

J.F. Where were you born and when?

P.W. I was born on the 27th. June, 1967 in Athlone in Cape Town, Kewtown (?) to be exact.

J.F. What kind of area is that - is it a Coloured area?

P.W. Ja, it's a Coloured area, an extremely working class area - in fact it's one of the most sub-economical areas in the Athlone region.

J.F. And what were your parents' politics like?

P.W. I doubt it if they have any politics.

J.F. What do they do?

P.W. My mother and my father's divorced at the - at this moment - my mother's working as a - in a factory as a machinist - I've three other - two other brothers and one sister - we are four altogether - my sister's working in a factory, my other brother is still at school, at high school, and the elder brother is also working.

J.F. And what are you doing?

P.W. I'm at university at this moment.

J.F. At UWC?

P.W. Ja.

J.F. And do you have a position with the Cape youth congress?

P.W. Ja.

J.F. What's that?

P.W. I'm (?) the Athlone region and the education and training person of the Athlone region.

J.F. Of CAYCO?

P.W. Ja.

J.F. And when you were growing up in Cape Town did you have any sense of the history of Coloured politics in the Cape - did you know about Unity Movement or the African People's Organisation or any of those organisations?

P.W. No, not really, ja - I - the only organisation that I knew about - or I only started to - to learn about organisations in 1983 at the formation of the UDF.

J.F. You hadn't been political before that?

P.W. No, I didn't have any political understanding at that stage, but although I didn't have a political understanding I - somehow I - I could easily associate myself with the political forces - that is why at the formation of UDF I could easily associate with them because of my experiences in South Africa and because I - I had a vague perception of what UDF is, and I just knew that UDF was fighting for us.

J.F. Had you heard of the ANC before UDF was born?

P.W. I've heard of them, ja.

J.F. Before '83?

- P.W. Ja, before, and I've had a weird perception of the ANC at that stage.
- J.F. How so?
- P.W. I mean when you grow up - I mean ever since I was a child I - I was intimidated - or not intimidated - ja, I allowed the (?) - this propaganda of the state to influence me - that is why whenever I - I wrote the name ANC I thought communist or terrorist or that they a danger to us, to the public of South Africa.
- J.F. And how did you change that view?
- P.W. Ja, somehow it's funny, you know, because I had friends who supported the ANC, but I didn't know (?) what, but I could - I could - I detected it slowly, you know, they hide - they hid it away from me, but I detected somehow, and I just thought at my one friend, how could he support the ANC - I mean he's such a good guy, he always - he helps people, that kind of thing, and he supports the ANC, so - so I think the way my friends were and the fact that they supported the ANC made me, ja, understand what the ANC was all about.
- J.F. And when they made you understand what the ANC was all about did they say to you : This is an organisation that's going to remove the whites, it's going to have blacks in power - at any stage?
- P.W. No (Laugh) - and I think one thing later when I - when I came to learn about what the ANC is, I learned that throughout the history the - they never had the intention of dragging the whites into the sea and that kind of approach, and my friends they never - I mean they believed that there's a place for everyone in South Africa, black and white.
- J.F. And do you believe that as well?
- P.W. I believe it, ja.
- J.F. Why do you think you don't have the view that - there are people who would say no - they have a kind of BC point of view - why don't you have that idea that the whites should be removed - why do you think it is that you haven't had that point of view - is it because you've seen good whites in your life or why?
- P.W. I think so - there was a teacher at - at our school, a white teacher - she gave us English, ja, and she always spoke about politics and, you know, when you don't come - come into contact with whites you tend to think that all whites are against us and that all whites hate us, but when you actually - when you actually meet whites who are - who support the - the movement and support the struggle, then you - your views would tend to change, but it don't happen all the time - that is why BC people stay the way they are.
- J.F. What school did you go to that you had this teacher?
- P.W. Belgravia High.
- J.F. It wasn't Jane Coombe, was it?
- P.W. No, Miss (.....)
- J.F. Was it a surprise to you to see that kind of a teacher?
- P.W. Ja, it was - given the fact that there were many Coloured teachers who were reactionary in a sense, and who were speaking against what the UDF and other organisations stood for.

