

J.F. So can I start out by asking you where you were born and when? 2

R.R. I was born in Lansdowne in Cape Town on the 24th. March, 1964.

J.F. How do you spell Lansdowne?

R.R. One d.

J.F. And what kind of area was that then and what is it now, or do you still stay there?

R.R. It was - no - the section that I was born in was a Coloured - very, very close Coloured community, and then two years after I was born, in 1966 it was declared a white group area, so our family was forced to move to another part of Lansdowne which was a Coloured part of Lansdowne, so I moved about six streets down Eastside (?) in the same area, but the part of it that was - that was declared Coloured (Laugh)

J.F. How do you spell your first name?

R.R. R e h a n a - R o s s o u w .

J.F. Do you remember your family talking about having to move that first time in '66?

R.R. I was too young to remember moving, but it's been spoken about a lot in the family because my - my father's entire family and my mother's entire family came from that area, and between 1966 and 1970 my father's parents, my mother's parents and all the sisters and brothers had to move out of the Lansdowne and Claremont areas to go to live in Coloured areas because they'd all been affected by the Group Areas Act, so it was something which featured a lot in family discussion and talk.

J.F. Featured a lot as what? Especially as you were quite young, what was your first memory of what did it mean? What had happened when you were two that people told you about it?

R.R. Well, before I was politicised all I can remem - I mean the kind of thing was my father's one aunt who lived in Claremont was quite weak and she suffered a stroke when she was forced to leave the area, so I always knew that there was Auntie Thelma who got very sick because she had to move away, and that was how I understood it when people were forced to leave the places where they lived - they got very sick (Laugh) - so that was my earliest understanding of - of what had happened, and then also my father was quite bitter about it, and on Sunday afternoons when we used to go out for drives he would drive us past the old house and say : That is where I grew up and that's where your mother grew up, and we were forced to move - so I knew the house where I was born, I - I knew where the house was that my father was born in, but only as far as - long as I can remember there were white people living in those houses.

J.F. And for your memories was it a bitter memory, was it a resentful or was it just that's what happened, or do you remember when (?)

R.R. It depends - I mean my father was very bitter, but his parents weren't - they accepted it because when they moved out of Claremont into Lansdowne they moved into a better house, so they would always tell their grandchildren that they were much more comfortable where they were living now than when they lived in Claremont, which is now a white area - but my father was very bitter and he always used to talk about the Group Areas Act and how the government forced people to move and always point out to us the different areas where Coloured people used to live before and things like that, so from my father's side I definitely got a lot of bitterness, but the rest of the family just accepted it because they weren't politically involved or had no political understanding of the situation.

- R.R. They were - were very religious and will just accept anything that the government did.
- J.F. Were you raised religious?
- R.R. No (Laugh)
- J.F. At all - nothing?
- R.R. It was a bit difficult - my mother is Indian and a Muslim, and my father was Coloured and a Christian, so for the first six years of my life I went to Sunday school, and then another two or three years I used to go to Muslim school, madressa, in the afternoons after school, and then when I was about 11 or 12 I decided that I wasn't interested in either religion and I stopped going to either church or to mosque, so I'm not very religious (Laugh)
- J.F. And what about your mother being Indian and your father being Coloured. What kind of ethnic identity did you grow up with?
- R.R. Oh, we were Coloured. My mother tried to get herself reclassified Coloured in order to live with my father, because as an Indian she couldn't live in a Coloured group area. It took 16 years after she married my father to be reclassified because government officials had to come to the house to look at - look at the hair texture and the colour of the skin and whether she had assimilated into the Coloured community and whether she would fit in and so on, so there was always that kind of tension that my mother was Indian living in a Coloured area, but all the children in our family were classified Coloured and we had no hassles with that. It's just that there was a bit of tension on my mother's - in my mother's family when she married a Coloured man, because the family wouldn't accept that he wasn't of the same religion and so on, so we never actually met my mother's family until we were - I was about eight years old, so - and then we saw that we had Indian relatives who lived in Indian group areas and who looked Indian and acted Indian (Laugh)
- J.F. Why did it take till you were eight? Was there....
- R.R. My mother's family disowned her when she married my father, and then she only made up with them about 10 or 12 years later, so I never knew her family.
- J.F. How did it feel to see the Indian part of the family when you first saw them?
- R.R. It was a bit difficult I mean - I still am closer to my father's family than my mother's family because - don't tell my mother this, but her mother doesn't really accept our family the way she accept the other grandchildren because we her only Coloured grandchildren. All the other grandchildren are Indian and they've got beautiful long, straight black hair and not flat noses but bit pointy noses and fair skin and so on, so we've always realised that we were different from our other cousins, and when the family got together we could sense that our other cousins were much closer to their - to the grandmother - to our grandparents and the other aunts and uncles than we were, but the - this was the Indian (as far as the Indian) customs and traditions go we've had no problems fitting into the Indian side of the family, but we much closer to - to our Coloured family.
- J.F. Where does the Indian family live?
- R.R. Most of them in Rylands, which is the - one of the - there are two Coloured group - I mean Indian group areas in Cape Town, and my mother's family all live in Rylands, which is one of the Indian areas.

J.F. Did your mother raise you at all Indian? Is there anything Indian about your....

R.R. Our traditions - the traditions - the family traditions in that we would - I mean during the Muslim fast of Ramadan we would be expected to observe it, and the food we eat, my mother only cooks Indian food. We don't eat with knives and forks, we eat with our hands - what else - that's about it I think. And on a Sunday morning my mother used to listen to Indian music on the radio, and that's about it.

J.F. Did it make you feel at all different from the other kids in the Lansdowne area?

R.R. No, as far as - as far as we're concerned we're all Coloured, we're not Indian, and the Coloured community's made up of so many different peoples that anyone who's Coloured or - is acceptable, so we never ever thought of ourselves as - I still don't regard myself as being Indian much - I regard myself as a Coloured.

J.F. When you say you regard yourself as a Coloured, can you tell me about - you're probably saying that now in a way that's different than you would have said it before you were politicised at all, so can you tell me like from thinking back to when you were young what it meant to be Coloured? Just talk a bit about what that means.

R.R. It was - it was difficult - my father was very involved in politics when he was young. He was involved in the Unity Movement, which takes a very principle stand on - on politics, the whole question of non-collaboration in government structures and so on - and although he wasn't politically involved after he got married and started having children, he still had a lot of that inside him, of the - the ideals of the Unity Movement. So when we were children my father always made it very clear to us that we were Coloured and the government would - wouldn't allow us to do certain things, like we'd walk past a park where there were white children playing, and he'd make it clear that, you know, that is for white children only, you're not allowed to go in.

I can still remember when I was very young when we used to go shopping with my mother, that we would have to sit at the back of the bus and not in the first eight rows, because the first eight rows were reserved for whites. Those are my earliest memories of being Coloured and therefore being different to whites, that we'd go for a drive on a Sunday afternoon and come along Sea Point, which is the - one of the smartest areas in Cape Town, and then we'd ask my father to stop at a shop to buy ice cream or to let us go and play in the park, and he'd say : No, you can't because you're not white (Laugh)....

J.F. And how would he say - would he say it in a way of resentment or just....

R.R. In the way of resentment and bitterness, yes, and - and say that, you know, this government has got certain things that only whites are allowed to do, certain places only whites can go, and because you're not white you can't go, that kind of thing - so we always knew from very young that because of the Coloured - colour of our skin there were certain privileges and certain places that we weren't allowed to go, but I mean it wasn't resentment - I don't think - I was too young to feel the resentment. It was just something you lived with, it was something you accepted. Because I wasn't politically aware I would never have thought of doing something about it - it was just I'm not white so I can't go here, I can't do this, I can't do that. But I think small - I mean as youngsters have a lot of acceptance of something like that. It's not something that you question - it's just that's the way life is, that's the way the country is.

J.F. And how about being Coloured as opposed to African? What was the Coloured identity? What did it mean to be Coloured?

R.R. You see, the other problem is we had no contact with anybody of any race - any other race, except of course for (.....) we had a lot of contact with the Indian community - I never had African friends. I had never ever gone into the African townships. We were quite sheltered because we were from middle class family, so unless it was to take the maid home or fetch the maid, I'd never gone into a African township. I never had white friends either. I would never ever go and visit someone that I knew in a white area.

So to be Coloured meant that we would stick to our own and that we'd have Coloured friends and play in Coloured areas and go to the movies in the Coloured area - everything we did was in our own group area. So because I had no contact with anybody of any other race group, it never occurred to me that I would need to be closer to anybody else except the people that I lived with. I never ever had - until I got involved I'd never ever had African friends or white friends.

J.F. And what was the feeling about them? What was the reason? Viz-a-viz your maid and viz-a-viz the Africans you saw what was the kind of explanation for that? How did you see it at the time? Did people in the Coloured community talk about the Africans and....

R.R. Ja, in a very derogatory way because I think most Coloureds aspire to being white - that most Coloureds feel closer to the whites than they do to Africans, and you wouldn't find many Coloured people being reclassified African, you'd find a lot of Coloureds trying to be reclassified white, so there was no - no feeling of identification with African people at all they only came into the Coloured area when they came to work. We never ever had any contact with them other than that.

