, the - the struggle around this issue in Cape Town was a very emotional issue, and the Liberation League was successful in harnessing a tremendous amount of support - the Grand Parade was crowded to overflowing, and there was a terrible clash between the police and the people that night, and soldiers were also involved, I believe - but it was a tremendous clash between the people and them, and of course this incensed one - this must have played a part -

The way out and the tremendous potential which Yusuf Dadoo's message, you know, presented to us - I think all of these things - not any - I can't think of any specific thing, but all of them coupled together must have played its part in, if you like to use the term conscientisation - I'm unused to the term myself - but this must have played its part -

I may say also that there was one other thing which drew me closer to the Yusuf Dadoo orientation - another man who played some part in my development in my earlier days, in my childhood days, was a man by the name of Dr. Gulam Gool, who was ....

R.S. .... at one time president of the National Liberation League - he was the brother in law to Cissy Gool, who was the councillor - wonderful woman she was - but these were two strains in my life, the teacher element, the intelligensia in the community, which was led by people like Gulam Gool and the members of the Teachers League of South Africa - and on the other hand the working class element, led by people like Moses Kotane and myself (?) -

I'll not forget an occasion on which I attended a meeting of the Teachers League or - I think it was - and being in great difficulty and walking out of the meeting half way through, walking the streets of Cape Town facing this dilemma, asking myself one question after another, and then eventually finding my way to Moses K tan 's home, and then going to fight with him about the issues and so on -

But the - one of the things which I think did cause me to come closer to people like Yusuf Dadoo and Moses Kotane was the issue which was raised with me by one of our teachers at Trafalgar - I remember this incident so clearly - his having said to me : Reggie, my boy - and he raised some of these contentious issues with me - he said : Don't worry, all our problems will be over when once we have a strong teachers league of South Africa -

He doesn't realise the gravity - he didn't realise the gravity of what he was saying, because in fact I was then beginning to lose faith in the teachers as a class which had the capacity to lead us in struggle - I realised it couldn't work - they couldn't do it - and any movement which places reliance on the intelligensia for its leadership is bound to fail -

And this was the big tragedy in the Western Cape - this has been our difficulty for a long time. It is something that we've been plagued with down there. This section of the community, the teachers of the community, I think spoke a language which played into the hands of the abstentionists in the community - played into their hands - right into their hands.

They adopted a purist approach theoretically, and in the end did nothing - in the end it never led you closer to the African people at all. It helped you to adopt a holier than thou attitude towards the A.N.C., for example, but it never drew you closer to the African people, and this became clear to me at a very early stage - at that stage already, when I realised the futility of reliance on the teachers as a group, and they were playing the dominant role in the non European Unity Movement and the anti-(CAD...) and so on.

On paper their phrases (?) were plausible, their statements were fine, but their practice was in fact a very dangerous one - very dangerous one - it led the community into a dead end, and it prevented the young people from coming closer to us - closer to the black people - the African people of South Africa - and we see some of the results of it even today - even today.

J.F. Maybe I can just ask you to spell out for me - I think you're assuming that I or anyone else would know.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. .... is bound to fail - I just wanted to know if I could ask you if you could spell out why that was so clear to you - what exactly....

R.S. Well, you see, in the case of the Teachers League of South Africa they were government and semi government servants - they were not free to participate in demonstrations in the same way as any worker would be free, because he ran the risk of losing his job, his house, his motor car, and everything else which went with it - he was a - this was as a class they were the most privileged in the community, the most secure - they had government jobs - and hence it was a contradiction for them to be coming out in open opposition, practical opposition, to the regime - they couldn't do it.

J.F. And what enabled you to see that at such an early stage - had you done any reading on kind of political economic theory at that stage, did you talk to Moses Kotane?

R.S. Oh, yes - well, I did (a) limited amount of reading - I was a kid at school, you know - but certainly talked and discussed them - these issues - with all sorts of people, and it was then that it became clear to me that it wouldn't work, that all the leadership which they were trying to project was in fact - had a false bottom.

J.F. When you said that time you left the teachers meeting and you went out and wandered the streets of Cape Town and found yourself at Moses Kotane's house, and you said and then went on to fight with Kotane, did you mean kind of political arguments?

R.S. Yes, of course...

J.F. But were you still a bit different from where he was - were there differences....

R.S. I was grappling with this issue - I was grappling with it, and I wanted help from him to help me to clear it up - I had respect for the man - he had a way of explaining things neatly and sensibly in a way which was, I found, to be acceptable.

J.F. What was his position, his organisational position, at that point when you met him?

R.S. He was in the National Liberation League....

J.F. Moses Kotane?

R.S. Yes, of course - yes - he must have been part of the national executive of the National Liberation League, and he was also editor of Umsebenzi - I don't know if he was general secretary of the Communist Party then but he was - when I first met him he was setting type of Umsebenzi - he was - piece by piece in those days - he was setting the type of Umsebenzi - that's the circumstances under which I remember having met him, on the corner of Constitution Street - corner of Hanover Street and Tennant Street - he...

J.F. And what did the Communist Party represent - did that have any implications to you - was that something that there.....

R.S. At that stage, no, very limited - no, I was involved in the National Liberation League, you know.

J.F. No, it's just that the South African Government and various forces kind of put across a kind of sense that to black people there's an innate alienation from communism - was there any sense in your community of any feeling about it either way - was it just....