J.F. And so you went to the UDF rally and then got into UDF right away, or one day you weren't political - you went to the rally and the next day you were or how did it work exactly?

P.W. It was a friend (Laugh) who took his time, and he worked with me and he saw that I - I was interested in - in UDF, and slowly he started to influence my - my idea of politics, because he used to come to me and he spoke - he spoke politics, he spoke about the UDF, and he wanted to - to start a youth group in our area, and slowly but surely I was beginning to - ja, I was - I was agreeing with him and I agreed that we should start a youth in the area, and we did it.

J.F. When you were growing up did you have contact - you didn't have contact with whites - did you have contact with African people or Indian people?

P.W. No.

J.F. Not at all?

P.W. No.

J.F. What was your image of African people?

P.W. (Laugh) Ja, I think the - the Coloured community is a very racist community, and from small when - so the only contact that we had with Africans was the milkman who came to deliver the milk, and I mean many times people would tell stories like if you - if you don't behave yourself, they'll tell you, the milkie's going to take you away and that kind of thing....

J.F. The Milkie?

P.W. Ja, the milkman, so - so I mean I had a sort of fear for - for the African people at that stage - but also, although I had that fear for Afr - for Africans, in a way I - I sympathised with - with the oppression, you know, and somehow I - I just knew that what was happening to them was wrong - because I came from a poor community, from a poor family, I could always sympathise with people with - with poor people, and the Africans being the poorest people, I could in a way associate with them.

J.F. But it was a sympathy, it was it's sad that you're in that position?

P.W. Ja.

J.F. And how did you move (?) from having that fear and that kind of at best, sympathy, to feeling an equal - what - wasn't it difficult - what was the process when you first - can you tell me when you first began to relate to an African as a friend or work politically?

P.W. I think it is in '83, ja, because after 1983 I changed rapidly my - my idea of my fellow South Africans also changed from 1983 upwards - ja, at the COSAS con - their annual general meeting in Durban in 1983 - I attended that meeting and I came into contact with various African people, and I spoke to them and I learned - I mean I learned about them as people, not as politicals or revolutionary or whatever, but I - I learned to know them as people, you know, and as people who perhaps - ja, who had the same longings that I, and I think that con - contributed to the positive image or the acceptance of Africans as my brothers.

J.F. What was it like, that first conversation - were you surprised that they could speak well or were you nervous - can you just tell me anything about that process?

- P.W. Ja, you know, to - to tell you the truth, I was actually afraid, afraid, afraid, because at the COSAS conference we sang songs, political songs - in fact that's the first time when I heard songs, such militant songs being sung, and I was actually being afraid in a certain extent, because in these three books I've always - they've always taught us that the Africans they invited Piet Retief there and they murdered him, they danced - they sang and danced with him, and afterwards they murdered him - so I mean that image was scrapped (?) up in me of how it - they - they danced - and you think they are friendly, and all of a sudden they would murder you - so when we had that immense atmosphere there in that hall, so I - I was getting afraid of it, but as the days passed on I learned to - to fit myself into that atmosphere.
- J.F. What made you get comfortable - what do you think it was that made you not be afraid of them?
- P.W. The duration of the conference, the content of the things that we spoke about, I mean clarifying, for instance, the non-racial position, and the warmth with which the Coloureds was accepted in COSAS - that also contributed to the - my - my attitude, or my change in attitude.
- J.F. Do you think that's important for people like a Coloured person, to see a Coloured person working - is it important to have those real (?) models - does it mean anything to you to see that James Stewart who's Coloured is on the NEC of the ANC or does it not matter to you?
- P.W. It means a lot to me, you know, and in a way one actually uses that to convince people that the ANC truly stands for a non-racial society - I mean Joe Slovo being a - a member of the ANC as well, and various other Coloured people and Indian people - Aziz Pahad and kind of thing.
- J.F. What was your perception of Indian people before you got political?
- P.W. Of Indian people I had a certain stigma, or one thing that you think of - of Indians as they are the - the snobbish people, and one thought of them as having a weird culture, and I mean because people always spoke in derogatory terms of Indians, like moere, it's - it's - it's got a bad stigma attached to it.
- J.F. Of what?
- P.W. Moere - dar es a moere - of a koelie - of that kind of thing.
- J.F. And what about whites - what was your perception of whites?
- P.W. Before, ja, I - due to experiences that I've had, to be honest, I hated whites because in 19 - in 1976 I was still in Standard One, I think, or at primary school, I saw how they shot my best friend's brother and what happened afterwards, like the police the - the policeman who shot him - the other policeman came and congratulated him, and they all were laughing there, and they took him by his hands and his arms and they threw him into - into the van - and we were right opposite where this - all these things happened - so it was my best friend - his sister was there nearby, and she was crying there, and it was something just - I got enraged, although I was still young then, and also at that sta - at that same time our (?) door was broken, I - our door was kicked down by white riot policemen, and they came looking for - for some people - there was no-one in the house - and they came, they smashed the door down, they came looking there with the guns, and I mean these kind of things made - made me hate the white people - and one day I was chased off a beach (Laugh) at Muizenberg.
- J.F. Chased off a beach - when you were also young?

