

J.F. What year were you born?

A.S. What year?

J.F. Ja.

A.S. 1928.

J.F. And whereabouts was it which....

A.S. In Alice.

J.F. In Alice?

A.S. That's right.

J.F. And did you grow up in the little township of Alice?

A.S. I grow up not in the township of Alice but in - in the village - a river called Tyumi - it's out from Hogsburg (?) - right on and join Mildrift River and then to East London....

*Hogs back?*

J.F. And....

A.S. .... and join the Indian Ocean there.

J.F. And what did your parents do?

A.S. My parents were peasants of the type of South Africa - though of course my father died while I was very young, more or less I am grown out of a one parent family, my mother.

J.F. And was she subsistence farming or was she working?

A.S. Yes - we had I think about four acres cattle, sheep, horses, that my father managed to - to buy while he was alive, and we looked after them.

J.F. So did you have any political awareness as you were growing up in that village - did you - had you ever heard of the A.N.C. - did your mother speak of it - did people in the village?

A.S. It is very difficult for a black man - black (person) - not to be political.....(Tape off)

J.F. ① So you're saying it's difficult for a black person not to be political - what do you mean by that?

A.S. Because, first of all, there are things like collecting of taxes, where the police from Alice come and raid the - the men - to find out whether they've got the tax paid, because Africans pay tax irrespective (of) whether they working or not working and so on - two, the question of dipping tanks - you know, the cattle after 14 days they've got to be dipped, particularly in summer, and sometimes this is not, you know, appreciated by people and they refuse to do that sort of thing, you see, because also when you don't pay tax they then go to the dipping tank and collect a cattle there - the government - sell it away and so on - so there are always some contradictions (?) and so on and this creates problems.

For instance, when children see a police in South Africa - (in the rural South Africa) - they immediately stand on the high heel and

A.S. .... shout "Kubomvu" - meaning it is red - meaning that there is a danger, you see - and therefore you grow with this conflict - you know, (a police is never a friend of black people, and so on, you see - and police are the government - and that introduces you to politics.)

Now the - I came up to be - what you call - man at a time of defiance campaign, you know - during that time - where the A.N.C. was addressing meeting in the rural, not only in the townships, urban areas, into the - the hinterlands of South Africa - and then of course we listened with (to) that sort of things -

(And perhaps I should have said that again, you see, that the tax collecting, the dipping tanks) contradictions, (people are arrested, you see, you know, from time to time and) - and then of course this is talked about in the villages, because going to prison in rural South Africa is a disgrace -

Now the older folks are going to - they've got to explain why so-and-so's gone to prison - (that he's not a criminal) - it's because of a white man wanting money from us - it's because of the fact that your father has resisted that - he has not stolen anything from nobody and so on, and that also helps, you see, and so on -

(And that answers the fact that I'm saying all black people somehow - somehow or other they will be political, even those who don't want to be political.)

J.F. This politics, anti government, anti police - (was it anti white) - as you were growing up in the rural areas what contact did you have with whites? - (could there be any contact with whites that wasn't trouble?)

A.S. No - no, not at all, (you see, because in the rural South Africa shopkeepers are white people, and I think language is powerful - white people in the rural South Africa they speak Xhosa or Zulu or Tswana, whatever and so on, fluently - if he's - if a person is behind a door you wouldn't say that is a white man coming, you see - the accent is completely that of a - (of a Xhosa if he speaks Xhosa, you see - and in fact they're adopted, you see - it's got nothing to do with his colour - it's got something with those white people who are creating problems, contradictions like the police, as I say, you see, (or officials of the government, you see, and so on -

(It's got nothing to do with white people) and so on - (they are loved, you see (?)) - in fact even now you can't go and attack a white person and - but also it's because it's - it's (when there are problems at home in the rural South Africa those white people are helpful) -

If you want, (for instance, during droughts, he'll give you things for credit) - I mean for - is it credit - you know, you pay when you've got money and so on, you see and ('Phone)

J.F. .... saying whites could be helpful, but (I kind of thought that whites in the rural area were seen as charging too much money at the mine stores or at the shops, and that they would badly treat labour and that kind of thing) - farmers, white.....

A.S. (No, no, no - you know, they are (a) different kind of white people) - in the rural people are the same - I was talking about, first ....

A.S. .... of all about <sup>them</sup> the shopkeepers who are helpful - who even if people they've got to go to courts ten miles away they offer their old trucks to carry people to that, and go and fetch them again and so on, you see - this has got a great deal - people appreciate that, you see and - and this doesn't mean that the farmers are a different kind of people -

There are farmers which are not necessarily in the circles of the villages, you see, and those - you're quite right - (they're horrible) - they're very bad, you see - perhaps we will come to that later -

I was talking about white people who live amongst <sup>us</sup> day to day - they cannot afford to be - also, you see, I mean as people - they cannot afford to be cruel to black people because they - they are there - (they're in the villages, you see - they sleep there, they live there and so on, whereas farmers they've got a fence) and so on - (they're isolated) from their own thing and so on, you see - they don't think like....

J.F. So what whites do you mean - the whites who live in small towns and run shops where all Africans go to?

A.S. That's right, you see - the villages, not - not - I'm not talking about even the towns - I'm talking about the villages, you see, that I'm talking about.

J.F. What about your own personal experience) - (when you were growing up did you get a sense that all whites were bad news....

A.S. When - (yes) - when I joined the - (when I became politically aware I had a tendency to say that white people are bad) - there's no doubt about it) and so on - because - you know, (because of the fact that all the time the whites that you meet are economically above you and so on, you see, and they are treated different from you) and so on, and (there's the discrimination, a naked one, that you cannot see and so on, and then - and then you can't help saying that) this is - (these people are horrible) -

And also it's caused by the fact that my families were religious, very religious indeed, you see, and I - (my brother is a dog-collar, you see and....

J.F. Is what?

A.S. A dog-collar - this thing - and not out of nothing, because (we were pushed into the church and so on, and we believe - but even that, you see - you know, you - particularly in my time - I think it's better now - it has improved - (a black person would never preach to white people, whereas white people would preach to black people, even - in fact that's what alienated me completely from church, is the fact that) the pictures that were sold at that time - I don't know now - I don't know now - I've never seen those things - but (angels were white people) and so on, you see, (whereas the other crowd were just - (the people who were held in (?) fire, I suppose they were black) because they were hailing (?) fire and so on, but they were horrors, you see, and - and that cause inject some thinking in other people, you see, that everything associated with whites it's wonderful and so on, even God, you see, he's a little bit of a character who doesn't care for his own black children, you see -

(He cares for the white children) - so, you know, there was to me

A.S. .... that sort of thing and so on, you see, but - but I was lucky - I was lucky because - because of migratory workers from - particularly from Eastern Cape, starting from the Transkei, either going to Johannesburg or Cape Town, I happened to hit upon good people who showed me that there is another side to the coin, you see - you can't judge people as bad people, all -

But I was never convinced yet until I joined the union - not the A.N.C. - when I was in the A.N.C. I was anti-white - no doubt about it - I didn't trust them at all, even those who were amongst them, you see - but also because I did not even - I was unable to communicate with them - that's another thing.

J.F. The whites?

A.S. Ja.

J.F. When you say the whites who were in the A.N.C. who did you mean?

A.S. No, they were not in the A.N.C. - they were in their own party (?) you know, there was Congress Alliance.

J.F. Did you know COD people - did you know some of those?

A.S. Oh, very well - very well.

J.F. In the Eastern Cape?

A.S. Yes, yes, yes - I knew them but - but all the same, you see - all the same to me because (there was never any) close - (closeness to them, you see) - they were just people, you see - (I did not speak English at all - I spoke Xhosa completely, and my education is not high) - it's very - it's very - well, I can live - that sort of education that I've got is (?) *to p. 11*

J.F. What's that?

A.S. It's education that I can live - what I mean is that I - I can say yes, no, at that time - not now - now - now I'm educated very well, don't worry, you see (Laugh) because (?) the politics brought me to - up to the mark, and so nothing can - I think I'm cultured, I'm educated, I'm everything - I compete with anybody in the world, you see -

But I was in the rural, you see, and we don't speak English, you see, even if we speak at school - as long as you don't speak it then you never know anything, you see. Now proceed with another question perhaps, you see.

