3

J.F. .... start with where were you born and when?

S.B. Born in Durban August, 1957.

J.F. What part of Durban?

S.B. Asherville, which is a middle class suburb of Durban.

J.F. And what was your parents' background - what did they do?

S.B. My father was a manager of a wholesale company owned by my grandparents, mother's a housewife.

J.F. And did they have any politics?

S.B. No - well, I mean ja, apathetic, let's say, but I mean it's I think the normal of a lot of Indian parents of that sort of generation - there was quite a fear of blacks and fear of the type of thing that happened in Uganda and elsewhere will happen also in South Africa - I mean a sense of insecurity, let's say, in that sense.

J.F. Was it described as Uganda, because I thought usually it was remember '49 but Uganda....

S.B. Well, also that, ja - I mean these things only really started to come out later when I began to get involved politically, but they would throw those sorts of things at you, you know - but my mother's father was some - something of a collaborator - used to be part of the local authority structure in an area called Westville, which is a very - that's where the Indian bourgeoisie stay so - Indian elite stay - so while my father comes from say, maybe a more lower middle class family, my mother comes from a fairly wealthy Indian merchant class family.

J.F. When did you start to see it as such, the collaborator and the wealthy merchant class?

S.B. Well, I mean that's - well, we always - I mean we - I mean knew that he was involved in those sorts of structures, but I mean we didn't take that very seriously because at that stage we weren't really involved in politics, you know - that was when I'm still a teenager that he was involved in those sorts of things and....

J.F. Did you see it as negative?

S.B. Not really at that stage I mean when we were - this is when I was, you know, between the age of ten and 15, and well, they owned a huge bazaar in Durban, and we used to work weekends in the bazaar and there was - they used to fraternise a lot with say, liberal whites, or even reactionary whites, for that matter, like weddings and things like that - they used to invite these people as honourary guests, you know, and it was like a prestige symbol, you know, or status symbol to be able to fraternise with liberal whites and invite them to your sons' weddings or your daughters' weddings and so on, but I mean we never took those things seriously - we didn't really understand those sorts of things - it's only later once one began getting involved marginally in politics that one began to see those things and begin to criticise it and begin to break with the family ties because of those sorts of things.

J.F. Maybe what we can do is not go through every single thing if you don't think it's important - I'll just ask you what politicised you, how you got involved?

S.B. O.K., I think it's a very contradictory process - my mother's brother uncle was very well known in the tennis world in Durban, and like a lot of my cousins I began to start playing tennis - well, I used to play most sports - I came from that sort of school, but I began to take up tennis seriously and well, began to win quite a few titles and so on, and then began to play league tennis seriously, and the league I used to play in at the association was (?) a member of Natal Council of Sport, or South African Council of Sport, and this was in the early '70s, and through that involvement in tennis, one got a sense of - well, the whole thing of no normal sports in an abnormal society, and as a counter to that one got a sense of non-racial sports, you know.

But it's contradictory in the sense that while that non-racial sport was being posited (?) there were in fact no whites, for example, playing tennis with us, and so although non-racialism in sport was being posited as - as an alternative to racism in sport, ultimately we were still playing sports amongst Indians and Coloureds - in fact there were no Africans involved in NACOS or SACOS in Natal at that stage - that's a very late development, only in the 1980s, so until the early '70s until I was about 21, 22, when I still played tennis seriously, all the tournaments I used to go to, which were organised by affiliates of SACOS, the tennis was between Coloureds and Indians and there were no Africans involved at all, but one still got a sense of non-racial sport, you know, that was being posited as an alternative.

J.F. Between all Indian teams and all Coloured teams or between mixed teams?

S.B. Because of the geography of Natal, or geography of Group Areas, that's how it essentially ended up being your (?) league matches - I mean it would be Coloured teams playing against Indian teams - there was very little mixing - and on the other sides I was at - I finished school in 1974 and went to university at Durban Westville, and that's where in my class and amongst students there were people who belonged to SASO there, and so my first interest in I mean what I would call say, real politics began in 1976 with the marches at UDW in (and) Durban Westville.

J.F. The marches in response to?

S.B. To the Soweto uprising and I mean I was on boycott in that year and I would go on all the demonstrations and I would go to all the alternative programmes that were being held and so on.

J.F. So you got right into that?

S.B. So - ja, and some of the people were then subsequently detained and banned and some of them went into exile - one of them was a point of reference for me, because I would go to him and raise the issues of, you know, the fact that while we playing sport under SACOS, we still find Africans starting to play sports with the whites, you know, in multinational tennis competitions, you know, and how is that possible - we are making sacrifices and they not prepared to make sacrifices and so on, and he would be very useful in terms of bouncing those ideas by saying well, one has to look at, you know, the levels of oppression and so on, and that one shouldn't just condemn that but maybe one should start understanding that far more, so I mean that's my initial involvement via SACOS.

S.B. I mean I used to come up with clashes with some of the hierarchy in the South African Council of Sport also, because the affiliate association that we belonged to in Natal, once a year there was this sort of tournament that used to be held in a white area on the - in the north of Natal, and that is where like tennis players from our league and white tennis players from the racial league used to come and play against each other, and I raised objections to that at a particular meeting of the association, saying that we are going against the grain of non-racial sport and we are going against the grain of SACOS, and how is it that we say we committed to SACOS yet we go and play with these whites who belong to a racial league once a year, and that's when I began to first get into political conflict with some - like my grandfather, for example, who came to - to hear of it - you know, I had raised those issues, and that is the circles that he fraternised with at times also, you know.

So it's very contradictory in the sense that here on the one hand, I'm committed to non-racial sport via SACOS, but not playing with any Africans or whites, so that the non-racialism was limited to Indians and Coloureds, but then on the other hand, I'm going to University of Westville and coming up against SASO and BC, you know, so that in that period really my politics which are starting to begin are politics of black and white - I mean I began to see things simply in terms of race, and even the terms that I would use for whites would be very derogatory, you know, which were the common terms then of honkie and so on.

And so far from mixing with whites, being a status like it was with my grandparents, I mean that was no status for me and I mean I think especially with '76, begins a real bitterness and hatred of whites, and I mean I think that situation remains until I left Durban Westville and began to do - I was doing science at Durban Westville and I was - it was basically a compromise, because my parents wanted me to do medicine and were going to shunt me off to Northern Ireland to do medicine, and as a compromise I went to do science at Durban Westville, and eventually I was able to persuade them that that's not the area I wanted to get into - I really wanted to do history, and so then I was allowed to go to Natal University and do social science.

And in my very first year at Natal University - this is early 1978 now and ja, I'm about 20 years old - I began doing courses which start to provide a perspective of Marxism, and I start to read Marx and I literally take like a fish to water, and one of my supervisors was - or one of my tutors in comparative (?) African government, which was one of the topics I was taking, a guy by the name of Heinz Klug, who's in exile now, he was quite an influence on me and used to provide us with liberal radical debate tutor seminars, where we used to read a reading from the liberal Oxford History of South Africa and then we used to read Wolpe Legassick, one of those, and that's my first exposure to Marxist writings and first exposure to class analysis, and from there I mean I - just apart from the academic work I really start to begin to read a lot - I mean that's the period when I start to buy lots of literature on Marx and Marxism and so on and -

But I still had that perspective of, you know, not wanting to do anything with whites, so that in the first four months I was at Natal University I wouldn't mix with white students at all - I mean I had nothing to do with them - I would mix with the few black students that were at Natal University, and again that would tend to be Coloured and Indian students.

S.B. I mean the background I came from I hadn't known an African student or an African person as a social - at a social level until I get to university at Natal - that's at the age of 20 - the only African people I come into contact with were domestic servants who used to work for my parents - I hadn't met any Coloured people until the age of 75 - 1975 at the age of 17, 18, and that was because of the social circles some of my other friends used to move in, and so most of my young life was restricted to fraternising with my cousins and fraternising with simply Indians.

So I meet whites students again for the first time in Natal University, so that's a very important period in my life, and because of the political interests that's growing and because I'm reading this Marxist literature and reading Legassick and Wolpe, I start to attend some of the meetings that are called on campus - they were organisations like the Students Democratic Association, of which Heinz Klug was president - there was wages commission, there was women's movement, and there was the newspaper Dome (?) and I then began to see that there were people like Heinz and I had to start figuring out, you know, what sort of place they - these people had, and they seemed to be committed to liberation and so on but yet (?) they were whites, and I began starting attending some of these meetings and found for the first time well, you know, here were people who, contrary to what SASO, what BC politics had led me to believe, were actually people committed to liberation and were actually thinking very much the way that I was starting to think in terms of class and seeing the struggle far more complicated, seeing capitalism as an issue.

So I think that's really the period where I start to transform from simply a race analysis to a class analysis, but it's a very academic transformation - I mean it's influenced by academic writings, you know - it's influenced by Marxist analysis, and I'm not still - still not fully involved in organisations politically, and then I start to get involved - I go to a seminar at Inchanga, which was run by NUSAS, in April, 1978, and that's the first time I meet someone like Auret van Heerden, who at that stage impressed me quite a lot also, and start to discover well, I mean you know, there is politics beyond BC, and I start to get involved in wagescom and students democratic association and I start to work on some of the media that they were producing and helping to arrange seminars and meetings and so on.

So throughout '78 I was involved in those organisations - in 1979 I became chairperson of wages commission, and we were doing a research project on migrant labour, and I began to do interviews with black workers also for the first time at some of the FOSATU factories in Pinetown and elsewhere, and still hadn't arrived at the Freedom Charter but - and then perhaps, you know, even the first time I saw the Freedom Charter was in Karis and Carter Volume Three, because I mean I - I probably did more reading in 1978, '79, '80 in those two years that I was doing the social science to complete my degree and in my honours year than at any other time in my life - I mean I used to just literally read and read and read anything that had to do with Marxism or socialism or black resistance politics.

And at that time I think I start to arrive at the Freedom Charter in 1980 during the students boycott, because we began producing literature that during the boycott we managed to raise money from someone and we produced 20,000 copies of June 16. Commemoration, and as part of that eight page pamphlet which went to a lot of the schools we had the Freedom Charter on the back page.

S.B. And then I was also helping in organising a free Mandela rally at Natal University, to which there something like four,five thousand people, and Zinzi Mandela spoke there together with Tutu, and then I became the rep from Natal University onto the Release Mandela Committee - the Durban Release Mandela Committee, and that's where I met for the first time Pius Langa and some of the other people.

J.F. Pius Langa?

S.B. Ja, that's Ben Langa's brother - he's an advocate and....

J.F. What year was this release Mandela....

S.B. 1980 - that's also the year where I start to strike up something of a friendship with Joe Paahla, who was later to become president of AZASO in 1981, and because I was doing a lot of reading in Marxism and socialism, he was also starting to become interested in those sorts of issues and I found myself lending a lot of material to him that I had finished with and he used to take that material and go through it and give it back to me, and in 1980 June or July NUSAS had a resistance seminar in Pietermaritzburg and Joe Paahla and myself and another woman who was - who had also been on the AZASO exec a few years later - we all went to the seminar together, and there I came across for the first time some of the people then I would come to know much better in Cape Town - they were busy working on the Fattis and Monis boycott.

So until that time still, 1980, I'm only involved in student organisations - I'm not involved in Natal Indian Congress or any of those structures, though in 1979 or 1980, I can't remember when, there was plans to organise a bus boycott because of fare increases, and Alf Karrim and some of them had come to me asking me to assist them in the area that I lived, and I did go to some of the meeting there and that's when I first met Yunus Mohammed also, but that - at that time I mean I had gone straight from race to class and class alone, and I mean for me there was reformist politics and revolutionary politics - there's the working class and other classes and I didn't see the hell why we should be worrying about bus boycotts and, you know, the main issue was the working class and revolution in South Africa - how is it that if we fight for getting the bus fares reduced how is that going to help us with the revolution, you see.

And I was fair - I mean I was very attracted to Trotsky on that point also - I mean I used to spend days and days reading the three volume by Deutsch on Trotsky and that's - I mean I was doing honours in 1980 and - but in that year I began to develop also - I mean I think I was becoming more critical - a lot of the reading I was doing was beginning to equip me with developing a critique of Trotskyism also, and in that sense I was already being equipped for when I went to Cape Town and coming up against the Unity Movement and Trotsky's politics - I mean by 1980 I was already going through that phase and rejecting that, but again at a very academic level - I mean until that time in my life I hadn't come with - up against a live Trotskyist, you know, but if I was to come up against that person I mean I had all my arguments and I would be able to, you know, debate with that person and why I rejected Trotskyism.

And 1980 was very important for me again in terms of my political development, because academically I was doing a eight week course on China and, you know, got to know politics in that area fairly well.

S.B. I did an eight week course on methodology and for my methodology I took Das Kapital Volume One, which you had to rigorously analyse, and I did an eight week course on South Africa and I did a dissertation on forced removals and relocation, so I mean I was being equipped, say analytically politically by that courses I was doing, but then I also first - for the first time got involved with mass student politics and I was the Natal University rep on the Natal Schools Crisis Committee, and that's when I met upward (?) people like Jay Naidoo and Alf Karrim and Vijay Ramlakhan and others from medical school, Natal University, Bashay (?) and so on - we were all on the committee together.

J.F. Vijay Ramlakhan?

S.B. Vijay Ramlakhan - he was training as a doctor - he was the president of SRC at medical school - and perhaps because they were impressed with my politics or whatever, or maybe because at that - I'm much more articulate in mass meetings or on the platform than like this, there was a three person delegation selected from students together with Natal Indian Congress representatives to go and visit the minister of education, Steyn, in Parliament Buildings in Cape Town, and I together with Alf Karrim and Vijay Ramlakhan were the student representatives, and we went and presented a memorandum to him in terms of the conditions under which we would end the student boycott, and in drafting that memorandum - that memorandum was being drafted and three o'clock or four o'clock in the morning and then we were meant to be on the plane at eight o'clock and leave for Cape Town, and I remember insisting at that point at three or four in the morning that they would (?) to eradicate all differences based on race and creed, and I remember the word class wasn't there and me (?) fighting to insist that the word class was there also, and eventually then Yunus Mohammed relenting and putting in class to help satisfy me.

So I mean again, you know, while I was coming up and starting to come into contact with people like Yunus and them, I think they probably saw me like fairly - as a hard line left sort of person and so on, but anyway I mean that's the politics that I was in at that time, and being on the Natal students school committee I mean was fairly useful in terms of learning organised, you know, mass politics organisation at a mass level and so on for the first time.

There was a lot of criticism for that visit to Steyn in 1980, and when we came back there was a huge fight that broke out at Natal University criticising myself for going and some of it overlaid BC versus let's just say non-racial politics, but it was more complicated than that - there were students who had been coming onto Natal University from Ngoye, Zululand, who had been suspended or expelled in '76 or post-'76 period, and they were in the process also moving away - they had elements of BC, so therefore I mean the whole scene of negotiating with the minister or with government officials was just not on for them, even as a tactic.

But subsequently I find out those are the same people who are making the transformation from BC to very explicitly the ANC because some of those people leave the country after 1980 and join the ANC, and some of those people were handing out pamphlets in 1980, Mandela's smuggled pamphlet, you know, between the anvil - the hammer and the anvil - we shall have liberation.

S.B. I mean during the boycott that pamphlets are being handed out in Natal University and I get copies of that from some of these people, and that then starts to shape me in some sense also, in the sense that I start to feel that, you know, for the first time there is a presence of this organisation called the ANC, which I knew very little about, and even in my readings I mean, reading Karis and Carter, reading some of the material, Legassick in his peace books at (?) the Communist Party and the ANC - at that point I had the position - if anyone asked me, you know, I used to be quite open and I say : Yea, well, I support the Communist Party - but I don't say I support the ANC - they just petty bourgeois and I'm not interested in them.

So getting that was very funny - I move away from Trotsky's politics and then I get attracted to the Communist Party because they committed to socialism, but I reject the ANC as petty bourgeois - and in 1981 then I go to Cape Town - I take up a scholarship at UCT and I start to tutor and start to work on an MA, and I come up against people like Dave Kaplan and others, and I got involved in the civic association called Thornhill, which Dullah Omar, who's very influential in politics in the Western Cape, is chairperson of.

