

Joe Matthews

Interviewer: This is an interview with Joe Matthews on 10 September 2009. I've read your interview in the SADET book which is a very, I don't know if you've seen the book of interviews, have they not given it to you?

Interviewee: I think I saw it

Interviewer: Ja, it's a very useful interview, giving general overview of the 1950s and the period, decision on the armed struggle. My interest in this interview, but not exclusively is primarily with Luthuli but also the relationship between Luthuli and Kotane and I'm also interested in the relationship between Luthuli and your father and I think your father has tended to be consigned to a moderate scholarly role you see and my impression is that is not the case and that he had a strategic sense and everything that I want to do is not really, I don't want pre-conceived conclusions but I would like to probe them deeply. So I think, I don't want to structure this with a list of questions and all of this, start where you like. See maybe you would start with your upbringing and your father's, a sense of your father's general involvement and then when Luthuli came in and Kotane I'm particularly concerned about. Like you, when ..(unclear) to give me how you said I am neglecting Kotane at the expense of people on the ground. Now Kotane's relationship with Luthuli appears to be have been special. I would like to understand that.

Interviewee: Well I think first of all, I want to make a general point that all the people we are talking about, who played a big role in the struggle for liberation were men of many parts and you cannot get a complete view of either my father, or Luthuli, or Kotane if you confine your study of them to their publicly known political life. In fact these were complex characters and one must try and look at all the various strengths which went to make up these individuals. It's very important to do that because then something which appears inexplicable

suddenly you know it's made easy to understand when you look at their own characters in the very broadest sense and not just look at their narrow political activity because that was just part of their active life and is not complete if you don't look at the entire spectre.

Now you take a man like my father for example. He has a life as part of the missionary, Christian Missionary effort, that's a history in itself, just by itself you could write a book on what he did as a Christian.

Interviewer: Simon has tried that, have you see a book by Simon?

Interviewee: No I have not

Interviewer: I can get you, Unisa has got a book on him, by someone Simon, Willem Simon, I will get you it

Interviewee: Ja, then you have got, you see life as a teacher, and you say to yourself, here's a man, he's got 35 years teaching at Adams High School and then at Fort Hare and it's a whole life in itself which surprised my own daughter when she went to Kwa-Zulu Natal and she discovered that her grandfather was the founder of the Natal African Teachers Union and he was in fact the president of that union. She found that when they gave her a sheep, the Zulu teachers gave her, at the end of her stay, they presented her with a live sheep you see and said this is in honour of your grandfather. That whole business of activity as a teacher and in teacher organisations, that's another life. You've got the political life, you have got what my father used to call public good, doing public good, you go all over the country you will find schools which he started, you, Agricultural College in Taung, high school in Aliwal North, high schools in Middledrift, that's another life of ..., helping people you know, not in the political sphere but in education, in health, a nursing home in Middledrift and things like that. So what I'm trying to say is that this, you could say it's a kind of, in our sort

of way, a kind of African renaissance men in the way, and when we use that word renaissance way ..(unclear) it's multi-faceted in that. And we need to look at that and particularly you as a white scholar you've got to be very careful of this because the tendency is to deal with the obvious factors because you're cut off from some of them like say the traditional factor or even the traditional. What role did my father play in the life of the Batswana specifically? To which group he belonged. Does anybody know that life which he shared with Dr. Molema, with Tshekele Kgama. They had a Tswana approach to many problems which are known to Batswana and are not known even to other Africans you see. So the activity was so broad, people got a shock when my father was appointed an Ambassador by Botswana as Ambassador to Washington and to the United Nations and they said what has he got to do with Botswana? You see, so you see there, so it's very important to have .., to bear this in mind, very few people master it, one old chap who did, he's the one who wrote on Sol Plaatjie, that American chap, you see that fellow, he dug very deep and he followed up and he went everywhere you know, trying to really understand this man and he produces something which makes a lot of Africans who read it say to themselves "how did he know that?" you know and I think a scholar can do that which by the way is what my dad said about the Germans, while he went to .. humbled in Germany and to look at the German scores of anthropology because in the German school of Anthropology, you had to spend five years first living in a community before you could say I'm now doing research on these people, so people like that, the Ram??, ..(unclear) childhood, a German chap later became a professor at Fort Hare, further going, can you imagine a chap must spend five years and learn the language of that area before the university will allow him to say he is now doing research. So the field work was such that they got a feel of the subject which a more superficial research would not uncover. So I make this as a general point because we were in cabinet when someone was talking about Luthuli and I was saying that there was a complaint about Luthuli that the meetings used to go on the whole night until the next morning, committee meetings, and people said but that's when you know .., we are exhausted and so on, and I said that's because