J.F. When did you first get involved with the A.N.C. - was that when you were still at school in the village, or had you left school and were working?

A.S. The first time I was involved with the A.N.C., you see, it was at school in Alice, a college called Lovedale - there was a strike of the - strike of the students....

J.F. This was high school?

A.S. High school - and the strike (Laugh) - the strike was caused ....

A.S. .... by the differentials in food - you know, there were students who because of their parents were either doctors - black doctors - reverends and other crowd, you see - and they were paying more money than the ordinary students and so on, and they were - they had their own tables one side, you see, with better food and so on, then there was the rank and file, the masses of the students who had just poor food, you see -

And too (two) the fact that the senior ones, you see - students, you see, were - they didn't like this idea of being divided - they were divided up into fours, you see - one was called, I think, Henderson - people who come from the Transvaal - Transkei - I don't know why they were called Henderson even today - I've just never thought - it just struck me now - and another one was Livingstone - people who come from the Ciskei - and there was Shaw - there was another one - I don't know what it is (?) but there were four houses separated, you know, according to your origins - where you come from and so on - and this introduces hostility, you know, and -

And the senior students didn't like that at all, you see - they said this thing must be stopped - you must just live - you know, when you come you located a place, man - it doesn't matter who you are - and also this thing of, you know, dividing tables here is no good at all, you see - and then of course people went on strike -

And around Alice there were high officials of the A.N.C. like Dr. Bokwe, Professor Matthews....

J.F. Dr. who was the first?

A.S. Dr. Bokwe - you don't know Dr. Bokwe?

J.F. No - I know Matthews but....

A.S. He's same - same generation - Bokwe comes from Middledrift, ja - and Njongwes were in - they were in the - Dr. Njongwe he was in the - in Port Elizabeth - and Robert Margis - and Govan Mbeki - and when there is any struggle anywhere around that area you see them appearing, addressing meetings in the middle of the night - this is when I started knowing about the A.N.C.

J.F. Why would they have to address the meetings in the middle of the night if Govan Mbeki and so.....

A.S. Because - because first of all when there's a strike the police Special Branch are already on the field too, you see, and - and chaps like Professor Matthews were lecturers at the university - Fort Hare University - and others were doctors, you see, and they don't want to be seen with striking students and so on - even if they're not charged for anything, you see, they would be blackmailed, you see and so on, and therefore meetings -

And also, you see, you can't have meetings when there are students, man, in the college - boarding college, you see - you immediately - that's prohibited, you see, completely, when there's a strike and so on -

And therefore they used to go out to the Tyumi River and have meetings at night, you see, and address meetings and so on, and explain why certain things are done in a certain way, you see, and how to go about things and so on, and - and some of them ....

- A.S. .... sometimes even to try and cool down the tempers of the students, because students - young people generally - they want to burn down quickly things, you see and so on, and - and in the meantime if you burn them - burn things down - sometimes they are valuable (?) for you, you know, whether those who are in authority are not very good, you see....
- J.F. Was that your first exposure to the A.N.C., when.....
- A.S. Ja, that's right - that's right - and then of course when then I went to the Western Cape as a migratory worker every weekend, Saturday afternoon, Sunday, there are meetings in the townships called by the A.N.C. to discuss rents, to discuss transport, to discuss all sorts of grievances, rates - to discuss shops, to discuss all sorts of things, almost every weekend, you see, there are meetings you see.
- J.F. Can I just ask some questions if you could give just kind of quick answers to because I'm afraid there's so much of what you're saying that is so important to what I'm looking at, because there are a lot of - just your perspective is an important one, but I'm afraid that if I get off into too many details.....
- A.S. That's why - that's why I said you ask questions.
- J.F. Let me just ask you....
- A.S. You must stop me.
- J.F. Let me just - I wish if I had time I wouldn't - anyway - so you grew up and your mother was able to put you through school?
- A.S. That's right.
- J.F. She had enough money to pay those fees to send you to Lovedale?
- A.S. She - she worked - she sold sheep - she had (herd) sheep - she went sometimes to East London or some towns around to try and get something - also - also myself and my brother we, before going to high school, you see, we had to go - (after passing Standard Six we had to go and work for our - the following year.) and so on, you see - ja, for our school fees, for our clothing and so on, you see....
- J.F. Where did you work - (Repeat)
- A.S. Where did I work?
- J.F. Ja, for that year, to....
- A.S. For the first - oh, yes, our - that is an interesting thing - I don't know whether it's not here (?) - that when I was - I went to Cape Town, for the whole year I was in Cape Town illegal(ly) you see.
- J.F. So even after Standard Six you were sent to Cape Town?
- A.S. I went to Cape Town - I went, you know, myself, deliberate(ly)
- J.F. How old were you?
- A.S. I don't know - that was 19 - 1950 - I don't know how old I was.

J.F. So you were 22.

A.S. Somewhere about that....

J.F. Was that Standard Six?

A.S. 1922, no - no, '50 - no, no, no, that was not '50 - it's - ag, I was about 20 - I think I was about 20 then.

J.F. And you went for a year to earn money to go back and finish high school?

A.S. That's right, to go back - that's right - and I - (I was just picked up by the - an Indian merchant, greengroceries, who said : You and you and you - were four of us - I think I will employ you, and so on you see - (and we) - we had no permit to be in Cape Town, and then this chap, when we said : No, we haven't got a permit (?) (he says: No, that's all right, doesn't matter -

(And then he took us to his place) - big (?) groceries - you know, they're selling groceries all over Sea Point and other places - but the instruction was that when a person with a uniform appears you must go to the toilet, sit on the toilet - and we were partially locked up) - (we couldn't go anywhere) -

You know, we started working three o'clock and we stop at ten o'clock and go to bed, for the whole year, and we are getting two pounds ten a week, eating there)....

J.F. I think that is in there - let me just focus on the non racial part....

A.S. Now then ja, I'm coming to that and so on, you see - and then of course that was the end of that period, you see, and I went back home - then I went back to - I went - (I came back to Cape Town now for the second time) - this time I had a permit to be there, because at the end of the year - at the end of that year this Indian person who said : Listen, we are threatening - we are advised by people - we'll report you that you - we are working for you for the whole thing, you see - for the whole year - and with no permit -

And then he says : No, I'll take you - and he took us there and we got the thing easily and so on - I don't know how he got it, you see - I mean people who have got the money and everything - very easy - it's corrupt - South Africa is corrupt - corrupt society - and then -

Then I left it there to somebody to work with it, because it had no picture - it was just a paper - you know, Archie Sibeko is permitted to remain in Cape Town and so on - I could give it to any black person and work with it.

Then when I came back and I got it back then I worked - then when I was looking for a job I got into food and canning) - (Workers Union) Oscar Mpetha came to the door) - then when I came in, you see - I came at about ten o'clock - now (then he said : Sit down there - after asking - (after asking why I wanted a job and so on) and so on - (then I saw a woman, a white woman, making tea - that is the first thing that struck me) - making the tea, you see and so on, you see - and he gave to everybody, including me, for the first time, you see, I was served by a white woman! (Laugh) I said to him, I said : Really that's wonderful (Laugh) and so on, you see, and - and that was introduced - introduced me to other white people

A.S. .... and so on, you see, and then - and then of course - and then of course it - it's an important thing to a South African, that - black South African - it's not a small - it's a small thing to other people - other people say : What's that, you see - they don't understand the mentality of South Africans, and (Laugh) - and -

(And then of course I asked Oscar) : What's that one - why is that woman giving people tea - he says : No, that's a - that is a comrade, you see and so on, you see, and his (her) name is not Mrs., it's Yon (?) you see - that was her name and so on, you see, and that's her name - he called me, he says : (Come, (let me) introduce you, this is Archie and this is Yon - I said : Oh, hello, how are you and so on - (she says) I'm all right, you see - I wanted to say Madam, and Oscar called again and says) : Don't say that, she is your comrade, your mate and so on -

(That struck me a great deal indeed, you see - of course, you see - then Oscar again said) : We can't give you a job; there's no job here, because this is a union, you see, but because we go out with factories we do know of jobs. - if you like Saturdays you can come here, we'll have - we have small schools here where we teach you the trade unions - (what is the trade union, and why are you doing certain things in a certain way and so on and so on -

Then I agreed, and then he said) : (Well, we'll pay, because in the long run you will help here too a little bit) and so on, writing down, taking complaints if you can from other people - and - (and then I got into that trade union school, where there were whites -)

(Ray Simons) - I don't know whether you heard about it?