R.S. No, they didn't know about it - they didn't know about it,mmm. In the poorer areas, where the Communist Party would no doubt have been having meetings before I got to know them yes, that's a different matter, but where - this - in the Wynberg section, no, they wouldn't have been exposed to the thinking of the Communist Party.

J.F. But not being exposed to the thinking but just the Communist Party or communism - did that have any resonance - any kind of connotations negative or positive - had the government started railing against communism as it did in the '50's....

R.S. It wasn't an issue - it wasn't an issue with us.

J.F. So - I'm trying to remember where we were chronologically - I think you've been 16 for a long time now - I'm just saying what happened after you were 16.

R.S. I see.

J.F. That's when you said you were asked to organise in the - what industry was it?

R.S. Oh, then I helped to organise the distributor workers and the textile workers....

J.F. How....

R.S. Textile workers....

J.F. How old were you then - when was that?

R.S. Oh, that was after I'd done an apprenticeship in the shoe industry, so it must have been age of about 22.

J.F. So that's more like 1945 - maybe I can just ask you what went on then in the late '30's and early '40's - what happened to the National Liberation League - was it - did it fade a bit...

R.S. National Liberation League came about on the issue of white participation, and I remember the Trotskyites in particular - people like Goolam Gool too, you know, played a leading role in opposing the full participation of whites in the National Liberation League, and it then broke up.

I will never forget, you know, his coming from this meeting and meeting me in the street - meeting me in the street on a Sunday morning and his laughing like, you know, a child, he was laughing, and he said : Reggie, we've smashed them, you know - they had been successful in breaking up the National Liberation League rather than letting the whites participate.

J.F. And what position did you hold on that issue of white participation?

R.S. I don't think I was clear on it yet - it wasn't an issue with me yet, no.

J.F. In a general way had you experienced whites who were supporters?

R.S. No - no, I hadn't been exposed to it yet - at that stage, no.

J.F. So there weren't many whites - there was - I guess it was - were there whites in the CPSA who were involved at all in Cape Town?

R.S. Oh, there were people who were involved in the National Liberation League - it was Harry (.....) for example - he was one of them I remember - Sam Khan is another - those are two names which spring to mind at the moment.

J.F. So it was over participation of people like them that the thing split up?

R.S. Yes, yes, mmm.

J.F. So you don't remember much about who was aligned where - was it a big theoretical debate, or did you just not know - I'm fascinated by it because it's exactly the area I'm looking at - the early, early debates - there have been these debates over the years - I'm just wondering what you could tell me about that.

R.S. Well, I - I myself at that stage was not knowledgeable about the whole issue - as I said, it was just clear to me where Goolam stood, you know, because he boasted of the fact that they had smashed the thing on this question on this issue.

J.F. But what year was that that it split up?

R.S. That would have been about 1940 - about, eh.

J.F. And what were you doing at that stage - was that when you were apprenticing?

R.S. I think I was - I was just beginning to work on the building industry then - in the building industry then.

J.F. So was there a void in your political life - what did you do - you'd been involved with the NLL and then it didn't exist - where did people get - what did you get into - what did people do?

R.S. Oh, from there - let me try to - well, that was the war - period of the war, you know. During that period I attended meetings at the peoples club in Cape Town - I attended meetings of the friends of the Soviet Union....

J.F. What was the peoples club?

R.S. The peoples club - there was a club in Cape Town which is a political club.

J.F. And who was it run by?

R.S. Well, I remember the one thing in which I was particularly interested in was the lectures which were delivered by one man in

R.S. .... particular, and that's Jack Simons, who was the finest teacher I've ever come across, and I made a point of going to as many of his lectures as I possibly could - his classes and so on. He was my teacher when I was a kid.

J.F. Did he give classes then?

R.S. Yes, he gave classes there.

J.F. What were they - what subject - was it political....

R.S. Political economy in particular, yes - and there were a number of us who used to go to these classes, which were organised under the aegis of the peoples club, you see, and we went to these things.

J.F. Now this is just - forgive me for homing in on this so much - but you were young, you had experienced Gool's very rabid, seemingly, anti white - how did it seem to go and hear a white guy lecturing to you on what seemed to be putting him in solidarity with black and African, Coloured and Indian people - was that something new or did that kind of seem natural - was that anything that.....

R.S. To me it was very natural - to me it was very natural - he talked sense - I had no reason to object to his being able to help me in that way and to give the movement the guidance which meant (?) his experience could give it.

J.F. When you say movement, the Liberation League had broken down, but did you just feel you were part of a movement...

R.S. Oh, yes, of course - by then, yes, certainly, yes.

J.F. You knew about the A.N.C. or where - how did that fit in....

R.S. A.N.C. at that stage hardly existed - it hardly existed - it was very - you must bear in mind that in Cape Town there's a very small percentage of the population's African, and in those days it was smaller than what (it) is today - very much smaller than what it is today - so that the A.N.C. as such was very small -

My link was through people like - then, as I said, became very real in class - in the class - run by people like Jack Simons in particular - and then other public gatherings held under the auspices of people of organisations like friends of the Soviet Union - those were the two movements, I think, which - two organisations which I, in a way, participated in during those days -

Also to a certain extent through the - what do they call themselves - the New Era (?) Fellowship, which was an organisation of the - which was led by people like Goolam Gool - I maintained some contact with him - I maintained some contact with him - they were the one organisation also which existed, and we were anxious to listen to - discuss things with people - so we went along, met them.

