

JF: When you were born and where?

S: Well, I was born here in Natal, in Affensbosch, in 1958, on the 20th May.

JF: Which town?

S: Appelsbosch. It's a Lutheran Mission Station, at about plus or minus eighty kilometres north of Pieter Maritzburg.

JF: Were your parents working at the Mission?

S: Well, my parents, my father is a teacher, my mother is a nurse in the hospital there, my father was a teacher there. So, I was born and bred there.

My primary education was done in that area. Thereafter I went to the Transkei for the post-primary education. Thereafter I went to Fort Hare for a short period. After that I worked, then I went to Fort Hare again where in 1982 I couldn't finish because we were kicked out.

More than 80percent of the input was kicked out. In '83, I went to the university of Zululand. At the end of '83 we were attacked by Gata. We had to write our exams beginning of '84. In '84 the University was closed in October, so this year I started at the university of Natal.

So, I have travelled three universities without getting a degree. So every activist has to try, because of student interruptions and so on and so on, whether at a student level, factory level, professional level and all over. Be it detention, be it attacks by MPs, by agents, that is attacks employed by the Government and so on.

JF: ~~Mr.~~ Simpiwe, spell your name for me.

S: S.I.M.P.I.W.E. Surname - MGODUSO.

JF: OK? Let me just ask you some things about your background then. Were your parents very political? Did they speak about politics in the home?

S: Well in our African homes we find that every parent is political, every household is political. It is a question that people are political in the sense that we are not explaining things in terms of intellectual concepts or so on.

Well, in my case, my father, as I have said, my father is a teacher, my mother is a nurse. If the people are educated - well, they are the ones responsible for making me into what I am today.

Like during the Rivonia trial, for instance, when our leader Nelson Mandela, Walter Sulu and many others were on trial, my father used to tell us of the developments in the Pretoria Supreme Court, and he used to tell us what a great leader Mandela was.

Sulu

So, he is the first person in my head of how Mandela was. So, again that shows that the highest deed which our leadership is being held - Mandela Tambo and many others, by our people.

Like he has never been a member of the ANC, but he sees people such as Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and other such leaders as leaders of our people. As people who are going to constitute the coming government in a free South Africa.

JF: And when you were growing up did your other school mates also hear about it, or were you having a special position that your parents talked about

JFcont: talked about this stuff?

S: Well, we have all been coming from the same position. Like some were coming from less advantaged background, they were coming from the working class. Their fathers have been victims of entrenchments, their mothers have been in the farms and some couldn't finish their education because of lack of funds, because of lack of material amenities and so on and so on.

So, all those things have raised the consciousness of our people to understand that the problem in our country is apartheid, the problem at this point in time is apartheid and what props up apartheid is the whole question of how the economy is run.

So, those are actually what our people have been studying at primary level, high school level and even now at a tertiary level.

Most of the people are coming from that background where the grim realities of our society have taught them, have workshopped them as to what is the problem in our country.

JF: When you were growing up, did your parents when they were saying Mandela he is the leader, were they saying he is going to be the one who will fight the whites? Did you grow up and have an early phase of being anti-white?

S: Well, we were never anti-white but we were aware, and when I say we in this context, I mean our parents, have been aware that this present government entrenches white minority rule. Well, because my parents were also coming from a missionary set-up, whereby actually my father grew up with a missionary because he lost his parents while he

Scout: while he was still fourteen years old, so he was growing up with whites during this time.

But, the crux of the matter is that the whole question of the minority, the whole question of the problem with apartheid, is that the minority of the South African people, that is the Afrikaans grouping or the white minority group are running the country from left right and centre.

Now the solution to the problem is to upset that imbalance where the majority of the people will run the country. The talk by people is that it's not just some people who, everyone is saying that the majority of the people must run the country.

It is inevitable that the African Group will be in the majority in the coming government. That's inevitable. But what is important is that will the ruling group do that because of ethnic or regional backgrounds or because fortunately or unfortunately they constitute the majority of that particular country.

Just as we have in Britain. Mainly in Britain the people are white people or in many many other countries the majority are white people, or English people. But one cannot say that the French are being oppressed in Britain or Dutch people are being oppressed in Britain. English speaking people are in the majority in Britain.

JF: You're talking theory, but I want to know how you came to see that as a young boy initially. Getting into your highschooling days. After the oppression of any black South African, did you know all through your life that you were non-racial?

JFcont: Was that your dad telling you? How did you - didn't you go through any phase of being anti-white and thinking no?

S: Well, I was anti-white when I was very young. Like when - I was anti-white at an early age. I thought that the further the white minority group is running the country, the solution will have to be to drive everything that lookã white to whatever the remote corner, the sea or what.

But, that's how I thought like. Even when I - when the whole story of our leaders, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo were in jail, made me not to be happy about it that our leaders weren't around, while leaders were around for the white minority, Verwoed at the time and Vorster later and so on and so on.

But as I grew up I realised that the solution is not to kick out these people, but that the solution is that the wealth of the country should be shared equitably, everyone must be protected must have the right to leave, must have the right to stay regardless of his ethnic origin, regardless of his social status and so on and so on.

Everyone must have the right whether it's a minority or whatever, but everyone must have the right to be in South Africa.

Those things which I understood then - I grew to that level when I was in highschool. I think I was in highschool when I understood that. Otherwise, during my earlier ages when I saw every white man for sure, with a few exceptions, I saw a person who was an enemy.

Scout: Like our women - a mission station is a rural area of course. The only white people you see are policemen.

Policemen, traders and some few doctors in the neighbouring hospital. Well some of them I would see as nice people. When the policemen came everyone had to run for shelter to hide because he knew policemen to be - rightly of course - we knew the people of the police to be there to cause chaos and havoc, to kick us.

So, whenever we saw policemen we would run away and hide ourselves. So, it is correct to say that is the main starting ground for every South African activist. The South African Situation, in it, the colour of the skin is inseparable with exploitation.

We are two words in this country. The other if you are white you happen to belong to the privileged group. If you are not white, you happen to belong to the non-privileged group. So, for a six year old, a ten year old, a fourteen year old, he sees things as they come superficially. So that was also my upbringing. I saw whites, all of them as a problem group.

I saw things as very simple. If every white man is driven away everything would be simple.