And the same with whites. I had never - until I went to university I had never ever had any contact with white people. I'm talking about close contact - never.

J.F. What job did your father have?

R.R. Hundreds (Laugh) Mostly in the furniture business. He was manager at lots of furniture companies. He was director in a furniture company at one stage. Then he moved on to insurance. I think during my childhood my father had about ten different jobs (Laugh) but he was always managerial or - ja, mostly managerial positions.

J.F. And your mother, did she work?

R.R. No, she'd never worked. She only started working after my brothers went to school, which was about ten years old, but she was always at home during our childhood.

J.F. How many are you in the family?

R.R. Four.

J.F. And what about this reclassification process? Did you remember it happening?

R.R. Vaguely - I remem - I knew that there was a hassle. I didn't exactly understand what my mother was doing, but I knew it involved her getting a book of life, because also the Africans need to carry a book of life, and I knew that she couldn't get one because there was a problem with hers.

- R.R. And then I can remember people coming into the house to interview her, to look at her, to look at the house and so on - and then the day she was finally reclassified it was big celebration - she was very excited and very happy and went around showing everybody her new ID book, so - I don't think I really understood what was happening, but I know that there was problems involved and she was anxious about it, and the day that she was finally reclassified she was very excited about it.
- J.F. Did anyone say anything about the fact of her having to have her hair looked at and this and that?
- R.R. Not to me at the time - I mean now that I look back at it, it upsets me, but at the time it didn't mean anything to me.
- J.F. And then just one last thing to follow up on that, just the whole Coloured identity, were you comfortable with it? Did you have any questions about it? Do you remember ever before you got politicised anyone ever raising anything about what is a Coloured or was there ever any discussion?
- R.R. I think there was - a lot of Coloured people reject being Coloured and say things like there's no Coloured culture or something like that, but (that) lot of Coloureds just absorb white culture, but it wasn't a problem for me. I remember every year with the Coon Carnival - I don't know if you know what the Coon Carnival is where....
- J.F. Explain it a bit.
- R.R. It's mostly a Malay tradition which started in District Six, where men who dress up - who dress up in fancy costumes, usually satins with bright colours, and paint their faces with black and white Nugget and look foolish, and they will take to the streets round about New Years time, December into January, and dance and sing and parade down the streets, and there'd be different troupes or - or groups, and they'd all compete against each other to see what (?) the fanciest costume or who had the best songs or something like this, and apparently this is something that the Coloureds inherited from a group of American minstrels who had come from the deep south to perform in - in Cape Town in the late 18th. century or something.

But a lot of Coloureds didn't like this Coon idea because they - they - they thought that Coons were something that white people found very amusing and they were making fools of themselves by dancing in the streets and entertaining whites, and that's not Coloured culture - that's something that was inherited from somewhere else or you can't say it's true (?) Coloured culture - we should rather stay at home and listen to Beethoven and read Shakespeare kind of attitude.

But in our family there was never that kind of hassles about identifying with something like that. We - every year we used to go and watch the Coons parade in the streets and cheer them on and shout and so on. And then also I remember my father was a great admirer of Adam Small, who is a Coloured poet and playwright who now is a lecturer at the University of the Western Cape, and every time there was a Adam Small play we used to be taken to see all his plays, and I remember there was one line that - of a play that I saw when I was very young when he said : Coloured people are children of the rainbow, they all colours and shapes and sizes and we must never be ashamed of being Coloured because rainbow people are always very happy people, and it's something that I remember from a play that I saw when I was very young, so I never had any problems with identifying with Coloured people and the fact that I was classified Coloured, because for me it was totally acceptable - there wasn't - I - I was Coloured, I looked like Coloureds and I should live with Coloureds, so I never ever questioned that.

- J.F. Did you ever ask about and find out about your father's background ethnic-wise? African people know they're Xhosa or European people know their mother came from the 1820 settlers. What about your father, what's his background?
- R.R. I never did - the first time I found out where I came from was when I was my first year at university doing sociology, and there was one essay we had to do to trace our families generations back - I think four generations back or something - and for the first time I actually understood where I came from and how I ended up being classified Coloured, but throughout my childhood I never ever asked. I knew my mother was Indian and I knew my father was Coloured, and I knew all my grandparents were, but I never ever thought to go back further. And even at - at high school level up - up as far - up as far as matric we had never ever done any project or something like that where we had to go out and find out who we are and where we came from and what made us what we were today. The first time I ever questioned that was when I was at university (Laugh)
- J.F. So what did you find out, what background?
- R.R. Oh, very interesting (Laugh) - very colourful. My father's - my great grandfather on my grandmother's side - my grandmother's father came from the West Indies, from the island of Dominica - the Dominican Republic - and he was adopted by a white family when his (.....) - his parents died when they were very young, and the owners of the sugar plantation where his parents worked on adopted him - they took him to Ceylon with them, and then finally came to South Africa, and that's how my great grandfather came here.
- And then on my father's - my grandfather's side - his father was a white farmer in Heidelberg in the Cape Province, and he had a - is it a relationship - I doubt if it was much of a relationship, but his mother had two children from the farmer - she was an unmarried Coloured worker - labourer working on the farm, and she had the farmer's two children, and she came down to Cape Town with them, and that's where my great grandparents met and got married.
- And then my mother's side - her father obviously came from India (Laugh) - ja, her father came from India, a little village which is about 50 kilometres from Bombay, and her mother's family came from Malaysia, so it's very colourful (Laugh) And there is a white somewhere. I mean all Coloureds have a white ancestor somewhere.
- J.F. But an African somewhere?
- R.R. No, I've got West African, not - there's no African African.
- J.F. Not South African?
- R.R. Not South African African, no - just my great grandfather from the Dominican Republic.
- J.F. West Indian?
- R.R. West Indian, ja, which was originally African because he was - his - his parents were slaves on a sugar plantation.
- J.F. (.....)
- R.R. Ja (Laugh) so he was probably African I'm sure - I haven't gone that far back - I don't think there is any black (?) - my grandmother couldn't remember, and she's dead now anyway.

J.F. And do most Coloureds know that? Are there any other Coloureds know their history like that?

R.R. I don't think so. I mean at school we aren't taught to question our history like that. There's no space for something like that on the curriculum, so I suppose if you have an inquiring mind you would do something like that, but I only found out when I was doing sociology.

J.F. I'd obviously like to move into your politicisation process, but let me just make sure it isn't too fast (?) but early, if you can just give me some sense of the early inklings of things. You said your father was influenced by Unity Movement - he'd been a member of....

R.R. Not very active, ja - he - he was very active when he was young, but then he became very embittered in the 1950s - there was this one treason trial, the African Resistance Movement - I don't know if you've heard of this - that was this group of people who had planned to blow up the Athlone power station and (Laugh) a lot of other strategic targets in Cape Town - and then I think the final trial - because there was about five African guys and three white guys - I just know there were definitely three white guys who were found guilty and were sent to Robben Island for either life imprisonment or long periods.

And then apparently what happened was the parents of the white guys who had been sent to Robben Island went to the state president to plead for clemency, and gave all kinds of promises that they wouldn't get involved again and so on, and they were released and - but the black guys were forced to serve their entire sentences, so that this made my father very embittered and he decided that he wouldn't be involved any longer, and specially now that he had children his responsibility was towards his children and so on, so he never ever encouraged us to be involved.

He would sometimes I mean in his explanations of certain questions that we asked, we'd find out that - I mean the political reasons for certain things, but he never ever sat us down - until I became politically involved I - he had never ever sat us down to explain what exactly he was involved in in the 1950s and who the people were that he worked with and what they were trying to do. Only once I got involved he started talking about those things.

J.F. And what did he tell you in general about what kind of involvements he had? What did he support and what were his views?

R.R. He - definitely Unity Movement - he had a lot of admiration for people in the Unity Movement and APDUSA. He was also very active in the - what was this - it was a student organisation - the Cape Students League or what was it - I can't remember - it was also a Unity Movement affiliated structure. He wasn't that active - he was very young. He was - I think he was most involved when he was about 16, 17, so what he did most of the time was fetch and carry for the older guys who were very involved in the struggle - he would like - he would socialise with them a lot, but he never ever got onto the executive of any structure or was that deeply involved that when the crackdown came he was the target or anything like that, but he socialised with people who were involved, and it sounds as though he was a skivvy most of the time (Laugh)

He was full of stories about how he used to go and run to the shop to buy cigarettes for Dr. Tabatha and - who were the other people - a lot of them are dead or in exile by now, Ralph Taylor....

J.F. Who was that?

R.R. Ralph Taylor was another guy he was very close with - he's dead now - he stayed in the country.

R.R. Who else - most of the people that he worked with had gone into exile. None of his political cronies are left in South Africa - very few of them, and those who are - who stayed behind are dead by now, because he was much younger than most of them, so ja, that was about the extent of his involvement - it wasn't much.

J.F. And did he say what he thought of the ANC? Had he not been involved?

R.R. Wasn't - he was definitely not supp - supportative or aympathetic towards the ANC.

J.F. Why was that?

R.R. The ANC was a violent organisation, very violent. He's changed since then, but he was very, very - and also the ANC because of the earlier policy of - of negotiation and so on, they worked within government structures and as a unit - Unity Movement supporter for my father that was the worst kind of collaboration you could get, so he was very - very, very anti-ANC.