J.F. In the FSU what did you know about the Soviet Union - you said you were learning and you weren't even that exposed to communism, what did the Soviet Union represent - why be friends with them - what was this organisation?

R.S. Well, to us it was important to stop Hitlerism - and the Soviet Union began to play a very important role in the struggle against the - and it was important to save the Soviet Union because we understood the sort of international role which it played in the working class movement throughout the world, and the progressive movement throughout the world.

J.F. And then what followed on that - there were the war years - did they affect you directly - you weren't involved in any way?

R.S. No, no - except, as I say, that those were the periods when I really appreciated the need to - for the survival of the Soviet Union - that became very deeply ingrained in my mind - very deeply.

J.F. And what year was it - sorry, I'm just getting confused with the years, that Dadoo came down?

R.S. It was about 1940.

J.F. And then I guess the next thing was that you got involved in the trade union - when about would that be - the textile?

R.S. Mmmm - let me see - 19 - I remember my 23rd. birthday I went to go to Durban - 21st. birthday I meant - that was 1944 - I went to Durban and I stayed there for about 18 months or a year, so '46, I think I entered the trade union movement in Cape Town.

J.F. Why did you go to Durban - was that apprenticing or?

R.S. To finish off my apprenticeship - the firm closed down in Cape Town and they then made arrangements for me to go and complete my apprenticeship in Durban.

J.F. Was that at all a political experience for you - did....

R.S. It was - it was, yes...

J.F. In what way?

R.S. In that there I was exposed again, fortunately, to the Indian community, and went to meetings of the Communist Party, went to the International Club in Durban - simple thing - but I met different people of different racial groups there and exchanged ideas with different people - not only communists but also liberals -

K.A. Hobart-Horton, for example, was an old man whom I met there - was a lovely old man I've never forgotten - and a couple like that.

J.F. And then when you came back to Durban was the anti CAD - was that a factor - did that affect you politically?

R.S. That was effective in Cape Town.

J.F. Right.

R.S. Yes.

J.F. But did you...

R.S. Oh, by the way, in Durban I remember having participated in the establishment of the APO branch in Durban while I lived in Durban.

J.F. And then when you got back to Cape Town what did you do - was that when you went to be a union organiser?

R.S. Yes, I started to play a role in the - in the leatherworkers union in Cape Town then - I know some of the people whom I became acquainted with then - people like Ray Alexander, for example, said it was incorrect for me to only be paying attention to the National Liberation Movement when I was in fact working in the leather factory and didn't pay attention to my own union - made me feel a bit small, and I then started paying attention to my own union and became the assistant secretary and treasurer of the Cape Town branch of the National Union of Leatherworkers, so I got a permanent interest in the Leatherworkers Union, of course.

J.F. And how long were you with them?

R.S. I wasn't full time - this was, you know, while I was working in the factory - and then subsequently not very long after that I was asked to come and work with the Distributor Workers Union, and from then I started to work also with the Textile Workers Union.

J.F. And....

R.S. As an organiser. During that period, by the way, when I became acquainted with the A.N.C. comrades in Cape Town.

J.F. How were you introduced to them?

R.S. Because we shared an office with them.

J.F. And this would have been what, around late '40's?

R.S. You taxing my memory, aren't you (Laugh) - when could have it have been - '48, I think - I think it was about '48.

J.F. Now was by then the A.N.C. more of a force to do reckoned with - you said early on in the '30's and early '40's it just wasn't....

R.S. You hardly heard of them, yes - they were very small in Cape Town even then, but that was the time when, as I said, we - we came into physical contact with the comrades of the A.N.C. because we shared an office with them in Five Alberta Street in Cape Town - people like Ndimande, Khota....

J.F. Who was the first one?

R.S. Ndimande, Khota - I see there's a Khota, by the way, involved in the struggle in Cape Town now, and it's possibly the daughter of this man Khota, I think - people like that and others like that, who played a role in the trade union, because a number of them were distributor workers but they were also members of the A.N.C.

J.F. So was that a lesson for you that there's a political as well as a workplace.....

R.S. Of course - of course - sure - sure - of course - oh, yes, in practice that's what we did.

J.F. And these A.N.C. members that you got into contact with, were they all African or were there some Coloured and white and other?

R.S. No, they were African, in the narrower South African sense.

J.F. Did you get a sense that this was a movement for Africans or did you get a sense that it was a non racial movement - at that time?

R.S. When you say non racial movement what do you mean?

J.F. I mean did you in any way feel that they welcomed you into it - did you in any way feel that because you were Coloured you wouldn't be a comrade with them?

R.S. No, we were comrades - I wasn't a member of the A.N.C. - it - but we worked together very closely.

J.F. And they didn't give you a feeling that you couldn't become a member - did you consider...

R.S. It wasn't ever discussed - it wasn't an issue...

J.F. But did you - was...

R.S. The issue was how to work together. I don't think that it would - you know, if we had discussed such an issue at that stage it would have been purely theoretical - purely theoretical - it would have been an absolute waste of time because it - how would one have put it into practice at that stage - it's another matter, you see - it wouldn't have been an issue which would have made sense to either of these communities.....(Interruption)

J.F. Was that because at that stage the A.N.C. was for Africans only and there was - was there a Coloured Peoples Congress at that stage?

