

P.M. I was born in the township of Lamontville in Natal, coast - coastal city of Durban, in 1951, and began school at Lamontville in Kichima lower primary school, after which when I finished I went to Nchanga Roman Catholic School, where I did my higher primary and then my secondary education. I had lots of experiences in fact in - at Nchanga, because it was a (.....) or a (.....) school.

We used to be taken to where the - the white brothers and people were training to be fathers and brothers (.....) and it was amazing I mean the type of difference that you saw there in terms of the buildings, amenities and facilities for - for the white counterparts, I would say, as compared to the facilities that we had, because we had to have our own plot so we grew what we were eating, and we used to get skimmed milk and really badly cooked porridge, and for the first time I realised I mean there was a big difference, you know, between black and white and, you know, even with the institution (.....)

And I mean you - you know that being born in South Africa you - you know, as a black person you don't learn about apartheid - you experience apartheid in your whole life as you, you know, get older and begin to see things, for instance (.....) - and because of the - you know, the - the house was so small - we used to sleep in the dining room, and eventually when, you know, the other brothers were growing up, I ended sleeping under the stove in the kitchen, and I mean those are some of the realities that you grow up with in South Africa more especially - and I remember one day my granny had visited us, because my mother is from Umbumbulu, which is in a south coast town next to Durban - she was born there - and her mother came.

My grandmother came and police came in the morning at about three - they look for a permit and they want to, you know, to see (.....) permit and unfortunately my - my grandmother couldn't (.....) because she wasn't part of the family per se, so you know, my mother and grandmother were arrested and they came back the following day.

But all those things don't really matter much, you know, you - you don't realise, you know, what - what - what's going on until you get older and older and see these, you know, discrepancies and different ways of doing things - and from there my mother didn't want me actually when I finished my secondary school - she didn't want me to be in the Roman Catholic school, because she thought probably I will take up priesthood, which she didn't like because I mean as an African family I'm sure she had this idea that I won't get married, I won't have children and you know - and as an, you know - the oldest son in the family - as you know, the oldest person (?) - son in the family, you know, you - you're supposed to be the one who makes, you know - to extend the family - so my mother didn't like that because she also didn't believe in Roman Catholic, you know, religion, she - she, you know, was always complaining that they believe in, you know (.....) - she didn't like me to be there (?)

So in - when - when I - when we - we finished our - with my brother, because we were together in the same class, I (.....) Sub-A and so we were together all the time throughout school - so we applied to Amanzimtoti Training College, which is supposed to be a Zulu training college and the only college around the area of Durban where they train teachers and you could do matriculation, and I went there to do my Form Four - fortunately (?) we had applied for bursaries with race relations and we (.....) so my mother, you know, couldn't - couldn't afford to pay for us, because my mother died in (my father died in) 1967 when we were still at higher primary school (.....) Standard Eight (?) (.....)

P.M. And so my mother really thought it was a difficult (.....) to go on, you know, supporting the whole family, since she (.....) some cleaning for the cleaning services and doing two shifts (?) a day, and leaving home at about three in the morning and coming back about....

J.F. (..... Sound's very faint)

P.M. As I was saying, that's where I think I developed my cooking (?) skills because I had to cook for my brother and sisters, because my - my family and my mother was not actually there all the time.

J.F. (..... - your family background.....)

P.M. Ja, ja, and my - my father was, I would say, self-employed to some extent at (?) that time in Durban there was a place which was called Victoria Street Eating House, and they used to make these cement trays - some tables where they used to sell cooked - cooked food like meat and dumpling and rice and stuff like that, which of course (.....) anything in terms of profits - it was just to keep on going from day to day, and my mother, as I've said, I mean formerly (?) my mother is a - is a housewife - she started working because my father got sick and she had to supplement the income, and eventually my father had to, you know - to leave work because he had problems with his feet (?) you know, swollen and his fingers and he couldn't do anything actually, until he eventually died in 1967, so I - I - I - I should say really I come from a working class family.

J.F. What about their politics - did they have (.....)

P.M. It - it's so funny I mean the question that you ask me, because almost all my brothers and sisters have names which reflect on the political situation in South Africa, but my mother and father were never politically active, like you know, the brother who comes after me his name is Africa because he was born in 1952 when people were saying Africa, and his other name is Mzabalazo, which means struggle, you know - and my, you know - my youngest brother is Mafukuzela who's, you know, John Dube's name (?) - you know, the first ANC president - and my other brother is Nkululek, which means freedom.

And so it - it's - I mean it's amazing because nobody in my family was really politically active - although I remember, I think in 1960 when there was strikes and women's strikes and - because our township was next to the beer halls, where women used to wash their panties to avoid men drinking (.....) it was a strike against, you know, beer halls and - and my father and my mother, you know, quite appreciated that, but I - I don't remember - I don't recall them really getting seriously involved in politics, so I don't really come from a background of a militant family, except that my township has always been militant, Lamontville - it has a history of militancy (?) and ANC - people like Msizi Dube come from there, and people like Joseph Mduli come from there and lots of other activists, ANC stalwarts (.....) and people who were participating in the struggle all along (?)

So I grew up in that kind of a background, although my own family wasn't really politically active.

J.F. (.....)

P.M. I would say that quite a lot, because I remember again when there was that strike in and around Durban I remember my - my - my father, who used to talk about it and - but the old man, Grandpa, didn't want them to be involved in that because of, you know, I think just not understanding what was going on in the particular time.

P.M. And fortunately (?) to - to - to say that they were supporting - the house we were living in was a four-family house - there were two houses under and two houses above and you separated - in fact you used one corridor or one stoep - I don't know what you call them - and the doors are different and the - the man next door was very much active and he was a leader of all those strikes, and one day there were shootings and he went to his house and they shot him here in his - you know, his - he died with - a bullet went through his head, but just grazed his head, you know, off, and my father went to open the door - they found him there, you know, seated next to - you know, kind of hiding his head, with his body all exposed to - you know, to the street where the - the saracens were going up and down shooting - shooting people.

So I mean those are things that we witnessed when we were young, and I mean my father - remember my father, who was very, you know - talked positively about that, but I don't remember then (?) whether they were practically involved in the struggle, but when I grew up I mean (?) there was no - no active involvement in terms of taking up issues, but I - I should think I mean the whole township at that moment there wasn't any activity generally (?) that were taking place around Durban (.....)

J.F. (.....)

P.M. Exactly, ja, there - there wasn't anything going on when - when I became politically involved, except that SASO was, you know, beginning to - to take place - I mean there were lots of people that I know - my own brother, for instance, was a member of SASO - he was part of the demonstration in 1974 (.....) demonstration in Curries Fountain and got eaten (beaten) by the dogs (?) - but I wasn't into that politics for a number of reasons - I thought at that time there was a lot of, you know, taking the struggle for granted, I - I wanted something more serious than that, because in the meetings that people would go to, for instance, I mean after that there will be games (?) - people would be playing (?) - there would be lots of women and, you know - and playing around and, you know, so I - I didn't really see any point (.....)

And I didn't actually - you know, I had this whole upbringing where I liked the church, and generally I would help my mother in everything, so I - I didn't have time for other things which were not of importance as far as I was concerned, and whenever there wasn't anything serious I mean I wouldn't go myself (?) because I would rather go to church and do something, so I - I was very sceptical about SASO, thinking to myself that what - what is the motivation, what do they want to achieve, and eventually the forming of BCM and that time I - you know, I was - I became quite aware of what was going on, but again the whole, you know, philosophy of people who used not to comb their hair and, you know, go around and you know - you know, I - I didn't grow up like that - a Christian (?) who believed he must be clean and so I - I didn't want to associate myself with them.

But what happened is at school when - when I was in my second year in matriculation, there was a - a guy - we were together in the same class and sleeping in the same dormitory, and our school was run by an Afrikaner, van der Spey, who I understand is still running the school today..

J.F. (.....)

P.M. Amanzimtoti - and this guy - I mean in our school they - they introduced corporal punishment meted to us by the prefects - there was a room upstairs called No. Eight, where people used to be punished with a cane (?) and we discussed this with (?) students in Form Five - Form Five is supposed to be the last class I mean in the school, and then you go to university.

P.M. So we felt I mean we should (?) take the matter up and we had meetings and decided, you know, on a strategy to stop them, and unfortunately one friend of mine (?) just didn't (.....) - he was beaten so badly that he had, you know, cuts on his back, and he couldn't sit and these things were getting septic, and we were with him in - in the same class and same dormitory, and we decided eventually that, you know, this thing must come to an end, because the people who were supposed to be prefects were not elected by the students democratically - it was - they were appointed by the principal because they were tougher and it was just a, you know - very big guys - no brains, just the brawn.

So we felt I mean this was unfair and we planned on one Saturday we're going to a cinema (?) to a film show, and we planned to pick them up (?) so we organised picking (.....) bush knives and lots of stuff from the pantry, you know, where we get storing (?) and after the film show we were able to, you know - to group and attack them (.....)

J.F. (Changing to 2nd. copy) You got politicised - you did get matric and then you didn't get into Ngoya?

P.M. That's right, ja.

J.F. So did you go to work then?

P.M. Ja, I went to work in a cabinet shop (?) - shopfitting factory, small - small outfit, as a time clerk, some, you know, dealing with the wages of people and cards, time cards and stuff like that, but I hardly worked six months there and I was getting 12 - 12 rands a week, and there was a job advertised in a paper, a messenger, clerk with Caltex Oil Co., and I started working for Caltex and I worked there for five years with Caltex - started off as a messenger/clerk, getting 85 rands a month, and moved on to accounts department, worked there for a year, and went down to the invoicing department, and from there I was transferred to Zululand to (.....) as a assistant (.....) in 19 - 1978.

J.F. So was that experience politicising for you or were you just making money or....

P.M. I was - I was just making money at that time, because if you remember, it's only in 1972 that, you know, there was the beginnings of, you know, the community based trade union organisation sprang up after the strikes in 1973 which, you know, took place in Durban, around Natal and, you know, spilled over to the whole country, provinces like Transvaal and the Cape, and during those years that was, you know, the beginnings of those organisations, the trade union organisations very small ones - but otherwise before I was transferred to Zululand I was a member of the Lamontville Cultural Society.

That cultural society we - we - we used to have different functions like picnics and organising discussion groups, and it was not really very political, but it was sort of controlling the - the youth so that, you know, we can have something that you doing in the meantime - but it did get political, because I remember we even had the play (.....) which, you know, kind of shows the - the city life compared to the rural life and, you know, how we are pressed (?) and really get into being worker and after that get to - you know, to get caught up in this Jo'burg type of life and end up being a - a big tsotsi or a hooligan, killing people - so that was primarily my kind of very slightly involvement in politics in terms of our township politics.

P.M. But what happened is that from 1978 there were groups from SAWU who - SAWU is South African Allied Workers' Union, which were already organising in Zululand in the factories around Richards Bay - Empangeni and Richards Bay - factories like Alusas (?) - factories like Richards Bay Mineral.....