J.F. I met her.

A.S. She - (she was there) - there was Becky Lan - she was somewhere here and so on, you see - there were Coloureds, there were Indians, there were everybody and so on - (Food and Canning it's - is been a mixed, you know, so on all the time - and that came across (?) closer to me to see realities.

(Now) - of course more more and above (?) it's a question of taking complaints from workers, you see, and then present it to Oscar or to somebody else, you see, and they take up these complaints, you see - and of course that is educational itself, you see, because complaints were of - (some of them of the grievances, economical grievances) (?) - some of them were political grievances - and these were tackled by white people, black people - it was very, very educative indeed but.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

A.S. (Then) of course I got employed in the railways, where I saw a lot of exploitation of people by the railways authorities and so on, you see, and who gave help - they were white people and so on, you see - well, (because of their position in South African - in South African situation) and so on, you see - but all the same



A.S. .... they are white people, you see and so on, and there - and to me to bring complaints of workers to Sam Kahn, you see, who's a lawyer - he was a lawyer then in Cape Town - to bring complaints to Brian Bunting, who was an MP then, you see, you know, and those complaints are taken seriously, and they do something about it and so on, and some of them win, you see - and to me it was a very important educational - (political education,) you see -

And that put me closer and closer to - to people - not to white people - to people - and also the Cape Town, during my time - because it has changed again, you see - Cape Town was a liberal city in South Africa.

You know, in Cape Town - when I arrived in Cape Town people of Cape Town lived anywhere - there were streets where there were black people, white people, Coloureds and Indians living in the same and so on, you see, and that affects you and so on - I - I did the same thing too - I live(d) in Maitland amongst the Coloureds - of course the poor whites, they were there and so on -

And you see children play together - there's no problem - they know - people know each other and so on, you see - people forget about the colour when you live next to them, and particularly if they're not particularly rich - they are working people and so on, you see - they - they - they recognise people and so on, you see - they really forget about what is going on -

They even - they even help - you know, at that time Africans were not allowed to go to the pubs - I mean to the - not pubs but bar to go and buy liquor and so on, and these whites will go and buy for the - for the black people who lived among themselves -

You know, when they go to work and says : 'Hey, man, can you take money, then when you come back you bring me something' - O.K., we'll drink together and so on - and white people drinking with black people and so on - there was no problem there - wonderful - great (?) indeed, you see - the -

Also - even borrowing money amongst each other and so on, it's because Africans they've got a tendency of - they don't go - they don't go to bioscopes or to all these other things - as a result they always have a lot of money I mean hanging in their pockets, you see, and whereas Coloureds and whites they go to the pubs, they go to the cinemas, they go to some parties and so on - they at the end of the - at the end of the week they are really skimped, if I can use that word there - they've got no money at all, you see, and they borrow from the Africans and so on, and this brings them together -

But of course - but of course, you see, I think the - the formation of SACTU did a great deal out of that, you see, because amongst - I'm a founder member of SACTU - there's a picture in The Star on - what is this - organiser of staff, where I'm there, and where African workers were expelled in this organisation) (?) Trades and Labour Council, and because some whites expelled Africans other whites decided to resign from the - from this body...

J.F. From?

*Organise or starve*

A.S

A.S. From the Trades and Labour Council - Trades and Labour Council, which cosmetically allow Africans to be there too, because they were not seriously doing anything about them, you see - and they joined us and....

J.F. Joined SACTU?

A.S. SACTU - and it was not a nice time - it was a battle - I'm sure that you have heard from Phylis - told you all about it and so on - and we were arrested together - we were addressing a meeting together, we were banned together, we are doing all sorts of things together, you see - well, Bennie Turok I mean - have you heard about Bennie Turok?

J.F. Mmm.

A.S. Bennie Turok - then I was working with Bennie Turok - we formed a lot of union(s) - for instance, the Metalworkers Union in the Western Cape was formed by Bennie and me - the Woodworkers were formed by Bennie and me working together - the railways, of course, you see - and I think Mary Turok too joined afterwards - even the children went to school, you see -

And then of course - then of course the Communist Party - the Communist Party they've got - (when you ask who are the whites who are there) and so on you see, (in the long run you discover that these are Communist Party people mainly) and so on, and - and then (even nationwide, you see, then (you find that whites who are communists are very, very good people) -

I suppose their politics is because it's class struggle and nothing else, you see, not - not only racism but also class struggle and so on you see - they recognise working people as working people and nothing else, you see - (also they recognise the fact that as long as Africans are not organised, nobody is free there, including whites themselves, you see - they will be a frightened lot, as they are now, you see - you'd better ask another question.

J.F. O.K. - what I'd like to know is, just to make sure I've got the details right in the beginning part - you worked as a migrant labourer and then went back to the Eastern Cape again?

A.S. Mmm.

J.F. And you said that even when you were in the A.N.C. you were anti-white - it wasn't until you got to SACTU that you lost it, - why was that? - you've said there were some good whites in the rural areas, there are also.....(Interruption) - you said there were some bad whites in the rural areas - what was your - why did you say you remained anti white - what was your experience of whites.....

A.S. (Because) - oh, I see - well, I was going to say because, (first of all, A.N.C. until very recently never allow(ed) white people to join to be members of the A.N.C., you see, so when you are in the A.N.C., particularly at that time, it was not necessarily that you were mixed up with white people, you see - that's number one, you see) - (and therefore it didn't help.) -

(SACTU helped because with SACTU you organise workers as workers, you see, irrespective of race, colour or creed, you see.) - it was not cosmetic, it was true, you see and so on, because they were

A.S. .... <sup>(There were)</sup> trade unions who, in their branches there are only whites, not - Food and Canning, Laundry and some textile and so on - you know, branches which are composed of whites, you see - (and they came to meetings as equal and) complaining - (had the same complaints of being sacked by employers or underpaid) or - (just like an African, you see.) - the -

*from p. 10 (2)*  
 (Particularly) - particularly, as I say, the - (the poor whites,) you see, they are completely poor - if you go to a white home, a poor white man's home, you'll just say : Jesus Christ, there's no difference between this home of this white and my home, you see, completely - you see, these chaps are poor, you see - not to talk about Coloureds, you see, and they're completely worse - worse off sometimes than Africans, you see - so that - that is the thing, you see, and so on you see - now just emphasise your question again.

J.F. But I'm saying before, when you were in the A.N.C. did you have a sense - they didn't say the A.N.C. does have whites - when did you first get aware of A.N.C. - I'm confused about that - that was when you were at Lovedale - before you were at Lovedale with that strike, when Govan Mbeki came to meetings you hadn't heard of the A.N.C. - is that correct?

A.S. No, no, no, I didn't - I didn't know A.N.C. as A.N.C. and so on, except general political talk and so on, you see....

J.F. You'd heard of them but you hadn't been exposed to them?

A.S. No, that's right - that's right....

J.F. But when you heard of them did they have a good connotation for you or were they just something you knew nothing about?

A.S. Well, because, as I said before in my introduction, that every black person is political and so on, you see, it was something that we were looking for, something that we had been questioning - things that we didn't understand and so on, they were explaining, you know - you know, broadening our thinking, you see, about the thing and so on you see, and - and - and probably again, you see, one should say that (though A.N.C. was not allowing people to join its rank, you see, (as members,) you see....

*from p. 4*  
 J.F. White people?

