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

T.W. 1953 in Johannesburg - last child into a family of five kids - what more do you want me to say - do you want me to actually talk about my political development?

J.F. Ja, if it - the questions I ask are what were your parents like..... or was it - what incidents.

T.W. My parents weren't - my parents were good Catholics, and they tended to, especially my mother tended to live by traditional Catholic values of love and justice and charity and these kinds of things - however, they never translated them into a critique of the political situation - it revolved more around our relationships in the family and our relationships between people and so on - but somehow I was able to translate them into a critique of our society, and when I was at school I - I immediately saw the contradictions between what Catholicism was supposed to mean and what our society actually looked like, and I was always very emotionally repulsed by apartheid and what the government was doing to the black people of South Africa -

And I think I was regarded as the radical at school, but I was never really involved in political action - I didn't even know what political action meant - that I think came much later, although at school I used to organise debates and discussions and food - collecting of food for the people in the rural areas and all this kind of stuff, and I realised that they were inadequate but I had no other alternative at all.

Someone who had a big impact on my life - well, I think all of my brothers and sisters who went to university somehow had an influence, so politicising my thinking - and especially I had a - a sister who was the fourth youngest, just slightly older than I am, who was very involved in UCM, the University Christian Movement in the late 1960's and the early 1970's - but my other brothers and sisters who went to university - not all of them went - they were involved in the Catholic Student Movement -

So I was introduced to a lot of these ideas at home when they used to come home from their involvement in student politics - but I think the biggest impact was through my sister who was involved in University Christian Movement, and she knew Steve Biko quite well - she was the general secretary of UCM, and many of the others - Barney Pityana I think was also involved in the UCM, and it was in fact out of the UCM that I think the philosophy of BC really grew, or it developed inside of UCM -

The chaplain - what was his name - Basil Moore, a Methodist Chaplain of UCM who - I think he introduced black theology very, very strongly into UCM quite early on in its history, and that started I think a lot of the thinking around both black theology and black consciousness, and that spilled over into NUSAS, and then there was the walk-out (?) I think in 1969 or 1970 led by Steve Biko when the blacks walked out of NUSAS -

But all of that period had quite a big impact on my life. My sister was also a feminist, or UCM certainly discussed feminism - it also at that stage I think was one of the only organisations that discussed one's response to the military and the S.A.D.F.

So I finished school in 1970, and I was conscripted and I went into the defence force, but there was no serious challange at that point, political challenge about how to respond to - to that - it was - even within UCM it was pitched at the level of purely an individual...

T.W. .... - well, a matter of individual conscience - but when I was in the defence force I remember I used to always argue with people about being in the defence force and about apartheid, and even within the army I was regarded as a bit of a radical - but after I finished the army I worked for a few years in computers before I went to university, and again I was not really politically involved at all.

However, mainly because of my sister's friends I got to know some of the - the - the BC people who were involved in the black Allied Workers Union, mainly Drake Koka at that stage, and it was by pure coincidence that I worked with Drake Koka's brother, who was a epileptic, and he occasionally used to have these fits at work, so I used to take him home and - and that's helped to deepen my relationship with - with some of those people - but I was never politically involved at all -

In fact most of my peer group, my friends were I would say ordinary white South Africans who had a kind of critique of society, mainly a critique of industrial society, counter-culturalists, environmentalists, this - this kind of thing and - but not much of a deep political understanding.

Then I went to university, and it was at university in 1974 that I got drawn into Catholic Student politics, primarily through the statement that the South African Council of Churches made on the question of participation in the army. In 1974 the SACC made a very pathfinding statement on the question, where they in fact said you cannot be Christian and go into the army at the same time - in fact called on Christians not to go into the army - it was a very strong statement.

It was in fact that statement which gave rise to the defence force producing legislation preventing anyone from encouraging anyone else not going into the defence force - that legislation came into being in 1975 - but I was drawn in because participation in the military had always been a central question in my mind, and the Catholic students on campus were taking it up, responding to it, debating it, and I got drawn into those debates, and then through that I got drawn into the Catholic Student Movement as a whole -

And then I think subsequent to that the big influence on my life was Albert Nolan, who was having a dramatic impact on - on the lives of quite a number of people by that point - by 1975 - and many of my friends nowadays - my friends that I have now, although they dispersed all over the place, came from that era, Kallie here and Pete in a way (?) and Mike and - Mike Deeb and oh, the list is quite long - Aneen I met partly through that -

But I think the biggest event, and I think the biggest - if one can argue an intellectual turning point in my life in terms of commitment and understanding it was a Catholic student conference that was held 1975, Stutterheim in the Eastern Cape - Kallie Hanekom was president of the National Catholic Federation of Students - he too had a very big impact on my life - and Albert Nolan was national chaplain, and they ran a conference called liberation which was basically Albert Nolan giving lectures based on chapters in his book Jesus Before Christianity -

And it certainly blew my mind and it - I think it blew a lot of other people's minds as well, and I think launched many of us into - to politics in a range of ways - first of all it made us realise clearly that there's no particular Christian solution to the problems of the world, there's a political solution - you fix politics ....

T.W. .... with politics, you fix society with social tools, and that Christianity provides the motivation and the faith but not the tools with which to fix society with politics and so - and economics - and these are the tools by which one actually fixes society - I think that was a very important learning experience, that Christianity in itself was about the fixing of society, it wasn't about some kind of life after death, and that Jesus Christ was a liberator in the political sense of the word, and that all of this had been distorted and mystified through bourgeois theology, I think -

But it also taught us about economics and the relationship between politics and economics, that exploitation and the unequal distribution of wealth lay very much at the root of oppression and suffering in society, and that also had its intellectual origins in the Bible as well, that one could trace this quite clearly -

So all of this had a very big impact, and we channeled our political commitment through NCFS at that point, the National Catholic Federation of Students, but we soon found that it was fairly difficult to go very far in that organisation because it was a broad-based Catholic organisation, primarily amongst whites, and there - there was a need to be able to get together with like minded people to be able to plan and strategise more clearly and more systematically, and to reflect on our actions, as we called it -

And Albert Nolan went to South America and experienced the Latin American YCS movement, and Kallie also had some experience of that but he went and studied the YCW movement, and they started the very beginnings of the new YCS, and then soon after that I got involved in working for YCS for about four or five years full time both at a high school level and - I mean at a university level and a high school level in the townships - that again had a very dramatic impact on my life.

J.F. Which years were you with YCS (?)

T.W. From 1978, the beginning of 1978 until end of 1981 - there was something else I wanted to say but I can't remember what it is - might come back to me - oh - well, I was detained in the end of 1977 for four months under section six of the terrorism act, as it was then, and that I mean didn't decrease my motivation - sort of (?) deepened it - it -

I was in detention with the SSRC people - the student leaders of the student uprisings in '76 - and I was also in detention with A.N.C. people, and despite the fact that we were in solitary confinement I learned a lot from these people - we were able to communicate in rudimentary fashion and learned an incredible amount from our political discussions inside of jail just in those four months -

And it was very unusual at that stage for whites to be detained - I was one of the very few whites that was being detained, and that I think had a big impact on Catholic left circles - well, my detention in fact - and Pete I remember - I think it was him - was quite involved in organising a solidarity action, and there were the famous carol singers in 1977 that got arrested outside John Vorster Square because they sang Christmas carols and were charged for riotous assembly or something -

But YCS the main - well I - YCS had an impact on me in - in a number of different ways - I mean I helped to pioneer YCS to get it on the road very centrally I think, but I organised black students in the townships and I think - oh, the point I wanted to make earlier on ....

T.W. .... was, which relates to this point, is that my formative period was in the period where BC was still strong but on - on the - a decline, I would say - its decline was from about '74 up until its banning in '77 - and I think it was partly because of that that whites obviously found it a difficult - difficult to work out what role they had in the struggle -

I think a lot of the origins of - of the white ultra left, as I would call them, people who went into the unions at that point, and the white left academia that has emerged, originated in that period in the early '70's where BC was at its height, and where there was little or no role for whites, and they started looking towards completely new forms of involvement like the trade unions, like the union the - the academic situation -

That was one offshoot, one response - another response was - a kind of response that we went through was an incredible introspection of ourselves, and looking for alternative forms of living and lifestyle, and so we spawned the Christian left wing communities that - that - I think some of them still exist now, Jeseta, Tagaste (?) and all of these groups where we looked very critically at the lifestyle of whites and thought it was important to live an alternative lifestyle -

However, we didn't replace this introspective approach with - against the - the need for political action - it's just that the political action was limited, but we found a role for a lot of political action in the church, so the white left was very active in the church, the Catholic Church at least, through NC of S (?) through YCS, through the Justice and Peace Commissions and so on, and were able to develop I think a fairly sophisticated understanding of dealing with whites on a broad basis within the church in terms of anti apartheid work and working towards alternatives, and so a lot of our political training developed there.

Another strand of training that was developing that some of our - the Catholic left people went through was obviously the NUSAS, the National Union of South African Students, but I won't cover that - I'm sure you have covered that in your discussions - and that had an influence on us -

So I went into YCS - YCS was interesting in significance because from our point of view the new YCS - there was an old YCS which was organised by the YCW which more of less stopped in 1975, and then there was the new YCS which was organised by us that came out of NCFS and some people - one or two people from the old YCS - and initially started within the white universities.

We soon realised the limitations of having a broad national movement located within the universities....

J.F. Within the universities?

T.W. Within the universities, and we saw that - and we developed a very - I think a very sophisticated analysis of the church and its link to the political struggle, which I don't think any other group was doing at all at that stage - and especially we saw that most of the politicised youth in the townships were simply leaving the church and abandoning the church, which we felt was understandable but politically maybe immature because it was leaving the church ....

T.W. .... to the right wing - it was leaving the church to be a institution of reaction rather than a progressive institution - and so we started developing this idea that the church is a site of struggle too, where progressive and reactionary politics needs to be fought out, so we got very involved in that, and we felt it was important for a lot of the black youth that were leaving the church to remain there to - to bring it into the struggle -

And so we identified a lot of Christian youth that were leaving the church because of this, and we felt it was important to give them a home something like YCS which will enable them to still be politically involved but at the same time to have a deeper understanding of the church and of - of theology.

So we went to what we called the radical high school students, and so we started organising straight away in that sector, and I started off doing that myself in the Transvaal - so first of all I'd done very little organising work myself, secondly I'd never organised blacks before, and thirdly I'd never organised these kinds of blacks -

And I went into the townships - I organised mainly in the Pretoria townships, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Salsville, and to some extent in Soweto as well, and this had a dramatic impact on my life - I spent a lot of my life living in the townships, sleeping at the homes of students that we were trying to organise, talking to people and so on, and because it was in Pretoria I was forced to do this because I wasn't near my home.

So this I think - although by that stage I think I'd clearly identified apartheid as the problem and capitalism as - as being a very important cause of that problem, I think the experience of organising in this way deepened my commitment considerably and my understanding considerably, and again I think it was a turning point in my life - and also the method and training of YCS, which had a strong emphasis on leadership building, also deepened my understanding of how to be involved in politics and how to build organisation.

I discovered the real conditions of how black people live - I used to often sleep in Moss Jakani's house, who's currently on trial for treason, and there I discovered what it meant to have a four roomed house and ten people living in it - very interesting - I sometimes had to sleep on top of the dining room table because that was the only space that was left.

And of course the conditions of the townships, driving around, but then simply organising YCS because YCS started from the experience, the life experience of the students themselves both at school and in the community, and so together with them I - we developed an analysis of bantu education, an analysis of community life and alternatives - so YCS was part of building up the student movement both inside and outside the church, so it was always closely linked with COSAS -

And in terms of community problems closely linked to civic associations and the embryonic civics that were emerging in the post '76 period, and therefore developing an analysis of that. I soon became a national organiser for YCS so I had to travel all around the country, and I got an experience of black student life in rural areas and urban areas in different places like Natal, Western Cape, Transvaal etc., and so I shifted from a fairly localised experience in analysis to a national experience in analysis, and therefore ....

T.W. .... both building organisation at a national level and working out analysis at - at that level as well. After that I got involved in - well, after that I left YCS - I went back to university to do post graduate studies....

J.F. In?

T.W. Industrial Sociology at Wits, and I found that very useful because when I initially went to university I went to university simply to get a degree and not to use the degree critically - well, although I did to some extent, by the time I'd gone back I'd had this wealth of experience behind me and it was a completely new way of studying - I could - I learned much more about how to integrate it into my daily life than I had previously -

So I developed my theoretical understanding particularly of Marxism and how to use it as a tool of analysis. In 1981 a whole lot of whites were detained - this I think had a big effect on white politics and it's part of the origins of JODAC, especially in the Transvaal. There were about ten to fifteen, I can't remember, white, key white activists who were detained - maybe even more at some point - and this galvanised the white community in a very real way, and was the basis of DPSC, the Detainee Parent Support Committee, and DESCOM -

The difference between the two was that DPSC was the relative of detainees - DESCOM was the - how can I put it - the comrades, the activist friends of those who were detained.

J.F. What does DESCOM stand for?

T.W. Detainee Support Committee - DESCOM still exists now but in a very different form to what it was then. Initially it was - its aim was to simply support our comrades - then it started raising a whole lot of political questions and questions of white organisation and what was our role in - in the struggle - and there was a lot of discussion at that point about setting up some sort of white political organisation, but nothing really happened.

And then DESCOM - a lot of the people started dropping out of DESCOM as their friends were released and as support work came to an end, but I was very involved in - in - in helping to develop the new DESCOM, which was to try and take it to people in the townships where detentions were a lot more sustained long term than they were in the white areas - so part of the formation of DESCOM -

It went through a very difficult - a difficult period of - of growth initially, and I think really took off significantly in November, 1984 - September, November, 1984 when crisis work was absolutely essential when - as a result of the S.A.D.F. and police moving into the townships.

But anyway I more or less stopped my involvement in DESCOM to put a lot of effort into forming JODAC at the end of 1983 and after....

J.F. 1983?

T.W. Yes, August, 1983, because JODAC was formed at the same time that the UDF nationally was launched, but I think through my involvement in the church I developed quite a clear understanding of the importance of the - of working with whites, and that whites can play an im portant role in the struggle, and through my experience in YCS, because YCS was one of the only truly non racial organisations ....

T.W. .... in membership that I think has ever existed. It's not only been committed to a non racial and democratic society but its membership was both black and whites - its leadership was both black and white - so it's one of the few progressive militant organisations which - or the only one at one stage which I knew that was really dealing with the problem of bringing different members of different racial groups together and thrashing through the problems that that created, because it certainly did create a lot of tensions, a lot of debates and a lot of problems -

There's always the question of white leadership and black leadership, white domination, white action, within the organisation (Tape off) and personally in YCS I was - it was a very traumatic time, especially towards the end of my time in YCS - I suppose being one of the founders and most probably one of the key founders of YCS I always regarded it as my baby and most probably was quite sensitive and protective about my role within it, but it was not unusual I think that the people that I was organising, especially from the townships, at one stage started accusing me of - of dominating the organisation...

J.F. Dominating....

T.W. The organisation, YCS, and of - and throwing up questions of white leadership within YCS, and so in a very traumatic way but in a very important way the whole question of - of leadership and what African leadership really meant, and working class leadership really meant, within the organisation, came up. It was a - it was a very good learning experience for all of us, both black and white, in that - because they had to understand what it meant to accept a white leader within a progressive organisation, whites had to understand what it meant to accept the challenge, and when blacks did take over the leadership positions within the organisations whites had to learn what it meant to accept black leadership within an organisation-

And I think YCS has reached the stage where it's not really as a key issue as much as it was in the past - I mean they now have got both black and white leaders in the organisation, and there's always debates about - I mean the race question does influence who is going to be elected and things like that, but it's not as serious and traumatic I think as it was when I was there.