JF: So, how did you move from that simple to understandable - understanding of anti-white to getting an understanding of a non-racial point of view? Was it some one you met, was it reading literature? What made you change?

S: Well, it was a question of getting to know what happened around me. Like when there were committee problems one would see other black people, even African people for that matter, siding with the Government. One would see other white people siding with the oppressed people.

Well, literature has been very scarce. The good literature is not allowed in our country by the law of the land. It's criminal to have good books in this country.

So, it's only in other countries, free countries, Zimbabwe, Angola, and so on and in Britain. But it is criminal in our country.

So, one had to use common sense and also discussion. Asking questions especially at high school level, from form one to standard seven, to standard ten. Like we used to discuss informally why this is like this, why this is like that, why Matanzima is selling out.

Like I was in high school for instance when Brahm Fischer died, and it came out in newspapers that he was dead. His whole curriculum vitae came out in newspapers. We had to question how when men coming from the royal family of Afrikanerdom could be putting so much in our instruction.

And I was in the Eastern Cape in the Transkei where at the Daily Dispatch then was not as reactionary as it is today. Donald Woods was the editor at that time. So, he used to be very supportive of our struggle.

So, one read the Daily Dispatch; on the other hand there would be other newspapers or other articles written by African people.

Scout: One would see a clear difference there. Donald Woods being supportive of our struggle and the others being negative, when it comes to our political rights.

And we discussed no, the problem is not this. The problem is that we are fighting for justice and justice is in the colour of the skin. But justice has no colour of the skin. We are fighting for peace and peace has no colour of the skin. We are fighting for rule by the people and this has no colour of the skin. For sure, for obvious geographic, for obvious geo-ethnic set-ups in the world, you find that in Britain there will be many English people, in France there will be many French-speaking people, in Zimbabwe there will be many Shona speaking people and so on and so on.

So those things shocked us. It was life more than reading. Reading and open discussion with people was only - we, or I was only exposed to those things at university level. At a school level those things were not there.

If we say that blacks alone or Africans alone are the people who must remain in the country, it is not a right way of thinking. There are many non-black people who have contributed. I've just quoted Donald Woods for you, I've just quoted Brahm Fischer and many others.

Like as we were reading even the history in the high school, the syllabus history, like reading the history of other countries. Like I got an A for history at matric and A levels so I was very good at history.

Scot: So we used to read extensively about what was happening in other countries. Like ever since I grew up I have been very interested in reading. Reading about the Greek culture even at high school levels. I used to spend my spare time reading in the library.

So, those are the main things that led me to understanding this, more than talking to other people. Anyway, it's a recent development in the country where our good leaders have not been banned, have been unbanned, when organisations have come out openly, because in the past it has been impossible. And anyway most of our leaders have been in jail and so on.

JF: Was that important that thing about reading in the paper about Brahm Fischer dying? Did that give you a shock to see it was a white guy who'd done all those things?

S: Yes for sure it gave me a shock. For at that time, I think it was '75, I was already starting to realise that it is not every white man who is another John Vorster, nor every black man who is as good as Uncle Nelson Mandela.

So at that time I was already beginning to understand it. It only added to what I was already starting to understand, that no, this is like that, like this, you see, so it added to me.

JF: And, had you met any good white people? Remember you said growing up in a rural area you'd only met the white people at the mission and these were mainly policemen. Had you met any good white people by the time you were in highschool?

S: Well there were none. Our highschool was a missionary institution also in the Transkei, where incidentally some of our leaders, that is Nelson Mandela, started.

It was run by every member of the academic staff. Every member of the academic staff was African, every member of the administration was African. But as I have said that was a missionary institution, methodist missionary institution.

Some whites used to come for the purposes of preaching and so on. Like Dr Alex Boraine, while he was still the President of the Methodist Conference once visited us, in the school, I think it was 1972.

So, his message was also very good then. So, those things. But we were already reading in the newspapers. The Dispatch during Donald Woods time was not as bad as it is today. At least it did report what was happening at this and the other parts of the world.

So, he was trying his best considering the limited confines of apartheid. He was trying his best to expose us.

So, at a physical level, there was very few, in fact minimum contact between me and white people. It was only at university level that I was able to speak with white people. Because even at primary level in the missionary where I was born, we'd see only the people at the hospital some doctors or some assistants, only at that level. So I was never hospitalised so there was no contact with them, I would just see them.

Scont: Some of them were very nice. Like one of them I am even in contact with now. He was the superintendent there some time back. They were very nice. They used to invite, when they were having birthday parties for their kids, they used to invite everyone in the mission station for those birthdays and we used to have physical contacts with their children, to chat, to laugh with, to play with, and so on and so on.

So those were the only limited physical contacts one had. So, beyond that level there were none.

JF: And when did you meet the first white you saw as progressive to whom you could talk to?

S: That's a very difficult question. Maybe four or five years back, when I was already in Azaso, because that would mean through organisations. Well, even before being in organisations, one used to meet one or two not as formally as in an organisation, but just meeting them.

But as meeting in formal sessions, it has only been about five years since I began going to meetings.

JF: Let's just take you a little bit back before; when you went to Transkei and you were boarding there?

S: Yes, it's a boarding school.

JF: What year was that?

S: Up to , '73, '74, 5,6,8,

JF: And did you find that people there were politically aware?

S: Well, as I have said earlier, people were politically aware, but not explaining things in terms of intellectual concepts or academic concepts. But people would say no we have to fight for change. Like Matanzima, for instance, when Matanzima, Gajera and all these other homeland clowns were talking of a Federation in the '73, '74 period.

I think I was sitting my junior certificate course then, we used to discuss this - look when they talk of a federation, who are they? Because they don't represent our people. All our leaders are in jail, are in exile and so on.

So, we were able, at least to explain things in those terms and the coming into being of a free and politically liberated Angola and Mozambique in late 1974, though we were very young then, but we would discuss this. These countries have liberated, and opted for a new society.

It seems to be different from Kenya, it seems to be different from Ghana and all other such societies. And we used to discuss as to what implication does that mean for a future and a free South Africa. Not in these terms I'm using, but we used to discuss those things widely, within the limited confines of our area, and understanding then.