P.W. Ja.

J.F. And did that make - how did that make you feel - what was your reaction?

P.W. Before when (?) I - I realised when - when I actually went to the beach I knew that that thing might happen, but my friends con - convinced me to go with them, so when it - when it happened it was nothing new to me because I sort of expected it, but nonetheless it added in a way to.

J.F. Did it make you fearful or angry?

P.W. Angry.

J.F. So do you work now with Africans, Indians or Coloureds - do you actually - could you actually say that you have a lot of contact with Africans or Indians or whites?

P.W. Ja - ja, to - ja, I have a lot of contact with Africans, Indians and whites, ja.

J.F. How?

P.W. Through school - I was involved on the SRC at school, and especially in 1985 we organised rallies - at an Indian school we invited African students, and we had that inter-relationship amongst the various groups - and often we exchanged speakers - we went into the townships to speak, to address the African students and of (?) their students came to us.

J.F. And do you find that it works totally fine - there are no problems - or are there certain things you have to think about if you're doing political work with a African or having a friendship with a Indian or working with a white?

P.W. To a - to a certain - having a friendship with - with any of these people is nothing, but somehow in a working relationship one has to adapt to - or one has to be careful in your approach, because the way African people are organised is different from the way Coloured people are organised, and it's difficult from the way whites are organised, ja, so one has to be very careful about how you organise or how you - what you say when you address a specific audience.

J.F. In what ways - can you tell me just a bit more specifically what you mean?

P.W. Like the fact is that not - many of the masses of - of - of the student population is still ignorant and they still have that prejudice towards each other, so you have to actually create a - a good image, and you have to be careful of what you say and exactly how you say it - like for instance, if you say a slogan - now there are a particular way in which an African person would say a slogan like viva, and I mean we would just say viva and that kind of thing, so if you artificially says viva, and they'd be able - able to detect it, and automatically it would - how can I say - they - they would - it would seem false to them like and - and as if you aren't really sincere, so you have to sort of show them that you are sincere in the struggle, because there were many incidences where Coloured people betray Africans, like in the 1980 boycotts, where the Africans decided that they were not going to write exams, and the Coloured people they wrote exams, so a mistrust sort of developed.

J.F. Have you ever had discussions among your political groupings of the concept of working class leadership - do you think that's important or is that an issue you've ever talked about?

P.W. It's an issue we talk of a lot, and it's an issue which can also be confusing, because one immediately asks oneself the question what does the leadership of - of the working - or, ja, the leadership of the working class mean - does it mean that COSATU as a working class organisation, or as an organisation that represents the interests of the working class, should be in the forefront of the struggle, or does it mean that one should start developing working class leadership within our broad mass based organisations, like the UDF, or does it mean that the party should - should lead in - in - in a way the struggle and should - should dictate which road which is we - we should follow - so to me the work - the leadership of the working class actually means the second point that I've mentioned, and that is that a working class leadership should be - ja, should be developed within all our organisations, so that the interests of the working class can always be paramount or can come to the fore.