R.S. No, no.

J.F. O.K., well, I think I must understand that - what did that mean to you - did that mean that the African people would, through the A.N.C., fight for the liberation of South Africa and you would kind of come in and join them where you could, or did that make you think well, maybe the Coloured people should start something or - you were with the National Liberation League, so you obviously saw.....

R.S. Up till the time it was disbanded....

J.F. Until it was dissolved - had you decided well, I'm doing the unions now and there is no organisation for me to join - did you ever - just trying to figure out where you fit as a kind of person, whether you thought you should be somewhere in a political organisation....

R.S. I think that throughout my political life the real objective has been to find ways and means of getting people to work together on the field - in the field - whichever way you want to put it - but this to me is the way in which you're going to bring about understanding between people - I'm -

I really pay less attention to people who - who talk about this question than to those who act it out - not that it's unimportant to pay attention to theory - I mean it's not unimportant, but I'm interested in the practical aspect of this - I think this is what's important -

You must provide people with the opportunity to work together,

R.S. .... to struggle together - you know, the Unity Movement talked for a long time about the ten point programme and non racialism and all that sort of thing, but in fact you can learn more about this issue - the whole question of developing understanding between different racial groups - in a strike - where you have a strike where Africans and Coloureds or where (?) different racial groups actually work together to bring about a successful strike, you can learn more overnight than you can by listening to somebody talking about this question of understanding between racial groups for generations - it's the practical experience which teaches you much more.

J.F. Well, maybe you'd better tell me about your practical experience, because I'm just getting confused as - or I just want to know where that left the Coloured people at that stage - the non European Unity Movement was around but you weren't involved with it.

R.S. No.

J.F. Was that - you never - why was that - had you come to some conclusions about the stance of Gool that the anti white.....

R.S. Well, it remained - it remained a - a movement which was led by Coloured teachers, which had an inherent weakness as far as I'm concerned. It remained a Coloured movement. It remained a movement which did not draw the community from which they sprang closer to the African people - in fact did the opposite -

It hindered this whole process of drawing the Coloured community closer to the African people - on that basis I couldn't see my way clear to go nearer to them (?)

J.F. So - just then tell me what you did from the mid 40's until the time of the Coloured Peoples Congress - was - you said - it's just interesting to me that you didn't - you felt there wasn't a - this was just a time in your life when you weren't involved in a political organisation - you were devoting yourself to the unions - did you think there should be some outlet for the Coloureds and did you think about the possibility of - did the idea of the Congress Alliance type of thing where there would be something for the Coloureds occur to you ever - what did you envision at that stage.

R.S. Well, for a period I tried to participate in the APO in the - in Cape Town - no, again on paper it wasn't a Coloured organisation but in practice it was, but it didn't - it didn't bear fruit - it was, you know - it had seen better days, as it were - until such time that we decided to establish the Coloured Peoples Organisation -

Becuase, you know, I had also gone through the period - I'd also gone through the period with the Franchise Action Council - the vote of the Coloured people was being threatened - about 1950 - we then decided to establish the Franchise Action Council, FAC - I was in fact the secretary of it.

This was an organisation composed of representatives of a whole wide variety of organisations in Cape Town, Cape Indian Congress, a city councillor like Cissy Gool, the trade unions, Cape Indian Traders Association, Cape Indian Congress, the A.N.C., Communist Party, but there was no Coloured organization - this was the weakness, of course, throughout.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. Ja, what I'm doing is.... (....) somewhere, as they say in Britain - so there was that weakness - are you saying that you saw a need for a Coloured organisation but it didn't....

R.S. It was a weakness throughout, yes, yes - for greater Coloured participation was something which we lacked - obviously we got a certain amount of Coloured participation through the trade union movement, naturally, for example, but it wasn't enough - what do we do about the people who are not members of the trade union movement -

It was a weakness that was there all the time because the - the teachers league of South Africa and the anti CAD, those people were not participating with us, as in fact they also refused to participate with us in the bus boycott movement which we tried to introduce - they fought shy of us - so we've had some harsh experiences with these people - very harsh experiences.

Through the Franchise Action Council we managed to bring about a very important demonstration against the withdrawal of the - against the taking away of the Coloured franchise rights - of the Coloured voting rights, not franchise rights - which heightened the political consciousness of the community, there was no question about that - we had a strike, again which the other people avoided - didn't participate in at all.

J.F. When was the strike?

R.S. May the 7th, 1951, mmm - I think it was that period - I think it was that date - and pretty successful, too - was successful - that is without there having been an organisation of Coloured people, so how much more would we have not have achieved had there been some nucleus of colour - of a Coloured organisation, or some organisation which catered for Coloured people, whichever way you want to put it - what next?

J.F. Whatever happened next - that was '51 - there was still the Franchise Action Council, and then you were still with the union?

R.S. Mmm.

J.F. In '52 when the Defiance Campaign was announced by the A.N.C., did you know about it, did you hear about it, did you get - what did it mean?

R.S. Very shortly after the Franchise Action Council campaign I was out of the country - I left the country - was supposed to go to some meeting or other, but that did not materialise.

J.F. A union meeting?

R.S. No, no - no, it's a political meeting - I remained outside of the country - in this country for exa(mple) I - I came to U.K. and I stayed there - I was in the U.K. for about 18 months before I returned to South Africa.

