

J.F. If you can just start out by telling me when and where you were born?

M.S. Well, I was born in Johannesburg, Soweto - I can't even remember the - the address now - in any case I was born in Johannesburg - that's where I grew up, attended school there, primary, secondary school....

J.F. What year were you born?

M.S. '45, just after the war, and I attended primary and secondary education, and then I went to the Transkei for my secondary education at a boarding school called Bethal - I spent about three years there, then I came back to Jo'burg and I studied (.....) Tutorial College, did my matric, but unfortunately I couldn't finish my matric because I was detained just before I wrote my exams - that was the beginning of the 90 day detention without trial....

J.F. In '63?

M.S. Yes - I was at the time the youngest detainee - I spent close to 30 days at the same time my mother was arrested - it was also the time when my father was underground, but he was subsequently arrested, so all three of us were in prison at the same time, different prisons - we couldn't meet - and it's interesting how I got to know that he was in - he was arrested, because we were not allowed newspapers in prison - no books - just solitary confinement.

A magistrate used to come once a week and take your complaints, but it meant nothing because whatever you complained about nothing was done about it, but one particular the police were very excited - they came to my cell and, you know, in jubilation announced that my father was arrested and, you know, they were quite happy about it and they drummed it that, you know, they've arrested all the terrorists, that kind of thing - of course, you know, it was a terrible shock for me, but shortly after that I was released and went home.

At the time of course Mlungisi, my brother, Zwelakhe, and all the others were very young - I'm the eldest in the family - and they were left with nothing really because, you know, the bread (?) - you know, my mother and dad and were all arrested, but fortunately the neighbours came to their help, and the neighbours were extremely wonderful - they helped clean the house, they cooked for the children and, you know, did the washing, and they took turns, our neighbours, in this cleaning and looking after the children - they were really absolutely wonderful.

One Soweto businessman - I forgot his name now - even volunteered to adopt the children for a while until my parents were released, and this was printed in the newspapers, and for that he was - for his efforts he was detained - he was arrested too, that businessman - but my mother was also released, and it was decided that I should leave the country - I then left the country in the '60s and I've been, you know, outside South Africa ever since.

J.F. Which year did you leave?

M.S. It must be '63 - I can't remember the exact date - I must be - it was '63, thereabouts.

J.F. And were you detained - when you were detained had you been active in specific organisation?

M.S. Well, when I was detained I was, well, active in the sense that, you know, we used to, you know, paint slogans and that kind of thing at night, but of course the police didn't know that.

M.S. I was detained more for what they thought I had information about the whereabouts of my father, not so much because of any political activities on my part - of course I was in the Masuputsela - I was one of the founder members of the pioneer organisation, Masuputsela, the young pioneers - those who show the way....

J.F. Masuputsela?

M.S. Ja, and (?) the ANC pioneers.

J.F. That was like an ANC youth - young youth league?

M.S. That was the ANC pioneers, yes - it was even before the youth, you know, organisation.

J.F. And when you were growing up - it's probably a bit pointless to ask how you got politicised - you kind of breathe politics - but the kind of politics that surrounded you - did you grow up initially with a feeling that the struggle was about overthrowing the whites or did you never have that feeling - so many people I've interviewed, they came from a ex-peasant background and they never saw whites, and initially they went through a very whites are dogs phase and then they got politicised through the ANC and discussed viz-a-viz the PAC and (.....) and all that - but for yourself what was the experience with a man like Walter Sisulu, who had a clear ideological base?

M.S. Well, when you grow up in Soweto, you know, you're faced with the white person, so your first reaction you identify of course colour with the system, because they are in power - it's a white policeman who - who sends a black policeman to arrest you - it's a white policeman who interrogates you, it's a white magistrate - you know, it's a white super in school - superintendent - everywhere, you see, it's whites who - who are in power, it's the whites who are dominating, it's the whites who have lovely houses, while the blacks live in hovels in the ghettos - it's the blacks who work for the whites.

So, you know, you see this every day that, you know, whites - being white means, you know, all the privileges and advantages - it's - and as you grow up that you see that, well, of course there are other white people who are opposed to the system of apartheid, but first and foremost you fighting to remove the system where a black man is a foreigner in his own country, where you are voteless and you have no political rights whatsoever - and in my particular case you grow up when, you know, virtually the police were with us every day, day in and day - you know, day in - every day and every night.