J.F. And what about African working class leadership - would you ever say there's a need for that or would you say that's racist to talk about African leadership?

P.W. I don't think it's racist to talk of African leadership, because the Africans being the most exploited, economically exploited group of people, I think that they in a way - ja, that we should actually talk of the African working class in particular, because they have nothing to lose, or they - ja, because they are the - the - the group of people who experience the most suffering within our country, they should sort of be in leadership positions, but it's not a spon - an automatic thing and a spontaneous thing - it should be a conscious process where - whereby you have the conscious intentions of developing that African working class leadership, you know, and also it shouldn't only be restricted to an African working class leadership but working class leadership in general.

J.F. But what would that mean practically - if you in the new South Africa or even in your political work now are getting - dealing with an issue, does that mean that you as a Coloured, and by the time you have your degree perhaps as an intellectual, should actually not stand for an office and let an African factory worker stand for the office - does it mean that you have to actually yourself make a sacrifice to let someone else come to the fore who's maybe not as good as you, who hasn't been as educated or hasn't had even as many years in political work as you - is that what it means?

P.W. No, not - no, not fully - as I've said, it's a - it's a difficult and it's an intricate conception, because it can also mean - and in my opinion it also means this - not only people who have a working class background but people who have the interests of the working class at heart, so you can be a lawyer, for instance, but if you clearly associate yourself with the struggles of the working class and you have the interests of the working class at - at heart, I would have no problems with you becoming part of the leadership, and I would actually in a sense say that you've created class suicide and that you are part and parcel of the working class leadership.

J.F. And what about the whole issue of class and race - do you - what's your understanding of that, the issues of class and race with regard to non-racialism - is class something that is the most important issue - is race not valid in comparison, or how would you talk about those issues?

- P.W. I would say that the question on - on race and that of class is equally important, ja, and I - I don't think that you can - that you should talk of the one, or you should place more emphasis on the one than on the other - I think that each two is very important, and that that in a way also determines which strategy we are going to - to - to follow in order to create - to attain our - our goals - so therefore I would say that we should have a national democratic programme and that would - that would in a way tackle the - the - the racial issues or, ja, and be a - a - a means where - whereby we can create one South African nation, and not different groups as we have at present, and then out of that national democratic programme should - should the - how can I say - the - the - the leadership of the working class should come to the fore or should - or should develop out of - out of that national democratic programme, and out of that we should tackle the - the - the class problem, because surely capitalism is causing problems within South Africa because it deprives many people of a lot of things.
- J.F. But how would you answer those critics who'd say : No, you can't do - have a national democratic struggle and then a second phase - you must actually begin now to deal with these issues - how do you answer that?
- P.W. I think that they are unscientific about the whole - about the reality of South Africa - I think that the material conditions of South Africa should dictate our programme, and South Africa has got a pecu - partic- peculiar history, and South Africa is in a sense unique in that one can actually describe South Africa as being some colonialist state of some - some sort, you know - ja, people refer to it as colonialism of a special type prevalent in South Africa, where the coloniser nation lives within the same country of the colonised nation, and I think that is also an important thing that we have to take into - to - to account, because that also in a sense determine, or say what's (?) important that we engage in a national democratic programme.
- J.F. When did you first hear of this internal colonialism idea?
- P.W. I think in 1984.
- J.F. And how - did you read something or hear something?
- P.W. I - I heard - like people were having debates that I didn't understand all about - like people were having debates on IC, as they call it - Internal (?) Colonialism, and racial capitalism - racial capitalism being opposed to the IC theory - so I mean people were having some heavy debates there that I understood nothing about, and I thought that - I made it my duty to - to know what these things are, you know, so I can't be left out when people have discussions of that nature.
- J.F. So how did you make it your duty - what did you do to catch up?
- P.W. I asked people what is internal colonialism and I read about things in Review - it sets out the - that theory in a very simple way, ja....
- J.F. Social Review?
- P.W. Social Review, ja.
- J.F. And do people get their information from stuff like this these days - is that a way that people get politicised in South Africa, or is it not as much - is there much about around and is that a way of getting politicised, or is it mainly from stuff like Social Review, written inside the country?