J.F. Alusaf?

P.M. Alusaf, ja - A l u s a f - it's an aluminium (.....) fertilizer company - and if you remember, there was then a company from Canada, which was Quebec Iron (?) and Titanium processing company which originates from Quebec - what happened is that I got - I got involved with an accident at the end of 1978 and I stayed in hospital for two months - when I got back my job was no longer there, and the bosses told me that I didn't tell them that I was in hospital, they didn't know where I was, so they, you know, signed me off and got somebody - but I had a friend of mine who was working as a recruiting officer in Richards Bay Minerals, which was a new outfit, you know, which was coming from Canada and a (?) company in South Africa - sister company in (?) South Africa - Richards Bay Mineral - and I got employed there as a test (?) administrator.

That's where I think I got started off with organising, because what happened is that the company was new and it was recruiting people for - you know, for permanent positions and - and temporary workers, and what changed my mind at that time is what I saw, what I felt, I mean the - the real touch with the people, because I was the one who was doing the tests for people to get jobs - I was the one who was collecting people from the gates in - in a car to come and interview them, and for the first time I was exposed to the real sufferings of the working people, where people would lie to me and say they have Standard Six just because, you know, when we go to the gate we recruit people - we recruit people for different jobs, and I will come and say : Today I want people who have passed Junior Certificate because we need operators, engine-room operators and different people to work in, you know, qualified jobs, and people would just flood in into the gate, hundreds of them.

And I would - you know, I would say : O.K., fine, before I take you can I have your certificates - people would produce all sorts of paper - some would say : I've lost my certificate but I did, you know - so I - it - that was the first time I sort of, you know, got to know what the system is about and realised that I mean they - they - there's a lot at stake - so much so I got interested and started asking people I mean : Why - why are you all, you know, coming here, knowing very well that you - you are not - you don't qualify - and they said : The company when it came here it took away our land, right, and promised us jobs - they built this factory here and they said we'll get jobs and our people were transferred to a place called Mtambana, which was, you know - they were just shack houses made of corrugated iron and no toilets whatsoever, so this was, you know, as I'm saying, the beginning of getting in touch with people, and amongst the people who came into the factory were people who were organising for SAAWU, South African Allied Workers' Union, and they could only get through by me allowing them through the gate because there was no other way of doing that.

So this guy, Sam Kikini, who was the general secretary of SAAWU, was the one who came to my house and talked to me about, you know, his interest in starting a union in - in Richards Bay Minerals, and there was no way of going in the factory unless I allow organisers to come (.....) - so they started organising the people in the plant to, you know - to - to join the union.

P.M. And what really I - I think really changed my mind is that during that process when people were joining the union, one of my friends who was working - I mean the one who really made me join Richards Bay Minerals who got me a job sort of, had already had connections with the ANC, and I had a house - I got a house, a four roomed house, and they used - you know, it was next to the bus rank, so everybody from work - what I can call the personnel staff, used to go past my place, would have beers or supper because I was, you know, a bachelor and, you know, so they would pass and - and we used to discuss about things, so my house became like a very popular house in terms of, you know, people coming in and out, the students from the university, because it's only eight kilometres.

Weekends they would come there, guys from, you know, Lamontville and people that I knew before, so generally it was an easier house because there was no - no woman to say I mean we inconveniencing somebody here - it's just, you know, ordinary (?) guys and I - I was still very young to (too) - so during the process, you know, a number of things would be discussed - there were struggles going on at the university, demonstrations, Gatsha being, you know, hit by the students and stuff like that.

And my friend would sit for about ten, fifteen minutes, and when - whenever we start a political discussion will go away - and one day I confronted him, I said : I don't understand - each and every time we have a discussion here you walk out - he said : Because I don't want to be arrested - I said : What do you mean, you don't want to be arrested - he says : Well, what's the use in talking politics because there's lots of police informers here - I (?) said : Who do you mean is police informers - he said : Well, I'm not going to talk about it, but in any case when you start discussing politics I - I don't want to involve myself.

So one day he made a mistake and this thing stayed in my mind for some reason or other, and there were only three of us - there was myself and Dr. Zonde and himself, so when we started talking about politics again - Dr. Zonde was involved in Fort Hare as an activist in, you know - during the '40s when (where) he was studying there, and he said he wanted to leave again, and I said : Why do you want to leave - he said - I told you I don't want to discuss politics - then I said : It's either you mean myself or Dr. Zonde are police informers, because there isn't more than three people, so you can't leave until you tell me - if it's Dr. Zonde then you must leave my house, right, but you must tell me what's going on - and he said to me - well, he called my outside and said : Now look here, you see, if you interested into, you know, being involved in something that is tangible, in something that is worthwhile, I would suggest that I come back and see you on Sunday.

Obviously he didn't turn up on Sunday - on the Monday I confronted him, so he said to me : Well, you will arrange a meeting with me with some other people - so I was able, for the first time, to come into contact with the people in the cells of the ANC, right, inside the country, and in the process there was this organising in my own factory, sending people in there - and I started working for the ANC, going to Swaziland, bringing in staff, you know, and doing that kind of stuff and - for about a year, at the same time having these people organising - and at the end of the organising period in our - in our factory, what happened is that there was a strike, a recognition strike, and by then I was not at the factory, I had - I was on leave and I was at home in Durban in - in Durban, and my friend phoned me and said : Don't come back here because the police are looking for you - I said : Why - he said : There is a problem at the plant, people have gone out on strike and you (?) one of the people that had been mentioned as the ringleaders and one of the people who, you know, has been involved in organising people in the plant.

P.M. And I mean I - I thought to myself should I really go back or should - and I stayed for a week, and I phoned one of my neighbours who had a phone, and they told me that : You must never come home, there's been police all week here, they are looking for you - so I stayed away and I didn't even go and collect my money - but before then what had happened in the factory is that the chief of the place had complained to our employers that we don't employ people from that area - that we take bribes from the people - that, you know, he - he's very much worried because this is - his people were promised jobs, and now jobs are being given to our friends.

So then what the employers did is that we were called by the personnel manager and he said to us : There is going to be a meeting at the chief's place - we said : What is the meeting about - he said : I don't know - (.....) - so he said : On Monday you are all going there - so when we got there there were all these workers, some of them working, some of them who had been coming to - to look for employment, and the Induna - you know, the right hand man of the king, and the chief (?) said : We've called this meeting here because there are allegations that you have been taking bribes from people, that you haven't been employing people from this area, and the meeting's about that.

And I mean it was a puzzle and (.....) to our boss : Tell us - I mean if - if there's this confrontation you should have told us that : Look here, guys, there's a problem like this - and fortunately the person I was working with, who I was working under, was a very strong person - he had had lots of fights with, you know, the foremens and (.....) Afrikaaners (.....) expel people and beat up people, so he stood up and said before he speaks he wants to ask whoever has offered bribes to who between me and himself (?) and after that he will be able to speak as to what, you know, this is all about.

So he - nobody stood up to say : Well, I've given a bribe to (.....) - so he started off by saying well, he's employed by the company and the company's told him to employ people - to take in people who are over Standard Six because this company wants to train people for different jobs - it doesn't want to have a person who's just going to be a labourer, so he's been doing that, and I have been doing the testing and I've got the records for everybody who's been tested, and we - people go through interviews and if they qualify for the job, then we take them in, so it's not our problem that they haven't been getting jobs.

So one of the people stood up and said : But your personnel manager said - sent me twice to you to go - to tell you that you must employ me - we (?) said : Even if he said that, we couldn't employ you unless you qualified, because that's how we take people in - so the contradiction was between us, the management and, you know the people, and eventually we exposed the company, so I think that's where the problem started, when this whole thing about organising the strike, the management was already, you know, sceptical about, you know, the two of us.

So what eventually happened is that there was a recognition strike and all - almost all the factories in the area went out on strike, Richards Bay Minerals, Richards Bay (.....) Alusaf, because they were organised already (.....) 1980 by SAAWU - so having then been already working for the ANC and having left my job, I decided well, I - you know, I wanted to go back to my place and start working again and (.....) - so by the time I went back I was told that again I don't have a job, the strike - strike had settled, so they were no longer, you know, interested in arresting me (?) and I went back to Durban and became the organiser for SAAWU full time.

P.M. And we had problems in Pinetown - at a plant in Pinetown, and then the police were really after me and I had to leave for Swaziland to - to run away from the cops, and when I got into Swaziland then I met with people who - who were active SACTU officials (?) who said because of my experience in the labour movement, they will rather prefer that, you know, I stop working for the ANC and get involved in SACTU, which of course I mean I took with, you know, open hands because I liked, you know, trade unions and organising the workers, and well, since then then I worked for SACTU.

I stayed in Swaziland from 1980 and well, this probably off the record (?) and I was integrated into the underground structures of SACTU from 1982 to 1984, until I had to leave because of the signing of Nkomati, and I had gone there for consultations, and I got arrested in Swaziland, stayed in prison for six months, escaped and - and in fact that's where I saw - what's her name (.....)

J.F. Angela?

P.M. Angela, ja - we met in a plane (?) when I was from Swaziland to go to Tanzania 1984, after having been arrested and going to the UN (?) for protection, and we (?) went to Lusaka - then when I was in Lusaka I was - I worked as a - in the internal structures until I got transferred to the international (.....) to canvass (?) SACTU coordinator.

J.F. You came in '86?

P.M. Ja, '86 (.....)

J.F. Let me take you back - what I think is really important not to gloss over is the way that you allowed yourself to be recruited into the ANC and that obviously there are people in South Africa then and now who would have been nervous and would have possibly not risen to that challenge - let me go way back in say - do you think you were open to the ANC - had you ever been critical - for someone like yourself growing up in the '60s, you looked back at what had happened in South Africa - what did people used to say - did they used to say : Oh, there was this wonderful organisation, the ANC - or did they used to say : Oh - some people have said to me they heard people say : Oh, those people that failed us, they're all gone - what did you hear?

P.M. Well, I think I had an opportunity of reading a few books when I was still in fact in higher primary school in - at Nchanga - I read the book The Road to the Left by Bruno Mtolo, who is, you know - sold out on the ANC, and got quite intrigued by, you know, what had gone on before - and as I've said, I grew up in a house where our neighbour was very active, and we used to sit around with him - when I grew up I used to go and ask him about what - what's happening, and growing up in a - in a very militant township, people used to talk about these things of what had gone on before, and some of the things I think I saw myself.

I mean I used to visit my aunt - or it's aunt (?) in - in - in our language, who used to stay in Old Mkumbane, Cato Manor, and we used to call for, you know the vans - they used to sell these illicit drinks, and when there were those struggles there in Cato Manor and stuff like that, I mean those are some of the things I used to see myself, but very, you know - as a young person I used to just to call Umeleko, meaning there is the van coming, you know, but it didn't really make that difference.