A.S. Ja - they never - (they were never anti white themselves) (?) and so on you see - they - (the explanation that was given then, you see, which I think is quite right) - that's quite right - they said that white people, because of their situation in South Africa, they are politically - politically they're reading - as a result when they come with meetings of the - of the black people and so on you see, they are, if you like you see, above, you see, you know, the Africans and so on -

Also the question of what do they discuss, you see - it's somehow things that you discuss they're not the same because South Africa is two nation completely, you see, and when you are saying things about South Africa sometimes if you listen to South Africans they talk about, you know, things that white people don't know, you see, because of separation, you see and so on, you see - and - and - *to p. 12*

And too (two) that the complication (?) level was difficult and

A.S. .... so on you see - <sup>If</sup> you're organising Africans who don't speak English, who speaks their vernacular language, if you like, and so on you see, and - and - and (this idea of translating) it's not good at all, you see - it creates problems, you see and so on - and also, you see, you can't help that Africans, you see, because of their own - (it's like women, you know) -

I mean women - (there is a time that women should meet and discuss their own thing) and so on, (before they get into the big group) and so on, so that they - they've got something and so on - because (there are some Africans who wouldn't talk if they're <sup>with</sup> white people, because) they want to talk something against those white people, you see. - they think, you see, you know -

(They don't even accept the fact that) well, they are converted, you see, and so on - (they're not going to be - feel insulted about what you're saying about white people, - they say the same thing even stronger themselves,) you see - and therefore, you know, that's the explanation that was given to us, you see.

J.F. So when was it that you were at Lovedale that you first got exposed to say, Govan Mbeki - how old were you or.....

A.S. About '46, I think - that's right, about '46.

J.F. About '46?

A.S. That's right, about '46.

J.F. So you were about 18 - and then was it after Lovedale that you went to the Western Cape?

A.S. The Western Cape, ja.

J.F. And when you went there - (in the Eastern Cape it's mainly Xhosa)..

A.S. (5) That's right.

J.F. Did you ever know Coloured people as friends in the Eastern Cape? or was.....

A.S. (No, it's when I went to the) - to the (Western Cape.

J.F. And did you have - everyone has prejudices - did you, since you'd never been exposed to Coloureds how was it for you, a young guy from the rural areas to come to Cape Town, which is overwhelmingly Coloured - (you were actually in the minority weren't you?)...

A.S. Yes, exactly...

J.F. Xhosa people are - (what was that experience, <sup>like?</sup> because I'm trying to make sure people understand that non racialism also means blacks and Coloureds and everyone, not just white and black.

A.S. Yes, oh, of course, you see - of course, you see, it's - it's not only - (well, not only, you know, me, you know, who are prejudiced - even Coloureds are prejudiced against Africans,) and so on, you see, (particularly those who, like us, (were) coming in there and so on, who have got, you know - they would - funny way of doing things - not urbanised but rural,) and you get exposed quickly that this is a little bit of a stupid person -

We had - (first of all we had no language with them) and so on - they speak Afrikaans or some of them who are high educated they speak English) and so on you see - Coloureds, you see - (and we).....

A.S. .... (speak Xhosa,) you see, and they - (more or less they were people who were between whites and Africans and so on, you see, and - and (some of them were extreme, you see, very bad indeed, you see, because they've got to shout more in order to compensate,) you see, so that they're allowed to stay in the Cape (?) -

(5) But - (but also ourselves,) you see, (we never accepted them, you see and so on, you see, (at first, until you know them - you see, the trade union is very important, you know - you see, it's more important than political organisation, I'm telling you, you see, because - (because here is the organisation in the factory, you see - I'm talking about South Africa now, you know, where you are equal - you are all workers,) you see - you understand what is going on, you see -

(Somebody is being, you know, (ill-treated by a foreman there in the presence of another one, and you're affected by this thing because tomorrow it's going to be you) and so on - (it doesn't matter whether it's a white or - or - or (a Coloured or an African - you know, (you feel very bad) and so on you see, because you are with this chap for eight hours,) you see, and you talk to him,) you see, and - and you develop, even though you don't know English sometimes or Afrikaans, you develop a language of communication between people because you work for eight hours for a year and so on - that's a long time, you see and so on, and you learn to - to acquire certain words and so on, you see -

(Whereas politics is completely different, particularly that time, you see, and so on - when I say particularly that time (is) because the A.N.C. had not gone down to the masses of our people,) and - and (we just followed because well, we were oppressed,) you see - so in the long run -

(In other words, what I want to say is that at first when you arrive in the Western Cape or any town you - you regard some of the Coloureds as similar to the whites,) you see - you see, (the way they're behaving and so on, you see - but as you go along with them) and so on, you see, you - you - you learn to know, you see, (how they are and so on, you see, that these are not whites, and - and as you go along, you see, they make friends with you) and so on, and - and -

And also, you see, they do things with you and so on - (it's a very important thing,) this thing and so on - (for instance,) you know, the question that I've mentioned, the question of going and buy liquor for Africans, it's a big thing this, you see - it's not a small thing,) you see, when you - when other people like liquor - I'm talking about Africans - and they are not allowed to go there, you see, and - and -

And then if a Coloured man says : Listen, man, give me money, I'll buy it for you and so on - (that friendship it's very important,) you see, and so on you see - (it develops into something else) - you are invited by him, you invite him, and you talk and so on, and you understand each other, and it's very, very important, you see. -

(Other relations crop up, you see.) - and also, you see, (you must know that Africans come to the Western Cape, they have got no wives, and there are Coloured women, you see and so on, which when relations develop and then of course the people fall in love with each other and so on, you see, (and that kind of thing crops up) and - and you - and it's amazing ....

A.S. .... you see, how many - how many people you find that they become Coloureds all of a sudden but they don't know why, and someone - it's the same thing and so on - I mean you see, I mean there are people that we tease here, you know, in the - in the - even in SACTU here and so on who says (..... Afrikaans) and so on (Laugh) because of this sort of thing - that's what - what it is.

J.F. And did you - you say you really lost your anti-white feelings when you joined SACTU because you saw whites being involved....

A.S. Mmm.

J.F. What about the feelings with Coloureds - did you actually work personally side by side with Coloureds or did that.....

A.S. Oh, yes.

J.F. When you were a migrant worker?

A.S. Yes, indeed - not only that - not only when I was a migrant labour(er) but also when I became a full time organisers for the railway and the other unions.

J.F. (3) Can you tell me anything about that, about (organising Coloureds and Africans together - that is quite unusual, but in the South African context they're meant to be apart and yet you're saying that you were involved in strikes where Coloureds and Africans supported.....  
*in a union?*)

A.S. That's right - that's right.

J.F. Can you tell me any story of when the....

A.S. That's right....

J.F. Perhaps about the....

A.S. Perhaps - perhaps the story that stick in my mind, you see, is when we organised about 200 Coloured women - these Coloureds were doing (a zip factory) - you know, they were specialising in zip, you know - and we organised together with Bennie Turok - then Bennie Turok was banned - I remain(ed) alone - at the time when we had applied for consolation board, you see - when you consolation board you - you - you - you know, a union of the Coloureds (could be registered and they could apply for bargaining position) where employer and the employee meeting chaired by the labour department official, you see and so on -

And then when Bennie was banned then it was only me who was going to represent those workers, you see, and unfortunately for the government, you see, after a certain time they've got to answer a certain letter - they forgot to answer a letter, you see - and (we went to these Coloureds women and said that : "Listen, now it's more than a month the government has not answered your letter of applying for consolation board a meeting and therefore you've got a right to strike now. - then that thing was different to me, and there were Coloureds and I was the only Africans leading them. -

And then while (I was there), you see, (at lunch time, you see, the plan - Bennie couldn't come - the plan was that we - we - even if the bell goes at two o'clock we continue the meeting)....

A.S. .... (and we continued) the meeting - I was inside these Coloureds, you see - and the employers peeped through the window and so on - they find that, you know, we don't care - somebody shouted : Hey, come up and so on and so on - they ignore that and we continue (our meeting as if nothing's happening and) so on -

And (of course) I suppose (the police were called), you see - and (the police came, and then of course they rush) into me - you know, (when they see an African) he says : Where's your pass and so on, you see - then I showed the pass and so on - he says : Well, you are arrested, you know, you and so on - and - and then these Coloureds says to the police : Listen, my friend, we will not go in if you are arrested - that's -

They said : We're not interested - (they took me to Maitland Police Station - after an hour I was rushed back to where I was - those Coloured women were there demanding me) - he says : If that person is not back that's the end of it - you might as well close this factory, you see - and lucky enough it was a hundred percent organised, you see and so on, you see -

So - (so you see what I mean) - it's an experiment of when you involved with Coloureds, even whites, (if they are organised) and (effectively) it's colour just disappear completely, you see, and - and - and they think what they're doing and so on, you see - (and here I'm an African, and so on and not even, you know, an articulate African at that time) very much, (but I was a symbol of unity to them and so on, you see, and they says : That chap must come back here) and so on -

And I was brought back to them and then they went back to the factory, and we won our strike - and so on, you see, led by (an African leading Coloureds.)

