

P. I was born in Everton - Everton is a small settlement which used to be where there was freehold for the Africans, and I never grew up there - within a very short time - I think I was about two - we moved over to Rustenburg and I spent the early part of my years in that place - then I went over to Pretoria and stayed in Atteridgeville and I attended school at Sekitla (?) Secondary School and I attended school again at Hebron Training Institution - Hebron was a - when the people moved from Kilnerton when the bantu education system took over the missionary schools Kilnerton was one of the schools which were closed down and it was turned into a bantu education school, then it moved on to Hebron - I was among the first group which moved over there.

I completed my secondary school education '66, '67 - then I move on to University of Natal, and at the University of Natal I - I studied medicine - that was until '68 - I left in '68 but I never let - let myself drift away from student politics - let me mention something about student politics at that time - student politics at that time was channelled through NUSAS, and NUSAS was by then a liberal organisation which included only two campuses which had - by then we called it a non-white representation - that was University of Natal black section and University of Cape Town - they had a section which included black people.

Then it was during the late 1966 that ideas were being thrown around, especially from the Christian circles, to form a university Christian movement, and conferences (?) were called and various churches backed the idea to have a university Christian movement - the churches which I can remember were not involved were the Catholics - and the Methodists were involved, the Presbyterians were involved, the - the ACCSA was it - there's another one which is run by Rev. Wing, Congregational Church of South Africa, and it was involved in it, and the Anglicans were partially involved in - in the whole thing.

And the Lutherans were initially involved, and they were the first to pull out of the idea of the university Christian movement - when the university Christian movement took on a radical stand - now this university Christian movement was not - was unlike NUSAS - not confined to the English speaking universities - it was some - a little bit broader because it involved the university students who were also at the so-called bush colleges - the university colleges of the north, the university colleges of Zululand, before they became autonomous universities, Fort Hare and so forth.

And it was at - at that time a very difficult thing at the University of Natal Wentworth Section, that we had non-Christian students who were in the majority, so to speak, and they were mainly Hindu and Muslim, and we couldn't cater for their interests as students in terms of them being non-Christian students, and we sort of toyed around with the idea of having Christianity not defining - not becoming the definition of membership, but rather having the - the university student becoming the central theme around which we could organise university.

By then our biggest problem was that NUSAS was banned at all the black campuses....

J.F. NUSAS was banned....

P. At all the black campuses, and we could not have any organisation of any sort which could be credible - SRCs were functioning, and by then we felt that the SRCs which - the way the SRCs were functioning they were functioning as appendages of the university administration in those areas.

P. Their stand was not much radical except for once, I think, in 1968 when we found Turfloop SRC coming out with the support of the students, demanding the recognition of NUSAS as a campus organisation - I think '69 was it - was the year - but otherwise we found that student organisation at the black campuses was very much minimal - it was confined to those ideas - in fact I think it was designed to be like that so that we could have students who were apolitical who could only think of nothing else except the degrees that they would get at the end of the whole thing and the - their involvement with the community was one such that one could consider as being an elite group out of the whole situation and -

But the experience we had within NUSAS was such that we were not considered really equals within the whole situation - we would go to a conference and would put our points across, have candidates for leadership within NUSAS, and which candidates would never have the majority - I mean the support of other white campuses, and they would fall by the wayside, and once or twice we'd find a window-dressing of a vice president who was just a figurehead having no tangible tasks he could perform and tasks which could meaningfully change the role of NUSAS within the - the community of South Africa - let me just put it like that.

I mean NUSAS was really an organisation of students and its activities was mainly confined to that level of student activity - it never dealt with the nitty gritty of how a black person relates to his own society and what can students do to help lift the - uplift the standard of living of the society - I would like to mention one other fact that this - this was frustrating the members - the only big member union of black students, which was University of Natal Wentworth Section, and they felt that it could not go on any - any longer, and the motion came - the motion of disaffiliation from NUSAS - I think it was first mooted in 1968 - June, 1968 - a threat of pulling away was originally in 1967, but it gained momentum in 1968, and everybody felt that now black people's association with NUSAS is coming to an end.

By then UCM was fulfilling much of the activities which later SASO came to take on - it was at that time that we had students of the calibre of Steve Biko - I would say that Steve was a godd organiser - he had his faults, of course - I mean he didn't have a - a very wide perspective in terms of where does he want the movement to go, which started off, for an example, as being friends (?) of Martin Luther King, and very soon we moved off to - from being friends of Martin Luther King to being friends of Elridge Cleaver, and it was only later on that we sort of left this fanaticism about other political figures outside South Africa to come and deal with our own situation.

Now I should come to the ideas at the formation of SASO - at the formation of SASO there were two main ideas which were prevalent at that time - there was the old ASA, which was the African Students Association, which was an ANC students association - and then there was the ASUSA - ASUSA was African Students Union of South Africa, which was a PAC outfit, and with people that went to (?) the tendencies to stay for seven years in that area, or even longer - some - I know of some who stayed up to ten years in that area - I don't want to mention names, but I think Madide, the present minister of health of kwaZulu, spent about ten years there....