So, those are some of the things I can say we used to discuss and used to gain a thorough understanding. Actually some of the people we used to be with in high school, like now, are in exile, some are in jail. So, from those clear understandings there have come out people who have played a very important role in the struggle.

JF: Then that was the Inkatha experience. But you've told me about the university experience, but at what stage did you begin to look at class more than race? Did you reach a stage where you felt you had to look beyond race for an understanding of class?

S: Well as I have said, the dividing line in South Africa between race and class is very thin, in the sense that the bulk of our black people belong to the oppressed class, the working class, while on the other hand every white man is being propped up to belong to the petty bourgeois class, in other words the non-working class group.

So the dividing line is very thin. So to understand the other is a very dicey question, because the dividing line is thin.

But, a clear understanding of course has come as one has been growing up, as I have. When one went to the university and had to understand what is a nation, for instance, in the South African context? What is class in the South African context? The role of the working class, the role of other classes? The role for instance of the African middle class in our struggle?

Because its role and the role of other classes is different. It is in the middle, because it is supposed to be part of the struggle, but some sections within it are, have decided to support border, that is we have homelands and other leaders such as we have presently in the tri-cameral programme.

So, to get a clear understanding as one has been growing up through involvement practically and otherwise, one has been able to understand more clearly when we talk of a class - how am I expected

Scont: How am I expected to advance the struggle of the workers being a non-worker, that is being a student. How am I expected to do it.

Some ten years back I couldn't explain to you how to do it because my understanding then was very limited.

JF: Well what class would you say you're in? Your parents were a teacher and a nurse -that's professional. Would that put you in a specific class?

S: Well when one looks like in the conditions in the rural areas-if one is a teacher one belongs to the middle-class, they are both professionals. So according to our standards they are in the middle class. So, I wouldn't like to call it a favourite position because even if one belongs to those groups, there are still stringencies by virtue of being black, there are stringencies.

The Group Areas act, lack of-that is the whole question of disenfranchised land - there's no vote you have no citizenship and many many other political inconveniences go with you even if you belong to the middle class.

JF: Have you ever experienced because you're so well educated, because you've had a bit of difference in class background, that you have to make a special effort to be able to relate to workers?

S: Well, I would prefer to call it a better understanding because of a longer period of involvement. Like I mean I'm twenty seven years this year; when I am thirty seven years I will be more experienced than I am now. When I was seventeen years I was not as experienced so I'd prefer to approach it from that angle that it's mainly because of the

Scont: because of the period of involvement, not necessarily because of that education.

Naturally the education that we get encourages us to be those types of people who indulge in intellectual scholasticism, academic questions which have got no practical bearing, no bearing to the issues that affect our people - starvation, hunger disease and many many other such harsh realities of our society.

JF: Now, when did you arrive at the university campus for the first time?

S: That was in 1979 when I went to Fort Hare.

JF: Now, Fort Hare, the whole eastern Cape in this late sixties and seventies was an area where BC was quite strong. Were you at all affected by BC?

S: Earlier I did mention to you that Donald Woods was very supportive of our struggle. As a result the whole question, the idea thrived in that area, because of one, there was a newspaper in the region, that was highlighting the existence of a certain way of thinking, that is black consciousness.

Secondly, historically that area has been the strongest piece of our struggle starting from last century, the wars of resistance are most ferocious, wars of resistance have been staged and waged in that region, that is the Eastern Cape region.

Now, even the ANC was very strong in that region, in that area. Even now, most people are in exile in that area, according to figures that come out in courts for people who are arrested for advancing the cause of the ANC, whatever that means.

Scont: But advancing the course of the ANC. Many people who are - the Eastern Cape area is one of those areas where even today, the ANC has the most support in our country.

Even the UDF now. Where the UDF enjoys most of its support is in the Eastern Cape now. So, because of that every progressive philosophy enjoys the support of the people. But black consciousness was never a substitute for the way people have been doing things and so on, but it was a way whereby intellectuals and university students had a way of involving themselves, of involving themselves in the struggle, because take into account the realities of apartheid like the extensions of Universities act, creating and establishing new and ethnic and tribal universities, whereby people had to work under such harsh conditions.

Indeed such strategies have been used in the past. They were called nationalism, and just because in America it's part of what it does trying to hijack our struggle trying to call it black consciousness, just because there it was called black consciousness.

It was called in the last century Ethiopianism.....

side two ends.....420.

Side one tape two begins.....001

JF: the evolutionary phase that everyone went through. Did you go through such a phase?

S: Well, when I was giving my earlier understandings of the whole thing, I did say that the starting ground becomes just like patriotism, the first level of patriotism is when you are four or five years old is that everything that belongs to your household, to your family must not be touched by somebody who is coming from outside.

Scout: You see a person driving your cattle away, you cry. When you see a person driving a car like your father's you want to say, no that 's my father's car, someone is stealing my father's car.

So, that's the first development of patriotism. Now, the same applies with the whole question of nationalism. When one is developing to be a nationalist, or to be patriotic, like in the case of South Africa where the country is divided into two blocks, white world and black world, divided by apartheid of course.

Now the first level is that you see all whites as problem people. As one develops one understands that no it is not every white man who is a problem, just that it is not every black person who is on the side of the oppressed.

So, coming now to black consciousness, we find that early in our struggles there have been so many different phases and manifestations of how people expect to express themselves, because of many socio-political factors.

Now, I have said that in the last century there were times by the resistance movement in our country there was an emphasis on the Ethiopian movement. At other times people were following Nationalism. And there was a time when people were following pan Africanism. There was a time when people were emphasising black consciousness.

These socio political terms some of them are imported from outside the borders, geographical borders like Black Consciousness. And even the Ethiopian Movement from last century.

Scont: With black consciousness the whole understanding simply means - it simply means that the whole black community, are the oppressed section of the community. It simply means that the black people have to fight for themselves.

Like there was an emphasis on psychological warfare. and psychological liberation. As I have said to you, most people who were advocates of black consciousness were university students. In other words, the intellectuals, the middle class of the black group.

So those were the people talking that language, of psychological liberation and so on and so on. Now, that has been the understanding, like the people in their lecture halls found - like most of our lecturers in our black universities are supporters of the apartheid programme.