*add <sup>new</sup> paragraph in yellow from Sedlaba article.*

J.F. Coloured women yet?

A.S. Yes.

J.F. Well, why did you say Coloureds disappear - I don't know what you mean - you mean....

A.S. I say colour....

J.F. Colour disappears?

A.S. Disappears, ja - people are worried about what they are doing and so on, you see - whether you lead them correctly that's what it is - and - and this of course happened in another factory - do you know Cape Town?

J.F. A little bit.

A.S. Ja, well, there's a place called Retreat near Muizenburg - somewhere there down that side - there was a gigantic factory there, about 2,000, you see, and out of this 2,000 there were about a good 20 percent of the workers were Coloureds, you see and so on, and again, you see, we used Coloureds to - to register the Coloureds but cover the whole factory - you know, the agreement that is going to be made is going to cover everybody and so on, you see, and therefore - but the ....

- A.S. .... people (who) were organising there were Africans because of their majority and so on, you see, and the Coloureds were following the Africans and so on, you see - so I'm emphasising the point that if the leadership is, you know, honest, principled, the Coloureds will follow, there's no doubt about it, you see - there's no doubt about that, you see.
- J.F. Had you had any exposure to Indian people - you.....
- A.S. No - no, because the Indians in the Western Cape they are not many.
- J.F. And the Eastern Cape it was just the kind of.....
- A.S. No, well, in the Eastern Cape I was a young person in school - my association with the Eastern Cape, where I'm born, is my very complete youth and so on, you see - my politics are of the Western Cape, you see.
- J.F. Because you spoke about at the treason trial - was that the first time you actually met - mixed with Indians?
- A.S. Treason trial - you see treason (trial) was in the Western Cape - I was in the Western Cape - it's the first time I met with - say it again.
- J.F. At the treason trial with Mandela and Lutuli and Susulu, you said..... that's the first time you got a curry...
- A.S. That's right - that's right - I was (Laugh) - no, because - because first of all it was the first time - you know, we were collected to - from all over South Africa to Johannesburg, you see, and also it was the first time for me to - to fly with an aeroplane, you see - we - we're all - it was a military aircraft, which was very rough - we vomited and got sick, even the police who were supposed to be looking after that they got sick themselves - I suppose they never fly with an aeroplane too, and - and -

And then there it was a great experience, you see, because national leaders which I've never seen they were there I'm never - before then I'd not seen Chief Lutuli and so on, you see, because he come from Durban, and I was just a regional leader, if you like, of the Western Cape, you see -

I had not seen many of the Transvaal leaders, you see, like Sisulu - Walter Sisulu, Mandelas and - and Oliver Tambo and so on, and I saw them there, you see - in fact even the leaders from the Eastern Cape - I'd not seen people like Rev. Galata and so on, the great person and so on, you see - I had not seen those people except.....

END OF SIDE ONE.



- J.F. When did you first go to the Western Cape as a migrant worker?
- A.S. The first time is 1946, and then I went back...
- J.F. And when was that....
- A.S. Came back - when did I come back then - you see, I worked for one year, '47 (?) - back, you see - and then I was there for five years in - at home.
- J.F. Where?
- A.S. At - in the Eastern Cape - three years, and two years, five years plus - how much is that - '51 - seven (.....)
- J.F. So the early '50's you went back?
- A.S. Ja, early '50's I was back.
- J.F. And when did you connect - when did you first go in and meet SACTU - when was that?
- A.S. SACTU, 1956 - was it - 1955....
- J.F. That's when you met Oscar Mpetha.
- A.S. Before - I met him before then....
- J.F. No, but I'm saying when did you first get connected with the unions - not SACTU - but when did you meet Oscar?
- A.S. Let me calculate this thing, man - I said '46 plus one, '47, plus five, twelve, '52 - I think - I think '53 - '53 is when I connected with Oscar.
- J.F. And what was the title of your first job in the unions?
- A.S. In the union - I was an organiser of the railways.
- J.F. And after that?
- A.S. I worked - as I say, I worked in the railways and then I was chucked out, you see, because of organising - then I became an organiser, and then I became a secretary of the railways in the Western Cape, because it was not national and so on, and later I became a local committee - a secretary of the local committee of SACTU, you see - and then from there on I became the national executive of SACTU, ja.
- J.F. And till when - in the state of emergency....
- A.S. Until I left.
- J.F. Which was when?
- A.S. I left '63 - '63 when I left SACTU was not banned '63.
- J.F. SACTU wasn't....
- A.S. Was not - no, SACTU has never been banned anyway.
- J.F. You joined SACTU, and in the Cape, were you still in the A.N.C. when SACTU was formed - did you maintain your membership with A.N.C.?

A.S. Yes, yes, yes.

J.F. Did you - (were you in the A.N.C. Youth League?) at all?

A.S. No, I was not in the A.N.C. Youth League at all.

J.F. Do you remember the debates about the P.A.C. - (the pan-Africanists wanting to split?) and then they eventually joined the P.A.C. do you remember - (did any of the people you moved with talk about the anti-white feeling, the anti-communist?) the...

A.S. Yes...

J.F. .... kind of pan Africanism?

A.S. You - (if you remember, the P.A.C. was strong in the Western Cape, you see - it was the strongest area because first of all the P.A.C. intercepted the campaign of the A.N.C., and it was at the time where the Nationalist Party was interfering with - with Cape Town where people used to live together and so on, you see -

(For instance, when I came back from the treason trial in the Transvaal I found that my place had moved from Kensington into Nyanga, Guguletu and so on, and - and - and I'd created a very rest - Africans were very restless, you see, - and it was easy - you could just light a match and they'd burn and so on, and the P.A.C. - I don't know what happened and so on, you see, because I was in the office of the Food and Canning when I was just told that there's a big massive march that is going towards the police station and so on - in central police station in Cape Town....

J.F. Led by Kosana?

A.S. Led by Kosana but I - it's not led by Kosana I mean....

J.F. Well, he happened to be there in his....

A.S. No, no, no, not he happened to be there - let me explain about what happened with Kosana - Kosana, you see, he come from the Transvaal - he came there - he was the first year - not even first year student - he had not even completed six months there in the - in the university - people don't know him - I didn't know him until that time, you see and so on - how many black people of the Western Cape - how is that possible -

You see, what happened is that people from the Transvaal they know Afrikaans (Africans) very well - what happened is that the police called for a person who can in - translate Afrikaans into this massive people and so on, and then this boy came out - this young person and so on, you see -

And then of course the liberals and the press, you see, build him up to be a big man and so on, you see - I mean really, you see, I didn't know who's Kosana - where does he come from, this person, and so on, and - because he had not, as I say - he had not - he was never involved in politics in the Western Cape, and he had not even completed a year in Cape Town University, you see -

How can he be a miracle - is this Jesus Christ now coming - ....

A.S. .... (Laugh) so....

J.F. So you heard about the march when you were sitting in.....