J.F. Did it have anything to do with being the African National Congress, which had a Coloured People's Congress, or was that not a problem for him?

R.R. He wasn't involved in the Coloured People's Congress either, because the Coloured People's Congress was part of the congress alliance....

J.F. But I'm saying the fact....

R.R. The fact that it was racial structures, ja, definit - ja....

J.F. ,,,.. reason for not being involved?

R.R. Ja, ja, but - ja, definitely, and also very, very negative about whites and white involvement in the struggle and the ANC worked with whites and so on. He had a deep distrust of whites who were involved in politics, and that was something I was aware of from a very early stage.

J.F. Do you think you picked up?

R.R. Oh yes (Laugh) - my father hated whites.

J.F. Did you pick it up yourself? Did you support that anti-white feeling....

R.R. Ja, we used to beat up white kids on our way home from school (Laugh)

J.F. In the Lansdowne - the other part of....

R.R. Yes, you see, the - when we moved out of - of the Lansdowne area our school was still in the other - we - the whites in the Coloured area is divided by a railway line, but the school remained in the white area, so what we had to do was every day we had to cross the railway line and go into a white area to go to school, and the school is still there today in a white area.

J.F. The Coloured school....

R.R. The Coloured school in a white area, ja. They've been threatening to move it for the past 25 years, but they haven't gotten down to doing it yet.

J.F. What's the name of the school?

R.R. Oaklands Senior Secondary.

J.F. Oaklands?

R.R. Ja - so every day we'd have to walk through this white area to go to school, and we used to pick fights with the white children - we'd go play in their park and wait until they ran home to fetch their mummies to say that there's black children in our park today or something like that, or we'd tease them - we'd say : Look at your hair, how curly, you can't be white - you definitely one of us, you must come home with us (Laugh) And then we'd either throw stones at them or beat them up or.

J.F. And what was the motivation for that?

R.R. It was sheer - I mean there was no political motivation, definitely not - it was just a hatred for white people, and this was before the BC days even, so it wasn't motivated by that either.

J.F. Did it come from experiences you'd had with the whites?

R.R. No, I had never had bad experiences - I knew that I mean - like I explained, I knew that because I wasn't white there were certain things that I couldn't do, but I'd never had any personal experiences of being kicked out of somewhere or anything like that - it was just something - I think it was something I picked up from my father - he hated whites, all white people.

J.F. So you certainly heard of Unity Movement. Were you attracted by it yourself? Was there any going on when you were....

R.R. No, they weren't - you never heard of the Unity Movement - they were - they are still very inactive - I mean they had their little discussion groups and one or two meetings every decade or so, but they weren't an active organisation, so I never heard of them. I mean I - I heard my father talk about them, but I'd never seen any of their activities or been to any of their meetings or anything.

J.F. Really?

R.R. Mmm (Interruption)

J.F. find that like at schools or something that you had some sense that Unity Movement was largely (?) in the Coloured community?

R.R. Ja, there were certain schools where a lot of teachers were Unity Movement supporters and would explain certain things to the students, but I was never part of that. My sister was - my sister who had a teacher who was - who showed a lot of interest in her and used to take her to these meetings and they used to have secret workshops where they would discuss politics and so on, and luckily I escaped that, but she - she was my father's blessing - she used to go to lots of secret meetings and lots of secret discussions and so on, but not me (Laugh)

J.F. Why do you say luckily you escaped it?

R.R. Yes (Laugh)

J.F. Why do you say that?

R.R. Well, I mean after I got involved I mean I realised that the Unity Movement's politics was very intellectualised and they weren't really active in organising the community or doing anything to assist any people who had problems in the community, but what the Unity Movement consisted of was mostly teachers, doctors and lawyers, who were very good armchair politicians who could sit back and talk about quislings and collaborators and so on, but never really got off their backsides to do anything when the heat was on, so -

- R.R. I mean at the time when my sister was going off to all these meetings I was very impressed and I waited eagerly for my chance and so on, but I'd never had any political understanding of what she was involved in or who she was involved with, so it was just exciting (Laugh)
- J.F. Why was it exciting, because it was some....
- R.R. It was something that was very secretive I mean - she was just going off to a meeting - the venue couldn't be announced, and she couldn't come back and tell us what was discussed because they were discussing politics and it was very secretive, and I think that was something that caught the imagination of a lot of these students who were taken to these meetings, but I don't know, I don't think she - I mean she herself I mean once (?) - after 1980 was never ever interested in going back to Unity Movement politics or getting involved in the Unity Movement, so she herself realised that there wasn't going to be any quick solutions coming from the Unity Movement side.
- J.F. Did it conjure up an image of Coloured politics? Was it a Coloured movement to you?
- R.R. No, I don't think so - it was more a kind of thing where you knew that there were teachers at the school - I mean you knew who the teachers were who were involved in politics, and you knew that that - this was something that could never be discussed during school hours, or something that wasn't part of the curriculum and - but I - I never thought of it as a Coloured thing - I don't know why, but - I'd never been to any of their meetings - I mean I knew my sister went, but I had never been taken to any of their meetings - it was strictly by invitation only.
- J.F. What do you think was the first political movement you ever heard of.....

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- J.F. ,... kind of first ever heard of - what would it have been?
- R.R. I think the first political movement I'd ever heard of was the BC movement in 1976.
- J.F. But first would have been your father with....
- R.R. First would have been my father, yes, with the Unity Movement, the non-European Unity Movement.
- J.F. Did he call it that?
- R.R. Yes, that is the full name, the non-European Unity Movement, NEUM - that was the first one I heard of definitely. Ja, I heard of it, but I never ever got a chance to get involved with it - I was still too young.
- J.F. And then you heard of BC?
- R.R. In 1976, ja. I had no under - political understanding of it, but I sang freedom songs and marched in the streets and did all the kinds of things that boycotting students did in 1976, but without any political understanding - I was still far too young - I was only 12 then.

- R.R. So I knew it existed and I knew it was part of the boycotts and part of the good times and our demonstrations of (?) the freedom songs, but I had no political understanding of it. But I could mouth all the slogans and sing all the freedom songs.
- J.F. What were the slogans that you remember? What was it....
- R.R. Ja, freedom isn't free - lots of things about schools - we want textbooks, we demand better education - what else - was a lot of - no, it wasn't Botha, it was - it was Vorster - ja, Vorster is a joster - that was a very Coloured slogan, Vorster is a joster (Laugh)
- J.F. Joster - how do you spell joster?
- R.R. Joster's - j o s t e r - don't ask me for the exact meaning of the word joster, it's a Coloured word - it's something like a - a guy, a jester, a fool - I think that's what it means.
- J.F. Do you not remember slogans that had to do with black, black is beautiful, black....
- R.R. Yes, black is beautiful, that was one - that's - what else - I don't know - I was in it for the good times - I mean it was nice to march in the streets, it was nice to boycott classes, but I had no political motivation, I had no understanding of - I just knew that this - we were boycotting classes because we wanted better education, and as far as I was concerned that was it.
- J.F. Did you see your education as bad?
- R.R. Yes - oh yes, the - the - the - the - we had alternate programmes at our school and we'd get speakers from the university to come in and address the students, and the speakers would talk about the white schools and how at white schools they had swimming pools and they had microscopes and they had halls and they had 20 students in each class, and what else about white schools - ja, all these wonderful things, and look at our schools - we've got broken windows and 40 students in each class and there weren't enough textbooks or the textbooks were broken, so we wanted - our slogans were more textbooks, repair our windows (Laugh) - not we want swimming pools - I mean we had a swimming pool in our school every winter when it rained - what else - ja, so that was my understanding of it, we were boycotting because we wanted better education, and my idea of better education was what - to give the Coloured students what the white students had. Why should they have swimming pools and we can't?
- I knew also about the discrepancies in the amount of money the state spent on education - I could quote those figures, but I couldn't discuss politics with you or give any political motivation or discuss BC with you. I mean I knew about the BC movement, that it existed, but I didn't understand its politics. I was only 12 (Laugh)
- J.F. But BC you heard of before you heard of ANC?
- R.R. Yes.
- J.F. BC, was it black - was it African people or Coloured people talking about BC?
- R.R. There were Coloured people talking about BC also - they used to - I mean some of the people that we saw at school during the meetings used to come dressed in these caftans and big Afros and - I mean most of the people that I can remember who (?) came to our school were Coloured people who addressed the meetings - I don't remember any sol - solidarity action with the African students at - in the area.