So our people are like that. Now our people in the sixties and early seventies, there has been very few black lecturers in our universities. In other areas they are non-existing. Even those who were there are reactionaries, who are more Afrikaner than Andre Treurnichts conservative party.

Those have been some of the things in our country. So when one looks at the Black Consciousness, one has to have that at the back of his mind. When one has to understand black consciousness what it is therefore.

Well it has been polarised for many and different reasons. As I have said the whole question of black consciousness started in America, the black power movement in the sixties.

Scout: Now when there was some sort of a lull, a political lull, or a political downswing on the side of the resistance movement inside the country because activists and leaders were either jailed, banned, banished exiled or in detention and so on and so on.

So now there was no chance for the younger activists to develop working jointly with elder activists. People at university were just doing things relying on apartheid books, on apartheid history books so they were not able to know what was happening in the thirties and forties and so on.

So that was why people were coping mainly on what was happening in America, how the black power movement was being conducted in the united states of America and so on and so on.

And again that was the advantage of the CIA. Why so? Because if people were hallowing the way the black power movement was being conducted in the United States of America, people were not against the essence of the American type of society.

But, were against the question that it will be whites, let's say whites Nixon or Johnstone or whoever it was at the time, who was running the country so they wanted, why they polarised it, they wanted - we wanted also the black conscious movement of South Africa, also to have that attitude.

In other words, to have that as long as we have that type of society in our country, that is an exploitative system even if we have clowns such as Matanzima or even leaders. Let's say we have leaders. As long as the leader is black or even African, or wholly African government that is in the cabinet, but as long as it is perpetrating the perpetrating the current social order, just like

Scont: just like Kenya today, just like other countries which was a question of changing hands from the white oppressors to a local oppressor. So, that's why it was polarised.

And furthermore, it reflected the mood amongst the black intellectuals at the time, because of the lull I was talking about. The positive aspect of that - it reflected resistance by the middle class group because they were rejecting even the homeland concept. It reflected that resistance.

It reflected that resistance, whether they were calling themselves black consciousness or whatever. But they were trying to move with the developments of the time. Some of those socio-political developments are not necessarily emanating from within the borders of our country. Like the black consciousness movement was coming from the United States of America.

JF: So, do you actually see CIA involvement, do you see the United States pushing the line?

S: Originally CIA, I believe it was not involved, but later there has been evidence that there were CIA attempts to win the hearts and minds of some of our leaders. Of Saso for instance and black people's convention.

So, there were attempts to do so, directly and indirectly, without those leaders necessarily knowing that they were being involved in a CIA programme. But there were attempts after some time. I believe that it was originally a purely South African product.

But there were attempts after some time by those people to co-opt it. Why CIA got interested because it was mainly a duplication of what was happening

Scont: a duplication of what was happening in the United States of ~~America~~ and the black power movement of the country.

JF: When do you think you started using the phrase non-racial to describe your point of view? When would you say you first described yourself as a non-racial progressive democrat?

S: Well, even in the - before 1980 during the Saso days people were using it that we are fighting for a non-racial egalitarian society - that's the language we usually used; a non-racial egalitarian Azanian society, that's the language we used to use.

When it comes to me now when did I start using it, that is consistent with when did I start to be involved deeply, which is a very difficult thing, because one has been growing growing. To say that ~~one~~ grew to this level.

The whole question is especially with the development of '76, it was mainly when such terms became part and parcel of our parlance of the struggle.

JF: When was Saso founded, what year? I mean Asaso?

S: Asaso was founded in November 1979. I joined it in January 1980.

JF: Why did the Azanian part come into it?

S: When Asaso was formed the whole idea was originally proposed at an Azapo meeting. As such there was an Azapo influence. Now it - number one, number two, the first formation of Azase in 1979 was not at all representative of the student fraternity of South Africa.

Scont: Only one campus was represented.
 Tefoop(?). No other campus was represented. We
 did discuss this like at Fort Hare and other areas.

But we felt that look hence a student organisation
 has been formed. We mustn't debate and indulge
 onto necessary issues as to why was it formed
 without our consultation and so on.

So we felt that we all had to support it and give it
 a thorough and a proper direction because there is
 no organisation that is supposed to be under an-
 other organisation. Azaso must not be under Azapo.
 Just as Azapo must not be under Azaso.

JF: Do you think that when it's free South Africa
 will be called Azania?

S: I don't think it will be called Azania.
 Personally I feel it would be wrong for South
 Africa to be called Azania. For many reasons,
 but just to sum it up quickly.

Historically, politically and tropologically Azania,
 South Africa is not Azania. Azania is something
 else. Well we should have to give ourselves some
 few hours to discuss that. The archeological
 background of the word Azania.

And secondly, we have Tanzania, Namibia, Zambia,
 and other countries with nia, ia and so on. They
 are special peculiarities. South Africa is different
 from other countries.

For example, Mozambique who didn't change its name
 after independence, just as other countries didn't
 change their tax after liberation. USA is that
 type of example. After the wars off, after 1787, 1786,
 those states remained those states. They didn't
 change.

JF: But do you think that it's unfortunate that Azaso is called the Azanian Student's Organisation?

S: For sure it's correct to say it's unfortunate. But I would like to call it - i would prefer to say the way Azaso was called Azanian Students Organisation was because at the time the people who first mooted it were people who believed that South Africa was to be called Azania.

Which was not a representative sentiment of the fraternity then as it is even now. Azapo at the time was very strong in ^{Turf loop} Tefloop(?). There were a few people there on an individual basis from Fort Hare and other campuses but it's Tefloop that was represented as Tefloop.

Turfloop

So, that is why the organisation got its name Azania, its people met there.

JF: So when did you go to Fort Hare?

S: '79.

JF: So when did you leave?

S: In 1980 we were kicked out when there were boycotts in the place. So I went back in 1982. In 1982 we were kicked out again in July.

JF: Then between Fort Hare and going back there were you working or anything?

S: Yes, I was working with a firm of (?170) In '80 I was working with one agency of the South African Council of Churches in Pietermaritzburg. After that I was working with a firm of atteniens in Pietermaritzburg.

JF: And then why did you go to Ngoya when you were kicked out of Fort Hare?

S: Well at Fort Hare we brought in an urgent court application. We were four. We brought this application to declare the expulsion of students there of no legal effect and force. We lost it. We believe that we lost it not on legal grounds. Just because on the principle that we were pushing.