And the reason why I ended up in Thornhill Civic Association is that because I knew some people in Cape Town - I knew, for example, the grassroots organiser of that time, Leila Patel, and I knew her brother, Kevin Patel, and though they knew I was in Cape Town and though they knew my politics I mean as far as the Freedom Charter was concerned - I mean they didn't really take the trouble to initiate me and say : Well, you know, these are the Freedom Charter youth organisations or civics where you can work, you know - and I was left to find that out for myself, and so I got involved in Thornhill Civic Association, which was a sort of non-aligned civic made up of Unity Movement and all sorts of people, and via Thornhill Civic Association I then get involved in the Cape anti-SAIC committee that is formed and I am on the executive of the Cape anti-SAIC committee together with some of the people who had been on the UDF executive recently in the Western Cape.

And via that I then come into contact with people explicitly committed to the Freedom Charter for the first time.

J.F. Your view on the Freedom Charter being at that stage?

S.B. No, I - I think by - by 1980 I mean because of the contact with some of these people who were at Natal University, my perspectives start changing I mean slightly on the ANC, but as far as the Freedom Charter was - was concerned I had no problems with that - I interpret it as a soc - you know, a basis for a socialist document, and so by the time I go to Western Cape in 1981 I'm fairly clear that I support the Freedom Charter, fairly clear that I mean you know, I see the resurgance in front of my eyes of the ANC, and I see - I'm starting to understand because of more reading an alliance that exists and so on - I mean I think literature was becoming far more available around that period, so that my simple writing off of the ANC and simply supporting the Communist Party was fairly simplistic, so I - I mean in that year I begin to learn a lot about alliances and so on, and then involved in the Cape anti-SAIC I come across people committed to the Freedom Charter in the Cape and - and then comes along the Cape anti-SAIC meeting in Cape Town and for the first time in November, 1981 the flag, the black, green and gold is unfurled at that mass meeting, and at that mass meeting I spoke on behalf of the Cape anti-SAIC.

S.B. Albertina Sisulu spoke on the same platform - Virginia Engels from Food and Canning Workers Union - Wilson Sedina from General Workers Union - Farouk Meer from the Natal Indian Congress - and then there were a whole lot of speakers representing various sectors - in 1981 also I start to live in a commune, you know, a student commune, and it's again living with mostly white students, but at that point I mean you know, the whole non-racialism issue had been more or less resolved and, you know, I began to see people in terms of politics and where they stood rather (than) in terms of skin colour.

So I mean for me non-racialism comes about for two reasons - firstly it comes about because on a concrete practical level at Natal University I see people committed to the political struggle in South Africa, and these people happen to be whites, and that forces me to change my perspective, and secondly I mean I start to come across class analysis and Marxism and these articles are (?) written by Harold Wolpe, who I, you know, know by reputation I mean as having fled the country, and he happens to be white and so does Legassick, you know, and these are clearly people who are writing from a radical perspective and are committed to liberation in South Africa, so very concretely I mean non-racialism is something that I mean I take on on board (?) and because of the class analysis that leads to a non-racial perspective also, so I mean it was both the practical and the theoretical merging at more or less the same time for me that brings me around to a non-racial perspective.

1982 I begin to get involved in AZASO in an attempt to set up an AZASO branch at UCT and help to organise the first batch of students from UCT to go to an AZASO congress in Hammanskraal in July, 1982, but at the end of 1981 Joe Paahla came to speak at the NUSAS congress in Cape Town and someone brought him to see me, and I was seeing him after a long time and we just began chatting about AZASO and so on, and until that point I mean I would never have considered going into AZASO because of its BC and what I thought was, you know, the lack of a strategy for mobilising students and the lack of a class analysis and so on.

But meeting Joe Paahla and meeting some of them again in early 1982 I mean I think I commit myself to trying to form an AZASO branch, and there were other people at UCT who were orientated towards the Freedom Charter and we make an attempt - we first attempt to launch a student organisation on a mass scale at UCT and we - we fail on that - there was a whole conflict over the name of the organisation - some of them wanted it called Black Student Society - if we called it Black Student Society we would have lost the votes of the so-called workerists.

If we called it Democratic Students Organisation, as we motivated that it be called, then we would have lost the votes of those inclined towards BC - eventually we lost all the votes, and the majority abstained in that situation, so we ended up with no organisation, and that's when we decided those who had attempted to form a democratic student organisation, but it was not just a non-racial BC, it was also whether you can have a student organisation or not at UCT - that was the Unity Movement politics, you see - if you form a student organisation at UCT you collaborating with the ruling class, so no student organisations at UCT - that just gives it credibility.

So anyway I mean we turned our back on that sort of nonsense and we formed a working group of AZASO and we went down to Hammanskraal, and I mean what we saw of AZASO and the fact that it had transformed, I mean we were fairly comfortable with, and in 1983 we transformed - or in the course of '82 I think we transformed into an AZASO branch.

S.B. And I was - in 1982 we began discussing an education charter campaign and I was on the national education charter committee as a resource officer from UCT - Shireen was also on that from UWC - it was a national committee - so from that time onwards I began getting involved with national student politics via AZASO, and in mid-1983 I was detained for two weeks after we had run quite a big campaign on save the six ANC guerillas, and I had been doing a lot of speaking around that at mass meetings, and we had chaired a mass meeting in the community around the save the six ANC guerillas, and a few days before I was detained I had spoken in the morning and the ANC guerillas were hung at a mass meeting at UWC.

And in the process of being detained I mean on that first occasion I was also tortured, and as part of that torture the issue that they were trying to pin me on is what is my difference with Neville Alexander - I mean that's the first question they were asking - why do you have problems with Neville Alexander - and they were trying to pin a whole lot of things on me in terms of finding documents in my house and insisting that a lot of this ANC politics began to happen when I came to Cape Town in 1981 and, you know, there seems to be a link and so on, and eventually they answered that question for me that, you know, you ANC, you non-racial, Neville Alexander is BC, he's PAC, and they were also wanting me to insist, you know, that AZASO is a front for the ANC, and so is COSAS and so on.

And from that interrogation I mean you know, it in some sense confirmed the correctness of like (?) the policies we had adopted, or I mean the politics that I was orientated towards, because I mean one could see - get a feel of they weren't afraid of exclusive BC politics or, you know, the BC politics of that time - what they were afraid of was non-racial politics or a politics that was starting to be based much more on class analysis.

J.F. Did they say to you what's your problem with Neville Alexander, why don't you be like him....

S.B. No, they didn't say that - I mean they began with the question, you know, what is your difference with Neville Alexander, so I mean I obviously answered : I have no differences with him, you know - so they went then to : Well, what happened - you know, you're an MA student - I mean obviously you know your history - so I said : Yes, I've done a bit of reading, you know - so they say : Yes, well, what happened in 1959 - I fell into the trap, because it was impossible not to talk, you know I mean and I mean I couldn't pretend to be stupid - I'm an MA student, you know, and I said : Well, there was a potato boycott in 1959 - so they said : Ja, well, that's very clever, but what else happened in 1959, you know - so they said : Come, come, you know your history, you know - so I said that : Well, I think the PAC broke away from the ANC also - so they said : Exactly, you see, so now what is the difference between you and Neville Alexander (Laugh)

So I didn't answer because I knew what they wanted me to answer, so I mean that's when (.....) said : Well, you know, the answer is that you are ANC and Neville is PAC, I mean is that not the answer - so I mean that was in the initial interrogation when they began to assault me and beat me up - that's what they wanted a confirmation of, you see, an admittance yes, that, you know, that is my difference with Neville - that he is PAC and that I am ANC and that is why we have these differences.

S.B. And so I mean one got a sense there also of, you know, the fear that they were starting to have of the ANC - this is only 198 - ja, this is early 1983 - but in the meantime, you know, the flags had started to unfurl and, you know, people were becoming far more ANC manned (?) than they had been in the past in terms of support and so on.

1983 after I come out of detention I'm elected onto the national exec of AZASO as projects officer.

J.F. How long were you in detention?

S.B. For 15 days - and most of my work involved the education charter campaign and also travelling to various campuses and linking up national campaigns and projects and so on, and that's about the time when AZASM is formed also, and by October '83, only after three months I've been on the AZASO exec., I'm asked by comrades in the Western Cape to take on the position as grassroots organiser - I mean I had some media experience in AZASO but not a lot, but they were convinced that I could learn that and that what was far more important is, you know, being able to give political guidance and being able to analyse issues politically, so I took on that job, but what happened a few days after I became grassroots organiser was I get a telephone call from the AZASO president here and being invited for a debate with AZASM - the first national debate between AZASO and AZASM at Rhodes University, because the black students at Rhodes University had to decide whether they were going to vote with AZASM or affiliate to AZASO, and so I was asked to go down for that debate, and I represented AZASO and outlined our approach and so on, and AZASM speaker withdrew at the last minute, although the vice-president of AZASM was there in the meeting at Grahamstown, but he refused to take part, and if anything say, in student politics confirmed the position that AZASO had in terms of a class analysis, in terms of how they viewed society, in terms of non-racial politics, in terms of the non-racial student alliance that we are building with NUSAS, it was that meeting in Grahamstown, because subsequent to that the black students voted and 99 point some percent of the votes were cast in favour of AZASO and nought point some percent of the votes went to AZASM, and for me at that point in my life I mean that confirmed, you know, the correctness of the policies that AZASO had and the orientation, or rather the change in orientation that it had in Augst, 1981.

And that was the first time at a mass student level, you know, students were given, without simply a branch being formed by a small group and then building up at a mass level, at the debate students were given the opportunity to cast their vote either for BC or a Freedom Charter organisation - I'm not sure I mean, do you still want me to go on or - O.K., so I mean ja (.....) - up till then I mean I hadn't worked say, aside from student politics, directly with white students, you know - I was involved in Grassroots, doing distribution for Grassroots in 1982, early 1983 before I became Grassroots organiser, and also had contact with progressive students in NUSAS and we used to maintain a fairly healthy relationship at the level of student politics - it's only when I get into Grassroots that I start to work with white democrats in the community, and at about the same time I joined Grassroots Bridget Pitt also had started to work at Grassroots, and we worked together at Grassroots for the next three years, and again working with someone like - like Bridget, you know (.....) - I mean not that I had any doubts, but if I did have any doubts, you know, working with someone like her as a white democrat, would have dispelled a lot of the doubts if I did have any, in terms of her commitment and, you know, the hard work she puts in and so on.

S.B. And so I mean I think in some sense my politics had been shaped by '80, '81 in terms of where I stood, you know - after that it was a process of maturing, of, you know, being far more strategic in terms of thinking far more organisationally, in terms of mass politics, mass mobilisation and so on, and a lot of that I learned in AZASO, I learned in Grassroots, and they were very important formative periods for me in terms of maturing rather than, you know, arriving at politics, and a lot of the things that happened after 1981 simply confirmed the correctness of my personal political position and orientation, you know, as far as the Freedom Charter goes or as far as the Congress Movement goes and....

J.F. What kind of things confirmed?

S.B. Well, I think I mean the way AZASO began to really grow after 1981 and its change in orientation, you know - its movement towards creating a mass base in the universities, its politics in terms of building a non-racial student alliance in the face of opposition from the remnants of BC, working in Grassroots with white democrats, you know, who were either contributing stories to Grassroots or working on some of the committees or working directly with me on a day to day basis - the growing support that one starts seeing manifested in the Western Cape, particularly from 1985 onwards in terms of the Congress Movement, you know.

Before being detained in August, 1985, because I had been a national executive office bearer of AZASO, I still used to keep a lot of contact with students and student politics and I used to be often asked to come in in terms of giving advice and speaking at meetings and so on, and in that period before being detained I must have spoken in the space of two weeks at least about at 20 (?) student mass meetings, and each of those mass meetings used to have, you know, between 500 and 2,000 students, including one mammoth rally of about 4,500 students organised by AZASO, COSAS and NUSAS in August, 1985.

END OF SIDE TWO.

S.B. And - but one got a sense of I mean being at that mass meeting and going and speaking at a high school like (.....) school, which is the only Coloured - sorry, the only Indian high school in - in Cape Town and speaking to the students and in front of me seeing students who are in Standard Six and Standard Seven having these black, green and gold armbands, you know, I mean was not only very inspiring but I mean it again confirmed, you know, that all the hard work that had been done by hundreds of democrats in the Western Cape who were committed to the Freedom Charter, that all the work that had gone into building up civic organisations and youth organisations and creating a mass base in the schools, and the work and effort that Grassroots has put in in terms of mobilising and raising political consciousness and so on, 1985 was a confirmation of, you know, all that, that - that work was starting to bear fruit, and it was not just hard work, it was also a case of having the - in my opinion, the correct politics, you know - that one had overcome some of the inadequacies of the BC period, that because it tended to be very intellectual politics it was never really concerned with mass mobilisation at the level of the civics, at the level of the women, at the level of the community, at the level of going door to door in the communities and involving people in making history themselves, involving people in struggles themselves, you know, and building a real unity on the ground.

S.B. Not just at the level of intellectuals and students but at the level of ordinary workers, housewives, young school students, church people and so on, so I mean again 1985 for someone like myself, and I'm sure for a lot of the people who had been working hard since the late '70s and early '80s, when really the congress tradition starts to revive and people began to get together in working groups and discuss national democratic struggle and what it means and what are the pillars of the national democratic struggle and so on, and not just discussing that, starting to apply that in the field - again that's a confirmation that I mean it's not a case of non-racial politics being superior to BC, but it's just still (?) confirmation of the differences that existed at that point, and continue to exist with BC, has little to do with non-racial politics but has more to do with how we mobilise the masses, the workers and the students and the women and the housewives - how do we organise those people, and that's the strength I mean of the congress tradition - I mean that's still the strength of the UDF compared to say, an organisation like AZAPO - it's never really moved into mass mobilisation at community level, at youth level, you see, whereas like the BC of the old days in some sense I mean they had been satisfied to have an overriding structure, AZAPO, you know, you could say equivalent of BPC in some senses, and then in (an) AZASM, which is, you know, the equivalent of SASO, SASM put together.

And though I mean in some of the documents that I have seen, they spoke about community politics and so on, I mean they've never really been able to move away from intellectual politics from rhetoric to going and getting down to that level, so that the developments that take place from BC I mean - I mean I would see as a class analysis starting to be introduced, from that class analysis flowing a perspective on non-racialism that it's not, you know, what colour skin you have but it's where you stand in the liberation struggle - whether you on the side of the people or whether you on the side of the enemy, and also because of that understanding, you know, that because you have a class analysis, because you have a non-racial perspective, it also opens up a whole new sort of dimension in terms of how you need to mobilise and organise - you come to a greater understanding of the state, you know, that the state is not just something that stands out there in a monolithic structure - that I mean it exists on the level of the education system, it exists at the level of the health system, it exists at the level of the administration in the townships, it exists at various levels, and those are the levels at which you need to start focusing on a day to day basis in terms of building unity of the people around bus fare increases, around rent increases, around gutter education and bantu education, and in doing that I mean you start to damage and you start to dent the state structures wherever they exist, you know, at all levels, and that I mean once you have done that, from there - from there you can really start - you come together at a regional level and at a national level and then link all the different sites (?) of struggle, whether it's education, whether it's women, whether it's the civics, whether it's the youth - you can then start to unify those disparate struggles.

And again I think, you know, that sort of perspective isn't there at the level of BC - it's - it flows out of a class analysis, a greater understanding of capitalism, a greater understanding of state and state power, and I think above all, an understanding that, you know, you fighting on the terrain that you have to contest all the time, you know- it's not simply the state as this monolithic structure which that - which can repress you and control every aspect of your life - that within that, you know, there are areas that you can challenge and areas that you can roll back in some sense and make gains and maybe those gains'll be taken away from you, but I mean you going to have to fight back.

