

- J.F. If I could just start by asking you where you were born and when.
- M.Y. I was born in Mapumulo - Mapumulo is fifteen miles - well, 25 miles from Stanger (?) and my district is Makombe - M a q u m b i Maqumbi, and it's a very small location or school - it's sort of a native location.
- J.F. And was it a village that you grew up in?
- M.Y. It's - well, it's a village - and I was born on the 23rd. December, 1923.
- J.F. And what did your parents do?
- M.Y. My parents were (.....) - my mother was a teacher, primary school teacher, and my father was a - well, a - a farmer who - who was doing some peasants work - in other words he - he would do some farming - in other words it's - it was sort of some form of - well, I'm trying to get the word - it's called some form of - of farming - type of farming - I'll get the word later - he was a peasant.
- J.F. And your mother as a teacher, did she teach in a mission school or a government school?
- M.Y. She taught at a mission school.
- J.F. So were you educated by the mission schools?
- M.Y. I was educated by the mission schools.
- J.F. So what was your contact with white people as you were growing up?
- M.Y. There was hardly any contact, but later I had contact with the mission schools - when I - I went to a secondary school and then graduated out of matric.
- J.F. And what was your perception of - were there whites teaching at the mission school?
- M.Y. They were teaching at the mission school.
- J.F. Sisters or.....
- M.Y. They were mission....
- J.F. Missionaries.
- M.Y. Missionaries.
- J.F. So did you have a positive view of whites or a negative view or did you just think well, there are a few whites who teach, or - how did you feel about whites when you were growing up - did you know whites who were selling things to you who you didn't like?
- M.Y. They more or less kept at a distance and my - well, our attitude was that whites were superior - they - we used to call them Xhosasana - well, Xhosasana is a Zulu word of being a princess or more or less a first born girl - we would call some whites Xhosana - Xhosana is a prince or first born man - and we would address whites as superior - they were - I had a condescending attitude towards a white person - now -
- Well, normally the blacks address women, married women, as Mesisu, Mrs., or the lady who is superior - it was a condescending attitude - but I was very, very much annoyed and humiliated by

M.Y. the whites who - who were addressing me as a junior, a boy - I would be - they would address me as boy - and just a very young girl who - who was about - much younger or the age of - of my daughter would address me as boy - yes, boy - all the whites who were in the counter would address me as a very, very junior person -

And I had a very, very, very strong resentment against being looked down - looked down upon by the whites - now for instance, little things like apartheid - well, Nelson Mandela tells of the story that he was not allowed cups of tea, and the whites wouldn't share a cup of tea - and I - I don't think I've - I did have a similar experience, but it was clear to me that apartheid was practiced in public transport and I would - we would be called to go up in the top deck which is reserved for blacks -

Now when the bus was full the conductor would order us out because we are black, and it was a very, very, very annoying thing to be discriminated - discriminated against and - and ordered - well, being ordered rudely to go out....

J.F. These examples are from the city - before - moving back to the rural area when you were still young - when did you leave the?

M.Y. I (Laugh) - I left - I - well, I was still young, and I had no contact at all with the whites, but later I had contact with the - with the whites when I was a - already a student at the secondary school - at the boarding school...

J.F. Where was the boarding school?

M.Y. At Umpumolo Institution first and at the Lutheran Church - Umpumolo Institution.

J.F. In Natal?

M.Y. In Natal.

J.F. But was it closer to a city?

M.Y. Well, it wasn't - it was not close - closer to the city - but it was a rural area - and later it was at Indaleni High School in Richmond, which is a Methodist missionary school - now the teachers were very careful about their attitude towards us - towards us blacks - and I didn't notice - I didn't notice at all that - about the - the attitudes of the whites towards us, and I had no opinion about the whites -

But I sort of felt that the whites were superior.

J.F. And what did your parents tell you - did they tell you the whites were superior?

M.Y. My parents felt that the whites were bosses, and they were superior to me and they - they - they hated being subservient to whites - my - my parents told me that I must get educated because my father resented being made a servant to - to - hated being humiliated to pick up and empty the white - white wives - wives of the whites - the chamber pots of the - of the whites -

And he actually felt that I was going to study and qualify and be free from the humiliation of being a - an emptier of the

- M.Y. chamber pots (Laugh)
- J.F. So did he see the way you would overcome discrimination and apartheid through education?
- M.Y. Of course.
- J.F. He didn't see it through liberation struggle - was he someone who was aware of the A.N.C. in its early days or?
- M.Y. Ja, well, he had known the A.N.C. - had - he had heard about the A.N.C., and he had also heard about the ICU - actually my name, my first name is Masabalala, after - after the name of Semil Masabalala, who was in the A.N.C. - he - he was leader of the ICU and he was famous for having been detained by the police, and when the police - when the people, his followers, stormed the jail - tried to storm the jail in Port Elizabeth - they were killed by the police - 21 people were killed by the police.
- J.F. When was that?
- M.Y. 1922 - now....
- J.F. Right before you were born?
- M.Y. Of course - well, before I was born of course.
- J.F. How do you spell Masabalala?
- M.Y. M a s a b a l a - now...
- J.F. K~~o~~sana - how do you spell that - when you said earlier, K~~o~~sana?
- M.Y. Nkosana - N k o s a n a.
- J.F. So you were named after Masabalala because your father - had he been in the ICU?
- M.Y. Well, because - because he had - well, he had been impressed with Masabalala's leadership in the ICU.
- J.F. From afar - he hadn't....
- M.Y. Ja, from far - from afar - but well, of course, my father had been in prison for - in Pretoria for taking part in the pass burning demonstration.
- J.F. In which year?
- M.Y. 1919, before my - before my father got married.
- J.F. And had he been in the A.N.C. or the ICU or what organisation was he in?
- M.Y. Well, I - I don't know whether he was in the A.N.C. at all, but he sympathised with the A.N.C.'s struggles, and he was a victim of the A.N.C. demonstrations - he was sympathetic, very sympathetic to - to the ICU.
- J.F. I see - although what work was he doing - was he an industrial worker?
- M.Y. Uhuh - yes, first - first he was a labourer and he - he was sort of a - a semi skilled labourer - a semi skilled labourer - and then he - he decided to go

M.Y. back to his own location to become a subsistence farmer - I've got the word which I was looking for - a subsistence farmer - he - well, he was working on planting his crops, and then of course, collecting whatever he had planted - a subsistence farming - he is - is a job of the peasants -

He planted some crops and he - he was - we earned a little money from ploughing for the subsistence farmers, and he was - later he carted - he - he was - owned an ox wagon which he hired out to the farmers and some traders - in other words he earned very little - he earned very little money.

J.F. So he - you think he was always a supporter of the liberation movement in its different forms?

M.Y. Well, earlier during his childhood - well, his youth he was involved in the Bambata rebellion, 1906, and he fought against the poll tax, and he was involved in the - the armed struggle under Bambata, the chief who had led the Bambata rebellion - I'm sure you must have heard of the Bambata rebellion.

J.F. I have, but in case people who are reading this haven't, can you tell me how you were taught about it - when you were told about - what did your father tell you - what did it mean to him - what did it mean to you?

M.Y. It meant that he - he was - well, the people were persecuted for - because the whites had imposed a tax against the people who have no money and he - he had - he had struggled against the imposition of the taxes and he felt - and he felt that he couldn't understand why they were being taxed for the which - for the head (?)

Now this was a very mysterious edict where it was said that each man was going to be taxed a pound per head, and the interpreter used the Zulu word by saying that the men will be charged literally a pound per head - the head tax -

Now they didn't understand why they were being charged the head - the tax for the heads (Laugh) - they pay head tax - now there are quite a number of people in my district at Maqumbi whose names are called Mali a Makanda - money for the heads because of this war of the heads and the Bambata rebellion -

And it's - it was a very, very, very disturbing thing for - for my - my parents and my people, and they fought in vain, and there were so many people who were killed - about thousands upon thousands were killed - and fortunately my parents, or my father and my uncles survived and they were not killed and - and sent to prison.

J.F. They weren't sent to prison?

M.Y. They were not sent to prison.

J.F. So did you grow up feeling that your father was kind of a hero for having been involved in those things - did you have a sense of pride or did you think maybe he was a bit foolish to stick his neck out, or did you not.....

M.Y. I was very proud - I was very proud of ^{my family} for having been brave enough to fight against what was called oppression, and he was - he felt that he wanted - he only wanted to be independent -

M.B. of the white man because he was very oppressive - now he actually tried to demonstrate his revulsion against white authority by breaking away from - from a missionary church to form an independent church - now when I was still -

When I was young I belonged to a protest church, an independent African congregational church and I wanted - well, I did not have anything to do with the whites which - even now I'm still a nominal member of the African Congregational Church.

J.F. So was that a political statement that you wouldn't have to do with the whites with your church?

M.Y. Yes, it was - yes, it was - it was - it certainly was.