J.F. In ASUSA?

P. In - in Wentworth at the medical - medical school - now there you had the opportunity of having ideas of the pre-illegality of the ANC and pre-illegality of the PAC being transported along by people who were not of a different generation, of the same generation.

P. If the ANC was banned in 1960, then you found that somebody who was doing his first year in 1960 belonging to ASA until ASA go - became - was dissolved in 1962, I think - if he belonged to ASA until 1962, it means that by the time he - he leaves Wentworth in 1966, '67, he still has got those ideas with him, and it therefore meant that pulling away from NUSAS, one had to find an identity, a separate identity, an identity which could be an identity in keeping with the political aspirations of the people of South Africa, and the political aspirations of the people of South Africa could only be interpreted in terms of the politics which the ANC over the generations had been pursuing, and also to some extent, a very small extent, the ones which the PAC had brought onto the scene, which was African exclusivism.

Now initially it was felt that there should be a compromise between the two trends, sinking of differences - I should tell you one thing - it took us sleepless nights to hammer out a position which could be neither a non-racism nor African exclusivism, one which could accommodate even our - our political position by pulling out of - out of NUSAS - one had to find justification, political justification out of that, and one was living in - in the - in the era of the heights of the civil rights movement in the US, and it was only natural that one could have those ideas being transported over to him as a student, because even at that very time it was the height of the student uprising within France, and even at that time we find - we found the student uprisings in Madagascar, where you found Siranana (?) being overthrown after a very massive protest which was begun by students and it - which overflowed - overflowed to the broader sections of the community to even involve the - the armed forces.

And we had of necessity to address ourselves to the situations as to - to the situation as students, and first and foremost - but basically we - there was no open political direction which was given by any given political organisation at that time - all the political organisations which were there of the oppressed people were operating underground, if they were - if I mean some were not operating underground, but I mean they were not there at all - and the ANC was operating underground and the underground structures, as you may have read from the documents of the ANC, were not that very strong to carry on the political guidance of the broader sections of the community.

It was a - a situation where it was very difficult to organise anything - then at a seminar which was held in Marianhill, which was a UCM seminar....

J.F. Held where?

P. Marianhill, which was a UCM seminar, ideas were knocked together for the formation of a - a black students organisation - by that time black power in the US was riding very high, and we had at that seminar a - even a visitor from the US, whose name I've forgotten - I've been trying to trace the name of that person - several people have asked me about the name and I just can't remember the name, it's so - so many years ago and I didn't keep any notes, I regret why I did not - anyway we - although we were with white students at that place, but we still found them paying very much of lip service to the cause....

J.F. What date was this again, Marianhill?

P. Marianhill was '68 - '68, if I'm not mistaken it was September, but it was second half of '68 - it was '68 - and ideas were being thrown around - Turfloop students were - were there, and the SRC president at that time, Pry, was also there....

J.F. Pry?

P. Ja - he was one of the people who were present at that time - he - at that time he was very articulate, I should say, in articulating the demand for having a student organisation which could be broad enough to include all the oppressed sections of the community - there we - we started by saying we need to organise ourselves as black, the black oppressed, because by then we did not talk of non-racialism - we were talking of multiracialism, meaning that NUSAS, being a multiracial organisation, recognises the existence of race as a point of departure, but just it's a com - com - combination of different races within NUSAS, but the question of how race affects the - the development of the political thinking within the country had not yet - had not yet been thoroughly examined at that time, because the political thinking was still race.

Even when we were talking about multiracialism the political thinking was still race - it was not - we had not yet reached a situation whereby we could say race is not a political determinant in our struggle - we are struggling, we are fighting to have race as a political dimension being completely eliminated from a political - from the - from the political vocabulary, so to speak, and this was the - the problem at that time - we couldn't isolate what was needed as political theory to guide ourselves forward into the next step.

I would say SASO was formed in 1969 - inaugural conference was in 1969 at University of Natal black section, in June, after the pull-away from NUSAS.

J.F. Were you at the walkout?

P. Unfortunately in '69 I - by then I had already left campus, but I was invited to come over into the inaugural conference, but I failed to arrive because of commitments - I was a working man by then - then 1970 SASO had by - by - by then set out its - its political line - it was a black students organisation - but now if we look at the manifesto of 1971 you - 1970, SASO on the attack, one clearly realises the very compromise we are talking about, that it was a compromise of two political strings.

Now this time it was no longer the black exclusivist, but it was the role of whites in the struggle - the two strings, one saying exclude the whites altogether, the other string saying the whites have a role to play - and the manifesto in its preamble said South Africa is a country within black and whites will continue living together - it is time that the white man should define whether he is part of the problem or part of the solution - so this is precisely what I'm talking about, of the - the different ideas which were being portrayed at that time, the different - the two directions which were moving along at that time.