S.B. You have to create the spaces for yourself, you know, at whatever level you working, whether it's in AZASO in education or whether it's in the area of women's right and united women's organisation, whether it's at the level of youth unemployment and Cape youth congress and so on - so I think I mean, ja, a lot of things become clarified in the post-'76, post-'79 period, and while I wasn't - I mean I wasn't active, you know, at that level between '79, '80, where this reorientation was taking place - in hindsight I mean and having it related to me by other people, you know, I'm aware that these debates began to take place, and a lot of the events and processes of the last four, five years are simply a confirmation of, you know, the correctness of those decisions that were taken to moving to a local politics, to moving to a mass mobilisation at local levels, to build local structures, and from there onwards build, you know, regional national structures just, you know, grass-roots politics.

And in the Cape for the first time I mean in contrast to Natal, where I rejected going to work on a bus boycott issue, in the Cape I come to understand for the first time the importance, you know, that it's not reform or revolution, you know, that the struggle for reforms leads and blends into, you know, the process of revolution and that it unites people - it gives confidence to people, and that's when I began to understand also, you know, the real meaning of say, a newspaper like Grass-roots, even the term grassroots, you know, what it symbolised, what it displayed a commitment to.

So that '79, '80 I mean I think I operated very much at an intellectual level - I mean my politics was the politics of the textbooks, you know-it was like pure Marxism with no - you know, no grey areas - you're either for, you know, socialism or you are against, you know - the petty bourgeoisie was the enemy, you know - there was no notion of winning them over, of contesting their terrain, despite the fact that I came from that sort of background, so I mean I think in that sense Cape, you know, was very important for me in terms of understanding the necessity of alliances, of understanding, you know, adherence to principles, as one person put it, but flexibility of tactics also in terms of how you approach issues.

And I mean I think that is something that really separates UDF and say, National Forum, you know - it's not a case of UDF not being principled - it's a case of being - of adhering to principles but also displaying a creativity and a flexibility of tactics, whereas from the National Forum, from AZAPO, you simply get an adherence to principle, and because it's such a rigid adherence, they virtually define themselves out of mass struggles, because the moment you get involved in mass struggles it means dirtying your hands at some times - it means that points negotiating, you see, either with the bosses for wages or negotiating with, you know, government officials around rent increases and so on, and if you conduct your politics in that way I mean it, you know - you end up in a situation that National Forum was up - ended up with very little support because you not - you not able to carry people through, you know.

At the end of a struggle people want to see some benefits, want to see some gains that they have made, you know, and not lose those struggles all the time, and in that sense again getting involved in concrete politics, getting involved in the community, is important in reformulating a lot of your intellectualism where you'd just see, you know, this thing called revolution and that's all you interested in.

S.B. And I've seen a lot of that in my own say, stay at UCT, for example, where you come across people who sit in the library the whole day, who read Marx and read Engels and read Lenin and Trotsky and they can quote to you beautifully and brilliantly about Luxembourg in the mass strike and Trotsky and permanent revolution and, you know, Marx on class and so on, but who have never been involved for a single day in organisation, be it student organisation or community organisation, and I mean those are simply, you know, armchair politics - politicians.

And a lot of them argue well, I mean they not involved in student politics because it's petty bourgeois, you know - they'll only get involved in community politics, and unfortunately the reality is that they never do get involved - they remain at that level of armchair critics, and generally then tend to move say, towards the Unity Movement because, you know, that's an area they comfortable with - it's all theory and very little practical political involvement.

In another sense also Western Cape is important because, unlike Natal and Transvaal, if you are orientated to a particular political perspective in the Western Cape, often you have to be pretty sure why you are orientated there, because there are other political structures and organisations, and besides being orientated to the congress movement you can either be orientated to the Cape Action League, you can be orientated to the Unity Movement, you can be orientated to BC.

Now lots of young people and activists don't have that options in Natal - I mean because of the tradition they largely orientated towards the congress movement, which is I'm not saying bad, it's fine - but in the Cape often you become mature politically far quicker because you're always being buffeted by criticism from other tendencies, whether you at school or whether you at university or whether you working in the community, and you must be able to answer those criticisms, so that if you support the congress movement you must know why you support the congress movement and not support CAL, you know, or not support the Unity Movement, and in that sense I think Western Cape is very different from the rest of South Africa.

People might chop my head off, but I mean I think a lot of people will confirm that Western Cape - I mean if you look at media and you look at creativity and so on, I mean it's - it isn't matched by Natal or Transvaal - if you ask anyone could any other region but the Western Cape have provided a launch for the UDF on the scale that it did, I mean I would think in honesty people would answer that no other region could have done that and guarantee that they would get 12,000 or 15,000 people to that launch.

And again Western Cape blends people in the congress movement today who come from various backgrounds - they coming from the Unity Movement tradition and bringing some of its strengths - theoretically they coming from the BC tradition and they bringing the strengths of that tradition and its militancy - and then you've got a younger generation that is simply coming into the congress movement, you know, and because of those tendencies existing I mean I think it - and being fertilized by each other - I mean I think it's produced a situation that is very different from other parts of South Africa and accounts for a lot of the things that have been happening there recently, and in ways that haven't happened in other - other parts of the country - I don't know if I've got much more to say about myself.

J.F. Where does that take you - how does that identify you - when you left you were what and will you go back to a job, do you know?

S.B. O.K., I mean I left at more or less the time when my three years at Grassroots were coming up, and we have a policy of not working in Grassroots for more than three years, so that we can ensure a reproduction of activists - that it's not a full time job, you know, that you live in for the next five, ten years - I mean the area that I'm really interested, even while I was at Grassroots, and the area that I feel best equipeed and which links up say, some of my academic training is at the level of politieal education and training, and that's something that I was involved in say, via my activities in AZASO and via a lot of the work I used to do amongst say, the youth organisations and COSAS, and apart from say, straight political education I mean, running workshops and so on, on whether it's, you know, education on Mozambique or education on Cuba or national democratic struggle or non-racialism or the question of alliances or whatever the main issues are at that point, I mean the other area that I'm more and more interested is education itself, you know, and the whole concept of people's education on a democratic education system.

And that's again one of the reasons why my current interest is in student politics, you know, too, because it's linked to education in some sense and into (?) educational struggles, and having been part of those struggles and having experience of those areas, I mean if I do go back I mean I think that's the area that I would, you know, want to be involved in, either full time or, you know, if I have a full time job that is academic I would, you know, be inclined to work in a UDF sort of structure or agency that does work in the educational area.

J.F. And what was your position at Grassroots when you left?

S.B. Full time organiser - organiser is the position of is - it's not an editor but it's the organiser responsible for the overall project and ja, he plays - he or she plays the role of having the contact with community and civic and all the affiliate organisations of - of Grassroots, of which there are about 70 organisations, most of them affiliated to UDF - he or she is also responsible often for political direction as far as the contents of the newspaper go, or I mean has - is usually I mean someone well placed will provide that sort of direction.

It's also often responsible for funding aspects of the Grassroots, also responsible for thinking of new projects and motivating for new projects being started and so on, and ja, so - and then he's, you know, responsible for the collective as a whole, you know, or coordinates the activities of all the other staff members within Grassroots on a day to day basis.

J.F. If I can just go way back and ask the questions - I didn't want to interrupt your flow - and they can be briefer answers if you want - when you - as you were growing up did you grow up with a view of yourself and your family as very much Indian - did that mean anything - as opposed to black or as opposed to not white?

S.B. I mean I don't think I really thought of those sorts of issues before 1976 - I mean....

J.F. Do you think you accepted that you were....

S.B. I mean the fact that I was classified Indian I mean I didn't even think of that as - I mean I don't think it was in my - in my consciousness that I'm Indian, you know, or that within (?) the Indian I'm Muslim, you know, but I mean as more positively though, the first time I start to see myself as black is in 1976, you know, and I think that's the BC influence at University of Durban Westville.

S.B. I mean that's when for the first time as positively asserting, you know, that I'm not Indian but I'm black, so - but while growing up I mean - I mean I came from a very comfortable middle class family - I mean I wasn't lacking for anything - I mean I had no contact with Coloured students or African students or white students - my parents were largely apolitical, and I was largely involved in sport, you know, and ja, I didn't really think about politics.

J.F. But do you think you accepted that you were Indian, that you were supposed to marry a Muslim Indian girl, that that was your future, or did you think - did that ever occur to you, that there'd be any reason to reject that - did your parents have any line viz-a-viz other races....

S.B. No - ja, I think they had - I mean I don't think explicitly they had a position on those issues, but I mean I think implicit was that there was a hierarchy and that whites were in the top, you know, and that - and in terms of levels of civilisation I think they thought of it in that way also, that there were whites at the top, you know, and then there were Indians and then there were Coloureds and then there were Africans, you see, and I mean they're not racist in that sense - I mean the only racist or race biting (?) came out was in 1980 when they were becoming really uncomfortable with my increasing political involvement and when I made that trip to Cape Town on the Natal Indian Congress people, I mean that's the first and the last time in my life when my father shouted at me that I must forget about these kaffirs and that sort of thing, you know.

But I mean otherwise I mean you know, we were closer to the nice middle class existence - I mean we didn't think about politics and - but I mean they've changed, you know, since - since my first detention in '83 and - and subsequently I mean they've changed quite a bit, and that they understand that what I had started to do and they began to understand more of, you know, my principles, you know, and what I was - where I was at and so on and didn't - they stopped treating me as just a rebellious youth, you know, as I think they saw it when I was younger, when I was at Durban Westville, for example, and in that sense my own political involvement has changed them and I think they are slightly clearer on issues now, you know - they don't vo - I mean they've never voted for - in the South African Indian (?) Council elections, for example, you know, and even if they were tempted to vote I think because of my political involvement, I think they understand things far more, and my younger sister, you know, has also been able to influence them because she's involved from a Islamic perspective but an Islamic perspective that's fairly radical and stresses non-racialism also, so they've changed, you know, because of me in some senses.

J.F. Why did you go to Cape Town (.....)

S.B. O.K., I mean I finished honours in 1980 and I then was going to go on to masters, and my economic history supervisor was quite a nice guy - actually suggested to me that he thought I was wasting my time at Natal University, that clearly I was influenced by a Marxist perspective and that if I really wanted to develop that I should go to UCT and work with people like Dave Kaplan, and he didn't think that he was very honest - he didn't think Natal University would be the right place for me, and he actually helped me in terms of trying to secure a scholarship to UCT, and then I did get a scholarship and began tutoring at UCT, so I mean that was the reason I went, and I wanted to - 1980 things were still very tense, even when I went to Cape Town I mean.

S.B. They tried to dissuade me from going to Cape Town, but I mean I insisted that I wanted to go and I insisted that it was for my academic career, you see - they were....

J.F. They tried to dissuade you?

S.B. My parents, but by 1980 they were becoming very proud because I was, you know - I had an honours degree already and I was winning all these nice awards, you know, and so they thought O.K., I mean you know, let him go and further his academic career, and my relations with the parents only really start to come right after my first detention - I mean until that time we had very little contact, we hardly speak to each other.

J.F. Can you just tell me anything about moving from Durban, which is (..... ....) Indian population, to Cape Town where there's far less Indians, and also what the relation is supposed to be in the Indian community with Coloureds, and how your parents responded to you going to a Coloured area and getting involved with Coloured people - was that an issue - and also just in terms - I think I'm familiar just because South Africa makes you familiar with black/white, but I don't know what Indian/Coloured is supposed to be, especially Durban Coloureds as opposed to Coloureds in Cape Town view of Indians.

S.B. Well, my parents were also, specially my mother, fairly religious, though by the time I - I mean I think by already in 1976, by the time I was 18 or 19 I mean I was agnostic I mean - I mean I wasn't really into religion at all - I mean from when we were brought up - as we were being brought up Coloureds were seen as less civilised, you know, as - because they drink, you see, and we don't - I mean because we were part of an Islamic faith, I mean we don't touch alcohol, and we lived in an area where two miles from where we lived was a Coloured area called Sydenham, which some - I mean there were always gang fights there and it tended to be a fairly violent area in - it was like a more working class area, and there always tended to be gang fights and violence over weekends and so on, you know, and I mean that was - those sorts of things we were aware of and - because we had no contact I mean with even young Coloured people, we often generalised from that and thought well, most Coloureds are like that and there would be like a fear, you know, of Coloured people because they different from us and they drink and they tend to be violent and that sort of thing.

But I mean at Durban Westville there were a few Coloured students at Natal University there were far more Coloured students - and I mean really going to Natal was - I mean I don't think I had - I don't think - I mean I don't think I had any of those prejudices - I mean I was just - I mean I was a very - what's the word - easy guy I mean - I mean - ja, I mean when I reach university at the age - I mean I was 17 when I went to university - I mean I began to form friendships there via tennis, which are friendships that last until today, you know, close friendships, so that if we go to Durban I mean we would always socialise with these particular people, and they go back ten, twelve years now.

It was a very easy crowd and it was a crowd that was in conflict with parents, you know, and I began drinking at a certain age - when I was 18 or 19, which people like myself who come from those families don't do things like that - I used to go to Cape Town for holidays every year because all the ten - national tennis tournaments were held there, and most of the people who played tennis in Cape Town are obviously Coloured, so that's when a lot of friendships were starting to be formed also.

S.B. For example, Leila Patel, who was Grassroots organiser before me - I met her for the first time in 1975 or 1976 and I knew she was involved in politics somehow, you know, but I mean I wasn't really that interested....

J.F. How did you meet her?

S.B. She was at a tennis tournament - that's how I met her brother, Kevin, also, you see, and so via tennis I began meeting a lot of the people who were playing tennis, people my age, people older than me, and so that going to Cape Town wasn't a big problem because I had been going there virtually every year for about a month, either to play tennis or just to have a good time really, so I mean I was - I mean I knew Cape Town, but they had those fears, you see - they had the fears of where was I going to live - with whom was I going to live, you know - would I have kosher food and those sorts of thing, and they weren't aware, you know, that I drink and that, you know, I ate whatever I ate and, you know, so.

J.F. And did it feel different being an Indian in Cape Town when - going there for the first time when you were younger and Durban having that kind of cushion of being the majority, being (.....) suddenly in a minority?

S.B. No, but I - I don't know in terms of my own personality traits once I've worked through a particular issue and say, intellectually, and when I move from a certain position and I move fairly solidly and strongly, you know, so that when I move to a non-racial sort of position it's like a down the line non-racial position, you know, which encompasses all of that, so whether it's, you know, whites, Indians, Africans, whatever, Coloureds, whatever, you know, and ja, I mean I - I mean I didn't - I suppose people would have some of those problems, but I mean I didn't have any of those problems in terms of how I would relate to people or - no.

J.F. Aside from you yourself not having it, were you aware of other people having it - I'm just interested because in fact Coloureds and Indians are minorities, but in fact if you're in Durban you don't notice it - if you're in, you know what I mean, and then it's - you try to find....

S.B. I mean at Natal University I mean there was an element of - it wasn't that overt and strong, but I mean you got bad vibes from time to time from Coloured students, you know, almost like anti-Indian type sort of sentiment from some Coloured students, and it was a tendency when at Natal University for Indian students to stick together and Coloured students to stick together and African students to stick together and very little mixing really, so there were those vibes, you know, and - but then I was working in student organisations and in those organisations there were white students, there were people like myself, there were some Coloured students, and then there was a black student society also, which was launched at Natal University in 1979 or 1980, and I was also part of that, though I wasn't too happy about the black student society, you see - I mean I was non-racial down the line, but I mean I was part of that.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

S.B. .... I mean it - there was a black student society and I was a member of that, and that black student society brought together black - Indian students, Coloured students, African students, and I mean again - ja, I think a lot of, you know - once I've moved to a certain position I'm able to move in terms of the concrete and practical implications of that - I'm able to adjust very quickly, I'm - I'm able to adjust very easily to situations, so that if I'm non-racial I'm, you know - I'm - in principle I'm non-racial down the line and I mean I won't tolerate anything else or - I was going to try and provide another example just linked to non-racialism - what was it?