J.F. What were you doing here?

R.S. I was working, mmm - as a clerk in the West End here.

J.F. Did you want to get out of South Africa?

R.S. No, no, no, not particularly - not particularly - it was just the - a possibility of my participating in some meeting or other

R.S. .... which didn't materialise, that's all - and then I was here - my family then came over and we stayed here for a little while and then we went back.

J.F. And went back in what year, in what, '53?

R.S. It must have been - I stayed here what, 20 months - 18 months, 20 months, and then went back, so about '53 I think it was, mmm.

J.F. And when you got back to Cape Town was it the same political scene or had there been changed?

R.S. Then we started to discuss the possibilities - we had just - ja - then we started to discuss the possibilities of establishing a Coloured organisation, and we then set about the task properly of establishing this Coloured Peoples Organisation - I don't remember what date it was, do you?

J.F. I'll find that.... in the history books.

R.S. You will? Please do.

J.F. That was....

R.S. I never recoll(ect) - I never remember dates - I'm very bad at it.

J.F. That was SACPO or the organisation....

R.S. SACPO - South African Coloured Peoples Organisation - that's correct, ja, mmm.

J.F. And the debates around it, were there those who opposed it, were there those who said this, we shouldn't segregate ourselves into four nations, or was there just a feeling that we needed to - there needs to be something done with the Coloured community or - what were the kind of points raised when you say we discussed it?

R.S. No, we were still facing the - the question of deteriorating rights of the Coloured community - and the African people were organising themselves, the Indian people were organising themselves, and we were not participating - we were not doing anything, and the feeling was that - we took it for granted that we had to do something, we had to organise something here - we had to do some organising among the community as such, and this was a simple workmanlike job which we set about, that's all.

J.F. Now was it related to the A.N.C. or was it just on its own?

R.S. It was on its own but with links with the A.N.C. - not very strong links but we each recognised each other, ja - we each recognised each other - until there was the preparation for the Congress of the People, ja - that was 1955 - in preparation for the Congress of the People SACPO people realised that they were the only organisation - the only unit, if you like, which was calling itself organisation as against congress, Indian Congress, African Congress, Congress of Democrats and so on - and it then decided very purposefully that the name should be changed to congress, which would enable us to speak of the Congress Movement and not in the sort of belaboured way of the Congresses and the Coloured Peoples Organisation - that was a bit heavy handed -

And we decided specifically to do it that way because we wanted to be - fall in line and make it simpler.

J.F. Did you go to the Congress of the People?

R.S. Not me personally, no.

J.F. Was there a representative of the Coloured people....

R.S. Oh, yes, there were a number of our people - oh, yes, there were a number of our people who were there - they participated in the organisation, of course...

J.F. Then took demands and the...

R.S. Oh, yes, oh, yes.

J.F. What was the mood of the Coloured people - what kind of demands went to the Congress of the People - what were the issues that mobilised Coloured people in those days?

R.S. Certainly Group Areas Act, certainly Population Registration Act - they had a lot of experience with these issues down there in the Cape and among the community, and these were issues which affected us - the question of housing (was a) very important issue which affected us - the question of voting...

J.F. What was your....

R.S. Franchise rights, I mean.

J.F. Did you have an office in the CPC, or did you call it the (.....) Congress whoever - the Congress?

R.S. I don't know at what stage we had an office in Cape Town, but I remember at one stage having worked in the office of the CPC in Cape Town.

J.F. No, I meant did you hold office...

R.S. Me?

J.F. Ja, were you an officer or did you....

R.S. I was a member of the NEC in the beginning - of the executive committee in the beginning - I was at the first conference, of course, which was held in Wynberg, and subsequently became its secretary.

J.F. And in - did your work involve - were you still with the trade unions or by then.....

R.S. No, no, no, by then...

J.F. When you came back....

R.S. Mmm...

J.F. You were...

R.S. No, no, no - by then I'd stopped working in the trade union movement.

J.F. Did you have a job when you came back?

R.S. When I came back what did I do - the likelihood is that I went back to the shoe factory - I'll have to think about that - mmm, that's the most likely thing.

J.F. But was most of your energy devoted to politics - were you getting to be quite involved in politics or was it....

R.S. Oh, yes, ja...

J.F. And....

R.S. I remember, you know, working at the bench in the shoe factory and having a notebook alongside me at the (Laugh) and the (Laugh) in between cutting out a pair of shoes I (Laugh) I'd make notes about what I wanted to do and so on and so forth.

J.F. And did your political work involve kind of recruiting people - did you find yourself...

R.S. Yes - establishing branches, recruiting, yes, of course.

J.F. Because one of the things I wanted to say when you were saying that you prefer to write things down is that I'm actually interested in anything experiential or I have to say anecdotal because I don't mean trivial, but I'm just wondering how did you in the mid to late '50's - what did you say when you went to Coloured people - not someone who you knew through APO or NLL but someone who was just an average person - so-called average person in the Coloured community - what did you say to them, and did they say to you : Why do you want me to go get mixed up with some organisation if they (.....) for the A.N.C., that's for Africans - did you get that sense - there's so much written about the Coloured community as a community in the middle and a historical ambivalence and - but that's not necessarily written by people in the Coloured community or political people - I'm just wondering what your experience was - what did you have to say to people - what did they say to you when you said : I'd like - come join us, let's establish a branch.