- P.W. At the moment it's a - it's a lot from stuff like these, Umsebenzis, Mayibuyes, African Communist - people receive these things regularly and circulate it and discuss it.
- J.F. And when people find - how do they get them - they find something in their mailbox or?
- P.W. Ja.
- J.F. They're handed some - what's their reaction - do they get nervous, do they worry when they get something like that?
- P.W. Ja.
- J.F. What - or are they happy to get it?
- P.W. I think it's a - it's a sort of - people - people are happy on - on - on the one sense, because people feel important in a sense that they also part of the underground structure and that kind of thing, but people also get nervous, because it's a highly dangerous thing to do.
- J.F. So what ways out - what's the most important - what ultimately - does the nervousness or the pleasure at receiving it ultimately win out?
- P.W. I think the fact that - that they don't go to the police and say that they receive these things shows clearly that the - the happiness one win.
- J.F. Your background - you always spoke Afrikaans in the home?
- P.W. Ja.
- J.F. And at school?
- P.W. Ja - I seldom speak English - it is very seldom that I speak English.
- J.F. And what's the future of Afrikaans in the new South Africa?
- P.W. I think that Afrikaans has got a future in the new South Africa, because in order to determine what the future of South Africa of Afrikaans will be, one has got to - to - to notice how Afrikaans stands in relation - I mean how people use Afrikaans in the struggle at mass meetings - I mean the mere fact that people speak Afrikaans on public platforms at mass meetings, and are being translated, means that South Africa - that Afrikaans isn't something that's going to die out soon - at this point in time, or over the years, Afrikaans has been - ja, has been used as - as a way to - as a way to maintain the - ja, as one means to maintain the - the apartheid ideology, and apartheid literature has always been used to promote that apartheid ideology, you know, so the fact that apartheid - that Afrikaans are being applied progressively or that people write progressive things in Afrikaans shows that Afrikaans has - has got a future in South Africa.
- J.F. Is the whole issue of non-racialism an important one to you.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

- J.F. If I say to you I'm interested in asking you questions about non-racialism what's your response - is that a kind of a side issue, is it an important issue?
- P.W. Non-racialism is an important issue and it's both - it's both an important and a confusing issue, because one immediately asks oneself what is the meaning of non-racialism, and are we a non-racial South - society in South Africa as yet, and my answer to that would be that non-racialism means not recognising the - the existence of different racial groups as such, but at this moment I would - I - I - I would contend that one can speak of different groups in South Africa - I would refer to them as national groups, as the Freedom Charter speaks of - one can speak of the African national group, the Coloured national group, the Indian and the white national group, but - and one can say that in South Africa there is not non-racial society as yet, but our aim is to build a non-racial society.
- J.F. What does that mean in practice - say 20 years from now, after South Africa's been free for a while, will your kids be speaking English, will they be speaking Afrikaans, will they be speaking Xhosa - what's your choice - what do you think is the future, what's realistic, what would you like - what's this new non-racial South Africa going to be like?
- P.W. Ja, I think the - the - the new South Africa will be one in which each groups or - or people can in - in a way maintain the - the different cultures which - with which they grew up, but simultaneously we build a new culture, a new culture that will be applicable to the whole of South Africa and, ja - ja, and non-racialism for future South Africa means that we will have schools that are intermingled, that where we'll have communities that - that consist of different people, like Indians, Africans and whites living in the same communities, that kind of thing.
- Non-racialism for us means people - people being free to associate with whichever people they want to and to build up friendships without being scared of being intimidated or without being scared of walking in the street and having people looking funny at you and that kind of thing, so to us - or to me - non-racialism means something positive - it means overcoming the prejudices that apartheid has instilled in us.
- J.F. What does it mean concretely - does it mean your kids speaking Afrikaans in ten years time - what do you think?
- P.W. It means that (Laugh) ja, we'll have to find some common language, ja, that we - we - that we all understand - I don't know, or I can't foresee what - what the language would be, but I think more - ja, I think it'll be English because English is - is an international language, and because at present there are people who hate Afrikaans because they associate Afrikaans as with the oppressor as such.
- J.F. Would you be happy to see Afrikaans die out in a few generations?
- P.W. No, because I believe that South Afrik - Afrikaans is not a lang - does not belong to the oppressor, because - I don't know if I'm right, but I think that Afrikaans is a language that the - the way Afrikaans was formed was through the - the - the people the - the Dutch people who spoke Dutch and that, and the - the - the - the slaves, the Cape Malays, who spoke gebrekkige Dutch, you know, and that culminated into the language Afrikaans itself, and I - I think that at first the - the Afrikaners or the Dutch didn't want to associate themselves with that language that - with the gebrekkige language that the - their servants spoke in the kombuis, but afterwards (?) somehow it influenced them and that is how Afrikaans came into being..