J.F. And when your dad and your family and the values they gave you, was there ever any sense that there were good white people or was that just not an issue?

M.Y. They were - well, generally they were - he felt very much - well, he - he was bitter against the whites but (Laugh) quite interestingly I'm called M. Masabalala, B, Bonny - I was called Bonny because my father had worked as a domestic servant for the Scottish people - the Scottish people loved Bonny Prince Charlie (Laugh) - this was a very interesting relationship, Masabalala Bonny - B o n n i e - you know, the bonnie sense of (.....) (Laugh) -

This was a contradiction in terms because my father was a very pleasant person to deal with, and he had a - well, after meeting his - his employers he had a very pleasant relationship with them, and as a result he - he felt that I could call my - he could call his son by the name of Bonnie -

Now this was a very strange departure from - well, from tradition because the missionaries insisted on giving the children English names - I - he - he was - in a way he felt rebellious and - and gave the name - a very Zulu name and it's called Masabalala which means - well - well, which is - which means that a person is - is spread out or is famous -

Now when my father got married he refused to have the marriage ceremony performed by a white person, Rev. Dudley (?) and - and then arranged to have the marriage done by - by a black minister - now when I was being baptised he refused to have a white minister to baptise me - now there was a black minister who had baptised me and my father gave - gave my name which was Masabalala - they - he - when the minister asked whether he would give me the alternative English name he insisted that he would give me a Zulu name.

J.F. I see - the people that he named you Bonnie after, were they the chamber pot people - the ones he had to empty their chamber pots that made him so angry?

M.Y. Of course (Laugh).....

J.F. The same ones?

M.Y. The same ones, of course (Laugh) the same ones (Laugh) - yes, there must have been a contradiction indeed (Laugh)

J.F. So in a sense it was just part of the normal duties so he could still feel that they were not - they weren't bad to him - it was

J.F. just what he had to do?

M.Y. Yes, well - well - well - it was in a way a general revulsion against the system of white boss-ship, and in the system of passes - of pass laws - in this way he burned his passes and this was - and - well, on a personal level he was generally a very, very pleasant person - that - that's - well, that's why there must have been a contradiction in - in his personality -

But generally he hated white overlordship - he was very, very, very much against having - having relations with the whites - that's why he decided to go to his homeplace and - well, when I was about to go to boarding school he was compelled to go back to - to Johannesburg and earn a living - subsistence farming is a very, very difficult job or profession, if you like, and you earn very little money - after working very hard you hardly - you are hardly able to earn a surplus -

Now he went back to work for his bosses at the Linoleum (?) Specialist Co. He was engaged by his old employers after 13 years.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. So he in fact went back to the rural areas to do subsistence farming, left the town job....

M.Y. Yes...

J.F. because he wanted to just get away from the?

M.Y. Yes, yes.

J.F. Now when you were talking about the way you perceived whites - just one last question - I want to keep following up on this - but would he ever have known about someone like say, Bishop Colenso or any white who was supposedly a supporter - even say - when did he die - how long did he - when did he actually die?

M.Y. Who?

J.F. Your father.

M.Y. My father - my father died in 1961.

J.F. So even during the '50's with some of the whites who were involved with the A.N.C., did he maintain that kind of anti-white attitude or would he ever have bothered to say : Oh, well, there is such and such a white who supports the A.N.C. - or did he just not concern himself?

M.Y. Well, it's very difficult to - to - to give my view about my father - he in a way supported the A.N.C. - I bec - well, after I've - I'd grown up through (.....) I was very much involved with the A.N.C. and he supported my struggles, and he felt that I was doing the right thing because I was being pushed into

- M.Y. a position and being sent into exile and - and to my place of birth - original place of birth - and in a way he supported me in - he supported me in my - in my campaign - now coming back to your original question about his attitude towards whites and to the white people, I think he - he had known about Harriette Colenso or the daughter of Bishop Colenso - he had felt very bitter against the white government and for having forced (Cetshwayo) Dinizulu into exile, and he praised Harriette Colenso for having supported King Dinizulu up to the time of death - of his death -
- And I remember specially that he singled out Harriette Colenso as being a very good fighter for the black people - he was of course a supporter of the royal family - he - he was a natural Zulu tribal supporter.
- J.F. Now when you were growing up - I've asked you a lot about how you perceived white people - how did you see Indian people - were they part of the black struggle, were they against the black struggle - how would your father have taught you when you were growing up - what did Indian people mean?
- M.Y. Well, to - to start off with the Indian people - generally the Indian people are the natural economic competitors of the - of the black people because they are more well-to-do than the black people - as a result they feel that they are very much overtaken by the African people - they - of course the - the Africans call Indians coolies, which is a - a demeaning word for - well, amakula (?) now which is -
- Coolie is derived from an imperialist word, perjorative word (?) now my father was very careful to call - well, to use the Zulu word, Amaindia, and as a result he respected the Indians - he didn't have anything to do with the Indians, and of course I was - often heard him correcting the Zulus talking carelessly about Amakula, the Coolies, and he would correct them to say that : You must never say - you must never call - say Amakula - you must call them by their - by their correct nationality, Amaindia.
- J.F. How would you spell Amakula?
- M.Y. A m a k u l a .
- J.F. Did you have any contact with Indian people?
- M.Y. We had contact with the Indian people - I had contact with the Indian people especially after I went to the University of Natal, and there were a lot of Indian people and I made friends with Indian people.
- J.F. But before that - when you were growing up in the village or when you were at school and stuff did you have contact with Indians?
- M.Y. I had Indians - well, before that I had contact with the Indians, but well, not exactly - it was only the contact with the Indians in terms of trade, and the Indians were - I had contact with the Indians when I was riding taxis - there were quite a number of Indians who had - who were very much in the taxi business.
- J.F. Did you ever feel any camaraderie - were they comrades or were they exploiters or were they just not an issue or?
- M.Y. They were not - well - they were not exactly - it was not an issue with the Indians - well, they were not really exploiters - but it was only in the sense that the Indians were - were the

- M.Y. first people who were in the - in - who penetrated into the trading stores, and some of the people who were enterprising enough resented the - their opposition to having trading licences, and they also resented having opposition from the Indians of getting transport licences
- Now anyway my father was not engaged in - in business - he was not particularly affected by their competition in business - now there was - well, I also was in the - was employed in the trade union, and the majority of Indians were in the hotel or catering trade - some of the Indians were highly skilled waiters and also cooks, and the majority of the Africans were unskilled labourers.
- J.F. O.K. - let me get to your history more chronologically - I kind of keep coming in with you later - but - so just to finish up did you think - was it common for people to have prejudices against Indians because did they feel they were exploiting them, or they felt that they were getting the trading licences that the black people, the Zulu people should have had - is that what you're saying?
- M.Y. Yes, yes, yes, indeed - yes, indeed - the Indians were - were more - much more highly skilled, and the Indians were also given preferential rights - rights of ownership of property - as a result they - the Indians were in a way owners of houses and therefore Africans were tenants of the Indians of course tenant and landlord tenant relationship which was -
- And the Indians were prepared to allow Africans to be tenants, of course, whereas whites would never allow Africans to be tenants.
- J.F. And what about Coloured people - did you have any contact with them - what was your perception or what did they represent?
- M.Y. I had no contact with the Coloureds at all - but the Coloureds - well, no, I didn't have any contact with - with the Coloured people at all - now - can you ask me another question?
- J.F. So you went off to school, you went to boarding school, and then did you go right - was it a natural progression into university or did you....
- M.Y. Yes - I went to university, yes.
- J.F. When did you get politicised along the way - was that not till university or was it at school or?
- M.Y. Well, I became politicised after I got - after being in my trade union - being employed as a trade union organiser.
- J.F. Was that after university?
- M.Y. Well, it was before university.
- J.F. So did you graduate from - did you matriculate and then go to work?
- M.Y. Ja, I - I matriculated and went to work, and then of course I