P.M. So what made me not to join other organisations, as I've said to you before, I mean I was kind of a very serious young person who - but (?) I didn't want to get involved in anything that didn't make sense to me, so that's why this guy in fact when he talked about the ANC, it was so interesting to me that I - I'm the one who made an effort to follow him up to find out when are we going to do this, when are we going to meet with those people, until we - we - we - we met with those people.

J.F. Did you - was it older people or younger people that first got you interested in the ANC who knew about politics?

P.M. It was - it was a very young person (?) or I mean obviously who recruited me and....

J.F. But in the days before that....

P.M. Well, in the, ja....

J.F. In the - in Lamontville?

P.M. Before then it was - it wasn't really anybody who was young who talked to me about the ANC - it was older people - people who would, I would say, probably my father's age, and I think you know in the townships there is shebeens, and most of (Laugh) you know, the young people or, you know, people of my age, you - you go there for two beers or something like that and, you know, there's talks about different things, football, for instance, in the '50s - how they used to play soccer - and most of these things too about people who had been arrested, and one interesting issue again, which I nearly forgot, was a person of almost my age, Themba....

J.F. Nxumalo?

P.M. Ja, ja - he had been to Robben Island for, you know - for some time and, you know, he - we used to talk about these things until late, you know, the experiences of what happened there, you know, at given times, you know, and it was some of these things that - and he will say: Don't talk about it, just - I'm just talking to you - until late in the night, twelve, two in the morning and - but he wouldn't say anything like, you know, I - this - this is still going on, like you know, O.K., you know, this is my contribution, this is what I did and end up like that.

But what - what really made me to be mostly interested is - is not really the young people that, you know, were themselves part of it - it was just the mere mentioning and talking about the ANC, the struggles that have gone on before - what happened to the old man who used to stay, you know, in that house and, you know, he got arrested in the '60s for politics and, you know, things like those and sort of got interested in that.

J.F. And your first perceptions of the ANC, was it a black organisation, an African organisation, or a non-racial organisation initially?

P.M. Initially what - what I thought about the ANC, or what made me eventually to - to even join the ANC was the whole issue of what the ANC stands for, the - the Freedom Charter - when the Freedom Charter was - was given to me by the same person that recruited me, what - what struck me was this, you know - the concept of we the people of South Africa, black and white, you know, will fight side by side, and I - I thought to myself I mean here is an organisation which is different from BC, which is different from SASO, which is actually different from other organisations that probably could, you know, mean anything.

P.M. Here is an organisation which probably is the only organisation that I can work for, and I got interested in even reading the Freedom Charter, and saw what the Freedom Charter meant for our people - I mean the clauses the people shall govern, and wanted to understand what is meant by the - the people shall govern - I mean doors of culture will be open to all, and I mean so I've had - had this vision immediately of this is what I would like to see, this is what I, you know - I could ascribe to.

J.F. But as a black person growing up in Lamontville with the history of racial pressure as it existed, it never was weird to you that whites were involved?

P.M. You see, I was - I was really - I think it was a very funny experience because there was that kind of not understanding, as you're saying, growing up in South Africa - not understanding why actually, you know, these - we hardly see whites - I mean they stay on their own and we are on our own - we have our own schools, we have, you know, every separate thing - it sort of was natural like, you know, this is what it is and so what can you do about it, you know - whites are people who are there and we are on this other side, and thinking to myself that probably there's actually something wrong here, as much as I didn't know what - what it was that was wrong.

But when - when I'm saying that I was exposed to people like old people who were talking about the ANC, the struggles that it had, it sort of made me see more clear as to why there's problems, why there is this, you know - divisions amongst our people - probably people don't want South Africa to look like, you know - like what this document says the - for some reason or other, and already I was a working person, and I had realised at my workplace that there's something wrong here - I mean it - these people are all working people, right, and we - we seem to - to be having a big fight I mean amongst ourselves.

The white people are better off than the black ones and why - why is it like that, and why am I supposed to take - I mean to look at all these people who are outside the gate who are looking for a job, and I'm the one who's supposed to process them, and they feel that probably I'm - I'm unfair to them, I'm - I don't want to employ them because they don't come from my own area, yet the really bastard who's making, you know, me hated by - by my own people is - is the boss, right, and you know, all these things I mean kind of an experience, not - not really reading about them, you - you see them that I mean the boss wants to play me against my own people, right, and yet I mean, you know, why should I do that - I'm not better off than them, they are not better off than me and - and he's there saying that, you know, this is what people are supposed to do.

So there's lots of, you know, revelations that, you know, I came to my mind as I looked at the system, and referred back now to the separation in schools, the townships, my own life, you know, and one - one of the things in fact which - which made me - just to go back a bit - when I worked for Caltex there was a friend of mine who was in Pietermaritzburg - he - I used to visit him, and he - he worked at the University of Natal and he had lots of friends there, white friends, and I remember one guy, Les - we used to go and distribute pamphlets at Retief Street in Pietermaritzburg when I was around, and we all used to sleep in a bakkie, and he had one room, and we all used to sleep there - I mean white students from the university - I mean males and girls and, you know - when the house is full we sleep in - at the back of the bakkie - and fortunately this guy got employed after I was employed by Caltex, and the moment he saw me he called me aside, he said : Look here, Peter, we - I am now, you know, employed here - you and me know, you know -

we know each other, but well, I hope now you understand that I'm working for my future.

P.M. My wife is doing law and we want to get married and settle so please don't, you know - don't even talk to me in, you know - in the presence of other people - and I thought to myself - I asked him why shouldn't I do that - I mean I know you, you know - he said well, those were school politics - now I'm working here, you see - and even then I - I realised that, you know, it's - it - it's - it's not actually that this guy didn't like me when we did this together - he didn't realise that I was black when we were distributing the papers, you know.

All of a sudden he - he realises that here I'm - I'm black now, he's not supposed to talk to me - then what could be the other reason for this, you see - and one of the things I thought to myself is that it means he wants to protect himself now economically, so actually there's nothing wrong with this guy, you know, he - he - he doesn't hate me because I'm black, he - he doesn't want to talk to me now because he hates me - he can talk to me if we can be alone - it's just that he wants to protect himself by, you know, not talking to me because he jeopardises his chance at work, so what is important is his living now, rather than me or the struggles, you see - so those are some of, you know, the vivid memories that I have of - of you know, why I thought this ANC is, you know - is the best organisation - and to be honest with you, I'm a very - what's the English word - well, I've forgotten the English word....

J.F. What's the Zulu word?

P.M. No, the Zulu word is I just don't believe in things, I - I'm like that, I - I - I take time to - to believe in things, even in people - and I had a lot of questions from the person who was talking about the Freedom Charter and talking about the ANC - had lots of questions in terms of, you know, how did they come about, why did they - why is there a military wing and - of the ANC and - and this guy tried to, you know - to articulate it all, why they decided to do that and, you know - and still I was still, you know, sceptical about some other questions because I didn't, you know, want to - to get involved in something that I wouldn't understand in the long run.

But it was all explained, and I had enough time, and before I mean I - I completely joined in terms of writing my biography I had fully understood, you know, even the whole question about communists, that the ANC's in alliance with the Communist Party and, you know, I wanted to know about that, and discovered that it's - it wasn't something that was on the books, because the books that I read it didn't say that - I mean didn't actually say when this alliance was formed, you see - it was sort of an alliance fought in the struggle and that as people fight - as people get along with the fighting and the contradictions sharpen then the communists always have played a very significant role in that struggle, and I wanted to be one - like one of those people like, you know, you give everything to it and - and I - I even came to understand, which now is what I believe in, that there is nothing wrong with colours, there is nothing wrong with people as a people - it's the systems that are wrong, and I - I learned that because when - when I looked at the South African people and the economy, and said to myself well, actually there's - there is two divisions - it's people that have and people that don't have, and people that don't have must work in order to get, right, and that's the only thing they can do, and whether they're black or white or green they - you know, they still have to go there and ask for work, and in order for the boss to - to be able to manipulate those people, he will pay them different salaries and work one against the other, but the ultimate objective of - of the bosses is that they get profit from us, whether we black and white or whatever.

P.M. So the main problem in South Africa to me became that people are, you know - people survive, and as people survive they - there's always going to be differences as long as that system of apartheid - system of apartheid is - you know, the form of our colonising - I mean the - the form of oppression in my country as I see it and as I saw it then was just, you know, a national oppression of what is referred to as, you know, the - the black people in South Africa, the African people - and the content of that struggle in fact is - is, you know, the whole basis of the system, which is capitalist exploitation, right, which has no colour, no rules in fact, so how - how do I fuse together these struggles to - to come out at the end with a South Africa that is non-racial - it - it's undermining that system, as far as I'm concerned, not - not saying that in order to be able to survive the system the white person must get off the way for me to inherit the same system, you see.

So it became very clear to me that the only way - and I believe in it, not - not just, you know, thinking about it in abstract form - that the only way forward for our struggle in South Africa is the road that the ANC has chosen, the non-racial struggle where people will be equal, not a multiracial struggle....

J.F. What's the difference there?

P.M. The difference to me is that in a multiracial society, you know, you - you can exist as groupings, right, as long as there is a way of living together you are fine, right, you - like what we are talking about - you can live as whites, you can live as Indians - for instance, let's use this country, for instance - it's a multiracial society - you know, there - there is no programme to unite people into a nation, right - they - they say they are all Canadians of different, you know, origins, right, and they - they - they exist independently of each other, yet in Canada, whilst with - with - to me non-racialism means we - we - we - we bury those differences, we - we - we cross those barriers and we come out as - as one people on the other side, right, and build a nation that is South African.

We are all South Africans, black and white - we - we eventually go beyond even seeing (?) that there is black and white, right - it's a process (?) I know - I don't think I'll see it in my times, but whoever came up with that idea I mean I - it's the idea that I stand for as - as a working person, as - as a black person in South Africa, and it's just unfortunate that whites at the moment live and survive on the backs of the black people, and they think that - that, you know - that's a permanent status quo - they - they - they fail to see that once the system, you know, fails to provide, then what is the difference, you know, what - what is the difference between black and white?

There actually isn't, except that we must all fight for a better living and a better country, united people, not - not living as identities, not preserving our identities, because otherwise we'll be a multiracial society, which - which I don't think is - is really what I would like myself to see in South Africa.

J.F. Why do you think it was so easy for you to accept that - why do you think that for some blacks it's so difficult to accept non-racialism - why do you think - have you ever had conversations with other blacks trying to push - put across your point of view about non-racialism and seeing them have a BC or an anti-white point of view?

P.M. I have - I think the main - the main problem that people have is - is the status quo, all of them - what they are saying is that you cannot talk of a future South Africa without addressing yourself to the present, and the present is that the white people have, right, privileges than the blacks.