J.F. So just to get back to non-racialism, if I'd say to you I'm interested in non-racialism, I'm asking questions about it, do you think gee, that's a lot of focus on one issue, there're lots of other issues, or do you think it's a worthwhile thing to talk about?

P.W. I think it's a worth - worthwhile thing to think about, because at the moment there are many debates going on in South Africa as to exactly what non-racialism means and as to how different groupings interpret non-racialism, because a grouping like a BC grouping like AZAPO, they profess to be non-racial, but in fact they are racist because one of the criteria to - to get a - a membership card to their organisations is race, because if you're white you automatically don't qualify, and that's being racist, you see, so one needs to get a proper understanding of what non-racialism means, because people use the concept non-racialism for their own means and, ja, ja.

J.F. Why do you think you've never been drawn to the kind of BC - did you ever have any BC in your background, did you go through a phase - you said you hated whites at one stage - why didn't you just rush to AZAPO - or did you ever have any BC people try to recruit you - did you ever go through a stage of joining BC or supporting it?

P.W. The - I never had any people who canvassed or who - who wanted me to join a BC organisation, so I think that is one - one reason why I joined the UDF, because there were UDF people speaking to me and politicising me.

J.F. But still you - what - you know what they represent - why didn't you go - try to seek them out and join them - why do you think - why aren't you attracted to them - if you said you went through the anti-white phase, didn't it seem at one stage, well, this is the way to go, or not?

P.W. Ja, I think at the beginning that - that sort of confusion was in my mind, but I think it's actually the practical side of things that made me realise the correctness of the position of - of the UDF.

J.F. Do you think that being Coloured means that you wouldn't be drawn to an AZAPO because they were a bit pro-African and anti-Coloured, or were there CAL people that would ever draw you in - I'm just wondering if being Coloured gives you a certain perspective on BC?

P.W. No, not to me, because I - I know of certain people that - of Coloureds that belong to - to BC organisation and it - it don't give me that - that sort of African thing, perception - CAL, on the other hand - you mentioned CAL?

J.F. Yes - I don't know much about CAL.

P.W. The thing is CAL could - could have galvanised much support for themselves if they were - if they would have been willing to go out into communities and to organise people and to actua - to actively work in the community, but because they don't do that they only come to forums where they discuss highly intellectual stuff - that only appeal to the ordinary person, so automatically you feel excluded and you don't wish to belong to an organisation like that.

J.F. And Unity Movement, did they ever have any effect on you - have you ever been exposed to Unity Movement?

P.W. They had no effect on me (Laugh)