They'd come in any time, sometimes in the wee hours of the morning, two o'clock, and simply collect my father, and then we'd stay for days and weeks without him, and my mother had to raise us, you know, five children - it was very tough on her, but also she herself wasn't spared, because they would come and harass her, so you grow up hating the system, you grow up hating oppression, you grow up hating apartheid - you grow up wanting to do something to put an end to this oppression - anything to put an end to this oppression.

It's only (?) when you grow up that you - you see that, well, the best way of going about it is not by individual acts of bravery, but simply working with an organisational structure or with many people and mobilising people to fight - this is what was, you know, taught us at a very early age by people of course like my father, Duma Nokwe, Hutchinson, and of course Eli Weinberg and many such people.

M.S. So we - you grew up knowing that there are people who are committed, knowing that there are people who are ready to do something, and knowing that amongst these people are also, you know, Indians and Coloureds and white people, so that's (?) part of the political education that we got in growing up - and the Masuputsela I was referring to was basically formed by people like Duma Nokwe and Hutchinson, and we had their (?) you know, political lessons, very elementary because we're still very young, and taking - going to meetings and singing and wearing ANC uniform and that kind of thing, so again it was a process of, you know, learning process, learning of the struggle.

And when the bantu education was introduced we simply of course didn't go to school, and alternative education, alternative schools were set up by the ANC in somebody's house and that kind of thing, and kids of a certain age group are put together and some volunteer teachers used to come - sometimes they were white, but mostly they were black, because whites were not allowed into the location - so you then learned that the struggle actually is not simply to replace a white man with a black man - this came very clearly when the bantustan thing started, you know, being formed by the government.

When you saw some of the blacks going into the bantustan system - going into it not to make them unworkable, but going there to make them work, and they - you - you - it opened our eyes saying (?) that well, being black is no guarantee that you going to be a revolutionary, that you are going to fight for your people, because some of the black people were in fact used by the enemy - the black policeman, the black informer, you know, the bantustan leaders - so you're not fighting, therefore, to replace a white man with a black man - you are fighting to replace a whole system, an oppressive system, with a new system - a system that would value human life, a system that would give people, you know, the right to exercise their freedom, a system that would make people live in peace in South Africa and within, you know, the neighbouring countries.

So you're fighting not just for political independence, which is very important, but you're also fighting for socio-economic emancipation, because even if you remove apartheid or apartheid goes, you still have a whole economic system which is entrenched there and it's, you know, run by the multi-nationals and by the whites basically, so you want to have a system where the vast majority of the people are going to benefit from the wealth of the country.

That is why even at that early age we supported the Freedom Charter and we went about publicising the Freedom Charter before the ANC was banned, and even after the ANC was banned we used to paint slogans and distribute leaflets at night, so this was again an important element in my political education.

J.F. What - in the Masuputsela were you aware of the kind of debates going on in the ANC youth league - were you aware of the position of Mandela and Tambo in the '40s, how they changed in the '50s, the kind of line the youth leaguers, the Mabedis and the ones who became the PAC - I'm just wondering - O.K., you were a teenager, might be a bit young, but what was the kind of perception of that camp versus the congress camp in your mind - did it ever come up in your Masuputsela meetings?

M.S. Well, it didn't come up Masuputsela meetings - it came up later when we were already in the youth, Masuputsela pioneers.

M.S. It did come up very sharply when we were already in the youth, when we were students and had to - to deal with these issues - this was the time when the PAC, you know, broke off from the ANC - PAC was formed and at a - at a time it - it was quite popular with the young people, especially in Johannesburg, because of course it was very - the slogans, very (.....) slogans, you know, Africa for Africans - and clearly, you know, people didn't go to debates or, you know, debate this or that issue simply, you know, it was a lot of slogan-eering, so it did carry quite a lot of young people with it initially.

But it's only through discussions that you - we said and said : All right, fine, you know, but how do you go about removing the regime - what are you going to do - we raised the question of an alliance, for example, the congress alliance, which we thought was very important because we said : All right, you know, you need also to work amongst the white population, you need to work among the Indian population, you - you need to work amongst the Coloured population - and it's the ANC in fact that popularised the concept of black, black meaning not only the Africans, but black meaning the Coloureds and the Indians, the - you know, the black majority.

So it started through that, winning over the Coloureds and the - and the Indians, and in fact understanding that they, although they're not as, you know, oppressed as the African, but they are also oppressed by the system, and therefore they have a lot to - to - to benefit from removing the system - and we also worked and went to - to the Coloured youth and had discussions with them, with the Indian that we managed to meet, and in the, you know, ANC circles we had access to some of these young people and had, you know, debates and discussions with them.