you don't know that he was in the Natal African Football Association which is the meetings, they started after work, if they had been at work then they went and started the Football Association meeting and they went on to the next morning. Luthuli got this bad habit from football and Trevor Manuel was shocked. He said "did Luthuli have anything to do with football?" you see now, I never thought of him in relation to his sport. You see.

Interviewer: yes and ..(unclear)

Interviewee: you see, still you know the .., or like Tambo being the top at every ..(unclear) who won the cup as the best choir master, it was OR Tambo but who knows about all these poets stuff and music and that he's favourite music was the Messiah and his favourite recording of the Messiah was the London Philharmonic conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargin???, which I've got incidentally, I've got the Messiah with the London Philharmonic. He used to carry around these records of the Messiah, Malcom Sargin?? Conducting or that he used spend his spare time always at the community of the resurrection head quarters at Merefield?? Whenever he felt depressed or not too happy or not ill or what, then he was amongst the monks at Matthews in community of the resurrection, you see. So you find then you are able to say God that's a contradiction, the chap is leading a revolutionary movement, sitting in Morogorro and Lusaka and so on, what's he doing in Merefield, what's the connection? Then you find that no the connection is where he went to school at St Peters in Rosettenville which was run by the community of the resurrection and that's the connection, so now when he was in exile he could go to the head quarters of the community of the resurrection in many of the people whom he knew because of the link with St Peters where he was a schooled pupil and later a teacher at the same school. So this was almost a place of refuge for a person like TAmbo.

So I'm trying to sketch that in looking at the lives of people like Luthuli and Tambo and Matthews and so on, one must try and find all the threads which together combined you see to produce the man that he was and is

Interviewer: they were separate but they were also one in the sense that their Christianity and the politics and their ..(unclear) as teachers or community leaders were informed by the same moral beliefs which is

Interviewee: Well that you see is, you will then get confused when an aesthet like Moses Kotane comes into the picture and you will find curiously enough that Kotane also had quite a church link in his life, but we would say that it was their philosophy of Ubutun which was the common thread, it's deeper than Christianity, the whole outlook of African, if you call Ubuntu, that is the concept of humanity which Africans have got and we shouldn't perhaps say Africans but particularly in this part of the world there's something about their attitude to humanity which influences and has influenced their original welcoming of the missionaries unlike other areas where missionaries ..(unclear), Uganda there was a massacre when the missionaries arrived there. In South Africa that didn't happen, why because a prophet like Ntsikana predicted that there are people who are coming, they will be carrying a buckle??? Without holes which meant money, see coins and they will be carrying a book and you must welcome those who are carrying the book. They come, the missionaries and find the people with a monotheistic religious approach unlike other areas where people had a polytheistic approach, here the outlook was of a single spiritual unseen God and what the missionaries were saying therefore wasn't startling which were in line with what they already believed. The missionaries said Jesus Christ was ..(unclear) between them and the supreme being and they also thought their ancestors were an interlock ..(unclear) between them and the creator. So the welcome given to the missionaries and so on also has something to do with this outlook of ubuntu which made Shaka stop his warriors from killing the strange people who are arrived, who were white, strange hair, wearing outrageous

clothes in 1820 and the warriors thought they must kill these, “what this” and Shaka said “wait, wait, wait”! and he sat around these people, he looked at them and he said “no these are human beings”, now, so and therefore you don’t kill for no reason.