So I think all of this helped a lot in my ability to work with whites- I was part of the formation of the UDF - I mean of the JODAC, and came out of that grouping of people who were part of the initial DESCOM that were looking for some sort of white political organisation to bring whites together who wanted to participate in the UDF, so since then I've been very active both in JODAC and UDF, mainly from the point of view of organising whites in the struggle for - for liberation.

JODAC was different to - to YCS in that it was more or less exclusively white in its - in its content - and it also defined its role as working with whites - so maybe I should stop at that point and see how you want to tackle the question of JODAC.

J.F. What I'd like to do - there's a bunch of (.....) questions that I have that'll take us up to....

T.W. Oh, O.K.

J.F. .... and then we can get the theoretical part (You're very faint on this one) - you figure you've told factually and (.....) get into the more theoretical?

T.W. No, you can ask whatever questions you want to ask....

J.F. No, I'm saying you're saying you basically covered the chronology?

T.W. Yes.

J.F. First of all back with the detention in '77 - which months was that?

T.W. November, 1977 until February, 1978.

J.F. And just if you could speak a little bit about that - why did you get put with blacks - didn't they.....

T.W. I was in solitary confinement - I was held at John Vorster Square, but at that stage - at that stage there were a lot of people in detention - it was - I can remember figures were well over 1,000 in section six of the terrorism act, and this was all as a result of the - the period 1976 to the end of '77 which was the period of the uprisings, starting with June 15th., '76.

I don't know why they put me there - they just put me there (Laugh)

J.F. So you were next - you were in solitary but the guy in the next cell would have been black?

T.W. Yes, and all of the - the leadership who ended up in the - was it the Bethel trial - the SSRC trial, was it in Bethel - no, Kempton Park - it was in Kempton Park, yes - Sass Mazibuko (?) - Seth Mazibuko...

J.F. Not Zef (.....) - not the P.A.C. trial?

T.W. No, no, no, sorry, that was the Bethel trial - the Kempton Park trial - all of them were in John Vorster at that time as well....

J.F. And that woman (.....)....

T.W. Yes, and Dan Monsisi and Seth Mazibuko and George Twala and Teef Twala and yes, all of them - and it's interesting to look at how they - they have ended up. There was an article, an interview in....

J.F. Newsweek.

T.W. Newsweek, ja, that's right.

J.F. Dan Motsisi, George Twala, Seth Mazibuko....

T.W. Teef Twala was another one - who were - what were some of the other names - I can't remember all the names.

J.F. Did you....

T.W. Trying to remember someone else's name - anyway - I often never saw these people, I only heard their voices, and I've only maybe got to know them since they've come out of jail or - and so on - some of them I've never followed up and never got to know since.

J.F. You haven't been too anecdotal in what you've said, which is fine - I'm just pressing on this point - what was it like to find yourself in a cell and realise there were blacks next to you, for them to realise it was a white - do you remember any of the initial.....

T.W. Yes.

J.F. ....(.....) conversations?

T.W. Well, I think initially there was a lot of suspicion, because first of all there were spies in and amongst the detainees and it was quite - it took them quite a while for them to - to start communicating, or for us to start communicating with each other properly - I mean first of all I didn't know any of them - I knew some of them by name or reputation but not personally, and I don't think they knew me, so there was obviously a big gap -

Secondly they felt - and they told me this afterwards - that it was very unusual for a white to be in detention and for whites to be involved in the struggle, so it was difficult for them to - to come to terms with it - but I think what started making the difference was that I was in detention for a long period of time - for just about four months - and they - their unease turned to an inquisitiveness and my unease, you know, also started turning to inquisitiveness, so we started communicating in all sorts of ways, talking about different aspects of the struggle, P.A.C., A.N.C., what each one meant -

And I think if you spoke maybe to Dan Monsisi now he would say that some of those discussions that we had helped him to start moving into the non racial political position that he's now taken up.

Ja, I don't know how to go into that in more detail - we used to have a lot of discussions around the Bible, for instance, I mean because that was our only reading - that was the only book that we were allowed - and we used to have detailed analyses of the most obscure (Laugh) little quotes and - and readings in the Bible.

I'm not quite sure where that took us - I'm not quite sure where that took us. In terms of my own understanding of my faith I got to know the Bible more, but I don't think that experience simply deepened my understanding and knowledge of Christianity any - any significantly. I think it deepened my political commitment considerably - and also having emotional ties like that with those kind of people is obviously something you take forward with you into - into your own future in a real way - it's something that you - you own and always refer back to in your own mind as a reference point to - to guide your action for the future, and that experience still remains that for me quite, quite strongly -

So it was a difficult one, but overall it turned out to be a positive thing because it I think catapulted me forward rather than backwards.

J.F. Once they began - I assume at one point that there wasn't any more questioning about you being a spy as much as trying to.....

T.W. Yes....

J.F. .... but once you.....

T.W. No, the question was never about me being a spy - the question was simply about being a white.

J.F. But they were coming from BC and were very young - did you get - can you remember any of the strong - any statements you have gotten or challenges you would have gotten of saying : Look, you may think you have a place but we don't think you do - BC tells us you must organise your own people - did you - what kind of things were they saying to you, what kind of things were you saying to them that would have moved things?

T.W. Well, let me say at this point that I mean I knew the difference between A.N.C. and P.A.C. as liberation movements, I knew some of their differences politically about non racialism, but I think we had felt that - that whites should be working with whites - that's we - I talk about us in the Catholic left at that point - that whites should be working with other whites and that blacks - that the BC movement to some extent had a positive role to play at that point in conscientising people, in mobilising people against apartheid, but I think we were also very critical of it, and I think some of our criticism was that it - it - it - was that it didn't take economic exploitation and class oppression, if you want to put it that way, into account enough -

So it was - so I never went - my discussions wasn't there to try and simply convert them into believing that there was a role for - for whites together in the struggle - I think they all agreed that there was some sort of role for whites, and I think that even BC organisations by implication say there's a role for whites, because they say well, whites must go and work with whites and - but I think what they do say where we differ is never the twain shall meet - only very informally -

And at that point I think there was a kind of acceptance that it would be difficult to meet to strategise together in formal organisation as has been - as has been happening in the UDF - so - and I never got the challenge because I never tried to impose that kind of analysis on - on the people, although we spoke about the need for a non racial South Africa, and a kind of broad non racial movement, and there I think there were some debates around - around those questions along the typical lines of a BC critique of non racialism, and I didn't go along with that.

And there were some people there who - who didn't want to communicate with me at all, and there were others that did, and I think it's quite significant that those that did communicate with me predominantly have ended up in a UDF position, although there's some that I know that after they were released went and left the country and I think most probably joined the A.N.C., but then some of those people at that point weren't communicating with me, some of those people, because I was a white they didn't see much need to - to have conversations with me.

That didn't have a devastating effect on me at all I mean because all of it - there was so much happening in detention - I had to deal with my own detention, I had to deal with my interrogation - we shared information about what was happening in our interrogations, how to deal with it, how to deal with the security police and so on - and - and I think this created a kind of unity, a very strong bond between us, because most of us were all in detention together for that whole period of time - quite a long time to be together and share a common set of experiences -

We used to analyse the - the prison warders, the policemen, together, the workings of the - the cells and so on, and all of this unified us - I mean that we could communicate together on quite a lot - but the problem was communicating in English because it - it made it less secure - they felt a lot more secure in communicating in their own language because they knew that white people couldn't understand it - I mean the white policemen who generally were on guard duty wouldn't understand what was being said - and also we were very close to the white section of the ordinary criminal part of the - the cells, and they also didn't want them to hear what we were talking about -

T.W. So when we had our conversations in English it - it tended to expose us a lot more than it did when - when they spoke in their own language.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

T.W. .... so there were a lot of reasons for why we communicated and why we didn't communicate, and some of it was the political reason, just not seeing the need for it.

J.F. What about that feeling - you kind of spoke about it and dismissed a bit some whites moving into an ultra left position which would define their position as whites - but what did it feel like in the early to mid '70's to find that BC was on the scene - were there times early on when you felt threatened, when you felt deterred or insecure, or had to deal with other people in the group who felt that it was just such - was a difficult time for whites - did you feel that at all or was the Catholic circle not in any way intimidated or demoralised or confused - for many people it was a trying time - they'd just gotten political and then they were told get out of it.

T.W. Well, the middle of the early '70's - '73, '74 was the period when I started getting involved politically. I never found it demoralising at all - I cannot - I cannot remember that experience at all. It was - it was a period of discovery for me - I'd never ever confronted - I never ever thought that there was no role for me, and the people around me never ever had that fatalism or cynicism or whatever that has often come with whites who tried to get involved but were blocked by this - this BC thing -

And I think a lot of it was - had to do with a number of different things - one, we were involved in the church, and there was a - that was a completely open field - you could do what you want - there were absolutely no blockages whatsoever - secondly, I think that the kind of theology that Albert Nolan was teaching, which we internalised quite strongly, was when we looked at the question of leadership it - we transformed it and said it was leadership for service and not leadership to dominate or leadership to guide necessarily -

So many of us who were involved at that point in the Catholic left it was - we were fine (?) not to be leaders or to be the central political figures - we were happy to - to - to be involved in the areas where we were most effective and for - for blacks to be the leaders at that particular point.

I think a lot of the dilemma of the early '70's for whites was that they were trained to be leaders and wanted to be in positions of leadership, not necessarily consciously and as a strategy, but I think subconsciously and - and that I think is a lot of what the BC revolt was about - it was wanting to establish themselves as - as black leaders - remembering that it came very much from black university students initially - they had to compete with students who had all the skills and resources at their disposal, and intellectual expertise -

T.W. We never - I felt that it was never a problem for - for a person to be in a black leadership position, so we never always used to try and run for the central positions and always want to be central to political decisions that - that were being made....

J.F. It never was a problem for?

T.W. Us, that we weren't at the points, at the central points where political decisions were - were being made - ja, so I - I can't - I can't remember that experience at all, and I think a lot of us who are involved now that came from that time in the Catholic left who are - many of us who are now not involved in the Catholic left but are involved in the left, I don't think any of us really were disillusioned -

I can remember being involved in Catholic Students Societies and getting many BC speakers to come and talk - Smangalisa Umkatchwa, for instance, who was a very strong BC leader, worked in the BCP, used to get him to come and talk - and this priest that was detained recently in Mamelodi - what was his name - Mabusela - the Rev. Mabusela - people like that - other BC leaders we used to get them to come and talk to white students, to white groups - it was never a problem for us -

And in fact they were the only political leaders we could get and so we got them - we were wary of some of their positions but not entirely - not entirely - and I think at that point it was very difficult to - to know what the difference between organisationally and practically between the BC movement and the A.N.C. was -

And the A.N.C. at that stage endorsed the BC movement - it didn't see any difference between its aims and the aims of the BC movement. It was only after Steve Biko died, after 1977 - the end of 1977 that the real differences between the BC movement and the A.N.C. started emerging, so it wasn't a major negative impact on - on - on my life at all.

J.F. Do you think that's because you had a secure base?

T.W. Yes - yes, very much, and I think those white left wing people outside who wanted to be involved in left politics pure and simple wanted to influence the direction of left wing politics wanted to have an influence in the BC movement and to be part of that movement - that was the mainline political movement and - because they had no other base - in a sense they felt frustrated.

But it was interesting when NUSAS broke up, the BC philosophy was developed, and there was a man, Clive Nettleton, I think, who was - not quite sure what his position in NUSAS at that stage was - he might have been president, vice president or something - anyway he wrote a booklet which was called White Consciousness, and spawned the kind of mirror image of BC, the opposite image for - for - for the white areas, but I cannot - it never really took off - it never really grabbed people, this idea of white consciousness in the same way that BC grabbed the blacks -

And I think - I can't remember it very clearly - in fact it would be quite a useful thing to study, to try and look at why it didn't take off - but I think the idea of white consciousness then is very different to the idea of something like JODAC now, the idea of white democrats or the role of white democrats in the struggle -

T.W. I think it was emphasising this - this idea of white consciousness which many whites wanted to get away from - I think that that - it wasn't able to co-opt the concept white consciousness from the enemy and - and bring it onto the side of the people, and most probably BC played its role in weakening it that it - it had a limited role - and the non racial movement has tended to emphasise quite strongly that white democrats do have a role, so I think that most probably weakened that initiative considerably -

But I think the contradictions in - in - in white politics also then weren't as severe as they are now, and so JODAC and ECC and all these groups are relatively successful, not only because of our philosophy, political philosophy, if you like, but also because the context, the terrain is vastly different to what it was in the beginning of the '70's.

J.F. Can you handle that maybe more completely - you've alluded to why it's different, but if I just ask you - tell me why it was so very different - I've got that Clive Nettleton book and (.....) stuff and I've just interviewed Horst, but Horst isn't particularly (.....) and I think if you could just tell me why is it different - what was the groping about then.....

T.W. Well, I - you'd have to remind me what - why the white consciousness thrust was about because I can't remember it very clearly.

J.F. It was nothing - it was just - as far as I can remember it was just saying we have to understand what they're on about, and I guess part of the difference was a defensiveness as opposed to an assertiveness - it was part of the times and that kind of thing.....

T.W. Well, I think what it said was - and I think everything that it said still applies in - in - in many respects - I think what it said was we need to understand our political position in society, the privilege, the political privileges that we get and we also - and also the - the - the lifestyle that accrues from that that whites get - the inflated lifestyle, which is false - it's based on this privilege - and that is what part of white consciousness means -

It starts from a position of privilege, and is to move away from a position of privilege to commit white suicide as opposed - I mean to take Nkrumah's phrase, I think of class suicide and transpose it - I think that's what it said - and also to some extent to - to conscientise other whites - I mean the word conscientise was very popular then - it came with the - the Paola Freire influence in the BC movement to conscientise other whites, but separate from blacks.

Now what is - is - is different between that and now I think that whites who start getting involved in the struggle do need to go through all of that question, their position of privilege, both personally and structurally, and the lifestyle that - that is linked to that - but I think the question of separateness is obviously a very crucial question, that the main force for change in society is - or are the oppressed people, which is the African majority - Coloureds and Indians too - and the main power to dismantle the power bloc, the ruling bloc, stems from that -

So any kind of grouping that tries to cut itself off from that power is cutting themself off from power - the ability to - to change and dismantle the power bloc, the ruling bloc - so if one looks at the role of JODAC, for instance, now and JODAC's success, and ECC's success (Tape off).....

T.W. .... our power doesn't develop from - only develop from - or let me say it primarily developed from our own deep commitment and political sophistication and our mass of numbers and so on. Our power derived from the fact that we are part of the UDF in fact, and that the oppressed people have risen up against apartheid, against white privilege and white minority rule in such a forceful way - it is that resistance which has thrown the white ruling group into a considerable crisis - it is not our little activity which has thrown it into crises.

We contribute in a very small way I think to that generation of that crisis - but what we primarily do I think is to exploit that crisis for the benefit of the progressive movement in that we can come to : Starting this paragraph again :-

We contribute in a very small way I think to that generation of that crisis - but what we primarily do I think is to exploit that crisis for the benefit of the progressive movement, and that we can come to maybe just now when we talk a bit more theoretically - but I think the white consciousness movement had the assumption that there was some power in that separateness - in other words, by becoming a white consciousness movement you'd have to derive your power from it, and that there would be power in it, and that's not the case.

The power would lie in the movement of the oppressed people to overthrow the oppression and - and that's where any kind of white movement would derive its power, get its power - so the question of non racial solidarity then becomes a very important question, and I think that the fact that - that no contact was allowed, formal contact was allowed between whites involved in the struggle and blacks involved with the struggle at that point was the death knell of the white consciousness movement at that point, and it tended to splinter - people started to question their identity -

I mean BC in a sense always had a positive outlook - it always had something to move towards - white consciousness was - was negative - you always had to move away - and I think what we need to do now is - well, what we're trying to do is to - yes, we're trying to break down a lot of things, in that sense being negative, but we're also trying to construct a non racial solidarity and unity at the same time, so we have, I think, a powerful alternative which - which didn't exist at that point.