We upset the whole programme that they had set up. On the basis of law they couldn't justify that. Actually the judge couldn't even explain that. So they - I applied for Zululand because it was clear that at Fort Hare I was not going to be taken.

JF: What language did you grow up speaking in the home?

S: Well, at home my ethnic group is the Xhosa group, but I was born in Natal and the first language that I knew was Zulu. I started to know Xhosa when I was in the high school.

JF: And did your parents send you to Transkei because of your Xhosa background?

S: No, it was me who wanted to start there in the Transkei.

JF: Was that because of your ethnic background?

S: Yes. I'd never been to the Transkei before so I just wanted to see even the hills, so I just wanted to see my place of origin.

JF: And then why did you go to Fort Hare? Was that because of your background?

S: Well, not because of that. It was because when I was there most of my friends were there and that was the nearest university and apart from that at the time which we were if you were Xhosa you had to go to Fort Hare, if you were Zulu you had to go to Zululand.

It's just recently that people can go to any black campus.

JF: And then coming to Ngoya was that - you went there only because you had no choice. Did you know about Nkatha?

S: They had an Nkatha branch but I knew that that branch was not strong. Just like everywhere. Even at Mlazi. Out of the people who are staying at Mlazi it's a few people who are staying at Nkatha. Even those warriors are imported from outside Mlazi.

So I knew then that there were not many people who were at Ngoya who were Nkatha people. I knew that there is not a decent and a sensible person who can support Nkatha. People who support Nkhata support it for ulterior motives. To get a business to get a promotion at work and so on.

They don't support it because of a patriotic zeal.

JF: What did you think when it was first founded in 1973?

S: It was 1975. Well then they were saying that it is reviving the ANC. Hence many people who are in the ANC went back. Even the uniform is the ANC. Even the colours black green and gold are ours, that is the people's colours when I say ours, because the ANC is using the People's colours.

The ANC is a separation movement it has to.. So, that's how we got the support of the people. Because people have always been supportive of the Congress movement because they have seen it as the liberation movement. The call for the release of Mandela has been there for the past twenty three years.

JF: So when it was first founded did it attract you at all in that it was supposed to be ANC like?

S: Ja. Many people are supportive of the ANC. Many people joined it because they were saying Gataha has an ANC background, he was once a member of the ANC. So, people were supporting it because they said the movement is coming up again, under a different guise. Though of course people were unhappy that he was working in the Homeland programme which the ANC rejected as early as 1949.

People were not happy about that, because of the lull I talked about earlier, people felt that something must be done. At least for the time being let's try to work within.

JF: What point did you think to yourself no this is not ok?

S: Well, I've never - for me when Nkatha was formed in 1975, as I've said earlier, I was already not impressed.

Scont: I was never impressed when he said he was reviving the 1928 Nkatha of King Solomon. I was never impressed because of the discussions with our friends, at the high school. Because we analysed the situation. How can he work in the homeland programme because of this and that.

And even during that time, in newspapers it was being reported widely that he was clashing with Bunny Ladla who was being seen by many people as a good chap. He was a councillor for community development or something like that. He died some years back.

So those were some of the things one couldn't understand well.

JF: So you went onto Ngoya and by then were you anti-Nkhata?

S: By 1983, sure. I understood Nkatha well by then. It was out of order.

JF: And can you describe briefly, where you were on the day they attacked? Were you in the dorms when they attacked?

S: Well, I wasn't there physically when they attacked. Because I was in the crisis hall meeting. So, I had to come down to Durban to arrange for a court action to stop them from coming there.

So, we were working around the clock and by the time they came there we were in Durban. We went there in the afternoon when they had left. When I left the campus it was desolated. It was like a haunted town.

JF: And were there friends of yours who were killed?

S: Well four students were killed and one hundred and thirteen injured.

JF: And did you know those people at all?

S: Ja I knew them, three of them yes. Actually two of them were members of Azaso. The one from Port Elizabeth and one from Bushbuck Ridge in the Transvaal.

JF: And then what followed up after that? Did you get kicked out of Ngoya?

S: They were kicked out last year, '84. But even then after '83, there was a list submitted by the Kwazulu Government that ABCDE should be kicked out.

So we got hold of that list and we confronted the university, with that information, and the university had to deny it. As a result nobody was kicked out. Hence everybody was kicked out last year.

Even last year we didn't publish the list in the newspapers. There are 282 names that are going to be kicked out in '85.

JF: Now how do you feel about the whole ethnic factor? Surely you just can't brush it away totally? Even the ANC says they are people from your nation and to be organised from your communities. Now how do you square that with the whole ethnic factor? What do you feel about it having lived through the Ngoya massacre, seeing what's happening in Durban right now? What about the whole ethnic factor?

S: The ethnic factor just like gender there's nothing wrong with it. One is English, one is German and so on just like one is a male or a female. But in the South African situation ethnicity is used to divide people. To divide people for the purposes of propping up apartheid.

That is why ethnicity has to kill people. Apartheid will kill people, so many people have died because of apartheid. '76, last year and even recently in the Natal area. So many people have been killed in the East London area by SADF in 1973, so many people have been killed recently by the Nkatha.

In the past weeks here in Durban and so on and so on, because ethnicity is used to prop up apartheid. So in the South African context it is being used not progressively. It is being used for the purposes of stifling progress. Socially, politically and otherwise.

JF: Whatever membership Gatsha claims, whether indeed it is 300 000 whether it's much smaller, the people who are supporting Inkata the people who are militant Inkata people, how do you explain that they are so into this nationalism?

S: Well just to touch quickly about the question of the Nkatha membership. It's very easy to be an Inkata member. Every civil servant is automatically a member. Now, the father is a member, every person is automatically a member.

JF: Yes, but I'm saying the ones who are members, what's their story?

S: It's very simple that the Zulu culture is used, even lies are used. Like they will say, look you people don't want the Zulu king, they are against all Zulus so we will need to attack them.

Scont: And you find that when it comes to the UDF, they will be more vociferous about the Non-zulu sections of it like the Natal Indian Congress, and some people speak Xhosa who are in the UDF leadership like Rev Ndlundu, and so on.

