

J.F. start now by telling me where you were born and when?

S.M. Well, I was born in the district of Kirkwood in a place called Danbrody - it was a Roman Catholic Mission, but some of my - my eldest brother and my eldest sister, I think, were born in Port Elizabeth, because that's where we originally came from.

My father moved to Danbrody in the Kirkwood district because my mother was troubled by asthma, and by (per 207) doctors' advice they then went to settle in Danbrody, so we then, in a sense, had two places where we were living - we were living -

We kept our house in town in the red location, New Brighton, and my father had his place in this missionary farm, as it were. He had, of course, by that time changed from being a worker in Port Elizabeth to being what is known as a share-cropper in the district of Kirkwood.

He worked for many farmers, and through share-cropping we were mainly brought up, and at the age of about eight, I think, I stayed permanently in Port Elizabeth schooling and going to see my parents, mainly during holidays, so that's the first part of my life.

J.F. Your father did what work, when he was a worker?

S.M. Well, he worked in all kinds of places - factories, filling stations, all kinds of places really.

J.F. Were either your mother or father political - had they been political people?

S.M. I think they were both conscious, but my father was not a member of the A.N.C. but a supporter, but my mother was.

J.F. A member?

S.M. A member of the A.N.C., and - but she had great difficulty to do much political work because my father was always interfering with her political work. All right, he always supported the cause - whenever A.N.C. stewards called at home, when they were in the house in town, my father would always take them aside in some room and talk to them there - we would hear the jingling of money, and we knew that he was giving some money and such such (238) but he didn't want us really to be directly involved, and in the end it was only me and my mother who were members of the A.N.C.

That is, of course, throughout my stay at home till I left South Africa - until I left South Africa in 1966.

J.F. So tell me what year you were born again?

S.M. I was born in 1934, yes.

J.F. And so would you say that when you grew up did you know whites - did you know those white farmers your father worked for - in your childhood did you think of whites as being the enemy, the oppressor - were they far away - did you have any sense of being anti white?

S.M. Yes, I think the question of feeling that there's something wrong in the country comes to you as an African at an early age. You had these rich farmers and we had a lot of our people working for them, and at every corner they were harassed. They would swear at you, they would use the very terrible word kaffir at you even as a child, and this goes for the white people as well in town.

We were always harassed even as a child. You would be walking on a pavement and somebody would nudge you with the elbow just out of his way if you didn't see the white man coming in your direction in good time, so you get to be aware of the wrong that there is in South Africa quite early in life.

I remember I had a lot of fights with white boys as a boy, too. One of these fights ended in court, and my father had to employ a lawyer for me, because we had fought and I had beaten this youngster up rather badly, and so his father took the matter to the police, who after harassing my father - my father had to do - had to produce me, and he fetched me in town - in the house in town in Port Elizabeth, and I had to face a court case.

Of course I was - the magistrate permitted me to stand outside the dock, and the case was conducted from there. We won the case on the grounds that he had provoked me. I didn't deny the fact that I'd beaten him very badly. Of course I was a bit -

At that time I was shorter than him - that is the white boy - I was shorter than him - he was bigger than me, but he was younger than me in age, and this is the type of thing that makes you conscious from the beginning.

J.F. The provocation - was it he called you a name, or what was the provocation?

S.M. My father had sent me to a shop, a shop which was in the farmers' - which was on the farmer's farm, and the road from my father's place crossed an orange orchard. There was a clear footpath which was used by everybody, but after I had bought all the articles we wanted and I was returning home using the footpath, then this youngster says - he meets me - in the first place he met me in the middle of the orchard, and he said I must take a round about way to reach home, and I refused, and the fight started over that.

I said - when I said I refused, he told me that I was cheeky and I must remember who I am, and then told - used the usual word, provocative word, or insulting word, kaffir. And before I knew what was happening he had already clobbered - he was clobbering me, and I fought back, and he got the worst of the exchanges when the fight did get under way, so ultimately he ran.

All right, I hit him with a - I hit him with a stone, I think, and so he ran away to his parents and the parents had me arrested.

J.F. And when did you first join the A.N.C. (.....309)

- S.M. Joining the A.N.C. was at the age of 18 in Port Elizabeth, but my association with the A.N.C. dates virtually to the time I went to town. I was very young - possibly I was doing sub B at that time, something like that - sub B or Standard - sub B or Standard One.....
- J.F. You'd be what - eight?
- S.M. I was eight years of age, and I think I was Standard One, and the - I remember my beginnings with the A.N.C. very clearly. We were distributors of leaflets - leaflets which we could hardly read, and proof of this that we couldn't read was that other groups - other political groups like the unity movement would come and put their piles on us, and we would distribute that (Laugh) as well until our supervisors, A.N.C. stewards would come up and find why you still had a big batch - it means - at first thing that you have not been working, only to discover that somebody's put somebody - some other political organiser (327) has put his own pile on yours, so that's as far as my association with the A.N.C. dates back.
- J.F. And when you first came to be involved at such a young age, what did joining the A.N.C. mean - did it mean fighting the whites anti white thing?
- S.M. No, not at all - not at all - not at all - it was just fun for us to carry these bundles of leaflets and give it to people - we felt - I think at the beginning I must have felt important to carry these leaflets and distribute them, but later on of course, we were taken into study classes where we were told about the history of the A.N.C., the history of our country, why we are not ruling ourselves, why the country's ruled by the whites - that type of thing was taught by A.N.C. volunteers on Saturdays or Sundays in various parts of the locations.....
- J.F. Uhuh.
- S.M. yes - that's where I began.
- J.F. Were they called classes or?
- S.M. Yes, they were called classes. In fact, at that time in the A.N.C. you are called Matsupatsila - this is another name for - pioneers.....
- J.F. Xosa?
- S.M. It's a Tsutu name - Matsupatsila - yes - but it is a name in English - translated into English it means pioneers - we still have them even today. You do not become a member of the A.N.C. until you are 18. Only at 18 can you decide, but prior to that you are just a pioneer, and at 16 you graduate. Of course, by that time, more or less, you are in what is called a youth league of the A.N.C., but from 16 there is a gap of two years which you are allowed to decide whether you want to become a member of the A.N.C. or not, and during that time, of course, you fiddle around with anything you come across in the A.N.C. youthleague, but you are neither in the pioneers*or in the organisation in the A.N.C., and at 18 you go and indicate in some office nearest to your home that you now want to join the A.N.C. They ask your age and they'll say, fine, you've

S.M. reached the age, you have decided, fine - then they register you and they give you a membership card. You join the A.N.C. but you're not a member of the - you then become a member of the youth league - that's where you belong - to the youth league, but whether you are youth league or women's section, you are all members of the A.N.C.
*nor

J.F. I guess I want to focus on my topic of non racialism - when you were first getting those classes was it a surprise to you that they told you the A.N.C.'s got Coloureds, whites, Asians - did you ever go from a period of thinking that this must be something that's basically anti white, because it's the whites who are oppressing us, to the.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. was there any experience like that for you?

S.M. Ja, it was. By that time you are very conscious in the A.N.C. at the age of 18, or even earlier than that. You are at school, you are holding school debates and you debate this question of racism in South Africa in our schools. You discuss this even in the youth league, and it's in these classes that the A.N.C. conducts - these are units of the A.N.C. - small units where an experienced member of the A.N.C. is your leader and your teacher, and they teach - they tell you the history of the A.N.C. and why the A.N.C. in 1912 adopted the policy of non violence and a policy of non racialism, and the stewards of the A.N.C. take pains to explain why the A.N.C. must be non racist.