Also of course it was important for them to understand the African, because you live in separated areas - the whites hardly know what's happening at the time in Soweto - the press was not much (?) actually said about how the African feels and what the African thinks and what the African wants to do - so for them it was also important to understand what the African wants and how the African feels, and most important his condition, socio-economic positions, because these shape the political out - ideological, you know, position of a person.

And in the discussions with the PAC we - with the youth in the PAC I think we managed to - to broaden the debate - not just a question of, you know, white and black, but simply a question of what kind of society do you want after apartheid goes, sort of in a liberated South Africa, so - and in the course of these debates and discussions I think we managed to educate a number of young people, so the seeds that were sown in those years of course saw fruition in the '76 Soweto, you know, uprisings - this didn't come, you know, after the - out of the blue - they came because of the political work that had gone, you know, in the past, and this is the work that was done mainly by the young, you know, people in the ANC and people in the congress alliance and, you know, generally the congress traditions that were there and still very strong, after the PAC existed (?) only for a year (Laugh) and never had any roots amongst the people, any strong history of resistance.

It was the ANC, from 1912 and passed through different phases of struggle, and I think this is an important sort of history that our people now are - are, you know - are using and benefiting from - the history of resistance and a history of struggle, and long traditions of struggle.

J.F. When you said in the youth, did you actually join the ANC youth league?

- M.S. Yes, yes, we formed at the time what was called ASA, African Student Association....
- J.F. (.....) someone who was in ASA - so you formed it when - when you were at (.....) or (.....)
- M.S. Yes, I - I was at Britzuis - I was in Johannesburg at the time when (?) we formed a branch in Johannesburg, and then we also participated at the inaugural conference that was held in Durban, in Natal.
- J.F. In '61?
- M.S. Yes.
- J.F. What month of '61 was it?
- M.S. Oh, heavens, I can't remember now....
- J.F. But it must have been earlier in the year - it wasn't at the time of the MK?
- M.S. No, no, it was early in the year.
- J.F. And did it have a long lifespan....
- M.S. No, it didn't have a long lifespan, because that was the time of, you know, repressions - many of the leading members of ASA were arrested and some forced to leave the country.
- J.F. Did you hold an office or....
- M.S. No, no, I didn't hold an office then.
- J.F. The president was Thabo Mbeki?
- M.S. No, he wasn't the president, the - he was one of the leaders of ASA - one of the leaders of ASA, but he wasn't the president - the president was - so far back I can't remember.
- J.F. And what was the name of the school you went to in Jo'burg....
- M.S. Britzius - that was a tutorial college - I don't know if it's still there - and we had - we used the facilities of (.....) then at Dara House (?)....
- J.F. Of?
- M.S. Saceta (?)
- J.F. So at that time - you're saying the PAC had a short lifespan, but you found the arguments easy to counter - what kind of debates - did you actually engage with the PAC people, did you have joint meetings, or was it more on an informal basis that you discussed with them?
- M.S. Well, it was more of an informal, you know - we didn't have sort of meetings, but like I said, in Johannesburg that time, you know, amongst the youth PAC, because of the, you know, emotive thing was quite popular amongst the youth, including amongst some of our, you know, at - friends in the same street, in the same neighbourhood, so the discussions were basically with the people in the neighbourhood and in Mpulmalonge and in, you know - you know, Orlando West as a whole.

- M.S. And also when we went to distribute some ANC leaflets, you know, we used to encounter these young - youngsters who used to say : But you know, ANC is just a liberal organisation - these are Charterists - and, you know, that kind of thing - so at that level we had to engage them in discussions and debates about what the ANC stood for and the history of the struggle and what we wanted to achieve.
- J.F. I won't dwell on this, but I just wanted to ask this and I'll get back more to theory - but was there any suspicion about the PAC - people have mentioned that it was formed at the USIS and that some of the conduct of Lobolo - was there ever the kind of charges that when I was in the country were traded about the AZAPOs and their connections - did you not worry, or were there actually feelings about how does this fit into an international understanding of the economic programme that's actually behind the PAC versus the ultimate socio-economic vision of the ANC - did you ever kind of characterise it or did you think no, Africa for the Africans, it's quite simplistic - did you have - was there ever any charges that perhaps there was backing that was a bit suspect, or did that come out at....
- M.S. Well, yes, it did - we - we were aware (?) that the PAC was formed really at US Information Service, but of course at the time we were still very young, we - we were not quite sure what it actually meant really to - we knew that say (?) if it was formed by the Americans then it was going to serve the interests of the Americans, or was intended to serve the interests of the Americans - of course these were some of the arguments we used, but you know, talking to some of the young people, you know, it didn't matter much for them - they said : Look, what we are fighting for is to get rid of the white man here - we'll see about the white man overseas later on - the important thing is the white man in South Africa.