Interviewer: can I interrupt you, by asking you about the different facets, I mean they were ..(unclear) you were talking about the facets

Interviewee: I think that you see the unifying factor with all these people, this philosophy of ubuntu, which would make Kotane have no difficulty in working with and being friends with, very closely with people who own the face of it, had a completely different philosophy you see. Now my father went to Cape Town very often to 45 Mount Road in Cape Town where Kotane lived and they would have ..(unclear) arguments and one of the arguments which fascinated my father was when Kotane had just, had been explaining to him why he must oppose the Imperialist war and gave a detailed explanation from a Marxist point of view, why you must support the British in the war against Germany. The following day, Germany attacked Russia, attacked the Soviet Union. My father was still in Cape Town, goes back to Kotane who then gives him a complete reason why the war has now being transformed into a war of liberation against the fascists you see, it’s an anti-imperialist war which is call you into question the very existence of imperialist and he said now, you see the secretary general of communist party showing his .., what he used to call his dialectical approach to problems and how the party now is going to encourage the ANC to support the war and previously they had been going around especially Dabi was even arrested for saying people must not support the war, but after the attack on the Soviet Union there was a complete switch and my father said it was uncanny because he had just been having that discussion and argument with Kotane and within 48 hours the same man was giving him a completely different picture\

Interviewer: was your fairly close to Kotane?

Interviewee: very close

Interviewer: very important in a sense of outwardly they seemed to be very different ..(unclear)?

Interviewee: No they were very close friends but they were both Batswanas, very important, they were both Batswana and Kotane belonged to the group who are regarded as the senior tribe among the Batswana that is the Bahurutse people

Interviewer: and from ..(unclear)

Interviewee: yes, the Bakwena are regarded as the seniors, it's contested by other Tswana groups, like the Barolong contest it, but my father who wrote the history of the Barolong, short history of the Barolong, points out that funny enough, the same Barolong who say they don't recognise this seniority of the Bakwena, whenever they have an important national ceremony they make sure that the Bakwena are present to preside over that ceremony. So there was a very strong link because of those Batswana and so on, there was that link as well, but also the other link was the link of intellectual engagement. This happened all the time and it is the way Kotane put the case (pause)

Interviewer: carry on

Interviewee: the way they put the case for the Communist Party, you know, because Kotane used to say to all of us, whenever we were rude or maybe shouting or making a lot of noise, he would point that politics has a culture, we must be cultured in the way we put our case, we must be ready to listen to the other people, not shout and ..(unclear) and we must win the argument you know, through proper facts and so on and his attitude was, as a person was different

even from other communists in the country. Some of the other members of the party didn't have Kotane's approach and we owe a lot to the way Kotane conducted the party and conducted himself. We wouldn't be having a Communist party right now in the country, in government and everywhere else if it had not been for Kotane's approach to a national liberation question, distinct approach to it which is illustrated by the participation of Kotane and Marx, JB Marx, in 1937 was the Jubilee Year of the ANC, 25 years and the secretary general, Rev. Xalata was going around the country to revive the ANC you see and the people who worked closest with him were the two communists, Kotane and Marx you see, who saw it as very important, saw it, when Vali says to people you must join the ANC, you see, it's not the first time that a communist have almost in some cases come to the rescue of the liberation movement, for it's sake, not for narrow reasons but because the project, the national project was still valid and important and the party leadership gave it very high priority and I think that therefore when you're trying to find why when the youth league in 1946 introduced the resolution to get rid of the Communist ..(unclear) led by Lembede, Tambo, you know, very strong argument by the ANC Youth League and the resolution, it was a clever resolution, it didn't mention the Communist, it just said members of the ANC must not be members of any other party which was another way of saying the Communist must then be expelled and it was heavily defeated and never was brought up again in the ANC's history. Why? Why did the conservatives, Xuma, Xalata, you know, why did these conservatives fight to prevent the ideology from being brought into the national movement and to have an ideological test, they rejected it and I think the behaviour which was pointed out in that conference, the attitude of Kotane, Marx and others, Den Tlume who were building the ANC and ..(unclear) we couldn't answer a simple question, that now look here these are people who are actually tarred and tassled, they are building the national movement, then you say that they must be removed for ideological reasons, then we will say the Catholics must be excluded, we must say the Muslims must be excluded, where are we going to stop. This organisation was formed to unite African people, you can't start imposing a test