It's something which is not very easy to accept at the beginning because of immaturity, because of youthfulness, the anger of the youth who had always been - we would tell our seniors that we don't agree with the policy, but they took pains - this is a topic which is handled so many times during the course of the year that gradually you get to understand the reasoning behind it, that first and foremost whites in South Africa came over three hundred years ago - they (who)(433) have nowhere to go.

Secondly, and this is the most important thing about - this is the most important - this is the most stressed point in the A.N.C. - that whites are first and foremost human beings like ourselves, except that they have got the wrong ideology in their heads, and with time they will change, and we will stay with them as brothers and sisters as our fellow human beings, and this is stressed in the A.N.C. even up till today - the humanity of the whites is completely recognised.

It takes time, but with development - political development - you come round to accept this, and in turn you begin to preach it to the lower and up-coming youngsters that are in the movement.

J.F. And was it - you talked about it very logically, but was it easy for you to accept - do you remember any arguments with other members saying.....

S.M. Well, you see, perhaps it's very easy for those of us who sort of grew up, first of all, as children in the A.N.C. You see, by the time you reach (the) age of about 12 discipline has been so stressed on you that you tend to respect - a lot of respect develops in you for your seniors in the organisation, and the question of discipline is stressed that indeed you do not query it that vehemently - you do not query it, although you are opposed to it, you are not so opposed to it that you would rather say that I am leaving the A.N.C. rather than being here if this is the policy of the A.N.C., that we should accept whites as our fellow-countrymen who unfortunately subscribe to wrong political beliefs of race superiority and so on.

So for me it was not so difficult. I respected the men who were around there - they'd been around for a long time - they'd led the organisation for a long time, and I - by that time I had attended a number of conferences of the A.N.C. - I'd seen how big it is, I'd seen the crowds the A.N.C. leadership could draw in a place like Port Elizabeth, where the square at Mlotene (455) was not enough to accommodate the crowds.

People would be - would fill up the square, and go into the streets and hence you had loud speakers fitted not only in the square but into streets - all the streets that faced to the square, and I had reason to believe that they know what (458) they talk about and that the country's going to be normalised, and the country will be - has got enough for us all and that it will be a happy country one day, so I had not much difficulty as a person.

I would imagine that it's perhaps difficult for those that joined the A.N.C. a little bit late. Even so we've got a lot of people who have joined the A.N.C. from such black organisations as SASO, AZAPO and other B.C. groups that are *working in the A.N.C and are working side by side with their white comrades in the organisation, and so with me it was not a difficulty - it was not a d(ifficulty)- by the time I came to I mean to I came - I reached the age of - of being critical in outlook - still it didn't pose a problem - much of a problem for me. *(Ignore)

J.F. O.K., but within the framework of accepting and being a supporter - I just want to take it historically and say - like, say, in the '50's or even in the '40's with pan Africanism being discussed with Mandela and Lambeti and those people being in the youth league - did you go through any period of thinking, now these are the real cutting-edge, these are the ones who are pushing more than the old A.N.C. - did you flirt with Africanism - were you taken with it at all at any stage or was that before your time?

S.M. It was before my time really - I never (473) thought about in the '40's - in the '40's it was really before my time and one, of course, was always operating under the - all the restraints my father was putting on me. I became really active after

S.M. 1952, that is after the defiance campaign. In fact, I never really experienced the defiance campaign of 1952, because my father had taken me to a Roman Catholic - strict Roman Catholic school in the countryside, down in Matatyele (479) in what do you call that area sometimes - not Victoria East - it was in Matatyele in a school called Mariezel(481) a school of German - German Roman Catholic Missionaries.

Now we were not touched, for instance, by all the riots of 1952 in that school, but that's one school which really made me very, very radical. I think really the school was a - another haven for nazis. I've never seen such cruel priests (488) as I came across in that school -

(They) treated us really like sub humans. The food we ate - I went to com - amongst the first things I complained about was food. It was meagre, it was so badly prepared, and I complained, because really although my father never was a rich person he always tried his best to give us enough to eat, and my mother prepared it - prepared it and prepared it well.

Those priests used to beat up schoolboys, they used to fight with schoolboys, and in the end - first of all I queried some of the theories of my religion - for example, the theory of the birth of Christ as being - as having come about spiritually, you know, and of course, I was to ask these questions - I was studying biology and one tends, therefore, to compare, you know, the spiritual explanation of life to the natural explanations of life, and of course, ultimately (504) I was expelled from the Catholic classes and sent to the Protestant classes, and of course, the Protestants welcomed me there like a hero, you know (Laugh) and now I was to campaign for these things.

I did not campaign as such - I was actually trying to elicit explanations that would satisfy my curious mind at that time. I was doing Form One and Form Two - of course, I was promoted in the same year from Form One to Form Two, and I was curious to know - I was a kid - and ultimately I was expelled even from the Protestant classes and I had to stay out - go and work with the workers of that school during this period of Scripture.

And in the end, as soon as I had finished my examinations - before I could have written*my last subject they bundled me into a van and took me to the nearest railway station and sent me home, and of course, I was very bitter after that - it made it - that did engender a certain amount of hatred -
*the

J.F. Of whom - of whites?

S.M. No - of Catholics - and I must confess that a lot of doubt - doubt arose in me about religion - took me a long time - it took my father a rule (521) sitting down with me and clearing this - that it is a quarrel between me and some priests that I come across, and I shouldn't transfer that to the church and well, I accepted that again, and I went back to the church on myself to my church, and it served (saved (524) me....

J.F. So are you religious now?

- S.M. I am - I'm Roman Catholic Church - that's why I left my children in Swaziland - I wanted them to be brought up in that Roman Catholic School in Swaziland - I had complete faith in them - in the - in this that my children would be educated and they would be protected by the church, because now, you know, I mean later I did come across correct people - correct church people and correct priests - people who would - who would sit down with you and explain anything you wanted without fighting you, and that sort of brought me back to the church.
- J.F. So you trust them even in these terrible conditions of Swaziland...
- S.M. Oh, yes, I knew my children would be protected - I left them there. It was a big risk. The police - the South African police could have taken it out on my children, but I had confidence in those priests, that they would do everything to guide the children correctly.
- We did discuss this matter with them before I left and they accepted the responsibility I was placing on them.
- J.F. Let me ask you just for time reasons - you're so good at telling anecdotes - let me just ask you instead of leading you through historically because some of the stuff may not be as relevant although, in fact, the church thing is a nice point because there's so much propaganda put out - what I'm trying to do is - a lot of my questions are asking what made people to be non racial - were there any points where you had the period of querying the church, did you ever have periods when you queried non racialism - for example, I was going to ask you about youth league or Africanism - perhaps that wasn't your experience....
- S.M. Ja, as I said to you, Julie, we did query the policy of the African National of non racialism. We were young and we said why can't we fight and drive them away, but our elders in the organisation were very patient people. They explained to us, no, ultimately, underdeveloped as we were, even though we suffered, we still have a duty to change the outlook of whites in South Africa.
- They would even go to the extent of saying : You know, we are supposed to be uncivilised people - we the blacks, but in truth the people who are uncivilised are the white people - the same people who brought us the Bible, the same people who brought us the Christian religion, are not practicing the Christian religion. Now it becomes, once we understand the Christian religion and understand - or rather once we understand the policy of the A.N.C. we shall also be automatically be understanding the Christian religion which believes in equality, that every man is born in the image of God and so on and so on, and that it becomes our duty to preach, to demonstrate, to change white people.
- They would say whites are not civilised people and we've a responsibility to change them and make them good people. Of course, in retrospect you can deduce here that all the people (who) were teaching us were Christians themselves, and they then, of course, gently nudged us politically into accepting the position of the A.N.C.
- But even when the policy of violence, for instance, in 1961 - rather the policy of non violence was changed by the A.N.C. -

S.M. that policy was not as a result of racism. The decision was based on this, we shall remove apartheid, and in order to remove apartheid we must deal with the instruments of oppression, and we enumerated who these, or what these instruments were, and therefore, even when we embarked upon the policy of violence it was violence against the institutions of apartheid - the government and those instruments that prop up a government which subscribes to apartheid.