- J.F. Because some - if you talk to old people from Cape Town they'll say : Oh, Cape Town is - it's got Unity Movement in it somehow, it affects everyone somehow, no-one is untouched by it - but you're saying you were untouched by it?
- P.W. Ja, I was totally untouched by - because they also talk as they not doers.
- J.F. So you heard about UDF in '83 and then you right away joined or you joined COSAS - you've got to join an affiliate, so what did you do?
- P.W. We started a youth in - in our area (.....) youth and we had - at first we had lot of recreational programmes and that sort of thing, and slowly my friend introduced politics into this whole thing, showing us slideshows and videos, and having discussions, and inviting other speakers to come and address us and that kind of thing, and slowly awareness developed within me.
- J.F. And then - you were in Kewtown youth congress, or what was it called - Kewtown?
- P.W. Kewtown Youth Movement - we refer to it as KIM.
- J.F. And then what did you do after that - did you stay with them or join something else - when did you join COSAS?
- P.W. I joined them (?) in 1984....
- J.F. COSAS?
- P.W. Ja, very near to their - to the time when they held their conference - say, about a month or two - it's a friend at school, he also spoke to me about COSAS and he encouraged me to join COSAS, to actually start a branch of COSAS at school, and that is how I got involved in COSAS.
- J.F. So were you COSAS branch chairman, or what was it?
- P.W. Ja, we formed a branch, but it was a very small branch and we didn't do much at school - that is why it stayed small and.
- J.F. And what did you get into after that - what did you do '84, '85?
- P.W. Then came the boycotts (Laugh)
- J.F. Did you lose years of school, or time at school - what happened with the boycotts?
- P.W. Because I have - I had that limited experience in the youth and that - a limited understanding of the struggle, I could - ja, I automatically became involved in the boycotts at school, and soon I found myself thinking too loud and speaking things (Laugh) that I didn't mean to speak or - I was always security conscious and I - I was also afraid of speaking in front of a lot of people, but somehow when I saw the apathy amongst the students at school, something inside me just burst and I spoke up, and after that I found myself speaking continuously, and that is how I sort of came on the - I was elected on the executive of the SRC at school - in that time I read a lot of political - political literature and I became much more politicised, and I in turn, politicised students.
- J.F. And when did the actual boycotting start?

- P.W. On the 29th. July, 1985 - it was in - in protest to the state of emergency being declared in 35 magisterial districts on the 20th. July, 1985.
- J.F. And how long did you boycott?
- P.W. We boycott - we boycott for three days, and after three days we assess the boycott - we decided to continue the boycott, and it lasted and it lasted and it lasted until the end of the year in which we decided not to write exams, and at that time I - I was detained for two weeks under emergency regulations.
- J.F. In '85?
- P.W. Ja.
- J.F. And what were they trying to ask you about, or did they interrogate you at all?
- P.W. They did (didn't) interrogate me - it - it was only the first day when they interrogated me - now the person who interrogated me wasn't on the scene when they actually detained me, so I worked out some story and I tried to convince him that I wasn't involved in the boycotts - I'm a sort of - I'm a very religious person - I mean I got that - he - he - I - he got that impression of me because of things that I said, and afterwards he were relating passages of the Bible to me and that sort of things, so I thought I got you (Laugh)
- J.F. And then what did you do in '86 after you were released?
- P.W. In '86 - in 1985 I was in Standard Ten and I didn't write exams because at that time I was in detention - I repeated my Standard Ten at school and I was involved in the SRC again - again being elected to the executive of the SRC, and again I was detained for four months.
- J.F. When was that?
- P.W. In 1986 on the 17th. July.
- J.F. And did you get interrogated this time?
- P.W. Ja - for the whole four months I was interrogated about five times, ja, about my activities at school - I mean there was nothing that I could - could tell them that they didn't know, because they showed me literature that I distributed at school, pamphlets - they showed me a pamphlet that I distributed two days before they picked me up - they quoted things that I've said in SRC meetings - they told me who was with me during intervals - they told me that on that specific Friday before I was detained a teacher took me home.
- J.F. So were they following you - was there a spy?
- P.W. Ja, I think that there - there's definitely a spy on school who watched my movements.
- J.F. And then you were released?
- P.W. In November during exams - I wrote part of my exams in detention and I wrote the other three subjects when I was released.
- J.F. And then in '87, or from then on till now what have you been doing?

P.W. I got accepted at UWC....

J.F. You did your matric - you wrote your matric?

P.W. Ja, in detention.

J.F. In detention?

P.W. Ja, and up to now I've - ja, I'm still involved in the youth organisation, but I've steered away from student politics at university, because you are very easily exposed when you are on the SRC, and I don't think that I need that exposure at this time - I can be of much more assistance to the struggle if I just organise in my community in our youth, you know.