P.M. So the black - white people can never be able to - to fight on the side of the blacks, because how do they do that - the - the system provides for them - who are they fighting for, right - that's the argument - the second argument you have the racist approach, that in the first place, which - which I think in most cases with South Africans who say that it - it's ignorance rather as to why are they here - they don't belong here - they are Europeans, right, that argument, so they must go to Europe - this is Africa for Africans, you know, in a very narrow sense, right, but most of the people, even people in the PAC, no longer argue about whites having to be driven into the sea - they just don't see the role of whites in the present South Africa - they think that O.K., fine, we can live with whites tomorrow, but we must be the ones who rule them because they've been ruling us, and we are a different people, right, so that - that's where I always see this difference and some - some people really adamantly say that we cannot be in a position, right, to have whites in our, you know, ranks because whites represent a very different society - they - they don't have the values that we have, because the system provides for them.

It - it's very - I must say it's very difficult to - to - I wouldn't like to say convince them to - to - to have - to advance that argument, but what - the example that I've used is that, for instance, in Natal there's a lot of hatred for the Indians, and I was partly influenced by that myself, and I always use that argument and say why do people in Natal hate the Indians, and the answer, which is an obvious answer, which is what I also have felt, is that Indians have the preference at work, right, and because they also want to protect their own interest as the Indian people, they - they will, you know, rather have Indians working together, and throw you out, right.

Now when I use that argument then I say then your problem is not really hating the white, because in this instance you hating the Indian because he's the one who's taking your job immediately, it's not a white person, right, so why do you say that the problem is the white people - don't you think that the problem is your - the interfer - the immediate interference with your own life becomes your problem, right, you - you - you want to say now you hate the Indians because they are not part of the ruling class - then why do you hate them, you see - and people begin to say well, you know, you can never trust them, you know, kind of stuff, they are, you know, the - the business class and stuff like that, but actually the problem is not that, is - is this threat, right, which could be any threat - it could be another black taking your - your - you know, your job, and obviously if he's promoted, like in the mines, for instance, they will use Mozambiquans as people who are the advanced lot in the mining sector who get the better jobs, right, because they've been there, they have a lot of experience, but when you take it in the South African context it - it's creating a lot of problems because the South African people, who are the Zulus, the Xhosas, you know, the rest of them, say why do Mozambiquans get better jobs than us, they are not South Africans, you see, because that's what the system uses.

But the argument is that I mean as - as you were saying - I agree with you - is that how can a black person really realise that the problem is not the white person, it - it - it's - I mean as I'm saying, it's partly ignorance, a narrow - narrow thinking.

J.F. What have you found has been a way of getting people past that narrow thinking - what examples do you use - what argument do you use - is there any kind of thing that's made a light go off over someone's head that you thought....

P.M. Ja, ja, ja, I've - I've asked, for instance why - why did the - why was Bram Fischer in prison for such a long time - he's a white person - what did he have to lose, you know.

P.M. Why are people like Neil Aggett - why were they killed, why - why have lots of whites I mean participated in the struggle fully and been killed like - like other people too - if we look at them and say well, they are not part of us, and people will always say well, you can always get one progressive person, and I say then if - if you - if you can afford to get one progressive person, go out there and look for more progressive people and - because I always think - I always say to them in South Africa you grow up with, you know, an American dream being sold to you.

For instance, I grew up I mean - the movies you see the black Americans, you know, the cool dudes driving big smart cars, and you think you want that kind of life, right, and - and I'm saying to them what if the - the reverse could be the case - if we were the ones who the state provides for, and the whites were in our position, right - would you say that has got nothing to do with you just because you get something - will you feel that you have to sacrifice your position in order to better that person - and they say : Ja, I would feel that - and they - you know, they use this - there's some African, I think, things that some people don't understand - we - we are a.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. So you were saying that African people grow up sharing things.

P.M. Sharing things - we share things I mean even now because there isn't enough, but people interpret that as being very good people - you know, we are very good people as opposed to white people - they don't want - they can't come down to understanding why whites can't share, because as far as they are concerned everybody must strive to have because there are opportunities for them to have, right, whilst for us there isn't opportunity to have, so everybody you must - that's why we have extended families - we look after, you know, our brothers and sisters and the rest of the family have brothers and stuff like - because otherwise who's going to look after them - and when they use those arguments then they say like what - what I was saying, what happens then if we were the ones who were better off - would you help those people, because you say you come from a background of helping people, right, and the person says : Ja, we'll do that - I mean why should they be dumped, we - you know, they should be with us - and I say : Well, then they are also the ones who have crossed over and realised that to have as white people, without other people having, is not correct, so they have been able to - you know, to - to get rid of - of that selfishness.

People like Bram Fischer, people like Neil Aggett, people - lots of other people now even in the struggle I mean - very good trade unionists, for instance, like - people like Alec Erwin, people like - who's this guy who's in the States now who was in the general workers union....

J.F. Dave Lewis?

P.M. Dave Lewis, who - who actually if you look even in their own history, they got into the trade union movement accidentally, right, going to write some thesis of some sort and, you know - and they - you know, they get involved in the struggle because it's so dynamic it's, you know - doors are open and they can go and do, you know - provide their expertise, so it - it - it's - nobody has ever, in fact who I've talked to - PAC people, BC people, who in fact - BC people I think they fail even to understand that Biko was killed himself because the boers could see that Biko was changing, and seeing that BC has come to, you know, a cul-de-sac.

P.M. If you want to advance then you must drop (?) the so - I mean the BC concept, because it doesn't apply in the South African situation, so that transformation of Biko cost him his death, otherwise he would still be around with us, right, because the boers saw the danger - he was good as a person who was BC, right, because you know, you build (?) this African nationalism, which is shortsighted, rather than to be, you know, in the front (?) of the ANC or be talking Communist Party politics - you better off like that, you see, because as long as they give you something you - you don't analyse the - the problem according to what the benefits are, you know, at stake, you - you analysing it for if I can get myself, if the black people are on top, fine, you see, and it's very easy to deal with that rather than to deal with a whole situation where you will look at things more deeper, like saying I mean - I mean I'm not fighting for a black government in South Africa, to tell you - I - I'm not interested in that.

If we going to have a black government in South Africa which is going to do the same thing like is happening, then I would rather go to the States and be a refugee - probably I'd come to your house and say : Can I be a refugee - because I don't think that's the issue - the issue is we are a people of South Africa, all of us, whether we from Indian origin, Coloured people - we all there and we must build I mean objectively a future for ourselves and for our children based on, you know, total ignorance about colour, how a person looks like - I - I would fear that in another 2,000 years when people of South Africa will never even be aware that, you know, talking to a white person, I'm talking to a black person, because what is important is this togetherness and the evens (?) that are brought about by the system of inequality anywhere in the world - it's there in the States, it there here.

In Zimbabwe you still have it - it's a process - to me it's just, you know, things that people go through in a number of years.

J.F. Those revelations you talked about when you were saying that you were beginning to understand the non-racial approach or class analysis - did any of those - and you've later talked about Neil Aggett and Bram Fischer, but you didn't know either of those personally, did you?

P.M. No, no.

J.F. Did any of the revelations that you talked about in all of the people you mentioned - it seemed like all of the people you had contact with had helped politicise you were actually African people - were there any people who politicised you who were not African people - because you mentioned the one white guy who slept in the bakkie and then he turned out to be a real hypercrit.

P.M. Ja - there's actually a - a Father di Passos, who was, I think of Portuguese origin, when I was still at Nchanga - we used to have discussions which used to extend to political discussions in a very big way, but again I mean it - it didn't make that much of an impression in me in terms of him talking about - I think he was ver - he was stalling, he was trying not to reveal who he was, because I thought about him later on and couldn't go back to him - I didn't know where he was - to actually ask him : What were you trying to say seven, you know, eight years ago - because he used to get us, you know, into these kind of discussions as groups, you know, Standard Seven and Standard Eight - like he will say is South Africa - I mean is Swaziland developed or not developed at all, you know, kind of thing - questions which, you know, he will read - he will give us books, and I didn't understand whether he just wanted us to have more knowledge about things, you know - he'll say read about Swaziland - the other group will read about Swaziland and read about South Africa and he'd (?) say : From what you have read, is Swaziland developed or not developed at all?

P.M. Then we will argue that I mean on political lines - and some arguments like are we happy with the school administration, are we happy that we have to plough what we eat, you know, very controvertial questions and - and - which revealed a number of things, but I wouldn't say that was very much political - I wouldn't say again there was any white person who sort of laid a political basis as far as I'm concerned - it - it was just the things that I saw and things that I was exposed to and how I - how I saw myself evolving within that, and couldn't understand how I could do it, but didn't want to also get involved in something I didn't understand, right, until I got to (?) the ANC - then I thought to myself this is what I want to do and I mean this is something that I think I want to do for the rest of my life, to be part of this organisation.

Sometimes I get frustrated because I think I become a bit emotional, like why can't people see like - things like I do, you know, it's - even in this country I'm having the same problem that people have - are so naive I mean it - it's again I mean - it's a contradiction with myself because I grew up in a South Africa where a white person is better off educationally and otherwise, and that mentality now and then, you know, really gives me a lot of problems because I - I always find, even when talking to my own South Africans, like the questions I was talking about that, you know, their whole way of looking at things is are we still going to have a fridges (?) after South Africa is free - are we still going to....

J.F. The what?

P.M. The fridges, you know - fridge and stove, electricity, you see, when - when you talk of sabotage, right, of - of these things it - it - it's so much fear for them that if these people destroy these things then it means we'll never, you know, be able to have them again, you know - we'll be like Mozambique and stuff like that - the - they don't think that it's people who make things - if the people of South Africa are politically mature, they can destroy that South Africa and build it - the Soviet Union was built I mean on almost nothing - it was, you know, a - a country of, you know, lords and - but now they - they have an industry going, so in order to be able to - if they have that, you know, conviction, the problem is that people don't want to - they don't have the belief in the people - they don't - they don't trust the people - they - they trust themselves - they think they are the ones who must, you know, tell people what to do, and I don't believe in that.

And between you and me off the record, I would say if the ANC in its mind, as much as it's leading the struggle, thinks that blindly, somehow or other, if they can think that well, when you go over - go to South Africa, this is what we going to implement without consulting the people, that's a big mistake, right, because that will be the beginning of the problems that will never end, but I think I trust my organisation - I trust the ANC that it - it's a very strong organisation with a very mature leadership, to take into account that when we go back to South Africa, we going back to a people who some of them because of some reason don't agree with the ANC - the majority does, but they agree with the ANC with the hope that the ANC will do what their aspirations are, and if the ANC goes back and doesn't do that, then I would say the same thing again to you, that I would like to go back to a house and say : Can I be accommodated.

J.F. Why do you think that you didn't have a fear or a negative reaction to the Communist Party affiliation or alliance or influence in any way on certainly in the history of the trade union movement etc. - there are people in South Africa, whites but also blacks who have a reaction against that - there's been a lot of propaganda - did you never have any worries, especially with your Catholic upbringing?

P.M. I've since abandoned to be a Christian, so I don't have problems with that.

J.F. But with your upbringing....