but what helped was the fact that the party itself in its attitude never said this is Pedit-bujoir organisation and this that and the other which happened with other communists parties in other parts of the world, other parts of Africa, the Sudanese Communist Party made that serious mistake. So Kotane's role is greatly under rated, remember at the time when these things where happening, non-Africans were not allowed to be members of the ANC. So he had to carry the burden of convincing other Africans of the correctness of the approach that he was adopting you see. And it's one reason why it's very difficult to be anti-Communist, right up to today, that consciousness was created, that look here, wait a minute, we're not accepting communism but the communist are our working neighbours of the ANC and we judge them on that basis, not on whether they are communist or not. Kotane's response for this attitude and therefore when Luthuli says, after meeting with Kotane I wondered you know, I thought that I could also be a communist because of the way this man conducts himself you see. And it was illustrated at a very emotional moment in Moscow when we were attending the 50th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution in 1967 and we were sitting around a table, with Russian communists and one of the Russian communists, ..(unclear) when he was talking about us, said I know that you're a communist, you're a communist and then he pointed at Tambo, you're not a communist, you see and (pause – phone rang) – Kotane said, interrupted him and said, "I wish there were more non-Communist like Tambo". Now the Russians are very sensitive people, he realised that he had made a mistake and he apologised and so on for making the distinction between the communist and the non-communist in that. But Kotane you see, that remark by Kotane, I wish there were more non-communist ..(unclear), and it was a profound sort of statement you know at around a sensitive moment and it showed his sensitivity, he wasn't going to separate himself from Tambo

Interviewer: from Tambo – is it not a mirror of image of how your father, Luthuli and OR to Kotane?

Interviewee: ja

Interviewer: ja, he were as much ANC as them. Let me ask you something. You know it's very interesting, as far as I know, Moses Kotane had very little formal education and

Interviewee: yes, in fact what he learned was from the party

Interviewer: ja ..(unclear) and all of that. So it's very interesting that the party and the ANC were able to create its own intellectuals and Kotane being this, but when you say

Interviewee: but it's the party who did that and by the way

Interviewer: ja the party

Interviewee: and by the way, let's go further, the Jews. You see the role of the Jews and I'm using that word, they advisedly, because its controversial. The Jews from Lithuania and other places who came here, mostly from Lithuania, they brought with them no only ideology, but study

Interviewer: mentality of learnedness

Interviewee: ..(unclear) this thing of you know, what I often call 4000 years of ..(unclear), best tradition was drilled into Kotane Marx, Tlume and who was the other one, who was also at the ..(unclear)

Interviewer: Nzula Latan??

Interviewee: You see he ended up in Lesotho, Josy Palmer's husband?

Interviewer: Mofutsanyane

Interviewee: Mofutsanyane. Now these chaps were all educated in the party, they didn't have formal education, in party schools and later on of course in the Comitan? School, learning again in Moscow and interestingly enough, they didn't just learn the Marxist approach to problems. Kotane knew the bible inside out, you know things like that. The range and this I say was taken as a tradition from the Jewish intellectuals who formed very strong part of the party in the early days and it's something that I find missing at present. You see when you met a Communist in those days, in the 1940s and 1950s and so on, ..(unclear) he had read everything you see. Then Catholic in the reading and the studying

Interviewer: can you think of some names like Julius First ..(unclear)

Interviewee: I mean we were .., because we are going back you see, I mean chaps like Bag, Lazan Bag who was regarded as a dogmatist who were insisting on dogmar, you know the Marxist thing. The stalwarts of those days, Eddie Roux of course, who was not himself Jewish but he .., there are so many, the guys who .., I'm trying to think of the one who used to lecture to us outside Port Elizabeth, he would be there with Govan Mbeki and others. And they were such readers and scholars and so on you know, Toli Benan and all these guys who were

Interviewer: I know this sense that you talking to someone who is revealing over the one fraction of what ..(unclear) from what's been transmitted but what they themselves have in the course of growing and learnt. I picked it up even in Soviet scholarship where they read so many languages and all of this sort of thing, ..(unclear) those things ..(unclear)