We did not transfer this - we did not ascribe this to every white person. We said : No, we shall deal with those that are in uniform, for instance, like the police, the army, and all those things which belong to government - installations which belong to government, but not white people per se, no.

And that is why today, in conducting that low profile - guerilla warfare in South Africa - we can hit a goods train, but we shall not hit a passenger train. Our guerillas cross in all directions from the north into South Africa - they go through Boer farms there - they don't hit those farmers - they don't.

They don't hit schoolkids*which are white, which is easy and would be very easy to do. We don't lay charges at bioscopes where whites are enjoying a film - we don't do that. We don't creep into a football match at Butt Erasmus or at any of these famous stadiums in South Africa and lay charges to hit - we hit white people (lay charges to it to hit white people 591) - we don't. *who

If any white people have been hit by the A.N.C. it has always been an accident.

J.F. So you would say that throughout your life from your early youth to now your Catholicism or your religion would always never be in conflict with your....

S.M. My political beliefs? No, because my political beliefs and my religion complement each other. There is no conflict between my religion and my political education. In fact, the two completely complement each other and therefore the policy of non racism is completely acceptable to me and I support it fully. I would never support a policy which preaches racism because it would be really apartheid in reverse.

J.F. In your experience have you actually worked with people of different race groups?

S.M. Oh, yes, I have.

J.F. Tell me, starting from the early occasions (602) - when did you first get exposed - did you know people like Leon - I guess Leon Levy was in P.E.

S.M. Ja - first - my first real working experience with white people was when I was a university student at Fort Hare. We joined the National Union of South African Students, and so together we worked in all kinds of demonstrations, be it in Alice, be it in East London, be it in Grahamstown or Port Elizabeth, where we would demonstrate together.

J.F. What year did you get on campus?

S.M. I was at Fort Hare from 1958 to 1961 - end of 1961 - and we would prepare leaflets together, we would prepare placards, we would share rooms with them - those students of Rhodes University who had homes in Grahamstown would leave their rooms in order to go and sleep at their homes in order that we might use their rooms, so those were the early real working together with white people.

J.F. And was that easy - did it just happen - was it difficult or was it something new for you when it first happened, to see a white like that?

S.M. Well, I think possibly I never felt that uneasy. Of course, we were very careful at first - very careful, particularly because it was something new to mix freely with whites, share a room with - or a dormitory with white boys, but it took us a very short time to realise that boys are boys like all other boys and -

But the other thing is that they were liberals, and they made it easy, therefore, for us to - to settle down amongst them, or them amongst us, because when we returned home we visited each other at our respective homes.

They would come to my home in New Brighton, greet my mother - of course, she was - (at) first she would feel very uneasy because they would say Madam to my mother, and my mother would feel very uneasy (Laugh) - feel very, very uneasy about being called Madam by a white boy or a white girl, and I also went to their homes.

Then during this time we were - we had now started speaking from public platforms, or we were addressing whites in private homes in the suburbs of Port Elizabeth and of course, very soon we had gained our confidence and we'd come to know white people are actually very normal - they are normal, given the right climate and - but it was not at every home that we were welcome.

We visited some friends in the suburbs per (644) of course, their invitation, but we found that their parents did not like it. They would not be rude to us - I've never been expelled or thrown out of a white home - even during those days I was never thrown out, but the parents would - they would show perpl - what - perplexity, you know, and they would move out of the lounge and go away and leave us with their children, and this was very obvious.

Some homes were very - some homes were very interesting actually. I remember visiting the (Laugh) - the home of - of one NUSAS friend - I've forgotten his name now, it's such a long time - Jesus - perhaps I might remember the name as I go on - but he had his grandfather on the mother's side, and this was possibly the first time this man was meeting young Africans.

They were very bold and who were obviously very easy in being in a white man's home, and although they were English this old man was asking very, very awkward questions, like how do you eat at home - do you use forks and knives and blades - do you pray and - do you play music when you are going to eat - that (Laugh) type of thing! Oh (or 672) this man's name was - this was the name of a good friend of ours, John Shingler - he was a NUSAS president - John Shingler - I think it's about 1959.

J.F. Shindler with a d?

S.M. Shingler - S h i n g l e r, Shingler - he was English - and in the end the old man*there had to find some excuse to get the old man out of the way - to get him away from us (Laugh) and we were just not bothered - we're telling the truth each time, that we don't play music when we are eating. *they

So he would ask : What do you do then? We'd just say : Well, we just eat the food (Laugh) So he would then turn to John, says (682) : There you are, you know - you are busy playing - I don't know what music was being played there - they don't know that thing (683) (Laugh) You see, they don't know music - you bring them here and*they play the music - they don't know mu(sic) *you

He was a very old man - he was actually senile, really, and....

J.F. But was it a.....

S.M. But truly speaking the - that was/the real beginning of working and actually collaborating with whites. You see, NUSAS was a liberal party organisation, and we were members of the A.N.C. NUSAS had the money, or the liberals had the money - the A.N.C. didn't have money. From that point of view it was important for us to collaborate, because by collaborating with NUSAS we were able to reach our own goals. /really

If we travelled to Cape Town it was an opportunity/to reach the A.N.C. in Cape Town - we do, of course, the NUSAS work, but at the same time we'd also do the work in the locations of Cape Town, and so you could always say, O.K., NUSAS, I would like to go to such and such a place, can I do any work for NUSAS there or what kind of work, they would send you the ticket and, of course, you would then do both NUSAS work and A.N.C. work. /for us

From that point of view NUSAS was very helpful to us, and in any case NUSAS didn't preach anything, and also it was very important for us to be in NUSAS because at that time the Liberal Party had this qualified franchise business in its politics - qualified franchise for Africans - and it was very important for us to win our youth comrades in the Liberal Party, convert them, convince them about the wrongness of trying to say one person is better than the other simply because they've got two let's say (708) one is educated and one is not educated - one is rich or the other one is poor - and from that - from those beginnings it was very - as for only a short step (710) or shall I say within a short time, the Liberal Party changed from a qualified franchise into the correct politics, you see, so it was important, therefore, in many ways to work in NUSAS, and thereafter, even when I left school, we had white comrades - some English, some Jews, who were in the underground with us.

And so it was easy from - from those beginnings from mixing very much with NUSAS it was very easy for me to have a hide-out in a white suburb, and sleep normally, so that is the position even now for me - whites are human beings. They have their shortcomings just like any other human being.

J.F. Is there anything you could tell in terms of anecdotes of that experience, obviously without saying anything that would be a security problem, but about being in the underground with whites where it turned out to be useful or interesting in any way.

S.M. Well.....

J.F. Just if there was any particular experience that highlighted....

S.M. Oh, I worked in the underground first in Port Elizabeth from 1961, as soon as the A.N.C. - in fact, the A.N.C. anticipated that it was going to be banned, so that even before it was really banned it was half underground already in the Eastern Cape, and so I worked with white people in the underground, and even in Swaziland -

When I came out of jail and left South Africa, in Swaziland we (were) operating under an underground, and in that underground I worked with white people, and I trusted them and they trusted me.