J.F. Back in detention - what about the level of awareness of the blacks that you were talking to and communicating with - you said you had figured out a bit of the difference - let me take it with you first - what was it like - you talked about your political background - when had you ever heard of the A.N.C. or the SACP or the P.A.C. or any of the historical movements in the country?

T.W. That is a difficult question to answer -.....

J.F. And when was it talked about - when was it in your frame of (.....)

T.W. Well, by the time I was detained I was pretty clear on the difference between the A.N.C. and the P.A.C.....

J.F. And that was through general awareness.....

T.W. I can't - I can't work out - let me just try and take this back a bit -

T.W. Well, I'm not quite sure how to put this, but as far as I can remember, as far as I can remember, I think it must have started round about 1974 at the time of my political involvement, and as far as I can remember I always had a lot more of a positive attitude towards the A.N.C. than towards anything else - I often had a lot of misconceptions about it - I often didn't know at all what its political analysis was at that time, but somehow it always was in my mind as the - the - the leader of the liberation movement - I always considered it to be that, so when the BC movement was around I never saw the BC movement as an alternative to the A.N.C. in my - in my own mind -

But I was often very naive about what the A.N.C. actually stood for so - and I had a kind of - I think my own political immaturity led me into a - a - a kind of radicalism for radicals for - for its own sake almost, that one needs to be as radical as possible and find the most radical kind of analyses, so for instance, there was a period I'd say from my first two years in YCS, from about the time of the end of my detention until - until about 1980 where I would have had I think a Trotskyite position and I though that this was the - this was something of what the A.N.C's position was, but I don't think you should put that in (Laugh)

I mean I remember in my own mind and thinking that - just a kind of little anecdote which I think came back to us through this Anglican priest living here in Harare now - we produced this theological document in YCS - can't remember what it was called - Peoples Theology or Theological Reflections or something like that, which was for us the culmination of all our political thinking and theological thinking and so on, and we produced this great big thing analysing '76 and why it took place and the forces behind it and so on, and we thought this was a great document -

Anyway it got out the country and it got into the hands of the movement, and we heard that it got into the hands of - of some very key people in the movement, and we heard that when they read it they were very - what's the word - how can I put it - sad, I suppose, that - or disappointed that - that - or that we had this kind of analysis, because in a sense it was very much a Unity Movement analysis of the Cape, hard line class analysis analysing everything in class terms, trying to reduce everything to class struggle, that race wasn't really a problem - it was just simply a superficial manifestation of the underlying class struggle and so on, and we - we analysed '76 very much in those terms, and we looked at the economy in crisis in gold price and all this kind of thing, and how it had its impact on the South African economy and jobs, and therefore students were - weren't able to get jobs and therefore they became more radical etc., etc. -

And no real sophistication at that point about national oppression, the problem of power and political control over one's life, racial oppression - no real sophistication and understanding of those issues at all - so we were quite shocked to hear that (Laugh) our little theological document wasn't looked upon favourably - so we went through, we started analysing, you know, re-evaluating our - our position as a result of that in fact, and as a result of - of - of the response that we'd heard that our little document had got -

So - but at the same time our hearts were politically in the right place and - in that we tended to I think agree with the aims and objectives of a non racial democratic movement, but not understanding very much about it, I don't think, and I think that only really started deepening around about 1980 for me clearly -

T.W. Ja - what - what we were talking about - what was the question again that we're actually dealing with?

J.F. I was just ascertaining the level of sophistication and understanding of the blacks in detention in terms of A.N.C. and P.A.C.....

T.W. Oh, and then my - ja, my understanding - so I always knew about it - I knew something of its traditions but I didn't always know its content - and I think that many of the blacks there it was very similar as well - they knew about it but for many of them, not all of them, and it was varying degrees - I mean I think many of them would have seen their - their BC position not being in contradiction to - to something like the A.N.C. -

But prior to 1976 the A.N.C. wasn't very strong aboveground - you know, it didn't have the same clear symbolism that it has now aboveground - and what it stood for and so on, so there was a lot of confusion generally at that point -

Some people saw it, yes, very clearly as a critique of the A.N.C's position - there was one person inside who - who was a reporter - he wasn't part of the student uprising, he was a reporter - I don't know if I should mention his name - he's now living in exile somewhere - but he was very clear on the differences of why he rejected the A.N.C., which I was quite shocked about - I mean he was in detention and he told me he rejected the A.N.C., and I assumed that he was there for P.A.C. - you know, I mean I assumed that - that all people who rejected the A.N.C. were the P.A.C. -

I knew about the P.A.C. and the P.A.C. breakaway and chase all whites into the sea and Africa for the Africans and those kinds of slogans - but he was BC, he wasn't P.A.C. - he's BCM - I think he's gone into the BCM in exile now - so I was quite shocked at that - at that analysis at that stage.

J.F. But would you have felt more comfortable with the A.N.C. because of its attitudes towards whites - did you know that - did that make you feel well, they accept people like me - was that part of your...

T.W. Yes, I - I think it might have been - I can't really answer that with any clarity at this stage - it might have been - I really can't say - I think in a sense I had a kind of unguided or natural movement into seeing it as - as the most important political movement - my sophistication around it, as I said, only crystalised substantially '79, 1980, that period, but it was always there before in my mind - I can't trace it out -

It might have been - it might have been that, the fact that it had whites in it. I mean for instance, certainly I mean - and this again I don't know how much it should be publicised, but I mean personally I've never ever had a strongly anti communist feeling, and never been that way orientated, and have always - not always but for quite a long time I think been - tended to be more defensive of the Soviet Union, and I think it was partly because of - of the communist propaganda and having to break through the communist propaganda and seeing how much the - this - I mean it's trying to come back to me now a little bit, now that I think about it -

We tackled the whole ideology of the fear of communism quite a lot in our Catholic left situation, and - but rerouting it to look at apartheid as the real problem and not the great big communist bear out there - and also for theology because for theology communism was the big alternative and oh, the big threat, the big bug bear, and we had to rerout that as well -

T.W. And we started using a Marxist analysis quite systematically, maybe not very coherently but certainly systematically (Laugh) and I think that that - for many people the Communist Party at that point represented the kind of left of the whole liberation movement, and for that - for that reason was an attraction - again at some stage I think some people were not very clear on the differences between the Marxist/ Leninism of the Communist Party and the Trotskyitism of the Unity Movement or - or the differences between them - but I think looking to the Communist Party and the fact that it had whites in it, itself was a non racial movement it membership, and that it had played an important role in various aspects of South African history, specially in organising trade unions and so on in the '40's - I think that helped to - to start breaking down the fact that race was merely a qualification for - for leadership - that it was political commitment and understanding and skill that was also important-

So I think that played a role - I can't remember exactly how significantly at all - but I think many of the - the - the whites who were involved in the struggle and in the Communist Party were important figures for us, and especially in YCS as we were trying to look at the whole meaning of - of leadership -

For instance, very, very few people in YCS in the white high - in the black high schools movement had never heard of Denis Goldberg, so we would have to - I mean at that stage he was in jail and very much a - it was always Mandela and the Robben Island prisoners but never Denis Goldberg in Pretoria Central -

So I can remember a time when we did a bit of research - who were the white leaders, what did they represent, how were they involved and - and discovering Denis Goldberg was - had a very big impact on our lives - he became an important symbol in YCS in a strange way so that we used to - and - and certainly for the black students I mean he was a complete revelation -

It was only much later that - that he became a popular figure before he left jail but - ja, I can remember us doing that as well. It's all a bit incoherent - it - it's something that I have to try and piece together again.

J.F. Did you raise that issue because you perceived an anti communist thrust coming from those who rejected the A.N.C.?

T.W. With the specific question of Denis Goldberg?

J.F. No, back when you first raised the issue - you were talking about what made you feel comfortable with the A.N.C. - the anti whitism of the P.A.C. didn't make you comfortable - was there a sense that the P.A.C. was anti communist and did that make you uncomfortable....

T.W. No, I came to understand that - I don't think that made me uncomfortable - it wasn't the anti whiteness of the P.A.C. that made me uncomfortable - it was the fact I think that I knew, and that many of us knew, that we thought the A.N.C., partly because of its links with the Communist Party, was prepared to look at the - the question of class - and as far as we knew the P.A.C. and the BC movement clearly at that stage wasn't prepared to look at the question of class, and sometimes when I came across some P.A.C. questions on class it was - it was often a form of Maoism which - which just didn't make any sense to South Africa at all, so -

But it wasn't its anti whitism that - that I think was threatening at that stage -

T.W. I mean I've encountered both practically and theoretically a form of anti whitism which - from inside YCS, from inside - you know, from the groups that we - we - we working with - but it's possible that it did - I mean it's very difficult to - to - to say how that actually had an impact on our lives, but I think it is an important point for the - the - the non racial movement that they - because they aren't anti white - that whites can feel easy about liberation, and I think that is an important point if that is underlying your question, but I don't know how much that was there at that stage.

J.F. Maybe I shouldn't dwell too much on that stage because (.....) will present you as a clear person in the '80's and not dwell too long on this - why don't we come back to you when you've become a clear person in the '80's and come back to some of the issues..... (Tape off) - I'm just interested just to finish up on the detention how effective the white left - I remember Meyrick talking about how it was so - such a big impact on whites generally that there was actually a white sitting in John Vorster Square.....

T.W. When was this, in '77 when I was in detention?

J.F. Ja - and do you have any sense of how it affected....

T.W. Well, there were a couple of people who were detained at that time - (.....) van Heerden was detained for two weeks in the middle of - and Max Price - were detained for two weeks in the middle of 1977, the first anniversary of June 16th. - and Cedric Mason was also detained for two weeks at that stage -

What it did was to bring the idea - well, its impact was in a range of different areas - I mean I think it would be much better to talk to other people who experienced - it might in fact be better to talk t to Pete about - about that impact - I mean I think he'd be able to give a clearer understanding of the impact of it.....

J.F. But with your perception is all I'm asking - what did it feel like to be hearing Christmas Carols - how did the blacks react?

T.W. Oh - oh, oh, yes - oh, yes, all of that - well, it's difficult - ja, what did I feel - O.K., let's talk about it purely personally - I mean I'd been in detention by that stage at - how long - two months, I think - I'd gone through maybe a week of - of - not even a week - two or three days of questioning in that whole time, so I was just sitting completely - I was very - I was pretty depressed - I mean it was Christmas time and all this kind of thing and it was pretty heavy going, and - unfortunately my cell was in a difficult position and the people who sang - John Vorster Square's got two sets of cells, one set that faces onto the streets and another set which face internally onto the inside courtyard, and unfortunately I was in one of those cells so I never heard the singing that was going on in the streets at all -

But the other black prisoners saw them and heard them, and I mean it inspired the hell out of them that whites were prepared to do this kind of thing - it - it had a massive impact on - in lifting their spirits - it - on handling and dealing with detention - but it didn't transform their political analysis - it didn't kind of say oh, there are whites involved in the struggle - I mean in a sense they didn't make that link - it was - on the one hand I mean detention is an intensely personal experience and it's also a very political experience, and - and sometimes those two don't always come together at all in - inside -

T.W. And I think it takes someone, you know, obviously with a lot of experience and understanding to - to link up your emotions and your feelings with your commitment and your analysis - they don't always coincide - and I think that is an example of that, where many BC people saw that - they were - I mean remember a lot of these people were students - they were straight out of school - they'd been thrust into positions of political leadership, not very mature, not sophisticated, so seeing people there singing for them was a good experience, but they weren't able to - to integrate and they helped - it helped to handle the detention to some extent.

I only heard them singing the carols when they were all in jail on - because they - we were on the second floor and they were put in - in the cells on the third floor.....

J.F. So what happened exactly?

T.W. Oh, well, they were all arrested eventually.....

J.F. After what, a few rounds?

T.W. After a few Christmas Carols - and then Derek Hanekom was punched in the face and (Laugh)....

J.F. By a policeman?

T.W. By a policeman, and he charged them with assault and he won the case actually - anyway they were all brought into the John Vorster Square and - on the third floor there - and I didn't know who they were at all, but they were singing Our Father and all sorts of (Laugh) crazy songs and Christmas songs they were singing them and I - I thought now are these people that I know or don't know, so I tried to communicate - I mean they were one floor above me, you know, and I desperately tried to communicate to them that they - they had no idea where the political prisoners were inside the cells and - but I knew that I must know them, and I was very, very elated - I mean I was - it was - it shifted me into a high which was - is a bit I think indescribable, to describe how deep and painful a depression can be in detention -

I mean a depression can become physically painful - it's not simply an emotional experience - and how that experience just lifted me out of that depression - it was the next day that I - one of the prison warders smuggled a Sunday Times into my cell - he was a vaguely friendly warder and he showed me the front picture and - and then I discovered it was basically not simply for me that it was done - it was done for detainees - but it was my detention which motivated people to - to do it - and they were doing it for all detainees -

And after that I think they'd planned to go to Mordaby as well, so it wasn't simply because I was at John Vorster Square -so it - it I think - so personally that's - that's what the effect that had on me - it also brought a lot of people into the struggle, that little carol singing thing, so it - I mean if you spoke to Pete about it - he was quite very involved in organising it....

J.F. Got him married, too?

T.W. Was that when he met Lulu for the first time?

J.F. Ja - just to follow up on it, did any of the blacks manage to tell you that this had happened?

T.W. Yes, they did tell me the next day - well, communication wasn't always instantaneous, specially from those people on the other side of - of the corridor - those who had their cells facing the other way - you - you weren't able to communicate so it wasn't - I can remember it wasn't very instantaneous an analysis of - of what was happening was not instantaneous.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. Now I'm just moving on chronologically, so I don't know if there's anything else you want to say about that per se....

T.W. About the carol singing?

J.F. No, just general....

T.W. No, no - oh, about the effect on the white left - there are two things that I wanted to say, that's right - the one was that well, it made people - it motivated people to - to - to fight repression and to see, you know, once again more clearly the horrors of the system and - and so on - and it brought repression close to people - to whites in a way that up until then was very removed for a lot of people even - I mean very few whites had black friends at that stage, even those who were politically active.

I think about the only area that I knew was the CI or Christian Institute which had - you know, where - but to meet someone who'd been in detention, and to get firsthand experience of it, was very unusual and very strange, especially in white circles, so to - to - it brought that home very strongly, it brought that experience first hand to a whole group of people, the horror of it and also how to deal with it -

And on the one hand it - it tended to motivate people to fight against the government (?) but on the other hand it helped to demystify a lot of what it was about - I mean up until then it was this incredible bogey, this - this - the unknown - it was - it was a complete area - unknown area.

The other thing was that it - it made a lot of people, both black and white, realise that the government is prepared to to detain whites, and that there are whites who would go pretty far in - in being detained - it I think - and I'm not sure what the extent of that impact was amongst blacks, but certainly amongst the white left almost there was a kind of feeling that whites were untouchable and that we were vulnerable too, and that the government was prepared to go that far, and I think it also broke down that - that - that kind of myth, but overall there was - it was a positive thing for the white left movement.

J.F. So when you came people asked you a lot of - they wanted to know and you felt that it was politically useful to describe it in detail?

T.W. Yes - yes, I can remember after about two weeks I went on holiday because I got very tired of talking about the same old experience again and again.

J.F. One last area in terms of your detention - how did the white policemen and the black policemen treat you - how did they feel about - they hadn't had a white detention for a while - it was unusual - what kind of things did they.....

T.W. Well, in both areas it was uneven - oh, you mean the (.....) policemen?

J.F. Ja, what were you going to talk about?

T.W. I was going to talk about the warders.

J.F. Do that first then.