Oh, ja, for example, you know, I've never - I mean I've got a social science and an honours degree and in getting those things I picked up two or three awards, an academic merit award and so on, but by 1979 even before I graduated I'd come to a position that as black students at white universities or so-called open universities, we should not be going to graduation ceremonies, and the rationale for that was again political, that I believed that by going to those graduation ceremonies a small number of us black students were giving credibility to an institution that was in large part racist - I mean we were there in terms of the so-called reforms that - that were being made, but more important I mean and I mean I would - I argued this in a black student society workshop very strongly also, and much too strongly because I got some strong reaction against that - that ultimately, you know, that piece of certificate that we get when we go to graduation ceremony and we get donned by either a minister, you know, or by some big businessman, that ultimately I mean our - our reward or our certificate must come from the community in terms of what we put back into the community, you know, in terms of what we have contributed to the community and that it's our community, or I mean as I put it then, it would be the oppressed and exploited that would indicate to us, you know, whether what we have learned at university has been of any value to them, and I don't see why we should go to a graduation ceremony and get some big businessman or some minister to say : Yes, you have done well, you know, and here's your passport to, you know, Anglo-American or a job, you know, in big business.

And I mean once I'd worked through those sorts of issues I wouldn't budge from those issues, you know - I mean I would never go to a graduation ceremony precisely for those reasons, so again once I've intellectually come to a certain, you know, that's, you know - that all that I've been taught about Coloureds and Africans and so on, once I'd resolved that intellectually I mean from that, you know, in practice there were very few problems - I didn't have an identity crisis or, you know, who am I and, you know, where am I going and that sort of thing.

J.F. Beyond yourself, can you tell me anything about Coloured/Indian relations since you've got this perspective of having lived both places, of having a relationship across the line that some would have been taught not to cross - I just don't know much about that kind of - the lore and the prejudice and what it - what you saw maybe way back in the (.. ...) circles and the kind of comments (.....) that build up that narrow ethnic....

S.B. O.K., again I mean in tennis circles I was coming from a middle class background and the team I was playing is a middle class, upper class team - I mean we - our home base was my uncle's beautiful tennis court in his back garden, which is behind a beautiful mansion of a house, you know, where - and sometimes we would come up against playing against other teams that came from areas that were working class, for example, and so I mean that class thing would come in that I mean here we are middle class, we have our own tennis court, we able to practice as much as we want, and obviously we get coaching also, so we are far better.

S.B. And we would then come up against say, other of our same age who, you know, can't even afford to buy decent racquets and so on, and I mean even - that's again when I was in my first, second year at university, and that used to like bring about in me - I don't know about other people - a sense of shame or, you know, but again it was not against (?) other Indian tennis players that we were playing - as far as I mean Coloured players that we came - had come across or - I mean there was very little mix - I mean there's virtually no mixing socially between Coloureds and Indians in Natal, you know, I mean it - Natal Indian Congress is Natal Indian Congress for a long time, and Indian is the operative word there and.

J.F. Was it the class reason or would you just - there'd be no possibility that a middle class Coloured person would be....

S.B. I think....

J.F. .... that the parents would think you could date even if it was middle class?

S.B. No, my parents would have been freaked out if I was going out with a girl who was say, the daughter of a Coloured doctor just, you know, let's say she was a daughter of a Coloured doctor they would have been freaked, because we come from different cultures, and if I'm going out with a Coloured girl the next thing that's going to happen is I'm going to be starting to drink, you know, I'm going to be starting to eat non-kosher food, you see, so I mean there's virtually no mixing between Coloureds and Indians socially in Natal, or at least during the period that I came from.

What mixing happens even today would be amongst activist circles, you know, and that's a very small circle, and also the fact that it's Group Areas, the fact that it's slightly different cultures - I mean I think those things play a part in - well, I mean to - as far as mixing between Indians and Africans or Coloured and Africans, that's virt - that was virtually non-existent during that period - where that - I mean where those things really break down, where that happens more often is say, at universities, but it then is confined to the university premises - it doesn't extend into social life, you know.

We might go to a disco at university together or to a concert like say, Nigel's wife at that stage, you know - we used to all go out together sometimes to functions, play squash together and so on and - and socialise I mean, you know, I used to - where she used to live I used to go to for supper sometimes and they'd play some song - that wasn't extended beyond that into say, the circles that she would relate to, you know, and I wouldn't go into those sorts of circles....

J.F. Social circles?

S.B. Social circles, ja - I mean I would never have, say the Coloured areas of Sydenham or Wentworth - I mean I never went into those areas socially, but I mean I did have contacts once I was at university with people in Coloured areas who were friends of a good friend of mine, you know - I mean he socialised with them because he was a professional soccer player at that stage and he played for a professional soccer team, and that - that team was say, you know, mostly Coloureds and a few Indians, so he had that group of friends and I would, because I was friends with him, related to those people, and those were largely unemployed young Coloured people or working class Coloured people, and this was about five minutes from where we lived, you know, but in a different suburb that was called Sydenham.

S.B. And that socialisation would be at the level of say, drink, you know, drinking beers and that sort of thing - it wasn't at the level of having meals together and that sort of thing, you know.

J.F. Was there any harking (?) of how horrible it would be if you got involved with a woman who was Coloured as opposed to white, as opposed to African?

S.B. Well, I mean in terms of Indians, say the family or the culture I come from I mean often mothers, you know, would like to select a female for you to marry and, you know, even while I was growing up there would also always be hints from your relatives or your grandparents that, you know, they would like you to marry so-and-so, you know, and your grandmother would always be nudging you and saying : You know, that's the woman we'd like you to marry - but the moment I got to university I mean it was - the moment I got to university I changed a lot and I mean I began to come up against real clashes with my parents on everything, in terms of my dress, in terms of the shirt I wore and the tattered jeans I wore and my long hair and everything, and we just went our own ways, you know - I mean they just lost all hope, you know, of me becoming anything, you know.

So I didn't have those sorts of pressures I mean as - and I think the - I don't know - I mean I can't generalise for other families, but I think maybe things have changed - I mean I certainly think because of the problems I had in my family, my brother who's at university now and who's starting to do law, is not going to have a lot of those problems because they've already gone through that with me, you know.

J.F. Would they accept easier if he got involved with a Coloured woman or would that not happen?

S.B. Well, I mean I think there would be a hierarchy (?) if they had preferences - I mean their first preference would be for me to marry a Muslim in terms of religion - a Muslim woman - I think that their second preference would have been well, in terms of status white - the third preference would have been a non-Muslim Indian, so that non-Muslim Indian would come after white, because it would be quite a shame for me to marry a - say, a woman of the Hindoo faith - I mean it would be a skandaal in Durban - then I mean maybe, you know, as a (.....) Coloured, and then sure - I don't know what they would have done if I'd married an African woman - they wouldn't have - no, I mean that's very strong - I mean I - whatever people might say today, I mean I think that still exists in most Indian families - I don't think that's strong in say, Coloured families or - it wouldn't be that strong, but I think in Indians it's very strong.

J.F. But what's it from the Coloured side - is there a feeling that they wouldn't want you to marry an Indian or how does the hierarchy go - first choice is still a Coloured boy?

S.B. It's a small Indian population.

? Cape Town is different to Durban - Cape Town there isn't the division between the Coloured and Indian - it's a small Indian population, they live in the same areas - only until very recently has....

S.B. But there is sometimes a Christian Muslim angle, even though that's started to break down say, with political existence, but it still operates I mean - your parents, for example - Shireen's father is Coloured and Shireen's mother is Indian, and they were excommunicated from her mother's family.

? (.....) but in Durban even the Coloured community is - it's different from the Coloured community in Cape Town - they more isolated.

J.F. So they....

? They had their own Coloured identity.

S.B. It's not such a big community either - it's a small community - and again I mean it's class comes in also, because Coloureds in Durban are largely working class, whereas all the shops and businesses are owned by Indian traders and merchants, and Coloureds would be more artisans and, you know, working in - as plumbers and electricians and that - and those are the skills that Indians never used to go into I mean, you know - the aspiration for every Indian parent was for the son or daughter to become a doctor or a lawyer or a dentist, you see.

For me to go and to become teacher or a academic, a historian or something like that was unheard of, you know - I had to go to Northern Ireland - that was their first choice for me.

J.F. Would it have been easy for you to get in there on a South African passport?

S.B. Well, that's the (.....) in Dublin - all my uncles have graduated from there to do medicine, and I almost had an automatic passport to that.

J.F. And were your parents upset that you married an Indian person or did they not mind?

S.B. They were so glad that I took them off their hands - took her off their hands.

J.F. That wasn't an issue?

? The main thing was the Muslim religious thing.

J.F. Because your background is?

? Muslim.

J.F. So that was....

S.B. Her father converted to (too)

? My father became a Muslim - you can never become anything else - whenever you get married then to a Muslim (non-Muslim) he has to convert or she has to convert.

S.B. So her father was Eric Roussou, and he converted and became Muslim so....

J.F. (.....) her mother?

S.B. Ja, her mother was Muslim and coming from a fairly respectable Muslim family, so she was excommunicated, and so I married a Muslim and my parents were - couldn't believe their luck when they heard that I was marrying a Muslim from Cape Town - they all - I think they always - well, I had a relationship with someone who was white in 1981, 82 - for two years we went out - name was Tessa Botha - and they knew about it because we lived in the - we shared a house - we lived together for two years, and so when they heard that I had started to go out with Shireen they were absolutely overjoyed.

S.B. And when I told them we were getting married I mean they were - you know, they were very happy about that.

J.F. Did you since (?) back in Durban and then in Natal at all any - you mentioned it briefly, a kind of anti-Indian feeling from Coloureds - did you sense it from Coloureds in Cape Town less or more, or did you ever sense it?

S.B. I've never sensed it in Cape Town - I mean I was like (?) - '81, '82, '83, I'd been largely involved in student politics though I was fair - I was starting to get much more known in the community because of say, workshops I'd begun to run and so on, and I was fairly nervous of becoming Grassroots organiser because I mean it's one of those key positions in Western Cape politics - I mean you don't become Grassroots organiser just like that - and I was very nervous of the fact that I was coming from Durban, and in some circles I was still being regarded as an outsider and that, you know - that maybe there would be a resentment that I was getting this portfolio rather than someone from Cape Town, but it was in that sense - it was never in a Coloured/Indian sense.

J.F. And what about viz-a-viz African people in Natal and in Cape Town?

S.B. I mean I - the only contact I had with African people was at university, and although we didn't know each other much socially, where we would meet, I mean the meeting ground would be politics, you know, in the dis - I mean discuss - I mean political discussions, but it would not go beyond that - I mean we would maybe have luncheon at the canteen and that sort of thing, but I mean there was no mixing beyond, you know, university, and they were coming from KwaMashu, Umlazi, those sorts of places, which would be unheard of - I mean that's the other thing in Natal - you don't go into African areas - I mean you don't go into KwaMashu or Umlazi - I mean it's unheard of.

J.F. As a non-African?

S.B. As a non-African, ja, but I mean in Cape Town you - you go into Gugulethu, Langa, Crossroads I mean, you know, with - without any problems really.

J.F. Why is that - is this that old Cape liberal tradition?

S.B. No - I also think that I mean when I got to Cape Town community organisations were being formed - some of the organisations - I mean AZASO had members in African student members - United Women's Organisation was there, which was linking to the African and Coloured women - Grassroots was linking them together....

J.F. But why - that exis - there were efforts in the same way in Durban, in Transvaal - why is it that it's so much easier in Cape Town - why have - why have they made the links....

S.B. There are still separate organisations in Cape Town but those organis - but I mean United Women's Organisation is a women's organisation but it has different branches - I mean branches in Coloured areas and African areas, right, but - that's a good question - why was I mean Gugulethu, Nyanga always more accessible - look, I mean firstly I mean townships in - KwaMashu is a fair distance from Durban - it's, you know, what, 15, 20 miles from Durban - kilometers from Durban.

S.B. And I mean the - the point when I was in Durban I mean there were no real community organisations - I mean Durban Housing Committee - those structures were just really starting, whereas in African areas there weren't that many organisations - I mean there was also Inkatha factor, right, and Gatsha had come out strongly against the democratic movement in 1980, but in Cape Town I (?) already came into a - an - a tradition where Africans and Coloureds were linking together in political structures.

J.F. What was the tradition from?

S.B. I think some of it comes from the unions, like in Food and Canning Workers Union Oscar Mpetha worked together with - I think Johnny Issel even worked there for a while and some of those links were being made - 1981 - Mildred Lesier and Cheryl Corolis and all of them - Virginia Engels - were all together in - in United Women's Organisation - Howie Gabriels, Rev Marawu, Wilson Sedina, again Africans and Coloureds in one organisation, general workers union.

J.F. What - does that date back to the old days, Ray Alexander and those days or has it come out of the '80s, or what are you saying?

S.B. I don't know - I mean maybe Shireen would answer - I think she's going to have difficulty answering that - it's something you just took as accepted, you know, I mean - there was never that - well, proximity's one - I mean Langa is next to Bonteheuwel - Gugulethu is next to Manenburg - Nyanga is nearby, you know - so often you would have to give - say, after a student meeting you'd give lift to your comrades, and you just drive into Gugulethu without a second thought, you know - there's no roadblocks or anything.

Say some of the United Women's Organisations meetings would be held in Langa, you just motor into Langa, no problems, ja, so.

J.F. Would you accept that it's the liberal Cape tradition like the textbooks say?

S.B. No, I wouldn't accept it's Cape - I mean I think it's - an explanation is (has) to be found more at the level of politics and sort of the links that were being made between Coloured areas and African areas politically - I mean Cape Town Coloured areas has always been a very weak ANC area - it hasn't had that ANC tradition - that tradition only starts getting built from 1980 onwards, and when it gets made I mean then the obvious people that you link up with, you know, the Oscar Mpethas and the Zollie Malindes and the Christmas Tintos and the (.....) and others, you see, and....

J.F. But you (.....)

S.B. And it's the young - you see, in the - from the Cape it's the younger people, the Johnny Issels and others who are coming round to the democratic movement, and they have to - as their point of reference would have to go to Oscar Mpetha - Cheryl's introduction to the Freedom Charter and the politics of non-racialism is via United Women's Organisation and the Mildred Lesiers, you know - these are the people from the '50s, and in the Coloured areas there are very few people from the 1950s, you know, the - the CPC, and it was always weak, so the generation in the Coloured areas is young - you take the Trevor Manuels, the Cheryl Caroluses, the Johnny Issels, all of them are under 40, under 35, often under 30 years old - the generation in the townships that was existing politically had been older, and that's where I think the bridges start to get built.

S.B. The younger comrades from the Coloured areas wanting to find the politics of the Congress Movement and their point of reference is, you know, the Christmas Tintos and the Oscar Mpethas, who existed in SACTU and in ANC in the '50s - Zollie Malinde, Rev Marawu - I think it's a proximity thing also - I mean townships in Durban are fairly far, and you didn't have that many organisations, and there weren't organisations that were linking together Indian and Coloured areas in one structure like United Women's - I think that's why United Women's Organisation was very important - it brought together African and Coloured women - Julie's asking why like in Durban you never really went to Indian townships, but I mean from the time I came to Cape Town there was no problem like driving to Langa, going to Nyanga or going to Oscar's house and dropping Temba or dropping Zoe in Langa, and why is that - is it just because they quite close - I mean they right next to each other - it's five kilometers - it's not a long drive, whereas in Cape - Durban KwaMashu's far?

? Yes, I think so....

S.B. What about the fact that say, people in the Coloured areas who came round to congress politics were younger, say Johnny and Trevor and Cheryl and all of them, and all the....

? (.....)

S.B. Yea, but then the older comrades were Oscar and Mildred and (.....) and people like that, and your point of reference were the older comrades in the township, say in - or Cheryl's politics start getting say, the contact with Mildred and Mama Zihlangu and all these people, so those links were there in UWO, you know - you would have to constantly go to Mildred Lesier's house, let's say, to pick her up or drop her off and - so it's the nearness also and - and you were meeting together much more organisationally politically, and it's also - it's - Cape Town is also far more working class in terms of class structure.

? (.....) isn't that upper middle class (.....) Durban?

S.B. Yes.