R.S. You know, questions of suspicion of the African community, in my experience, have come mostly from the more privileged section of the Coloured community, not from the poorer section of the Coloured community, which, in my opinion, have proved to be the most involved in struggle - struggle for life - apartheid means many things to many people, you know -

To the more privileged section of the Coloured community it of course means the denial of many things to them, but it doesn't necessarily mean abject poverty, as it does to people in the poorer areas - there are tremendous - it's a big percentage of the Coloured community which is poor, very poor - and to me this is the section which I've thought, and I've always thought, is the section which is most amenable to organisation because they've got more to fight for -

They are closer to the African because they are poorer - they are poor - more likely to respond to appeals for struggle than the average artisan, for example, who has a home of his own, who has a motor car, who has a son at university - this is what you've always got to take into account -

It's not necessarily a homogeneous community that you're dealing with - you're dealing with a community which has a class structure within it - very much so - and we've got to take this into account throughout in organising the community, and realising that in fact the - we have a need to pay particular attention to the poorer section of the community in order to draw

R.S. .... them into struggle - the rest of the community will draw - will be drawn in as the movement gathers momentum - this is my belief.

J.F. And what did draw people in - was it actual campaigns around issues - there was a lot going on throughout the '50's, especially after the Congress of the People that the A.N.C. made calls for - was there any - anything that you were involved in that you remember as solidifying the solidarity of Coloured and African or Coloured, African and Asian and white - any particular things?

R.S. When was the Nelson Mandela appeal - well, I remember first of all the Lutuli visit to Cape Town - it was an electrifying experience actually - he was a wonderful man to have had the opportunity to have worked with him - was an extraordinary experience - so patient, so humble, and yet such a command of people this man had - tremendous loss to the people as a whole - he drew tremendous crowds in Cape Town, Lutuli did - tremendous crowds - and gained a lot of influence over a cross-section of the community, not only Coloured people in Cape Town but Africans, Coloureds and whites in Cape Town -

This was rather significant in Cape Town because of this sort of unified response which Chief Lutuli managed to achieve there. The next big thing which I remember off-hand - I mean if I were to talk a little more patiently with somebody who had similar experience to myself maybe we would remember incidents in between, but talking off-hand like this, off-the-cuff like this - was the response which we got to the Nelson Mandela appeal -

What year was that....

J.F. What do you mean Nelson Mandela appeal?

R.S. You know, it was a three day strike...

J.F. After the All-in Africa...

R.S. That's correct....

J.F. '61....

R.S. '61, yes, yes - I won't forget that because it was rather a signal experience in my life for some time - we as a committee, CPC committee in Cape Town, worked underground because we realised that if we exposed ourself we'd be picked up when we prepared for the strike, and we each lived in different places, and I - I would never know from one night to the next where I would be sleeping, but -

And in during that - that campaign, in particular, I remember we concentrated on the poorer comm - poorer section of the community - but never ever did I receive - did I encounter any difficulty in being accommodated after a meeting - however poor people were they would make certain that they would put me up - however poor they were they would make certain that they would put me up, and I would -

Even during the course of the meeting I wouldn't know where I would sleep that night, but they would organise it for me - they would organise it for me - and for what was it - ten, twenty days or something like that we organised night after night, moved

R.S. .... from one area to another area, all of us, and the response was absolutely magnificent - absolutely magnificent.

J.F. They were all different Coloured areas?

R.S. Mmm, different Coloured areas.

J.F. And was that quite encouraging - do you think that was the greatest show of political activism to date - had there...

R.S. During that period, yes, it was a very important period for us.

J.F. And during that time did you work only with Coloured people - did you work politically with whites or Africans or Indians?

R.S. Well, we'd meet Africans and Indians and whites at the consultative meeting to discuss the overall issues, but the actual organisation on the ground had to be done by us in our own communities, in the same way as Africans were working among their own communities on the ground, but when we had to decide certain general objectives then we had to come together to consult about these questions.

J.F. And was that also underground, those....

R.S. No, no, no - there was a period when it had to be semi-legal because some people had to be consulted who were banned, but a lot of it was above ground when there were no banned people involved.

J.F. I'm just wondering about the logistics of working inter-racially, if that involved working with Coloureds and Africans and whites, if that was any kind of logistics to organise to be able to get together, especially...

R.S. No, we managed that all right because I mean that didn't have to take place on the daily basis - that only had to take place at a periodic consultive level - it was manageable.

J.F. And did - historically the Coloured community might have known about Jimmy La Guma perhaps, but I'm just wondering if it was - when you think of the African people and the kind of lists of names from say, Xuma to Lutuli to Mandela you certainly don't have a lack - who did the Coloured community see as heroes - did they readily - were there maybe the names of Coloured people I don't know, or did they readily accept Africans as national leaders and heroes, or how did that come about - it seems that any people need role (?) models - have to kind of look up to leaders and that kind.....

R.S. What models?

J.F. Role models - leaders - heroes.

R.S. Oh, I see.

J.F. Not in a totally romantic way, although partly in a romantic way.

R.S. Ja, perhaps it's one of the things that we've lacked in the community - we've never had, in the community as such, a Lutuli or a Mandela or a Xuma - this is one of the problems - in its heyday the community did have a Dr. A. Abdurahman - at a later stage it did have a Cissy Gool, who was the leader of the Nat-

R.S. .... National Liberation League. Since then I would not claim that there was anybody in particular who stood out as a leader of the Coloured community.