And I should say that we still had people who were former ANC youth league members, like Barney Pitjana....

J.F. Was Barney in the ANC youth league?

P. Of course - former youth league members who, see (?) had the political training from that era of the ANC youth league - who still had that approach to make sure that the black exclusivist approach becomes watered down to give that final version which came out - but one other fact which was that the - the black exclusivist line was still strong was that within the very same document there came a sentence that we must close ranks to white students and consolidate ourselves as black students.

- P. And contact between white and black student was discouraged only at an academic level - so I mean I can give you the - the brief history up to then of the formation up to that - I think the rest of the - of the ideas have been well documented.
- J.F. Just tell me a few things - were you - do you see - the UCM became the organising framework just by default because there was no other organisation that was acceptable, useable?
- P. Ja, it - it was just like that because at that time it was just after the repression and the - and political expression was not very strong at that time.
- J.F. Were you Christian (?)
- P. Of course I was Christian.
- J.F. But it was basically means of mobilising the people more than the Christianity?
- P. It was - it - it was less and less Christian - it - in fact the - the question of black power as a political idea was mooted within UCM, and it was promoted by even people who were not black.
- J.F. When SASO was formed why wasn't there the word black in the name?
- P. Ja, by then they had - as I was saying, maybe it didn't come out quite clearly - as I was saying, it was a stage (?) of an identity - by (but) then the identity was non-white, like the - the - the motion of dis-affiliation from NUSAS, it reads - it read we, the non-white students, right - by then the definition of who we are, the identity of the - the - the people who were - the students who were now involved, was not yet quite clear - it came out much more clearly in 1970 - the whole of '69 it - the - the blackness was developing, the - the - the black identity was developing.
- I should say SASO was - was involved in a lot of identity crises because it - it was a ques - even if you look at their - their - their documents the starting points a - a lot of it was devoted to identifying who we are, right, and even their poetry some of it shows that who is - what is blackness - it was a definition in the beginning, a lot of it - a lot of time was devoted to that, to defining who we are and why we associate ourself in the form we associate ourselves in - this was the problem - so it did not become BYO - BSO, Black Students Organisation, but it became South African Students Organisation.
- J.F. And was the antiNUSAS motivation anti-white or anti-liberal?
- P. It was anti-liberal - it was - it was not a - an anti-whitist type of approach - it was anti-liberal tendencies of paternalism which existed in - within NUSAS, where the black students had no - were not regarded as equals even within that, but were - they were - they were being given these - this paternalistic treatment of yes, we understand the - the natives, or we understand the - the black people.
- J.F. And what was your feeling about these motivations - how did you feel about the Eldridge Cleaver or this black American at the conference?
- P. I don't know what you mean by - by that, what I felt about it, but I was greatly impressed by the forthright - forthrightness of - of the whole approach, the sort of stimulating political rhetoric, I should say.

- P. Later on in life I've - I've come to realise how little of analysis was done in the whole thing, how little of proper perspectives were involved in the thing - I should think it was an expression of more of anger than any - any other thing, and at that time we were very angry young men and we - we were - we were particularly impressed by - by expression of anger, especially anger in front of the enemy, when we tell the enemy he can - he can go to hell with all my compliments, so it - it was a question of defiance and not a challenge to the - to the system - challenge came much later, but at that time in the - in the early days it was pure simple defiance and say we have got the right to say who we are - we are not going to be defined by - by any other person as non-whites - we're going to define ourselves as black, and the definition of ourselves as black depends upon our situation and we are the people to define ourselves, not any other person.
- J.F. How did you move beyond that defiance to a definition of your political socio-economic position?
- P. Learning - learning - one learned that the definition of blackness as - as a political phenomenon was much limited - it - it had no political substance, and it could not provide the political vehicle for change in the apartheid system - if black exclusivism was a remedy it was going to bring about a - an exclusivist type of situation which is a very reactionary type of attitude where you cannot accommodate citizens of a particular country because you - you - your eyes have been blurred by racial concepts, by - blurred by racial oppression.
- J.F. How did you learn - what were the directions - was it just books you picked up, was it particular people in movements - how - what took you in that direction, because a lot of people didn't move?
- P. Well, one - one met with various people, one read a lot, one - there was dearth of material at that time - one picked on any other thing one came across - books from the ANC or published material of the ANC was particularly valuable - one treasured it as if it was gold (?) - but one cannot say one's political development came out of that type of just reading, but meeting people - sometimes coming across people who had been released from Robben Island and coming back into the society, they are free men, and we - we were free to - to talk to them - we should say we learned quite a lot from - from people who - who were once on the Island.
- J.F. But what was different about your attitude, because you had some people who said : The movement's crushed, they've failed us, they - the vacuum, political vacuum and just didn't have those positive associations that you seem to have - quite a prejudice about the ANC out of ignorance, but out of an image that wasn't positive.
- P. You see, the prejudice about the ANC came in between - you see, the - the - the two trends have always been struggling against each other - the non-racial attitude that the whites have got a role to play, and that the whites do not have a role to play, the black - black man you are on your own, black man you must free yourself - you see, they have - there was no smooth acceptance of that - there was always political debate about that.
- I should say some - some people I met later on in life I realised there - I came to discover that they were ANC members I mean who were putting across this - this line that we cannot define ourselves only in terms of - of blackness - what is blackness - it is no political vehicle - oppression has never been a political vehicle.