Like during the 1980 boycotts, Chief Buthe, said that the Xhosa lawyers the late Mr. Mdlenge, Mr. Posa and Advocates Quier(?) were responsible for the unrest in the Durban area, just because they were non-Zulus.

So that's how they use Zulu culture, the negative side, the reactionary Zulu culture for their own purposes.

JF: And, how do you think that whole theory of what you're saying, anti-ethnicity, or not using ethnicity in a non-progressive way, how does that fit with the four nations theory?

S: Well, it's, ethnicity in this case, just as people can say all men are bad and having a movement moving around bashing males. Some can say all females are bad and move around bashing all females.

But that doesn't mean that males or females are bad. The whole question is for the cause that Gatscha is advancing, the cause that Inkata is advancing is an apartheid cause, is a retrogressive cause, a reactionary cause. Inkata is part of the bandwagon of apartheid.

Now he is using that for business of propping up apartheid, for proving that Zulus are different than Sutu, than Indians, than whites and so on and so on.

Scont: That's why they do all what they are doing, because people are like that.

When it comes to the four nation theory well it's a different story there. The four nation theory simply means that, or four national groups, four ethnic groups simply means that Africans Indians Progressive whites, coloureds all those people have a right to stay in South Africa.

Those people have a right to stay, not only whites as is the case now. It means that all others have the right. Actually, it's the present social order that justifies what Inkata is doing.

JF: But how do you answer when people say find, but why organise ethnically? Why have the Natal Indian Congress?

S: We organise people ethnically because in our national democratic struggle people are divided according to the texture of their (?364) according to their ethnic origin and so on.

So, the conditions are met - I'll make an example of Lamontville and Chatswell, - which is just separated by Vailly(?). Now people in those areas find that the conditions are worse, but more worse in Lamontville than they are in Chatsworth. Because Indians are third grade citizens, Africans are fourth grade citizens.

The same applies with all other areas and so on. The list is long. Now we have to organise people and when we take up issues of black students for instance, AZASO HAS TO CATER FOR THOSE SPECIAL problems experienced by black students, which are not the experiences of white students, hence we are different from Nusas.

Scout: The NIC has to cater for Indian problems experienced by the Indian people which are not as bad as those experienced by the African people. Hence we have Residents Associations in African areas.

So, that is meant for purposes of specialisation. To have organs that will specialise in areas affecting their people.

Just recently, we were having a memorial service for Mrs. Mhlinge who was brutally murdered. Now, Ingata with the ^{Inkatha} police - I saw this with my naked eyes - came there to attack us with knobkerries, with guns, the police had teargas, - now you can't have that in Indian areas, but in African areas, conditions are so brutal, such that death is just next to you.

So there must be an organ; a vehicle to cater for those needs of the people. So, NIC and all such structures are manned to teach the people to make them be part of the struggle, not only in the ~~form~~ but also in their programmes. That's what they are actually doing excellently.

Unlike what Inkatha is doing, which is preaching an anti-Zulu gospel, an ~~anti-Zulu~~ I mean a pro-Zulu hegemony, Zulu imperialism and that Zulus are the chosen race, just like the Germans were saying. That's what Inkatha is doing, spreading the myth.

side ends.416.

JF: When you were growing up in Natal, did you have any prejudice against Indians?

S: Well, I had very little contact with Indians. Actually there was one Indian shop in our area. He was part and parcel of us. We grew up with his kids, even now we are still friendly to them. So there has never been an anti-Indian prejudice not for me, not for my peer group.

JF: What are you doing now?

S: I'm doing a junior degree in law, at the University of Natal.

JF: Why do you want to study law?

S: Well, I don't know really. I just wanted a job that would make me independent, not to be a civil servant.

JF: And so were you president of Azaso?

S: I'm the immediate past president of Azaso.

JF: When was that, '84?

S: Yes '84 to '85, July '84 to July '85. Our year starts from July to the following July.

JF: And has anyone said how can you go to a white university now?

S: No one has said that. I've been to many black campuses. Well maybe people have asked that if they don't know my background. That I've been kicked out.

JF: When you say you're very open to white progressives, how do you feel about white liberals?

S: Well, I understand the whole question about white liberals, even right wingers for that matter. In the South African world, I said earlier we have two worlds in white South Africa.

Now a person who has been listening to only one side of the story, that black people need some sort of paternalism and so on, so they have been like that.

And number two, I see white liberalism as a starting ground for future white democrats. So, I see it in that light.

JF: So you think they can move?

S: Ja. They are potential ground for moving to be progressive to being white democrats, to understand that democracy is inter-racial and non-racial and so on.

JF: OK. This is just a quick question. Do you see the PAC as having any force, any following in South Africa today?

S: Well, it doesn't seem to have it. I think the answer is political. The ANC is not an organisation it is a liberation movement, an umbrella body with many organisations or many political wings within itself. Unlike the PAC which has been an organisation from 1959. So it's difficult like comparing UDF and Azapo.

UDF is an organisation with many organisations under it unlike Azapo which is an organisation.

JF: Do you see Azapo as continuing to be a minority group?

JFcont: Do you see it waning? Do you see it as getting any support?

S: I see it as - politically I see it as waning. Because it is beating an ahistorical drum. As such it is something to wane. But as it is with the future course of time, I see it as being the future Unita of this country because it is going to offer a unique potential of group for such Unita structures.

JF: But it doesn't have an army.

S: But that doesn't mean that in the future it cannot have an army.

JF: You see Azapo as a future Unita rather than Inkata?

S: Well they will come together. What we have seen during the past few years is that all those groupings that are against the freedom charter are coming together in many different ways.

You'll find Azapo condemning the UDF, you'll find Gatsha condemning the UDF, you'll find Le Grange condemning the UDF, of course using different words but the basic message being the same. eg saying the UDF is a front of the ANC it is the front of other organisations and so on.

JF: Why is it that the non-racial philosophy threatens the Government, threatens the conservative blacks?

S: It's supposed to be a threat. Because it means equality. Conservative blacks want whites to move away from the Homelands so that they can be just like Transkei, just like Kenya, just like Malawi where white people left and local aspirants took over.

Scont: There was no bourgeoisie class it had to be manufactured - there has to be.

With whites clearly non-racialism means death for their rights means death for their ill gotten privileges.