J.F. And long ago (?)

? Among the Coloureds - Ja, among the Coloureds (?)

S.B. There isn't a big middle class or.

J.F. And you wouldn't say it has anything to do with the early trade unions that - there was - Oscar Mpetha - if you want to talk about Oscar Mpetha, he worked with Ray Simons, Ray Alexander, and there was that non-racial trade union - I'm just saying if you talk about it historically the history books will say : O.K., the trade unions - Ray Alexander being voted in as a native representative and then being denied a seat - those things that only happened in the Cape, that that was an influence but.

S.B. Well, that - you see, it didn't only (?) exist in the Cape - if you take Paarl and Mbakweni you had Liz Abrahams in the Coloured areas, SACTU in the '50s, and you had a Lizzie Peak in Mbakweni....

? Western Cape, yes.

S.B. It's the Western Cape, ja - no, I'm just seeing the other links, like Liz Abrahams, Lizzie Peak and the contact between Mbakweni and Paarl, for that matter, Coloured, African areas - I don't know - I mean again I left Durban in '81, but I don't get that sense of Durban having that sort of links, you know, with the African townships....

? You would trace it that far back on the trade unions and that sort of thing, because initially when the trade unions started there wasn't that big African - that big an African population in Cape Town either, because Cape Town is a Coloured preferential area - also Coloureds and Africans lived together, they married one another as well in Cape Town - a lot of them got married....

S.B. And Retreat in Elsie's - Mildred Lesier used to live in Elsie's River - some of them used to live in Kensington, Retreat, until 1958 - late '50s, whereas that was never the case with Indians and Africans living together....

? So that's another important.

S.B. But then I was suggesting maybe also like say, Oscar Mpetha, Johnny Issel, all of them working Food and Cannings for a period, which makes links again - Rev Marawu, Howie Gabriels, those sorts of people working in trade unions together - you know who might be very interesting to interview is his daughter (Marawu's) Sokota - she must be in Tanzania now I think - she was secretary of United Women's Organisation.

J.F. I actually interviewed his niece - she's in Durban - so she's left - just back - and I would much rather stay in this area of analysing it, but just a little point - did you - you came to Durban - to Cape Town then you went into the Coloured community and the Coloured and African - it doesn't seem like you're mentioning any people who were Indian.

S.B. No, well, you see - well, when I - when I first came to Cape Town I lived in a house, a non-racial student commune - in that house was another guy, Indian guy also - his - I mean this is just for future, so I don't think it was because it was an Indian area and that's why I went there - what happened is this guy who lived in the student commune with me had a sister that was living in Rylands, right, and while we were visiting his sister he had started to hear much about Thornhill Civic Association - Thornhill Civic Association is in the Indian area of Rylands - it's called Thornhill because that was the name before the Group Areas Act, right, and in the meantime I had been speaking to some of the people I knew from the past in terms of wanting to get politically involved, you know, and I was hoping that they would point me to involvement in a certain area, whether it was grassroots or a civic or whatever, right, and they were just not coming forth in terms of pointing me in - to an organisation, and so this guy in the house used to go to some of the meetings on a Sunday morning of Thornhill Civic Association and I began to go with him to these meetings, and simply because of that, because he was going to those meetings and was able to facilitate my going because it was a little distance from where we lived and he had a car and I didn't have a car and so on, I simply went there and began to work within the Thornhill Civic Association - I didn't last very long in that civic because it was non-aligned so-called, but what was meant to be non-aligned was actually aligned in all directions but the congress movement, and very soon myself and this guy who lived in the house with me and another guy from Thornhill itself were starting to have clashes with the people in Thornhill in terms of, you know, whether they should affiliate with the Federation of Cape Civics, which is Unity Movement, or whether they should affiliate with the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee, which is congress movement, and we were always the dissenters, you know, in terms of where they should affiliate, so we didn't last very long in that civic.

S.B. But I mean it - I simply ended up in an Indian area because, you know, of the logistic problems and that sort of thing.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. Did you just go totally easily into that community - you never felt - people always talking so often prejudice comes down to this cultural level where people say : Well, you can get so far but then there's the cultural barrier, there's a tiny cultural obstacle - did you not ever feel that in terms of having coming out of the separate group area and then making your wholepolitical ties, your whole emotional and social ties into a different community - just kind of end or Durban, end of Indianism into Cape Town - I'm not asking you to pull out negative things that are not there, but I'm saying was there never anything where you - for me I really enjoy being in African settings, but I - every once in a while I'll - it'll be reminding me that I'm not - that I have to make an extension or whatever but it's not there for my back-ground doesn't necessarily bother me, but I can't pretend it doesn't exist - that's obviously much bigger for you, but I'm just asking does it not exist at all or does it just become (?) a lesson or did it....

S.B. Well, for me it never existed....

? Saleem is extremely laid back (?)

S.B. It never existed....

? Especially about things like this - it honestly won't (?) I mean....

J.F. I don't mean being up-tight about it as much as - did you grow up speaking Afrikaans or English?

? English.

J.F. Because sometimes - I actually can speak Afrikaans because I'm Dutch, but sometimes I would think little things like people who speak kind of (.....) to each other - there are people who get into doing that and other people who can't because they just - they aren't as good at it.

S.B. Well, I mean I didn't really know - I mean I did Afrikaans at matric level academically and scraped through Afrikaans, and I went to Cape Town not knowing much Afrikaans but trying to learn, and I mean in Thornhill because it was mostly an intellectual talking shop, we hardly did any door to door work, you know - in fact we did no door to door work - the first time I began to do door to door work, and I began doing it alone, was during the Cape anti-SAIC committee - I would go through Salt River with a voters roll handbook and go and knock on all those doors that were qualified for voting - in Salt River, which is those who were qualified for voting in the Indian elections....

J.F. Is that a mixed area, Salt River?

S.B. No, largely Indian, mixed....

? Largely Coloured (?)

S.B. Largely Coloured?

? (.....)

S.B. No, it was largely - but there were few - I mean there were people on the voters roll there, there were people in Woodstock area also, and so that's the first time I did door to door work, and I had no negative responses - then I began doing door to door work via Grassroots in terms of selling Grassroots in Coloured areas, and I mean I had no - I mean maybe I was very confident, but I mean I had no apprehension of going into a Coloured area or - and in fact I mean no matter how much people used to laugh at me, I used to just go and say knock, knock and (.....) Grassroots and Grassroots (.....- you know - (.....) 15 cents (.....) - I mean they would laugh at me and tell me no, speak in English, you know, and I would speak in English and I mean I never had any of those problems.

And ja, I mean I - I don't think in my life I've had a negative response from anyone, you know, that I wanted to sell Grassroots to or give anyone a pamphlet to - I mean I - I mean other people have had negative responses, not racially but - and that's another thing I mean during the UDF campaigns in Cape Town, during the million signature campaign, we used to put 400, 450 people into the field on a Sunday morning, and of that 400, 450, maybe 50, 60 were white democrats, and we used to go to Crossroads - that is Indians, Coloureds, whites, Africans were in Crossroads on a Sunday, oh, two, three hundred of us, you know - I mean no-one had problems.

We used to put 400 people into Elsie's River and Hanover Park, which is a working class Coloured area, and white women I mean who one would think, you know, might have some problems with Coloured men or those who were hanging (?) around the corners, I mean they never used to have any problems, and there was a certain respect for you because you wearing your UDF tee shirts, you know, and people know, you know, this is UDF and I mean, you know, we political activists and they wouldn't hassle you - I mean they might whistle at you and they might fool around with you, you know, but they wouldn't do anything more than that, so there was never - I mean I've never experienced racism and I think virtually no white democrat has experienced, you know, a racial problem from Coloureds in Cape Town, but I think again that is because we are, you know - maybe it's because we are political activists - one would maybe have to ask those who are non-activists, you know, whether they've experienced any of those sorts of problems.

I mean I've seen in - in Durban I mean something that freaked me out - I - this is after I was in Cape Town for a year or two - I happened to go back to Durban and I went to visit this friend at King Edward Hospital, and I was going back home and I was on the same bus as - I was sitting a seat in front of an - an African chap was sitting behind me who was middle aged, and I had my foot slightly into the passageway, and on these Durban buses you get conductors, and the buses are owned by Indians and they driven by Indians and the conductors are Indians, and this guy came and collected my money from me, and as he passed this African guy's foot happened to be in the passage, virtually in the middle, you know, and there was no excuse me from the conductor or anything - I mean he took his right foot (?) and he booted this leg of this African guy, you know, and just kicked it in and then just asked for the money, you know - I mean I've never seen something like that in Cape Town, but here I was in Durban not a few days, you know, and I see something like that - I mean it was like a shock, so I mean I've experienced a lot of that in Durban - I used to work in wages commission at Natal University in 1978, '79, and we were doing surveys and we used to have very good contact with the workers, both Indian and African workers, and I used to play soccer together with them also during lunchtimes.

S.B. And these Indian workers - I got to know them very well because I mean I used to constantly - we were trying to tackle the university in terms of the salaries they were paying, and these works - I mean this one worker had six children, for example, an Indian worker, and who was earning 140 rand a month or something, and I mean we used to try and raise those sorts of issues, but despite the fact that they used to - we used to all play soccer together, these Indian workers used to speak about kaffirs, you know, die kaffirs or those kaffirs, and come Christmas time and these Indian workers used to tell us : Hey, make sure - don't organise the Christmas party with those kaffirs, you know, and they don't know how to behave - and that sort of thing, you know - make it separate, you know, that sort of thing - so we used to come across that sort of - I don't know if it was racism, you know - it was - I mean I never put it down to racism, maybe because I just wanted to delude myself - I almost saw it as ignorance or - because they were nice gu - I mean they used to play soccer together, they used to do everything together, you know, but when it came to Christmas they used to say : But we eat different food, you know, so organise it separately, and they don't know how to behave and organise it separately, you know, and that sort of thing.

And I don't - I mean I - I didn't think it was racism - I think I mean there was - whether it was culture clash or whatever - maybe it was racism, but I mean I came across those things at university where Indian and African workers used to work together, play soccer together, smoke dagga together, but when it came to certain things, you know....

J.F. Why....

S.B. .... there was those elements of - despite the fact they were all workers and all earning shitty salaries.

J.F. I was going to say why do you say it's different than if whites display racism - why is that not really racism - all races have ignorance and culture clashes....

S.B. Yes, that's what I say, maybe I was deluding myself, you see, because that's the period when the working class was my, you see - I had set up the working class there, you see - I used to play soccer with them and I couldn't believe the working class could be racist, and I could accept that the white working class was, but I couldn't accept Indians workers could be racist towards - maybe I was deluding myself, you know, I wasn't accepting realities.

J.F. How could you accept that the white working class was racist then if you have class analysis?

S.B. Because - no, because I mean I could - I understood - I mean my class analysis was fairly sophisticated in the sense that I mean I understood that, you know, they had been co-opted by state strategies etc., and I read about the Rand Revolt and all those sorts of things, but I mean Indian and Africans were equally oppressed and equally exploited, and I maybe grappled far more with that - I mean I saw it again in Cape Town, it was easier to organise African workers than it was to organise Coloured workers, and again I mean a lot of those things began to - to suggest to me, you know, that maybe I must start to mature, you know, that sure, I mean all workers are exploited, all black workers are exploited, but there are differences, you know, in terms of how easily you can mobilise and organise them, and that it's easier to organise African workers than Coloured workers, or easier to organise African workers than Indian workers, and the historical reasons for that.

S.B. And TUCSA used to, you know, have Indian and Coloureds in their unions and only had parallel unions for African workers and so on, so I mean in some sense, ja, when you in that intellectualism and you have this class analysis, you know, if you tend to want to ignore those sorts of realities, you know, that the different levels of operation create different conditions under which you have to mobilise and organise, and if you ignore those things you ignore those things at your peril - but I mean again I mean I used to have contact with Coloured workers and African workers at UCT, and it used to be largely Coloured workers - very few African workers, but I never came across those sorts of racism and race - racist problems at UCT that I mean I saw at Natal University.

J.F. With all your interest in the working class, why didn't you move toward the unions, do you think?

S.B. I had an option I think in late '81 - I don't know if it was a firm offer, but in that year Mike Norris moved from Cape Town to Durban - started to work for General Workers Union - and because when (?) in a reading group he posed that question to me, you know, whether I wouldn't want to work in that arena - this is before I mean relationships with Mike broke down in all quarters - and I mean I was tempted but I mean I didn't think about - I didn't think about it seriously - I didn't want to go back to Durban, for one, so - and secondly I was just in Cape Town one year and I found it very intellectually stimulating and I found it exciting - I was also working on an MA, which was on forced removals and relocations, which was an important area, and I didn't want to give up that research at that point, and I mean it wasn't a incorrect decision, because I know my limitations and I know my strengths and I know my weaknesses, and I don't think I am a trade unionist - I mean I think I'm more strong at the political level, more directly political level - youth politics, student politics, that level.

J.F. Just the whole concept of non-racialism - why were the police who interrogated you, and this was when with this Neville Alexander?

S.B. June, '83.

J.F. Why were they afraid of non-racial politics - what was the fear of the ANC in terms of non-racialism - did they say anything that let you gain some understanding to why they were such a threat?

S.B. O.K., I mean June, '83 was, you know, just two months before the launch of the UDF, and in the meantime there were preparations under way - Transvaal UDF had already been launched - the Cape Democratic Front was going to be launched in two months time, and when they detained me, in my bag were a lot of documents in terms of how we were going to set up that structure, the UDF and so on, and - you see, I mean as part of the assaults and beatings one thing that they constantly suggested to me is what I mean, you know - why don't you admit, you know - why don't you admit that you an ANC member - you know, we've been - we've got all the documents on you we need, I mean why don't you just admit now, or are you still going to be a koelie, you see - I mean are you still a koelie despite all your activities and commitments and so on and - and what are you saying to us - I mean they kept on harping on this, that ultimately you're a koelie and you haven't got the guts, you're just like all the other koelies in this country - you don't have any guts, you see, and they were - they were starting to become very aware of the links that were being formed between NUSAS and AZASO and COSAS and United Women's Organisation, because United Women's Organisation consisted of also white women and those observatory branch - there was Claremont branch - those are white area branches.

S.B. There were Coloured branches, there were African branches, and a lot of our media and a lot of our pamphlets etc. used to be getting done at UCT via the student organisations there, because they had access to printing machines and, you know, the student press used to be made available for the community organisations and the youth and so on, and one could - I mean I could sense in this guy (.....)....

J.F. What's the name?

S.B. Lt, Col. (.....) that just as he - I mean he had a real - I mean I don't know if he had dealt with an Indian person before that, but he had a real problem in this koelie that he was dealing with here, you know - just prior to that three other so-called Coloured comrades had been arrested on suspicion of ANC activities and they thought they had made a fourth breakthrough and they were fairly interested in my links with those other three also, and one got a feeling I mean O.K., he had a - he had a problem I mean - ag, he was out and out racist and I mean there're quite likely to be - a lot of them are - but he als - I mean he gave the impression of, you know, having real problems of, you know, these whites also.

Other thing is I mean I was going out with someone whose name is Tessa Botha, and how he's (.....) - he's an Afrikaaner also, and I mean I think elements of that came out also, because I mean they knew where I lived and they knew who was living in that house and all - all that sort of information they had - they also claimed to have been watching me for a long time, and I mean a lot of the comments that they would make, you know, in some sort of race-baiting and so on I mean they would ask : But I mean how you - I don't know if - I mean I can't remember directly, but I mean I got the im - they were - want to say, suggest : But I mean how can you work with whites, you know, and aren't whites the problem in this country and so on, you know.

And I mean for some reason I got the impression, you know, that it was not just a case of an ascendant ANC that they were happening (?) to deal with, but they were also having great problems with this non-racial politics that are starting, because I think a lot of those people had prior - I mean they were more younger - I mean they're not people who go back to the '50s - these are all Cape younger people that the security branch people - maybe they politics going (?) back to BC and they were able to handle it at that level - it was also largely intellectuals - here they being faced with a new politics which is, you know, including working class people - is also becoming far more ANC orientated - is also non-racial and so on.