- P. We should move out of a - a political vehicle of - of - I mean of - of a social identity to one which is much more dynamic which sets forth the perspectives for a future.
- J.F. You left me in your description at the struggle to find a compromise between non-racialism or as non-racism, you said, and African exclusivism - just take me further because you were going to - you weren't still trying to find a compromise, you're not still - at what point in the development of the groups and your development did you think - at a certain point did you decide that it wasn't important to have a compromise or did you think there was value in African exclusivism - because you said also African exclusivism, that does....
- P. You see, at the - at the beginning it was African exclusivism, but as the - the movement developed it had to take a new turn - it had to address itself to the issues of the day, and African exclusivism had no part to play - it had to include all the oppressed people of South Africa - this is why I said the identity question of what is blackness, we - it had to be defined on the basis of oppression, and it was not on a basis of colour of a skin or any sorts of biological traits - it had to be on the basis of the oppressed people of South Africa uniting against the oppressor, but that the type of definition of the oppressor and the oppressed being seen to be racially exclusive groups was a - it was shortsightedness - one lacked the - the - the analysis to say that not all the white people are oppressors - so the oppressor, oppressed contradiction, one could not put it as whites therefore oppressor, blacks therefore oppressed.
- We still found the Matanzimas of this world, the Mangopes of this world, still acting the role of the oppressor, so the - the realities of the day proved the shortsightedness of - of the political philosophy, so one had to come back to the ideas which the ANC had been saying all along, non-racism.
- J.F. Non-racism, is that the same as non-racialism?
- P. Non-racialism, ja.
- J.F. But you still got to the next step - you said it had - it couldn't be just colour, it had to be unity of the oppressed, but then you said that you discovered that repression was not a political vehicle - what did you mean by that and where did you move to next?
- P. I mean one cannot say because we are oppressed, right, therefore all oppressed are united together and that is the political vehicle - where to - where I mean what it we want (?) - what type of South Africa did we want, what - I mean what - did we under - really understand how - how our - how our oppression looked like, right - simply saying that we are all oppressed, O.K., fine, we are fighting against the oppressor - it's quite good, it's quite attractive - that's why we were attracted to it, but in - on later retrospection one finds that it was shortsightedness on our part because we did not know just what did we want, and later on in the development of the BC movement SASO (?) - we came up with the idea of communalism, which itself lacks any political content - I mean serious political content, because it is contradictory by itself - talks of socialism - it talks of African socialism and I mean we - we - we're aware of what African socialism is.
- J.F. What is it.

- P. African socialism is a - is a political theory which says that they are going to build a new political animal which is neither socialist nor capitalist by taking the best from everywhere, and it has - I mean practice has proved that where African socialism or Arab socialism has been practiced capitalism has become - has always remained the dominant ideology.
- J.F. When did - did you reject that immediately or do you remember debates about it - did it sound attractive initially, African communalism....
- P. Of course it sounded attractive in the beginning, but it was more because of lack of knowledge that one was attracted to it rather than I mean the political analysis which the ANC put forward was not so much prevalent at that time amongst the - the youth which was there - so one could not quite get to grips with analysing the situation properly, but anything which sounded like a solution was picked on - Nkrumah was a hero, Nyerere was a hero, but what they stood for in actual terms, we couldn't have all the books that - that they wrote, and we couldn't even debate their own theories.
- J.F. How long - I'm just interested as to how and when you changed - this thing of trying to find a compromise, I don't want to leave that (.....) misapprehension about it - were you thinking at one stage about a third force, were you thinking the compromise between the ANC and I suppose you're saying the PAC, or were you saying the ANC and BC or....
- P. No, at the beginning we - there were people from both organisations who were there at Wentworth and then they were saying : Let's - let's find a way of compromising so that we - we don't have to say that so-and-so's ideas - this is an ANC organisation or this is a PAC organisation - let's find a way of having an organisation which will be - which won't be identified with either - this is the type of compromise I was talking about.
- J.F. And did this mean a third force, a new movement?
- P. Not quite a third force or a new movement - it just meant that we needed a - a platform for organising students - never a political movement - it was just a platform for organising students at universities, and technical colleges later on.
- J.F. What about yourself - I'm confused - you left campus in what year?
- P. '68, '69.
- J.F. And when did you tell me you were born, what year?
- P. (laugh) I said '48.
- J.F. So you left in '68, you didn't get too far - why did you actually leave when you'd been studying medicine initially?
- P. Oh, well, I was chucked out.
- J.F. For politics?
- P. Not quite for politics - I was chucked out for having failed a - a supplementary exam.
- J.F. And so you went to work where?