J.F. And what are you studying at Wits?

P.W. I'm studying law at the moment.

J.F. What do you want to do?

P.W. I'm not sure at this moment - I've got a choice between being a Dullah Omar or doing labour law, assisting the trade unions.

J.F. And have you ever been - were you ever tortured in detention?

P.W. No.

J.F. What do you think of this conference?

P.W. Of this conference - I - I had some miscon, or I - I didn't know that the conference would turn out the way it is - it is a very significant conference on the one hand, but on the other hand I find that there are there aren't many people that are accountable to organisations - I mean to mass based grassroots organisations here - I find that there are too many intellectuals or professional people here, speaking on behalf of the struggle inside South Africa - I think that the whole arrangement - the whole arrangement to the conference could have been - ja, should have - should have been different, because people that aren't accountable to our organisations with (?) somehow - how can I say - ja, they were organising this thing and they consulted - ja, they told us what was going on, but because they're not accountable to organisations they don't have that sense of responsibility and they didn't go to the organisations to ask the organisations to send delegates down, so we find many people here who are here for - for their own interest or whatever.

J.F. And what are you here for - what are you hoping to accomplish - why did you come?

P.W. I was specifically asked to speak about my detentions and I was - I was delegated by a organisation, ja, and I'm here to relate my experiences, because that was what I've been told the whole organisation - the whole conference was all about.

J.F. And what do you hope will come out of this conference?

P.W. I hope that the inter - international community will start realising what apartheid is all about, and not only realise it but start to act, because I think that the youth in South Africa are getting impatient - we are appealing to the international community to assist us in - in any possible way that they can.

- P.W. We don't totally re - or we don't regard the international community as our saviours - we should be our own saviours - but we do feel that the international community can play a role.
- J.F. What kind of role - in what way?
- P.W. Imposing sanctions - people feel that sanctions can only hurt the oppressed people, but I think that the oppressed people have suffered so much that the - the - the - ja, that you can't actually hurt us more than we al - already living - living under miserable - the worst conditions that you can conceive in your mind, so I don't think that any condition can be worse than what South Africa is - is at the moment.
- J.F. And if someone from this conference were to say to you : But if we impose sanctions things are going to get even worse - how would you respond?
- P.W. I would say that I agree and we - we know that, because on the one hand it will create a - the - a vast unemployment, ja, or how do you say, a reserve labour army and the - the enemy can - can actually use that to can - can win them over by, ja - ja, can sort of co-opt them by becoming kitskonstabels or whatever, you know, and in some sense we will lose out, but on the other hand we - on the other hand, I think that it will also practically, ja (.....) because it will weaken our economy, and the economy is - is - is - is one of the main sources that the enemy rely on, because how - how would they pay their defence force members if the economy is crushed, you know, and that kind of thing - sanctions won't crush the economy completely, but we have another side (?) of struggle that will secure that - that is why we have Cosatu, who will - who can influence the economic situation in another sense, you know, and bring the - the - the country - the economy to a collapse.
- J.F. You answer the international community who - which says sanctions will hurt you black people.
- P.W. I say that sanctions can be - have its disadvantages as well as its advantages, and imposing sanctions in South Africa can only be to the - to the - can only help the oppressed South African masses, because it will weaken the economy and we - we see that the - the state rely heavily on its - on its economy to, ja - it relies, one can say - almost say it - it relies solely on its economy, its - its his (?) economy that allows its - that allows it - or that keeps itself in power apart from their - from the force, but....
- J.F. What about the suffering that'll go along with hurting the economy?
- P.W. I think the - the Afri - the oppressed people have suffered so much, we can't suffer more than we are - are suffering already.
- J.F. And you're willing to endure more suffering, you're willing to endure a continuation for what purpose - why - why are you saying that?
- P.W. Ja, we are willing to - to endure more suffering because in order to end the suffering that - that is prevailing in our country - we are willing to suffer more because it will only be for a time, and in order to rid South Africa of the suffering that we are going through at this moment - we are prepared to take sacrifice.

END OF INTERVIEW.