JF: And do you find that the young blacks you're trying to conscientise in Azaso readily accept non-racialism? It seems miraculous to me that blacks wouldn't say to you whites have been so awful to us, how can you say it's for us to work with them?

S: Those who are involved their experiences have taught them. Like I was telling you my experiences. These experiences have been undergone by millions of young chaps. So, our experience is like when a white man comes you hide, but our experience has shown that it is not every young white man who is bad, it is not every black man who is good.

So those things have workshopped us. The same applies to our people. Actually the people involved in the struggle are the ones who understand and appreciate non-racialism. Because in the course of their involvement, in the process of their involvement they have understood that it's every person -not every person who is supporting what they're saying.

JF: How do you see the struggle evolving in the future? How do you see freedom coming and what do you see happening?

S: Well the coming years are going to be tough. The Government can no longer hold the reins politically. Hence it is resorting to brutal methods. The state of emergency and so on and so on.

Scont: And the extra-legal assassinations. The mysterious deaths and disappearances of our leaders and so on. So the coming years are going to be more tough.

But as they are going to be more tough they are also advancing the struggle in the sense that many people become more committed, many people choose the side of the struggle, because many people see the government become more brutal and see the solution to end apartheid.

JF: Have you actually seen ex-Azaso members leave the country?

S: Well, ja some people have left the university to join the armed struggle., which is mainly waged from outside. Training has always been from outside the country. Though there recently everything has shifted to within the borders of the country. Even training is within the borders with recent developments.

We have many Asaso members who have left the country. Though I cannot come with figures as to how many members per year.

JF: Well whether it's to be trained outside or be trained inside, can you shed some light on what the motivation is for a young person to decide to take the step to armed struggle? Are you - is this something coming up in discussions?

S: Well it's not coming out so much as in the experiences which people undergo. Like most people who go out are African people because their conditions are worse.

Now people see that the whole question of the armed struggle is very central to our liberation.

Scont: Mass meetings, rallies, house to house organisation alone are not enough, are important but not enough. They say that when there is Mrs. Mhalanga there must be ten apartheid people. That's the talk of all the people all over the place.

Take for example when people are being attacked in a memorial service - that means people are not safe all over the place. And that makes people see that they have to have a military counter, not only a political counter but also a military counter to the SADF's aggressions.

JF: And what about the way things have escalated, maybe not in Natal so much, but just having come from the Transvaal where in places like Kwathema and Diduza you have pitched battles and really that level of militance and violence from the people? I've heard some people talk about the question of mobilisation and organisation and saying when you cut off the top leaders and arrest the grass roots people what does that leave? I mean do you worry at all that what it's going to leave is such a leadership vacuum and such an intensity that you might just have killings that will have a lack of direction?

S: Well, it certainly does disorganise us when our leaders are not around. But the extent of organisation is defended to what extent we are organised at grassroots level.

Now, in most of our organisations you can take the whole of our executive because we are strong in our branches. Even if you go to those branches' executive we are organised we are strong on a hostel to hostel basis. The struggle continues.

Scont: Look when most of our leaders were taken during the tri-cameral elections last year. But the struggle has continued. Even the state of emergency has been declared. Even when our leadership is not around, in detention facing the treason trial and so on and so on, but there has been a state of emergency, our leaders are presently in detention, even in hiding after the declaration of the state of emergency.

But, new areas have taken it out to the streets that are not yet included in the state of emergency, the Natal areas, the Freestate areas and some of the areas in Transvaal, it's only that they are scared of embarrassment to widen the state of emergency to other areas.

So in a way it doesn't set back our struggle. It does disorganise us.

JF: What do you see, how do you see it evolving? Do you think there's just going to be war in the townships? Do you think that will die down to some degree, do you think there will be movement? You haven't mentioned at all the trade unions if that's a factor. Concretely if you have to think of what the reality will be for the next couple of years.

S: Well if it continues, clearly there will be many more street fightings between the people and the police, because now there's no leadership to talk with the government. The government is not talking with us, it will lock them up.

So, we use now as it has even been happening, people just throw hand grenades at the police when they see them, they will shoot at the police when they see them and the police will shoot back, so it's going to be even an escalation. The war will escalate.

Scont: The civil war that has already started is going to escalate. And finally the people will win because the government cannot extract its personal resources to every square kilometre of the country.

But the war is just going to continue and it's going to be impossible for the Government to do it. So it is to its benefit to release our leaders.

And at a trade union level, the trade union leaders are in detention. There will be disorganisations here and there, like set backs, but in other levels there will be issues like, in Maritzburg there was a stay away, a very successful stay away a few weeks back.

And at school levels and at youth levels there will be those activities where people just do things without informing the press or the media. So things are just going to happen without the knowledge of the government. Which is dangerous for the Government also. In other words, the more the Government continues with repression, the more it is dangerous for its survival.

JF: Do you ever think of a time frame? When do you think this tension will escalate?

S: Julie, that's a very difficult question. It can be ten years from now, it can be twenty, it can be fifteen, I don't know.

This time last year I didn't know we would be having a state of emergency by now. I didn't know that the country would be drenched with so much blood. Things were so normal this last year by this time.

JF: Do you think that when South Africa changes it will be different than other post-colonial situations in Africa?

S: It will be different because of the extent of the industrial advantage of this country. Because of its closeness to the Western World, economically politically and otherwise. So, it will obviously be different.

JF: And what about vis a vis black and white? Will it be different than other countries in terms of how the other countries have treated their whites and the way other whites have responded?

S: Surely even then it will be different. Here whites are here to stay unlike in other countries where whites had to leave actually.

So they will have to stay here, they have no other home. They are part and parcel of South Africa.

JF: And what role will they play? If you think of the whites in the police and the army and you know those various whites, what role do you think they will play?

S: To play a role of observing a new state of order, not to play auxiliaries but playing an active part as South Africans, also, a positive role, than the reactionary role they are playing now.

And more and more as the struggle continues, more and more whites will be joining the side of resistance.

JF: There's a question about the lessons of the fifties. So much has been brought up that's -- that what was going on in the fifties, with the Congress of Nations. There're parallels there but everything was crushed.

JFcont: How will what's happening now be different? What do you see as the lesssojs of the fifties that the lessons will be different this time round?