T.W. Well, it was quite interesting that we had a white warder and a black warder, two of them, they were incredibly sympathetic to us and very good.....

J.F. To all the prisoners, black....

T.W. To everyone, black and white - the black one was eventually kicked out because he was doing too much for the people - I think he was taking messages and things like that - I mean he - he was very interesting because he told me he was completely trusted by the other people in the cell.....

J.F. White?

T.W. No, this black guy - completely trusted - he used to take messages - and it was this black policeman that told me that eventually - there was a MK guy who was detained and picked up and put in a cell next to mine and he became a spy and - while he was in jail anyway - and then they used him in the cells - they used to put him next to different people to try and extract information - and the reason why I'm very clear on - on - and this I don't think should go in - very clear about why I knew about the difference between the A.N.C. and the P.A.C. at that point was I remember we had a long conversation one night with this guy who was the spy, where I pretended not to know the difference at all, but I knew everything that he was talking about and he told -

But he was interesting because he'd been trained in East Germany and Angola and places like that - I keep forgetting what the point is, the question.

J.F. You were just going to talk about....

T.W. Oh, O.K., so he warned me about this guy being a spy - he took messages - he was eventually kicked out because of that - but then there was a white guy doing his national service in the police force who'd gone to a Catholic boarding school in Natal - private boarding school in Natal - Thomas More - I can even remember the name of the school - and he was very friendly - very nice guy, very friendly, and he used to do things like he used to chat to everyone to make them feel at home and things like -

I mean I don't think - he was very naive and he was a bit racist actually in his own thinking, you know, as an ordinary white South African is - I mean didn't understand blacks - I mean the first time he'd had contact with blacks was in this context - but an interesting anecdote here - I mean at that point I didn't know the Saidis, 1977 - never heard of the Saidi's before, and he knew the Saidis -

T.W. I can't remember what his name is now - if we can go back and find out what his name is - I met him afterwards - he went to university when he finished his national service - but he knew the Saidis and he was our warder at - on Christmas Day, and at lunch time he went off and had lunch with the Saidis, you see (Laugh) and when he came back from lunch he brought back sweets and fruit and everything -

Mrs. Saidi - you know Theresa Saidi?

J.F. I know the kids.

T.W. She's a - she's a real saint of a woman - she - she felt sorry for these people in jail and she'd asked this guy to take them back and he brought us back fruit and sweets and all sorts of things and - what he did was he opened all the cell - the two doors in each cell and the warders - the police warders had the key for the outside doors, the security police had the key for the inside doors - so he opened all the outside doors -

We couldn't get out of our cells, but we could shout and communicate and sing songs and everything - and he got into trouble for that - so he was - so there - a lot of the other warders were very heavy, typically heavy, both black and white, so there again I mean you know, the kind of thing - how things cut across race.

The interrogators well, they were normal - I mean Steve Biko had just died before I was detained - he'd just been killed - and I think that there was a bit of wariness to - to treat people harshly after that, so not only I but quite a number of prisoners weren't getting physically tortured in the way that I think a - I mean I think it soon changed but - so in that sense I was never ever beaten up - I mean I was cut once because I shouted at a security policeman....

J.F. You were what?

T.W. Hit, but never tortured physically.

J.F. Was there anything that they said to you that reflected their difficulty in handing a white - and seeing that a white was there - how did they feel about.....

T.W. Yes, they felt very uneasy about how to deal with a white.

J.F. How was that evidenced - what did they say to you - how....

T.W. Well, they treated me with a lot more respect - they didn't quite know how to talk to me - they knew exactly how to talk to blacks, you know, in a very antagonistic and racist way, but with me they didn't know quite how to do it at all....

J.F. But they fit you in (?)

T.W. I got a visit from my parents at Christmas time, just after the carol singing bit - in fact the next day - I'm not sure - sometimes others did get visits but generally not, so I think that was a privilege that a lot of other prisoners didn't get - I got fruit parcels, which sometimes the other black prisoners didn't get.....

J.F. What about their attitudes, their fitting you into a pigeon hole kind of - did they....

T.W. They didn't know how to deal with me at all because they - I wasn't the run of the mill radical - I was involved in the Catholic left -

T.W. I wasn't detained because of that - I mean I was detained because of something else - but I didn't answer any of the questions that they wanted - they didn't know how to deal with me in that regard - it was obviously - but I was also being - my case was run by police from Protea Police Station although I was being held at John Vorster Square, and Protea Police Station is the one that deals entirely with Soweto, and I think this was the first time that any of them had ever had to deal with a white at all -

These are the security policemen that I was dealing directly, so it was - it was simply a new experience for them - but it was quite clear that discrimination happens there as well - I mean I got treated much better than - than all of the black prisoners - and ja, they most probably thought I was slightly naive and misguided person, didn't quite know what I was doing and - they used to give me long lectures about well, my involvement and why I'm involved and -

And it seemed so sometimes that they were operating from a sense of concern, that this whitie had lost the rails and they were trying to bring me back onto the rails, but not very much - I also think the fact that I was English and Catholic made me a bit more alien as well - you know I mean if I was Afrikaans I don't know if they would have communicated better, but I don't think there -

I know that in other towns there've been real attempts to try and bring people back onto the rails, you know, real long moral lectures and so on and I didn't get - I mean I got some of them but not a lot - but I think all I can say is that that racial affiliation is so deeply ingrained that it's almost natural for those people even in detention.

J.F. Moving on - I wanted to ask what your reception was from blacks as a white when you began organising - you got out and you.....

T.W. In YCS?

J.F. Just generally what it was like to go into the black townships and sleep on the dining room table - how blacks responded - it's also interesting for me to see what kind of levels of ingrained or learned BC responses there were - BC was a lead movement - what was the kind of township kids' response - did they have problems, did they have - what kind of obstacles did they have to get across to accept what you're doing there - were there any things they said to you, and how did they first deal with you - how did you actually do it - it was early stages to go in '78 to go up to Pretoria, Mamelodi and those kind of places.

T.W. Well, initially - initially through key contacts, people like Moss Chikane who was - what was his job then - I think he was working in the Catholic Church - or was he, I don't know - anyway he also - he came out of the BC background as well - I mean he was involved with Smangaliso in BC - SASO - he was in SASO - I mean he was our main contact in Pretoria, and through him everything that happened in Pretoria, and then eventually also through Smangaliso - he was - I mean - no, it was Smangaliso and he - Moss and Smangaliso were the two main contacts in Pretoria -

Then in Soweto again it was with key contacts, blacks who were involved in the church - it was someone like Rosemary Mabaso, Zodura Mabaso - I don't know if you know her - she was, and her husband, were detained....

J.F. Mobaso?

T.W. Mabaso - I mean we just went and asked her and said, you know, who were the students who would be interested in this kind of thing, and they put us in contact with them - Rosemary Mabaso was never - I mean she's involved in The Grail in South Africa - she was detained quite severely, heavily, with her husband - when was it - last year, before the state of emergency, I think - I can't remember anyway -

And then what I would do I would go and speak to these kids about YCS, tell them what it stood for, were they interested in something like that, would they try - if they were, would they get their friends together - then they would get their friends together - sometimes we'd go and approach youth groups in churches and tell them about YCS.

J.F. What was their response to you in the early stages before you were known?

T.W. Well, because it was in the church I think it had a relative amount of safeness - if it was purely political I think it would have been - it would have been a lot more - there would have been a lot more suspicion, but there was an incredible amount of suspicion, no doubt about it, and not only suspicion but a lack of understanding of what YCS was, because YCS wasn't a youth movement, it wasn't a political organisation - I mean a political party kind of organisation - it wasn't a classical youth movement I mean in the sense that it -

Most youth organisations play games and, you know, all this kind of stuff - sport and all that, drama and so on - but we had a clear orientation of what are your problems, how do you see those problems, how do you think they should be changed, and so on, and starting from people's day to day experience of life and then moving into the whole question of action, and -

And essentially dealing with militants, activists - I mean training people to be activists but also dealing with them - it was a method, process which was very, very good for activists, and a lot of this people simply didn't understand, so it was difficult for me to say what is the problem - are people responding to me negatively because I'm white, or are people responding to me negatively because they don't understand YCS, or because I'm a male sometimes I mean, you know, if I had to deal with black women it would be very difficult to break through maybe because I'm a white male, you know I mean that I think was also a problem.

Maybe another problem was - because at that stage we were living in these kind of alternative communities, these left wing communities, so we used to have tatty clothes and long hair and straggly beards, and I can remember years afterwards we had a kind of I think - I don't know who set it up, can't remember - but anyway we got together about 40 or so students at Smangaliso's parish in Soshanguve and I introduced YCS and so on, and the whole thing was organised -

Oh, I know how it was done - Smangaliso put me in contact with a couple of students and then they had got this whole group together and I'd come along and give them a talk - I don't think they knew that I was going to come along and give this - introduce YCS - I mean they saw their friends who invited them and on the basis of the invitation of their friends they came along -

And anyway Mabopane at the moment is one of our strongest areas - Shushungu ve Mabopane's the same place -

T.W. Chikane Chikane, Moss Chikane's younger brother, years later said to me, there I was with my tatty jeans and my broken sandals and my long hair and my scraggly beard, and he thought what's this white bum come for here - is he going to ask us for money at the (Laugh) end of this speech - there were a lot of them that were very sceptical about this -

However I mean it was his group, Chikane Chikane's group and Zolile and - that became the most militant group in - in Pretoria area - and I dealt with them and - and there was initially a lot of suspicion, especially from the more militant people, and I think - I mean all sorts of problems I had to deal with - people just didn't arrive for meetings, you know I mean that was the prolific problem - lack of - what do you call it - reliability and so on, like me with you yesterday (Laugh) this morning - I mean -

And it wasn't because I was white or anything, it was just a problem - you know, people didn't arrive for meetings or they would forget about it or didn't come or what's this white want anyway or ag, I'm tired of the church or a whole range of problems, so it was very difficult to pinpoint down at each particular instance what the cause was, so it was just simply a matter of persevering and almost disregarding that, you know, and -

So for instance, in the (.....) areas eventually I did become known, become close (?) - I used to drive around on my 200cc motor bike, and this caused a bit of a stir, and then eventually I started staying there, and because I had the backing of Moss Chikane as well, and Smangaliso, key black leaders in those areas, it - that - I mean I think if they hadn't given the go ahead we wouldn't have made any headway whatsoever in those areas.

In Soweto we didn't have the backing of the key leaders - BC was much stronger there, and so it was a lot more difficult to break into Soweto - Pretoria we broke into very easily, and a very, very good section - but now for instance, from time to time I used to go in by car and I used to travel around with Chikane Chikane, and the black students in COSAS or that kind of thing would be very suspicious - initially they thought, you know, I must have been a police - policeman, and that these guys were fraternising with a policeman, and they had to sit down and explain to them that this wasn't the case, and explain why YCS was non racial in the way that it was, and that was a very positive -

And initially it did create tensions between the organisations, but eventually they worked - I mean there was something that was - that people were able to overcome - it wasn't a permanent break - and then eventually I got to know some of the key leaders in COSAS there, and we used to work together very closely so -

It did take quite a while to - to establish the relationships but understandably so, but I think in YCS we decided that you just need to persevere and break through - I think in the end in YCS we came to the - it's obviously much better having - not having whites organising in the townships - not as the permanent thing, but there's so many problems to deal with and work through that one can short cut them so much more quickly, and the question of non racialism can be dealt with in a different way without having to have to deal with - with white organisers.....

J.F. When did you decide that?

T.W. Well, I think that's come to be decided in YCS but I suppose we decided it more or less by end of 1980 or 1981 or so, round about then.

J.F. After your experience?

T.W. Mmm, but I wasn't the only one that organised - I mean Katherine Hunter, for instance, was organising in those areas - I mean we brought her in and trained her to be an organiser and someone else, Sharhon Velmonts and - a lot of it also depended on the person's character as well, you know, if they were able - if they were extremely tense about - about it that - they will I think project that tension to some extent onto the other person - they would feel it and also response in a tense way -

But for instance, Sharhon Velmonts, who was an organiser there, was a very flamboyant personality and was able to strike it off very quickly with people - she didn't have many problems, not in the way that some others did - I mean she was just a very, very good organiser, unbelievably good organiser, so she just seemed to make it in those areas..... (Tape off)

T.W. .... in DESCOM mainly from '81 until '83.

J.F. Was there anything to pinpoint about non racial that came out of that experience?

T.W. Well, I think the initial phases of DESCOM it was a purely white thing where we were mainly focusing on supporting our white friends and we called ourselves DESCOM, but then when that came to an end a group of us got together to re-evaluate DESCOM and we said that it wasn't properly a DESCOM, it was a - it was simply supporting our friends, and that it was a positive experience and it might be worthwhile taking this to various people in the townships and asking them what they thought of it, and once again we approached key people in the townships, a whole range of different areas -

I can't remember - even remember now who I really approached - I remember the most impressive person that I approached was Amanda Kwadi, who you must know, and oh, and immediately we hit it off - I mean she understood the need for it, she thought it was very important - there were no problems of - of working with whites together in the same organisation at all, and it got together quite well - I mean we fumbled along incredibly trying to find our aims - our role and our aims and objectives and the actions that we would do and so on -

The DPSC was always a lot more successful and had a lot higher profile - appeared to be a lot more successful - they were in that they had a bigger impact on the whole question of detentions, especially through their publicity - we were never able to generate the same kind of publicity but - so -

But despite the fact that we agonised so often over our role we'd work together as a team - there was the Johannesburg DESCOM, which was mainly white, and then there was the DESCOM co-ordinating group, and then there were groups in the different townships that we started, but we worked together quite well, but we mainly - the co-ordinating group mainly consisted of key political activists from the townships -

T.W. So they knew what non racialism meant, so there was never a problem of working - I mean someone like Amanda is - is just so unbelievably non racial in her approach - she'd never have problems with white leadership at all - I mean Amos Masondo was another man there who was also very active - and there were quite a lot of others whose names I cannot remember -

Someone to interview about DESCOM would be Neil Colman and Barbara Creasy because they've continued their involvement in DESCOM up to this day - they followed it all the way through - but we ran workshops together, black and white - I'm not saying DESCOM - I never ever found the kind of racial tensions that did exist in YCS - I must say in DESCOM I found a greater readiness to work with whites than even in some - in some ways I felt within YCS - maybe it was because of the changed circumstances - I mean it's a completely different period - post '81 was the big - the second wave of student boycotts, and what was characteristic of that was, because it emanated mainly from the Cape Coloured schools it had a very strong non racial sense about it, much more so than the '76 uprisings -

And then between '81 and - and from that period onwards - well, the big student boycotts, I'm sorry, were in '80.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

T.W. There were all the Wilson Rowntree - no, that didn't come at that stage - the Fatis and Monis boycott, the Red Meat boycott, the anti Republic - anti Republic Day '81 was a very important event in breaking down - it was the first real national action, non racial action, I think, and all of that had happened, and so I think there was a sense in which there was more acceptance -

Secondly, a lot of white service organisations had sprung up.

J.F. What do you mean by white service organisations?

T.W. Oh, well, let me - no,no - yes, exactly - thank you for correcting me - service organisations that had white staff, things like - well, I can't remember what existed then - but things like CRIC and MARS and - what other groups existed then -.....

J.F. SDP?