- M.Y. went to work and afterwards I went to university.
- J.F. So where did you work after you matriculated - what kind of work?
- M.Y. I went to Durban and became a trade union organiser - it was a very frustrating job - very frustrating - I - the trade union was, to put it mildly, a reformist trade union - they - the trade union kept strictly within the law to organise workers who are excluded from the pass law - pass laws or any - it was illegal to form trade unions and they were not registered under the Industrial Conciliation Act -
- Now I was employed in the so-called native section, which I resented very strongly - the - well, incidentally the secretary of the union was an Indian, Samuel Josef - now I felt I was - well, the Africans were having a bad deal - they were not able to organise themselves into a trade union, and they were not able to determine their own affairs, and I felt that I was going to - well, my experience in trade union work was very much wasted, and in a sense my experience in the trade union work was very much wasted -
- In other words I was not in a sense a trade union leader - I wouldn't negotiate with the employers - in a sense I was just - just another assistant.
- J.F. What was the name of the union?
- M.Y. The Liquor and Catering Trades.
- J.F. And had you worked right after matriculation or gone right into being a union organiser?
- M.Y. Ye - I went right into the position of being a union organiser.
- J.F. And why did you - you say that you got politicised in the unions but you must have been kind of political to think of that job.....
- M.Y. Well, I was looking for a job, and it was just by accident.
- J.F. And how did it politicise you?
- M.Y. I had contact with the trade unions and - and leaders of the trade unions - I had contact with some of the leaders of the other trade unions and leaders - well, members of the Communist Party - and I met some leaders of the Communist Party like M.D. Naidoo - of course - well, no, I shouldn't say - I shouldn't say that M.D. Naidoo was a member of the Communist Party, but I've no knowledge of the Communist Party of him being a member of (Laugh)
- J.F. That he was a union person?
- M.Y. He was a union person - now I had - I had known that we as a trade union we were not supposed to engage in politics and we - we were strictly non political - now when I met M.D. Naidoo and - and I explained that my union was non political, I remember his words very clearly - he told me to the face: "You can't divorce economics from politics" (Laugh)
- J.F. Was that something new for you?
- M.Y. It was something new - it was something new - and I felt that my role in the trade union was not a very - a very influential

- M.Y. role - I felt that whenever there were meetings of the mixed union, Indian and white union, there was nothing - no decision about Africans - they were - in other words they were treated - the native (?) union was treated like a - a stepchild.
- J.F. How long did you stay in the union?
- M.Y. I stayed in the union for about three years, and then I went out to establish my own book-keeping office - book-keeping was a - well, part time book-keeping was quite a very interesting type of work - I worked for African traders and small business people like bus owners, Isaac (.....) traders, A. Makuzwayo -
- I would go to the - their various stations, trading stations, and as a result I became - I became independent - an independent person.
- J.F. Did you grow politically or was that just a time when you - you mean financially independent or?
- M.Y. Financially independent - financially independent.
- J.F. So during the time in the union there was the head of the union - of the reformist union who was Indian who you didn't respect very much it seems.
- M.Y. Of course (Laugh)
- J.F. Now how - I've always liked to meet someone like M.D. Naidoo - would he have been the first Indian you met who you really respected?
- M.Y. Yes, he - in - in fact M.D. Naidoo was my chairman of the students committee.
- J.F. Oh, you didn't meet him at the union - you met him as a student?
- M.Y. Well, I - I met him at the union but - and then I met - I met him later as a student.
- J.F. Now when you met someone - when you met M.D. Naidoo did it take you a while to overcome your prejudices - you were saying your father made you understand and he had a good attitude, but still the fact that you'd never known Indians as equals or comrades - did it take you a while to see him as a comrade?
- M.Y. Well, took - it - well, I - I didn't - I didn't even - it didn't occur to me, but it was automatic - well, our relationship was quite automatic and - because we had - well, we had met in the trade union movement - there I felt that his politics were - were very much in line with my own think (thing)
- Now my trade union operated in a way that they tended to exclude Africans and as a result they felt that - I felt that we were being treated as well - as stepchildren - now M.D. Naidoo's union was organised in a very different way - M.D. Naidoo's executive consisted of Africans, and who were prepared to decide - to - to decide their own affairs - and I was very much impressed with his own style of leadership.
- J.F. What was his union?
- M.Y. His - it was Food and Canning - well, Food and Canning workers - or was it - I think it must have been coffee workers.

(check)

- J.F. And when did you - what year did you go to the union?
- M.Y. 1945.
- J.F. And then when did you go to university?
- M.Y. I went to university in 1946.
- J.F. But I thought you were in the union for three years.
- M.Y. Three years, yes.
- J.F. So when did you go to the union?
- M.Y. 1942.
- J.F. Oh, '42?
- M.Y. Yes.
- J.F. And university '46.
- M.Y. Yes.
- J.F. And when you said that you met members of the CP for the first time....
- M.Y. Yes.
- J.F. What was that experience like - had you heard anything about communists - had you had any prejudices or any kind of?
- M.Y. Well - it's interesting that you should ask me about the - the Communist Party - I had heard about the Communist Party - the Communist Party was a very popular during my time and - and I had heard about the Communist Party organising trade unions - my feeling was that I would be interested - I would only be interested in communism - I would be interested in communists but I would never - I would not practice it - go to the meetings -
- I had been impressed by the book of the dean of Canterbury, Dr. Hewlet (?) Johnson, the Socialist Sixth of the World....
- J.F. The Socialist what?
- M.Y. The Socialist Sixth of the World, but I never attended meetings of the Communist Party, and my attitude to the Communist Party was that the Communist Party was leading the African people, but my - to freedom - but my primary objective was uniting the African people through freedom, through unity -
- Of course there is of course an alliance between the A.N.C. and the Communist Party now, and my own views have changed.
- J.F. Why were your views like that at the time - why did you think, I'll check them out but I won't go to meetings - had you - when you grew up did people say communists are bad in any way or did your parents think anything, or did you read in the papers about things?
- M.Y. Well - my own - my own answer is that I didn't - it didn't occur to me that I should become politicised and I was not - I was not

- M.Y. influenced by the Communist Party at all, but quite - quite a number of people expressed views about communism, and of course some people felt that the Communist Party had no place in the - in politics - but I took an independent line in - in politics.
- J.F. And was it just M.D. Naidoo that you met from the Communist Party or were there others who you met subsequently?
- M.Y. Well, there was M.G. - M.G. Moodley.
- J.F. But did you have much more to do with them after that?
- M.Y. No, I didn't have anything to do with - with the Communist Party.
- J.F. So you never met any white members?
- M.Y. No, I never - well, I never met any white members of the Communist Party.
- J.F. You didn't - you never had experience of the night school or anything?
- M.Y. No, I never had experience of the night school.
- J.F. So you went to university in 1946....
- M.Y. 1946.
- J.F. Why - was it strictly for furthering your own education - was there any politics in the decision?
- M.Y. It - it was strictly for furthering - for furthering my own studies - let me go further, since you didn't ask me the question - I had become very much - very much politically aware during the def - well, the - the passive resistance campaign of the Indian Congress - I was very, very, very much impressed by the determination of the Indians in fighting against the segregation or the Ghetto Act to the point that they were prepared to go to jail -
- I had known M.D. Naidoo being a very active Indian leader in the Indian Congress, and I was very, very much impressed - now I felt that one must fight for - for his rights - and when I got married 1945 I wanted to get a - house in the housing scheme - you can't get a house without a pass, and up to that time I avoided taking out a pass as full (?) service contract.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

- J.F. So you had avoided taking out a pass.
- M.Y. Now I will tell you later my - my traumatic experience - and then I went to the native administration department to get myself registered, registered as - to take a service contract - a service contract or pass or some - some pass to be allowed to do Durban - when I went into the native administration department I queued

M.Y. up in a very long line - in a way it was very, very, humiliating and distressing - so many people would - would stand for days and days without being attended - I was lucky - I was allowed into - into the queue for only one day - in the queue municipal policemen were harassing people when they were being very rude to job seekers, and when we went into the hall it was shattering -

We were ordered to expose our male organs and show and expose our male organs and they were - this was a very rude (?) order which is not mentionable in Zulu, which says literally rudely, Vulamtondo - expose your penis - and we were in a line, no respect for privacy, and we were ordered to expose our penises, and the white man examined our private parts and just casually (?) and then said : Go away - you must go and wash - wash yourself -

Of course obviously he had - well, he had not taken trouble to wash his body (Laugh) - and such humiliation I'd never seen, and I felt that the white man was such a horrible oppressor to expose me in any way - then I went -

Well, of course the examination was very horrific and I went back so disgusted that I would have to fight against passes because I'm so humiliated and I don't like to face the experience again....

J.F. When was this that this all happened?

M.Y. 1945 - and then the secretary of the A.N.C. was there - who was working in the same office - I went up to ask for - apply for membership of the A.N.C....

J.F. Right afterwards?

M.Y. Just afterwards - just afterwards - in my disgust I felt that I've got to work for the abolition of passes right away - now 40 years after this Botha is now saying that the passes have been abolished (Laugh) - Now - well, it was a - it's a very long time ago, 40 years and when I -

Then the A.N.C. has done so many things from - and I never knew what future was in store for me.

J.F. When you went to join the A.N.C. was that an office in what town?

M.Y. Interestingly enough the secretary for the A.N.C. - of the A.N.C. was employed in the very same premises of Kwamu hle, which is called by the Zulu name Kwamu hle - a so-called Kwamu hle because some of the white madames used to come to get a labour for the boys and say : Mina funa lo Mu hle - Mu hle lo boy - I would like to get a nice boy, Mu hle - Mu hle - and then they would call it Kwamushle - Mu hle - Mu hle (Laugh).

J.F. (Kwamushle means nice?

M.Y. Nice, of course, Mushle.

J.F. And whereabouts was that - was that near Durban?

M.Y. It was in Durban, in Ordinance Road - now....