I used to send some white people, because it was easy for them to go into South Africa - used to send them inside in South Africa to go and deliver messages or to go and do work for us inside, you know, like delivering money, and in Swaziland I built a chain of - of underground hideouts because the South African security system was looking for us to kill us, and amongst those hideouts two of them were with white South Africans, and another white who came from Ireland -

Another white who came from Ireland, of course (759) was a hideout for me, and I was never betrayed - I was never betrayed by whites. White children have sacrificed in the struggle. Sylvia Neame is an example of such people. Sylvia Neame, who is now - I don't (know) - somewhere in Europe - had to serve imprisonment - she was involved with the underground.

She was in a generation behind my time at Rhodes University - so I have no qualms about having whites in the A.N.C., and some white people have paid the supreme penalty for this struggle led by the A.N.C. - paid the supreme penalty.

Some have served life imprisonment, and many are serving imprisonment of varying lengths even now, and I've no doubt that the A.N.C.'s right in inviting and accepting whites into the A.N.C. The more of us South Africans of all colours join the struggle the quicker shall we deal, or shall we bring about the downfall of that regime.

J.F. I guess.....

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J.F. which showed how you could use whites and where maybe would outfox the system - was there any....

S.M. Oh well, first of all whites are not suspected, isn't it - whites are supposed to be loyal to - if they're Afrikaners they're supposed to be loyal to the Nationalist Party, which is based on the Afrikaner people and - but, you see, today's

S.M. Afrikaaners I think are beginning to think independently, and that is why Afrikaaner children have joined us, and it has been - it's been of - been of great importance to have them in the A.N.C. and in the underground, because some of them are serving in very delicate departments of state, and in that way we are able to know things which otherwise would be impossible for us as blacks to get - there are areas of employment where we cannot be taken - strictly white jobs, and therefore is it (it is) very important to have white members.

Of course, we do - you have to convince these people about the correctness of the cause, and once they are convinced they are normally very, very faithful people - very dedicated, and they will - they will do anything - they'll give you anything you want, except there is only one - one disadvantage we have noticed with our white comrades, they become over-enthusiastic, and this is one reason why invariably they get arrested.

So many of them get arrested. Some, of course, have learned, some have stuck to the rules of discipline, but many of them have been arrested because they become over-enthusiastic - they want to do more now, virtually 24 hours working at A.N.C. assignments, and in the process become even careless and get - they get arrested.

I must say that this is one thing which we still have to overcome with white comrades. They have difficulty to keep to underground discipline rules and many of them get arrested, but otherwise I have no fears at all about having them as -

Of course, we do not take anybody. Some of them are wrong, just like many Africans who come to us are wrong - they are policemen - but it's not difficult for us.

J.F. Do you think that you're perhaps a bit more open than most - have you ever had an experience say, when you were in Swaziland where other black A.N.C. people would say to you : How can you trust this guy, or you're a bit too open to whites, and you had to say : Look.....

S.M. No, I would always know what - how far to go, even not necessarily to white people but even to other black people - even to members of the A.N.C. I would know how far to go. I would never disclose information that should not be divulged.

J.F. No, no, but I'm saying were there ever any instances where blacks working with you would say : My gosh, can we trust them - I'm just saying do you think you happen to be one who.....

S.M. No, I wouldn't have been given the position I'm holding.

J.F. No, I'm not saying too trusting, but I'm saying are there others both - everyone - you'd be security conscious is one thing but did you ever find - do you think you're more open or do you think everyone in the A.N.C. is as you - judges people purely on colour or decides whether they're a security risk.....

S.M. No, I wouldn't - I would not necessarily trust - base my trust on anybody on a question of colour. If you ask me a question and I thought that the question can be answered openly I'll answer it not because you are white....

J.F. Sure, no, I'm not answering.....

S.M. or*white - in fact in the - even in the A.N.C. you're not allowed to divulge certain information that you have, or certain areas of operation to anybody except those people you work with and to those you are responsible to, but I've never had occasion to be - to be asked : Why are you open - so open - I've never had that above (?) thing because I don't think I have ever been open, or I've never had occasion to be asked : Why are you mixing so freely with whites or with so-and-so, because I don't mix with any white, in the first place.
*black

Perhaps if we had met - if I had met even you in a place like Swaziland it would have taken you a very long time to have me for an interview because I would first have tried to establish as to who you are and why you want to interview me, and if I couldn't get clearance I possibly would just find an excuse not to meet you, and keep away from you, but with you, you've been cleared to come to Tanzania - (I) heard about you from Nono - heard about you from headquarters D.I.P., and I'm in Tanzania - I have no reason to fear you even if I didn't know you - I've no reason to fear you - if you ask me any awkward question I will tell you I won't answer it.

J.F. O.K., I was only trying to get at the idea that perhaps there are those who might accept the A.N.C.'s non racialism in theory but in practice they just actually don't tend to me - and also the thing I've been asked.....

S.M. Well, I'll tell you what, Julie, on that point I think A.N.C. membership generally will have accepted the philosophy of the organisation, that it's either this or you keep out, my friend, and - but there are some people who will be probably still afraid of whites they do not know.

There's no problem with all the whites within (?) the organisation - for instance, if we take a man like Joe Slovo in the A.N.C., he's a hero. The young people, when he was elected for the - when the - for instance, the question of white membership was opened in the last conference - open to whites - when Joe Slo(vo) and so for the first time we had a white member of the national executive.

When the whole thing was over and (the) meeting was closed the youth rushed to the platform and most of them were rushing for Joe Slovo, but you see, if they didn't know you they probably be keep aloof from you - they're not just going to go out of their way because you are white and say : Hello, how are you - come this way - can we have tea - and that type of thing - they might - some of them might even just have nothing to do with you.

J.F. The other thing I haven't asked you about is - I'm keen for this non racialism to be a look at not just black/white, but relations with Coloureds, Indians and people of different ethnic groups - in P.E. you've got mainly Xosa people, finished - was that something where....

S.M. No, you've got a lot of Coloureds in P.E.

J.F. You've got in Uitenhage, O.K., but you don't have Indians like you do in Durban.

- S.M. Ja, that's true - that's true ja, ja - we don't have Coloureds like they have in the Western Cape.
- J.F. And you don't have Xosa, Tsutu, Swana all together like you do in Soweto.
- S.M. That's right, ja.
- J.F. So I'm just wondering if that non racialism for you was it something to get over to be able to see Indians or Coloureds or people of other ethnic groups?
- S.M. No, I think the other groups, really, you do come across them, because when I grew up in New Brighton in my early years, there were a lot of Coloureds in the location - a lot of Indians in our locations, a lot of Chinese. In places like Southend, for instance, it was a mixture of Xosa people, Indian people, Coloureds, Indians and even Chinese.

I have got a good friend of mine who now lives in Swaziland. She is a product of a Xosa and a Chinese. That's how much it is easy for races to mix when there's no interference with them. To a great extent we do not know each other simply because of the race laws which government - successive*government in South Africa have created for them. *governments

If this thing of non racialism was allowed to go on - if it was not legislate(ed) - if we didn't legislate on this question of race South Africa would be (a) very normal society - would be a very normal society, and possibly the - but if that had been allowed from the beginning - from 1652 - I think possibly half the population of South Africa today would probably (be) Coloured more than any other thing.

It is - it is race laws that have contributed to any amount of antagonism between the races of South Africa. These separate residential areas, for instance. That's one of the causes for the - for the riots, for instance, in Durban of 1949.