Interviewee: ja, so you see, this, the tradition of studying and a lot of people made a mistake for instance, as I say I've met comrades who'd, who on the basis of what they heard would tell me that Kotane was not a theoretician he couldn't

write, and I realised they don't know the history you see and have never met the man and so on and it's .., I know when we were collecting the demands to include in the Freedom Charter, and I came up to Jo'burg and Kotane called me aside you see and he said now Joe you are either a bad theoretician but the fact of the matter is that you are a theoretician. How did you allow these demands from Port Elizabeth to pass through you and in this form. So I said I didn't draw up those demands, they were drawn up by Govan Mbeki you see. He said no, no you can't escape your responsibility you know, you are the theoretician (phone rang). So there was so much Soviet stuff in the structure you see and Kotane said how could you allow this Marxist stuff into the demands to be included for a liberation movement and so on. So he, you see he was .., a superficial chap would have said, these are the demands of people in the area and we must insist that they are included in the freedom charter and now here's a leader of the communist party saying "how could you allow something like this, this is not the communist party this is ANC" you see, national liberation movement, that's not their programme, defending the ANC's programme even against his own chaps who were coming with ideas which were not in line with the policy. Now I think myself you see that when we look at the relationship between these men, we look at perhaps the personal characteristics but more than that we have to look at the fact that they shared, there were certain things they shared, they didn't share everything but what they did share was sufficient to sustain a very healthy relationship. Now of course there's a danger in that which we begin to see. There is a danger of the communists responsibility to the working class being diluted in the national and a loss of, which is very important, of the independence of the party of the working class. Now when we say independent we don't mean it in a vulgar sort of way

Interviewer: quite separately

Interviewee: it's not in a vulgar way but it's in a way which protects the interests of the workers in the interest of the furtherance and progressiveness of humanity

where at times the party has to be, not only critical of the national movement but even fight against wrong tendencies which occurred in a national movement. Now if the party is not strong enough intellectually and otherwise, it doesn't play that role. Now we seem to have lost that guiding role, a lot of it is the fort of the comrades who visibly left the party which was then the rest of the historic legacy and the link so that when a man like Mbeki leaves, Joel Netshitenze and others and so on and become a collective around the ..(unclear) and not around the party, certain weaknesses are going to occur, first you are going to get superficial verbal adherence to progressive ideas from that collective, separate from a collective consisting entirely of communists and that separation occurred and its consequences we still haven't got to the serious consequences of that

Interviewer: the intellectual content of the party, what it's done to it

Interviewee: and losing it's .., in a true sense and in a very unselfish sense losing its leading role you see and then you get a deviation in which somebody like Mbeki and Joel and others consider that they are playing the leading role and playing the leading role from a platform of a non-Marxist organisation, you see

Interviewer: using the language

Interviewee: ja, so you're left with the language but you are even left with people who can accuse the party of being, they schooled the party

Interviewer: also left??

Interviewee: from this platform, the heard Marxists insults at the party from an ANC platform. So we are being oppressed I think of a policy which was correct at one stage and which has benefited us tremendously in achieving liberation and which could, which had the potential to benefit us during liberation so that the contestation between the workers and the poor and the rising middle class

which is now linking with the old ruling class as defined in our programme of 1962 where we defined it in great detail the classes that there were in our society, what we have now got is that we've got a bureaucratic middle class occupying powerful position in the parastatal organisations, state organisations so that we are not sure now who is .., are we still representing the working class and the poor or are we now basically representing the interests of the rising middle class and I'm not saying that it was wrong to encourage the rise of the middle class. One of the aims of apartheid was to prevent the emergence of a black middle class and all their laws and practices were designed to do that. But we not only removed those laws, encouraged them so far, middle class but it seems as if that became an end in itself and so a depth is developing from a class point of view. Whatever people were .., all of us may say personally and otherwise, but looked at from a class point of view, and it's not a matter of personalities, it's not a matter of Zuma or Mbeki or what, there's a growing rift between the aspirations of the new and rising middle class and I don't know if you can still just be called middle .., it has become big enough, controls large part of the economy through the state 300 or so parastatals, people sitting on those boards and earning those salaries, enormous salaries and so on. We have got a class which gets a shock when there's a strike. Now we didn't get a shock when there was a strike. We went to the workers and we supported the workers and showed them where they were wrong and showed them how .., the strategy of how to win their demands. Now we look ..(unclear) at any demand of the workers. We are on the other side of the table as Jeff Hudson used to say, that there's a table there, the working class is that side, and this side you've got the bosses on the capitalist class and he says sometimes the chaps from that side of the table move and come to this side and historically he says that happens and he was referring to Roy Valenski who was he leader of the workers in the then Northern Rhodesia and he ended up on this side of the table whereas when you look at his early history, he was sitting on the working class side of the table and he ended up being against the workers. We are getting something like that and we are confused therefore, all of us even personally are not knowing, we are

drifting, you don't know, do you support COPE, do you support his and in the end what is happening is that in the absence of proper collective party sort of guidance, in the end people are keeping quiet.