- R.R. I remember there was one day that we had marched to Alexander Sinton (?) which is a school in Athlone. I think it was intended that we were going to meet up with African students at the school, but we didn't get there because the police chased us back to school, so there was never any link-up for myself with any African students during 1976. It was mostly confined to on our (?) school demonstrations and premises - on the premises we'd march around with placards and so on.
- J.F. Was it inspired by Soweto's June 16th?
- R.R. Yes.
- J.F. You knew about that?
- R.R. Yes.
- J.F. And where do you think you moved? I'm just interested at the age of 12 that you would have related to something that was inspired by African kids and African leaders shouting black is beautiful, meaning African. Did you think about gee, this is African kids that were....
- R.R. No.
- J.F. killed by the police?
- R.R. No - no, I don't think so. Like I say, my experience of 1976 was just during the boycott stage - I mean it didn't mean that I got involved in 1976 and was steadily involved until today. For me 1976 only entailed a boycott at our school and in our area. - I couldn't have told you who the leaders were at that time, the African leaders or - probably I mean - let me think - I don't think the fact that the - the kids who got killed on June 16th, were particular - who were African had any particular meaning or significance to me - I don't think so....
- J.F. But certainly there were Coloured people who would have said....
- R.R. There were, but not - ja, but not - not - I don't - not me - I was too young I think.
- J.F. And knowing the black power slogans....
- R.R. Oh ja, black power....
- J.F. African people - was that something that you had to think about....
- R.R. No, we were black - I was black - as far as I was concerned - maybe I should have said this earlier when we spoke about me identifying myself as a Coloured, as far - my father always told us that there are blacks and that there are whites, and the struggle is between black and white, so even though I was classified Coloured and I had no problem with identifying as a Coloured, I was not white and therefore I was black, so I don't think I needed particularly to identify with African people during 1976. I myself felt black, and I had no problem with black power salutes or growing a big Afro or suddenly interested in wearing caftans and African print clothing. I was black.
- J.F. Your father never told you about class? It was black versus white? It was a race issue?
- R.R. Ja, never class - never class issue.
- J.F. So '76 when you were 12 was a kind of a flash in the pan?

R.R. Yes, a flash in the pan - after the boycotts when things were normal, I went back to my normal schooling. I was unquestioning until 1980 when we boycotted again and I was finally old enough to get involved, so ja, I don't think - I mean after '76 there was no political experiences or political involvement on my part, or even questioning the system or anything like that - the feeling I - especially my parents, who were very concerned about their childrens' education, were very concerned during 1976 and again in 1980, that the boycotts are bad and it was O.K. for the time being - you've made your point, now go back to class and get your education that - it's no use fighting the system and not having an education, because without an education you going to be a nothing - first get your education and then get involved - that was always the - my father always preached that to us.

And then when we first got involved he was very upset because (Laugh) we weren't getting our education.

J.F. So tell me how you got involved in the boycotts?

R.R. In 1980 there - once the boycott started it spread to the Coloured schools I mean it started again in the Coloured schools this time, and our school had to elect a boycott committee which would take over the running of the school, work out a alternative programme, try and get anything we needed - if we needed speakers we had to organise it (?) videos, film shows and things like that - negotiate with the principal about the boycotts - tell him that he was no longer in control and we'd make the dec - decisions from now on - so I was involved in that committee at a very low level at my school only - I wasn't involved in any of the inter-school meetings.

And what had happened was the students at the University of the Western Cape each took responsibility for assisting in different areas, so my sister was at UWC then in her first year, and she was - was working in the area, and I was the contact person at my school, so the students would come and they'd have meetings in the area and say : Look, tomorrow at your school why don't you have this person to come and speak to you about trade unions or there's a good film on - something like this - why don't you get that film for you. So I was involved at that level during 1980 and ja - but I never got involved in the big committee of 81 in Cape Town, which met to discuss the strategy and the direction the boycott was taking. It was a very low level of organisation at my school.

J.F. And what was the inspiration the boycotts? Why were you on boycott? Why did you - do you remember taking a decision? You weren't 12 years old any more.

R.R. No - we were on boycott for better education again, but the difference this time was we weren't boycotting because we wanted white education. We wanted an improvement in our facilities, yes, but we also wanted better education. We wanted to be taught about the real - the reality of South Africa. Why weren't we taught about politics at our school? Why was our history book so bad - we wanted better history textbooks and so on. Again there was no call for political change in the country. It was very limited to students' grievances and so on, but the - ja, the difference was that it wasn't we'd want white education, we want - we want better education.

And the - ja, the boycotts spread throughout the - when (?) we heard other schools in - in the black areas and in certain Coloured areas in Cape Town were boycotting I was recalled (?) - the students at our school called a meeting and gave a run-down of the situation and what - how the students felt at our school - did they want to join the boycott - did they feel it was more important for them to get proper - to go on with their schooling and so on, and that's how the dec - decision was taken at our school for us to boycott.

R.R. Again there was - I mean it wasn't a political decision for most students - I mean boycotts are fun - you don't have classes for a couple of months and you can bully the principal and tell him what he should do and so on. For me also I suppose in a certain way it was something like that - it was just a nice feeling to be in control of your schools and to hold meetings and for the students themselves to decide what they would be doing and so on, but I had no politics again (Laugh) It was just like from reports that we had gotten from the other schools.

J.F. And did you have any sense of BC or ANC or anything?

R.R. Nothing - it was just lekker to boycott (Laugh) - but the difference was that this time I got involved in something and then I stayed involved and I became more politically aware later on in 1980.

J.F. So tell me about that process.

R.R. O.K. - the boycotts started around - round May, June, and then, like I said, we had these meetings with UWC students about what was happening in their areas and so on. And then there was this one particular meeting where we were told that there were workers at a meat factory in Cape Town who were going on strike for higher wages, and the bosses were refusing to re-employ them - they'd been fired and that - because we were already involved in structures and so on, maybe we should take up the issue of assisting these workers, and that's - after a lot of decision, lots of meetings in different areas, the decision was taken to boycott red meat, and in my area we formed the Lansdowne Interim Committee, who assisted in organising the red meat boycott and getting money for striking workers and so on.

So for the first time I got involved in meetings where political issues were discussed, about how to mobilise a community, and we had meetings at the trade unions offices, the Food and Canning Workers' Union, where we heard union people speaking about the problems of workers and that workers problems were linked up to the political problems in the country and so on, and so gradually I started becoming more and more aware of the situation in the country, and then - ja, so I was involved in this Lansdowne Interim Committee, and we used to knock on doors and tell people about the boycott and urge them not to eat red meat, and we'd go around also collecting money for striking workers and so on, and in that way I also got to meet groups of activists in other areas who were doing similar kind of work that we were doing (Interruption)

J.F. So you got - you were talking about getting involved....

R.R. Ja, with the - the red meat boycott, so - ja, so that was the start of my proper politicisation and ja, then....

J.F. Was that (.....) '80?

R.R. Ja, it was about September, October, 1980 - August, September, October, ja. And then I got to meet people who considered themselves to be activists from other areas and we would have - they would have discussions about the political situation and so on, and because I was very young - I was only 16 - I used to just sit quietly in a corner and listen to them, too scared to open my mouth in case I said something stupid and they'll all laugh at me. I think most of them were around their late 20s, early 30s, and I was only 16, so I'd listen all the time, but without giving my views on certain issues, but in that way I learned a lot of - of politics and I - I'd hear things like people discussing things like what it was like in the old days when SACTU used to organise workers and how the communities got involved with the potato boycott with similar kind of tactic, and I'd listen to them speaking about that and listen to discussions about the ANC, and that was the first time I'd heard about -

R.R. During the boycotts I didn't hear about the ANC and - or any political organisation, except for the students organisations and - but then during the red meat boycotts when I came into contact with all these people, I started hearing about the ANC for the first time and how they organised in the old days, and that this was now reminiscent of the way that people organised in those days, so that that was the beginning of my politicisation finally (Laugh) in 1980.

And then of course after the red meat boycotts there was the - the Fattis & Monis strike as well, where we did a similar kind of thing, urged the community to boycott Fattis & Monis, and the same kind of process, exactly the same - and both boycotts were a success and I mean workers got their jobs back and were reinstated and the community was very, very good in - in boycotting these products, and there was a lot of solidarity and we could knock on doors and be accepted into people's houses and they'd listen to what we had to say, so it was a good feeling I mean - I felt as though I was involved in something exciting some - I was part of something big finally - it wasn't just related to my own school or a local problem or issue, and it was exciting.

I still felt very inadequate because of my youth and because all the other people were much older than me, but I was learning a lot all the time. And then after the red meat boycott and the Fattis & Monis boycott was over we - the Lansdowne Interim Committee had no role again because the issues were gone - there was nothing more for us to work on, and what was there that we could do - and then people decided that we should form a permanent organisation - instead of an interim committee, we should be a permanent organisation that would be able to draw in young people at any time and get them involved in an organisation so that if there was any other issues or problems which arose, we would have a group of people who would be on standby to tackle it - and then it was decided to form the Lansdowne Youth Movement, and then again there was a big debate over the name, because it had to be movement because the movement made sure that we were identified with the ANC, and there was again this whole politicisation problem - I would identify with the ANC and would want to be part of something that they - part of the struggle that they were also involved in, and therefore it was very important for us to have the name movement, and in fact the Lansdowne Youth Movement was one of the first - was the first youth organisation in Cape Town, which later formed part of CAYCO, which later formed part of SAYCO.

So it was actually a - shall I say historic - no, it (Laugh) - no, no, not that word - ja, it was just the beginning of the youth movement in - in the Cape - not sure of the country (?) but we were definitely the first in the Cape and ja, so that was it, and then what we would do was we'd meet once a week - we'd have either political discussions where people would prepare papers on the ANC or the question of the armed struggle or organising workers - we'd invite a trade unionist to come and speak to us - what else - ja, we'd have like what we called awareness programmes within the organisation.