T.W. I don't know if SDP had started then - I think SDP came a little bit later - but anyway there were - whites were more and more generally dealing with blacks in the townships, through these organisations primarily, and because these service organisations were education orientated there was an acceptance, I think, from people in the townships to receive information from whites in these service organisations -

And by that stage the whole idea of non racial struggle, non racial society, was pretty much on the map - BC had more or less, as the major political force, declined, and the slogan for anti Republic Day, for instance, was No to - what was it - No to Racist Republic or No to Apartheid Republic, Yes to a People's Republic, People's Republic being the essential thing -

T.W. Not an Azanian Republic or a Black Republic or anything like that - and then '81 was also - ag, there were many anniversaries taking place left, right and centre - Free Mandela campaign happened and Freedom Charter anniversary was when, 1980 - I remember there was a big Freedom Charter campaign - I can't remember exactly when it was - but a lot of us were introduced to the intricacies of the Freedom Charter and various critiques of it - the BC critique of it and so on -

So there was a lot more acceptance, and my memory of the non racialism in DESCOM was never ever a problematic question - it was - it was assumed that we should work together, that repression was an issue that everyone faced, not only blacks - I think there was a realisation that blacks were obviously a lot more severely affected - I think because of the DESCOM/DPSC experience a lot of the political under - the - the more sophisticated political understanding of the significance of DESCOM and DPSC did lie with the white activists at that stage -

But as I said earlier on DESCOM floundered not because of the non racialism but because its political aims and objectives were very unclear, and it was very difficult to - to find a very clear role - and then DESCOM just took off after repression reached its peak in - it - I mean its role became abundantly clear - and well, since then it's now run and led by blacks and - I mean there's still whites involved in it but it - it's a successful and viable organisation.

J.F. And it's nation wide - there DESCOMS.....

T.W. Well, it's not always called a nation between the different - in the Transvaal there the DESCOM which co-ordinates from - in the PWV area, Pretoria, Vitwatersrand and the Vaal Triangle - it covers that kind of area but has - it has contact with the DESCOMS around the country - the crisis groups like that around the country are all very different and structured in different ways and so on but - so I'm just talking about the Transvaal experience.

J.F. But DESCOM - DPSC tended to be mainly whites - it was the parents of the detainees....

T.W. Yes, yes...

J.F. .... DESCOM became more and more township based and there were whites who were involved, but most of its chapters or people doing it were in the townships, is that correct?

T.W. I think that is correct that DPSC has tended to maintain white - maintained - or remained, sorry, white led - or the main people who are active and initiate things - although they did a lot of work in the townships obviously....

J.F. Because of circumstances....

T.W. Yes....

J.F. .... like parents haven't been detained, black (.....) were also detained (.....)....

T.W. Yes, yes.

J.F. So you decided you shouldn't let things collapse just because your friends were no longer in detention - you went into an already existing DESCOM or went to someone like Amanda and said : Hey, isn't this a good organ - a vehicle to.....

T.W. No, DESCOM, we set up support groups to support our friends - that became DESCOM - that went into decline - we had to re-evaluate - then we went to the townships, and then township people got involved, and that went through a series of re-evaluations, and then with the DPSC they set up offices and - and employed organisers and so on, and have become quite an important organisation.

J.F. O.K., let me just sharpen the question mainly partly because of time and just maybe it'll clarify it ultimately with less talking about it - you - in the '70's you were working in townships, in '81 to '83 you were working with blacks - why a decision with the culmination non racialism in UDF to start a white organisation?

T.W. An organisation primarily for whites - well, in all of this period more and more whites were being thrown up who were against apartheid who had a radical critique of it and who wanted to be involved and who wanted to do something together - as I said, in '81 their question was something like a white political organisation was already on the agenda - groups of people were - got together -

This was before the detentions in '81 in fact - I know that Barbara Hogan, for instance, was involved in discussions about setting up a white political organisation with - in Johannesburg - and other people were involved in it as well, but it then - because of the detentions nothing really came of that, because those people were hit quite hard -

And then the DESCOM - there was debate about whether the DESCOM should become that, and in a sense the DESCOM for a while did become that - I mean the DESCOM - the white support groups.....

J.F. The DESCOM in your area?

T.W. The DESCOM which was supporting the - all those, Barbara Hogan and the others who were in detention - we used to have debates and discussions and form shows and things like this - so there was a bit of a kind of discussion about the need for a political home for - for - for white activists, but it never really took off until the UDF was formed.

The formation of JODAC did not come from the UDF - it came from the white people themselves - I think in UDF people wanted whites to participate, yes - exactly how if they weren't prescriptive, but they wanted to see some sort of involvement - and it became very clear that the only way we could involve ourselves on a big scale, on a - you know, on a large scale, and not just as individuals, would be through a broad kind of political association.

I've always - I operated in the townships, yes, but I've always felt that, and known that whites have a role to play and - and that we need to work with whites in getting them to - to abandon apartheid and join the democratic movement - I've - that was always only priority -

So for instance, when I worked in YCS I started off in fact organising the white universities - I spent a year, 1978, organising in the white universities, and it was only after that that - well, in 1979 I was doing both - I was organising both in the white universities and in the townships - then in 1980 I think it was exclusively in the townships, and in 1981 I was national so I wasn't organising at all -

T.W. So it was never kind of an option for the townships as opposed to whites - it was to go into townships to build YCS, which was a non racial organisation - so I would have remained organising in the white areas if I had been told to in the YCS if that had been my allocated area, so it wasn't so much a racial option, an option for preference to work with blacks than with whites on my personal part, although obviously I see change is going to come on the mass basis from blacks and not from whites -

It was to build the organisation which made me go into the townships, and I think the formation of - of - of JODAC again was the same thing - it wasn't so much a kind of preference to suddenly work with whites as opposed to having worked with blacks - it was a need to build a non racial national movement that motivated many of us to start something like JODAC, realising one, that there were many whites who were committed to fight apartheid, that they didn't have a place or a means with which, an organised means with which to do it -

Up until then it had either been through something like YCS or NUSAS, DESCOM, DPSC, some of the professional organisations and then maybe some of the service organisations that were set up, but by and large these catered for individuals or else they only focused on issues, single issues like detentions or medical issues or whatever, and it wasn't something that was open to anyone on a broad basis, on a borad political basis -

None of those organisations provided clear political alternatives and political options - you know, even now, for instance, ECC, the End Conscription Campaign, is issue orientated - it's not broadly politically orientated and - and there were many, many whites who had this kind of need because they were looking for political solutions and for political ways of getting rid of apartheid, so the constituency was there - also the contradictions within white politics were - were manifesting themselves more clearly -

The difference between liberals and conservatives, between left wing people and liberals and so on, these were all becoming a lot more forceful within the white community outside of the - the normal white left areas like on campus and so on - off campus and in other places the contradictions were manifesting themselves more clearly -

So it was quite clear there was a space for some kind of organisation- what kind of organisation then became the question - now I think there was a general decision in African areas not to start a political organisation al la TIC or NIC or anything like that that - I think there's a general acceptance that the A.N.C. was the political organisation for - for blacks -

Or let me put that differently, that the political organisation for blacks existed and there was no need to start another one, but what was necessary was to start organising blacks around issues which affected them on a day to day basis - so there wasn't an initiative to set up a homogeneous national political organisation, if you know what I mean -

I think if there had been that decision most probably it - it would have been a non racial organisation in membership.

J.F. But wasn't that UDF.....

T.W. No, UDF is a front of organisations - it's not a homogeneous - a single organisation - it's a front of organisations - it has its organisational structures to facilitate being a front - it being a front, but it's not a single organisation - it is - its structure and strength is dependent on its front nature -

So the decision to set up UDF was not a decision to set up a homogeneous - a single membership organisation - it was a strategy of drawing together all the forces that already existed to tackle the - the - the so-called reform initiatives of the new - of the - the - P.W's government -

So I think - but if there had been a decision for some reason or other to set up a single organisation, single national political organisation, I think there would have been a decision to - to go for a non racial membership, but I don't think - there were too many factors mitigating against that, the fact that a national political organisation already existed, even though in exile or underground, and didn't want to confuse those kinds of issues of having two organisations of that nature around -

So then the question became O.K., well, what kind of organisation is going to be appropriate in Johannesburg, let's say, rather than use the white area - the term whites - in Soweto you'd ask the same question, what organisations are appropriate here - it's not necessarily got something to do automatically with being black - it's got something to do with being black in that situation -

In other words, housing problems, community problems etc., etc. are the basis of organisation there - you can have a mass movement around housing, you can have a mass movement around women's issues etc., etc. in those townships - in white areas you can't have a mass movement around housing - if you do it's going to more than likely be reactionary - you've got Rate Payers Associations in Johannesburg but they reactionary - it's very, very difficult to - to make them progressive -

So the clearest anti apartheid constituency were people who wanted a - who had a political consciousness and who were looking for political solutions and political methods of - of tackling apartheid - so JODAC was set up in - in - in that sense - it was set up because it was the most appropriate organisation for the people in Johannesburg at that time, and obviously the racial factors come into play - Johannesburg it's - it's - apartheid has created different conditions in different areas - different material conditions, different political conditions, and to some extent slightly different political cultures - different ways of dealing with politics and discussing things and so on -

So it - it seemed most appropriate in building a national non racial organisation to start with the reality of what is happening locally on the ground, and to have very, very localised organisations, and I think that - that is the general thrust of the UDF is to build organisation on the ground, so not to start with a model of a non racial organisation, but to start with - with consciousness and with the conditions that operate on the ground and build up towards a non racial organisation, and in that sense UDF has been able to come, I think, the biggest mass movement in South Africa, even bigger than maybe the A.N.C. was - I think bigger than the A.N.C. was in the '50's as a mass movement -

T.W. It's very clever political thinking - it's a very clever way of - of mobilising people, all sorts of people, into the struggle - it's quite clear that the conditions in Johannesburg are vastly different from Alexandra Township, which is our - the township most - closest to JODAC geographically - to have tried and dealt with the issues there we wouldn't have been working with them on a equal basis at all - I mean they were dealing with real housing problems, sewerage problems, this kind of thing -

If we had gone into an organisation with them - we don't have housing problems, sewerage problems - our problem is to - how to get more and more whites to see the need for democracy inside South Africa so that those problems can be dealt with politically at the central political level - that was our main fundamental problem - and -

And so therefore the need for an organisation in Johannesburg of that nature - I think we see whites as being our priority - there many people inside JODAC who don't like to define it exclusively as a white organisation - in fact occasionally some Indian and Coloured people who do live in the Johannesburg area do participate inside in JODAC, but even then those Indians and Coloureds who - who live in Johannesburg they've got very different problems to deal with than whites have to deal with -

They've still got to fight the Group Areas Act, they've still got to deal with the question of the legality of their - their residence in those areas and so on, so I - I'm not convinced that JODAC is the most appropriate organisation for them - they still need some kind of - of organisation which focuses on those problems, like ACTSTOP, for instance, focuses on those kinds of things.

Of course JODAC could possibly take up those kinds of things - the other kind of people that live in Johannesburg are domestic servants - now we call ourselves the Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee - would it be appropriate for JODAC to - to try and organise domestic servants - I just can't see white middle class people, intellectuals that have hardly any material problems of any serious nature being in the same organisation, political organisation, with domestic servants, many of whom are women who are not used to working with men, who are pretty uneducated, can hardly - often not speak much English, whose problems are incredibly low wages, no legal protection whatsoever -

I mean there hundreds of domestics living in Johannesburg, so if - if we argue that our organisation is a geographically based organisation, why don't we organise them - we would be completely ineffective as - in terms of JODAC's present aims and objectives we would be ineffective - secondly, I can't see them working together -

You'd have to work on the basis of dealing with the problems of domestic workers - essentially those would be the fundamental problems so what is needed is an organisation for domestic workers, and political issues can be brought into that organisation - so again it wouldn't be entirely correct to - to describe JODAC as purely geographic and purely non racial - we are geographic and we address whites primarily in - in that area, because the problems of whites are just so substantially different to - to the problems that other groups face -

But then at the political level it doesn't mean that we cannot collaborate - in other words, with an organisation that has democratically elected leaders who are thinking and strategising politically we are able to come together in the UDF and to work out common plans based on the particular nature of our constituency -

T.W. It doesn't mean also that - that non racial solidarity's never built up - that's the point, that non racial solidarity has to be built up - it's not something that is simply there - apartheid has not created non racial solidarity, apartheid has created the need to build up non racial solidarity - so for instance, a lot of our work is to do work with other affiliates on the basis of their own work -

So during the anti election campaigns we worked with anti PC in the Coloured areas, with TIC in the Indian areas - and during the Freedom Charter campaign last year we were just beginning to work with some of the Alexandra Township organisations on a Freedom Charter capaign in Alexandra Township together, but never got off the ground because of the declaration of the state of emergency last year -

Where have we worked with other African organisations - not very closely because - we've mainly worked with the Alexandra Township organisations because JODAC is part of the Johannesburg UDF area committee, which has only got one set of African organisations on it, and they all come from Alexandra Township.

Alexandra Township has been allocated to the Johannesburg area and all this - Soweto's on the East Rand area committee, so we only work with them on - on campaigns and issues which tend to go completely outside of the Johannesburg UDF area committee.

The Johannesburg UDF area committee incorporates Indians and Coloureds, predominantly white and Alex, because those are the - the people in the proper municipal area of Johannesburg - so we work a lot with those organisations and we plan a lot with those organisations.

Non racial solidarity also means supporting the actions and activities of the people in the townships, so for instance, in May this year JODAC went into Alexandra Township and laid flowers at the cemetary and so on and - and the whole thing was planned with the people in Alexandra Township, and they came out in full force to support and protect the whites from the army, believe it or not, who went into Alexandra Township - a very strong expression of non racial solidarity.

We also work with people in some of the sub-committees on the UDF, so that a lot of areas in fact where blacks and whites are - are working together, but it seems - but also, if I may just say that it's not only now whites that are organising whites - more and more blacks are seeing the need for themselves to start organising whites - so just before I left Johannesburg there were isolated incidences of where blacks were coming out of the townships and organising whites themselves, very often on the basis of trying to - saying that - that no longer can they tolerate whites supporting the S.A.D.F.

It's important to get them to have an alternative perspective not only to the defence force but to apartheid generally - so for instance, in Krugersdorp, in the hottest right wing - one of the hottest right wing towns of the Transvaal, when the right wing vigilantes were going into Munsieville and Kagiso and killing people, black youth were coming out of the townships to organise whites in - into the struggle against apartheid - small meetings of four or five people - the women in Kagiso - the women's group is working very closely with the JODAC women's group in running a campaign for white mothers around the whole question of what are their sons doing in - in the defence force.

T.W. In Pretoria and the East Rand I can give two very concrete examples of where blacks come out of the townships and doing exactly the same thing - and after having organised these people very often these blacks contact JODAC and say well, can you follow the work on - can you take - take the work one step forward -

So there's a growing realisation that the white community's not only the responsibility of other whites, but it's the responsibility of the - the democratic movement as a whole - but I think JODAC and JODAC's form of organisation still remains the most appropriate way of bringing whites into the non racial struggle in the most effective way, ja -

There are a lot of whites who - who feel that they don't want to remain in a white organisation like JODAC and simply want to - to - to work with other blacks - and sometimes JODAC is not able to fulfil those expectations and those needs as much as we want - I mean sometimes it's actually very difficult to - to have continuous bases with people - for instance, during the last state of emergency communication between the townships was virtually severed completely, and I would imagine in this one it's even more serious, so you -

I mean the fact is that one has got to operate in the conditions that are created by apartheid so as to transform those conditions, so the Group Areas Act remains, and one way of smashing the Group Areas Act is by having organisations in those areas which are able to organise people on a mass basis against apartheid, so whereas we see our priority as addressing whites, an equal priority is to build a non racial solidarity.

J.F. Why did Johannesburg get a JODAC and Durban and Cape Town didn't get a similar (.....)

T.W. I don't know - well, that's....

J.F. .... very parochial - is that anything to discuss - is there something particular...

T.W. I think it's got - I mean when I've - I've spoken to people from the Congress of Democrats it seems like that in the Congress of Democrats that geographically they faced similar kinds of problems that - that exist at the moment - by the way, in Cape Town they - just before I left they decided to disband the area committees and set up an organisation like JODAC and.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

T.W. I don't know if they going to call it CODAC but anyway....

J.F. Something like that.