It's only, you know, in the discussions that we realised that in fact though (?) the struggle in South Africa against apartheid is not simply an isolated struggle - and this came later when Lutuli and, you know, when the boycott campaign started - it's then that also we saw the international dimensions to our struggle, because we are asking the international community to boycott South Africa, and at the time (?) in the papers the liberal papers were saying : You're asking, you know, for - for suicide - you know, cutting off your nose to spite your face, that sort of thing.

And in the discussions and debates and in some of the meetings that we went to, some of the cells, these are some of the issues that we raised - later on when we hoined the youth, and when I join, much later, MK inside the country, these are the things we discussed in the cells - the international dimensions and also how South Africa came to be what it is - how apartheid was supported by capital, international capital - how South Africa got its weapons and its strength and its, you know, international support from the western countries, and also the vetoes - we didn't know what a veto was but, you know, when these were exercised and, you know, when sanctions we asked for and there were the first vetoes that were used in the UN, and, you know, the ANC leadership had to explain what this was all about.

M.S. In my case of course I was rather fortunate because my father had been abroad and had been, you know, to some of the socialist countries and to some of the African countries, and we were able to sit and discuss - we benefited a lot from the discussions that we had at home in the family - and also with my mother and my grandfather - my grandmother actually, who incidentally was a fantastic woman - she had a - a wonderful influence on us children, and also very committed old lady - she was way past 80, but she was exceptionally good in - she knew Orlando West very well, and she knew where we could put posters and slogans with relative safety, and she used to make the glue for us from flour and - or pastes.

So she of course was also very religious, but you know, a source of information - a real treasure when it came to sort of inform - my father wouldn't discuss certain things, but we went to my grandmother and she would be able to explain and that kind of thing.

J.F. Was she your father's mother?

M.S. Yes.

J.F. Were you - did you have any religion in your home - were you raised with any religion?

M.S. Well, my grandmother, yes - my grandmother was very religious, yes.

J.F. Tell me, how do you assess the influence of anti-communism - why was it that the Masuputsela kids seemingly weren't bothered by it, and yet it was used as a weapon - it seemed like the big weapons of the PAC were anti-communism, anti-whitism, and in fact it seemed specifically anti-Indian, very much anti - racial anti-non-Africans, but also the anti-communism - one can understand how racism would have its attraction - how did you feel - the anti-communism had an attraction for some - why did it have no attraction for your people?

M.S. Well, yes, the PAC used this anti-communist bogey quite a lot, you know, to scare people - again it was curious that the regime and the PAC here were on sort of the same plane, same level, because the South African regime had been, you know, putting its propaganda about how bad communism was, and it was anti-religion, it was anti that, you know - they are going to take away your property and take away your wives and your everything - in fact trying to appeal to the Africans or the (?) you know - the African workers, African petty bourgeoisie to say, you know, communism is a very bad thing.

But we were not really bothered because we had people who had been to some of the socialist countries and had seen for themselves the situation there, and we had no reason to believe that, you know, they would be telling us lies when they came back and said : No, we were there and this is what is happening, this is the situation - and we also benefited from discussions with people like Makgothi, who had been abroad and he came back, and Hutchinson and the others who said : No, this is what is happening outside South Africa - in other words, they broadened our horizon - we saw the world as it was now, much - that South Africa was not the whole world.

We were brought up to believe that the whole world was just South Africa - we knew nothing about anything else - and the history we were taught at school was a history of, you know, the British Empire, and we were reading about things we never knew existed, things that were quite irrelevant.

M.S. But when people came and said : In fact we saw these things - and explained them it roused our interest and we wanted to find out how other people were living in other parts of the world - and that was one way of simply educating the people about socialism, about everything else - secondly people got suspicious, said : Why is the PAC and the regime, the sworn enemy, singing the same song - there must be something wrong somewhere - the third reason was people were saying : If the regime is so dead scared of communism, there must be something good in it after all - if our enemy is so scared of it, why are they so scared of it, and why are they coming to us now to support them in this fight with communism - we've got nothing against communism - if it's their fight let them fight it alone - why are they coming to us now - the people who are oppressing us are now coming to us for support - we said : No, there's something wrong there.