P.M. Ja, with my upbringing - well, those ideas came after, as I've said - after I - I had worked and thought to myself the working people in fact should be, you know, the ones who plan their future - they have the power as far as - as I - as I saw it I mean - I - I was working at that factory and within two weeks there's, you know, a stop - workers just decide we not going to go on producing, and the boss goes, you know, like he - he gets mad, right, so there is a lot of him depending on the people, rather than people depending on him, because they can go somewhere else and sell (?) their jobs and that plant can be shut down if nobody goes to work there any more.

So I - I developed this thing when I actually read, right, and understood the struggles of the people, that most of the people who have contributed to the drastic changes and the transformation of organisations as they, you know, grow, because I believe it's a process, have been the communist, and I believe now - I'm not a communist - that communists are - are true revolutionaries, are - are people who want to change things, and when I say this I - I always have arguments with people because people when we talk of communists they - they - they think you talking about the Soviet Union.

I don't know the communists in the Soviet Union, but I've known the communist in my own organisation - I've seen them with my eyes, and I have seen what they have done, so that's why I - I have, you know, after having read that, I was still not sure what - what is this all communism about, right, until I came to understand that people's leaders, that - that - that people who have done a lot of things, people who have challenged, you know, unflinchingly, the system, and people who - who have sacrificed are communists mostly, because in - in my own South African history, you see, people like Bram Fischer, people like J.B. Marks, Kotane - people like Mabhida, people like, you know, Johannes Nkosi, people - you know, almost, you know, even young - young - young people who, after they've died in fact - I mean it's just unfortunate that you don't know about them when they are still living - Nduguma, Lion of Chiawelo, I mean all - all these people, for instance - Nduguma was a - he liked to - well, to refer to South Africa to groove, to go for parties - he was the - the most social (sociable) character I've ever known - he liked his drink, he liked his women, you know, and when he died I was told he was a communist, and the work that he had done in the country, you know, on the ground is amazing, you know, with all that I've countered, you know, and he got killed.

People like William Khanyile - I mean people like, you know, who are in Robben Island now, the old man - what's his name again - there's a man from Pietermaritzburg....

J.F. Gwala?

P.M. Gwala, Harry Gwala, you see - people who've been in and out of prison and are - are communist - to me I mean it - it has given me some - you know, a lot of respect for those people, and again I mean as I advanced I read about other people's struggles too, and discovered that it's the same type of people, you know, who - who have contributed in their own struggles, so that's the inspiration and belief that I got from, you know, the - the role of the communist.

J.F. In the factory floor - I'm just going on and on with the questions - in the factory floor experience and in the kind of quasi-managerial or the experience you had with the testing and all that, did you have experience with other race groups there?

J.F. Were there any Indians or Coloureds who were in your position or were you white - working with whites, or was it always with Africans....

P.M. There were lots of whites, very racist whites, seriously racist whites who used to beat people up with spanners, who used to throw people into, you know - to the fire and stuff like that - and there was a lot of racism and injustice - and as I'm saying, you know, I was - there was a contradiction in what I was doing - I go out there and see thousands of people milling at the gate waiting to be taken in for testing, and all of a sudden those people are at my mercy, right, and I'm the one who's testing them and who must pass them, yet I have to be honest about it too, because when they go to the, you know - the people, the foremen that they are working with, you know, it reflects on me if I, you know, say this person has passed, you know, 95 percent, and he doesn't even know what a spanner is, you see, so it was a very difficult job - I - I got torn - torn apart, completely torn apart in terms of how to relate to people and how to relate to management.

And there was even an in-company union there, which I was part of because all the staff, you see, was - we belonged to that - the boss used to call us and have some tea and cakes and sit down and discuss, you know, what are the problems in the plant, who are the people that are, you know, giving problems and stuff like that, so....

J.F. How did you feel at the time about that?

P.M. At - at - at the time I mean you - that's why I'm saying that - that was causing a lot of problems, because eventually I - I said (.....) I'm not going to be part of this thing, you see, and he said : I also am not going to be part of it - and we were working together, see, and there (they) were really bad guys - for instance, the industrial - what's name - industrial relations officer - I mean he was a young graduate from Ngoya who was - you know, who had this kind of middle class (.....) and stuff like that, and he - instead of talking on behalf of the people, he used to go out there and, you know, these people will say we - this guy is fired, and he will never stand for the people, so we had - I mean I - I nearly had a physical, you know, showdown with him at some stage, and we hated each other seriously, because I used to ask our personnel manager what is our role I mean if - if we supposed to represent the people - we don't even know who these people are, we don't even know where they work - why don't you go and, you know - and they eventually from that - they introduced what they called section leaders - a person would be taken from one section to - to represent that section in this in-company union, right, and actually this guy didn't know what to say - I mean the question would be are those guys happy - he will say : Well, some of them are happy, some of them are not, what is the problem, you know - and this guy will tell us : Well, you must go and, you know, sort that out and find out what's the problem - it was something that had no meaning at all as far as I was concerned.

In fact that's what even encouraged me to get these guys who were organising into the plant, right, and I, you know - they - if they were found there - because this is supposed to be a mine - there's internal security, right, there is a department of security, so if they are found inside the plant not employed, what are they doing in the plant in the first place, because they are supposed to be working under a different section or be in the office with me for testing or sending them for - you know, for - introducing them to their bosses, you see, but I (?) used to let them go to the plant to talk to the people, right.

- P.M. So it was, you know, kind of a combination of a number of things - risking the job and confrontations with, you know, the - their fore-mans who - I mean who used to make a lot of comments about me because I was wearing - sometimes I was supposed to wear this, you know, white jacket, you know, to protect myself against dust and this, you know, white hat, and I mean they will, you know, just make a lot of comments - look at that, you know, white kaffir - you know, you think you better - and sometimes I'd be passing under and they will, you know, just push sand if there is sand, to follow me and stuff like that and, you know, kind of a humiliating type of thing which, you know, I lived with and understood what - what was going on.
- J.F. Let me get into asking you about - taking it back a bit - what year did you leave South Africa actually?
- P.M. 1984.
- J.F. And when you started....
- P.M. Finally.
- J.F. When you were going in and out of South Africa and you were acting in Swaziland, were any of the people in your unit or that you were dealing with not African?
- P.M. Ja, ja.
- J.F. Was that a surprise to you?
- P.M. Not really, not really - it's only that I, you know - I - I didn't (?) think that there were already some people who were working for the ANC as, you know, full activists who were not African.
- J.F. You didn't know it was?
- P.M. No, I didn't know it was, you know, that developed - I mean I was looking at the whole question of, you know, the other people who are supposed to be part of the struggle have some advantages of some sort, and as much as I understood - for instance, I grew up in Lamontville and we have Meerwent just a kilometre away from us....
- J.F. You have which?
- P.M. Meerwent, which is an Indian township, working class township - they also, you know, live in very small houses, about ten, 20 of them, and they have these garden plantations and stuff like that - we used to go down there and take fish from there - just horrible young guys - fight and stuff like that - so I....
- J.F. Fight with the Indians?
- P.M. Ja, ja.
- J.F. So there was antagonism?
- P.M. There was, ja, quite a lot - I mean I was still young - I mean we used to use - I don't know what you call it.
- J.F. Slingshots?
- P.M. Slingshots, ja, and they used to fish because there is - the sea is quite near - there is a place where there's an opening, so we used to go there and sometimes take a fish away from them and, you know, they will scream and shout.

P.M. But I mean I was 12, 13 so, you know, it's - it really - it was a reflection of, you know, some kind of things that happen in society, but I don't think at that time I was thinking what I was doing - it was like what he (?) was explaining that as a child, just everybody chasing the Indians - some - one of the guys was chasing the Indians, you see, but when I came to think about it later on I mean I even went to the extent of, you know, finding out that they - they stay exactly like us, you know - the working class families, the - you know, they suffer a lot, they - you know, they struggle from day to day, and that was it.

But I was really quite, you know - I - I wasn't aware that I would find people of, you know, other racial groups working already with the ANC.

J.F. Did you - how did you find it once you started - just the thing about those white students and sleeping in the bakkie and all that - didn't that piss you off when the guy later said don't talk to me, I have to think of my future?

P.M. In fact - in fact I asked him quite - quite a number of times - I said: What - what do you mean, what - what's this that I shouldn't talk to you - then he went to the whole trip about white South Africans, that when you are still at university that's part of things that you supposed to do, so for him too it was the same thing, but for - for me it was reality, like I never did that because I was part of just a group, you know - I thought of that and got satisfaction from it, and when I see him a year later he tells me that he was just doing it for - because he was at school and, you know, it was quite shocking, but I came to grips with that quite, you know, easily because I understood what it's all about.

That's why I think, as I've said, this element of the differences between black and white, you know, it - to me he - he's the first person I think who made - who created an impression to me that this whole thing is not about colours, how you look like - it's about who you are, what you want to make, you know - now you can relate to a person at different times differently because of the situation, like when we - we were distributing papers and sleeping in the bakkie, there was no difference between me and him - he was a student, he was not concerned about other things, but now he's a worker, right, he wants to earn his living, so he has nothing to do with me, right.

And I even went to the extent of thinking well, probably that's why you find that most of the people change when they start working because there's a lot of - at stake - and I even wanted to equate it with when you are young, you know, and not responsible, you can do a number of things and go home and ask for your plate - now when you're supposed to provide, probably it's something else, you know - there were lots of questions that came up in my mind, but eventually it was a question of here is this guy who's now my boss, right, and I must relate to him as a boss, but why, you see, because I know him.

I - I - I didn't expect him to say: O.K., fine, I'm going to arrange something for you that you get better pay - but it could have made me feel better to know that there's somebody there who knows me and, you know, it's better off that way, but it wasn't like that - it was just school politics versus now working politics, you know, and those are two different relations, you see, and sometimes I think I should be hating whites, but I don't, and I'm happy about that.

Some time ago I used to think probably I'm pretending because I know what has gone on - I know, for instance, the comrades who have died that I know, and quite a number of them - I say to myself I know well how they've died, they've been killed by whites in most cases, or by those who worked for the whites, but that's not important.

P.M. The people who have a problem are those who are killing them, because that can cause a lot of problems in the future when people remember them, and it - it - you know, it bothers me because in - in killing our people they - they are creating a situation which will make people say a lot of things, because people react to things - when - when whites get killed, then they will say : Ja, but these people are retaliating - then they are not supposed to retaliate because this is the new order of things.

Yet personally if my brother's been killed fighting for a good cause, probably it is very difficult for - for me to forget that, yet the state won't be saying that people must be killed - there will be incidents - and I - I - I mean I fear that and I think to myself somehow or other I should be probably hating whites, but - but I don't, I - I just - I - I think I - I understand that very well, that they have a big problem, and they must overcome that problem.

J.F. And your getting past the hating whites stage doesn't have to do with having met some good whites?