You have these Africans staying in Shacks - slums of the worst kind - Katomana, for instance. Then you have got these affluent Indian community side by side with them and of course, it is there that the Africans have got to go and buy and be abused. Naturally if you stay in a house like this and I stay in a shack across the road even the children will grow up with this feeling that they are - the one group is superior to the other, and this is the type of thing which builds these divisions, these antagonisms.

- J.F. (Tape off) - what I'd better make sure is that I've asked you to tell me your history a bit more - about how you left and - you joined when you were 18, so that was '52, and you were active in the - you said you weren't so active in defiance campaign because you were at school.

- S.M. Ja, I was back in now in Port Elizabeth in '53 - back home in '53, and I was in a location secondary school, and then of course, I resumed my activities in the youth league and of course, as students we - we were involved now in youth league work, meetings at weekends, meetings at night, unit meetings and so on, and until I completed my studies in 1955. Then we had no money at home so I couldn't go to college. I had

S.M. passed with exemption my matric, so I was working in Port Elizabeth as a driver, which was the best job I could get. My matriculation certificate meant nothing. Couldn't get a decent job at all, so I had to work as a truck driver - thought it would get decent money, for those two years, and at the end of two years my father had saved some money, I had saved some money, and I was able to go to college, and I was then at Fort Hare.

I was a member of the A.N.C. - member of the youth league - and of the school I did a B.A. degree majoring in history and administration with two courses in English. Then I completed my studies - I was a teacher - was qualified now also as a teacher - I did a diploma in teaching, but I couldn't take up a teaching post. I was not debarred. I was sorry I was not barred from teaching (I was - sorry - not barred from teaching) (New machine - no numbers!) but Bantu - I felt that I couldn't teach - I couldn't have been preaching all those years against Bantu education, and when I qualified as a teacher turn round and say - administer the same thing that I had been representing as poison for our people.

So I had to get all kinds of jobs. First again as a truck driver, then as a clerk in a dairy - milk dairy - and then a stint with the Institute of Economic Research at Rhodes University, where I worked for about six months there - then in 19 - this was in 1962.

At the beginning of 1963 I registered as an articled clerk with a firm of lawyers - but I (Laugh) - '63 - I had hardly worked for three weeks as an articled clerk when I was picked up. And then - so '63 up to '64 for a long time I was in detention.

J.F. What month were you picked up in '63 - was it....

S.M. I was picked up - I was picked up in February - because I started my articles in January, and I was picked up at the beginning of February, 1963, and went into detention - 90 day detention, and it was this - they just kept renewing my detention orders until - until October '64 when I was taken out of detention. I was already in Victoria East at that time.

J.F. October, '64 or still '63 - wasn't it February to October....

S.M. Ja, February - February, 1963 to October, '64.

J.F. So you were there for more than a year in detention?

S.M. Yes - then I spent two months in awaiting trial - I spent two months awaiting trial in East London, and in December - on December the 16th. - December the 17th. of December, 1964 I was sentenced to one year imprisonment in East London, together with others..

J.F. For - what was the charge?

S.M. I was charged for furthering the aims of a banned organisation, namely the A.N.C., and I was given one year's imprisonment with the magistrate taking into account the time I had spent in detention, and I served at Nongongo for one year.

Now we were sentenced on the 17th. of December and we were due to be released on the 16th. of December,*1965, but because it's

*1965

S.M. December the 16th. for Boers is almost a religious - a holy day, we were then released on the 15th. of December in 1965, and that's how I escaped further charges, because on the night of the 15th. of December special branch were moving from Port Elizabeth to East London in order to re-arrest me when on - when I would be released on the morning of the 16th. of December, and that's how I escaped, and from that moment onwards I never - never - it came as a shock - I knew that I could have been successfully charged for further charges and I therefore didn't trust my home - I didn't sleep there.

I slept in another strategic place, and indeed on the morning of the 17th, the police were at my place - 17th. of December in the morning they surrounded my home - I was not there, and from that moment began a cat and mouse game between me and the police until I ran away in January - end of January.

J.F. In '66?

S.M. In 1966.

J.F. Did you go via Botswana?

S.M. Via - I ran to Swaziland - I left via Durban. I had a fiancee and I wanted to get married to her, and that's why I stayed that long - it was an attempt to get this thing fixed, yes - and as soon as I got married I said to her : Well, O.K., I'm returning - we were in the Transkei. I said : O.K., let me accompany you to Durban - she was at that time at Natal University, so we went (?) to Natal and I left her in Natal - I said to her I was returning to Port Elizabeth when in actual fact I was going north - she did not know.

It was when I was in Swaziland that I sent her a telegram that I am in Swaziland not in Port Elizabeth - will explain later by letter.

J.F. So did she not know - she knew about your political involvement?

S.M. She knew very well. She had waited for me all those years. She knew very well but she'd never guessed that I was tricking (?) her when I said to her I was going to Port Elizabeth. I just had to apply strict underground methods and lie to her, so that is briefly the outline.

In Swaziland, for the first time, I exercised my profession as a teacher. I taught there for a number of years in the same school where I say my children completed.

J.F. Catholic Mission School?

S.M. Catholic Mission School.

J.F. And how long did you stay in Swaziland?

S.M. Twelve years, I think - twelve years - then 1982 - let me see - from '66 to '82, January.

J.F. And were you - when did you become the rep in Swaziland?

S.M. About '78 - ja, '78.

J.F. I see - and.....

- S.M. But even bef(ore) -/officially about '78, but even prior to that I was doing a lot of work in terms of representation of our people to government but I was not official - I was not the A.N.C. official representative. /that is
- J.F. Did you find that - a sense of betrayal when Swaziland ultimately went the way it did - did the whole post Enkumati business - you've known the Swazis all those years.
- S.M. Yeah - well, you see, no, I didn't feel so - one had assessed Swaziland - its strength - just as you can assess any state in Southern Africa. In the end South Africa must win. They are also dependent on South Africa, so (it's) easy therefore, particularly from the economic point of view, there is no comparison at all between these countries and South Africa - they are all dependent on South Africa - but I didn't at all - I just felt that Swaziland had been victimised by South Africa.
- J.F. You get people who are quick to say : Well, the Swazis are meek and mild and they don't - critical of - they make generalisations about ethnic groups - to me that's part of the racial or non racialism to look at it that way and I get a bit nervous when I hear people say that - even in Swaziland when I was there right before John was kicked out some people would give a whole line about these Swazis -
- S.M. No, that is - that is an unobjective assessment of the situation in Swaziland. It's a small little country (of) about a half a million people, basically undeveloped, entirely dependent on South Africa - in fact, as far as I'm concerned underdeveloped country, because even that part - I know that in terms of what is written about Swaziland it's sometimes called a developing country, but you see, how do you ju(dge) - how do you arrive at that assessment?

When you count - when you look at the industry and the commerce you'll find that virtually possibly about 90% plus of this industry and commerce is owned by South Africa, or these are all subsidiaries of businesses of one kind or another in South Africa - these are subsidiaries - and you look at the manpower development you'll find that Swaziland is amongst the most - they've got peoples in Africa, and so as far as I'm concerned the Swazis just had to give in when South Africa said that they must first kick out some of us and later to kick out the A.N.C. - they just have no alternative.

Who is there to stand between South Africa and Swaziland - who is there to defend - there's none - there's none. Britain - the former colonial powers mean nothing to defend these little countries that were their former colonies - nothing - nothing. Nobody stands between them and - between them and South Africa.

No, I think - simply think that it's - it's an unfair criticism on Swaziland, which col - which is under pressure right now and it's knuckling - it's giving in even before they have signed any treaty with South Africa. Mozambique gave in with all the background of African nationalism and a long history of oppression by colonial - white colonialists, the Portuguese, so I think really that personally it's a very unfair criticism of Swaziland. We understand - we understand.