S: The lessons of the fifties were that there was much reliance on the mass meetings and so on. Though of course other areas were already developed to have low profile structures like organisation and so on. Street to street, block to block and so on.

But presently the emphasis is on area to area, house to house in the UDF and so on, so the emphasis now is on a grassroot level.

JF: And why do you think it won't be crushed the way it was crushed in the fifties?

S: It is impossible because now it is grounded on the exact surface of the ground. It is a grass-roots struggle now.

And there are many resources that have been developed now. All sorts of resources organisationally and otherwise, to cater and to sponsor the mood that is there around the country, at all levels. So, it's not going to be possible to crush it like it was then.

It's not going to be easy, because people are also aware of countering militarily, not politically. So those are some of the resources I am talking about.

JF: Did you go to the Craddock funeral?

S: No, I didn't.

JF: What did you think when you saw that SSEP flag in the media?

S: Well, SACP and the Soviet Union flags. Well, the South African media because of its venal nature emphasise that. Those are not the only flags, one. Two, they were not the largest or the biggest flags they were just one of the few flags that were there.

Now, they wanted to say that, because according to the dogmas of apartheid, the myth is that we advance our struggle because the Soviet Union says it is a good thing to do so.

Now why there was a Soviet banner there, why there was a South African Communist party banner there, there are many problems there. We can talk till cattles come home.

Now the South African communist party is the only group from the first world war that has been non-racial in composition and in their political perspectives.

Two, it was the first group that had to accomodate Africans and the Soviet Union has been the only group right through from 1917 that has been supportive of the struggle of the South African people. The first country in Europe to support our struggle. That has been the Soviet Union. Up until now, it has been consistent, it has been sincere in support of our struggle.

So, all those things that shocked the people, not the television, not the media, will shock the people, that communism is bad. Though for sure many people don't know communism. But they see communists being among the most people who genuinely support them. Not just supporting them because they have a hidden agenda or programme, but supporting them earnestly.

Scont: So that's why some of our freedom songs praise the Soviet People that they have been one of those people supporting us and so on.

The hand grenades the AK47's that are being used against the SADF are coming from the Soviet Union, hence people see the Soviet Union as one of the countries that is supporting us. So, I think it's mainly that you see. Why it was there.

JF: You mentioned that it's mainly Africans who join their own struggle, do you think the blacks in this country have an idea that the war when it escalates is only one fought by Africans or do you think that they see whites as having a part in it?

S: Ja. They know that everybody is fighting, like in casualty they have people coming from all racial groups and that even people who leave the country are coming from all racial groups. What I was actually saying is because all the African people are the most oppressed group, one.

Two, they constitute the majority of our population of our country, as a result they are the major ones. That is just two major reasons. They are the ones who swell the ranks of Umkonto We Sizwe.

JF: What do people think of Joe Slovo? What does that name mean?

S: O, there are so many songs about Joe Slovo, if he can come around many people can hold him shoulder high. They see him not as a bad person, but they see him as a liberator. One of those people fighting for liberation. His name is held in high esteem by the oppressed people in our country.

Even in the Craddock Funeral, ^{Beiers Naudé} Beieirsnout is coming from the Broederbond, he is held shoulder high by the people.

Scout: He is given hero's welcome. There were other African priests there, because their role in the struggle has been so ambiguous and equivocal, they are looked upon with suspicion you see.

So you see that in our country, the people see that you contribute and they hold you high for it. That was why in the last century Didizulu was the king of the Zulus and was given shelter to the daughter of Bishop Collins in Greytown, I think more than a hundred years back. That women even used to be visited. People used to bring African beer to her, if to bring African beer in Zulu society is a good prize you see.

In the Eastern Cape, people used to vote for Judge Ross Innes. His grandfather was voted into parliament by those Africans who were confined to vote in the Cape. They regarded Ross Innes as a patriot, although he was an Englishman. They saw Jabavu as a patriot but not as a patriot as Ross Innes was. So, all those developments have shaped our political culture in our country.

JF: Do you think that people are scared about getting involved in the struggle on any level? A small thing up to the armed struggle? Do you think that fear is keeping people from getting involved?

S: There is no fear that is keeping people. For sure at certain levels it does. But it doesn't make them to be inactive, it makes them look for other solutions. I'll make an example.

If people see that the SADF is attacking them when they attend mass meetings they think of means of how to attack the SADF. So they just change the emphasis. Let us not call mass meetings, let us attack the SADF because it's making it impossible

Scont: because it's making it impossible to attend a mass meeting. So that is the case.

JF: Let me ask one final question. If somebody listened to everything you were saying, what if they would say look, you've got some really intelligent urban intellectual person that average blacks would never support this, the rural blacks wouldn't support it, the uneducated blacks wouldn't support it. Do you find that what you hold as your belief is quite distant from what the people in your parents home town, not the nurses, not the teachers, but the people who are labouring in rural areas or workers in factories would support it?

S: They believe it actually. They are the people we have been chatting with, they have been telling us some of these histories and so on. They are the people who believe in this more than I do actually.

But, they don't present it as I'm presenting it to you now. Like an example is the whole question of disinvestment. You talk about disinvestment to an illiterate person, clearly he will say, no no I'm against disinvestment. But you explain concretely what you mean by disinvestment, you don't come with a concept which he won't understand because of lack of academic exposure. But you ask him and he will say no I'm against disinvestment, I support dis-investment that's what I have always been saying and so on and so on.

JF: Then do you have evidence that they support non-racialism?

S: Ja. They support non-racialism because their experiences in those rural areas where I'm coming from, like in those mission hospitals there have

Scont: mission hospitals there have been some of them saying no so and so is not good it is bad. So and so is good who is white. You have heard of Brigadier Minaar who attempted a coup in the Ciskei. That Minaar was farming in my area from '66 to '69. Now the way I heard that he was involved in it was through the servants who were working there. He was a cattle farmer there so he used to go and buy milk. Now ordinary people said that man is dangerous he is a soldier.

Now clearly they identify anyone who is a soldier with the enemy. They were saying be very careful he can shoot you at the slightest provocation, he is a very bad chap. So if you come though with intellectual concepts, he won't know.

The whole thing is to take the issue and explain it and the person will understand it not intellectualising the whole thing.

tape ends.....397.