A.S. That's right - that's right - then we - even Oscar was not there - a leader like Oscar was not there, he was at the office, you see - because the thing was spontaneous, you see - and then - and then there was then a fight between the A.N.C. in Tomwe, Western Cape, you see, and P.A.C., you see - I was involved in those fights and so on -

The P.A.C. forced people to join P.A.C., you know - if you are not P.A.C. you either you'll be beaten up in the township or something will go wrong with you and so on, you see, but lucky enough, you see, we knew the leaders of P.A.C. because they are - they broke away from our branches -

You know, for instance, the chap was leading in the Western Cape at that time was my secretary, branch secretary in Kensington, of the A.N.C., you see, and I knew him very well, and I went to him and says : Listen, this has got to be stopped, my friend - if it doesn't stop we will not go to those young people that you are using - we'll come to you, there's no doubt about it I assure you and so on - no A.N.C. person will be beaten - you going to talk to people, persuade them to join P.A.C. if you want to, all right - to be forced into it, it's not on - not going to happen and so on, you see -

And - and - and people were forced into it and so on, and we went to him - we arrive at three o'clock like the police - it's nice to use the police tactics sometimes - we arrive in his house at three o'clock and we knock at the door and he wants to say : Who's there - I said : That's me - that's me - and they open the door - he knew - he knows me, you see, and so on, you see, and I said - what did I say to him -

Listen, we give you an ultimatum - this is the last one and that's it, you see - at that time, you see, because, you know, I don't know whether - was it banned - I mean not banned but there was something wrong with P.A.C. and A.N.C. - I mean the government - I don't know whether they were banned or what and so on, or partially banned, I don't know, you see - but he was underground, you see, and we said to him that : You see, you can see that we know where you are - because he was not in his house, you see - he was somewhere in a friend's house, but we knew where he is, you see and so on, you see, because we followed him up, you know, very late until he go and he went to sleep - we know where he slept and so on -

He said : That should, you know - should be something written in your - what do you call these things - should be notice (?) to you that we'll reach you as long as you are in the Western Cape - if these boys beat anybody up - and then that stopped - that stopped because - because he was incited by him and so on because, you know, P.A.C. was shallow, you know - you know, because they say, you see, a slogan, you see, first of all, this is our country, Izwelethu - this is our country - and not only they say Izwelethu, you see -

(They say it is African country only) - now (the name Poqo come from that - it's only Africans, you see,) and we call it Poqo, you see - you are Poqo and you know, P.A.C. and Poqo, you see, synonymous, and - (and that kind of a slogan does, (when) ....

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 A.S. .... (people are excited) they - I mean you know, (or ill-treated) (?) you see, (it goes very well,) quickly and so on, you see - (it's an easy thing to say): This is (the whites came from the sea and they need to be pushed back to the sea again,) you see and so on, you see, and (they don't belong here - and those politics are very easy, you see, to understand, you see, and - and - and you know, they can fan all sorts of problems, you see, temporarily.)

J.F. (But what were the debates like then? - you're talking about the violence and the beating up, but didn't some more well meaning Africans ever say to you: Why don't we just break away from the whites? - how can you have whites in the SACTU office - why do you work with Ray Alexander....)

A.S. How do you - how do you do that, you see - (how do you do that? - first of all, when you say you don't want apartheid, how can you create another apartheid? - I mean there's something funny here, and so on, you see, you know -

(Two, if you are a mature political person, you see, you'll understand that whites in South Africa are not like whites in - (in Rhodesia) - they're not settlers - they've been there 300 years, man - they know nothing about Europe - nothing - and therefore, you see, you are dreaming if you going to say you going to remove them - that's not politics, that - it's cheap politics, you see -

(And two and three) perhaps, you see, it's another, you know, strategy, you see and so on - you - if you are going to say all whites must go to the sea you are uniting them, even good ones, they will say: Well, you see I mean (what can I do, and even if I'm good I'll be chucked) - (you've got to divide them) - (do exactly what they're doing to you, you see) -

If - (you've got to acknowledge if a person is good, whether white or black or pink or green and so on, and admit that - acknowledge that you are a person - you are a good person, come to us, let's stand against the enemy) (?) and so on, you see -

These are politics and so on - (and of course when you become even more mature you see that this idea of racism, you see, it's a camouflage, you see, for bigger things, you see, (exploitation of working people generally, you know -

(I mean if you come to Britain what's going on here, you see - what's happening here, you see - they are all white) and so on, but there's a bloody oppression here and so on - people are go on strike here, what for and so on - (it's the same thing in South Africa, you see - (it's just that it's an accident of history there, you know, that there are more black people - as a result you've got more black working people, you see, and nothing else, you see) -

So I mean if you are mature, man, that politics is cheap - this thing of saying white and white - no, no, no - and also, you see, also it's now, man, it's even (?) more and so on - I mean if you are going to say whites, what are you going to say about the Soviet Union - they are white, those people, man, and you are not given arms by Reagan or Margaret Thatcher - you are given arms by them and so on, you see - what can you say to them - I don't want you and so on, or ....

A.S. .... you are going to get jammed up somehow and so on, you see - it's a nice slogan that's lit up quickly, Woah, woah (?) - they change it too - P.A.C. change it in the long run because it looks stupid, you see - it did, you see - and they deny that they ever said that white people must go to the sea, when they said it before, you see, and it was palatable and so on, and sometimes you see big leaders, you see, get, you know, taken by this kind of crap here, you see, and - and -

And as I said, that that is a short thing - it's rubbish, you see - it's a corrupt politics.

J.F. But how did that - how did you - did you say exactly that to some migrant worker from - who was uneducated and that kind of thing - I'm just saying (you were saying that the P.A.C. slogans were attractive to some people) - when you put the argument you just gave to me did a simple black worker respond? - did he say : Oh, O.K., whites is O.K. or....

A.S. (The Trade union helps a great deal with this) - it helps a great deal, you see, because you explain to people are not - though they are not educated, they do understand problems, particularly when it comes to confrontation and so on, you see -

(b) Just look now, (for instance) - you know, (people have been arrested - you see, amongst the arrested people are whites) there and so on, you see - you know, because they are organised trade unions and so on, you see - (you know, once you organise for the people you will be arrested whether you're white, pink or green,) you see - it does help, you see -

(And also) it helps because, you know, (when you go on strike,) you know - you know, for instance, you see, there's - there's a thing that which is sounds simple, you see, when you - when you say - when you say the workers, you see, you know - (the government is nothing else but the police for employers,) you know, and even educated people sometimes says : What are you talking about and so on - what do you mean - I mean these are bosses, man - these are wonderful people - they say what they like and so on, you see -

Then you say to them : Just wait a little bit - when there's a strike in South Africa - even here for that matter, you know - the government intervene to - the employers they are sitting down nicely folding their arms and so on, you see - you haven't said anything to the government, you see, you know - the - the - the miners here didn't interfere with the government - they were not struck (?) on the coal board and so on, you see - they had a quarrel with the employers in the coal board, but the police were there bashing them, sent by the government, you see - why - because they are just police and nothing else, you see -

The real people are these, you see - the people are employing us, and people do understand it - you know, when there's a struggle they says : You're quite right - I never understand that, you see - (you understand that, you see) - (it doesn't need a book,) that - (it's clear as A B C;) you see - and people in South Africa they (go on strike the first they get is the police) - what's that to do with police again, go on strike - is this a private firm - I've no quarrel with you and so on - do they listen to that - (they bash you.) -

Who called them - it - I mean - that's what it is, you see -

- The government,*
- A.S. It's just an organisation created by those who have got money, you know, (to protect themselves, and nothing else,) you see.
- J.F. The police?
- A.S. The - the - the government - the government is an organisation to protect those who have got money, you see - it's like - it's like - it's a small - this thing is in the small way - for instance, it's happening in the Western Cape now - you know the fight that was taking place - these so-called fathers - they were sent by a person who built houses on top of a land that he bought - a black man, you see....
- J.F. Johnson...
- A.S. Nxobongwana, you see - he's the man who started that kind of crap there - of course it was exploited by the.... ('phone)
- J.F. (So you found that that's the kind of argument that made workers understand non-racialism?...
- A.S. (That's right) - that's right - that's right - (they learn) - you know, it's not education - (politics are very understandable to people, you know, when there's a struggle particularly, it's very easy - even the question of racism itself, it's easy to understand,) you see, with people, and - and - (for instance, how to explain the question of (you are arrested, and a lawyer who's a white comes to bail you out for nothing, and he goes to court and spend - spend his time there, (valuable time, you know, to defend the person who's uneducated) and so on, you see - how do you explain that, and so on -

(6) And (they are not stupid, - they are men, these mature people - they just cannot read but they see what's going on, that there are white people who are human beings, who have got the same feeling like me and so on, you see, and how do they explain that Bram Fischer died in prison, you know -

(He was here in England, he went back - they know that, you see, that he went back and says I will, you know - I'm prepared to die in South Africa, you see, for what I believe, and so on, and (they understand it) - they know it, you see - you don't have to be educated for that, and so on, you see -

(And they know that Ray Alexander) or (and) (Ray Simons, as you say, and so on, that he (slept in the bloody rural fishing compounds in Sultana Bay and other places with them, and so on, you see, for organising them, you see - that is not lost.) - those people were migratory workers from the Transkei, you see - they can't forget that, you see -

(They know that they were arrested together with him - with her) and so on, you see, and - and - (or if they are not arrested together, when they're arrested she comes and says: Why are they arrested, and so on - why don't you arrest me, and so on, you see - and people learn out of that, you see.) -

You see, you know, (that's why I'm always coming <sup>back</sup> to the trade unions, because trade unions brings you nearer all the time with the hot line, you see - it's not a theoretical thing) - you come closer to somebody's factory and your honesty is proved, you see, whereas in politics) sometimes it's - you - you can stay for a long time if (?) you are arrested - if you talk in the townships there (?) very far and so on, ....