- J.F. But to get back to the racialism aspect, do you hear people saying - making generalisations about....
- S.M. No, those are generalisations, you know (Laugh) - I don't know if you have lived amongst Africans. That is the type of thing you would get even among my own nationality - amongst my own people. We are about nine major tribes - the Xosa nationality is about nine major tribes and two minor tribes.
- It's easy for any act that one does to be interpreted in terms of the tribe you come from. If for instance, you are a Fingo - you do something wrong, they'll trace your history, that no well, it's typical of Fingos to sell out - they sold us out to the British colonialists way back in history. But is it - I mean you can't interpret any - I mean how - I mean we still say so to each other even today but in truth it's not so.
- It's very common in South Africa to hear people speaking contemptuously of Shangaans, and then this can sometimes assume prominence in terms like when the Inkomati is signed, but it's not true that Mozambique sold out to - sold us out because they are Shangaan. Those people simply knuckled under under the pressure of South Africa.
- It's not true that they're Shangaans, and in actual - if you examine Mozambique you'll find that Shangaan is just one of the tribes that you'll find in Mozambique - it's not everybody who is there is a Shangaan - so it's not true - that's not an objective analysis of what caused Swaziland to sign a treaty against the A.N.C.
- It's true the treaty which they signed was against the A.N.C.
- J.F. If you hear people talking that way do you try to chastise them - do you hear that among blacks - lots of my black friends tell me, because I have a friend living at Alexandra/Hostel, and she said it's just unbelievable what people will say about those Pediolas do that..... /Womens
- S.M. That's right - it's a common thing among Africans to resort to all histories amongst us. I know, for instance, that during colonialism - during the time of the colonial period when various*tribues and nationalities were being conquered by the British, sometimes the Boers, that the Swazis did side with the Boers against the pedies, but you can't use that example that because they once conspired with the Boers against the Pedies and, that they are naturally people who betray others.
- The instance of their betraying the Pedies during the time South Africa was being carved up into a colonial area, and during now the tide - things are totally - they're completely different - it's a completely different situation. *tribes
- J.F. What about - how do you feel about the future of South Africa when change would come for the A.N.C. to take over - do you think that's going to be a tough challenge to deal with that so-called tribalism - if you hear the kind of the*B.C. analysis they say, oh, you know..... *B.B.C.
- S.M. No, I think they will - there will be no problem of tribalism in South Africa. I think our people in many ways are far past the tribal problem that many countries in Africa still experience, and a good demonstration of that is what is going on just now. They are demonstrating, they are fighting,

S.M. they're dying, not as Pedies or Xosa or Zulu as Tsutus - just as South Africans. They are - the degree of unity as blacks now it's infinitely (?) beyond the point of African as blacks is growing - is growing stronger and stronger.

What will confront us is convincing our people that we've got to live side by side with what has come to be termed the enemy. Now that is what we have to work hard at. That will be our biggest challenge, and I think if we can - if we can add to our current leadership as members of the A.N.C. brought (broad) that eligible (?) with what is internal leadership of the black peoples, broaden that to include white leadership to work together as South Africans, then I think South Africa will be a very successful country.

We'll need strong leadership, clear leadership. Racism, of course, is the thing which can be exploited during that time, but we'll need to be very vigilant that such elements as could exploit the race issue should be - should be dealt with in a manner that will make them not succeed.

I am speaking about broadening the current leadership externally, internally, broadening it to include white leadership. That is my hope, that we will be able to shoulder the coming burden of the birth of a new South Africa. It's going to be very difficult - I've do doubt about it - it's going to be very difficult, but if all of us can accept this, that South Africa belongs to us all, we are all fellow South Africans irrespective of colour, and we can get the white leadership, even the current white leadership, to accept these positions and link up with the black leadership, then the problem should not be very big.

J.F. Are you saying that the current leadership of the white of the regime?

S.M. Even the current leadership, if it is acceptable to their people, that is the leadership that we will deal with. Whichever the leadership of the white people will be, we must not choose who the leaders of white people will be - they must throw them up, and though they will be thrown up by the white people, those we shall embrace.

Of course, if they are rejected we shall not deal with rejects, but we shall also not appoint white leaders - it would be wrong. Leadership must always be thrown up by the people. We must not decide for the whites who their leaders must be.

J.F. I thought you'd say, well, there are whites in the A.N.C. leadership or....

S.M. Well, you see, now to go beyond that point, my friend, these - some of the whites that are in the A.N.C. right now do not command the majority of whites inside - these are rabble - these are what are called rabble - people who have rebelled against the white system and have come over to there - they are treated as traitors at the moment - they are treated as traitors.

These whites who are with us are people's leaders - people's leaders. This is the type of - Slovo's the type of person whom you can send and address a meeting that's in the Transkei - he will be accepted, but I don't think you can send Slovo to

- S.M. Pretoria and ask him to call for a meeting there - they'll lynch him. So I'm talking about during the period of now reconciliation, we will have to accept those leaders that the white people themselves will throw up. Let's face it, the question of racism is not going to disappear overnight - it shall be there - we must give it time to phase itself out, so there will still be a white community -
- Let's face it, it will be there. We can't wish it away, my friend, and they will still have confidence in certain people who are their people, their choice as leaders, not the Slovos that we have on our side, but their own people, and we must accept that leadership so that we must not, like they are doing with us, impose a leadership on them.
- J.F. But the question is can you trust those kind of people.....
(Rest of this side taken up by reports from Swaziland - beginning of side two reports on local elections etc.)
- J.F. I can see what you're saying, that that needs to work, but at the same time isn't there a problem of trust and....
- S.M. What do you want to do with trust - what do you want to do with trust - what do you want to do with confidence?
- J.F. I'm just talking about say, the Zimbabwe experience where.....
- S.M. I don't think you - I don't think Mugabe trusts Smith, or has confidence in Smith - never possibly will ever have - but he works with Smith in parliament (Laugh) isn't it?
- J.F. Maybe Zimbabwe's not a good example because is never was a non racial party anyway....
- S.M. No, I don't think that is the quality which I will go for, but of course, we shall want as much as possible to hope that the people who will be coming forward to say they are prepared to bring about the new - the new South Africa, will be people who understand what is afoot at the time, what is required, and what we want to bring about.
- We of the A.N.C. only have the interests of our people at heart. The interests of the people of South Africa as a whole. We don't have the interests of the Xosas, or the interests of the Tsutus, or the interests of the English - no, we want to build a new society there that will accept each other, that they are equals, that they are human beings.
- J.F. So you envision a future South Africa that would have Nats in the government?
- S.M. Nats? If they so choose, yes, because I don't think you can avoid opening up the country for a multi-party system, for a start. At the moment ideology enjoys no point - enjoys no priority in the A.N.C., but let's face it, that perhaps that side of freedom people will say : Look, I've served all my life in the A.N.C. but in actual fact I am a communist and I want to devote - I want to form a party which is the Communist Party of South Africa, and I want to go along that way.
- And the others will say : Look, we are social democrats and