And of course, you know, people were able to articulate this in meetings - although you're not able to say some of the things publicly because this was the time when the ANC was already banned, but people could say these things in trains, and they found ways of, you know, speaking in a very coded language and, you know, it went on and the young people also carried this information to the schools, to working places, and to the football, to the clubs, and to the dance halls, that kind of thing.

J.F. So was it more word of mouth than reading or did you read any....

M.S. Well, I think it was more word of mouth, because most of the literature was banned - it was not available to begin with, so it was basically through word of mouth.

J.F. So you left in '63 - you just mentioned MK - would I be correct in saying you left because of your MK involvement?

M.S. Well, I left because the ANC said I should leave the country - it was instructions from the ANC.

J.F. And you - just tell me from '63 to now what you then did?

M.S. Well - well, I joined the ANC outside, in Tanzania - I went to Tanzania - Zambia wasn't free then - stayed in Tanzania for a while - then I went for studies in the Soviet Union, completed my MA there - came back to Tanzania, worked with the youth section, and I came to Zambia - we formed the ANC youth section here, and I've been working ever since with the different ANC structures - with the youth - I'm now with the economic unit of the ANC.

But of course I also did a stint in Hungary for four years - I was in the World Federation of Democratic Youth as an ANC youth representative there - then I also spent 15 months in Holland with the Govan Mbeki Fund, and doing a research project - so I've written a book on electronics industry in South Africa - T.N.C's (?) involvement in the electronics industry in South Africa.

J.F. I'd like to just ask about this concept non-racialism - back in the '50s and '60s in South Africa - do you remember speaking of this concept, the actual word non-racialism?

M.S. Not really - not - well, we went through different phases - at the time it was, you know, we were (?) speaking more about multiracialism, that kind of thing, but of course gradually it developed into a concept of non-racialism.



M.S. In the '50s we were still young, and of course the whole thing was not, you know - was still fuzzy - it wasn't sort of very clear in our minds, but all we knew is that we are fighting for a South Africa where the colour of the skin, of a person's skin won't count - we are fighting for a South Africa where, you know, all shall enjoy, you know, the benefits of development and the wealth of the country - that's the kind - that's the kind of concept we had - and of course these, the concepts that were there in the Freedom Charter, basically have the content of non-racialism - they are not based on race or race domination.

And again we were (?) I think influenced by some of the things that were said in the dock when Mandela was on trial, when he said: You know, we - we are not (?) against white domination - we are against black domination - so that, in a nutshell, was the kind of South Africa we - we envisaged - we don't want any race domination - neither do we want, you know, class domination - we don't want the blacks simply to exist to enlarge the wealth of a white minority.

J.F. In the '70s when BC people started - late '60s and '70s you began obviously reading about seeing BC coming up in the country - did you have any contact with them - can you tell me how you saw the BC - there was the lull - there was a bit of a lull in political activity, and then you saw coming up a kind of political ideology that was really opposed to the thing you've been fighting for - how did you see it then - did you worry about it - how do you see it now - did you have any contact with those BC people?

M.S. Yes, we had a lot of contact with the BC people - in fact many (Laugh) of them were members of the ANC - no, we didn't see the BC as opposed to the ANC - we didn't see the BC as a - sort of an open and no (?) - we also think that the - the BC did play an important role in politicising the people, especially, you know, after the long period of a lull - but if you trace even the history of the BC, many of the people - some of the founder members were actually, you know, members - who had been members of the ANC and some - many of them came from ANC families.

My own young sister was a member of BC and she came from an ANC family - and its importance was that the youth actively politicised the - the people and other young - the young people about - about the struggle - clearly we had differences of approach and method and ideology - where they emphasise the question of the supremacy of the colour in a - a case like South Africa, we on the other hand, you know, say that a colour - the national question, colour and class, all are important in the case of South Africa - so we are not taking one to the very exclusion of everything else - race is important in a racist society, certainly - the national question is very important, where people are nationally oppressed, and class is important, where people are exploited, so we're all taking these three components and saying the kind of struggle you are fighting is a national liberation that is for political and economic emancipation of a people.