T.W. Ja - and in Durban there are - or have been - I don't know at what stage they've reached now - there've been three attempts to get something going - the first two attempts in terms of trying to establish long term organisation failed - I mean as ad hoc structures they were quite good and quite effective, but they didn't somehow launch into - to long term organisation -

T.W. But at the moment just before I left there was a third attempt to get something going, and there a group of people quite keen there - in Grahamstown there's - was GRODAC which existed....

J.F. Grahamstown (.....) GCD?

T.W. Well, it used to be called GCD, Grahamstown Committee of Democrats and that.....

J.F. What was it called (.....)

T.W. Well, it's not called anything now - GCD is banned (Laugh) so a new organisation has somehow sprung up in the Grahamstown area called GRADAC, Grahamstown Democratic Action Committee - and Port Elizabeth people, I believe, are also talking about starting something - there was in Port Elizabeth the Port Elizabeth Area Committees, but both Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown at the beginning of last year, before last year's state of emergency, all meetings were banned - a similar kind of meeting that's happened in the Western Cape now, and certain organisations weren't allowed to hold meetings, and that included the Port Elizabeth Area Committee and GCD, so for all intents and purposes they were banned.

GCD basically broke up into a whole range of issue orientated groups - I can't remember their acronyms because they are so complex down there in the Eastern Cape - but the Port Elizabeth Area Committee disbanded and more or less formed the EEC - ECC - but I think recently they've felt the need to revive something like a JODAC in Port Elizabeth - and then in Cape Town they have transformed the - the area committees into an organisation -

So there is a kind of growing movement amongst the white democrats to - to set something up all over the place - but why Cape Town went through the phase that it did, and why Durban went through the phase that it did, is peculiar to those areas.

J.F. What about the parallel with COD?

T.W. COD is banned so it's problematic for us to - to draw too many parallels, but I think one of the differences about that period is that COD had a very elevated position in the Congress Alliance - the Congress and the national co-ordinating committee or whatever it was called - each had equal number of representatives, so COD had as many representatives as the A.N.C., for instance, on the Congress Alliance, so in a sense it was a bit - it had a position out of proportion to it - its membership and so on.

One difference that exists now is that JODAC and all these other white structures have no elevated place at all - we operate as equal partners completely, so there's no possibility at all of talking about white domination or control or whatever, which was directed towards the Congress Alliance to some extent.

We're a very different organisation in that we are - are formed in a very different historical context, but there are nonetheless quite a lot of similarities between COD and JODAC in that we're both addressing the white constituency and operating in that area, so I suppose if one had to do a close study of the - the methods used and the problems that we face and so on we would actually find very similar sets of problems, and it's also I think -

I don't know how much of a coincidence it is - I don't think it is coincidence - I mean JODAC happens to be strong in areas where COD was strong in Johannesburg, in Yeoville and Berea and Hillbrow and these kind of things, and I don't think it is because of the fact

T.W. .... there remnants of COD in those areas or anything like that - I think it's because lower middle class English speaking people tend to go into those areas, or young professionals who're on the move up who have still got a fairly critical approach to - to life seem to gravitate initially in those areas geographically, because they fairly cheap to live in but still quite nice neighbourhoods and so on, and I think are just receptive areas for that kind of work, and I would imagine they would have been the same in the '50's and I don't think they've changed that considerably, so I think it's the material conditions more than any kind of tradition that has - has given rise to that and -

And in a lot of ways white privilege still remains structured in the same way - the economy is more or less the same to the '50's - O.K., big capital is a lot stronger now than it was in those days and South African multinationals are on a - on a far stronger footing than they were then, but I think the class structure of - of white society hasn't changed to such an extent that - that the kinds of anti apartheid groups and forces which would emanate from the white community would be very, very different.

Our struggle is still a national - the major contradictions in society I think still point towards the national democratic struggle being the most appropriate way of tackling political and economic injustices and inequalities in society, and I think that also means that - that white opposition, extra-parliamentary opposition, would also still tend to be fairly similar to - to the '50's, but we are a very different organisation -

I mean we look back to COD merely as history, and maybe as some kind of symbolic value, but other than that there's no - there's no real link - and there are some ex-COD people that are close to JODAC - I mean Helen Joseph is very close - she can't be a member because she's still listed, and there quite a number of other listed people who are very interested in JODAC, JODAC's activities, who were members of COD, so there is some kind of feel for a link between the two obviously but very different.

J.F. Did you help foster that link with that Christmas party idea - can you talk briefly about that - is that....

T.W. That Christmas party idea existed - which Christmas party idea?

J.F. I don't know - I thought there was a move to get the older and the younger generation....

T.W. Oh - oh, no, well, that - what's her name - Anne Heyman and Izzie Heyman, who were both members of COD in the '50's, have traditionally been holding Christmas parties for a long time - I'm not exactly sure what - no, it's helen Joseph's Christmas parties and it's Izzie and Anne Heyman's New Year's parties, and just when JODAC started developing they started inviting JODAC people to - to them - and now they - they pretty integrated into JODAC - they come to a lot of JODAC meetings - or certainly all the public meetings they come to all of them and they - they like JODAC - JODAC gives them a lot of hope, the oldies.....

J.F. Did it give you a lot of hope to be with them?

T.W. Oh, certainly, and it's very inspiring, I think, for people in JODAC to - to hear of how similar the problems are and how they attempted to overcome them, and we've got a lot to learn from - from their experiences.

J.F. So the first one would have been '83 after the formation of JODAC?

T.W. First Chris - New Year's party?

J.F. The first joint one.

T.W. When did I go to the first one - I have a feeling I went to my first one before JODAC was actually formed, but I can't really - 1982 - I think I did because it was - yes, I think I did before JODAC was formed I went to the first one - because remember, there was a growing white left - I mean in all those - those anti apartheid struggles in 1980, '81, '82 there were a whole lot of white ad hoc groups that were set up like rock against management and - and the Wilson Rowntree support committees, and Fatis and Monis boycott committees and these kinds of things and they had them - they were always based in Johannesburg, so there was always some kind of awareness that whites were beginning to get together before JODAC was formed -

And I can't remember why I went to that Christmas party - I think - if I think hard enough I'll - it'll come back to me - someone invited me - someone invited me....

J.F. I'm just thinking of your time - I want to ask a bunch more questions..

T.W. Yes.

J.F. The key thing is the critique - the criticism from black and white from white left, lefter than JODAC, the whole - it seems that in '83 there became this debate - there emerged this debate about the four nations thesis - speaking to the A.N.C. in London, they deny that such a thesis exists.....

T.W. Well, there was this character, Lionel Bernstein - is that the right guy - was it Bernstein - four nations - someone in the '50's, a COD member - what was his name - Lionel - is it Bernstein - God, why - I can't remember his name - did write a few essays on the whole question of the four nation theory - and there has been an attempt to - to systematise that kind of approach, there has been - and I mean I think I know someone in South Africa who's got access to that literature - but it was never -

It was never adopted as - ever as official policy - and I don't think it ever really got very far - but certainly someone attempted to - to - to put something down on paper.

J.F. Well, maybe in case (.....) not dealing with that per se and because it seems to be kind of denied, just let me ask you to tell me about the critique you got - when you started seeing it emerge and how you - whether you felt it was important - what you answered - how you answered criticism - who didn't like it and why.....

T.W. I don't think right at the beginning at the formation of JODAC.....

J.F. Did it tie into TIC - was that - that's triggered the debate more - do you have more in common with Indian groups who try to organise in their area - you remember the whole left (?) debates?

T.W. Yes, yes - no, I'm just trying to think about a certain facet of that - I mean there were the critiques of the formation of TIC setting up ethnic base groups from other Indian and some Coloured people - but at the time of the formation of JODAC, and some of the discussions around the formation of JODAC, so-called ultra left people were in those discussions, and not only in the discussions around the formation but even in JODAC at the beginning -

I never encountered a critique of JODAC in the same way as I encountered a critique of - of - of TIC of entrenching - I think it was there but I never encountered it in any substantial way in the way that that critique of - of TIC took up - took off - because in a sense TIC saw itself as a political party - extra-parliamentary but a political party - JODAC never saw itself as such - it was a kind of broad - a political association more than party -

And the debates at the beginning from the ultra left were over the question of - of - of not so much getting the white left together, but what would the white left do when it got together, and that - that is what I think the most of - the area where most of our debates revolved around, and that's a whole nother question altogether.

There were some, and like for instance, in Durban I mean there's a kind of anti white organisation feeling - I've never really spoken very deeply to those people - I don't know the Durban scene well enough to - to go into it - in the '50's there was exactly the same problem, according to Helen Joseph, with the Durban branch of - of the Congress of Democrats -

But there was never a major problem with that, and I think a lot of the - the ultra left in the beginning wanted something like JODAC because that would provide them with an avenue to critique UDF, because there the thing was going around that UDF was led by petit bourgeois types and wasn't socialist enough and all this kind of thing, which was coming from white ultra left people, and JODAC they felt should be a white political association, and this was before JODAC affiliated to the UDF, by the way -

I mean JODAC only affiliated to the UDF three or four months - or five months after its formation, and I think by that stage a lot of these people had pulled out of JODAC because the dominant line was that I mean we not setting up an organisation just to - we weren't - our aim wasn't to set up a socialist association, or some kind of new socialist white left or something like that -

Our aim was to set up a group which would be to draw a primarily anti apartheid group, to draw many whites into the apartheid struggle and all that goes with that, but not an explicitly socialist group, and there were people in it who wanted us to be explicitly socialist, and even I think to use JODAC as a platform, socialist platform for - for - for criticising the UDF -

And those people lost out and they decided not to remain in JODAC.

J.F. And why did they - what was your argument against those people?

T.W. No, that's the long question (Laugh)

J.F. It's a long question but Dave Lewis is posing it all over the place and not getting any counter to it - if you can answer within - how you remember that you dealt with it....

T.W. Oh, no, no, we dealt with it O.K.....

J.F. But I'm saying within that context.

T.W. Oh, at that particular point?

J.F. No, no (.....) you in your past - it's an important question- it's going to come up more and more.....

T.W. Yes, how does one deal with that question?

J.F. Yes, what's the answer - I'm saying you can answer it organisational tactically, you can also answer (.....) theoretically - since I'm not (.....) theoretic or into book.....

T.W. Ja, let me try and just integrate - integrate some of - of - of those two elements - well, first of all within - within JODAC there are people now with both a socialist commitment and those who might not be very clearly socialist, or those who are - I wouldn't know how to put it - not pro free enterprise - I don't think we've got - definitely in JODAC we haven't got staunch pro capitalist people - we've got a lot of people - I think the Freedom Charter would definitely be a point of consensus within JODAC, although maybe to some extent some people would have some problems with - with some areas of the Freedom Charter.

The question is how does one build socialism and move towards a socialist society - this has - I mean it's a minefield - I mean this is what the Marxist debate is all about inside the country and - and everywhere in fact - how does one build socialism - is there a parliamentary road to socialism, is there not a parliamentary road to socialism - is there a national democratic road to socialism, is there not a national democratic road to socialism - is there a non violent way to socialism, is there only a violent way to socialism - I mean these are all the various key questions -

And if there is a national democratic road to socialism why call it a national democratic road to socialism and not just the road to socialism. God I mean one can - can unravel this one - one can even go further back and say the whole question of the road to socialism depends on what kind of Marxism you using or how you using your Marxism as well -

And In fact I think a lot of the problems with the ultra left was with that kind of line that I think Dave Lewis puts out is a problem with Marxism and the way they - they understand their Marxism - anyway I won't go into that whole theoretical debate because that's another academic minefield that is not worth dealing with, I think, at this stage, but I'll maybe just try and touch on some of the issues - issues that are related there -

Every society, whether it's a capitalist society or not, has got many different contradictions in it, and a capitalist society is a statement which is an abstract statement. Every different capitalist society has so many different features within it which makes it different from other societies - they - there's incredible variety of capitalist societies - we look at the political structures of capitalist societies - no two are the same really.

If we look at the cultures that operate within those capitalist societies no two are the same at all - so a capitalist society is a complete abstraction - it - it's something that - that doesn't exist on its own anywhere - it - it's - it's an abstraction from society - it has - it's a structure of the way capital is owned and controlled, and the way albourers are put onto the labour market and how they work for - for their employees - I mean that's an abstraction -

T.W. How that manifests itself in any particular situation varies considerably, and it's those variations which are the important things which give rise to a whole range of other contradictions, tensions etc. - and politics, political power generates its own set of interests - it's not always possible simply to reduce everything to the interests of the capitalist class or the interests of the working class short term or long term for interest -

For example, it's in the interests of the white working class to maintain white privilege and white domination because it's possible for them to benefit a lot more than - from that than from a non racial society - I mean it doesn't mean they'll be annihilated in a non racial society, but it's possible for them to benefit substantially more than they do, so political power there has generated a set of interests which is at variance with the majority of the working class inside South Africa.

So the question then becomes how does one start moving towards - away from a form of national oppression which yes, does serve the interests of a capitalist economy - how does one start moving away from that - and I think an important point that many people do not focus on, many ultra left people, is the whole question of ideology, and that ideology's not simply a set of ideas wafting around in people's heads or up in the sky somewhere, but they too generate a set of interests -

So for instance, the ideologies of white domination, privilege and apartheid etc., does create within people an interest to maintain that - that privilege and that domination - and the fear of the future becomes something which - which cannot be easily tolerated - and so the ideological area - the area of ideologies and - and interests that are generated from that is an important area of - of transforming society - a very, very important area of transforming society -

And I think that is the area in which JODAC primarily operates - its struggles are primarily ideological struggles - or to put it very basically, educating whites about the - the nature of the society in which they live and the kinds of contradictions that - and conflicts that get thrown up inside that society.

Now the question of political power inside South African society is a real contradiction - in other words, there are those who have political power and there those who don't - there are those who dominate and those who are dominated - it's a contradiction which doesn't simply reflect the contradiction of those who own industry or capital and those who do not own capital - it's not a - a direct equivalent - so that it's possible for different classes to have similar political interests and - and that I think is the way the struggle is manifesting itself at the moment -

And specifically within the white ruling group there are a range of - of other contradictions which operate at the ideological level - conflicts and contradictions over ideology as well - liberalism versus conservatism and so on -

Now if one wants to move towards a socialist society one has to look at the question of political power very, very seriously - very often I think these ultra left people don't look enough at that question and look primarily at the question of economic power and the power of capital outside of the question of state power or political power.

T.W. At the moment political power is serving the interests of the capitalist class, yes, predominantly, but it's also serving the interests of white middle class people, white working class people, to some extent a compadore (?) African class, capitalist class and so on - it - it's serving the interests of vigilantes who act - who benefit somehow, for example, from apartheid structures, from homeland structures, from community structures and so on -

And even then it's often not in their interest to dismantle it, so you get blacks who fight, and this is what the whole so-called black on black conflict is about - it's blacks who don't want to see the end to apartheid because they are benefiting from the apartheid structures that - that exist -

So the question becomes a question if one's primary interest is socialism how to dismantle the present power structure, and how to - to do that meaningfully - and JODAC can fit into the perspective of a socialist strategy by saying that our role, and part of our role is to facilitate the dismantling of that power structure, especially at the ideological level -

In other words, to - to win over more and more whites away from apartheid and win them over towards at least a kind of Freedom Charter position - or not even a Freedom Charter position - a UDF position - and - and not to kind of just simply keep on asserting socialism - and that winning over more and more whites - well, at least neutralising more and more whites at that level strengthens the working class inside South Africa and creates the possibility of - of - of putting a socialist ideology and socialism, real socialism, on - on the - on the agenda -

To simply go into the whites areas with a socialist ideology and a socialist programme you going to isolate yourself completely - you not going to - to - to win over many people at all - so in other words, this idea of fragmenting and dividing the ruling group is an important strategy in building a socialist society, because it's dealing there very centrally with the question of political power and interests that are generated from that, an ideology - ideological power - the power of ideology and - and the interests that are - are generated from that - and those are important areas to deal with as well as the - the - the economic area - and the classical socialist strategy is to simply build up organisation on the factory floor and integrate that with a socialist ideology or with Marxism or whatever you want to call it, and somewhere along the line the workers are going to be strong enough to - to get control of society - but I don't think they are dealing with the questions well - political power you've - political power involves state repressive apparatus, the S.A.D.F, the S.A.P., and it also deals with ideological apparatuses and power that is derived from that, legitimacy for the S.A.D.F., legitimacy for the S.A.P., legitimacy for the present political dispensation - all of that helps to - to galvanise, to consolidate political power and state power at the moment - the present form of political power and state power inside South Africa...