P.M. No, no, it's just an understanding that they have a big problem - you know, why - why I - I think in fact it's a big problem for them - you meet a white from South Africa and - of my age - and you ask him what's going on there - he says : No, no, no, there's nothing wrong there - it's just a few agitators, you know, who are causing problems - otherwise you've got guys, they work in my father's farm, we pay them well and, you know - and I - I don't think that's being politically naive - it - it - it's just going beyond something that's difficult for them - going beyond the fact that it's only agitators - you know, telling themselves there is - there is a whole thing - there's a whole lot of things that are wrong here - it's the system, it's us and let's (?) change - they want to deny that - they want to say no, there's nothing going on there, and it's just a few people who are causing problems, and they think to themselves those problems are going to be sorted out, I don't know how.

And I think that's a wrong way of thinking and I - I - I mean I don't care about the few whites that I know - I think they are good guys - I would sleep with them in the same trench, and I'm happy with that - I'm just concerned with how many will realise sooner or later that the system is not going to be able to even to provide for them, because the black people are fighting for their rights, trade unionists are fighting and, you know, getting to almost get the same salaries with them, so what will be the difference in the actual end - why should they keep apartheid if there's no more difference in terms of salaries - what if the system doesn't provide any more for them - what will be left for them to say we must stick to this, you know, and feel bad that I mean they don't want to learn that.

And I - I don't think it's because they - they can't - they are incapable of learning - they just don't want to, because it's reality, you see.

J.F. When you were working in and out of Swaziland before you left the country and there were non-Africans, did you find dealing with them on an equal basis in a struggle as comrades for the first time - were there any different ways that they worked in terms of styles of working if it was an Indian or a white or a Coloured, or in terms of your relationship with them - is it going to be - has it, from your experience, been totally easy - if you're comrades and you're all ANC it's cool - if you're white ANC and you're African ANC, or are there any little things that you get past that you laugh about later or does it not matter?

P.M. Ja, I think - I think there is quite a lot I mean to - to tell the truth, a lot of things that I think I have to overcome, or some people too have to overcome, is the fact that, you see, you cannot be able to work with people if you - you don't want to get rid of some of your own, you know, hang-ups, and secondly as much as we talk of freedom of speech and stuff like that, I think there's an unwillingness, right, from other people to - to learn, you know, the - the - the languages of other people, and I think that's a hindrance.

I'm saying this because we used to meet I mean people from home, people who only could speak Zulu, and I was working with two Indian comrades, and so these - these people speak in Zulu because the - that's how they feel comfortable, in speaking in Zulu, yet I have these two comrades who can't hear what they are talking about, and there's no willingness from their side to learn, right, and again it reflects what we talked about - you know, when people think of a future South Africa, right, they - they still think of it in - in - in their own terms, in terms of well, in a future South Africa I will still speak English and somebody else will speak Afrikaans - I won't worry about learning how to speak Zulu because, you know, the Zulus will speak in their own language, but that means an unpreparedness to change - you don't want to change - some people must change, you don't want to change.

Those are some of the things that I think I used to discuss with comrades, that : Look here, Africans are in the majority, right, and you - you - you better learn to relate to them, right, because it - it - it - to them it's like why should I speak in English, so why can't you speak in my own language, you see, those - those just fine - fine points which I used to argue with them about, and what - what again didn't - surprised (?) me was that the - the comfort, right - my comrades will kind of relatively comfortable than myself in terms of they have their own transport, right, they have a better house - they have two or three houses to hide, right, and I didn't understand all these things and I will ask why is it like that, you see....

J.F. What do you mean two or three houses to hide?

P.M. Ja.

J.F. What do you mean?

P.M. I mean say, like in Swaziland you - you can't just, you know, live like everybody else, so you have to have different houses where you can, you know, hide in case, you know, you must change your houses or try to keep underground because first and foremost, you not allowed to be operating from Swaziland, so it's a clenched in (?) from Swaziland right into South Africa - so you'll find that you are only having a - your, you know - one place where they come and see you, but you don't know where they going to, right, which to me was like kind of not trusting, right.

You were supposed to trust them that they come to you in where - where you stay, but you not supposed to know where they are staying because probably they don't trust you, and I used to ask these things and they said : Oh well, it's, you know - it's underground work, it's got to be like that - but those are some of, you know, the things that I couldn't understand - I'm just hoping it wasn't, you know, just being over-suspicious or whatever or, you know, wanting to know more than I'm supposed to - to know - it was like, you know, I - I still had those hang-ups about home that well, they are better off than me, so they - they - they must have transport.

P.M. Or that, you know, they are weak or they can't go into buses because, you know, it creates some myth of some sort, but again it wasn't, you know, to do with racism, like I would say I mean who are you guys to be, you know - it was just like, you know, things that were very subtle and couldn't understand why it was like that and why they couldn't learn Zulu - why couldn't they use transport like anybody else - why did they have cars - why - where did they get the cars from - I couldn't ask whether those were their own cars, you know, the - there're some questions that you cannot ask, but these things are there and you don't know why they are there, see.

J.F. Did you ever resolve that?

P.M. Ja, I mean resolving it will be like you keep quiet because if - if you want to know, then why do you want to know, you know - I think it's part of a revolution, because in Lusaka, for instance, I can ask that - nobody will say: Well, you have no reason to ask that - but in a situation like Swaziland when you ask those questions they have a lot of connotations like, you know, the - they can't - supposed to be sensitive security questions - why do you ask another comrade why he has a car - why do you want to find out about that - yet strictly speaking, I mean - I mean honestly speaking, I just wanted to know - like am I not entitled to the same rights, you see, and I - I - I think there's one time where I think the women in the ANC, for instance, the - the woman he was talking about who has these twins - there was a very big problem in the ANC about her, because she was given a separate house and she didn't stay in, you know, what they call the chalets, like everybody else - she had -

And people - women asked why was she given, you know, special treatment - is she because - is she white or whatever - and I guess I mean the explanation which was satisfactory to me was she had twins and she, you know - who were a big problem for her - the husband was not there - and they decided to give her a place - but you know, those are some of the things that can cause some kind of, you know, friction, sometimes unfounded, you know.

But to me again I mean it - it's - I don't know - I'm positive about things - I think that's why (?) it's a struggle - I mean there's - there must be something that makes it feel like it's a struggle - then otherwise it's not a struggle - then we can all put the pieces together and say here is a good picture - a struggle is we - we talking of different races in South Africa and how we are going to adjust in the future to - you know, to all these - what's name - relations, right - the children speak Zulu, they can't speak English - she has a problem with that because it means in other words, why can't she speak English if the children can speak English - the explanation will be the children learn faster, right, but there is unwillingness from her to learn English, so those....

J.F. To learn Zulu?

P.M. To learn Zulu - so the - I mean those are some of the barriers which - which are, you know, a manifestation of a struggle where, you know, you have to give up something in order to, you know - to get along with something and with other people, and I - I guess I - I - I don't see any negative thing about that - I think it's just, you know - those are very small examples of if - if you had 20 whites then in Mazimbu, will they get, you know, first preference - the answer would be to me as far as I know, because hey (?) this is non-racial, no (?) you see, but you could do that with one woman who has twins - then don't exaggerate it - you know, people mustn't think it's just because she's white, you know, I mean - so I mean those are some of the things that happen within I think any organisation that is fighting, you know, with different groupings, and I - I think I like that.

- P.M. I mean even the relationship with the - the comrades that I have that I'm talking about, it's fine with me I mean - I - I see all these barriers - I can even see my people coming - I mean Africans coming to - to give a briefing, yet being very suspicious of those people, because they are Indians I mean - Indians are bad guys, right - but the moment I say to him : You are going to discuss these things with us here - when he goes back he has a different, you know, thing about Indians - why are they in the ANC if he didn't understand that - but the ones I talked to were different, you know - you know, that's the struggle - that's, you know, part of what is supposed to happen - you must get those I mean inhibitions out of your head and relate to a person as you see them as you meet them, not like you have this myth like whites are racist, you know - it's not like that, so I think positively thinking that's - that's good.
- J.F. Most of the - all of what you've mentioned about the different race groups, like Indians in the ANC, or whites, has been their handicaps, that they should overcome like not the language - has there been anything ever in your working either in underground structures or just in the ANC outside in terms of working with Indians or Coloureds or whites that you think has been positive about their approach, that's been anything particularly that is not African but that's their approach that you thought that's good?
- P.M. Mmm, mmm, I - I think I mean even - even the way I speak obviously probably reflects, you know, the position that I'm speaking from that, you know, I'm African, these are - I'm looking from that eye (?) which is also very wrong, right, but I mean, as I'm saying, it's a process - probably an Indian could be speaking differently, but all in all I mean I - I've worked with very good people - there's lots of positive things that I have, you know, learned in fact from other comrades from different racial groups - for instance, talking to each other about issues at home and, you know - and finding that you don't have problems in relating to each other - you don't even feel that - I mean it's only when you speak that you find probably you want to speak in Zulu, but you can't because you speaking to this person, but otherwise there is no - no problem in terms of relating to each other for - for instance, they will come and say : Well, comrade, well, let's have a drink today, you know, just a few shots, you O.K., and you feel nice and you talk about the struggle positively sometimes, but they - there is - there's been a lot of questions I mean from even today, and sometimes that affects me too.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

- P.M. that there's been a lot of Africans dying and probably this could be an over-exaggeration again - I mean I - I - I'm subject to correction that the calls (?) that have been made say, by the organisation have not been properly articulated by other groupings - for instance, calling for ungovernability - you still find the structures within the Coloured community, the Indian community, intact, whilst our people are trying to - I mean Africans are trying to dismantle those structures, and so this - this gives rise to a number of things, like - like you - you sort of say are they - you know, are they doing enough - are they contributing like everybody else, or this is kind of lopsided - we the African people are the ones who are supposed to take the brunt of it all or whatever.

P.M. But again I mean when you look at numbers, you know, there's quite a number of them involved in terms of, you know, ratios, so it - it's just that there's a lot of things here (?) involved and you - you always think that probably if they can also do more, probably things can quicken up, but you - I - I - I don't like people probably who look at that from a racist point of view, you know - it - it's that we must mobilise like - like the whites - for me I think that whites need to be mobilised politically - we - we shouldn't just talk of the ANC being a leader in the struggle and failing to mobilise whites - it means then it's not leading everybody - it's leading a section of the people, and it must make efforts and devise means to - to lead the whites to, you know - to properly articulate the struggle rather than, you know, voting for Botha, so I think even with that kind of, you know, thinking about the Africans as the ones who are doing the dying all the time and the other racial groups not committing themselves, I think again it - it's - probably it's not a correct analysis, but I mean sometimes you - you - you - you - you want to say that, you know, that is what you - you see I mean that some people haven't really done as much as they supposed to.

J.F. When you were in South Africa you were a member of SAAWU, are you....

P.M. Ja.

J.F. And had you heard of SACTU - were you involved with SACTU inside South Africa?