In the discussion with - with the BC people we also said that being black does not make, you know, a recognition of the fact that you are black does not mean that you are liberated - recognition of the fact that you are black is an important element in mobilising people for the liberation - and we had a series of discussions and dis - you know, disputes with the BC people that we managed to win, but I think in the end the political position of the ANC and the congress alliance prevailed to the extent that today, you know, hardly anybody disputes, you know, the importance of the Freedom Charter, and accept the Freedom Charter as a blueprint for a future democratic non-racial South Africa.

M.S. And like I said earlier on, many of the young people who were in the BC then are - are with the ANC now - they found a political home in the ANC that they would never have found in the PAC or any organisation like AZAPO - the political home clearly was ANC because it did accommodate the aspirations of our people, accommodates the - the histories of our struggle, the traditions of struggle, and of course the method of struggle, where we emphasise that we are now fighting of course with gun in hand, but also other pillars of the struggle are the working class and the international community and mass democratic organisations inside the country.

J.F. To put it into an ideological framework, is non-racialism synonymous with the national question - what's the national question?

M.S. No, I wouldn't say non-racialism is synonymous with the national question, no - non-racialism in - in fact the point is that we're not simply fighting for non-racialism, because if you fight for non-racialism it becomes simply a civil rights struggle - ours is not a civil rights struggle - it is a struggle for the seizure of power and its transference to a majority of the people - it is to liberate, first and foremost, the most oppressed people, who are the African people, but it doesn't end there.

It also looks at the other side, the - the economic base of - of South Africa, and also to say that we are fighting that this wealth must be shared equally by the people of South Africa, regardless of race, colour or creed or even sex - so that is our understanding of the national question, so non-racialism is a form that the struggle takes, but it is not the content of the struggle, it is not the objective - we're not simply fighting for non-racialism for non-racialism's sake, no - we are fighting for the liberation of our country - we are fighting to put an end to a situation which prevails where we are simply foreigners in our own land, where we have no votes and no say, no nothing, and we are simply beasts of burden for the benefit of a minority and the multi-national corporations.

J.F. After BC clearly had been defeated and not accepted, in the late '70s, early '80s the question of ethnicity and its validity came up - with the refounding of the TIC you had a lot of intellectual debate about a so-called four nations thesis - did that - was there ever such a thesis in the ANC - how can you say you support non-racialism when you allow and in fact foster an organisation for the Coloureds, an organisation for the whites - well, the Coloureds is a sticky wicket, but as an organisation like JODAC, an organisation like NIC, TIC, a release Mandela committee, just as you had the four congress spokes of the wheel in the '50s - if someone would come and say : Ja, but I've just heard you say you're for the conviction of non-racialism, and yet you condone an ethnic four nations thesis.

M.S. Yes, but non-racialism does not mean that people - it doesn't mean that the ethnic or the national question disappears - it doesn't mean that people cease to be Africans because they believe in non-racialism, or they cease to be whites or Coloureds or Indians - fact of the matter is that there are these - the national cultural differences and - and people are either ( ) ethnic or tribal - there are differences, certainly - but non-racialism emphasises the fact that despite these, these are not fundamental - the fact that you are white and one is black are simply those accidents of history, which should not determine who runs the country or who gets what share of the national cake.

M.S. Non-racialism simply means that you transcend (?) the boundaries of race in uniting - unite across colour lines, you unite across tribal lines in order to build a - a broad democratic united front to defeat the enemy, to defeat a racist regime - not that there are no differences - certainly there are differences, like there are differences also with gender - they don't cease to be there because people, you know, are fighting together - no, they are there - but we're saying the fundamental difference is not a difference between the oppressed people or amongst the oppressed people - the fundamental difference is a difference between the oppressor and the oppressed - that is a crucial difference - and non-racialism says : Well, we accept that these people are different, but we equally accept the importance of uniting across these tribal or racial differences.

J.F. And the Unity Movement or the National Forum would say : We're anti-racist, we don't recognise race - this ANC actually uses race and organise, and the (.....) question how far should the organisation go in setting up non-racial organisations within a framework of a liberation movement - I....

M.S. Well, the peculiarity of the South African situation (?) is that people live in segregated areas - whether you like it or not it is there - and in order to mobilise we've got to mobilise where the people are, and it is a lot easier for example, for an Indian to go and mobilise the Indians in his area, or a white amongst the whites - you can't, as an African, go and mobilise the whites - it's impossible - so you make use of that situation that you find yourself in - part of the process of, you know, the struggle is you recognise - you recognise the - the programmes (?) and the obstacles and you find ways of bypassing them - and we know that people live in segregated areas and we mobilise - we have to mobilise - we have to mobilise the whites, we have to mobilise the Coloureds, we have to mobilise the Indians, we have to mobilise the Africans, and how do you do it - you don't do it by sitting back and saying : We don't recognise these boundaries, we don't recognise race - non-racialism means you recognise it but you do something about it.