And I don't know whether it was fears in terms of, you know, cracking - making real cracks or whether they thought we were going to make real cracks in the ruling class or in - within the white sort of power block or whether it was just an inability to cope with the fact that, you know, here are whites and blacks mixing on equal terms and working together and living together and - and so on and so on - and ja, so I got that impression, you know, that they had this - they had a fear of that sort of alliances that were being forged between whites and blacks and students and so on.

J.F. What I'm asking is is it because that word non-racialism and these groups getting together means ANC and they're the terrorists and they're the communists, or is there something about you being involved with people who aren't also Indian....

S.B. No, non-racialism and (?) the ANC.

J.F. So it was just really that - that was more than any discomforting about the breakdown of the group - of the separateness of apartheid?

S.B. Mmm, but I mean if you try and I mean - I mean you dealing with people who are racist, you know, who - I mean I as a koelie should know my place, you know, and here I am getting involved with ANC politics, you know, whereas we koelies have always been so subordinate and so - so humble and quiet and, you know, we know our place - I mean that's bad enough, you know - now here you are getting white students and whites who have all the privileges also starting to mix with those Africans and these koelies and people like that.

So I mean I think there's an element of that also, but the - the bigger element would be I mean non-racial - I mean when he poses the question, you know : What's your difference with Neville Alexander, you know - BC - you are ANC and he's PAC - I mean ja, non-racialism at that point - I mean whatever was emerging in Cape Town at that point - and I mean a lot of people articulate it in terms of non-racial versus PAC - we are non-racial, they are PAC - I mean BC - non-racialism meant, you know, ultimately ja, we are - we didn't call ourselves charterists ever, you know - that's what we were called by BC people - we would say we are non-racial, and non-racial meant congress movement ultimately, so it was more that also, you know, that resurge in non-racialism was, you know, a resurgence of congress politics in the Western Cape.

J.F. But was Neville Alexander PAC?

S.B. I don't know - I mean I - that was the only question they asked, and I wasn't prepared to speak about Neville and his politics, so.

J.F. Or for them anything that was either the ANC....

S.B. You were either ANC or PAC, yes.

J.F. They didn't call it BC?

S.B. No - I think they had a - a notion that if you BC you PAC, if you non-racial you ANC, but then again, you know, I mean my AZASO T shirt was, you know, black, green and gold - that was the AZASO colours or AZASO flags that you wear, or the banners that were made for the save the six ANC campaign a few days, you know, earlier - black, green and gold....

J.F. The which campaign?

S.B. The ANC save the six ANC six guerillas - that was the campaign we had run a few days before, so the colours were....

J.F. Did you ever get a sense of, beyond that, what their fear of the ANC was - if that had a race or a class or just general personal fear attached to it, or if it was power or - manifested itself in any way that - did you get a sense of what really threatened them - you were saying it's the ANC but what does the ANC mean to them (.....)

S.B. Well, I can tell you what the ANC meant to (.....) - the ANC was - well, I mean (.....) in his desk (?) had virtually every copy of Sechaba - I mean he's this guy who really thinks he is the expert on the ANC - I mean he fancies himself, and I mean all - a lot of the stuff he found in my bag, you know, he was constantly telling me, you know, the next time we meet I'm going to show you where all the stuff that you've written comes from.

S.B. Now these were all papers on a national democratic struggle and the workshops we had been running for the UDF in terms of training our activists, and he was constantly telling me : Boy, I'm going to show you where all your stuff comes from and I'm going to quote you line from line from Sechaba, the stuff you've used in your papers - so he fancied himself, but I mean his - he was - you see, when was Pretoria bomb blasts - 1982....

J.F. 1983....

S.B. I was picked up a month later.

J.F. June, '83?

S.B. June, '83, and I mean that was something that you could see over their faces, the impact of that - I mean he virtually - he was virtually berserk when he was assaulting me or - or beating me up - I mean he - I mean I thought he was mad at that point, and I mean I think that - that had a very big impact - I mean I don't know on all of them, but certainly it seemed on him, because he discussed that a lot with me, you know, and what was my perspective on that, you know - am I supporting an organisation that, you know, engages in a bomb blast like that and so on and so on, so beyond the facade of his analysis and his readings of Sechaba and so on so on, you know, I don't think he had really an understanding of what it was all about beyond that it's simply this terrorist organisation, you know, which kills children and which kills black people in the process and which is using you - I mean that was the main emphasis, you see - here you are, Saleem - no, this is afterwards - you know, after the assaults and that sort of thing - but you still sitting there with bruises and things - I mean look at you, Saleem - I mean look at your face - you an MA student, Saleem - I can see you intelligent, you see - why do you get involved in these sorts of things, you see - I mean you've got a good career in front of you - I mean we know you for some time now, you know, we can see in what direction you heading - I mean you've got a good career in front of you, why don't you stick to that - why are you getting involved in these sorts of things - do you know what the ANC's all about really - I mean are you aware of the type of things Tambo and them talk about Indians in London - I mean are you aware of those things - do you want me to play those things to you, you know - I mean do you know what Tambo and them say about you Indian people - now why are you involved with the ANC, you see, and....

J.F. But what (.....) what were they saying....

S.B. The implications were - no, they didn't say, you know, because I mean when they say things like that you just sit and listen to that - I mean there's no point in responding, you know - I mean you never know if you going to respond you going to get a - you might get another slap, so you might as well just keep quiet, you see, but I mean that - I mean I remember now that came out, I mean do you know what these ANC people say - Tambo and them say about you Indian people - I mean why you being misused or you've been allowing yourself, you an intelligent guy, allowing yourself to be misused by these ANC people, so I mean you just sit and listen to all that - and later on I mean in the '85 detention I mean another picked up on a variant of that theme - this was Capt. van der Westhuizen - picked up on the other theme of the ANC being made up of Xhosas, you know, and I mean do you know about these power fights in the ANC between the Xhosas and the Zulus, and this is the damn guy sitting in my chair at my desk in the Grassroots office telling me all these things and me standing there, and he's sitting there in his - my chair and telling me about do you know the Xhosas are running the ANC.

S.B. You know, Saleem, you and I, I mean you come from a civilisation, we can get on, you know - we can get on, you know - Coloureds - maybe the Coloureds can - yea, I mean, you know, Coloureds maybe also, you know - they are on a higher level, but I mean certainly, you know, I know people like Rajbansi - I mean I've had - you know, I've drunk whiskey and I've had curry with Rajbansi - you come from a civilisation, what's your family - oh, you come from that family in Durban - but I know those people - but I mean that's a good family you come from in Durban, you see, and I mean you know, the changes are coming, you know - the constitutional proposals are here, you know - what are your problems, you know - we have this national security council, tell me your problems, you know - we can put these problems there - what do you want, a national convention, right, but the Africans I mean, look how divided they are - I mean I'm telling you the ANC's Xhosas - now if there are Xhosas there's Buthelezi and the Zulus there - there's Mpephu and the vendus there - there's Mangope and the tswanas there - what you want - do you think those people can ever come together.

We can come together, you know - Saleem, you as Indians - maybe the Coloureds also - we whites can come together - but these blacks will never be able to come together, never, never, and if you think the ANC's going to be able to bring everyone together, forget it, because the ANC is just Xhosas - so that was a variant of the theme, you know, and so that's quite hot - I mean that's on - always on they sort of - in their arsenal to play out that sort of issue - so that's more sophisticated than 1983, you see - in '83 I was still a koelie - in 1985 I mean we can start to live together because, you know, the constitutional proposals has incorporated me and if I have problems, you know, put it to the national security council.

The 1985 detentions in Cape Town - maybe I should just say because it's opposite on this (?) - during that first period of detention, one and a half months - this is before the emergency detentions that came later in the year when we were all taken again - this was one and a half months when myself and Christmas Tinto and Dullah Omar and - all of us were prominent in that period and had been organising the Mandela march to Pollsmoor....

J.F. This was when now?

S.B. August, 1985 - that is three or four days before the Mandela march was planned to occur, and others weren't taken - I mean others would have been taken also - but it was like, you know, 20 of the people more or less in key positions in the congress movement in the Western Cape, and one - one AZAPO person - no-one from Cape Action League - what a lot of the questioning during that period was - was - I mean none of us were beaten up at that - in that detention - and that's when Cape Town was burning, soon after we were taken in - I mean a week later, the fires began burning and the barricades began going up and so on - a lot of the questioning then - I mean they picked me up with an ANC tape, right - I mean that was sufficient to put me away, and they didn't even bother about that.

What they were trying to do is they were trying to sort out where we stood ideologically - a lot of the questioning would focus on how do we interpret the Freedom Charter, how do we see the ANC, what is our position on the national convention, what - how do we see majority and minority rights, you know - do we guarantee minority rights and so on.

S.B. And - and what it was doing in my - I mean this is what I've always argued.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

S.B. I've always argued since the detention what they were doing at that period in that detention is they were trying to sort us out in terms of where we stood ideologically - what was our position on the national convention - did we support that or didn't we support that - how did we interpret the Freedom Charter - the people who were questioning us were far more sophisticated than the questions I've had in previous cases, even more sophisticated than (.....) who fancies himself - van der Westhuizen was more sophisticated than that - how did we interpret the Freedom Charter - social democratic programme - socialist programme - what do we say about all national groups shall have equal rights, you know - is that guaranteeing rights to whites - how do we interpret, you know, all the national wealth (?) coming to the hands of the people - is that socialism, is it like Sweden, you know - what do you say.

And it was trying - it was at a period when the whole thing of the communists and the nationalists and the ANC was starting to hit the media, and my impression was in that period they were trying to fathom out where - I mean had Johnny Issel and Trevor Manuel and Jeremy and all of them been around they would all have been picked up also - I think that was a period when they were really trying to fathom out where did all these people who are linked to the congress movement stand on the vital issues, as they saw it - preparedness to negotiate at a national convention, socialism, social democracy and so on.

And I think I mean, ja, they were trying to - I mean I don't know whether they were sophisticated enough to even read into some of the answers we were giving them where (?) they were trying to fathom out whether so-and-so is a communist or so-and-so is on the nationalist side, and who is the people that we can possibly work with in furure and who and who we can't, and I mean that was largely what it was all about.

J.F. Was this - does this indicate that the - all the questioning about non-racialism was now moot - that they'd already figured out you were non-racial....

S.B. No, I mean by 1985 the fact that of the people in detention then, you know, 20 were - 95 plus percent were UDF congress movement people under - this is section 29 - this is not the emergency - I mean even in the emergency detentions 90 percent were UDF people, and then there was a sprinkling of Cape Action League people in detention in the emergency with us - with this specific one where people were key people Christmas Tinto - I mean I was in Grassroots - people who were in CAHAC - Zolly Malindi, president of UDF - Dullah Omar, very influential key person - some of the key youth people, some of the key civic people and so on, and ja, I mean I - other people were questioned about this and that, you know, but my own impression was in terms of what a lot of people were questioned about, it was fathoming where you stood and the - the vital issues, as they defined it, and I think they wanted an indicator of, you know, what people were thinking and how - how people were going to - what direction people were going to go in the future.

J.F. Let me ask you some stuff more generally about non-racialism, but just before that one last thing about Cape Town specifically, about the specific - what about the debate over separate organisations say, generally - back in - there was this big criticism of the refounding of the Transvaal Indian Congress and all this anti-TIC critique, and then there was in the Transvaal JODAC founded, and yet in the Cape there was not any separate white organisation - how does that fit into your understanding of non-racialism - can you be non-racial and have the TIC and the NIC and be the same non-racial and say : No, we don't have any Indian or white organisation?

S.B. O.K., I think I mean the TIC must be addressed slightly separately - AZASO is committed to non-racialism as a principle, but is - there is a black university student organisation - COSAS for much of its existence has been committed to non-racialism but is a black student organisation, though it indicated in '85 that it was opening its doors to everyone, but practically that didn't happen - NUSAS is a non-racial student organisation, but in concrete terms it is made up of white students and is staffed by white democrats - I mean there's no black progressive students in NUSAS, right, so I think one has to separate out a commitment to non-racial - non-racialism and working in a non-racial way, being non-racial in practice, and the conditions that one is confronted with on the ground are the realities that AZASO has a different constituency from NUSAS.

NUSAS has a constituency which is made up of conservative whites and liberal whites - AZASO has a constituency of black students who are largely at bantustan and bush colleges like Turfloop, Ongoye, Durban Westville, Natal Medical School and all the open universities which have black students, right - now the conditions that face white students are very different from the conditions that face black students - the level of repression, for example, that black universities is quite different from UCT or - or Wits - the conditions, be it hostel facilities, be it food, be it library facilities and so on, is quite different from the facilities at UCT and Wits, right.

The social backgrounds, social regions from which people are coming, is very different at UCT and Wits from Turfloop or UWC, where at UWC 90 percent today of the students come from working class backgrounds - you can't say the same for UCT and Wits and Rhodes, so that the social conditions under which you are forced to mobilise students and organise are very different, and you can't ignore that, and in that context I mean AZASO has to be able to devise strategies and tactics which allow it to mobilise the maximum number of people, because ultimately that is the crucial element in I mean progressive politics, the fact that you must be able to mobilise a constituency and organise that constituency and galvanise that constituency in political action.

You can't be non-racialism simply because - I mean you can be non-racial, right, as a principle, but I mean if that non-racialism for the sake of simply being non-racial means that I mean you are not effectively able to mobilise a constituency, and I mean you not advancing the struggle at all, and in that sense I mean it's always been understood that AZASO and NUSAS have been different because their constituencies are different - there is no way a NUSAS can, at the same time, attempt to manoeuvre (?) liberal whites onto the side of the democratic movement and make dents in the ranks of the conservative students and at the same time keep black students and black student militancy - it can't address the issues at Turfloop and at the same time address some of the issues that arise at say, UCT, you know, which are very different.

S.B. And in that sense I mean, although SASO form - I mean SASO broke away, right, some of the issues - I mean I don't disagree with the breakaway of SASO - I mean I think it was correct, because the conditions of the student constituencies are different, and you are able to mobilise and organise far more effectively as separate student organisations, but the crucial feature is like unlike AZASM now - AZASM speaks about a non-racialism in a future South Africa - I mean we would argue that non-racialism has to be built in practice - that you can't speak about a non-racialism in a future South Africa if you don't start sowing the seeds for that non-racialism now in practice, you know, and that's why, although we have separate - we had separate organisations, NUSAS and AZASO, even up to today, you still co-operate whenever you can, and in that sense what began to emerge in the mid 80s was a non-racial student alliance and we all came together in the UDF as a student wing, NUSAS, AZASO, COSAS, so although we are mobilising separate constituencies, although we have (?) black student organisations and a white student organisation, I mean we manifested that non-racialism in the anti-Republic Day campaigns in 1981, in the anti (.....) campaigns in 1981, within the UDF, on the various issues that we worked on, you know, and in that way we've also mobilised people on a non-racial basis.

I mean we had made it clear - I mean we didn't attempt to fool any black student to say that, you know, the struggle is against whites - you know I mean they were organising, mobilising AZASO on a specific principle basis, and that was that the struggle in the country is not just race but it's a race, class problem, and because of that analysis I mean NUSAS, which was liberal in the 1960s and '70s, has changed and has shown its commitment to the struggles of the people, and on that basis we can have an alliance, and that was accepted - I mean we had to fight for that - you had to fight at Turfloop for that, you had to fight at various universities for that perspective, and finally you won out and that perspective triumphed.

So I mean that's the difference - you can have separate organisations because conditions demand it - in the same way United Women's Organisation - if you speaking about mass politics, then you need to start going down to grassroots level - you can't have a United Women's Organisation that exists at a regional Western Cape level - you need a branch in Langa, you need a branch in Guguletthu, you need a branch in Crossroads and Nyanga, you need one in Landsdowne, you need one in Claremont, which is a white area, and in Observatory, which is a white area - the geography of South Africa and Group Areas means that because you live in Langa you are African and because you live in Claremont you are white and because you live in Landsdowne you are Coloured, but those are all branches of the United Women's Organisation, the non - executive of the United Women's Organisation is non-racial - its made up of Coloured, whites and Africans, so again that non-racialism is manifested in practice and (?) the decisions that are made at the level of the organisation are made by all, irrespective of what colour they are, but the geography means that the branches are separate, you know - you can't wish that away.