P.M. (Laugh) SACTU - in fact I think I could talk about this now - SAAWU in fact had a - a very strong relationship with SACTU - this was because SAAWU comes out of the community organisations that were built in fact by the underground cells of SACTU, of the ANC - SAAWU comes out of SACTU structures in the country, and there was a very, very strong relationship between SACTU and SAAWU even in its formation, and you can notice this by I mean even general workers union, all these unions which are community-based organisations, which eventually joined UDF - most of them started off from the activists of the ANC and the activists of SACTU - so it's - it was what I can call a - a - an - I was in an advantageous position that I came to know about SACTU when I was still inside the country by one of, you know, the very active members of SAAWU at that time, who - well, I don't have to mention names, but I came to know about SACTU when I was, you know, still there.

And I think many people do know about these organisations whilst they are still in the country, but the main problem which - which I've discovered is that our people - it's very difficult for instance, for our people to say that, because of prosecution, you know, in South Africa, because of sometimes it's not necessary to say that - why should we say that I mean - people have, for instance, come to this country and they (Interruption) - so it - it - it's very difficult for people to say that - they've been asked even in this country for some reasons which are not very great business (?)

But for me I mean I - I knew about SACTU even before I went out of the country.

J.F. At the time that you were active in the late '70s and through the early '80s there was a debate about shop floor versus community-based organising workers, and I'm just wondering - I don't want to get too involved in that issue because the issue I'm trying to look at is how people got politicised and how race and class figured into it, but I'm just really interested - maybe taking it back from this perspective I wanted to ask you fine, this is theory, but how did all this relate to the workers' perspective - how did the worker perceive the issues of non-racialism, working with whites, shop floor, community activity.

J.F. What did you see as the response, the perspective, the view of the workers that you were dealing with, the working people who you were obviously politicising and talking with at that period - did they ever say : You're crazy, whites will sell you out - did they ever say : let's just concentrate on getting our increased wage-packet and this idea of getting in with the new community organisations, the beginnings of UDF, it's going to hurt us - what were the workers saying to you?

P.M. I think with a South African worker most of the things are - are not abstract, are not - are not things that are theoretical, are things that a person faces on, you know - on the ground - there were many struggles taking place - for instance, the students, for instance, you know, the - the rand - the bus fares - and all these struggles were taking place during the formation of these, you know, unions - and for instance, if I may make an example about SAAWU, SAAWU was a community-based organisation in the sense that people were talking about - they used to have meetings in the trains, for instance, in the Eastern Cape, talking about SAAWU, so people who became SAAWU are not the people I mean actually who were trade unionists or people who were workers - it was everybody who lived in the township and commuted between the township and the city, right.

So for a worker in South Africa to know about these things, whether I should really be part of the politics, I should be strengthening my union at the shop floor, was - was not something that was defined, was not something that you sit down and say : Look here now, you and me are going to be involved in the shop floor - there's a struggle going on there, right - people get expelled, people get, you know - got - get onto a strike because of wage increase, right - they want some wages - and they win that fight, right, so that's one gain they've made.

They go back to the township - there is a strike about, you know, rent increases, right - they participate there because there is a struggle going on there, right - they come back to work - people are organising and saying : Let's better ourselves here, right, let's look at the working conditions, somebody has just been killed by a machine, we don't want to, you know - many people to be killed - and people articulate that issue.

So it - it - it's not really something that you can define that well, one day I sat with (?) 1,000 workers and said : This is what we supposed to do - it - it's learning from, you know, experience, and in that then you - you got white activists, right, who got drawn into the struggle, Neil Aggett, people like David Lewis, you know, Alec Erwin, who because of their expertise, right, in talking the language of the, you know - I wouldn't say the language of the bosses, but who can articulate, you know, things like what the company makes and stuff like that, and coming back to the people and saying : Look here, one of the things that we should demand is this - and people really going out demanding that and getting that and getting that trust, right, that Alec Erwin is a good guy, he has done this for us, that you know, David Lewis has done this for us, right, can we trust him - it's not a trust that, you know, people abstractly say : He's white but, you know - it - it's something that he produces, right, and people get to know him better and he knows them better and he goes along with them.

You know, I might - I may say that some people were very sceptical of Alec Erwin - I was myself, right, but he has proven in the struggle, he has learned himself quite a number of things, right, and he has proven in the struggle that he's with - with the workers, right.

P.M. It's not just sitting down and saying : Here is a white, what do we - how do we deal with him - for instance, when - when - when - when we get deeper (?) to that it's like the community-based organisation and the shop floor kind of stuff, like FOSATU, for instance, which was keeping away, you know, politics from the labour movement, right - those were some of the things that people like Alec Erwin were, you know, saying, but in practicality how do you do that in South Africa - how do we - how do you say we want to divorce, you know, the shop floor issues, the bread and butter issues from the politics in practical sense, right - you can say that because it - it's easy to say it, but here you are living in the township, right - your son is in a high school and your son is fighting against the use of Afrikaans at the school, right -- you come back home and he says : I'm no longer at school - you say : Why - he says : I'm fighting against the use of the language Afrikaans because we don't want that - you say : Oh well, I've got nothing to do with that, my fight is at work, right.

You come back home - your family has been thrown out of the house because there's been a rent increase and you haven't paid the rent, right, and you - your family and the belongings are outside the house - then you say : No, no, no, this is not my struggle, my struggle is at the workplace - it - it's impossible, so somehow or other you - you have to - you have to address yourself to all these questions practically - I mean you - you drawn to them - it's not because you like to.

But then the - the emphasis of - of FOSATU keeping away politics from the shop floor didn't work - where is that politics now - where are they now, as they are COSATU now - they are involved in that - it's a process - it was a process, and that has advantages and disadvantages - one of the advantages was that they were able to consolidate their, you know, shop floor struggles and shop floor I mean stewards and, you know, people who were training workers on the ground, you know, to make their demands, and they were very strong as an organisation on - on the shop floor, right, but they wouldn't have been able, right, like the community organisation had a problem - you have this whole mass of people who were saying we are SAAWU, right, so you organise in all factories, but you don't have strong structures on the shop floor, which weakens the organisation, for sure, as a trade union organisation, which sometimes people said that was the problem with SACTU.

People say SACTU got so involved in politics that it didn't consolidate itself on the shop floor issues, but again when you look into the politics of those days, right, there were - there weren't many people organising to trade unions, right, and after the ANC was banned, after the Communist Party was banned, the only legal organisation was SACTU, and all those people, you know, could articulate their aspirations through SACTU, right, so SACTU became somehow or other a mass organisation rather than strictly a trade union organisation - because it was the only legal present organisation in that - at that time.

So using that as an argument is very wrong, because it means you - you - you don't understand what was taking place at that time, so it's the same thing that we talking about here, that it - it's very difficult for any South African worker to say I'm - to draw the lines to say : I'm going to do this only, I - I have nothing to do with the rest - because the struggle is inter-related, it - it - it's - the system is - is - is all one system, right, and in fact those people were buying into the hands of the system, because the system is even saying now the problem with the unions have become too political, right - otherwise if the unions can abandon politics and be concentrating on the shop floor, fine, we'll agree with that - why - who are those people - those are community people - they - they live in the township and in different places, you see.

- P.M. I don't know whether I've answered your question fully, but I guess I mean the question of, you know, non-racialism or (?) trade unionism in South Africa wasn't just I mean a thing that people sat down and discussed in a conference - it - it's, you know, the whole involvement in the struggle and how whites and other groupings get swallowed up in this whole stream of, you know, the process, and how people come to trust them and how they themselves transform themselves from the ideas probably that they come in with and articulate what the workers, you know, want.
- J.F. But you did yourself get involved in - and really recruited actively into the ANC, and it was only afterwards that you got into SACTU - why was that - why - if you were SAAWU why (.....) SACTU inside the country - was there a SACTU inside the country?
- P.M. There was lots I mean - as I've said, I mean SACTU was there, but the person who recruited me was an ANC person who had actually nothing to do with SACTU - he was an ANC activist - I only got to know SACTU politics within SAAWU.
- J.F. Why did that guy refuse to talk politics - I'm still confused?
- P.M. His argument eventually is that he didn't trust people and he thought to himself - in fact not - not he thought - he was working for the ANC, and one of the instructions was he mustn't I mean engage in - in - you know, in discussions because he might slip, you know, and make a mistake, so he was keeping away from that kind of stuff, because he was actually acting as a recruiting person for the ANC.
- J.F. Did you find, and have you found in working in a non-racial way throughout inside the country, in Swaziland, outside in Lusaka and Canada - do you think that there'll be any need in the future South Africa for affirmative action - for whites specifically to be told they can't be in leadership roles, and for African or working class people to be pushed into a leadership role even though maybe they don't have the training, but it's an affirmative action, that Western concept - do you think that it'll have to all be on merit regardless of race, or do you think that there would be a case because whites tend to dominate, or do you think that's liberal to say that whites should learn not to dominate so much - how do you think - in practice what's it going to be like - what's been your experience and how it is going to be in the future?
- P.M. I think the struggle is going to teach people a lot of things - for instance, what we've just talked about in terms of how whites themselves who come with some kind of a - a view that they know, and it's either the struggle rejects them or they - you know, they articulate what people want, but I think the problem that we'll have is a kind of lopsided - what's the word for it - like you know, whites at the moment have the skills, right - they grow up in a society where they are taught to lead people, to be bosses, to be managers, right, and the blacks are taught to - to kind of, you know, be the led and, you know, listen to what the white people are saying - I think in - that is going to take a long time before people are able to - before people are able to - you know, to - to understand that the problem here is not really that the whites are the ones who want to lead, but it's because of, you know, the - the professions that they have, and it's going to take a long time before that is readjusted to equal, you know - people being taken in on different jobs on merit basis.

P.M. But I - I - I don't think actually that I mean there - there is a willingness from the organisation and the people to - to - to be doing things that they don't know - I think it - it - it is in the interest of the people to do what they feel comfortable about, like for instance, for a long time I even talked about Zimbabwe and said it's going to take a long time before the Africans, right, in Zimbabwe get to the same level with the white people who are there, because of the experiences, the expertise of the white people, and the generation that is now, you know, getting equal education and so that - that's a process which - that - that's going to take a long time before people come to realise that there is some kind of equality, right.

So I think I mean what - what is important though (?) about the South African struggle is that it, you know - it - it's a - it's a process that - that - that's very different from - I think from other, you know, places in many respects - South Africa is just unique, because with the ANC and other organisations having advanced this non-racial - non-racialism in South Africa I think it - it's very difficult for - for some other groupings, right, or for the white people to say we don't have room here, right, we being left out - because that's an excuse, you know, so even with the - when the system changes then it will mean how do people, you know, get swallowed up in that system - how do they relate to - to that system - I don't think it will be something that will be put in terms of rules and regulations that we now taking in blacks before whites or anything like that.

I think it - it's again a process that we talking about, that if you qualify to be headmaster, you will be - although I'm talking like a man here, saying headmaster - let's say headmistress, you will be, whether you black or white, that's your qualification - it won't be based as to oh well, we have so many of the white, you know, head - headmistresses, no, let's have a black one, I don't think so.