J.F. I was going to say when you went into that A.N.C. office to join what did the A.N.C. represent to you - did it represent black people against white people?

- M.Y. It represented merely black oppression against the - the - well, black oppression against white oppression....
- J.F. Black oppression?
- M.Y. Ja, well, the whites fighting against the - fighting against white oppression....
- J.F. It did?
- M.Y. The whites fighting against oppression - or the blacks fighting against white oppression.
- J.F. Would that mean that it was African only - did you see it as African people fighting European people?
- M.Y. Well, I could see - I could see that the fight against our own deprivation of rights was going to be a political one after the experience of the Bambata rebellion I felt that this - the alternative of violent demonstration against the blacks was not a viable one.
- J.F. A violent one wasn't....
- M.Y. Viable, yes.
- J.F. Violence wasn't viable?
- M.Y. Violence was not viable.
- J.F. You mean it had to be political?
- M.Y. It had to be political.
- J.F. Did you - that means you had no sense at all that it would lead to Umkontho we Sizwe - that wasn't in your mind?
- M.Y. It was not in my mind - there were - there were at the moment - well, at the time quite a number of strategies like petitions to the government and passing resolutions to the government, and deputations to the government -
- Now this was changed completely - the - the method of strategy was changed completely after the Youth League (?)....
- J.F. After?
- M.Y. After the Youth League.
- J.F. But at that time did you see it as Africans against whites - would you have expected to see any Indians at the A.N.C. office, or Coloureds?
- M.Y. No, no, no, no - it was - it was only Africans against whites - but at that - at that particular point I didn't have any - any idea of alliances with the Coloureds and the Indians - as the struggle grew I - we became aware of the need for a united front.
- J.F. How did you become aware of that - did you have any personal experiences whereby you began to work with Indians or Coloureds or whites?

M.Y. First we - we became aware of the tragedy of the Indian riots during 1949, and we felt that we - we had to confront the question of - of our deprivation of rights together and fight as a united organisation, and we had joint sessions with the Indian Congress and also we for the first time decided to - to demonstrate against laws which were against - were against apartheid -

Now the 1948 government was voted in to fight against - and it enacted all sorts of laws, Group Areas Act etc. etc. - now we then voted - we decided to have a demonstration - stage a demonstration of protest on June 26th, 1950 - we were then still in the Youth League and the A.N.C. was still under - led by Mr. Champion -

Mr. Champion was not prepared to co-operate with the Indians - now we decided to co-operate with the Indians - we felt that this - it was in our interests to fight against the laws and we - from our experience that we felt that the Indians were to be trusted to - to go along with us because in a sense they were in the passive resistance campaign.

J.F. That's a lot - let me ask a few questions - you joined the A.N.C. in what year?

M.Y. 1945.

J.F. And then you - how long were you at university?

M.Y. I was at the university for only two years - two years - but let me point out that I - I joined the university in 1946, and I had a lot of - I - I had a lot of breaks up to 1960 - I - I then eventually qualified as a Bachelor of Commerce degree, and I became a lawyer, and of course I studied law, and took my articles under an Indian - - an Indian principal - I then -

Well, during the defiance campaign - well, I was - I broke my articles because I was deported to - to Mupumolo - then in 1953 - and then after ten years I then completed my law in 1963, and then I was admitted as an attorney....

J.F. When did you get your Bachelor of Commerce?

M.Y. I got my Bachelor of Commerce degree in 1960.

J.F. So you worked as an articles clerk before 1960?

M.Y. I worked as an articles clerk before 19 - well, I had my matriculation certificate.

J.F. And which - where did you get your Bachelor of Commerce from - what university had you been at?

M.Y. South Africa.

J.F. Oh, UNISA you did it.....

M.Y. UNISA, yes.

J.F. And then the lawyer - was that degree from UNISA also?

M.Y. Well, I - no, it was not from UNISA - I - it was conducted by the - by the something - some board of - I've forgotten - I've forgotten the exact name - the board for professional examinations or - an educational body for - for law exams.

J.F. Now were you in Natal for the 1949 unrest - the so-called riots?

M.Y. I was.

J.F. You were?

M.Y. Yes, I was.

J.F. There's been so much written about it that it's later shown the other stresses - the kind of the government tries to show this is Africans and Indians - they don't get along - as if it's proof that they can't get along - what was your experience of that time - what were African people saying, what were Indian people saying, what were you seeing?

M.Y. Yes, well, this was a - it took us completely by surprise because there've been so many - there've been so many reasons advanced for the cause of the riots - now I don't think - well, I don't think that there are sufficient reasons that can be advanced -

One must look deeper into the political and - causes underlying - political causes - but social underlying political and economic source (?) but socially the Indians were very, very, very friendly with the Africans -

Well, I personally, from my own personal experience I was very friendly with some of the Indian students and I - we used to visit socially the Indian people and - well, my friends were - used to admit me in their houses and we used to share meals together -

Now after the riots I personally helped my friends in getting resettled, and the Africans got into the - the Indian houses and they had to - I had to help them to collect the rent at (.....)

J.F. So at what university were you friends with them?

M.Y. University of Natal - the Natal University College.

J.F. That was the University College system - they had Indians there....

M.Y. Yes.

J.F. And so what did happen - what did you understand had happened in '49 - what did you talk about with your Indian friends - did they think you were one nice African person but actually most Africans were attacking them or how did they see - how did they reconcile that they could be friends with you with the animosity of 1949 - did they see most Africans as anti-Indian and most Indians as anti-African?

M.Y. Well - it's very difficult to explain because - well, I regarded Africans as - as generally friendly and to the - to the Indians they also regarded themselves as generally friendly - but it was the incitement to racial animosity which was responsible for the riots - it was the preaching of racial prejudice that was responsible -

Now I can say - well, as you can see in the present riots the - there was a very unfortunate riot in Phoenix about a year ago

- M.Y. and it is - it is as a result of political stresses and economic stresses - there are not very many answers and I would hesitate to give an opinion on this.
- J.F. When was it that Champion didn't want to co-operate with the Indians?
- M.Y. 1950 - during the June 26. I - we tried very hard to persuade him to co-operate with Indians.
- J.F. What was his argument - he can't trust them - was it racist?
- M.Y. His argument was that we should struggle together but when - and in effect he threatened that - well, he said - he warned us against co-operating with the Indians - he would say in effect when - when this demonstration failed the people will turn against us, as they did against the Indians.
- J.F. Are you saying the people will be against us because we're with the Indians?
- M.Y. Ja, because we were with the Indians.
- J.F. And what did you argue?
- M.Y. We argued that we have no alternative to - to work with the Indians - their politics are the same - we are fighting the same enemy and our - we are obliged (?) to fight together (against) the Indians.
- J.F. And you won the argument?
- M.Y. And we won.
- J.F. And what happened to Champion?
- M.Y. Champion was - was deposed and - and Chief Albert Lutuli was replaced as leader of the African people.
- J.F. Now just to go back to before 1950, when you joined the A.N.C. in 1945 - you were young, you went to university the next year - how did you see the A.N.C. - A.N.C. had been around since 1912 - was it a militant organisation - if you could just talk a bit about how the Youth League came on the scene and how you saw the A.N.C....
- M.Y. Yes, the A.N.C. was a very - well, it was - well, I regarded the A.N.C. as not very militant at all..... I felt that this was a body which was doing absolutely now nothing - it was not effective - it was a body of chiefs (?) and it was being - it was based on the support of the chiefs, and the chiefs were dependent of - on the government's goodwill, and it was - well our -
- The methods of passing resolutions and deputations etc. etc., had been proved to be of no effect - now we - the Youth League had been formed in 1944 - well, proposing very, very, very drastic reforms of the programme of action, and it had stated that Africans must be united and through African nationalism, and we must try and put pressure on the government through the boycott of the NRC, the Native Representative Council was established and it has not become effective, and we must boycott NRC and we must devote our energies on strikes and civil disobedience, and that's the defiance campaign.
- J.F. So why did you join the A.N.C. - with an idea of making it more militant?

M.Y. Of course - our - well - well, I joined the A.N.C. because - with an idea of putting more political pressure on correcting, redressing our rights, but redressing our rights was a very frustrating exercise.

J.F. What was frustrating?

M.Y. Very frustrating - frustrating exercise, because it was not effective at all - making representations to the government was not effective - and of course we - the first - and the first militant step of the strike was made during the June 26.

Now this is a very important month, this - June 26 is now a historical milestone in the liberation struggle.

J.F. Now did you get drawn into the Africanist debate - when you said you wanted to get the A.N.C. more militant did you feel it should be more African, more anti-white or more pro-black African - did you get involved in the Youth League?

M.Y. It was - it was not an anti-white thing but we - we felt that the Africans - well, whites must fight their own battles - now as a result.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

M.Y. As a result of our - our common struggle we became more and more aware that we must fight apartheid - our struggle is - is not against the white man - our struggle is against apartheid.....