You do something to eliminate racism - you actively fight against racism - that is the essence of non-racialism.

J.F. What about the future South Africa - people say : We're fighting for a non-racial democracy - can we talk a bit about what is envisaged there - what kind of society, what socio-economic system will be this future non-racial democracy that's being fought for?

M.S. Well, the - the blueprint will be the Freedom Charter - the starting point will be the Freedom Charter, which amongst its economic clauses says that the land will be distributed - in fact it talks about the socialisation of the land and nationalisation of the monopoly industries - how in practice this is going to work out of course will be left to - to the people to work out the details, but the essence is that we cannot have a situation where there are - is huge monopolies that control more than 80 percent of the wealth of the country and these are concentrated in few hands, about three or four monopolies - we can't have that.

We would need to break these monopolies and we would need to use the wealth of our country to uplift the standard of - of living and the quality of life of our people - doors of learning and culture shall be open - in practice what does it mean - it means that the government will have to build schools.

M.S. It means that the government have to get teachers - the government will have to do so many things in providing housing for the people, schools and the hospitals and the roads and that kind of thing - all that is essential - but more than that we also say that, you know, that - the political system that is going to, you know, take root in South Africa is the system of one person one vote basically - a democratic system.

J.F. Will there be an effort to ensure black representation in the structures being built when apartheid has been dismantled in a future socio-economic groundwork is being laid to assert working class hegemony - there's this concept in the West of affirmative action, whereby you say we're redressing the wrongs of the past, and in fact you have a situation where you might be discriminated against as a white man because a black woman would fulfill a quota in a government institution - this is mainly pre-Reagan in the States and I guess a bit in Britain - is that something where you would have in South Africa despite the call for a total lack of discrimination on the basis of race?

M.S. Yes, a total lack of discrimination on the - on the basis of race will go, but this is going to be meaningless if you're not going to do something in order to redress centuries of oppression - to say that the doors of learning to everybody is meaningless when people have no means of either going to school or of buying books or whatever - so when you say these are open it means you must create those conditions to make them really open and enable people to enjoy these open facilities or benefits - so clearly, you know, you have a whole generation now of kids who have been in the streets fighting and very - and generation of illiterate kids basically, so what are you going to do with them - you'd have to have a special programme in order to teach these kids - clearly affirmative action here is called for.

These are kids who were not at school because they were fighting in the barricades and also boycotting - you'd have to have something to redress that imbalance, otherwise apartheid is going to continue in reverse - it will be removed from the statute book, in theory and whatever, but it will remain if the economy still remains in white hands - so what you need to do in order to destroy apartheid is to destroy it as a system - political, social, economic system - all three - so politically if it goes, fine, you use that, the political base, in order to create conditions for the people to enjoy freedom, otherwise freedom will be meaningless if a person would continue to there in the bantustans and eke out an existence on barren land, or if the whole migrant labour system continues to exist, and if so many other, you know, discriminatory laws continue to exist the, you know, freedom is not going to be quite meaningful to the people.

For it to be meaningful it has to encompass the political, economic and social aspects.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. .... you've inherited after liberation - a lot of ANC people and people in the country are the first to say : We can't run the economy on our own - so you might also find that the same white structures will continue, isn't that true?

M.S. Certain structures will continue, but then there'll be control over these structures that continue - you don't allow them to continue as they did before - a mechanism will have to be worked out to control them, clearly - now if we are unable to run certain things like the mines because we don't have the personnel or whatever, whatever, those who will run the mines will have to, you know, be controlled by the government or ministry that the government will set up.

J.F. How does the - in terms of the theoretical base of non-racialism - does it relate to the internal colonialism thesis, the understanding of South Africa and the system of exploitation - I'm just trying to understand whether non-racialism - will you see it as a kind of a nice overlay in an aspect of the struggle, or a peripheral central issue, rooted - you said something about how you're not fighting for non-racialism, but at the same time do you see it as central or peripheral, non-racialism?