We weren't a large number of people - we were about 12 at the beginning, but it was 12 people who'd come steadily and we'd all go out in the next week, bring another person with, until we got about 30 members, so there was a lot of - I mean that's where I got most of my politicisation, from those programmes that we organised in the youth, and I suppose that's where I started.

J.F. And was there not a - any fear or difficulty in raising the ANC among people?

R.R. It was exciting - I suppose even though a lot of the other people were older than I was, we were quite naive - I mean it was exciting, it was - it was interesting, we identif - I - I'm not sure what kind of contact we had - we had no contact with the ANC, but we identified with them and we felt that by - by doing what we did, even though we did very little - all we did was go out and speak to other young people and draw them into our little closed group - we felt as though we were doing good work.

We would organise programmes like games (?) evenings where we would try and attract a lot of people by having a few games put up and then have a speaker talk about the ANC (Laugh) and I mean that - that's what (?) we used to do to get more members. And then in 1981 our idyllic hopes and dreams were shattered when we came into our first contact with the security police, and then we finally realised that we couldn't go around just talking openly about the ANC and we'd have to be careful, and so I'm - I think the problem was that during the 1980 boycotts a lot of student leaders were detained and we knew that people got detained and so on and - but we never saw ourselves as being a mass based organisation - we were working quietly in our own area and drawing in youth individually, and because Lansdowne is quite a petit bourgeois area, it wasn't as if we were taking up problems of the community, because there were no problems - unlike any other working class areas we could - where the youth could get involved in problems like rents and low wages and so on - we never had those problems in our area.

So I suppose we could say we were a group of young intellectuals who used to discuss a lot about the struggle, but for the first couple of years we never did much about going out to do anything in our area. We saw our main task as politicising ourselves and politicising other youths in the area.

J.F. And did you have any position in the organisation?

R.R. I took minutes (Laugh) - I can say I was much younger than everyone else, so most meetings I used to be too scared to open my mouth - I'd just sit and listen and nod my head once in a while to show that I was taking in what - what had happened, but for about two years I had quite a bad inferiority complex because of my youth.

J.F. Was it mainly youth? It wasn't being a woman....

R.R. No, I wasn't a woman, I was a child (Laugh)

J.F. It wasn't being a girl?

R.R. No, I - no, it wasn't that - it wasn't that - we had a lot of strong women in our organisation, and the women dominated a hell of a lot, so it wasn't that problem at all - it was just - I just felt inadequate because a lot of them were involved in the BC days and had that kind of political understanding - one or two of them were involved in trade unions - and there were university students - we had a lot of suss (?) and a lot of knowledge that I didn't have, so it was only that. I mean when it came to organising programmes and discussions I had no problems with raising - I mean with - with - with contributing, but I was (it was) during the political discussion I - I was too young, I was too naive, I was too unaware (?) to really get into in-depth discussions or analysis with any of them.

J.F. What was the contact with security police? Did you get detained or?

R.R. No, in 1981 with the Republic Day campaign - it was 21 years of the republic - by this time there were quite a lot of youth movements in the Cape, although we hadn't formed any structure like CAYCO - well, CAYCO wasn't formed yet.

R.R. So there was some discussion between organisations about what would be done on the 21st. - I mean on this - ja, on May 31st., and what was the reason - I can't - for some reason people decided that there'd be mass publicity but there wouldn't be any joint activity on anything on any large scale, and we decided - we had decided in our youth that we were going to have a big campaign in our area because it was something that we felt strongly about, and other people warned us that we shouldn't, that it was too much to take on - for one small group to take on, but we thought no, we going ahead, and we got hold of an old - not an old - it was a new supermarket that someone was building in the area, so it was this big empty shopping centre, which looked like a hall - we got the use of it for one week and we had programmes for every day of the week where we would - and it was very successful - we got an average of 300 people a night to our meetings and programmes.

So on the last day - in fact the day after the armed (?) Republic Day we were having a coffee bar evening - I mean we had invited the community and we had round tables set up and we served coffee and biscuits and things and we had this play on, and the play was all about republic and how republic was sick in bed, and the Group Areas Act came to visit him and he revived a little bit and then - I can't remember what happened, but it was (?) this wonderful play - and in the end the ANC comes, you see, to visit Republic while he's sick in bed, and of course Republic dies and the ANC takes over - it was - oh, it was exciting - and then just as we were busy with this last thing with someone standing up in front waving the ANC flag, security police walked in (Laugh) and there's about 250 of us in this empty supermarket, and they kept us there for about six hours until half past two the morning while (?) they took down everybody's name and address, photographed us, fingerprinted us, confiscated pamphlets, flags, posters, tapes, 5,000 copies of Saspu National (Laugh) and it was our first contact with the security police, so you can imagine how shit scared we were (Laugh)

J.F. That put a damper on things?

R.R. That really I mean - we had - our next meeting was very interesting - we discussed how to deal with this problem of security, because for about two weeks after that all of us were followed - I mean there was police cars outside all our houses and they used to follow me to school and so on, and it was exciting I mean - you know, this was real politics - we were - the fact that the security police was interested in us showed us that we were on the right track, you know (Laugh) - so we used to have these late night meetings to discuss the problems of security, and do you also have a security policeman following you, there's one outside my house, you know, and - we were still very naive, I think, and ja, so I think that was it. After that we never ever had anything like that again where we openly had the ANC flag I mean.

Nowadays it's quite acceptable in Cape Town, but I think that was something that shocked quite a lot of us - it showed us how serious the work was that we were involved in and that it wasn't something that we could play around with - it was something that you were either in for for good or you weren't going to be involved in at all - and in fact having that attention focused on us put a lot of people off - we lost a lot of members because of that, so ja, I think that just - that - that whole incident just reinforced the - the seriousness of the - of the struggle that we were involved in, and it wasn't just the question of having little meetings where you intellectualised or shouting slogans - it was actually something that you had to take seriously.

J.F. And after '81? After that kind of security police incident, and then what direction did you move in politically after that?

R.R. Well, I think because I got involved early I went through quite a lot of different stages. I went to university....

J.F. In what year?

R.R. 1981 - didn't do much academic work (Laugh)

J.F. Why did you decide to go to UCT? You went to UCT?

R.R. I went to UCT, yes.

J.F. And why is that?

R.R. I was accepted at UCT - you see, I was - I went to school very young - I was four when I started school, and I was 16 when I matriculated, so I was very young and very naive and very stupid, and I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with the rest of my life - I just knew that I didn't want to work (Laugh) and I was accepted at UCT, so I went to UCT to do law, and I didn't make it my first year - I was running up and down to camp (?) just to print pamphlets and get involved in discussions and played a lot of cards and went to the beach often during my first year....

J.F. You lived at home still?

R.R. I lived at home still - so I flunked - in fact I didn't get any credits (Laugh) but I mean ja, I was still involved and my father threatened me - he said that unless I was - that whole question about getting your education first and then getting involved, and the problem with most of the people in the organisation being so much older they had already got their degrees and were graduates and had good jobs - he would say that they just using you, you know - they all got their degrees - how come they weren't so involved when they were at university - and I was put under house arrest I think for about four months or so (Laugh)

J.F. By your dad?

R.R. Yes, because his whole thing was education first and struggle afterwards. But it was - it was an exciting year in 1981 - I learned a lot, I - I think that was when I really got most of my politicisation.

J.F. With whites, Coloureds, Africans? This was the first time you were at the white - with whites (?)

R.R. That was, ja - that was a cultural shock - I mean it was the first time I had ever mixed with white people - at UCT the group that I moved with, my - my - my closest friends were all Coloured - I had no white friends. There was only one guy who was allowed into our clique who was white, but that was because he was raised in Malawi and he couldn't identify with the other white students at UCT. But I just didn't relate or form any close relationships with any of the students at - the white students at UCT - it was like a whole - it was like going to Mars - I mean they spoke differently to - than the way I did - they dressed differently than the way I did - they lived differently, and it was just - also because - ja, because I was so young and stupid and not really involved in my academic work we would say things like : Ja, it's easy for those whities, you know, they get good education, so they prepared for university - the reason why we flunking is because (Laugh) we got gutter education until matric (?) but of course we played cards all day (.....) - printed pamphlets all day - we blamed it on our education (Laugh)

J.F. What pamphlets - what organisations were the pamphlets....