- A.S. .... you see, and it's not - (you're not always), you know, trespassing, (challenging employers) and so on, you see - it's very - (trade union) it's a politic - (it's a school to politics, no doubt about it and so on - it's wonderful.)
- J.F. And once you'd explained that to people did they ever come back after being brutally treated by the police or having an experience where a white employer was terrible to them and say : Ag, these whites, how can I stay with the non racial point of view - did they waver - did they talk - you even said yourself that you were still anti white when you were in the A.N.C.....
- A.S. Mmmm...
- J.F. Did you find that you had to continue to argue non racialism or did people accept it and then that was that - was it a debate?
- A.S. No, no, you - you develop at that point - you can't be sitting in one place - you develop people and so on, you see, and it's very important - there are every A.N.C. branch, every trade union branch, you see, they have got lectures that they conduct to answer problems of people and develop people, and leadership of the people is very important, that, you see -
- If you are not going to develop the leadership of the people then you are going to have problems, you see, in the long run, because there are questions that push people into doubt and so on, you see, and because - because of course it's sometimes even those white people that we are talking about sometimes can be treacherous, you see - they can change and become treacherous and then other people says : We were doubted anyway - says : You see, your white people, you see and so on, and - and even today people say those funny things, you see -
- For instance, you know, the question - don't write it down, that one, you see, because it's no good - the question of Goldberg, when he, you know, he - he was - he left Britain - I mean prison and so on, you see, and so on and other people says : You see your white people - he got life imprisonment, that guy - Mandela is still there and so on, you see, because he says no and so on, you see, and - and people can really create problems out of nothing, you see, because they don't discuss things - they exaggerate and so on -
- You have got to answer them as they come from the time, and know why you're doing it - that's not for - because Goldberg - Goldberg is here and we don't want nonsense - he's a great guy - he comes from Cape Town...
- J.F. Ja, I know.....
- A.S. I was together with him.
- J.F. Oh, really...
- A.S. Yes - oh, yes, I was together with him - I'm older than him.
- J.F. (6) But was - (do you think that non racialism is an important idea? - do you think it's worth me asking you all these questions about it - non racialism?

6  
A.S. In South Africa? (It is very, very important) - it is very important (because, you know, militarily, economically, it is the only sensible policies to follow in South Africa, you see, (because you are dealing with four million strong, highly technically and educationally sophisticated people in the world - you're not dealing about a quarter of a million and so on, you see -

And you are dealing with people who are, you know, (boers are fighters, you know - they are not just going to - they (Laugh) - they are not going to (get away from that country) - you have got to win them over, some of them. - (it's very, very important - you have got to divide them up a little bit, you see -

I'm talking about even those people who think that, you know, you mustn't do that and so on, you see - even tactically it is wrong to talk about racism and so on, you see - (those whites must be told every day that that country belongs to them as well as me, you see, so it's a very important, you see, as I say, militarily, politically and economically.

J.F. What about the other aspect of non-racialism - not African versus white but the different so-called tribes of Xhosa, relating to the Zulu or whatever? - you were in hostels (?)

A.S. They're not - they're not (even tribes that we're talking about - there's no tribe which is Zulu or a tribe which is a Xhosa - they are nationalities, you see. - it's wonderful to have Xhosas in South Africa, it's wonderful to have Zulus in South Africa, it's wonderful to have Tswanas in South Africa, you see -

7  
And (in all countries they have got nationalities - those nationalities can work together in peaceful and beautiful way) and so on (and break the monotony of one thing and so on, you see, (and let people decide, for instance, which language they will use commonly among themselves and so on, but not to suppress Xhosa or Zula or Tswana and so on, you see, and it's very, very important, that.)

J.F. But do the - that sounds good but....

A.S. Do they....

J.F. I've just - just from talking with people who've lived in hostels in any experience, it seems that.....

END OF SIDE TWO.



J.F. .... all those tensions and stuff, and I'm just wondering if you think that - just what your experience of that was - did that exist in the hostels you were in....

A.S. No, there are fights - you're quite right - (there are fights) - (tribal fights, so-called, you see, but those fights are, you know, engineered somewhere - it is a question of divide-and-rule) - you see, (what do you think would happen if you are going to take in the compound - (one compound - you take Xhosas and put them one side, then take Zulus and put one side, men - (if for instance, a silly person, you see, is in the camp - a Zulu is in the camp of the Xhosas and then he creates problems and he fights with somebody else and is defeated, he runs back home in his camp of the Zulus and says: "I've been beaten by Xhosas" - (he's not going to say: "I've been beaten by one man" - (he's going to say: "I've been beaten by Xhosas" - and that sparks problems) and so on, you see -

(Whereas if they were mixed together other Zulu(s) will see that, (he was not beaten by Xhosas, this chap; (he was beaten by one man, that man) - (it's his business, man - he's silly or - or that man is silly and so on, you see - and this is a small example, you see, and - and -

And (of course, you see, (when you separate people you are inciting ethnic small quarrels, you see and so on, (and this (is) divide and rule and nothing else and so on, you see - I mean you know - you know, (whites) are troublesome, you see, sometimes - you know, I'm talking about those that are (in South Africa) - you know, (they never divide themselves up, even - even - even when they don't like each other, you know -

You know, English don't like - rather not English but (Boers don't like English) - they don't even - let alone you talk about Jews - (but now, you see, there are whites, you see, they're a nation, four million and so on, you see - but when it comes to Africans, divide them up) and so on, you see - it's just a trick, you see, nothing else, you see -

They don't like it, I'm telling you - I mean if you looked at the book of the Broederbond - you see, Broederbonders even have - have a, you know, sub committee that deals with the Jewish question, you see, in South Africa, another one deals with (....) and so on, you see, because they just don't like the English - they don't like the (.....) and so on, oh no, you see - it's convenient.

J.F. You left South Africa in '63?

A.S. Mmm.

J.F. Had you been banned - how many times were you banned, or were you detained?

A.S. Well, when I left, you see, I was banned but also I was sentenced - that's why I left - I was sentenced to five years imprisonment, but the A.N.C. then decided that no, man, (?) there's a lot of people in prison - just forget it - leave.

J.F. Were you on bail?

A.S. Me?....

J.F. How did you escape?

A.S. I was - you know, when - I was on bail first, and then we went to

A.S. .... Supreme Court, were sentenced there, and then they withdraw our bail, you see - we are supposed to surrender ourselves, and we did not surrender ourselves and no, just forget it - we are not going - we are not in court that time - we are at court at magistrates court and we are bailed out -

Then when they met - when they met at the supreme court we are not there, you see, and - and when we were sentenced we were just told by the lawyer, Alby Sacks - you know Alby Sacks?

J.F. I interviewed him.....

A.S. That's right - and - and we said : Alby, we are not coming there, my friend, forget it - just keep quiet, you see (Laugh) - he says : No, but, you know lawyers - I'm going to get the lawyers - he says - he says : Just stop talking nonsense here, but what - we are not coming there - and he says : But I said you be (.....) - I said : Listen, they'll take the money, man, just forget it - you've not seen us, that's all, and so (Laugh)

J.F. So from the time you got involved and the time SACTU was formed had you been banned or detained in the '50's or the early '60's - when were you banned or detained?

A.S. I was ba(nned) - since - once - once I was arrested for high treason, 1956 - then that was - that was it, you see, and so on, you see - my ban expired and they renewed and so on, but I never take any notice of that - I was - I was confined to the magist-erial district of Cape Town, but I went anywhere in the Western Cape, you see.

J.F. And then when did you get arrested - what was that for?