The same with civic associations, you know - you can't wish that away - now - and that is because you're committed to mass politics, mass mobilisation, and you need those structures at grassroots level, and I mean unfortunately they're going to be either African or Coloured or, you know - but you merging and you bringing together those constituencies, and it's not - and it's not simply being argued for because it's easier for Africans to mobilise Africans or Coloureds to mobilise Coloureds.

S.B. It makes no point for a Coloured woman living in Landsdowne to go and try and mobilise women in Langa - she must mobilise those Coloured women in, you know - in Landsdowne - but if there's a big campaign around say, a particular issue in Langa and all the energies need to be directed at that, then it's not a problem for the Coloured woman from Langa and the white woman from Claremont - sorry, the Coloured woman from Landsdowne and the white women from - from Claremont to go to Langa and all of them work - I mean we've done that in UDF's million signature campaigns, you see, so it's not a issue of, you know, Coloureds mobilising Coloureds, whites mobilising whites - I mean it's the geography, the Group Areas that dictate that sort of structures,

Now as far as Transvaal Indian Congress goes, I mean that was a structure that existed in the 1950s, but because it existed in the 1950s there's no reason why it needs to be revived in exactly the same way in 1983, but I mean they had some arguments and that argument was that they were living in an area that is ex - well, exclusively Indian - if they were to form a new political organisation, there was chance of being - it being repressed, and in some sense what they would simply be doing is reviving an organisation that wasn't banned at all, which was the TIC.

More important, there is an identification with the Indian congresses in the Indian communities - it is known from the 1950s - there is a generation from the '50s and '60s that can identify with it and gravitate towards it, and you wouldn't have to establish the credentials of that organisation like you would have to do with a new organisation, and therefore, on the basis of conditions and at the level of strategy and tactics they argued that it was wise to revive TIC than to form a new organisation.

But what is significant is that the executive of that TIC was not just made up of Indians - it includes Sampson Ndou, who is from Soweto, and it included Dr. Ismail Mohammed, who was from Eldorado Park or from a Coloured area, right - so although - and this TIC was going to mobilise people in an Indian area.

Now I mean I'll be honest, not everyone accepted that - I mean I was one of those who didn't accept the need for revival of the TIC and - but there was a lot of discussion and debates between the comrades in the Transvaal and us in the Western Cape - a lot of us in the Western Cape opposed the formation, like we opposed the formation of the Coloured People's Congress when it was a possibility was slightly raised in Cape Town in 1980, when there was a suggestion of forming the Coloured People's Congress in 1981 in Cape Town, and that was quashed.

Now in that - that's why we weren't too happy with the TIC, and we felt it was going against the grain of the 1966 - '69 Morogoro conference....

J.F. In what way?

S.B. That Morogoro conference began speaking far more about non-racialism and, you know, that we felt - but I mean the comrades in TIC were able to turn round and say it didn't go against the grain, so I mean you know, there was differences of interpretation there - ultimately I mean it - they went ahead and formed it on the arguments that strategically and tactically it was correct, and that ultimately time would show whether it was correct or not to form the TIC - that if they were able to mobilise and organise thousands of people from Lenasia and the Indian areas of the Transvaal, then they thesis (?) that TIC should be launched would be confirmed - if they have problems in doing that, then obviously, you know, they would have to admit that they were wrong.

S.B. So they again would insist that, yes, they are non-racial in principle, because they are linked up with all the other organisations in the UDF, and they have a working relationship with NUSAS and with, you know, the trade unions and all other organisations of the democratic movement, but they are organising and mobilising in one specific, largely one area, which is Lenasia, and that is Indian - so ja, I mean there was a lot of criticism of obviously the launching of TIC and it was labelled as an ethnic organisation and so on, but I think, you know, I mean - ja, I mean I mean I think ultimately, without necessarily wanting to defend them, I think they can defend themself very eloquently - ultimately I mean, you know, we speaking about mass mobilisation, and I mean it - whatever strategies and tactics can assist in mobilising the masses on - on the principles of non-racialism, democracy, unit - unitary state in a united South Africa - I mean whatever strategy and tactics can mobilise people on the basis of those principles, wehther then it is a black organisation or it is an organisation largely based on the Indian community, then I think it is valid, you know.

Had TIC wanted to mobilise Indians on an Indian card (?) you know, as we are Indians and therefore, you know, we should be organising TIC, then I would say, you know, that's wrong, but if you mobilising those Indians on the basis of non-racialism, we need the TIC because there is an unfolding process in South Africa and we need to be part of that process, and we need to cement non-racialism in practice and so on, then I mean I think it is valid, you know, and it becomes intellectualism to argue, you know, that you non-racial - you not non-racial simply because you have a - I mean why were those criticisms not made against AZASO, for that matter - if you criticise TIC then you must criticise AZASO, you must criticise COSAS, because we were a black organisations - we weren't non - we were not - we didn't have white members, you know.

J.F. What about the critique of non-racialism on the basis that it's the leaders coming together but what about the people - that Saleem Badat and Zolly Malindi can sit together - Trevor Manuel and Bridget Peak can sit together, but what about the masses - do they ever sit together - they go back to the separate group areas - what's non-racial about UDF and its regional committees actually - how do you respond to that?

S.B. O.K., I mean non-racialism - I mean even if it's at that level I mean - let's not look at it in terms of a critique in a negative sense - I mean there's a positive element to a Saleem Badat sitting with a Zolly Malindi and a Jeremy Cronan sitting next to a Cheryl Carolus, because in some sense that is symbolising the future South Africa - I mean that's what the future South Africa is going to be - it's going to be a non-racial South Africa, and even if you want it almost in terms of representing, you know, Jeremy as white and Saleem as Indian and Zolly as Coloured and Cheryl as - Zolly as African and Cheryl as Coloured, that is the new South Africa that we are fighting for, and that alone - just that alone symbolises something, you know - the fact that now in the course of the liberation struggle, despite the fact that some of us have privileges and come from privileged backgrounds potentially like say, Jeremy in this case, and the fact that we suffer different levels of oppression - Zolly far more than I do and Cheryl far more than I do, right - despite that, despite the divide and rule strategy of the state, we are able to transcend those divisions and come together in a non-racial democratic movement, right.

In that sense that is - I mean that is what is - what is - what is being provided (?) is a vision of a new South Africa that is going to be non-racial - but I don't think it's just that - I mean I think within the trade union movement, unless you have a very arrogant position on terms of, you know, the intellectual capabilities and capacities of black workers - I mean workers have voted for that non-racialism in - by, you know, the unions they have formed.

S.B. Whether those unions are largely made up of black officials or African officials in the case of SAAWU, it's still a non-racial union - whether it includes a Dave Lewis in General Workers Union or a Jan Theron in Food and Canning Workers Union, those workers have elected those officials, right, and have mandated those officials and have elected those officials at their annual congresses, and unless you argue that those workers are being misled, and implicit in that also is an argument that those workers don't have the intellectual abilities or capacities to really understand what they doing, you know - I mean that sort of argument can only come from people who are very arrogant, you know, in terms of what their capabilities are and what the capabilities of workers are, so I think I mean at the level of workers and the trade unions, those workers have democratically voted for non-racialism at the level of the, you know, officials in the trade union.

At the level of students, you know, if AZASO took that step in 1981 and as part of that new class analysis, as part of that commitment to mass mobilisation of students, was also a non-racial alliance with NUSAS - AZASO grew tremendously - I mean between '79 and '80 when - when AZASO was started it stagnated - I mean there was virtually no AZASO - there's no mention of AZASO in the 1980 boycott - I mean why - there's no mention of the role it played at the universities, or anywhere for that matter - I mean why - with (?) suddenly 1981 AZASO changes - by 1983 it's having 300 delegates at its 1983 congress in Cape Town - by 1984 it had something like five or six hundred delegates at its congress, and virtually branches and working groups at every university and lots of colleges.

I mean that is a confirmation where students have voted with their feet, you know, for not just a sophisticated analysis of South Africa but also a commitment to non-racialism in practice, and one sees that throughout I mean United Women's Organisation, you know, it is bringing together working class women from a Coloured area and I mean 95 percent of the women in the Langa and Crossroads and Gugulethu areas are working class, you know, so it's not just bringing together Mildred Lesier, who was a domestic servant, and Cheryl Carolus, who is a - was a Coloured student, but is bringing together working class women from those areas, right.

So I mean non-racialism is far more than, you know, a symbolic alliance of, you know, individuals who sit on a platform - I mean I think it goes into the trade union movement, it's reflected at the level of the women's organisations, it's reflected at the level of the civics and so on, and I mean it's - it's - I mean it's a mass movement, you know - it's - and one sees the other side of that in terms of the gains that one - the democratic movement has made as far as white democrats are concerned, you know.

When one spoke of the democratic movement and the participation of white democrats previously, you were talking largely of NUSAS students - I mean today you speaking more of comrades who are off campus - people who are engineers and people who are technicians who are white democrats, and none of them have come - or a lot of them, let's say, have not come from NUSAS, because NUSAS used to be the conduit for white democrats - after student politics you get involved in community politics - a lot of the people who have come to UDF, and especially in the Western Cape, since 1983 have not come via NUSAS - they have come straight - I don't know where they come from, from the very - not from NUSAS - they coming from Pinelands, they coming from Claremont, they're coming from everywhere - they've come via ECC.

S.B. They've come via mass meetings that the Claremont area and Observatory area branches have organised, so again as far as white democrats are concerned, it's not just individuals any more, you know, it's - it's significant number of white democrats who have started to commit themselves in JODAC, in the white area committees of UDF, so I mean, ja, I mean I don't accept that it's - non-racialism is manifested and reflected by individuals on a platform - I think, you know, it exists at a very deep level - it exists at the level of consciousness of workers, of students, of women, of community people and so on.

The one other point one can make there is that I mean it's also reflected at the level that those white democrats who worked with us on the six million signature campaign weren't necklaced when they went into Crossroads or went into - despite the fact that the boere would (?) shoot a white, you know, when there's trouble at Crossroads - I mean none of those white democrats was harmed or molested when they went into Hanover Park or anywhere, for that matter, you see, and for me that symbol - signals that even at the level of the masses there's an ability to discriminate and differentiate, you know, the good guys and the bad guys as far as whites are concerned.

J.F. Another - just a few points that I'd like to ask you to address - you say the ANC had such a long history and tradition of non-racialism - how was it to a certain extent derailed - why was it, do you think, in the '40s and '50s with the Africanism of the ANC youth league and the PAC - in the '60s and '70s with BC - an argument for non-racialism is a tenacious persistent historical feature of South African resistance - there are the times historically when one sees that if it was not so persistent that there were attacks against it and that it doesn't seem to have been dislodged through the BC era in the '40s and the '50s - why do you think that is - does that mean that it's not so persistent, or what does that say about non-racialism - how did one go from a congress tradition to BCM, BPC organisations?

S.B. I mean I - I - I don't really know - I think if one looks at the '40s and one looks at the '50s, and you must locate whether that tradition existed or not against a whole lot of background structural conditions that existed in South Africa in terms of the way say, the Coloured community and politics in the Coloured communities had developed the same for Indians, the same for Africans, you know - when the ANC was formed in 1912 the only other organisations were what, the African People's Organisation in (?) based largely in the Coloured areas, and NIC, which had been founded by Gandhi.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

S.B. .... difficult question.

J.F. Maybe I shouldn't just ask - maybe I should ask....

S.B. No, I mean I - I - I'm trying to understand it myself - I mean you had NIC, you had African People's Organisation - in 1912 you get the formation of the ANC, which brings together - which in itself is a historic step in the sense it's bringing together people from different so-called tribal backgrounds, you know, which in itself is a historic step because there was - there's no unified nation in South Africa.

S.B. There were Indians, there were Coloureds, each with their own trajectory in parts of development - some coming as indentured labourers, others being dispossessed and so on - the type of problems - I mean there were some problems being faced in common, but I mean the - the levels of oppression was so different, also the - you had a - I don't know if I can even attempt to answer that - I mean there's the other thing the Communist Party that get formed, you know, and its got white workers wanting, you know, to - white workers who then starts to draw on black workers and people like Kotane and J.B. Marks and other join, you know, and in that sense that's where non-racial politics is in the CPSA, and you get maybe I mean - I don't know, non-racial politics starting with Unity Movement in the early '40s, but I mean you - that, you know - you must qualify that - that's largely Coloured teachers amd some Indians and some Africans - it wasn't, you know, including whites.

J.F. It's a (.....) involved question to try and answer, but maybe I can just - what makes more sense for you to answer rather is how was that perceived - it's something that I ask like African people who are in BC about or somebody who was in the ANC youth league, like where did this come out of, this Africanism - what were people saying - a better example is like (.....) and I was saying what was - how was the ANC seen - a lot of young - middle 35 year old blacks that went through a BC phase will say it was seen as like the people who lost, the people who didn't - who tried but failed, and I'm just wondering if your understanding or the kind of movement that you're a part of - because I don't want it to become too much you as an individual but what the circles were saying - what was the kind of historical view of non-racialism - you're talking so enthusiastically about it coming out in '79, '81, but obviously it didn't come out of a vacuum - what were people - with the excitement of AZASO re - moving in that direction, with the excitement of the organisations that led to UDF being founded, what did people say - we created non-racialism - we owe it to the CPSA - it - we're just - the million signature shows us we're replicating the '50s, all of the above - how were you understanding where non-racialism had come from?

S.B. I think maybe a lot of factors - I mean I think the one factor I've hinted at already - I mean I think the moment you start to search for a different type of analysis of South Africa you start to arrive at a class analysis - I think from that leads I mean for me fairly logically, you know, a non-racial position - a second factor would be - I mean a lot of us - I mean, and I think I can say a lot of us, were ignorant of our history, you know - I mean if I had stayed at Durban Westville I would never have come to, you know, the Freedom Charter and - at the point when I did, you know - I mean it's because I had access to libraries and I had access to books and so on that I began to understand some of the history of resistance in South Africa.

And I mean just an individual like Bram Fischer, you know, when you read about that makes you think, you know, I mean that I mean, you know, what is the role of whites - I mean do they have a contribution to play and I mean, you know, if people like Ray Alexander and Bunting and Goldberg and all these people, you know - I mean one didn't even know Goldberg was in Pretoria Central, you know, through (?) a certain stage, but once one starts to find people like that and, you know, Ruth First and Slovo and others, I mean one starts to ask oneself questions, you know - I mean what sort of - I mean what - if they have played a role in the past, you know, I mean what sort of role is there in the furure or currently for - for whites to play and -

S.B. You see, I mean the one thing I mean which we often lose - I mean I remember Jeremy Cronin telling me, you know - the time when Jeremy was working and he was sentenced, you know, Jeremy used to say : Yes, we have a Freedom Charter and yes, we have it very well hidden somewhere so that it wouldn't be found - I mean those days you couldn't be found in (?) the Freedom Charter - by the time Jeremy comes out, you know, Freedom Charter is here, there and everywhere - Grassroots was producing it by the thousands within Grassroots.

You start to find the Freedom Charter and the Freedom Charter is talking about we, the people of South Africa, white and black, at university and you finding, you know, white students who are committed to the struggle, you know - in fact more clued up about the nature of the society and what the issues are than you are as a black student - you getting NUSAS that is moving in the direction of Africanisation in the late '70s and starting to produce a lot of these booklets, which are very accessible and which are very useful, you know, in (and) prodiving you with an analysis which you fairly in agreement with.

Ja, I mean I - I think in some sense it's at - in that period you actually starting to rediscover your history, you know - you also starting to get more I mean - far more accessible is (?) you know, Frelimo - material from Frelimo which starts - which speaks about - and that is in the, you know - the preamble of the constitution of AZASO is a preamble from Frelimo, which speaks about the struggle not being against whites, you know, as such, but being against the system of well, oppression and exploitation, and I mean even logically you confronted with a situation of four, four and a half million whites, you know, and I mean you still buying (?) - you know, is it still a case of driving them into the sea - I mean obviously that's not on.