- P. I was working for a chemical concern - I worked for one year and went back to college - I was at Fort Hare.
- J.F. How long were you there?
- P. Fort Hare, I was there for four years.
- J.F. Did you get a degree?
- P. I sat for my final exam and flunked one course, and repeated that one course - it was a minor - I repeated it and before the year was over I was chucked out again for political reasons this time - I was leading a strike in - in '73, and they fired me, and they gave me a letter from the so-called minister of bantu education to the effect that I was not allowed to study in any institution of higher learning until he - until he's satisfied that my - my activities can allow me to study in any institute of higher learning.
- J.F. This was '73?
- P. '73.
- J.F. And did you hold any office in SASO or any of the organisations?
- P. I was a literacy coordinator for the Transvaal in 19 - in 1973 when I left and until '74 - then I started working, and I worked with BAWU, Black Coloured Workers Union.
- J.F. As what?
- P. We were field workers with BAWU.
- J.F. What kind of trade union was that?
- P. Oh, it - it - it's a trade union which looks like - it's a successor which is SAWU - it was just a general trade union which did not see the need for the division according to crafts or according to sectors of the economy - it was just a general trade union - everybody was being organised into be - becoming a member.
- J.F. And what inspired you to go - move towards a worker movement?
- P. Well, it's an old thing - it started with the black worker project within SASO, and the black worker project was a project - it was started when SASO found itself now trying to be helpful to the community but not being with the community, and first and foremost they started to organise community development projects like this literacy I was running, and later on after the community development projects it was felt that one had to be involved with the working people, and then the black worker project started within the - the South African Students Organisation....
- J.F. And the....
- P. And the black worker project, there was a contradiction between BAWU and the black worker project - the black worker project had its blueprint in the - in the - in this way, that workers - workers unions - since workers unions were not banned they could be restarted and they could be promoted, but they should be according to the different industries, but BAWU was already formed by then by Drake Koka and his friends and they wanted to - to carry it on as an - a general trade union.

- P. Now we were sent (?) by - by SASO black worker projects to go and learn something about trade unionism from BAWU, and so that we shouldn't be dependent on the BAWU line which is the - the line of one trade union for everybody, a general trade union - we thought better have a trade union confederation like the practice has been in South Africa.
- J.F. So - I'm a bit confused - what was Drake Koka representing and what were you sent in to - to (.....)
- P. Drake Koka was a - a man who came into the political scene from the Catholic Church - he was with the young Christian workers, and I think he got involved with Eric Tyche - Eric Tyche who was the man who started the - this urban - urban training project - T y c k e - who was with the urban training project, and they sort of fell out with each other from that urban training project and they started this new - both - I mean Koka started BAWU, and Tycke started this urban training project, which later on was to form the trade unions which are today under CUSA.
- J.F. But.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

- J.F. I don't want to get bogged down in that but I just want to understand the ideological (.....) - you were coming in basically in a way of just saying we've got to relate to workers - did that indicate that you had moved and felt that you were searching for some socio-economic programme, did that indicate that you were influenced by Durban strikes of '73, what was the - what moved you from student politics....
- P. Personally?
- J.F. Well, why don't you take it personally and what was around....
- P. I - I'm saying, you see, even by the time of the Durban workers strike black worker programme was already started - it was started in '72 - it was on and it was led by somebody by the name of Bokwe Mafuna - Bokwe Mafuna until he got banned in '73 and it was taken over by Wilile Lenthlapo.
- J.F. In that case you went to BAWU and how long did you stay?
- P. I stayed for a year with BAWU.
- J.F. And how did you find that ideologically....
- P. Ideologically we are not yet - we - we're not agreed with BAWU - there were a series of conferences which were held on this - on this contradiction between black worker project and the BAWU line, because one felt that the BAWU line was a bit not answering the question, because there were already trade unions which were in existence, and one wanted to find an umbrella confederation of trade unions which could cater especially for the black people.

J.F. So then did you leave BAWU for that reason?

P. Not quite leaving BAWU for that reason - there were - there were other personal problems involved in BAWU.

J.F. I don't know if I'm getting a clear picture....

P. Now it's - I didn't leave it for ideological reasons, but there were other personal problems which were involved - I was working elsewhere, right - I'd found myself a job elsewhere, because from BAWU one could not get adequate financial remuneration but one still worked with BAWU and I couldn't say I split away from BAWU at that time, but I mean we were still associating with each other, but we are not yet - we are no longer agreed - by 1975 we no longer agreed on political understanding.

J.F. So what was your political understanding, what was your problem, aside from the fact that there - what do you mean, there existed unions - was it....