J.F. And then what happened - as a result did they accept the African leaders - would Coloured people who you organised into branches of the CPC talk about "Mandela, our leader" easily? - would they accept....

R.S. I think that more and more, as they gained experience, they understood that it was inevitable that the African people would lead South Africa - but a lot of these things, you know, are - come about as a result of practical experience, don't they, not just talking about them.

You learn to trust your neighbour when you get to know your neighbour - when the neighbour remains a stranger to you then you don't trust him.

J.F. So you're saying it hadn't happened yet at that point?

R.S. Oh, no, it's been happening - it's been developing over the period of time, yes.

J.F. And in the '60's with the state of emergency did you continue to operate openly - did you have to go underground - did you get detained or banned at any stage?

R.S. No, I was detained.

J.F. In the emergency?

R.S. Mmm.

J.F. For how long?

R.S. Five months, I think it was.

J.F. And were you detained with only Coloured comrades or were you with African?

R.S. No, no - no, we were all - we were all in the same prison, not necessarily all in the same cells all the time, although in our particular cell it varied, you know - but when we settled down in Worcester we were a mixed group, Coloureds and Africans.

J.F. Was that in any way an important experience - there are just some people like maybe especially Indian people who felt that being detained or being imprisoned with Africans actually solidified a bond and gave them an experience they hadn't had before that - was that - or had you already had so much contact with Africans?

R.S. I mean at our level we had had that kind of experience for a long time - it may have helped us to understand each other at a personal level - it helped being detained together, I suppose.

J.F. And during all this activity was the Unity Movement a factor at all - when you went to organise people were there ever people who apparently were anti-CPC because they were attached to the unity movement - were there debates between the two - which was the kind of force or?

R.S. By the time that there was a state of emergency - when - what date was that, 1960?

J.F. '60, ja.

R.S. '60 - the Unity Movement was running into a lot of difficulty by 1960 - the - it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to gain support, and they were losing support - the teachers league was beginning to run into difficulties - some of the people who were beginning to question the leadership were beginning to help us - help us -

Some of their chaps would, for example, hide us, you know, during campaigns and so on during the state of emergency. Some of them helped to send food into Langa and Nyanga which were surrounded at that time - that hurt the leadership in the Unity Movement, of course - but by then the Unity Movement had become pretty ineffectual.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. ..... so after the state of emergency did you go back openly - did you have to work underground when you were released - did you stay in the country?

R.S. No, after the state of emerg(ency) - after the state of emergency...

J.F. After 1960 - you were detained for five months, you were released, they banned the A.N.C. - did they ban the CPC specifically?

R.S. No, no, they didn't - they banned individuals.

J.F. Were you banned?

R.S. Yes, yes, yes.

J.F. Was that the first time you were banned?

R.S. No, I think I'd been named, eh - I'd been named earlier - with the Suppression of Communism Act - what date was that, 19...

J.F. '50.

R.S. '50, yes - but I was banned - I was house - not - I was confined to my magisterial district.

J.F. Did you have an office in the Cape Town CPSA?

R.S. The CP?

J.F. Before - when you were listed under the Suppression of Communism Act was that because you had been....

R.S. A member?

J.F. A member, or an officer?

R.S. Yes, yes, yes...

J.F. Just a member, not an office.....

R.S. I'd been a member - been a member, mmm. The - after the state of emergency - 19 what '60.....

J.F. '60 - April, '60, Sharpeville?

R.S. Why are you so unkind to me, talking to me about all those old days now..... I think I went back to organising in the - in CPC after that - yes, must have been - until I was caught at a meeting - oh, I must have been - I must have been banned then from participating in the affairs of the Coloured Peoples Congress, mmm - when that was I don't remember - it's quite unimportant to me -

But it was about '63 that they caught me at a meeting of the CPC - and then I faced trial - I was allowed out on bail - I then (.....) bail, went into hiding for about five months, and then left the country - that was about '63, ja.

J.F. And then did you go to London or the States?

R.S. No, I went to Swaziland and went back to - went across to Botswana, because Swaziland was surrounded - you couldn't get through Mozambique in those days - I went across Transvaal into Swaziland to Botswana, stayed there for a while until comrades came to pick me up, and then went to Dar es Salaam - worked in Dar es Salaam in a office for perhaps nine months or something like that - worked on our information journal - and then went to London, worked in a (the) London office - 1969 became the chief representative - O.K.

J.F. And then after that did you - have you been in London since or did you get - where did you go?

R.S. I was the chief representative until 1978, when I went back to Tanzan(ia) to - to Lusaka, and I've been in Lusaka since '78.

J.F. And you're on NEC?

R.S. Mmm.

J.F. Since '69?

R.S. Since - since when - what is it now, '86 - since '85.

J.F. Since June?

R.S. Mmm.

J.F. Could you just, to wrap it up, make a few more statements about what we're talking about, the issues of class and colour as they come together - the fact of you getting on the NEC just last ....

J.F. .... year when the A.N.C. officially opened its ranks and yet you were a chief rep - was that just something that was the historical.....

R.S. Development...

J.F. Development - can you just explain that because I think to some people it would be confusing?