- S.M. we want to form a party of social democrats - and we cannot stand in their way, and I think if we agree, if we accept the principle of self determination then we must allow our people to go the way their own ideological beliefs direct them. That's my standpoint.
- J.F. O.K., let me ask you a couple of other quick points - just that NUSAS thing I was so keen to ask you about - did you know Hugh*Millins... *Lewin
- S.M. Yes, I know Hugh Lewin. I knew him from the time that we - we were contemporaries at university. I think his father is a priest in England, and he was a student - completed his studies and worked first in Port Elizabeth as a journalist, later in Maritzburg, and I met him in all these places.
- I met him even after he was married to Elizabeth Pitman, also a friend of ours. Me, Hugh Lewin, Elizabeth, his wife, and Tamim Hlambiso were big friends, because Elizabeth's home was in Port Elizabeth and that's where we spent a lot of weekends together with Hugh and Elizabeth and Elizabeth's mother. I know them very well.
- It was a - it was - I was very sad when I learnt that Elizabeth and Hugh had divorced - you know, very sad - it was a very sad - I even wrote to - I remember that when Hugh was in jail I wrote to Elizabeth demanding an explanation, and I felt - I felt that Hugh had been betrayed, but she wrote back and made a lot of explanations and what could I do - she -
- At that time she was in the United States and Hugh was in jail - couldn't write to Hugh and - and - oh, I knew Hugh very well. He belonged to the Liberal Party himself. Of course, the left wing of the Liberal Party they also embraced armed struggle, but it was - I think it was a hastily organised organisation by young people and it wasn't properly planned - it soon fizzled out as soon as the Boers started - started applying the brakes it fizzled out.
- I think it was partly again because of what I said earlier to you - white people have got difficulty to conceal their activities - great difficulty to - to run an underground - really have great difficulty, I'm convinced about that. You must test them thoroughly before you let them go, and we have had great successes with some of them - that is those that can - that have been thoroughly drilled - but we have had also embarrassing moments with some of the cadres that we have sent in because they - they just get crazy. They just feel that they must grab anybody who's perhaps a (....- who has befriended them and bring them into the underground and in this way they give themselves away.
- J.F. And were you surprised when you heard about Hugh being bust for ARM - was that - had you had any inkling of his involve.....
- S.M. No, it came as a big surprise because Hugh has got such a gentle nature. I was - at first I tended not to believe it. He's such a gentle person, and I thought somebody had framed him. We all ran around trying to check well, could it be true - could it be true - and there it was in the end, it was true - Hugh was a guerilla, and (I) was sorry for him, but so what. We were also in our own underground - we -

- S.M. he hadn't told us and we hadn't told him that we were underground - underground activists so - but they got him, and (he) served a long imprisonment. I like him for the fact that he'd never sold out - I respect him for that - always respect him for that - there are some elements which I don't - I wouldn't greet some of the people who sold him out - I wouldn't talk to them - I don't talk to such people - I'm very angry with such people.
- J.F. And what was the view in black circles about ARMM - did you folks talk about it - just kind of what was the buzz when people said : Oh, this thing has happened - how was it thought of among blacks?
- S.M. We didn't think it*was succeed - we didn't think it would succeed. Somehow that's how we felt - we didn't think it was going to succeed mainly because the society from which they emerge(d) was not an oppressed society. They were likely to sell it out sooner or later. You've got to have a base for guerilla warfare or for underground combat work - you've got to have a base, and with us the base is our people, so as soon as you have explained yourself to our people they know why you are doing that - *would
- You are doing that to liberate them, and so they'll support you - they will hide you. You can't do that in South Africa. You are in actual fact a threat to their privileged life - you are a threat, real threat to their privileged life. Why should you do it? You're traitor - they'll sell you out.
- So that is why we never gave that organisation a chance of survival.
- J.F. And did blacks say : Ag, you know, if they wanted to do that they should've been with the A.N.C. - or did people see it as like a third force?
- S.M. Would have been difficult for us to be - the liberals never accepted the A.N.C. The liberal Party was as suspicious of the A.N.C. just as the Nats are today always, except perhaps individuals within the Liberal Party - they never accepted the A.N.C., the leadership of the Liberal Party really never accepted the A.N.C. They always were witch hunting in the A.N.C., pointing at communism - that type of thing - so we could never really work -
- We have never really collaborated with the Liberal Party - the party - I'm not talking about NUSAS but the party, no, no.
- J.F. Do you remember when Paton testified in mitigation at the Rivonia trial?
- S.M. No - I wasn't even aware - this is the first time I hear of that - did he?
- J.F. It's in Hilda Bernstein's book..... and....
- S.M. The liberals were - their party's based on - on orthodox liberalism, really. As soon as things became tough in South Africa they dissolved themselves - they couldn't take the struggle, even as a legal organisation - it was a big disappointment for us because liberals at least would shout all these, (you) know, the right things about justice and the

S.M. rights of man - you know, the wrongness of detention. Instead the liberals folded up and dissolved the party. It was too small ineffective organisations to speak up for the peoples of South Africa. (N.B. The last paragraph can easily be punctuated differently - suggest you listen to get correct sense.)

I have a lot of respect, for instance, for those*who men *call the Black Sash. You know, passive as they are, but they stood up for what is right in that passive way, which is what the liberal Party could at least have done. They didn't - they folded up - they dissolved themselves.....
*women *called

J.F. Oh, they folded up - they said that they couldn't have blacks in their party - that was their excuse.

S.M. That was rubbish - that was rubbish - they didn't have/blacks in their party. In the end the blacks were able ultimately to stand up on their own. A.N.C. was beaten down at one time, and we remain underground, remain inactive but waiting for the right moment to come up again. /to have (?)

Students formed themselves into SASO. Despite the conditions they spoke up, so I - that was one of the biggest disappointments for us - the Liberal Party - the dissolution of the Liberal Party by Alan Paton. We lost a lot of respect for him and in fact, in our circles he's treated more like the intellectual academician around South Africa. That's about as much tribute we can pay to him - nothing more.

J.F. Did you ever try to talk to these NUSAS boys - did you ever think you should - if you talked a bit you could move the liberal a bit - make him understand.....

S.M. Oh, we used to have a lot of talk with them. We used to have a lot of rows with them. We used to have lots of rows with them. Oh, yes - then they used to take us to some of the raw elements of the white community, which was very good for us - we used to encourage that, even*though we were outside NUSAS because not everybody was NUSAS - was in NUSAS at Rhodes - and we used to - we used to mix words - strong language with them, and we converted a lot of young people from those meetings because we used to stand our ground.
*those who were (?)

Because, you see, morally they couldn't defend the positions of white people - they couldn't - they couldn't - other than that's the colour - you are black and I'm white and therefore superior - there's no logic in that - there's no logic.

J.F. And when you talked about before - this is just loose ends - about your religion - being so not at odds with your politics - did you ever have any situation where you had to get past the communist aspect - the fact that the A.N.C. worked with communists - a lot of people would say that - invoke their religion to justify their anti communism.

S.M. I have worked with communists and I have never had any problems with them. I've worked under Govan Mbeki who's serving life sentence on Robben Island, and I admire him. He has never tried to interfere with the fact that I'm a religious man. He has always respected that - between such an hour such an

S.M.

.... hour and such an hour I would be in church. He has never interfered with that - he has always respected that. And communists are in the A.N.C. as members of the A.N.C., not as members of the South African Communist Party. There are very few of them I know, because they are a very secret organisation, and so we have never had any problems.

No-one is allowed to criticise or to be vindictive to me simply because I'm a Christian. No-one's allowed to be vindictive to another simply because he has discovered that the other one is a member of the Communist Party. We are members of the A.N.C.

Just as you will not be allowed to be vindictive to another person simply because on tribal grounds in the A.N.C., so that has been the position between me and the - between me and the communists in the A.N.C. and I've never queried the - I mean I've never - I've always supported the correctness of that statement, because as those people who are in the A.N.C. and who are also communists are in the A.N.C. as patriots and members of the A.N.C., and together we've been in the thick of things - they've never reneged, they've never sold us out.