J.F. But was anybody saying that in the Youth League - wasn't the Youth League saying our struggle is against the whites - we must separate ourselves...

M.Y. White suppress - we did, yes - of course generally our whole thrust was African nationalism, and it was our fight for - well, African nationalism was, as we saw it, a uniting force and a driving force towards overthrowing white oppression -

Now we have - we - as we developed - developed our own philosophy of African nationalism we decided - we discovered that we had common goals - it doesn't matter whether you are black or white we evolved - in other words we evolved towards non racialism as our Freedom Charter here states that people - South Africa belongs to all, black or white and -

Now that's why the P.A.C. broke away and they were - they were appalled that we are changing our own stance towards whites, and they felt that they were being - we were being disloyal to the original framers of African nationalism.

J.F. But how did you change - I've read a lot about the P.A.C. break-away and the rise of African nationalism and even Mandela and - statements himself - but I'm saying how did you actually make that change - how did you evolve from a strong - what were you saying with the African nationalists - how did you change?

M.Y. Well, from - from - from the actual struggle we - the National Party made laws against the - the Communist Party - it made laws against the Coloureds - it made laws against - well, it - it was - well, the Group Areas Act and so forth - we felt that, no, this is - this is directed against the African people - this is directed against the communists - and we are all lumped up together - we must fight this - this is directed against the Indians -

We must all fight together - now if you - if - if you look at the resolutions of the - of the A.N.C. you'll discover that the A.N.C. passed a resolution affirming unity between the Africans and the Indians, and they - we together felt that we must fight - our fight is the same -

Now as you can - as you can - as you will notice Dr. Jim Naicker was the first leader of the batch to defy laws against apartheid - Indians in Natal they were - had the biggest number compared to the Africans to participate in the defiance campaign - after the defiance campaign we had evolved -

Oh, yes, of course - let me go further - during the defiance campaign we discovered that (.....) and (.....)....

J.F. And who?

M.Y. Percy Cohen - (.....) Gandhi - were together and leading a batch in defying the laws against the unjust laws - as a result this was a natural process of learning how - about our common struggle against apartheid, and we were able to discover in actual practice that our fight was common against the common enemy.

J.F. By seeing someone like Patrick Duncan....

M.Y. There was - yes, exactly, yes - and we realised that Patrick Duncan was in terms of - in the South African context he was the son of a governor general, and he was identifying with us in (and) fighting against the white oppression.

J.F. So when would you say you became a non-racialist - was it in the '50's, the '40's - when abouts was it - by the time the P.A.C. broke away - well, that's much later.

M.Y. Yes, it was during the '50's - it was during the '50's.

J.F. Was there any experience you had with someone of another race group that you think was important in shaping you as a non-racialist?

M.Y. Yes, it was - we - well, we had - well, the whole concept of non-racialism developed imperceptibly (?) and slowly, but I've become a convinced non-racialist - of course - well, I would say that I'm now convinced that we - we - non-racialism is the answer.

J.F. When you say it was imperceptibly are there any - I was saying to you that I'm interested in stories that would illuminate - is there any kind of experience that shaped you or else was there any time when you thought no, I'm not a non-racialist?

M.Y. Yes, well, I'm - well, the congress - the Congress of the People was a turning point, and the treason trial was again the - the turning point.

- J.F. Did you attend the Congress of the People?
- M.Y. I did not attend the Congress of the People....
- J.F. But seeing it happen....
- M.Y. But seeing it, yes, and - and seeing that it had happened - the Freedom Charter had been passed and it was part of our - our charter - of our charter - and it was based on our own principles which were very, very praiseworthy indeed.
- J.F. Do you ever remember having any discussions or arguments with people - you talked about the Champion - him being anti-Indian - were there ever any times when you argued or had discussions with someone from an Africanist point of view who was saying : How can you deal with whites?
- M.Y. Nnno, no, I've never, but - but it would appear that Africanists are very, very prejudiced people - they have emotional racist attitudes - I think you can't fight racism - you can't fight against racism and - and substitute racism - and you can - and it has - it is a philosophy -
- Well, racism is a philosophy which is very destructive - it's very self-destroying - and well, take the example of South Africa - you have - you can't win in a racist war, a racist philosophy - when you have fought races you will then have to be faced with another racism (Laugh)
- J.F. I read in some biographical material about you, that you in the '50's went to meetings where whites were there, to help explain A.N.C. policy - I don't know if that's true - that you went to political meetings, and you were even talking to whites to try to show them how the A.N.C. felt?
- M.Y. Biographical material, I'm - I don't remember that - I don't remember that.
- J.F. Did you ever....
- M.Y. Oh, - in which book?
- J.F. Karcis & Carter - the.....
- M.Y. Oh, yes, yes, yes....
- J.F. There's Tom Karcis
- M.Y. Oh, yes, yes, yes, that's right - Karcis & Carter would - well, I think they are very objective people, and I would accept that - but I'm interested in what - in - in this occasion because I can remember that I attended a meeting of whites in which we had demanded a national convention, and at the meeting there was present the chairman of Standard Bank (.....) de Beer -
- I saw him on television the other day, and I'm sure he will remember that I was present - I was representing Chief Lutuli - then Chief Lutuli was a committed non-racialist.
- J.F. So what was this meeting with de Beer and Standard Bank - when was it, where was it?
- M.Y. In Johannesburg.

J.F. In what year?

M.Y. I can't remember - '6 - it was during '61, '62 - 1961, 1962.

J.F. And what were you trying to say to the whites there?

M.Y. Well, I - I - I was saying that - I can't remember the specific purpose of the meeting, but I do remember that there was a meeting to arrange for a national convention where the - where we would - where the blacks and whites would come together and draft a new constitution, and this constitution was a racist constitution where the blacks were excluded from the government - participation in the government councils.

J.F. Do you think that - when did you first meet Chief Lutuli?

M.Y. 1949.

J.F. And that was the kind of hey-day of the Youth League?

M.Y. Yes, yes.

J.F. How did he influence you - how did he feel about the Youth League and pan Africanism?

M.Y. Well, he was very sympathetic to the Youth League - that's why we elected him - well, in a way - in a sense Chief Lutuli was a great leader of the people, and he influenced me in a way towards his own policies - he was not a political demagogue, he was not an ideologist - he was a Christian - he -

He looked at his politics through Christian - a Christian perspective, and he was very strongly against apartheid.

J.F. And what about the non racialism aspect - how - did he influence you at all in that way in terms of you had one influence of the very militant Africanists - maybe some of them eventually are going to break and form the P.A.C.

M.Y. Well, as I've explained before I - non-racialism - well, I - influenced me through struggle - through the defiance campaign, through the demonstrations, and of course in a way non-racialism sort of was a way of exchange of views and - and through having personal experiences of my own struggle and in the demonstrations.

J.F. Can you just - again I'm kind of pushing you for stories - but if there's any experience you had with an Indian or a white organising something that made you feel we can work together - are there any?

M.Y. Yes, well - well, I was volunteering (?) chief of the Indian - I was volunteering chief in the passive resistance campaign - my office was in Lakani Chambers, and the....

J.F. In Durban?

M.Y. In Durban - and the offices of the Indian Congress were also in Lakani Chambers - of course my office was turned into - into an A.N.C. office - well, A.N.C. was literally the same office as - in the same offices as mine - we had the experience of working

- M.Y. closely together - when comrades are fighting the same battles they tend to be very closely - closely connected to each other - well, I had met people like Ismail Meer and J.N. Singh who were very - who were very, very close to in the leadership of the - of the NIC - and I had very, very good relations with them - very good relations indeed.
- J.F. And were there any whites you ever had good relations with over the years who you worked with politically?
- M.Y. Nnot - no, there were - there were no whites - I can't remember the whites.
- J.F. So why did - why do you see yourself as a non racialist - you could have - there are P.A.C. people who work with Indians and Coloureds but wouldn't - would draw the line at whites - if you didn't have the actual experience of working with whites why are you a non racialist?
- M.Y. [REDACTED]
- Well (Laugh) - well (Laugh) - I am repeating this point over and over and over again because the struggle made me a non racialist - Pat Duncan I've mentioned, Percy Cohen I've mentioned, also demonstrated their own attitude towards anti apartheid.
- J.F. Are there any whites that you saw - it's just Patrick Duncan became P.A.C. and he's a bit of a confusing character historically - are there any other whites who you saw from afar who impressed you....
- M.Y. Well, of course I didn't - I didn't know - I didn't know Patrick Duncan at all and I'd never met - I had never met Percy Cohen or Patrick Duncan before, and in a way I could see that even whites were now against - were now against apartheid - now I didn't -
- I did not have contact with the whites whilst I was in - in South Africa, and it's only now that I've been able to have contact with the whites in England - here in England.
- J.F. Are there any whites since you came to England who you've gotten to know, who?
- M.Y. Well, there are plenty - there are plenty.
- J.F. I just thought if there was any particular person who you had any working relationship with.
- M.Y. There are plenty - there are plenty, yes - Brian Bunting, for instance, who we have mentioned.
- J.F. What positions did you hold - were you in any position in the Youth League?
- M.Y. I was the secretary of the Youth League.
- J.F. For Natal?
- M.Y. For Natal, yes.
- J.F.