P. No, the - their attitude towards the workers, it was a very funny question - there was a - in '74 - there was in '74 a - a meeting which was called in Orlando where people like Manthatha were involved in - in the discussion, and Manthatha was saying the struggle of the black people is not one of all the workers - it is of the black workers - that's why we say black work - we don't say workers of all countries unite - we say black workers of all the countries unite - I said (?) now we started differing very seriously about that because now I didn't find it necessary to say black workers now of all countries now - on what basis, because our definition or point of departure was one of - one of oppression in South Africa - our point of departure was that, but now if you bring in other countries now you - you are extrapolating the - the question rather awkwardly and it makes nonsense of your definition of blackness.

So this is one of the things which I found a bit funny at that time - we're not very much agreed on many things with BAWU at that time - one other thing was that confrontation with the system - Drake released a statement to the effect that they don't want to - they are a trade union which won't - which has got no aim of toppling the state - the - the system - it wants to work with the employers in terms of trying to educate the - the - the workers so as to know their rights so that there can be industrial peace in South Africa.

So that thing, when it came to the 1974 SASO conference in Wilgespruit, it was challenged very strongly and....

J.F. Challenged from what perspective?

P. That the tra - the - the - the duty of the trade union is not to - to fight for industrial peace but it - it owes its - I mean it owes its allegiance first and foremost to its membership, and that it is to satisfy the membership in terms of their rights as workers, in terms of their needs as workers, and in terms of their security as workers.

J.F. So you went to the '74 SASO conference?

P. Ja.

J.F. You weren't a member of SASO still at that stage?

P. I was associate member of SASO.

J.F. And you were working in a job?

P. Ja, I was working in a job.

J.F. What job were you doing?

P. I was a research assistant with Noreston Limited....

J.F. With what?

P. Noreston Limited.

J.F. What's that?

P. It's a pharmaceutical company which is based in Silverton.

J.F. So what did you study, science?

P. I did science before.

J.F. So by '74 where did you stand politically, ideologically - where did SASO stand - I'm talking about non-racialism - I don't want to get confused about the unions because....

P. Non-racialism was still not yet accepted as an idea - I think the - the divide came - the first document which was one which sort of moved SASO from that black, black communalism and things and towards a scientific analysis of the class situation in South Africa was the 1976 second issue of a SASO newsletter - there you found the change clearly manifested.

J.F. And how did that change get clearly manifested - were you part of the lobby to move in that direction?

P. No, I was no longer part of the lobby.

J.F. So there was in fact a mass base, there was in fact a large - growing group of people who supported a change?

P. Ja, in - in - in effect I mean at that - at that point the debate was - was growing in intensity - one found that now blackness was a very narrow concept which one could not effectively use to analyse the situation in South Africa.

J.F. And was that because people were reading a lot more than they had - was that because the ANC was more....

P. I think the ANC - contact with the ANC was even growing at that time.

J.F. And how did it grow, more people off the Island?

P. More - more people from outside coming into the country.

J.F. So even by then....

P. We'd - we'd - we even had at that time a - a library - books which were coming from outside.

J.F. Which you must have kept in a special place?

P. No, it was a mobile library that was - that's what it was called.

J.F. Was it actually a vehicle?

P. No, it was books moved from one - from hand to hand amongst selected people.

J.F. So you didn't have the feeling that the ANC only came from older people coming off the Island - you felt that there was a - people coming out of the country would be coming back in?

P. We knew the ANC was underground, but the problem was finding the - the underground members of the ANC, but at that time more and more of them were coming out and coming to see us for who we were, because in the beginning it was not yet - it was not clear whether we were a bantustan type of organisation because the SABC, when SASO came out, lauded the - the - the emergence of SASO, only to regret two years later.

J.F. Did they actually have an editorial on SABC....

P. Of course they had an editorial on SABC.

J.F. Do you remember what they said?

P. They said it proves to NUSAS that the black people want their own identity which the (.....) - the - the government has always been - been saying that black nations must be allowed to develop our own blah, blah, blah - you know, this apartheid blah, blah, blah.

J.F. And what was your response to that?

P. We didn't come out with a statement at that time, but we just went on to work, but at that time we didn't even have the facilities, we didn't have the - the - the material and the financial material to start off even giving out a publication - SASO news bulletin - the first SASO news bulletin came out - out of a roneo machine.

J.F. But given that the PAC was founded at the USIS and that the SABC supported SASO's foundation, did you - did you at the time consider that to be something that said something negative about the organisations or did you figure well, that's one of those strange contradictions where we're in the right and they're in the wrong but - what did you think with the SABC....

P. We hated the comment - let me just be clear, we hated the comment and we felt very bad about that comment and - but I mean in later interviews with members of the executive certain newspapers got the truth of - of the whole matter - but within two years the SABC came to regret their comment because they found themselves now having no foot to stand on about what they - they lauded the (.....) two years earlier.

In fact '70 already - by 1970, June, they were seeing a different animal coming out.