Interviewer: If I may come in, I think this informs you know, from your background that scholars with a political background choose their subjects for political reason and I'm interested in this because we need models, we need models, we need to rescue the lessons of those people because as you say there was a gap, not only with those people withdrawing, but there's a gap between Mbeki and Mandela that when Mbeki wouldn't consult, there was not really a generation that he respected. Now what I would like to know is, you know, if you see a photograph of Madiba and Kotane coming out of the Treason Trial courtroom, really nice picture of Kotane with his cigarette you see, they identify Mandela and the other person is not identified. Now I have written, I don't know if I have sent you my article called "Misunderstanding Mandela", did I send you this. It's about Tom Lodge's book on Mandela. And I was saying that there's nothing that most people would have done without going past Kotane and what I would like you to go back to, is not just his manner, but the quality of the advice and the reasons why people why consulted him, like your father, Luthuli. Madiba was a wild man in some ways

Interviewee: but he was tamed by Kotane?

Interviewer: Ja I would like to hear that because you know, I want to rescue, I want to retrieve Luthuli not as a statue but as someone to engage with but the same with your father and I'm realising from speaking to you, that your father needs to also be dealt with, I mean not, I can't deal with all of them but I'm going to do some work but to me it's very interesting that men who, academics will think he's not a theorist because he hasn't got a PhD, in fact no one would do most things without talking to him. Can you comment on that because that relates again to Luthuli saying "send Moses down" you know, this type of thing.

Interviewee: You see, I put it this way, the media in the world largely controlled by the West and by the imperialist has created a perpetuation of a communist. There's a certain image they've created and whereas we who are communist can distinguish between say Lenin and Stalin, we can see the difference, we can see the difference between Kotane and another communist you know and the thing about Kotane, about Hilda Bernstein, about Ruth First you know is communist integrity. Now this integrity doesn't mean infallibility, the integrity of Rosa Luxemburg who made a mistake, or she and the party in general made a mistake in 1918 but their integrity cannot be questioned. The criticism of Stalin by Rosa Luxemburg cannot be questioned, made at that time that this will lead to .., if you go on this part you going to have these deviations and so on. Now the thing about Kotane is inspiring people through integrity, through not telling lies, through not being propagandistic you know and many of our comrades were propagandistic, they were .., they said terrible things about others, they ... When I arrived at school here at Rosettenville here in 1943 as a school boy, I walked into the school and there was a tall man outside a (pause - I think you thought the tape had gone off and it hadn't).

Interviewer: sorry it's new technology. Okay, that one luckily didn't stop okay. It still going on, I don't understand how these things work properly, sorry. Okay. You see this is why it's safe, I believe in using two recorders which is extremist and people think I'm crazy, okay

Interviewee: I arrive at the school you see and a tall fellow in front of the door to number comes up to me and he says "and who are you"? so I say "I'm Joe Matthews". So he says "oh you are the son of the capitalist professor". Now we later became great friends with this Richard Kekana was his name, he was a leading right in the Young Communist League. Now I mention that incident because some years later when the party was dissolved, and there was no party, liquidator took all the assets of the party and everything, Kotane moved from