M.S. Well, if we say we're fighting for a free, democratic, non-racial South Africa, then of course non-racialism comes in, is one of the things, right, but one can't say it's central, you know, to the exclusion of everything else and everything else is - is - is peripheral - we're saying all these are interrelated in - interdependent - we are fighting for, you know, the emancipation of the most oppressed people, the African people, and the form the struggle takes of course is non-racial because we invite and accept and work together with other races.

But like I said earlier on, it's not the end, you know, of the struggle, or isn't yet of the struggle, is not simply non-racialism as such - it's simply for national and social emancipation, and this clearly means that as a form you accept non-racialism - we are not fighting for a black man simply because a person is black - we're not fighting to replace a Botha with a Matanzima, no - we're not fighting for black domination or white domination - we are simply fighting to remove that - even to remove the root cause of that domination, race domination - that is our - our understanding of non-racialism, fighting to remove that root cause of race and of racism.

J.F. Just a question that relates to this in terms of the ethnicity - there are a lot of liberals who are desperately grasping at the federal solution - it's currently under the cloak of the Indaba - but I'm quite concerned because if you speak to pretty genuine white liberals they will say - they will feel that this is some kind of value-free solution - it's Switzerland - it's France or the US, it's - I think to them it's a comfort because it somehow assures leaving certain structures intact and protecting interests - but how would you answer if a white liberal would say: Look, why - what is this unitary one person one vote - why not a federal solution - South Africa's always had the different provinces, it's got different race groups - can't we have federalism, can't we have protection of minority rights - maybe let me take it separately, federalism first.

M.S. Well, there are many proposals that are being bandied about - one of them is this one of Indaba - but the way we see it is that these are no solution to the problems of South Africa - the political and economic problems facing South Africa today - in a way these are intended really to entrench racism, not to completely eliminate racism - we are fighting for a democratic South Africa - now in a democratic South Africa why do you need those special rights here and special federalism here and there and there - you are fighting basically for one person one vote - we're fighting for a democratic South Africa.

M.S. The liberals are always talking about democracy, they want democracy, but when it comes to South Africa, when it comes (Laugh) actually to fighting to implement this democracy the - they are not quite happy with that democracy - why - we are fighting for a democratic South Africa that's based on the Freedom Charter, which despite the fact that it's more than 30 years old, still remains valid, and it's one of the most democratic documents - and I think if people are genuine in wanting democracy, of course the Freedom Charter is there, and it wants a unitary state - federalism, I don't see how it's going to solve the problems of South Africa - if anything it's going to create more problems in the future.

It's going to create serious political problems where you're going to have, I don't know, 15 here or 26 there, 20 reserved for that and 20 reserved for that - it negates the very principles of that democratic South Africa we're fighting for, so we therefore don't agree with the Indaba option, or kwaZulu option, or whatever - we simply are fighting for a unitary South Africa.

J.F. And how do you respond to those groups who worry about their cultural national identity, if they ever called it that - the Indians, the whites, the Coloureds - people who worry about the hegemony of probably of the working class but of the black - the African community - do you think there'll be any scope for reassurance through protection of minority rights?

M.S. Well, the Freedom Charter does say that, you know, this - the rights of or the (?) nationalities of people are going to be protected by law, and in fact it even goes further - it says that, you know, one person cannot insult the dignity or whatever of another - another national group, and racism is going to be a punishable offence, so that is an important assurance, that you - you - your identity, whatever, is going to be protected - and also South Africa is a country of different, you know, nationalities, and we have benefited from this kaleidoscope of different cultures, and we have got a very rich culture precisely because of this diversity.

We are not going to try and remove this diversity - why not - we've benefited from it in terms of culture, in terms of so many things - it's only when this diversity is at the expense of other people then that is bad - when the whites, you know, monopolise the political and economic power for their own benefit - of course we are against that, but we'd equally be against that if any other group wanted to do the same.

J.F. Just in conclusion - is it important - someone come here and ask incessantly about non-racialism, you ask me why - do you think it's an important topic - how does it strike you - is it a worthwhile endeavour to ask these questions - is it a bit off the mark - is it central, is it useful?

M.S. Well, I suppose, you know, it depends on the audience - if the book is intended for primarily the white audience, and perhaps of course it has - it - it's very useful - but if it's intended, you know, just for the black audience, then it has to be non-racialism plus something, you know, because they - they - some people will find it - like I found it strange, this non-racialism bit, you know - we are for non-racialism, but we are also for the seizure of power, so these are not, you know - these are the two sides of the same coin, so that is how we understand our non-racialism, an active non-racialism.