In fact, you'll find that now and again when they die they are announced, that so-and-so was a member of the Communist Party, and you'll find that invariably this was one of the most dedicated A.N.C. cadres, and so we have no problems with the fact that some people in the A.N.C. are members of the Communist Party - it's not a problem at all.

We regard them as our strongest allies in all the - throughout my history in the struggle we've been together side by side than any other one who are outside the A.N.C., and so there is no problem at all. I accept them and we accept them. We respect those members who are members of the Communist Party and who have been uncovered - no problem at all.

They are my fellow-countrymen - black oppressed like me. I've never suffered anything from them. We've never suffered any - any oppression from any communist countries. We have never been colonised (?) by communists or anything like that. We've been colonised by our Christian West. All our problems stem from the Christian West and not from the communist countries.

Instead what we have received from the communist countries, even now, is support, sympathy, assistance and treatment on a complete basis of equality. That is the position.

J.F.

I'm interested when you just said they're black like me - the big thing that the P.A.C. tried to push and the regime tries to push is that they're white communists.

S.M.

That's right - they were....

J.F.

Did you ever experience white communists - did you work with them at all?

S.M.

Yes, I worked with Joe Slovo when I have been given any assignment.

J.F.

On what?

- S.M. I have worked under Joe Slovo when he gives me any assignment to do. He's my leader - I don't question him - absolutely.
- J.F. And when you were in South Africa did you work with any Communist Party people?
- S.M. Yes, I worked - I worked under Govan Mbeki.
- J.F. No, but I mean whites C.P. People - I'm just wondering just in the - just having read Hilda Bernstein's book and thinking.....
- S.M. No, no, not - in Port Elizabeth I didn't know who they were in Port Elizabeth, no.
- J.F. O.K., and then just because of so much of what you've said about NUSAS, did you in any way anticipate the break with NUSAS that Biko led - when it happened later after you were out of the country did you think, I saw it coming, or did you think what a pity?
- S.M. Yes - no, it didn't come as a surprise. We ourselves had recognised the weakness of NUSAS, and even before we left Fort Hare we were forming a black student organisation. We called ours ASA - African Students Association - ASA.
- J.F. And Tabo Mbeki was....
- S.M. Tabo Mbeki was actually very, very, very prominent in the formation of ASA, and P.A.C. had formed theirs - I think they called it ASOSA, and this was this that the political organisations in South Africa had recognised the weaknesses, political weaknesses of NUSAS, and we wanted a more radical students organisation, hence the formation of ASA which was, of course, to cut across these party or organisations' differences - independent students like Biko formed SASO.
- No, I think it was in the - it was the - the writing was on the wall even before SASO came to the scene it was on the wall. We were the generation of students who recognised this. I was in the formation of ASA. It was formed in Durban 1961.
- J.F. I see - and when you talked about being aware, like when Hugh got arrested with some of the whites, did you - were you aware when Mario Schoen was arrested? Or was that.....
- S.M. No, he was - where was he, by the way, in Johannesburg or Cape Town - no, we just read about people like Mario Schoen, but a person like Hugh Lewin sort of - they*truck us because we were very - we were not just fr(iends) - we were not just compatriots; we were friends with him - friends with him. *struck
- J.F. And just one other point.....
- S.M. People like - who was the president - who was the NUSAS or president (?) who gave evidence against Hugh now?
- J.F. Adrian Leftwitch?
- S.M. Adrian Leftwitch - we got very angry with - he disappointed us because that was a very articulate man - very brilliant youngster, and he was our NUSAS president, you see, and so when we heard that he - Adrian was giving evidence against Hugh and others, Jesus we despised him because some of us had

- S.M. endured isolation, detention, and what the hell had he to - to sell out. Why couldn't he endure like Hugh? Why couldn't he be a man like Hugh. Hugh was very young also, like him, but he decided to - to buy his freedom the cheap way, and I'm sure - I'm told he's in Israel now. He'll never be at ease with his conscience for the rest of his life.
- J.F. O.K., just one last thing is young people leaving the country that you saw since you got out, I'm just wondering over the years - just to kind of finish up on this topic of non racialism, what the trends were - during the B.C. years did you find that there was less non racialism - did you ever have talks with the young people who arrived in Swaziland - Swaziland was such a place that people arrived at - I'm just wondering - you saw them coming raw - there would be people who would be B.C. but still would be coming to the A.N.C. - what kind of trends did you see - did you ever try to have discussions and talks about non racialism....
- S.M. Yes, I did - I did, and I personally found the B.C. movement really racist, but I thought that this is an expression of anger. They had been frustrated, segregated, and why not go it alone? They were saying, in other words, to themselves : Let's stand up as blacks and fight our battle as blacks - let's not compromise our struggle, dilute our struggle with whites, and if we stand up and know that as blacks we can do it we will feel even prouder.
- Well, this philosophy, as you know, has its roots in the United States of America. And although to me it's very negative and always invariably ends in a cul-de-sac it has a positive aspect about it in that, you see, it is one thing that they rooted out the inferiority complex amongst our people, you know - it did root out inferiority complex amongst our people.
- Blacks, through preaching of this philosophy began to feel that they are black and they are equal to anybody and they - it's normal to be black, it's right to be black, it's beautiful to be black - you know, they began to feel proud and then psychologically this had a tremendous impact on our people.
- But it tends also to have a race - a certain amount of racism about it because they are anti white and you cannot, therefore, run away from the fact (that) there is a certain amount of racism about B.C. philosophy, but as I say, it has a - it is also - it always leads to a cul-de-sac, because you are into B.C. for a number of years and all you have to do is to keep repeating yourself and repeating yourself that we want to be free, we want to be free, but you reach a point where beyond this point what, what to (?) and this is when they come over to the A.N.C.
- We've got a lot of them in the A.N.C., very good - very good. Once they are in the A.N.(C) - they know that by themselves they have no answer, and black Africa made it very clear that there is no room for you here. You either join the P.A.C. or the A.N.C., and they come over to the A.N.C. which had started fighting.
- There's the answer - they want the gun in order to go beyond the cul-de-sac, and we've a lot of them they've accepted the philosophy of a - and they've discarded their B.C. skin

- S.M. or skins, and they're A.N.C. cadres and they are very good and they are fighting, and they are very determined to fight. Some of them have reached even, I think, the level of national executive now, and they are the ones who speak - who embrace the policy of non racism.
- You had one actually prominent B.C. man deserting the B.C. cause in Robben Island.
- J.F. Terror?
- S.M. Yes - and many others even inside. People like Mukwena - is it Mukwena?
- J.F. Aubrey Mukwena.
- S.M. Aubrey Mukwena - they've all discarded that skin, and they're doing very well. They're holding prominent positions on the platform of non racism.
- J.F. O.K. - and you found that in Swaziland - people who had come - that was just.....
- S.M. Oh, yes, that was a reception point - thousands of them came through Swaziland.
- J.F. But did you find yourself in a position where you had these guys and you had to talk to them...
- S.M. Of course - it was my duty to talk to them and tell them : Look, this is the only way to get into the A.N.C. - you're not going beyond this point - we can't take you - you'll have to go your own way.
- J.F. That they must embrace non racialism?
- S.M. Of course - they had to - I can't take people to the A.N.C. who don't believe in the policy of the A.N.C., only those who believe - will accept this (?) - they have to decide. And so many of them stayed for a long time in Swaziland, coming over and - of course, I used to keep an open door, and in time (if) you feel like coming back, fine.

END OF INTERVIEW.