- R.R. For - for the youth work and whatever issues there were during 1981, for Republic Day and....
- J.F. (.....)
- R.R. Ja, and then also the broader Republic Day - anti-Republic Day pamphlets and so on.
- J.F. But your base was still Lansdowne?
- R.R. My base was still Lansdowne ja, nothing else.
- J.F. Rondebosch or....
- R.R. No, the only close - I think - ja, the - the other thing about 1981, talking about the whole (?) white question of the white thing, was that our youth used the UCT printers to get our pamphlets and stuff done, so there were white students that we'd run to all the time for assistance. I suppose you could say in a way that we used the white students. There was no question of us working with them in organisation or anything like that, but you know, these white students had lots of money and their university has lots of facilities, so we should use them and so - and so for the first time I found myself in contact with NUSAS people and with white progressives at UCT - not very close social relationships, but more a kind of thing where I would run up onto campus and say : Look, I need 20,000 pamphlets by tomorrow morning, can you organise that - but it was some form of contacts at least - more than I'd had up to then.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

- J.F. So you were just starting to say that there was - that the whites kind of in effect were using them. How did they respond to young (?) say get us some pamphlets? Were they....
- R.R. No, they were very supportive - very supportive because it was a whole new area of work - I mean for the first time since a long time there was ongoing political work - it wasn't just around an issue or a boycott that would last for a couple of months and then be called off or something - so they were very supportive and I started - I formed quite good relationships with a lot of the white students at UCT who were involved in NUSAS, but still not - it wasn't a social relationship - it was I'd go up and say : Look, I need this, or I need that - and they'd say : O.K., come tomorrow and we'll have it - but I wouldn't go with them home - go home with them and socialise at our homes or anything like that, but it was a beginning - it was the start of - of forming close relationships with whites.
- J.F. And after that first year what happened?
- R.R. I went to the University of the Western Cape (Laugh)
- J.F. You left UCT?
- R.R. I left UCT, ja - I had no credits, so there was no way they'd take me on for a second year, and then I went to UWC, which was a even worse move because I got involved in the SRC and got involved in AZASO, which was the Azanian Students Organisation.

R.R. And spent the first six months of the year organising mass meetings and organising rallies and printing posters and pamphlets and generally being a full time activist on campus, and I left UWC with no credits either - but this was the difference I mean - this was - besides my involvement in the youth, I was now involved in student politics as well, which was very exciting because we were busy discussing getting AZASO formed in Cape Town - there was no real black student organisation in Cape Town - so it was very exciting, but again I left - I left at the end of the year with no academic credits.

J.F. How about this focus on race, the fact it was a Coloured university after being at the white university?

R.R. I felt much more at home at the Coloured university, I must say I mean honestly I - the white university was - it was weird because we were like - we were a little Coloured clique of about 16 friends who stuck together throughout the year. At the Coloured university I had no such problems - I mean I was free to move and make friends and form relationships with people and so on - I never felt restricted in any way - they were my kind of people - they were people I could relate to. There was of course the language problem - I had to learn to speak Afrikaans very quickly because most of the students spoke Afrikaans, and the lectures were in Afrikaans as well, but besides the language problem I fitted in much better at - at the University of the Western Cape than at UCT.

J.F. You hadn't spoke Afrikaans before that?

R.R. I learned Afrikaans at school but I couldn't speak it fluently in (?) every day usage.

J.F. Why was that? Your family didn't speak it?

R.R. No, my family doesn't speak Afrikaans.

J.F. And the kids in Lansdowne in the streets you played with?

R.R. Oh no, definitely not (Laugh)

J.F. Is that because it's a middle class area?

R.R. Yes, yes, very, very upper middle class.

J.F. So they didn't want to know about Afrikaans?

R.R. No, no, no, Afrikaans was something that the working class spoke, so I - it was good for me, I learned to speak Afrikaans properly - but I really felt much more at home at UWC, without meaning it in a racist way - it was just that I had no contacts with whites before other than my first year there, and I found difficulty in forming relationships with them.

J.F. I never realised that about Afrikaans. I hadn't - I'm just thinking about that. So did you - in Lansdowne and that area what do people say, just thinking back to what I was trying to ask you to think about what you thought then? What did people say about Afrikaans?

R.R. We spoke Afrikaans to our servants (Laugh)

J.F. To the blacks, to the African....

R.R. No, we had - I had a nanny for years that was - that was Coloured - in fact during my childhood most of the servants we had at home were Coloured, not African, and none of my friends or associates or I (?) went to English speaking school, so we never ever spoke Afrikaans.

J.F. But that's a minority in Cape Town?

R.R. Oh yes, definitely, def - most of the Coloureds in Cape Town speak Afrikaans, and in order to organise effectively in Cape Town you have to be able to speak Afrikaans, definitely.

J.F. But Africans, would they speak Afrikaans in Cape Town?

R.R. Some of them do, especially those who were moved into the townships from areas like Elsie's River and Kensington, where Coloureds and Africans lived together - they would speak Xhosa and Afrikaans, but the young people nowadays speak Xhosa and English, but I mean (?) in the old days before the Group Areas Act Africans and Coloured lives - lived in the same areas, and most of them spoke Afrikaans, so amongst the older generation you'd find Africans who speak Afrikaans better than they speak English, but the younger generation speak English and Xhosa.

J.F. So did you look down on Afrikaans then?

R.R. Oh yes (Laugh) definitely - it was a - that was a class thing definitely.

J.F. Is there any names that people are called who speak Afrikaans as opposed to who speak English in the Coloured community? Is there any way of differentiating?

R.R. No - no, there isn't - the English speaking people are the larnies I mean, who are those who are well off, those who live in the - the better....

J.F. The what?

R.R. Larnies - l a a n i e s, I suppose - no, l a r n i e s, larnies - those are the snobs, the guys who think they big, so I suppose I was a larny (Laugh) but it was definitely a class thing - our parents - we were never encouraged to learn Afrikaans as children.

J.F. And do you speak any Xhosa?

R.R. No, I learned now in the past two years, I - I learned to speak Xhosa, but it's very, very basic - I can ask you what your name is and where you live and how many - how many children you have, and that's about it. But it was never taught to us at school and we never made any effort to learn it on our own, and now I find it a great disability because I would actually - I mean I have to learn Xhosa to be able to organise as well, and I'm teaching myself now, but we were never given an opportunity to learn when we were children.

J.F. And with Afrikaans is your accent such that people could tell if they heard you - if a Coloured person ran into you or was introduced to you, would they know from your English that you couldn't speak Afrikaans or that you were a larny?

R.R. In 1981, yes - I mean the students that on (?) campus used to laugh at me because I couldn't speak proper Afrikaans - it was very stilted - but not now because I speak Afrikaans much more now - most of my - lot of my friends are Afrikaans speaking and I find myself - on campus as well a lot of my - of my fellow students were Afrikaans speaking, and I'd speak Afrikaans all day and then come home and for a couple of hours speak English, but I've no problem switching from the one language to the other now.

J.F. And when you spoke English before you learned the Afrikaans well, could someone tell that you weren't a native, that you....

R.R. Definitely - definitely ja - yes, from my accent, definitely.

J.F. And what about the whole idea that people who don't know much about South Africa figure that there's such a an anti-Afrikaans feeling? Is there any anti-Afrikaans feeling in Cape Town?

R.R. Not in Cape Town - the majority of people who live in Cape Town are Coloured, and the majority of Coloureds speak Afrikaans. The - the - I mean the minority in the white community speak Afrikaans in Cape Town, which is different from any other centre, so Cape - Afrikaans is a Coloured language - a lot of Coloured people speak it.

J.F. And there's no problem with it?

R.R. No, no problem with it.

J.F. Is it - how do you see it after liberation in South Africa?

R.R. You see, the - the kind of Afrikaans spoken by Cape Coloured people is different to the Afrikaans spoken by whites - it's a what we call kombuis Afrikaans, kitchen Afrikaans, where there's a lot of words which have been added into the language, a lot of Anglicisation of a lot of the words, so if a boer from Bloemfontein came to Cape Town he would probably have difficulty understanding what the Cape Coloured is saying, even though the person is speaking to him in Afrikaans, so it's their ons eie taal, our own language that - that people have made up in Cape Town.

But I mean for me to go out into an area like Mitchell's Plain and with a UDF pamphlet and knock on doors and not be able to speak Afrikaans, I mean I'd get nowhere with the people - it's - I - I had to learn Afrikaans.

J.F. And how did you learn it?

R.R. It wasn't - I mean it wasn't that difficult - I had done Afrikaans right through my schooling - it was just that I had no experience of actually holding conversation - the conversational Afrikaans didn't take long.

J.F. Just spoke it....

R.R. Mmm, I mean I was laughed at a couple of times, but didn't even take that long to learn.

J.F. So after that year - that was '82 at UWC?

R.R. Yes.

J.F. After that year you got - you were at UWC - what did you - you left UWC to do what?

R.R. Nothing (Laugh) absolutely nothing - I was - I think I was a spoilt young person - I mean I had my parents paying my university fees and went through all the proper rebellion years and so on, so I left UWC and did nothing for the entire 1983.

J.F. Were you politically?

R.R. Politically involved, yes, but loafing at home most of the time, particularly (?) 1983 - 1983 the UD - no, wasn't the UDF - 1983 CAYCO was formed, the Cape Youth Congress - that was when all these groups in Cape Town formed one umbrella structure, which was very exciting. I remember - this would be important - at CAYCO the first AGM, there was this whole - there was a message of support from NUSAS, the National Union of South African Students, which is white.

R.R. And there were certain people who were involved in youth organisations - in fact some of them in the same branch that I was in - who had big problems with working with white people, and there was this whole debate about what relationship NUSAS should have with CAYCO, whether they should just be outsiders completely or whether they should have observer status in the organisation, and a lot of people felt that there was no ways that whites could be involved in the struggle and there was no way that they would allow white people into CAYCO, which formed lots of big differences - I mean I lost lots of good friends during that argument, who felt that white students who were involved in political organisations were sons and daughters of the ruling class and once they got their degrees they'd go back to being sons and daughters of the ruling class, and we can't trust them all the way in the struggle and so on and so forth, so that was also a hectic and heated debate in Cape Town.