- J.F. And in the A.N.C. what was your position?
- M.Y. I was the secretary of the - of - of the A.N.C. - the provincial secretary.
- J.F. And were you on the NEC?
- M.Y. I was on the NEC, but this was not an elected post, but I was in the A.N.C. by virtue of being the Secretary of the Natal Province.
- J.F. And were you banned - when were you banned?
- M.Y. How do you know?
- J.F. Because of Tom Marais.
- M.Y. (Laugh)
- J.F. I took notes before I left.
- M.Y. That's right (Laugh) - yes, I was banned in 1953 (?) - I was banned in 1953 (?) and I was also banished in 1954 to Mapumulo - to the place of my birth - and then in 1965 I was also banished and placed under house arrest - the banishment order took only six months and I fled the country.
- J.F. But when you were first - you were first banned for how many years?
- M.Y. For two years.
- J.F. And then after the two years you were banished?
- M.Y. After - to Mapumulo - I was banished to Mapumulo for two years.
- J.F. And what did you do when you were sent there - did you have to stop politics?
- M.Y. No, I didn't stop politics - I didn't stop politics - I did political work - and of course I was also - just after the expiry of my banishment order I was arrested on high treason - charged with high treason (.....) - this is the treason trial picture.
- J.F. And you said that the treason trial was an important time for you in terms of the non racialism aspect - that put you together with a lot of....
- M.Y. With a lot of whites, yes.
- J.F. And how did that affect you - was that just totally natural by then or was it still part of you moving along imperceptibly changing?
- M.Y. Of course, yes, indeed - indeed - ja, we were invited to parties and we were - in a way we were able to understand each other, to know each other.
- J.F. In a way you couldn't - you hadn't had the chance to before?
- M.Y. Yes, that's right - I had never had the chance before.
- J.F. And when were you imprisoned, because I read that you spent two years in prison for membership of A.N.C.
- M.Y. Yes.

- J.F. Was that in the '60's?
- M.Y. I was in '63 - in '63 to '65.
- J.F. Let me now jump ahead - so you spent '56 to '61 with the treason trial or were you out of it earlier than that, because some of the people - were you through the whole '56 to '61 with the treason trial?
- M.Y. '56 to '59, yes.
- J.F. And were you - did you continue to be banned?
- M.Y. No, I was - I was not banned - I was not banned.
- J.F. Now '59 was the year that the P.A.C. broke with the A.N.C. - is that right?
- M.Y. Yes, yes.
- J.F. Did you have friends who became P.A.C. - had you seen that - was that a big traumatic kind of rupture in the experience or had you lost contact with those people by then?
- M.Y. I had lost - I had lost contact with A.B. Ngcobo - with - well, A.B. Ngcobo was still strongly pro P.A.C.
- J.F. And the contact was lost - was there no dialogue - you didn't ever have discussions....
- M.Y. We had no dialogue, yes.
- J.F. Even among your A.N.C. colleagues did you ever talk about the issues that the S bukwes and the (.....) were pushing - did you ever sit down and say : Let's talk about what these pan Africanist people are saying - before they became the P.A.C., or did you just think they're wrong - you had no time for them - or was it an issue - did younger black African people talk about it?
- M.Y. Yes, well, we had talks, but in politics we were taught very, very rigid positions - very rigid positions - we - we - well, we couldn't go back - we couldn't go back to our resolutions of 1952 where we had placed our unity between the Indians and Africans, and we couldn't betray the trust of the Indian people.....
- END OF SIDE TWO.
- M.Y. Politics tend to - political ideas tend to become very much rigid, and you - you would have to - it - one - this has to take a catastrophe before one changes one's mind (Laugh)
- J.F. So you're saying you had thrown your lot in with non-racialism and that was that?
- M.Y. Mmm, that's right, exactly, ja.
- J.F. And even if you talked about it at the time about what those people

- J.F. were doing, did you see them as confused, did you see them as hostile racists, or did you see them as opportunists or how did you see them - I'm just so interested - I can understand you had a rigid position, and I can understand that especially because of your close association with someone like Lutuli that it would have been something you would have been fervent about by then, but still you must have had a kind of discussion, just the way you talked about Nat policy - you don't have to agree with the Nats or - but you would talk about it, and it's just so interesting because I've read about it in books, but I've never spoken to someone like yourself who lived through the Youth League to the P.A.C. breakaway through - so could you tell me a bit about that?
- M.Y. I'm afraid - I'm afraid I'm going to disappoint you in that, but my own period during the break of the Youth League is not clear enough because I was not present at the time of the break with the Youth League - I knew - I knew Sobukwe casually, but after the - the issue of African nationalism or going it alone I never met him, and I never met him during the period of the breakaway from the A.N.C. -
- I never met him, and I have no - no particular contribution to make.
- J.F. So someone like you and Lutuli wouldn't even have discussed it - when the P.A.C. broke away you didn't even talk about it - did you worry or did people.....
- M.Y. Well I - I worried - I worried because I felt that they were mistaken and they were - and they felt that well, they wanted to break away - well, as a result they broke away, and I felt that this was a mistake, and as a breakaway organisation we felt that they would not get support from the A.N.C. -
- As a result the A.N.C. - well, the P.A.C. tried to project us, the A.N.C., as the alternative organisation - well, when the A.N.C. decided to become - to campaign against passes they pre-empted - they made a pre-empted demonstration in fighting against the passes, and this was not a very happy relationship between the A.N.C. and the P.A.C., and we felt that the P.A.C. had cheated us in the timing of the demonstration.
- J.F. And what about the P.A.C. people criticising the Communist Party, saying whites are dominating the A.N.C. - the white communists are dominating the A.N.C. - there's too much CP influence - is that something that you talked about - did you ever talk among the African people or in the A.N.C. about, gee, how many whites are there, or what about the CP - we don't like the CP or its influence?
- M.Y. Yes, definitely there is an alliance between the SACP and the - and the African National Congress - our position is that the A.N.C.'s leading the - the struggle and the revolution, and we are not worried about the accusation that the SACP is dominating - well.....
- J.F. SACP.
- M.Y. ^{That} The SACP is dominating the A.N.C. - we are a fully viable organisation - we decide - we decide our own policies, and of course Nelson Mandela is the leader of Umkhonto we Sizwe and now - and he's virtually dominating the whole political scene, unlike the

M.Y. P.A.C. - unlike the P.A.C.

J.F. And at the time - I can see it's quite strong now - at the time did you speak to people who expressed any concern about the CP, about white communists?

M.Y. Well, I wasn't worried about - about the CP - and the - I could see that the CP was - the CP leaders were genuine - they were working hardest, they were honest and dedicated and they - we could see that they were genuinely fighting against racialism and apartheid, and when -

We could see that they - they were not deceiving us - they were quite genuine about racism or non racialism - they were non racial- to the point of not being embarrassed to have their daughters marrying black people (Laugh) - and anyway the communists - members of the Communist Party had been very consistent about non racialism to the point that I accept them genuinely as genuine comrades.

J.F. And who were the ones who might have stood out then - were there any particular whites that you and other blacks thought highly of?

M.Y. Well, of course I - I can think of Bram Fischer - he was an outstanding member of the Communist Party.

J.F. O.K., I think you've answered that well.....

M.Y. (Laugh)

J.F. Just a few things.....

M.Y. Is that a (.....) or what (Laugh)

J.F. No, I'm saying I'm interested - I won't pursue it any further - as I was saying, I don't want to keep feeding that - the..... ja, you talked about replacing Champion with Lutuli - were you involved at all in the push to replace Xuma with Sisulu as the A.N.C. secretary general in terms of not - just adopting the radical programme of action and kind of the more conservative....

M.Y. Xuma - no I was not - I was not directly involved in the push of Xuma to replace Moroka, but Sisulu was very, very useful to the Natal Youth League - he was responsible for strengthening the Youth League and thus weakening Champion's position -

I was directly involved in pushing out Champion and replacing Lutuli as leader of the A.N.C. - and of course from his provincial position he - I was responsible - I was also responsible to make him national leader of the A.N.C. -

At the time it was not - people were not confident about Lutuli's politics, and he proved himself as a very able leader - very able - because chiefs are not famous for being militant - they are regarded as being tame and conservative.

J.F. Who is?

M.Y. They are considered as tame....

J.F. Who?

M.Y. The chiefs.