So I think at that point when there's a lot of searching for a new way forward and searching and debates for which way to go forward, I would think, you know - I mean some of that I am personally affected by, but I mean I'm trying to put myself in the situation of other people - I mean all those questions are coming up - the Freedom Charter is becoming more, you know, available and accessible and coming out of people's cupboards and that sort of thing - people who were ANC and who had been dormant suddenly, you know, after '76 are maybe reinspired, and the trade union movement is starting to develop and Oscar and people like that are coming out, you know, who are linking the present and the past and so on and so on, so I mean I think a whole lot of factors converge there which, you know, ja - I mean I think one mustn't take for granted that, you know, people have always - there's been a linear (?) development and people has always had that history - I mean '60 to '68 a lot of people will speak about it being a very dark period, you know - that you couldn't even have the Freedom Charter around, that people didn't speak about the ANC or any sort of thing about struggle, you know, and where that was happening it was happening in very low key, whereas with Jeremy putting on a - putting off a pamphlet form (?) here and there, but hell, when you asked Jeremy to come and speak at a workshop at UCT Jeremy would never come, you know, this nice - as Graham Bloch described it, this nice man, you know, we could never understand - we used to ask him to come and speak to us and teach us, you know, and he just wouldn't come and we used to wonder why - what is wrong with this white man, you know, or this nice man, and then suddenly we found he's on charges for ANC and SACP and then we understood, you see.

S.B. So even people like him who were in a position, you know, to make those links and provide a perspective etc., were not around, and I mean I think it - ja, it's a variety of factors that converge at some point, and I think they start to converge because the BC generation had lost also, you see, and now we needed to find a new way to go forward and, well, you had to look back into the past and you had to, ja - and I mean there was a - there was - I mean '75, '76 Diliza Mji was president of SASO - I remember reading something, either his presidential speech or some article he wrote, which starts to raise the issue of class, you know, and I think some of that perspectives come from the liberation of Frelim - I mean Mozambique and Frelimo - and ja, in fact I think he mentioned this as an (?) AZASO panel discussion we had in 1983.

NUSAS students are getting more involved also - Auret can Heerden - bridges are being built - SASPU National is starting to come out 1979 first issue, 1980 - SAWU breaks away from - SAAWU moves away from BAWU, right, but I mean you know all that, you know - given all those factors, you know, they - I mean there must be from the side of say, the ANC in exile, you know, links being made far more effect - I mean '76, you know, thousands of people are leaving - maybe they not coming back immediately, but I mean you know, a lot of those old ANC people start to resurface - they already starting to provide direction for SSRC and SASM in 1976, '77 in Soweto - I mean Baruch Hirson writes about that.

And I mean I don't know - maybe, you know, the ANC has far more effective links with those people by '78, '79 and those people are also providing direction and clarity and so on - in fact that's exactly how Baruch Hirson ends his book on '77, you know - his conclusion is that the students are looking for - the students, if they are going to be effective, must come to understand capitalism and state power and class, and it is the duty of the ANC to provide that - or the role of the ANC, and from '79, '80 you find things taking off in a different direction, and I am (?) going to argue that if (?) the students do find capitalism and state power and the ANC does provide that direction, you know, and I can't give you concrete evidence that so-and-so provided, but I mean clearly, you know, that had to be happening for the links to be made with the past.

J.F. How do you - just a few more little points - how do you respond to the argument that the ordinary workers are naturally not supportive of non-racialism, that they have a kind of natural anti-whitism, that this kind of non-racialism is a more effete concept, and that to mobilise workers, just talk about the boss, he's always white - it's really anti-white - that that would be the most efficient way to organise - the kind of - the question you said Barney Pityana got, and it doesn't - isn't - wouldn't it be quicker, wouldn't it be more officient, isn't it more logical to be non-non-racial?

S.B. Well, I mean that - you see I mean, if you argue that workers are going to be naturally easier to mobilise on a basis of black, white, you know, there's some - some problems you going to run into - firstly I mean you want - you - you ending - you beginning with a race analysis which almost argues the homogenity in terms of whites and blacks, right, and you almost denying that they are - you almost positing that the white community's a monolith and there's no possibility for cracks within that white community, and therefore you making the task of defending apartheid and mobilising whites to defend apartheid far more easier, whereas I mean the reality is that large - well, not large but I mean segments of the white community can be won over, and if they are won over, then it's to the benefit of the liberation movement.

S.B. You secondly positing that the black community is fairly homogenous and if you mobilise them simply on the basis of race, then I mean you have to take into account that within the black community there are class differences, you know, and precisely one of the strategies of the state is to create a black middle class, so that I mean when you positing mobilising simply on the basis of race, then I mean we also need to discuss what sort of future are we speaking about, you know, because of this class differences within the black community - I mean are we speaking of, you know, a South Africa where, you know, we replace the whites with the blacks and instead of having white bosses we have black bosses, you know, and what sort of fundamental change does that bring about in - for black workers - I mean I - I would argue very little, and I mean if you mobilising people on the basis of race, black versus whites, what sort of future are you positing for South Africa after liberation I mean if you want to fight a race war.

And I mean a large - and I mean even though you winning over whites, you know - I mean you wanting to win over whites, I mean the reality is that the majority at this point are still going to defend apartheid, they are going to defend white supremacy, but I mean you have to (....) that of vision or a future that is, you know, not going to have the possibility to - to reproduce I mean in another way what exists today, you know, so O.K., blacks are being oppressed by whites today I mean, so in the new South Africa, on the basis of mobilising and hating whites who have done all this to us, I mean what - what sort of South Africa are we creating for the future - I mean one that is going to be blacks in command, blacks in power and, you know, whites in a situation where blacks were one day, which is not logically possible either, you know.

So I think I mean again in the way you fight a liberation struggle I mean you have to not only be transforming a situation but you must be also positing a future that is, you know, something that - I mean something that people can grasp and something that people can dream about and which takes into account the realities of South Africa, the realities that there are four million whites and they here to stay and they command a lot of skills and so on, and I mean I don't think - I mean I'm told that (?) I don't think workers are necessarily I mean - I mean I think again that that's a very arrogant sort of position that, you know, workers cannot - workers cannot make distinctions, you know, between white and capitalist, you know, between bosses and - I mean not all whites are bosses, you know, and I mean I think workers can make those distinctions and have been making those distinctions, and I mean I think that is one of the strengths of the liberation struggle in South Africa, that you not just mobilising on the basis of colour and simplifying issues - that the reality of South Africa is far more complex and you must confront that reality as - as - in all its complexity, and the fact that workers are confronting that reality and are making a distinction between white and capitalist I mean augurs, you know, well for the future, because in that process I mean workers are - workers are becoming conscious, they also becoming - I mean they educating themself in the process of struggle, so I don't think - I mean I think some intellectuals would like to argue that ja, well, you know, it's much more simpler simply to mobilise workers on the basis of race and that most of the bosses are white, and I think the complexity of South Africa is far more - it's more complex than that, and I - I mean I think workers have - I mean the way they have organised and the way they have, you know, resisted in the last five, six years, I mean takes into account that complexity.

J.F. For all the talk of non-racialism, in the future South Africa will it be purely non-racial or will there have to be some specific adjustments made to ensure a lack of white domination, to ensure working class leadership or African leadership - can you have a perfectly non-racial society or do you have to just from above, from outside say : Wait a minute, what happened to the African leadership - there's too many non-Africans here - or does that take care of itself?

S.B. O.K., I mean I think a lot of people have problems with say, the ANC's emphasis on the liberation of the African majority - I mean I don't have problems with that - I mean I think it's an important component of the ANC's strategy, that I mean one must look at the population structure of South Africa and one must look at the level of oppression in South Africa, and the most militant and the militancy comes from that township sector that is African, and to stress that and to put in all efforts in terms of - of creating the confidence and uniting that sort of community, and because a large part of the community far more than any of the other communities is also working class at the same time - I mean the majority of Africans are working class - I mean reative to say, Indians or Coloureds, although I mean lots of Coloureds are workers also, but I mean if you look at the class structure of Africans, Indians, Coloureds, the majority of Africans are working class - I mean you obviously not going to be able to make all your transformations in the process of struggle against apartheid - I mean I don't think you can do - I mean you can't - you can make the advances in people's education, but ultimately you can only consolidate and build on that in a future South Africa.

And I mean if we speaking about I mean people - real people's power in a future South Africa, then - and we speaking about democracy - then I mean the question of whether, you know, it's still going to be whites dominating or a preponderance of whites in positions of power relative to Africans etc. - I mean I think if one is speaking about democracy at all levels of society - I mean not just speaking about political democracy but we speaking about economic democracy also - we speaking about democratic schools and so on - I mean I think a lot of those things would imply that - that the democratic process means because Africans are in the majority as far as population goes, and because we speaking about power to the people at all levels, it's inevitable, you know, that the majority in organs of the state and at the level of government etc. are going to be African, and that's also a reality in the sense that, you know, South Africa is in Africa - it's not elsewhere - I mean it's an African cult - country ultimately.

But I mean again I mean I don't think that can be answered in abstract - I mean one - what is going to happen to the Group Areas, you know - I mean how is that going to shape political processes in South Africa - what is going to happen to the bantustans, you know, what - what the - what is the meaning of the fact that 95 percent of whites are urbanised, you know, and only what, 40 or 50 percent of Africans are urbanised, you know, or how do you create your electoral districts in terms of voting and that sort of thing, you know - is that Kleindorp, which is predominantly made of - made up of Afrikaaner farmers, going to have one seat relative to what, Onverwacht, where 250,000 Africans stay, you know, is that going to be another seat.

I mean I think there's a whole lot of concrete, you know, realities, like Group Areas, the bantustans, the electoral districts - all those things are going to have to be taken into power - it also depends on I mean how are people going to elect, you know - are you going to elect through your factories or are you going to elect through the communities.

S.B. I mean what is the basis of popular power, you know - speaking at the level of not say, direct democracy but at the level of representative democracy, you know - do workers elect a representative to the people's assembly through their factory or via, you know, their community and so on, so I mean I think all those factors have to be taken into account in terms of, you know, ensuring that ultimately what - what is reflected at the level of central governmental authority and at the level of state power is, you know, what is reflected on the ground, a majority African population and, ja, and.

And I mean if we speaking about, you know, not just people's power but also as a essential central component (?) of people's power, working class power or workers power, you know, then I mean it also raises a question of not just African predominance at the level of central authority and state but also, you know, what's ensuring that workers, who constitute what, 70 or 80 percent of the population of South Africa, that is also reflected at that level, you know, so that it's not in elect (?) - whether it's from the factories or whether it's from the communities, you know, it's not the Saleems and the intellectuals from the UCTs and those place who are representing workers in, you know - in parliament or in the people's assembly, but is actually workers or their representatives that are sitting in that place.

So I mean I think I mean, you know, in one - one can say what would - one would like to see, but I mean I think there are whole lots of realities that are going to have to be taken into account in - when you speak about how people are going to be represented and so on.

J.F. As your view of non-racialism and how it's going to work in practically been.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. .... society functions in Britain - or else just generally seeing a situation where you've got different race groups that don't - that have obviously their problems but aren't separated by a Group Areas Act - is that taught you anything - has it warned you about anything?

S.B. Ja, I mean I think, ja - I mean well, the one, you know - in Britain people aren't being separated at the level of Group Areas, you know, but I mean one - and I think this is becoming a increasing problem - one still is walking into racism, and I mean only those who are blind would - or want to be blind will deny that there are conflicts, you know, even here in - in York or in Leeds and places like that, which are based on racism, and I think what that would suggest is that, you know, it's not simply - I mean we - fine, we can alter the structural - the structures in South Africa of oppression and exploitation, you know, but to think that that automatically is going to bring about the deathknell of racism I mean, you know, and racial prejudice or cultural prejudice and so on, I mean I think it'll take far more than just altering the structures - I mean in the process of liberation you want - you hoping that a lot of those prejudices etc., you know, get - get eliminated, but to think at that (?) on the day when say, the people's flag is flying in South Africa that there's going to be no more racial prejudice or no more racism is going to be very naive, because no matter how much you undercut those structures, I mean you still going to have a generation there that has been brought up, you know, and has been brought up and educated and is still going to have elements of racial prejudice, so that even I mean if people start - if there are areas that are opened up and people live next to each other, you know, I mean there's still going to be aspects of racism and racial conflict.

S.B. And I mean that's going to take a long time to get eliminated, so I mean I don't think anyone should think there's going to be, you know, a beautiful new society and where there's no racism and no racial conflict and so on - I mean the one - I mean the one progressive thing that will happen is, you know - is that legally institutionalised racism will - or preaching of race hatred etc. I mean would be legally punishable or, you know, would be eliminated from the statute books, but I mean I think socially or culturally these things will continue until your future generations have been educated, you know, that, ja, I mean and that has been eliminated through a process of education and people's consciousness being raised and so on.

J.F. Last question - why is non-racialism important - is it important - is it worth discussing - why are you interested?

S.B. I mean I think I mean given the - the structure I mean the population and the demographic structure of South Africa I mean, given the fact that the system in South Africa has been structured in terms of race and that I mean racial oppression I mean has been a constant throughout, you know, from the first days of colonialism in South Africa, and that in terms of the re - reform process also, I mean - that the adjustments that are being made, you know, are - in terms of whether it was in sport, in terms of multiracial sport, you know, where we play - Indian teams - play African teams - play white teams - or in terms of the political processes where Indians and - Indians and Coloureds are brought into the constitution and into the electoral process, you know, again multiracial adjustments to a racist structure - I mean I think in that sense what non-racialism is positing is something very different, you know, a very different future from the type of reality which exists in South Africa, which is racism, racial oppression, a very different reality from the type of adjustments that the state in South Africa is wanting to make in terms of multiracialism, and it's very clearly I think separates out what the democratic movement is standing for in opposition to a system based on racial oppression or a system based on multiracialism, you know, that in - in that sense non-racialism is going to be a society in what - in which, you know, people are not judged on the basis of colour or are not rewarded or have certain privileges or do not have certain privileges on the basis of colour.

And I mean if you - if you are speaking about non-racialism in a society like Norway or Sweden, maybe doesn't make that (.....) and is not such a big issue, but in a society whose whole history - whose whole history of three hundred and odd years, you know, since van Riebeeck landed there, has been in terms of racial - racism and racial oppression, I mean non-racialism is a very important issue, you know - it's not I mean if - where I think it's misleading - I mean it's important but where I think it becomes misleading is in political arguments and debates where I think as was pointed out earlier today, I mean I - he's right and I agree that I mean the issues of the post-'77 period or '79 period is not simply BC versus non-racialism - I mean there are more fundamental issues, and the issues there are how one understands South Africa, how one understands state power, how one defines class - I mean do we define class like some of the BC people were defining, you know, race is a determinant of class, you know - all blacks are workers, which doesn't take us very far also, or I mean a class analysis which recognises divisions within the black communities, and also starts to comprehend the needs, you know, in terms of political opposition - the needs for local level politics and local level mobilisation, grassroots structures and so on, and those are the more important issues in terms of the differences between what is perceived as BC and what is perceived as the so-called non-racial position.

S.B. I mean I think it - I mean it's very misleading to argue that it's the conflict in South Africa say, within the forces of opposition is between non-racialism and BC - I mean it's - that is just at a very superficial level - the real conflict is I mean how we analyse South Africa and how do we mobilise against apartheid, how do we organise against apartheid - what sort of analysis we have, and one - one analysis leads to a situation where the struggle is still seen in terms of, you know, blacks exclus - exclusivity and non-racialism after liberation - another analysis leads to mass mobilisation, organisation - an analysis which proclaims non-racialism in practice as a necessity for a non-racial South Africa.

So in that sense as far as political arguments, debates go, I mean the whole non-racial emphasis is misleading - there's more fundamental differences between BC and say, the congress movement.

END OF INTERVIEW.