And I felt at that stage that we should work with white people who were involved in the struggle, because I knew during my years at UCT, and also being involved in student politics at UWC, that there were a lot of white people who were involved, especially white students, who were involved in - in structures and were doing good work on their campuses, and I could see through my working with them that they were just as committed as I was, and I was sure that a lot of Coloured people or African people, who were involved in student politics, once they got - get their degrees, there were chances that they'd also become managers or doctors or lawyers and forget about the struggle - that it had nothing to do with race - that these students were just as committed as we were.

J.F. Do you think that was a class thing, that being not from working class parents youth could relate more to them (?) having to put up with that criticism?

R.R. No, strangely enough I mean most of the people who were anti-white in the whole CAYCO debates were from middle class areas - I don't think it had anything to do with class - it was just - it was put in such a way that we got the impression that it was a class analysis, that the whole question of - of even - even (?) for myself being involved in youth - in a youth organisation in a bourgeois - petit bourgeois area, I mean there was this whole debate about whether we'd go all the way in the revolution - I mean sure enough you can get a lot of these bourgeois intellectuals to support us as far as destroying (?) apartheid goes, but how many of them are actually going to go all the way through until socialism is built - there was this whole question of where does one draw the line and who does one draw in.

And I mean for (?) myself coming from a middle class family I mean, I could understand and sympathise with - with that kind of argument that they weren't going to go all the way, but I mean my feeling was that it's a broad struggle and we need to fight apartheid on all fronts, and therefore we should include all those who at the time purport to be part of the mass movement and who are willing to work, and whether they dropped out along the way had nothing to do with whether we were going to work with them now or something like that - I mean that was the basics - the basis of the argument - but then of course we were out-voted and NUSAS wasn't allowed observer status in CAYCO.

J.F. Wasn't?

R.R. No.

J.F. Because?

R.R. It was - it was quite a dirty fight actually (Laugh) - there was a lot of accusations flung and a lot of emotional outbursts and a lot of people who resigned from CAYCO even before the organisation was properly constituted, and in the end it came to a vote, and we were out-voted.

J.F. Their argument being what?

R.R. Their argument being mostly that whole thing about sons and daughters of the ruling class who are in the struggle for a jorl but aren't really as committed as we black comrades were, and that they would mislead and misguide the struggle, and it was really quite an emotional argument - I don't think it was based on any evidence that - that - that having white people involved in the struggle was going to dilute our - our socialist trend in any way, but that was how it went.

J.F. Sorry to kind of make you go over it a bit more, but like if you can remember what you argued or how you - just more....

R.R. O.K., let me do - let me localise it more and - in our branch of CAYCO in Lansdowne we had the person who was mostly - who was the most anti-white person or the person who led the argument that we shouldn't have NUSAS involved in any way, she tried to present it as a class thing, that one couldn't expect the bourgeoisie to - one (?) you don't want the bourgeoisie to lead the struggle - that if they do lead the struggle and the working class aren't leading the struggle, then they (?) going to be - what's the word - we're going to be deflected from our - from our socialist path - and what were the other - the other argument about ja, that they were - they had rich mummies and daddies that they could always run back to in time when times got bad - what else was there - it was - it was a - like I said, it was a very dirty fight - it wasn't anything based on any experience with working with - with - with whites who were involved in the struggle - in fact this very person who was the one who pushed for NUSAS not being involved went to the UCT SRC, which was affiliated to NUSAS, two weeks after this whole debate and expected them to print pamphlets for her, so it wasn't - I mean I don't think it was based on any fact or something like this, but it was just people felt very strongly about working with whites.

J.F. Did the whites print the pamphlets - NUSAS print the pamphlets?

R.R. No, they didn't (Laugh)

J.F. They said what?

R.R. They said that they weren't there to be used, that they were just as committed as other people were, and unless they were allowed - I mean what - no, that wasn't the argument - ja, that they weren't prepared to be used any longer, that people should accept that they were just as committed as anyone else was, which they were.

J.F. Why do you think - what made you more open to accepting whites? It's interesting for me to know. You're saying it wasn't a class thing? The woman arguing was also from Lansdowne from the same kind of background?

R.R. Yes.

J.F. So what - why was it with you?

R.R. I think also my - my year at UCT was very important, and then also I had lots of contact with a lot of white people who I could see was very committed, like Jan Theron of the Food and Canning Workers' Union during the the Fattis & Monis boycott and the red meat boycott - I mean we attended meetings where he - he would address (.....) organisations and workers, and one could see that he was actually committed, that he worked - chose to work for a union where he was earning peanuts and he - he was as committed to the struggle as any black - other black person could be.

R.R. At UCT also my links with NUSAS students and students involved in all the other committees of the SRC, one could see that although they were restricted (?) to organising on a white campus, they were just as committed as we were, that it was just as important for them to - to - to politicise white people as it was for us in our communities to politicise blacks.

Then also in 1981 Grassroots was formed, and there were a lot of white people who worked full time for Grassroots, or assisted on a part time basis, and I worked closely with them as well, so I had practical experience - I knew from - I was speaking from practical experience that these people were just as committed as we were, and that it wasn't a question of - of race, that we shouldn't dismiss them just because they were white - that it was important that we work with them and that it was important that they worked in their own communities, so I mean the - the - the argument that I brought up there was - was based on my experience in working with white people in the struggle.

J.F. And you didn't worry about pushing that line? There wasn't - you felt it important enough to push?

R.R. Well, I mean remember what I said earlier about me being scared to open my mouth in meetings for the first few years - I mean these people that I was up against were people who I had great respect for, people who were responsible for politicising me in the first place, and I mean although I had a lot of respect for them and I had a lot to - to be grateful for because those were the ones who had guided me in the early years, there was no way that I was going to allow myself to bow down from my position simply because they were older than me and they were more experienced than me - I felt very strongly about it, and I mean looking back now, I'm still convinced that I was right, and I know even more now that one can see the kind of non-racialism in Cape Town politics that that was the correct position.

J.F. Did you - the arguments for white involvement that you and the others who also pushed it - were pushing - did you invoke at all the ANC's tradition of non-racialism or anything like that?

R.R. Ja, what had happened was we were given time - the AGM was postponed and we were given time to go back and get a mandate from everybody who was going to affiliate to CAYCO, so what we needed quickly was to politicise a lot of young people who would need to make the decision who weren't that involved in the organisation and who needed to understand why they need to vote in a certain way, so that's what we did in all our - in all our branches - we went out and we organised awareness programmes once again for people, explaining the - the congress alliance policy and how it worked and that it was important that apartheid was attacked from all parts of - I mean every part of the community - all communities throughout the whatever - the - I mean ja, that whole thing about the congress tradition, and we got - put together booklets and we presented such things to people - to young people in the youth groups, and unfortunately we still lost the vote (Laugh)

J.F. I'm just interested when you talked about first getting involved and then the whole ANC up through the supermarket police and then getting more mature about it, but what was the image of BC viz-a-viz the image of ANC? Why were you so enthused about the ANC? What was - were you not enthused about BC? What did it mean? What did each of them mean?

R.R. You see, the people who were responsible for my political education, because they were older, had gone through the BC experience as well, and looked back at their BC experience as necessary, but that the congress position was the correct position to hold.

R.R. And the whole 1980 upsurge I mean brought the ANC back into open politics in Cape Town especially - I mean the ANC flag flew high at all meetings and so on, and I mean the older people that - that I worked closely with would talk about their BC days quite openly and say that it was necessary and laugh about the big Afros they used to wear and how they used to push white people off the pavements when they walked past them and say : Well look, it was necessary - we had a process that we had to go through, but the congress position is the correct position - so - what was the question

J.F. Just what the image was to you, what BC represented, why you didn't want to....

R.R. Ja - no, no - ja - no, BC was for me - I mean my understanding - what I was told and my understanding of it that was - that was a necessary stage for black people to go through, but it wasn't a - a - I mean that - that BC politics is not going to bring us freedom - BC - ja, the BC - the BC position wasn't - it was - it wasn't a - it wasn't a good enough position to - to bring true liberation to South Africa - that it was important in the early 1970s for black people to have confidence in themselves and it was important for them to become politically awakened again, but that the BC movement couldn't sustain itself because its pol - its politics wasn't - it wasn't a political movement, it was a - it was a - a stage through which people had passed, and that most of them I mean the - this is what people in Cape Town told me when I first got involved, that most people who were involved in BC moved over to the congress position, but obviously in other centres it didn't work that way - organisations like AZAPO are still strong, but in Cape Town it isn't like that.

J.F. And the Azanian in AZASO, how do you feel about that?

R.R. Well, it was - it was funny - it was the feeling that we had taken over AZAPO's organisation and people felt good about it. AZASO was changed to SANSCO two years ago, but at the time we felt good about it because movement people had stolen AZAPO student organisation from them, and we had no problems with keeping the name as long as the - the constitution was changed, but obviously it became necessary to change AZASO's name, because people were confusing AZASO and thinking that it was - it was still part of AZAPO.