R.S. Well, I think that the organisation had reached the stage where it felt it could introduce the - the whole question of opening the leadership also to people who are not Africans, in the narrow sense of the word. We felt - you know, you can pay - a leadership can believe in a particular concept, but until such time that it comes to the conclusion that it can carry the population with it in the process of doing this it can only do so - it can only take a particular step when it feels it can carry the population with it, and the leadership and the people felt that this was the time it could do so, and it could have practical effect -

It wasn't just sort of paying lip service to a very revolutionary thing, you know, development - it was in a position to actually carry it through and it could be effective.

J.F. Do you think it's symbolically important to the Coloured community that the A.N.C. has gone all the way to the point that Coloureds are active on every level?

R.S. It's important to the Coloured community, certainly - sure - it's a very important development for them - I think that it's important for every section of the community to participate in all levels in this way.

J.F. Why do you say it's a revolutionary step - including members of all races is part of a revolutionary ideology, and does the non racialism fit into the ideology?

R.S. I think I need - I would hardly use the issue of non-racialism - I would think it is a practical - their practical application of a theory at the right time.

J.F. You spoke about the Unity Movement in the background - did you remember the rise of pan-Africanism and the split-off of the P.A.C. in '59 how that was perceived in the Coloured community?

R.S. I think that we were, of course, aware of it, because the P.A.C. performed certain acts in Cape Town, as you remember, and Kgosana was there in Cape Town, but as far as they were concerned - as far as the bulk of the community was concerned it was the Africans who were moving - not necessarily P.A.C. or any particular organisation - it was the African people who were moving, and it was looked upon in that way, not necessarily as the work of one organisation or the other - they weren't participants in this internecine struggle which was taking place.

J.F. Did they feel distanced from it in any way - did they feel well, this is real Africanism that just doesn't involve the Coloured community - did they feel anti because it excluded them?

R.S. No, you must understand that the issue at stake at that time was the question of passes - passes didn't affect the Coloured comm-

R.S. .... community directly.

J.F. No, I'm talking about the P.A.C. splitting off from the A.N.C. because the A.N.C. allowed whites in forming the P.A.C. - just that whole issue of dealing with the races.

R.S. Those who were politically conscious did not agree with it - those who were politically aware and alive to the whole thing, they didn't see eye to eye with it, of course. I don't think that it - I - it's probably correct to say that I don't believe that the bulk of the community were aware that the - of what is developing -

But the politically conscious ones who read the newspapers, who took an interest in these questions, they were not impressed with the breaking up of the P.A.(C) - with the break-away with the P,A.C.

J.F. And then and during all your time out of the country have you participated in debates about the four nations thesis - is that operative right now in the A.N.C. - what does it mean, and is it....

R.S. It's not an issue which is being debated in the organisation right now. I think that the issue which is uppermost in our minds is the question of the struggle for power in South Africa. I think we - we must make it very clear that in conducting this struggle, and in working towards a new South Africa, we have a terrible history to overcome in South Africa, namely the separation of our country on the grounds of colour and the balkanisation of our country through bantustans -

At the same time I must expect - I must say that when you talk about the national question this to us, it's accepted in our ranks - the importance of this question is accepted in our ranks, because certainly to those of us who have travelled abroad and who've been - and who've had the experience of say, observing what is taking place in the Soviet Union, for example, we have learned to appreciate the importance of recognising just how valuable - how a man values his own culture -

Oh, yes, we did raise this question at the time the Freedom Charter - when we evolved the Freedom Charter we spoke of the rights of each national group and the right to his or her own - their own - each group having the right to their own cultures - but I think in the case of the Soviet Union we have seen in actual practice how important the recognition of the racial - of the national groups culture is and the development of each - of the culture of each national group.

I think the Afrikaaners in South Africa who rule that those who rule South Africa have, unfortunately, gone a long way to to - what word can I use - to - gone a long way to - to destroy any concept of - of respect for peoples culture - they've just paid lip service to this whole question, and destroyed it - and destroyed any respect which one national group can have for another, and we've got a lot of leeway to make up in order to make up the ground which they have destroyed, because this is an issue which I think is going to be with us for many generations -

The whole question of the development of peoples' cultural heritage, because it's something you cannot ignore - you'll ignore that at your peril - and it'll be with us for many generations

R.S. .... after we have defeated the Afrikaaners in South Africa - the Afrikaaner nationalists who rule South Africa today - and after we have got majority rule in South Africa we'll be then confronted with this whole problem as to how to develop the national question - how to evolve it -

But that'll be with us for a long time, and it's going to require a tremendous amount of patience and care and scientific treatment.

J.F. Given that it's something that you're saying is so important do you think that it's important to discuss it now just theoretically - for me to kind of say I'm interested in talking about non racialism, how do you respond to that - it is important issue for you to talk about at this stage?

R.S. Well, I'll - I certainly will not understand you if you - if you or anybody else were to question me as to whether we were interested in non racialism - we're interested in national liberation, and that encompasses the whole question of national - of the relationship between national groups - you sometimes call it non racialism, but I think that's a side issue myself -

But we're - we have the objective of struggling for the liberation of the African people and other black groups in South Africa - this is our objective - and encompassing the liberation of the whites, of course, and in this way we hope to bring about a society in which we can build respect for one another irrespective of racial - whatever racial group you come from.

We will certainly, for example, make it a crime for anybody to practice or preach racism in our country. -

END OF INTERVIEW.