J.F. Back to '74 in Wilgespruit there'd begun to be a debate over the concept of black workers versus workers - where did you go from there - you continued to have the same job....

P. I couldn't - I couldn't - I continued to have the same job and later on I mean I left the country - not the same year - I left the country later on, but the ideas and the contacts with the movement I still had.

J.F. Were you - what province were you based at that stage where your job....

P. I was in the Transvaal.

J.F. And what year did you leave the country?

P. Beginning of '75.

- J.F. Because in '75 and '76 you had - I don't know very much but trials that I do know, there were like Rabkin and (.....) - those trials where you began to see - I don't know if there're other trials that I'm not familiar with - I'm just saying because your - did your conscientisation come at all from seeing trials or from receiving literature produced in the country - did you ever get any literature produced or did you ever hear of a - I don't know if there were....
- P. There was Radio Freedom, for example, - we used to listen to Radio Freedom every day when there was a broadcast - I think we listened to it thrice a week by then.
- J.F. Did you listen in a group or did you just discuss it the next day....
- P. Of course I mean we listened in a group - we're living in - in - in groups as SASO members - we're not - for example, I was no longer staying home - I was living with - with a group of young men and we were - we were behaving in - it was almost communes, I should say - we were living just like that.
- J.F. And what was the view of Radio Freedom among SASO people?
- P. Of course we wanted Radio Freedom - we - we were not anti-ANC political ideas at that time, never, we - because we felt that this is a liberation movement, we are a students movement, and these are the people we need - we want to have the - the material the - the - they are giving us - that is why SASO became so receptive to - to - to - I mean members of SASO became so receptive and (.....) ideas later on.
- J.F. I take it you were recruited inside before you left....
- P. I was not recruited.
- J.F. You weren't - did you have any reason to cover up your view about the ANC to protect yourself - I'm just wondering if....
- P. I was not a member of the ANC....
- J.F. But your view of it - were you saying : Hey, this is great stuff, let's listen - I know there were AN - there were SASO people who came out of SASO who went in the direction of the Muntunyezis and that were anti - I'm saying was it a very open thing or were there people within SASO like this one is supporting ANC, this one is PAC or was....
- P. Let me just mention one thing, at that - after the meeting in Orlando this guy Mantado (?) walks over to me and says : You are a young immature communist, you don't know what is blackness - and I did - by then I didn't know what communism meant - I said : What do you mean - I was shocked, I didn't know what was happening - so this is the problem that I mean one - one was involved in a - in a - in a situation of development - the situation was constantly developing, and once ideas were developing when - whilst one was trying to put them into practice - we were meeting hard practice which could not be fitted onto those ideas which we had developed in co - in college - we had to deal with a situation which was much more concrete, and then we had to come into contact with things like the Freedom Charter, and we had to find out what questions - how can we - we put a - questions against the Freedom Charter - we said the Freedom Charter is an old document at that time, but we - we found that nothing had changed which was there in the Freedom Charter, but by then no debate was ever going - was ever put forward about the validity of the Freedom Charter - I mean (?) personal understanding of things where one was getting things from friends.

- J.F. What year was the Orlando conference that Manthatha came after you....
- P. '74.
- J.F. Was that the same year as Wilgespruit?
- P. Mmm.
- J.F. And why did you leave them?
- P. Well, the cops were picking up people left and right and I had to leave.
- J.F. But just for SASO activity?
- P. I don't think - well, let me say, in '74 there was at - we had - we had series of meetings in - in SASO which had to deal with what we - what we were calling second phase - now second phase was now armed struggle, and our people were caught and arrested and beaten up and they wanted to know what is that second phase, and it was around those ideas I mean some - some other things were more sensitive at that time, one can - still can be sensitive, some people - what I can tell you about the other things that made us leave at that time, some people can still get arrested for that.
- J.F. But how - were there people in SASO who were opposed to armed struggle?
- P. Of course like in any other new phenomenon people will get different - differences of opinion....
- J.F. But it wasn't new, it....
- P. I mean let me just inform you, we had a - another (?) thing, a national executive committee meeting in 1973 in which we had sent out people to go and meet the liberation movements, right - to come and talk to them and say in what way can we work together, O.K. - does that satisfy you?
- J.F. And that was both movements - you said movements.
- P. Liberation movements, let me just leave it a blank that's all (?) - because if I say it was both movements I'll have to say so-and-so was sent to this movement and so-and-so was sent....
- J.F. You don't have to say it, you can just say....
- P. Ja, but people were sent to - to the two movements, and the only movement which replied positively was the ANC.
- J.F. But had you any doubts yourself as to which movement - were you waiting to hear how does PAC respond or were you (.....) clear of ANC....
- P. We did not know even what was the PAC, we'd not - we did not know what was the ANC - we wanted contact with these people with - we're hearing from them - about them from their broadcasts.
- J.F. So if you could've got - did you - there was no PAC broadcast?
- P. There was from Dar es Salaam....
- J.F. Did you listen....
- P. in the morning - we couldn't get it clearly.