J.F. But do you have confidence that in - that whites won't dominate because of historical tendencies - that there won't be a case when after the 15th. headmaster or headmistress is white, there wouldn't be a case to say : Look, we're just going to make an affirmative action policy to make the next ones black?

P.M. No, no, that - there is nobody who has that chance in South Africa - again it - it goes back to what I said to you, the trust that I have on the people, right - I trust the people of South Africa that even - even if whites would like to do that, they won't be able to - even if blacks wanted to do that on the whites, they won't be able to, because of that kind of, you know, way that South Africa has evolved, right - it - nobody will be able to - unless that is done so subtle that people are not aware of it, but I don't think whites will just walk in and say ; O.K., guys, look here, we are the ones who are, you know, calling the shots here - no - even the blacks can't turn around and say : O.K., guys, now it's our turn - no - it won't happen like that - I don't believe in that.

J.F. How do you respond to someone who says : Ja, here's this guy talking - he may not have been to school or university very far, but he's representing an intellectual point of view the black worker on the ground understands Africanism - he understands black, he understands - he doesn't know about non-racialism, he doesn't relate to it - what's been your experience on that level - how do workers respond - do they want to know about non-racialism, do they already know about it, do they relate to it, do they say : No, look, I'm black, I'm being screwed by the white man, the white man's always the boss, nonsense this non-racialism?

P.M. Well, I will say I mean if - if we have to be practical again I mean I - my - I always use those examples - we have 750,000 people in COSATU, right, who are talking of non-racialism - it's not because they are - they are ignorant about it - they know what it means, and they wouldn't accept it - there wouldn't be divisions between CUSA, AZACTU and COSATU if people didn't understand that, right - they will say : Tell us what is the difference - we can be in CUSA, AZACTU, we can be in COSATU, there is no difference, right - but they are in COSATU because they understand that, you see, as workers what - what we talking about when we talk of non-racialism - it's -

That's why I'm saying I mean probably with me I'm also - I didn't go to university so I - I always take examples that I can see on the ground - there are people who - who are in the UDF who are more than people who probably could be in the national forum, right, BC orientated grouping, right - why - why are they not there - they are not because they - the UDF doesn't give really some kind of incentives that you can see, you know - rewards that you can - that are tangible - they are there because they have understood, right, what it means when you talk of non-racialism, you see.

J.F. Let me just ask - one thing I didn't talk about in all the kind of divisions that I was talking about in terms of the different groups - I hadn't asked you about different ethnicity divisions between African groups like Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa, those kinds of things - do you - have you seen on the factory floor in the workplace, in the community people who - specially say, in Natal who'd say : Ja, look at him making trouble, he's Xhosa, that's his problem....

P.M. You know how to make that sound (?)

J.F. But say (.....) the one they chased out, or the one who was killed who wasn't (.....) Victoria (.....) he wasn't Zulu - the way Gatsha manipulates people so that you do hear in Natal people - because it's such a dominant Zulu area - I've heard about inter-ethnic things stoked by the tribal leaders, government appointed homeland leaders, sure, but when we talk about non-racialism and overcoming those divisions, have you seen divisions between the so-called tribes in South Africa - do you think that's something that has to be worked on in a future South Africa, or do you think no, it's as soon as the homeland leaders go it'll be fine?

P.M. I'm very positive on that question in the sense that it - it - it's very rare that I - I've come across that kind of experience, and I think I - I've, you know, known quite a number of people - I think in South Africa again it - it - it's the whole question of how South Africa is, you know - the whole bantustan system and workers being used as labour units - that we don't have really a - a peasant class, right, a - a - people who are peasants who have attachments to the land, because the land was taken away from us, so most of South Africans are - are semi-proletariat people, who have once in their lives been, you know, in touch with what we can call Western civilisation, right, have been workers at some stage for six months or seven months, and people have since realised then that the problem is, you know, not themselves but the system - I think South Africa is supposed to - to be very much - there should be a lot of inter-tribal fights, which if that was really an important phenomena in South Africa, we could be having problems now, serious problems of divisions, but we don't have that because what has happened is that even the - the death of (.....) the - the chasing of (.....) is more political than being tribal.

P.M. It's not just a group of Zulus saying let's kill this guy - it's a whole Inkatha vigilante issue, right, which has no real colour - I mean tribal, you know, whatever it - it's got to do with UDF and Inkatha mostly, and as you rightly said, I mean the - the Zulus are being used by Gatsha, and I believe as a Zulu too myself, that it takes a long time to change people.

You see, the Zulus have always been regimented - just a little bit of background - have always been regimented, and even now they are still regimented - I - I belong to a regiment, (.....) regiment because he's my age group, right, and if I'm called out to go and defend, right, the Zulu people, I'm supposed to do that, like soldiers, right - it's an order that I must go and do that - so Zulu people are responding in that fashion of as (.....) as regiments, right - you go and defend this - and they believe in that, right.

But that is becoming clearer to them that I mean these people I mean that we supposed to be killing are fighting for us, right - it - it's no longer just like (.....) who's Xhosa, right - he's Xhosa, so what - why should I go and kill him, he's talking for the people, right - so I don't think really we going to have as much as one of these guys said that we going to have that - I don't - I don't know I mean probably it's just being too optimistic, you know.

J.F. I would support your point of view and I'd like to believe it, but I'm just thinking of a friend of mine who lived in the Alex women's hostel, and she said some of the women - and this was like 1979 - would say : Oh, ja, those Sothos or those Tswanas and they had nothing to do with the UDF and Gatsha directly has - I'm sure there are reasons.

P.M. Ja, the - the reasons that, you know - for instance, Zulus are supposed - these are some of the things that I think have been promoted by the system mostly - Zulus are supposed to be very stupid and people who just do the work, like being, you know, a guard, right, who will never let you pass because the boss has said you must never (?) pass, you see, and Xhosas are people who are supposed to be very dominating and who lie a lot, right, to get along with things, right, and Sothos are people who are supposed to be very weak who will always report you to the bosses all the time - I mean they - you must never trust them, right - these are all the things that have been, you know, in - inbuilt and encouraged by the system, so - but I think because of the struggles that people have gone through, people begin to realise - for instance, there some - there's some people - I'm sorry that I don't finish the point - that say - I mean there's a person who said to me : What are you going to do, I mean the ANC's dominated by the Xhosas, you know - this is a whole Xhosa mafia, I mean how are you going to deal with that?

And to be honest with you, I never - I never ever felt like what he's saying is true - it just didn't dawn to me - I mean I don't look at the ANC as being dominated by Xhosas, and not because I'm - I'm, you know - I'm being naive I - I think really there isn't any domination by the Xhosas, and if - if it's like that, so what - I mean they are doing a good cause, right, but they're not doing it because they - they want to dominate the - I mean the Zulus - it's just that there is more Xhosas who've been exposed to - you know, to better teachings than other people because that's where the whites landed in the first place - they were exposed to Western culture, you know, at an earlier period than anybody else - I'm not - I mean trying to say that the - there isn't those, you know, kind of differences - they are there, and I think those are natural differences, but they don't extend to - to even saying we can have civil war or I mean those - those problems are going to - we really going to have a terrible, you know, power struggle, I mean the Zulus wanting to dominate, I don't think so - I actually don't think so.

P.M. I think this is just a problem like probably you are - you are English speaking and you from - you from Britain and you look at somebody else and say he's Irish - you know, the Irish well, you know, Protestants and you know, the other people, Christians or Catholics, you know, and well, you Polish (?) - all (?) the Germans are very bad people - I mean it's kind of that stuff, you know, dominating race and, you know, pure race and something like that, but I don't see a South Africa where there will be really I mean tribal clashes after independence - one group wanting to dominate the other, I don't know, I doubt that, I - I mean I hate people who want to say there is no tribalism even in the organisation - I hate that because it's overlooking the fact that there are some differences, but in - in order to be able to fight that we must reckon the fact that there is that kind of stuff, but it's not in a form that, you know, people can write books about and say at some stage in the ANC the Zulus were fighting the (.....) - I don't think so.

J.F. Just lastly, do you yourself have any kind of pride in Zulu cultural traditions that you would worry about preserving in an undiluted form in the future South Africa - not that you fear Xhosa domination, but do you think that some of the rituals and some of the culture needs to be preserved so that Zulu culture remains, or do you think maybe 50 years from now after change comes to South Africa there won't be such a difference between the Zulus and the Xhosas and other people or how do you feel about that - sometimes you say to people : But then when you get to a certain point they actually feel quite strongly about (.....) or whatever kind of historical tradition they have - other people say : No, that's - they don't have it, but then again maybe they've been living in the township - people who live in the south coast of Durban - of Natal might have a different point of view.

P.M. In fact I was about to say that to you that the fact that we don't have serious peasantry in South Africa - there's nothing like that - for instance, I mean when - when you talk to me and I say I'm a Zulu I - I'm not saying I'm a Zulu because now it means if you can say I'm Xhosa then it's the end of me - no, it's just because I'm born of a Zulu family, but I think to better understand that or to - you know, to give some light to other things that - I don't know how we going to be able to deal with the fact, right - probably this touches into a lot of things - with the fact that Zulus take themselves as a nation, Xhosas take themselves as a nation, right, with their customs and stuff like that - now in - in a new South Africa we'll all be one nation, right - now as to whether people will want to - to say we are still a nation within a nation, I don't know how we'll solve that, but I don't think anybody will have these problems about I want to retain my Xhosa traditions, right, because even if you wanted to, nobody will say you shouldn't if you wanted to, but it mustn't interfere with the overall process of, you know, changing South Africa to what it's supposed to be, so I don't see obstacles in that.

And again I will go back to - to the fact that I believe in the people - again I - I don't see the people of South Africa making a fuss over being Xhosa and being Zulu and saying let's hold it, guys, I mean unless this is explained properly, then we not going to be part of that, you see - if people have hang-ups about circumcision or some kind of - they can still go on doing that, nobody's going to stop them, right, but they mustn't say : Well, we are not part of this nation because otherwise you must put it in the books that everybody must circumcise, you know - I don't think that's an issue, you see, but I mean there might be problems in terms of people thinking well - because I think Xhosas will still remain staying in the Cape - why - why should they come to Natal - and the Zulus will be staying in Natal.

P.M. But because there won't be any restrictions in terms of movement, a Zulu might end up in Cape Town, you see, and I don't think that - the Xhosas might I mean as - as a group of people say : In this house we've got a Chaka, right - that's how they refer to Zulus - we've got a Chaka here - - but I mean those are things that, you know, as you said early this - I mean this afternoon that when a person say that, the best thing is for the next person to say : Eh, stop calling the other person, you know - that's wrong, right - that's how we going to build ourselves, but there will be such remarks at some (?) you know - here is a coolie, here is a boer - people will do that, but it must be discouraged because we are preparing to build a nation here which has no differences, and such use of language should be stopped, you know - that's my, you know, kind of vision that I have and - and I think I mean practically that's what's going to happen - probably I - I'm being over, you know, optimistic.

END OF INTERVIEW.