A.S. For - we - we - we - you know, the A.N.C. was banned when - it's when - I think when Oliver went out of the country and so on - and then we were distributing A.N.C. leaflet(s) - it was in a car he had full of leaflets either (?) back there, and then we ran straight smack to the police and they caught us, you see, and -

And of course in court too, you know, my fingerprints were not there in those leaflets - three of them were there - one had only car, and the other two had fingerprints there - not me - but the magistrate says : Listen, you are a leader of the A.N.C. - these are leaflets of the A.N.C. - you can't be in the car and you say you don't know - I don't believe that - that's not law, that, you see - just rubbish, you see - you see (Laugh) - and - and -

And I was sentenced just for that, you see and so on - true, he's quite right, you see - I knew about it but I never took part in producing them.

J.F. And when was it that you were arrested - '63 or '62?

A.S. No, no, no, I mean - you mean - you mean for this?

J.F. Ja.

A.S. No, no, it's far less than '63, you know, when A.N.C. was banned, underground - we are underground, you see - we are working under-ground...

J.F. No, but I'm....

A.S. The last time - what are you talking about?

- J.F. But when was - the trial that Alby defended you - when were you arrested for those leaflets?
- A.S. Oh, for Alby - oh, when was I arrested for - I think it's '60 - I think '62, because it dragged on and on and on and on - '62 - because it was when - when we left it was in the middle of '63 - round about May or June - I remember it was cold.
- J.F. So you got five years for what - being an A.N.C. member or...
- A.S. Yes, and distributing banned literature of the A.N.C.
- J.F. And from the state of emergency had you gone underground?
- A.S. Yes, I went underground for a long time - (we were working together with Carneson - (Fred Carneson) - I don't know whether....
- J.F. Fred?
- A.S. Yes - (and Sonja Bunting,) that's right - (all other people were in prison,) you see - we escaped....
- J.F. And how did you.....
- A.S. We - we were arrested the last week of state of emergency because we went out - we came out of underground and the fools collected us for a week.
- J.F. (And how did you manage to work with Fred - him being white) and all the difficulties of working underground?)
- A.S. We were camouflage - big camouflage (?) every evening - a certain time I went through the - the ring of the soldiers - you know, the township was surrounded by - as they did now - surrounded by the soldiers and so on, and they went through - we go through....
- J.F. How did you get through?
- A.S. Oh, it's not very difficult when you are there - not difficult at all.
- J.F. What, just disguise so you didn't look like yourself...
- A.S. No, you don't disguise - you get through there - you make your own - you see, the police are not standing - the soldiers are not standing like this - you know, they stand in groups, you see - they - there's spaces there and so on - you just observe it and find out what's - and then you get through -
- And also they don't want to - even if they see you sometimes if it's at night - they just leave you - of course they don't want to be killed, you see...
- J.F. What do you mean, they don't want to be killed?
- A.S. Listen, if you are going to be provoking problems, even if the commanding officer is not there, do you think you going to - you - because you can be killed too, so they pretend as if they don't see anybody and let you go.
- J.F. But they've got the guns - how could they.....
- A.S. And what - how do they know that you've got a gun at night - they don't know that, you see - they are not going to look for what is going on over - or walks over the forest, you know, ....

- A.S. .... and go and hunt for that, you see - no, sorry - as I say, particularly if the officer is not there - no.
- J.F. So you went out every night and worked....
- A.S. Every night to meet Fred, you see - you see, Fred was conspicuous - I wasn't conspicuous.
- J.F. Why, because he was one of the few whites active and you were one of many black?
- A.S. Well, he's white too and so on - he couldn't, you see, go to the township, you see and so on - also black people do work with the white people and so on, whereas white people don't work in the township - I mean if he comes to the township he'll be very conspicuous, you see and so on, (so it will be me who goes there - I can pretend to be his servant of some kind.)
- J.F. And what - Fred <sup>according to</sup> was telling me when I spoke to him yesterday that he would have just white people who were not politically <sup>involved</sup> - didn't have a big profile or anything, (who offered their homes... <sup>or their cars.</sup>)
- A.S. (8) That's right - and cars.
- J.F. Did that surprise you....
- A.S. In fact - in fact what happened is that, you see, (I went to Worcester with a - a person whom I didn't know, and a car which I didn't know - what - he didn't know what I was carrying, you see - you know, Sonja Bunting arrange(d) that a car of this colour will be in such and such a place and then you must go with your parcel, and - because I sent a message that I want to go to Worcester with pamphlets and so on, and then he organised this transport, you see - and then -
- (Then the car was there and I got in it - I didn't even ask) - he was sitting there - I got into the back, sat down - I said : Worcester, my friend - he didn't know where he was going, you see, seriously speaking, but he knew that he will be told where to go by - by the person who went in there - and then he drove to Worcester from Cape Town.
- J.F. Who was that that drove?
- A.S. The who - I don't know - I don't know - (I don't know him even today, let me tell you that - and then - and then (I said to him): You - you drive - when we are next to the township in Worcester, I say : You drive for ten miles straight the main road, and then when you have finished ten miles you return back - you'll find me there standing - and he drove for ten miles and I went - (once he disappeared I went to the township and I dropped the parcel to somebody there, then I quickly went back and stand where - then he drove back, then I opened the door, I came inside - he drove back) -
- (And then, you see, when I was arrested last week I was taken to Worcester Prison, and they - they said to me : On such and such a day somebody drove a car, this number, and he didn't know what you are carrying, he didn't know where you are going - you told him to drive and come back and so on - what you were doing - what were you doing? He was really (Laugh) you see -
- But lucky enough at that time the police were not as vicious as they are now, you see, and we had instructions from the A.N.C. that you give no statement (to) no police - the statement is

A.S. .... given to the lawyer - you just give your name and your address, that's it - then I said to the police : Well, my friend, you know the rules of the law of South Africa - I'll give you my name, my address, and nothing else, sorry - and this chap says : Hey, listen, we know what happened and so on, you see, but we can't - we have got nobody to prove it and so on - why do you say these white man? - this white woman and so on, you see -

They knew, you see, you know, that it was Sonja - I said : Listen, I don't make statement, man - don't be silly - don't talk that nonsense - I don't care....

J.F. Why did you stay with this white woman, they said - what did they say to you?

A.S. No, no, they say that you know, you know - you know this woman, you know - white woman - you know - I said - I said : I make no statement - they had - they - you see, what happened is that they took the - the number of the car, and they went to the owner of the car, who knew nothing about the whole thing and so on - it was not the driver, you see - and then the chap says : Just wait a little bit - I gave my car to so-and-so - he borrowed it here - Oh, I says, who's that so-and-so (Laugh) -

And they went to that chap - they said : Listen, hey, you drove somebody's car somebody to Worcester and so on - and the chap says : Yes, I did - and what happened then - he says : No, somebody came in behind and so on - I drove him to Worcester, and then that's it I know - and they say : What do you mean, that's it - because that chap says I must move, you know, and says : Can you identify -

I was identified by him in prison, you see - he says : Can you identify that man - he says : Yes, I can - I think I can identify him, you see - so I'm trying to show Fred Carneson was quite right -

And then the chap that identified me he says : They are (.....) in the road there, and then he says : That's (the) one, you see - and then the police now they had to come to me and says : You, you are that person - who's that woman that sent you - (gave that car) - they wanted -

(They were after Sonja Bunting, not after me, you see, you see - and - and I said) : Listen, I make no statement here, sorry - I don't know that person that is pointing at me, you see - I don't - I make no statement - anyway, I never even said I don't know - I said : No statement, you see, sorry - and that thing helped a great deal - (so Fred is quite right).

J.F. About what - Fred's quite right about what?

A.S. (About the fact that they use people who knew nothing about what is going on - they just know them as friends.)

J.F. O.K., I think that's it - just tell me, when you said that word, it is red - that Xhosa word - it means there's danger - watch out - how do you spell that?

A.S. Kubomvu. Conciliation

J.F. (Tape off)..... the A.N.C. member of SACTU.

A.S. I'm NEC as I was before, and also I am a representative in Western Europe - I represent SACTU in Western Europe.

J.F. O.K., but when you left the country can you just - what would you want to say about what you - you left in '63 and what you did, or do you just want to leave that.

A.S. No, I don't think that.....

END OF INTERVIEW.