J.F. I'm just trying - you don't have to expose anything....

P. So we couldn't get it clearly.

J.F. But would you want to have - were you just as open to either movement yourself or were you leaning towards the ANC, or were you just saying I don't know about them, I'll see what I see?

P. I would say because one was - was receiving more ANC material, one was much more inclined to the ANC - one knew more about the ANC than any other.

J.F. You didn't have any prejudice against the PAC for any reason?

P. Not quite - I mean one was was saying : No, well, it's a small organisation, right, and by - by then there was a - there was an idea which was flying around the country that there was a need to unite the two.

J.F. Did you get any sense when the cops were looking for people about this second phase - when the police were infiltrating organisations they were attempting to - that they leaned in any direction - because the people I've interviewed have talked about being put in cells with BC people or being released and saying : Why don't you move to the BC organisations - this is the late '70s and the early current decade to the '80s - did you have any sense that the system was beginning to feel that it had editorialised correctly or that it felt that it was actually more pleased with anything that would stay with BC would not move to a second phase, that kind of thing, or did you not have a sense of....

P. No, we - we - we didn't have that long term perspective at that time, but what I would say is that whenever we were arrested one would come across the policeman - he'd say : You are still small fry - I've made - I've met bigger men, better men - you don't have politics as he had - I mean policemen were saying that : I've met the ANC, I'll make you shit in your pants, but - but you must know you are a small boy, you are nothing.

J.F. And when you left can you - again you don't have to go into anything you don't want to go into, but what can you say about - you left because it was a hot time and you went out - did you immediately join the ANC or did you take a while or what?

P. Well, I left and I came into contact with people of the ANC, not immediately joined - after some time I joined.

J.F. But did it take you a while to decide or once you got to see and read for yourself and speak to people were you clear or did you still....

P. One was, well, finding an exile situation very much confusing - as soon as one arrived we - we found a large political spectrum of people we didn't even know about when we were in South Africa - think of the Unity Movement.

J.F. Where were you....

P. I was in Botswana - think of the Unity Movement, all the - all those other types of movement - two shades of Unity Movement, all this - one was meeting so many people one was just meeting two - two factions of the PAC next time.

- P. And it was sort of a very funny situation where one was being buffeted from left and right by political ideas from this one and this one, and one had to stop a little bit and say : Hey, what's happening - we thought I mean there was unity among the people outside here.
- J.F. So was it for that reason that you waited a bit - how long before you did join?
- P. A few months.
- J.F. So you joined in '75?
- P. Not quite - '76.
- J.F. But before Soweto?
- P. Ja, before Soweto.
- J.F. And was it an easy decision to finally make or was it still a confusing one or did....
- P. No, it was an easy one to make - one had learned by then - one had studied the situation - when one found himself in that situation where one didn't know what - what was actually happening at that time, it took one time to make a very rational decision from a very cool and clear-headed mind - not to jump onto any offer that comes along the road.
- J.F. And what moved you towards the ANC instead of the PAC - was it....
- P. I knew the ANC.
- J.F. But was it ideological, was it just they had a better army - did they have anything to do with non-racialism....
- P. That's why I said ideologically I was much more - by then I had known the ideological line of the ANC and I was much more satisfied with the line of the ANC.
- J.F. And the non-racialism of the ANC, was that positive or negative to you...
- P. It was a positive one because it involved a very clear analysis - it was not just theory of some kind which I don't understand, but it came from the nitty gritty analysis of the contradictions which are existing in the South African situation - how is race a factor in the South African situation - how is non-racism, non-racialism a policy position which the ANC can develop on, and which is the only way forward to bring about a situation where apartheid can be eliminated - one cannot eliminate apartheid with apartheid.
- J.F. On the level that you had once long ago been supportive of the decision that said : We don't even have contact with whites except for an academic level - was it hard to move on an emotional level to accept whites in the movement - did it surprise or disturb you to see whites in the ANC?
- P. No, come on now, I've been - I was in NUSAS, I was in UCM, I had worked with whites, I had contact with them, and I knew how to work with them - I had all that experience - it was nothing new to me to meet whites....
- J.F. No, but you....

P. But now at - I mean on a - on an organisational - at an organisational level, but what I - this time I knew that I'm not meeting whites who are - who are going to laud it and - and - and just push me around, but this time I was meeting whites who were comrades with whom we could think together, work together, act together, and plan together for the future - it's quite a different thing.

J.F. My last question is do you think this whole topic of non-racialism is important?

P. Of course it is important - I mean race as a concept is a - is a non-starter because even it - scientifically how do you define race - it cannot be defined scientifically - it cannot be defined scientifically - from what, features or what - what is race - one cannot use race as - as a point of departure because it's a non-scientific concept - in fact it's a colonial concept which is - which seeks to perpetuate colonial domination of one people over the other.

END OF INTERVIEW.