END OF SIDE TWO.

T.W. So something like JODAC has a very important role to play in dismantling the present power structures, and creating a possibility for putting socialism more and more on the agenda - for instance, inside of JODAC we discuss a lot about the tole of capitalism in South Africa - foreign capital, international capital, or to put it differently, imperialism, and to look at these questions critically and to - to - to view our strategy from the point of view of not only transforming political structures but economic structures in society as well -

So I don't know what the alternative is - I mean I don't know what alternative Dave Lewis would have in mind when he talks about these kinds of things when - when one can view the A.N.C. from the perspective of - of a socialist strategy as well, but I don't want to go into that - I mean that's the whole question of the relationship between socialism and - and national democratic struggle, and how the two can come together, which is certainly an analysis that's been developed consistently within the South African Communist Party.

But to go back to the question of four nations, no we - I mean I would disagree with that idea very completely - there are not four nations inside South Africa, but sometimes that word four nations is misconstrued - there are four national groups - that is a bit more vague, national groups - what is a national groups - there are four racial groups, yes - there are - there is a white group, and there is an Indian group, and there is a Coloured group and an African group - and when I use the word group I don't mean it's not divided by other social divisions, other ethnic divisions, other cultural divisions or other class divisions or whatever -

But even within those four white groups you can get major divisions which you wouldn't often maybe enable you to identify them as a coherent group maybe - these are all kinds of cultural questions - but there are four more or less identifiable racial groupings inside South Africa,

What kind of nation you construct out of that is a process of struggle, because a nation is something that is - is the product of struggle anywhere, in Britain or in South Africa or whatever - so what kind of nation that ultimately gets constructed is - is a product of struggle - and I think people are saying there's the possibility for a non racial nation - non racial and democratic South Africa in South Africa, and there's the possibility for a non racial strategy to achieve it -

In other words, that all sections of all races - I mean sections of all races can play a role and what do I mean by can play a role - it's not a moral question, it's a question of are there contradictions and conflicts emerging and developing within those groups which give rise to them involving themselves in struggle, yes, in my own history and the - the - the history that my personal history represents is a clear example of the kind of - of conflicts and contradictions that exist in the white community which - which give rise to whites opposing apartheid, so -

So when you have white organisation it's not to say that whites are a nation and therefore they should be involved in it as - as - as whites - it's to say that the conditions that operate in white areas facilitate white groups engaging in - in non racial anti apartheid struggle there in - in alliance and in collusion with the broad anti apartheid movement or the national liberation movement -

T.W. So it's simply to acknowledge the political significance and the cultural significance of - of what race means at this point in time and to move from there in the process of trying to dismantle the present power structures.

But JODAC is not a total strategy - one mustn't look at the whole of the - to say that JODAC strategy is the strategy of the whole of the national liberation movement - the national liberation movement has a range of strategies which relate to each other and co-operate with each other - it has an international strategy to isolate apartheid, it has an underground strategy to build up, because legal struggle is severely limited - it has a mass political strategy within side South Africa, it has an armed struggle strategy -

Within the mass political strategy it has a range of sub-strategies, or tactics, if you'd like to use it, at that level - it has the level of trying to draw in as many, many people into the apartheid struggle as possible, and to work towards a non racial democratic and - and a socialist society as well -

And so one develops a whole range of tactics, so JODAC then is one tactic within the strategy of mass political struggle inside the country - that's what we are, if you want to put it that way - we part of the broad mass legal democratic struggle in the country, which is one strategy within the overall strategy to - to get rid of apartheid -

So we merely a tactic - we may be here tomorrow, we may not be here tomorrow, both in form and content as we are - and overall what JODAC is trying to do is to try and to produce people who are committed to a long term struggle against apartheid, not to JODAC, not even to the UDF, but committed to - to transforming society fundamentally and that is - it certainly becomes most uppermost in our minds under present conditions when we see that the life and potential to JODAC to exist is severely curtailed - what does it then mean - we don't -

If JODAC can't exist what do we exist for and then how do we exist in the present and in the future becomes another question, so JODAC is merely that one little tactic in the overall struggle to get as many whites to participate in the struggle as possible, ja, and as simply as that, and to fight against the - the present power structures.

J.F. And can you point to evidence that in fact it's working - that it's not just preaching to the converted, it's not just a society for the white left in Johannesburg - was there any particular experience over the past short existence of JODAC where you could say this is what we should be doing, this is nice, these are people moving?

T.W. Well, first of all there's nothing wrong with talking to the converted or organising the converted because you can never operate effectively as an individual white left person - you've always got to operate through some form of organisation, so very often you've got to convert the white left who participate in organisation - so that's not a problem in itself - it's actually an important part of our work - our work is to address the white left and to - to try and get them into organisation, so we have a common strategy - we strengthen our organisation and we strengthen the overall struggle - obviously their strength lies in unity and consensus rather than in division and antagonism, so that is a very, very important part of our work, and we have been successful there, but we've also been successful in losing people because they don't agree with our line -

T.W. But in reaching out to the broad masses of whites, yes, I mean - I mean that's where we've been successful - we've recruited, especially the beginning part - the first half of this year hundreds of new people into JODAC - we were holding house meetings for new people almost on a nightly basis just before I left, and after I left 20 people at a time every single night of the week -

We were getting to our big popular meetings three, four thousand people - to our smaller regular JODAC meetings we were getting 500, 600 people at a time at public and open meetings - our membership - our direct membership I think it expanded from about 200 to 350 this year - our subscription membership had expanded considerably as well -

More and more people are joining our structures, ordinary South Africans who realise they need to fight apartheid, not necessarily anti - not necessarily socialist or maybe even only vaguely anti capitalist but who are aware that there are some problems between capitalism and socialism - I mean capitalism in South Africa - and all I can say is we've been successful in recruiting and organising and educating whites -

I think that we've also been relatively successful in challenging some of the strategies - do you want me to stop..... we've been successful in - in - in I think neutralising on a fairly broad scale strategies of the PFP, for instance, which I think is a strategy to - quite clearly to maintain capitalism and they - they're not hiding their aims and objectives there - they want a capitalist economy, a capitalist (Tape off) -

And there's a possibility of having capitalism with some form of political democracy, yes, but our attempt - we attempt therefore to try and as much as possible neutralise the strategies of - of - of big capital, and to try and expose them on a consistent basis, and I think especially we've been fairly successful at the political level - and if it hadn't been for this state of emergency I think we would have been very successful in - in drawing more and more people into support for the UDF, which is one step forward, and not only for UDF but for - for the trade unions, and not only for the UDF and the trade unions but for the A.N.C. as well -

So - maybe I should rephrase that one - being more and more successful into drawing support for the A.N.C., but at least seeing that the A.N.C. is very important for South Africa's political future - I think that that - and again we don't do that because of our own strength - it's because of the way the struggle has - has gained momentum, the way that the majority of people, the masses of the people have been able to make their impact on the white ruling group inside South Africa, the way that that struggle has created confusion and a lack of consensus and lack of coherence and division within that white ruling group -

That's where the real power comes from, in fragmenting that white ruling group, and then we tap that power and - and we move in and we provide alternative political programmes, alternative political perspectives, new ways of - of looking at possible political solutions and so on, and that's where -

So in other words, we work very closely with the people in the townships, but it's mainly those struggles which in the townships and in the factories, and it's mainly those struggles which bring about the - the disintegration of the white ruling group -

So we have had quite a lot of successes - I mean how do we judge them- we judge it in terms of the mass of numbers that are coming in, we judge them in terms of the mass of numbers that are withdrawing ....

T.W. .... their support for the government or parliament or capitalism or whatever, we judge it by the - the extent to which people are looking towards alternatives - you can't give real quantifiable results - we can in terms of our members, yes - in terms of those that we neutralise we can't, but if we look at how, for instance, the A.N.C's become the central political refernce point even in white politics I think we can say that we've played quite an important role in facilitating that, as well as the A.N.C. itself and the UDF and all sorts of other things - the trade unions and so on -

But Dave Lewis's primary criticism is that the A.N.C. is a petit bourgeois organisation, and that it's merely a matter of ideology, if you preach socialism everyone will believe it, which is not the case - I mean he's not identifying other structural contradictions which exist in society which give rise to the kinds of - of ideologies which emanate from the A.N.C. - in other words, the ideology of national democracy or national democratic struggle - he's just not looking deeply enough - he -

He's got a very mechanistic approach to his Marxism and socialism and - and he doesn't see, I think,where political power and ideological struggle really fits in adequately enough.

J.F. Can you tell me what you say to whites when you organise them or do you actually - do you have any speech - is it ever written down what you.....

T.W. (Laugh)

J.F. .... I'm just wondering if - how do you approach those people?

T.W. On the basis of the issues that - that concern them most, the political issues - so we deal primarily with fear as a real problem - responding to the issues of fear - to political alternatives and political solutions, which is the key one - the future, in other words, is a very central issue - the question of the economy, what's going to happen to the economy - to the question of violence, which is very central, and I think that - at the moment those are the kind of four most important areas -

We've started talking about - but then we deal with a whole range of other issues, like the Johannesburg Centenary or end to conscription or - what other kinds of issues.....

J.F. ..... you could tell me a particular meeting where somebody responded - to me it was very important to meet (.....) Shapiro...

T.W. To what?

J.F. To meet Gabey Shapiro, this woman in Cape Town who is a big staunch UDF area committee person who was actually just detained, a mother, a 55 year old woman Gavin told me about - anyway someone who was actually an example of a recent recruit, is very mainstream, very kind of would be PFP, and that kind of put it all out of theory and into practice for me, and I'm just wondering - your angle, if you could tell me about a particular meeting or a particular recruit or a particular conversation you had, because I think you had a lot of theory and I think it would be nice to know just in practice.....

T.W. What kind of meeting - public meeting?

J.F. Or house meeting, whatever....

T.W. House meeting would be much better....

J.F. .... was there anything you can tell me that would crystalise how you deal with fear - how you don't just preach to the converted or - how you've been bringing people in in a way that to preach socialism wouldn't.

T.W. Well, for instance, that Alex action would be a practical example of..

J.F. Were you there?

T.W. No, I was in South Africa, but I was part of the planning of it just before I left.....

J.F. That's great - that's terrific.

T.W. That - I mean if you follow that action through that's a very concrete example - about 400 people went - O.K., well, who is the converted - one must see that there very few people who actually converted in the white areas - there very few people who actively participating in the democratic movement - so who do you mean by the converted - there were people.....

J.F. People who you would have already had in 1981....

T.W. Oh, right - O.K. - O.K,....

J.F. .... I'm just trying to get some.....

T.W. The majority of the people who went on that Alex thing are not the people who we already had in 1981, and sometimes it's actually difficult to get the people that we already had in 1981 to do those bloody kinds of actions - they all theory and no action, and that's true - I mean a lot of that's true with the white left academics, and that's the problem with a lot of these ultra left people - they all theory but absolutely no action whatsoever - any-way -

Repression, which is one arm or one element of the whole thing which maybe we put under the - the - the label violence - I mean it has two responses - it makes some whites withdraw into their laager or into their shell or whatever you want to call it, it repulses others incredibly, and it's that repulsion which provides the motivation for white to go into Alex, or would even do more dramatic things than that, but that repulsion is - is - is not effective in getting rid of apartheid if that person channels that energy or that repulsion individually or anarchically or in some undirected way -

So the point is that repulsion is happening on a mass scale with a number of - I mean not with all whites but with quite a significant number of whites - and then you take people who are experiencing that repulsion to Alexandra Township and to deepen that repulsion into an organisational and political commitment, so then you'd start talking - you'd get them in to Alexandra Township to meet the people of the township there, to see that they in fact not so fearful - a lot of those people there will have questions about black on black violence or the need to get rid of violence on all sides and this kind of thing, and allow them to actually hear and experience something different to - to motivate them, those people to join organisations, and then through the process of organisations to consolidate their commitment and bring it down -

T.W. So I mean the majority of the people who went to Alex were not converted at all in that regard - if we had to count the number of people who are members of the UDF, or the core members of UDF whites, the number of whites, I'm sure it won't go above a few hundred - about 500 - so I mean in fact the converted are a very, very small number -

And we've got to convert people from both sides, from the liberal spectrum and from the left spectrum - we've got to convert people into action - but that's just one example of how we would take liberals who are very fearful of violence and things like that and - and....

J.F. I guess it's just kind of a tone in which you're talking - I wonder if you can think of someone, with or without mentioning their name, who you think is really a success story who came with prejudices or fears who's moved through to do such and such or who raised such and such a question at a meeting and how you answered it - or.....

T.W. A classic example of classical conversion (Laugh).....

J.F. Just something you could talk about that's more concrete.

T.W. Ja, I think you asking for too much because you asking for a dramatic case....

J.F. Not necessarily - just one little.....

T.W. There have been those cases - I mean there's - I can think of a woman in JODAC who slowly got involved in the Black Sash and slowly made contact with JODAC and she's - she's a woman of nice age, 55 I would imagine, as well, who started - lived in a conservative family in Pretoria not so long ago - I don't know why she started getting dissatisfied with apartheid, but started linking up with the Black Sash, and then JODAC started doing work with the Black Sash and - and they sent her along to a JODAC meeting and she found that JODAC was much deeper and more critical and had a lot more answers that made a lot more sense, and she now virtually runs our membership group in JODAC -

And she's not a very dynamic person, she's not a very - I mean she's dynamic but she's not very - always very clear thinking politically, but she plays an incredible role in - in - in talking to new people herself because she's gone through - through that experience - she's had to work through all the problems of violence, but it was merely a matter of - of bringing her into contact with alternative sources of information instead of the mass popular forms of information which whites have access to, TV and commercial media and so on.

That, I think, had a big impact on her life and now she's a stalwart JODAC member. She's 55 - there're a lot of younger people that I could say that have gone through a similar process of - of joining JODAC and then going through a whole process of - of - of change inside of JODAC - I mean someone who arrived there and was just - didn't know anything about the A.N.C., didn't know anything about all the - the kind of internal divisions within the democratic movement - you know, would initially want to organise crazy actions like carnivals through the middle of Johannesburg or things like this and you know, just slowly through a process of change have - have become quite sophisticated people -

T.W. I mean I think the kind of people we are really cathing on are an age group from about 25 up to - upwards - to about 35 being the key one - at the moment I'd say it's slightly older than that - so post university, young professional types, who have little or no experience - those are the majority of people who are actually coming to JODAC.....

J.F. Which was the gap in the old white left was.....

T.W. Complete gap - well, on campus it wasn't a gap - NUSAS was addressing those kinds of people, but then what happened, you see, I mean like NUSAS - what NUSAS wasn't able to do and it still hasn't been able to do, and it's a problem that JODAC and NUSAS are going to have to sort out together is NUSAS, for instance, were able to run a big campaign to go and visit the A.N.C. very successfully - mobilise the 6,000 students on Wits campus in support of it and so on -

But if you then look at NUSAS after - follow people through - the kind of thing you trying to do - from campus to post campus, each year you'll only see about ten people coming off campus. Our problem in JODAC is how we going to get - continue with those 6,000 people, not necessarily in organisation but in support, so we are dealing very much more at an ideological level of symbols and things like this, which people support and follow and don't necessarily simply get involved.