Cape Town and he came to live in Alexander township and of course he had no job. He had been a functionary of the party, paid by the party and he is now sitting in Alexander with the family. So he started a little spaza shop you see, and there was a whole business about actually ..(unclear) came right down to Port Elizabeth to come and see me from the left of the party. How can a leader of the working class have a business? You see now, just like now we are saying how can a leader of a party have a Mercedesbenz car in the government. You see we had superficial sort of elements like that in the party. And the difference was that Kotane and Ruth First and people like that were conviction politicians, they convinced of the rightness of the course. They didn't need to butter it with rudeness or swearing at anybody or you know. Their methods of dealing with things were interesting to watch. You watch Kotane in a conference, and there's a resolution put before the conference you see. And it speaks about we must combat national oppression you see and Kotane lifts his hand and says "Mr Chairman, I would like to suggest just a slight amendment, national oppression and exploitation". Now he brings in the class element but in such a subtle manner he doesn't say look here that thing, national oppression this and that you see, he .., and everybody admires even the dexterity of the man in bringing in his ideology in a very interesting way, in a non-confrontational way and yet he makes his point, that you can't just leave it at national oppression you've got to bring in exploitation which forms part of, which is the class side of it. So this is how the man functions in reality in the branches which he belonged to whenever he was in a branch, in any committee he was a member of, it's the contribution made and the manner in which it is made to educate, to advance people's knowledge and not to come with a big hammer that you people don't understand the size of Marxist, this that and the other and so on. Never using jargon and dogmatic expressions, the method of work as well was important but largely it was integrity. You see someone like Hilda Bernstein, she couldn't tell a lie whether it was against or for her side, or whatever. She always spoke the truth, so she won a reputation that here's someone who is not going to mislead you in any way, who when she tells you something is actually what she believes and it is

something that she has thought about and it is true and she is not prejudiced in any way. So there were people like that you know, well like Jack Simmons and Ray, you know, these are believers, they are not, they lived their Marxism and therefore one respect even from opponents because of their intellectual integrity you see. Now this was the thing about Moses, I regard it as a key factor. A Soviet communist would put it differently and say that no he's a good communist you see and not separate integrity from his .., he will say no he is acting, it's his ideology which makes him act like that, so you can't separate the two you know.

Interviewer: so when your father and Luthuli particularly consulted with Kotane they did this, you saying because of integrity but also that they would get well considered responses with which they wouldn't necessarily agree but in the case of Luthuli appears to have generally considered it the most important advice

Interviewee: You see they would regard the view of Kotane as not being actuated by narrow political, party political ..(unclear) but based on what he would regard as a scientific approach to the problem and a sensitive approach, sensitive to all the factors which make up the society. You see people mistakenly say, and Kotane would always say this, it's a mistake to say that Carl Marx preached or introduced the notion of the class struggle. Kotane would say no the message of Marx was when you have taken everything into account, history, culture, this, that, at the end the basic factor is the class factor. But you have taken all the other things, you have taken them into account and you arrived at an answer, you see. So when he writes you see his history of the coup, what do they call it, Brunet???, is that written by somebody who's obsessed with class. He takes everything into account, the personality of Napoleon, this, that, the culture, everything is taken into account in an analysis of a particular event. And this is the thing about Kotane who by the way used to criticise JB Marks as not having that outlook correctly, he would say JB is not dialectical enough you see, JB was more of an agitator of a organiser, trade unionist and so on you see and JB was never of course an ideologist you know.

But Kotane you are dealing as I say a very complex character, I know he wrote me a letter after I had written something about you know the relationship between blacks and whites, especially in our organisation and in the party and so on. Kotane wrote me a letter and said you know, your African has described in your letter to me and in your writings is a frightened African. And he says, the African is in his own environment in South Africa. The whole, everybody is surrounded by his culture, by his languages, by everything and he must behave as if he is a master of the destiny of the country. Therefore his responsibility is to look after not only the African people, but all those in his domain, he used the word domain, everyone in his domain is his responsibility so you are responsible for the destiny of the white people in this country and he missed that, it shows that you are a narrow, you are an African as he said who is frightened and you are not master of

Interviewer: embryonic ..(unclear)

Interviewee: you see and it was a very interesting letter and I'm sorry that the police took it and so on, you know the police have got all letters, I wish I knew where what they have done with all the things they seized over the years. But you see there you get the outlook of a man who is not going to pander to African you know sense, he is not, he refuses to pander to that and he says you know Joe your African is scared, is a frightened African, you are afraid of everybody, afraid of the whites, this is your domain. You must master your environment and you're responsible for each and every person in that environment and your attitude is incorrect where I was putting the sort of youth league type of attitude like Julius Malema saying that why are we putting non-Africans in the important economic institutions like the Reserve Bank and Treasury and so on. Kotane would have said you see you are a frightened African, this is your domain, you're responsible for the destiny of all the people.

Interviewer: he was very strong on this, African leadership. How tired are you, would you like to continue

Interviewee: no we better do it on another day

Interviewer: Look thanks very much and

End

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