J.F. Do you think that because the P.A.C. had not committed itself to non violence at the early stage that the P.A.C. attracted more kind of violent and aggressive members - more kind of tsotsi kind of elements - do you think there was ever that difference between the A.N.C. and the P.A.C. - Lutuli being such a man of peace - do you think that was a factor or do you think the A.N.C. also had quite militant people who were later leaned to Umkhonto we S izwe - this is just - I'm taking - these are questione because there's a lot of academic analysis put on this issue, and for example, Gail Gerhart writes a lot about it - I don't necessarily agree with it, but I'm just asking the question in terms of whether you saw a difference.

M.Y. Well - you are putting me into a very difficult question - position - because I've had (heard) a lot of difficulties about - about the - the - my view - previously the A.N.C. was a non violent - and then the government decided to ban the A.N.C. -

It is to the credit of Nelson Mandela that he proposed that we should, in the face of violence against - of the government against the - the A.N.C. we should answer violence with violence - I must admit the idea was very, very, very thoroughly debated until we decided to engage in the armed struggle - the armed struggle which we adopted was - has been proved very, very effective -

Chief Lutuli himself agreed and accepted the view that the A.N.C. must engage in the armed struggle - now I think some people who - there are many people who are still unconvinced about violence - I am always trapped into a very, very compromising position in being depicted as a pacifist, as a person who - who - who - well, who favours non violence and - and as a person who felt that I had - I didn't agree with - with the armed struggle -

Chief Lutuli of course is being projected as a peaceful and non violent pacifist who was dragged into armed struggle stance - but I would like to state positively that the armed struggle decision was taken with our full consent - it was a decision that was made which was after a lot of heart searching and a lot of debate, and I feel that - well, I - well, I -

Well, I would like to ask you to, after publishing this interview, that you should give this back to me and - so that the A.N.C. can look at my own interview fully, and in order that we should not distort the history of the A.N.C.

J.F. I think I understand your point - do you remember early on any suspicion about the Africanist point of view of being seen as almost being assisting the government because of the fact that it took this kind of anti-communist point of view - there are suspicions about people like Patrick Duncan subsequently and some P.A.C. people being supposedly linked to various kind of - was there ever any talk at the time that the P.A.C. would be playing into the government's hands or was that not an issue then - do you remember people saying - being suspicious?

M.Y. Ja, there is no doubt that the P.A.C. was seen as an obstructive force, when the A.N.C. had called a strike and - which was - and it was shown that the P.A.C. was colluding with the special branch, the security branch, and it is said that the P.A.C. was formed - when the P.A.C. was first formed it had gathered at the premises ...

- M.Y. of the embassy of the United States....
- J.F. So people talked about this...
- M.Y. That's right, yes.
- J.F. Did you know Moses Mabhida in Natal?
- M.Y. I knew him very well - very well indeed.
- J.F. Because he - there was a quote I read of him talking about the militancy of workers in the early '60's, with the Howick Rubber workers - did that militancy of workers - did that movement towards Umkhonto we Sizwe and after the war had been declared in terms of the A.N.C. launching Umkhonto - did that ever in your experience manifest itself as anti-white sentiment?
- M.Y. There was no - there was no anti-white sentiment at all - well - there were quite a number of - of cadres in Umkhonto we Sizwe - I was not a member of the Umkhonto we Sizwe - but the white cadres who were in the Umkhonto we Sizwe.
- J.F. So knowing that would mean that they couldn't be anti-white - is that what.....
- M.Y. They couldn't be anti-white - they couldn't be anti-white.
- J.F. Now when did you spend two years in prison for membership in the A.N.C. - that was when - in the '60's?
- M.Y. It's in the '60's - now, well, I was in various jails, Leekop firstly in Leekop.
- J.F. Just what years were that - when were you imprisoned - which year?
- M.Y. I was - two years - I was first in Leekop and also in Kronstad in (.....) and in Viljoenskoen - Viljoensbund (?) in Stoffberg.
- J.F. And which two years was it - which years were you in prison?
- M.Y. Two years.
- J.F. Which years - 196-?
- M.Y. 1965 - '64, '65.
- J.F. So were you really associated totally with Lutuli until he died - were you kind of.....
- M.Y. I was already out of contact - out of contact with Lutuli.
- J.F. Why was that?
- M.Y. Because he was - he was banned - he was banned in - in - in the Stanger district, but it's very funny about Chief Lutuli - we were banned - well, we were being arrested all - every - well, many people were arrested and detained for membership, but Lutuli was left out, and it would have been very foolish for Lutuli to be seen to be visiting me in jail whilst I was and - and of course he would - he would not - well, he lived a very, very very

- M.Y. different life - he was - I think he must have been deliberately persecuted - psychologically persecuted - because he was left out of jail.
- J.F. So can you tell me just briefly what your involvement was from '59 to '64 when you were arrested - what kind of work were you doing?
- M.Y. My work was.....
- J.F. I mean what political work?
- M.Y. Well - well of course - well - I was doing political work in the A.N.C., doing the Mandela plan....
- J.F. What does it mean, doing the Mandela plan?
- M.Y. The Mandela plan - we were doing underground work in the A.N.C. - Mandela plan was working with members of the A.N.C. from door to door - in other words it was a very, very secret closed organisation, which meant to get involved in secret work.
- J.F. And did you have a regular job while this was going on?
- M.Y. Well, I - I was busy studying and completing my - my law exams.
- J.F. And did your - the lawyer you were articling - you were still article clerking then?
- M.Y. Yes, yes.
- J.F. Did they have any idea about your political involvement?
- M.Y. Well, they suspected that I was doing my political work because he was sympathetic to the A.N.C., J.M. Singh.
- J.F. Was he in the A.N.C.?
- M.Y. He was in the NIC.
- J.F. And you were married all that time as well?
- M.Y. I was married, yes.
- J.F. Did you ever explain to your kids your involvement - were they - they were young, I presume, but did - is that something that just doesn't get discussed when you're away from home so much?
- M.Y. Ja, well - well, I discussed - I discussed this matter with my children - yes, we used to sing the freedom songs - and I - one thing I'm happy about is that I - I was able to instil this question of congress politics very - very strongly to my people - to my children.
- J.F. How many kids do you have?
- M.Y. Four - two boys two girls, and well, I've got grandchildren now.
- J.F. How many?
- M.Y. Four grandchildren.

- J.F. And are they overseas or in South Africa, the kids?
- M.Y. Well, they are in this country.
- J.F. And so you were doing the Mandela plan from '59 to '64?
- M.Y. Yes, yes, yes.
- J.F. And you weren't arrested any time from '59 to '64?
- M.Y. I was arrested in '63.
- J.F. And how long did you spend in - were you detained or?
- M.Y. I was - I was detained in solitary confinement for 39 days - those were the most cruel days.
- J.F. Was that the first - you were amongst the first 90 day people?
- M.Y. I was the second.
- J.F. Really - after?
- M.Y. After - after the Rivonia trial - the Rivonia detention.
- J.F. You mean the second wave or the second person?
- M.Y. Well, after Dlamini and Mbele then was second wave of people was detained.
- J.F. Stephen Dlamini?
- M.Y. Stephen Dlamini.
- J.F. And who's the other one - Mbele?
- M.Y. [redacted] George Mbele - George Mbele - and of course George Mbele and (.....) Mponya.
- J.F. So you were detained with them or after them?
- M.Y. I was after them.
- J.F. So Rivonia was in July?
- M.Y. It was - it was in October.
- J.F. October, '63 - so you had seen the whole thing in the papers about Rivonia being....
- M.Y. Oh, yes, yes.
- J.F. Did you think : My time is coming or?
- M.Y. I think my time was coming - in fact when I was already in jail the Rivonia people asked me to give evidence in mitigation on their behalf.
- J.F. When you were in jail?
- M.Y. When I was in jail - well, fortunately I - I - I declined the invitation because I felt that there were so many charges

M.Y. pending against me which I'd - which - in which I'd escaped - I was given a very light sentence, two years.

J.F. That's when you got the two years?

M.Y. Yes, that's when I got the two years, yes.

J.F. That was '64, '65.

M.Y. '64, '65, yes.

J.F. So you didn't want to go into court for Rivonia because you thought it wouldn't help things?

M.Y. It wouldn't help things (Laugh) yes, that's right.

J.F. It would hurt you.

M.Y. Mmm.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. Unfortunately I think I told you I was supposed to go to a conference and ~~Thabo~~ Mbeki is speaking so I'm afraid that I'm going to ask questions kind of quickly and finish up, and then maybe I possibly.....

M.Y. ~~Tha~~bo Mbeki - what is he speaking?

J.F. It's just a conference on destabilisation - I was supposed to be there by nine.....

M.Y. Oh, yes, yes, yes....

J.F. But I thought I'd rather be with you but I couldn't actually miss the one thing, so it's unfortunate because I really have so many other things I want to ask you....

M.Y. Now will you please send me a text?

J.F. Ja, I will, and in fact.....

M.Y. I hope - I - I've been helpful...

J.F. Oh, very helpful - as I say, I'm sorry that I can't be with you longer but perhaps I might be able to phone you again and come back, but if I can't, I want to ask questions kind of quickly - because I have to go back to Zimbabwe....