We trying to get support away from the government and support for - now support doesn't necessarily mean active engagement - or another way of doing it is to neutralise the government, and that's what our main concern is - it's mass politics at that level - I can -

I mean we can look at individual case studies like (.....) Pointer and I mean all of these people that I've been talking about and - and some of the younger people and see what process of thinking they've got through, but I think it's the - the - the main area that we have to deal with is alternative sources of information, or ideological struggle, to put it that way, to get the propaganda war which you know - have written so much about - and get that in - that's our key area absolutely.....

J.F. So that's the way forward - I was going to ask you what the way forward....

T.W. Ja - and that's why the present form of repression is primarily against that - it's against the UDF, it's against - it's a clampdown on information of all forms, it's - you can't even say whatever, so you can't say white minority regime, you can't say disappeared, you can't - so it has to - it's a complete and utter clampdown on information, and so that's why this state of emergency has taken that form because it's -

But that's our primary struggle and so it - but it's not simply education - we think of it as education - we depoliticise the - it - it's the struggle to - to - you dealing with the police, you dealing with repression, you dealing with a conflict situation all the time to - to bring in these alternative sources of information - you dealing with ways of persuading people, way of winning over people's support, issues around which to hinge it, what are -

You have to assess moods of people, you have to assess feelings and emotiont that people are going through at - at various times -

T.W. The questions and the confusions, the contradictions that are unresolved and - and all of these kinds of things which is - so it's not just a kind of an education class that - that-- that's - that you're involved in to win people across at that level.

And also more and more I think the important question for whites is going to become how to - to put it straightforward, how to make apartheid unworkable in the white areas - that's a whole nother question which JODAC just hasn't confronted which people in the townships have confronted with - confronted in a very real way -

But you know, I mean I suppose that's a question that - that I don't know if JODAC should confront it or who, but it's going to have to be confronted, because it's not simply winning over whites but it's getting rid of structures and - and - and that's the question that's been quite obviously systematically dealt with in the townships but we haven't - we dealing with a different, a very, very different constituency.

J.F. Do you - have you had concrete examples of blacks supporting the idea of JODAC and what you're doing?

T.W. Oh, well, they kind of speak at our meetings, all of them - they come to our house meetings. Some - some people from TIC came and did door to door work with us in our recent campaign - we ran this UDF call to whites campaign - dammit, why did I give all my literature away in London on that.

J.F. Who would you give it to, CIR?

T.W. Mmm..... but they've come with us doing door to door work recently, so ja - but for instance, we've just run a campaign called UDF call to whites campaign - this Alex action was part of it, and Van Zyl Slabbert's meeting was part of it and - well, the meeting with Van Zyl Slabbert where we got 4,000 people, and all of these things were all part of the same campaign.

We caucussed it widely - it was during the last state of emergency that we caucussed it - before the last state of emergency was lifted we caucussed widely and there was a lot of excitement and support for it - I mean just verbal support - I mean our question now - it's a problem we face is how to get these people involved much more in organising in the white areas.

J.F. Which people?

T.W. The township people - the other UDF affiliates....

J.F. Can they afford that time.....

T.W. No, well, that's the problem - ja, that's the problem - it's not - it's a problem - I mean at the moment it's not really a priority but in some senses it is because that's the enemy, and the question is how do you deal with the enemy - you deal with the enemy in two ways - you try and demoralise and win over as much of the enemy as possible, but you also try and smash them, those that decide to remain the enemy - the enemy's never a static camp - it's a - it's a camp that's always in a state of fluctuation and change and the - the kind of interesting role about JODAC is that it straddles both the people's camp and the enemy's camp - we operating in both and - and that's what gives us our unique position - people in the UDF are solidly in the people's camp, and so their general strategy would be people's war against the enemy camp, right, but a more

T.W. .... sophisticated approach would be people's war at the same time as trying to organise them and work with them - and at the moment I mean JODAC's been caught more on the - much more on the other side of trying to win them over kind of thing - they've been caught more on the side of people's war against the enemy camp and - and on both sides there needs to be a fusion of - of - of different approaches to - to - to the enemy, to put it in those terms.

J.F. So why do you want blacks to run - come get involved in JODAC?

T.W. Not so much with JODAC but in the white areas to see that - that winning over whites then actively doing it, because let me - it's a condition that's taking place in the white areas - more and more whites are beginning to realise that majority rule is on the cards, or black majority rule is on the cards, and are now only prepared to listen to blacks, to be persuaded by blacks -

They tired of hearing Van Zyl Slabbert, they tired of hearing the whites, Beyers Naude or even the government or whoever, and they want to hear it from the horse's mouth, so to speak and - and I've noticed time and again if you get good black leaders into white areas it's the most effective and powerful political weapon you can have at the moment - even if you don't get someone who's so good - get someone like Percy Qoboza into a white meeting he'll win them over hands down....

J.F. Just because he's not the monster he was painted?

T.W. Ja, and they discover that he's not the monster, but also because people want to hear - there's a kind of feeling that these people are in fact our leaders but they are not allowed to hear them - I'm talking about not the whole of the white community by any means obviously, but the kind of left section of the movement, the PFP and to the left of the PFP and - or maybe even to the left of the Nationalist Party I would say that there more and more whites who - who want to hear black leadership, and the government can't afford that - it has to - to cut down on that completely -

I mean the government's gains recently in the past on the one hand playing up the right wing, the AWB to the extent that they did is to win back the white left that they lost to some kind of support for it, or at least for parliament or something like that - and now the state of emergency is to win (?) back the whites - I mean they trying to - to play this - this - this incredibly difficult balancing act - and well, we'll just have to see to what extent they were successful, but I think they were relative successful in winning back quite a lot of white liberals and so on by creating the right wing fear, or facilitating that right wing fear, so - ja -

But I think that - that it's not simply breaking down the idea of the fact that black leaders don't only have horns, but it's allowing whites to have access to those black leaders, and I think a lot of - of blacks simply don't realise the power that they do have over a lot of whites at this point -

See, JODAC doesn't see itself as a leadership organisation in the sense that we want to be the leaders of the whites, progressive whites or anything - we see ourselves as playing a leading role in facilitating that process, and the leaders are the people in the townships - that's the real leadership - and it's worked -

T.W. When we do it, if you get good leaders into the white areas it - it's - it has - it can have a devastating - you can win over hundreds of people in - in - in - that's why people like - I mean Terror Lekota and Popo Molefe were - were masters at this game - I mean there were no two better people at winning over whites than - than those two and - and I just hope the time - I think I mean it - it's - that's why the government has got to rule more and more by repression, that even within the white community is losing legitimacy.

J.F. Is JODAC a threat to the government - is there evidence of that, that they're especially worried about JODAC or - do you think it's the level of repression against JODAC indicates inordinate fear by the government - how does the government react to JODAC?

T.W. Well, it's - one mustn't always see the government as being purely logical and purely coherent, and I still think that they believe that blacks can't do it themselves and there's one white behind every hundred blacks or something, and most probably some of that view is projected onto JODAC and yes, I think we have got a disproportionate amount of state attention in terms of our - if we try and look at ourselves in ourselves - and we can't really do that - if we try ja, when the last state of emergency we had ten people in detention at one point - about 40 or so people were - houses were raided, and a lot of people were forced into hiding - I mean that is a disproportionate amount of attention -

We were able to survive all of that - and at the moment - well, I don't know how many are in at the moment, but at least eight or so from JODAC have been in detention - I don't know as yet how many people houses have been searched and so on, but a number have been, and again obviously most of them are in hiding -

So again it's disproportionate, but I think JODAC is a lot more of a serious force now, or has been between March this year and - and June than it was in June last year - it's grown incredibly in sophistication, in understanding, popularity, knowledge about it -

I mean for instance, we - we call a meeting now we pretty guaranteed of getting 500 people to an ordinary meeting, which is - is I think quite good in Johannesburg - I mean Cape Town's a bit of a different case - I mean it's a different kind of white context but - we (?) can get greater numbers in Cape Town.

J.F. Finally can you tell me about the new national white organisation - what...

T.W. New national white organisation?

J.F. Ja - is that - has that gone anywhere since that meeting or.....

T.W. No, that meeting wasn't - that meeting was simply a meeting between all of these different white organisations - it wasn't an attempt to set up a white national organisation - it was simply an exercise in communication, to share ideas, analysis strategy, and the main - the main question we had to deal with was that question of that document - in fact that document was the central theoretical or strategic question, the role of white in the national democratic struggle, and there was a lack of consensus, strong lack of consensus at that stage, and I think that conference helped to - to bring about a greater unity at least at the level of analysis and about what our overall role was -

T.W. I don't think it achieved an entire consensus - there's still a lot of people that feel that the white areas are a waste of time and that whites involve - white involvement should be to support black organisation directly - I still think a lot of people feel that - and it came mainly from Cape Town, but Cape Town has set up this organisation, I think, that the other position has won through so - my feeling is - personal feeling is that there is a need for a - a white national political organisation, now more than ever, but we just going to have to wait and see whether such a thing will emerge.

J.F. Why the word democrats, democratic important for me to understand - important for people to understand whi it's used - why isn't this called the Johannesburg....

T.W. Socialist Committee?

J.F. White People's Group.

T.W. Well, because as I was saying we - we don't primarily see ourselves as a white group, right, so we wouldn't ever include the name white in it because white is not going to mobilise other whites - I think it's a question of I mean whites will do that - the whole concept white will mobilise people politically in the right wing but not to the left - to the left people have a consciousness of being white, but that is filled with a whole range of nuances, variations and so on. Democratic I think because we trying to put on the agenda, as openly as we can, the central political problem, which is the question of democracy.

Now in itself democracy is open for debate - I mean one can stop at one person one vote, voting democracy, or one can deepen it into the economy, into the factories and all sorts of different areas, so it's a broad enough concept, on the one hand to be attractive to people and to take people further - it's a dynamic concept which is not simply a definition of a political position, but it's a - it's a definition of where you'd like to move, so it - it's open and dynamic in that sense.

We would never use the word white because we see ourselves as being part of the non racial movement first and foremost, and we happen to be the organisation that is addressing people who live in white areas and in the white group areas as doing that, so we see ourselves as addressing those whites, yes, but we would never define ourselves as an exclusive white organisation - we'd define ourselves as a non racial organisation, and our membership is predominantly white and that is because of the conditions that we have to deal with.

J.F. The last major area - I've just a lot of things which I'm going to ask you off tape is (Tape off)

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. .... non racialism - is it important - why should one talk about it - can you articulate what it means, and then how you see the future - is the goal to make JODAC unnecessary - what kind of future, what kind of post change....

T.W. Yes, JODAC - JODAC's certainly not wanting to put itself in power at all (Laugh) - we are trying to make ourselves unnecessary - our aim is to - broadly speaking is to create a democratic society - so for instance our aim is - and I think that is also the aim of the UDF - the aim of the UDF is not to put itself in power but to - to - to oppose and get rid of all anti democratic forces as much as possible, and to facilitate the democratic process so that those groups who want to organise themselves for power can -

And obviously there's a strong feeling that the A.N.C. is very, very important not only in the democratic process but should be there in - be allowed to participate in that democratic society - so that's how JODAC sees itself moving forward - I mean it - it's the key political - if the key political organisations were unbanned I think that JODAC would have to - to reconsider its role.

Non racialism - maybe I should just play around with this - this whole idea of black on black violence a little bit just to tackle that question, and using racial terms to understand the struggle, because in a sense what the government has done is it's taken this - this idea of black on black violence out of a matrix of possible uses of, or combinations of racial terms -

I mean for instance, the main two racial groups are black and white, but the conflict in South Africa, the conflict is not a black versus white conflict - our society is racially structured, yes - there are whites dominating blacks, but the conflict - the way to get rid of that has been that there are blacks and whites on both sides of the struggle, so you've got whites and blacks fighting whites and blacks in fact -

And so you've got black on black violence, yes, you've got white on white violence, you've got black on white violence and white on black violence, and so you've got a matrix of possible ways of attempting to try and understand the nature of the conflict, and what the government has done is simply taken out one component of that matrix and say this is in fact the complexity of our struggle - our struggle is about black on black violence -

And the reason why these terms - so the point I'm trying to make is the reason why these terms are not very helpful - I mean even if we to say that black on black violence or white on black violence or white on white or black on white or whatever - that doesn't really help us to understand what's going on inside society - we've got all of that - we've got - sometimes we've got whites fighting whites - we've seen it on TV -

We've sometimes got blacks fighting whites, we've sometimes got whites fighting blacks and so on - so the point is so what if a black kills a black - I mean that's got nothing - I mean to me it's an irrelevant thing - blacks kill blacks all over the world - blacks kill blacks in South Africa, too - what is important is the way that the whole of that society is structured - so in -

T.W. Maybe to - to put it differently - non racialism is - or the kind of conflict that is taking place in South Africa, and the fact that the predominant form of the conflict is non racial, is an expression, I think, of the people to do away completely with any form of - of - of racial stigmas to - to characterise one's humanity through a racial political system -

So non racialism is, I think, a real human solidarity that manifests itself despite the fact that our society is - is racially structured white against black - there's a kind of spontaneity where whites and blacks can get together on both sides to maintain a set of interests or to work towards a more just set of interests -

One can see it at - at - at that level - non racialism is also an attempt to construct a new nation inside of South Africa. Our present nation is structured along racial lines - there's an attempt to - to organise our society racially to discriminate and exploit people through this racially oppressive system -

And non racialism is an attempt to construct a new nation - it's not an attempt to - to replace white domination with black domination - it's an attempt to have a nation where - where you don't feel that you have to call someone by the colour of their skin to be able to make sense of what that person is about, because so osten now even in South Africa you've got to say this and this person did this and this, and then you'd always get the question well, was that person white or black, or Indian or Coloured -

It's to move into a whole new consciousness, and that can only be built up through struggle, so it means forging links between blacks and whites in the process of struggle - it means having a very strong ideal of non racialism, it means identifying the fact that racial structures are there to also serve other needs, to serve an economy as well, so it's not simply racial oppression that is the problem - I say not simply - it's also economic exploitation -

So, it's not only to - non racialism is not only an attempt to construct a nation which has nothing to do with race, but it's to construct a nation that has nothing to do with exploitation as well - it's to develop human solidarity within the situation which goes - cuts across both political - the political and the economic facets of life - I don't know, I think that's what non racialism is.

J.F. Do you want to say anything about the future, about what it'll be like to make it work in the future of South Africa?

T.W. You mean once this - I think that - I mean I don't think we should be entirely rosy about the future - I think that the vestiges of apartheid are going to remain for a long time, and that even in a post liberated situation a lot of the - the manifestations of apartheid are going to erupt most probably into violent conflict from time to time - certainly whites are not going to give up power simply when apartheid is dismantled - I'm sure that some are going to continue to try and re-establish it -

I think the government has been to some extent successful in entrenching ethnic and tribal conflict within our situation through apartheid - I mean tribalism is a product of apartheid, if one wants to call it tribalism - I think it's possible that that might erupt after apartheid is dismantled and tis present government is got rid of - so I mean I don't think the immediate future's entirely rosy - I think we've also got to have a pretty - a much longer term view on that, and that getting rid of apartheid is not only a problem of getting rid of the present government - it's a process of social

T.W. .... transformation , so I think that struggle - that conflict is going to continue afterwards and will need to continue afterwards - but I think the future at least provides us with the possibility of starting to work through the issues, the problems that are being built up now, and of course it's not going to be a sea of roses - rose petals or whatever (Laugh) in - in achieving all of that -

But I think it's - it's something that we can all look to hopefully because it at least provides us with the space and the opening to start resolving the real problems that have been build up over the last three or four hundred years in South Africa.....

END OF INTERVIEW.