M.Y. What - what project are you in?

J.F. Well, I'm.....

M.Y. I hope it will come out - my story will come out and it won't be controversial (Laugh)

J.F. No, no, I don't think so at all - in those difficult days of

J.F. solitary confinement did you ever waver about non-racialism - to see white police interrogating and white warders and the treatment you were getting from the kind of whites who weren't Bram Fischer - all the majority - the vast number of whites who were mistreating you and continued to - did you ever waver and think : "Gosh, how can I be giving - making such sacrifices in the name of non racialism?"

M.Y. Well, racialism is a psychological thing - if you are treated very badly by someone you react very, very aggressively - now I - well, I look at racialism - well, nationalism as a political force, but on the personal level I feel that psychologically I feel very, very bitter against the Afrikaaners -

Now it's only after meeting Afrikaaners on the same level that I realise - that I've realised that they aren't - the Afrikaaners are not all the same - there are Afrikaaners who are fighting against apartheid like me, and it's the Afrikaaner mentality of racism that is at fault, and I can't spell out this personal attitude very clearly enough -

Now I've been struggling very hard with my conscience in being bitter against the - the Afrikaaners, and until Schoon spoke when he had - he had lost his child and his wife, and he had spelt out very clearly his Afrikaaner ancestry, and he had said, no - he's a descendent of the Afrikaaners -

He fought against British imperialism, and there was the peace between the British and the Afrikaans, and then some Afrikaaners ruled and - ruled the country - some of the rascals - then some rascals highjacked the - this - their government of being Nazis, and he is not one of the nazis, and he will fight against the - this nazi philosophy and apartheid to his death -

In a way Schoon explained my dilemma, and he realised that - I realised that Schoon is right - he's an Afrikaaner who is fighting against the evil of apartheid, and he's only another person who's caught in the trap of - of apartheid nazism - it's a personal matter

J.F. So how did he explain your dilemma?

M.Y. He explained my dilemma of - of hating Afrikaaners - well, making a distinction between Afrikaaners and - and nazi orientated apartheid people - it's not the Afrikaaners that are at fault - it is the apartheid pedlars of nazism that I hate (Laugh)

J.F. Is there another flip side of that which is explained by say, Gatsha Buthelezi or Matanzima or a community councillor who sides with the government - you can say not all Afrikaaners are bad, but does a black person like yourself ever also go through something which says not all black people are good - the young people I speak to who've been bitterly tortured by the police and all this would say : Look, look at Gatsha Buthelezi or the so-called community councillors - they have taught us about non racialism - they're blacks who are on the other side - it's not white against the black that way - I'm just wondering if you feel that over the years seeing blacks who've sided with the oppressor as opposed to siding with blacks would make you feel that a racist view didn't work.

M.Y. Ja - well, I don't know whether I'm with you because you are now citing the question of blacks who are literally oppressing

- M.Y. freedom fighters, and it's like Gatsha Buthelezi - I would never, never set foot to his place.
- J.F. No, I'm saying because people like him exist doesn't that - isn't that a blow for non-racialism - doesn't that prove that one can't analyse things in terms of race - he's black but he's on the other side - Marius may be white but he's not the same side as Gatsha Buthelezi - he's in fact on your side - and you and Marius are on the same side and Buthelezi's on the other side, and I'm just saying is that part of non-racialism, part of your growing - was that - maybe it's not - maybe that's not a part of it, but as I say, to many black people they cite the fact of the blacks who aren't on the side of liberation to show that it doesn't have to do with colour.
- M.Y. Ja, ja, ja - well - well, in a way it's a political - it's a political problem - as I was saying, non-racialism is - is a political factor, and on the other side it is a psychological factor.
- J.F. What came out at your trial, just briefly - did a lot of your underground work - did it appear that the police had known about them, the M.-plan work you were doing - what did they have on you?
- M.Y. Of course - of course - I was going to - I was going to tell you that during my solitary confinement I was insultingly offered freedom in exchange for giving information, for writing - telling about - well, implicating many of my comrades, and I was given - offered freedom in exchange for writing implicating my comrades and exculpating myself from detention, and I said all right, you fool, I'll show - I'll show you what's - what I am -
- And they just were mistaken - completely mistaken about - I told them that, oh, it's a complete surprise - this is a complete surprise - I never expected this offer - all right, I'll think about - I'll think and pray about it - let me go down and pray - well, "pray" in inverted commas - and pray about the offer - I was -
- I was very much insulted, and it was an insult to my own leadership that I should be offered - well, I should be asked to write and implicate my comrades in exchange for giving information about my comrades, and when - well, after seven days I called the special branch and they hide (?) to get full information -
- And I said that, oh, I'm asking - I've called you to tell you that I've decided to - I've taken my decision - I've now prayed at God and God has answered my prayer - I'm not going to give you (Laugh) - I'm not going to give you information that required -
- And they asked me : Have you considered your - your children and your profession, and I've asked for - I've considered all that - my children and my profession - God has answered no (?) (Laugh) - very, very, very interesting - it was a most insulting offer that has ever been - been made to me.
- J.F. And what did come out at your trial - what were you jailed for?
- M.Y. Membership of the A.N.C.
- J.F. Does that mean they didn't have the details of your underground work?
- M.Y. They had details of my underground work, and it was - they had - they had information from people who had previously been

- M.Y. detained that I was present at the meeting - there was an amendment of the criminal law placing the onus on the accused to - that of being a member of the A.N.C., and the only - the evidence against - the only evidence against you to be a member would be attendance at meetings - attending meetings is a - it's a - is assumed that - it is assumed that you are guilty of being a member of the A.N.C. in - by mere attendance at meetings.
- J.F. Did any of your underground work involve you liaising with Indian people or white people or was it just African.
- M.Y. No, it was just African people - it was just African people.
- J.F. And so then you did your two years and then you were released in '65?
- M.Y. Yes.
- J.F. And then how soon after did you leave, or what did you do afterwards?
- M.Y. Six - six ja - yes, I - I'd - I was virtually living in isolation - isolated - I was not earning a living and not having any contact with people altogether.
- J.F. Were you banned or banished?
- M.Y. I was banished, yes.
- J.F. Back to M....
- M.Y. Back to Mapumulo.
- J.F. So you decided you should leave?
- M.Y. I decided to - that I should leave - it was the most cruel time of my life, and I then fled into Swaziland.
- J.F. And how long did you stay in Swaziland?
- M.Y. Four years.
- J.F. And why did you leave Swaziland - or what did you do in Swaziland?
- M.Y. I was deported - well, I was deported from Swaziland because it was alleged that I was giving protection to terrorists - people with terrorist activities - I was a lawyer practicing law in partnership with Lukele who was a professional assistant to - in the firm of Mandela and Tambo.
- J.F. And then you went to Britain?
- M.Y. I went to Britain, yes.
- J.F. And what did you do in Britain?
- M.Y. I was employed by the insurance company, Abbey (?) Life as a supervisor of a department of claims, and then after nine months I was asked by the A.N.C. to carry out a project of the Lutuli Memorial (?) Foundation.
- J.F. And how long did you do that?

- M.Y. It took me only six months, and then I fell ill and disabled.
- J.F. So you haven't worked since then?
- M.Y. I haven't worked since then.
- J.F. But you are - you do have contact with the A.N.C.?
- M.Y. Yes, yes, yes..
- J.F. And are you a Christian now?
- M.Y. Yes, I am a Christian.
- J.F. I could go on and on, but - unless you think there's anything that I should have asked you more about.
- M.Y. Yes - may I ask you why are you asking me this question?
- J.F. Which one?
- M.Y. This question whether I am a Christian or not.
- J.F. Oh, no, I just - I figured you were - I just wanted to make sure - it's just that I just read Lutuli's biography - he mentions.... one question I forgot, if I can just add one more - there are people who write about the A.N.C. and say that there are ethnic and tribal factors, that the A.N.C. has a preponderance of Xhosa people and Zulu but mainly Xhosa and not as many *Sotho*, and that the P.A.C. is more *Sotho* - was that ever part of your experience - did you ever feel - did people in Natal say, oh, there's too many people from the Eastern Cape in the leadership of the A.N.C. - anything like that - did you come up against that tribal factor?
- M.Y. Not exactly - I've never - I've never felt it - I've never felt it because the A.N.C. is a - composed of various tribal groups - it's just by sheer accident that I should have been in Natal and - and I should be Zulu speaking - and I never - I've never bothered about the ethnicity of the A.N.C., and I never ask who is *Sotho*, who is Tswana or whatever -
- Now - now that the A.N.C. has declared itself as being non racial it doesn't matter at all whoever - you could be Zulu, Xhosa or *Sotho* at all, and whether you are black, Indian or Coloured....
- J.F. Or white?
- M.Y. Or white (Laugh) that's right (Laugh).....

END OF INTERVIEW.