J.F. And looking at the ANC tradition, how did people in Cape Town feel about that Coloured People's Congress, SACPO era, that was it discussed, was it looked at as separate organising, was it correct, was it known about (?)

R.R. It was discussed - I mean the whole question of the revival of the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress - obviously there was a debate in Cape Town over whether the Coloured People's Congress should be revived, but you see, the problem in Cape Town is although the Unity Movement isn't an active organisation, they've got a lot of influence in Cape Town, and a lot of people who become involved go through Unity Movement politics first, and although they reject - I won't say they reject it - they see that the Unity Movement isn't the organisation which is actively involved in political work - I mean all they do is intellectualise, and a lot of that Unity Movement politics still stays in them, and even today in - in UDF meetings in Cape Town we find a lot of people will still have arguments which sound slightly Unity Movementish, so people in Cape Town felt that it wasn't actually necessary to revive the Coloured People's Congress, that Coloured people were being drawn into the civics, into the youths, into the women's organisations and so on, and that it wasn't necessary to have an umbrella organisation for Coloured organisations in Cape Town.

J.F. So that year - you were starting to say what you'd done in '83 when you didn't go to university or anything.

R.R. What did I do - nothing - I loafed (Laugh)

J.F. But UDF was formed in '83?

R.R. Yes, UDF was formed - I was - I mean my - I gave myself the job title of full time activist (Laugh) - I used to hang around in all the organisation offices and do odd jobs and print pamphlets and do mostly kind - most - I did mostly media work for organisations, and then of course with the UDF launch now we worked full time for about five months just organising the rally, so that was all I did in 1983 - I was a full time activist.

J.F. And you - were you out there in Mitchell's Plain launch?

R.R. Oh yes, definitely.

J.F. And did you have any trouble (.....)

R.R. No, nothing - absolutely nothing.

J.F. Were you in women's organisations at all then?

R.R. In - what was it, 1982 or 1983 - 1982 we formed a UWO, United Women's Organisation branch in Lansdowne, which wasn't very successful because all that happened was that there was the - the women in the youth became members of the UWO and found that they were dividing themselves between the two organisations, and we weren't able to pull in many older women, and it collapsed after about a year.

J.F. After what?

R.R. After about a year we just disbanded because it was - all it meant was the - the women who were involved in the youth were involved in two organisations, but doing the same kind of work.

J.F. So when - '83 you say you didn't do much. What - tell me after that what did you move into then (?)

R.R. Ja, 1983 was - I just did odd jobs wherever I was needed - 1984 I went to work for the clothing workers' union as a full time CLOWU as an organiser.

J.F. As a regional organiser or....

R.R. It was only based in Cape Town, so I was a - a union organiser, but ja, stayed there a year (Laugh)

J.F. What's that?

R.R. I stayed there a year, didn't organise much workers, but I left after one year.

J.F. Why did you leave?

R.R. I wasn't getting much done - I had responsibility for a certain area. What had happened was that the clothes (?) approach to trade union organising was different to the mainstream unions. We felt that we had to organise workers in the community as well as at the factories, that - the whole SACTU tradition that a worker isn't only stuck in the factory all day - he goes home to the community, so he's just as - as affected by political problems as he is by shop floor issues - but unfortunately we didn't get very far - I didn't - we weren't very successful, and I left CLOWU after a year.

J.F. Does it still exist?

- R.R. It still exists, ja, but I'm not sure what's happening to it now because the garment workers' union, which was the TUCSA union that we were trying to - to - what was the word I'm looking for - that we - we were trying to organise their workers, just to get the workers (?) away from them - they are expected to join COSATU within the next year, so I don't know what's going to happen to CLOWU. I don't have much information on that now either.
- J.F. Do you think that there - are you critical of that CLOWU approach to organising at this stage?
- R.R. Ja, but it didn't work - I mean I know more than anyone else that it didn't work - whether the approach was wrong or whether there was something wrong with us is still a question hanging in the air, but it didn't work.
- J.F. How did workers respond?
- R.R. You see, the problem was we had this splurge of media into all the factories and in one year we brought out 250,000 pamphlets (Laugh).....

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- R.R. Ja, we brought out 250,000 pamphlets and it was - there was a lot of excitement - there was a big fuss - I mean CLOWU got into the papers and the garment workers' union started attacking (?) us in their newspaper and workers were excited because it was exciting and so on....
- J.F. Started whating you in their paper?
- R.R. They attacking us - the garment workers' union they had this newspaper called the Clothesline (?) and they wrote about these students who all live in communes and have free sex coming to organise workers and (Laugh) But we weren't able to sustain any form of organisation at factories I mean after about four - three years - CLOWU doesn't have one (..... agreement at any factory in the clothing industry, so something was wrong - whether it was the approach or whether it was just us, I don't know. But it was an exciting year - I mean I learned a lot - I developed a lot - I became a lot more mature than I was earlier, because I wasn't only involved with youth, I was doing much more serious work - what kind of work - I mean it - it matured me a lot.
- I learned a lot, especially how to bring out 60,000 pamphlets in four hours (Laugh) Ja, it was - it was an interesting year - it was very exciting. But Coloured workers I have no (?) - Coloured clothing workers especially are the most apathetic workers you can imagine. It's Coloured women who are - most of them have very low levels of education - go to the factories when they about 14, 15 years old, and are shit scared about losing their jobs because there are hundreds of thousands waiting at the gate who can just take over the next day, so it was very difficult - I mean we were faced with a formidable task and they weren't up to it - we didn't get anywhere - but it was interesting.
- J.F. Did you see it that year? Is that why you quit? That it wasn't working, that the approach wasn't working?
- R.R. No, it was a mutual agreement - we all decided that I should quit (Laugh) ja - I mean I wasn't getting anywhere - I had responsibility for a couple of factories and I wasn't able to get any large amounts of members into the union.

- R.R. And then just a couple of months after I left I mean it was realised that none of the organisers were able to get large amounts of workers to join the union, and quite a lot of them left, but CLOWU still exists today - how strong they are I don't know.
- J.F. Do you think that at all any of your problem was not having yourself been a worker?
- R.R. Definitely - I mean what - what I had wanted to do originally when I started was to go into the factory to work for a few months, just to know what it was like to - to actually work in a factory. Unfortunately we didn't have the time - I mean CLOWU was being launched, a date was being set, and they needed organisers, so it was very difficult for me to relate to - to these workers - I mean their whole attitude towards life was totally different to mine - I mean they would come home on a Friday night and the first thing on their mind was to get drunk, and it was something that I never had any experience of, and I mean being a middle class sheltered little petit bourgeois girl, who had just come from university to organise the workers, there was no way I could relate to them - and they sensed it, they knew it - I mean they knew it full well.
- J.F. From the way you just described yourself as sheltered and all that, could you relate to whites at UCT?
- R.R. No, not really - I was - it was a cultural difference more than a - a - a class difference I mean - I just - they spoke a different language, they looked different, they - I had never ever mixed with whites before, and I had difficulty forming relationships with the white students at UCT, but it wasn't a class difference - it was more cultural. I mean they listened to a different kind of music that I listened to, they wore clothes that I - clothing that I thought was - I mean I look like them nowadays, but (Laugh) I didn't look like them then, so ja, it was - it was culture shock (?) I think.
- J.F. So after - that was what year that you....
- R.R. 1984.
- J.F. '84 (.....) - and then what happened when you left - what did you do (?)
- R.R. Then I fell pregnant, and then I had no job - nothing but my matric certificate and two years of loafing at university, and I decided to use 1985 to get my life in order and went to Technico (?) enrolled to study journalism, had my baby - I wasn't involved in anything in 1985, which was a great pity because I missed all the excitement in Cape Town in 1985 in the street battles and so on, but I was nine months pregnant and gave birth on the day of the Pollsmoor march, so (Laugh) it was impossible for me to get involved, but it was good for me also because it gave me a chance to get my life in order - and then I had my baby and finished my journalism degree and now I'm working as a journalist - that's my life story.
- J.F. So where are you working?
- R.R. I work at the Argus news - daily newspaper in Cape Town.
- J.F. And when did you go to Argus?
- R.R. I started there in July last year.
- J.F. I thought you'd worked at Grassroots (.....)

- R.R. I've been involved in Grassroots since 1981, never - I've never worked for Grassroots full time, but I've been involved in Grassroots, writing stories, being involved in different committees ever since 1981. I've never worked full time - and I'm now on the exec of Grassroots - I'm the secretary of Grassroots, but I don't work there full time.
- J.F. And just explain a bit....
- R.R. O.K., Grassroots was formed in 1981 and I was there since then. I - I attend all their news-gathering meetings where we decide what's going into the paper, and then I go out and I write stories for Grassroots, and I come back and help with the layout and make sure that it's printed, and then I just read the paper, and I've been doing that ever since 1981 with the exception of 1985, when I wasn't that much involved. And even now I mean even though I work at the Argus, I still am involved in Grassroots, I still write stories for Grassroots - I steal stories for Grassroots and I print that (don't print that) So I've never worked there full time, but I've always been involved.
- J.F. And it's interesting that you worked there from before you being trained as a journalist.
- R.R. That's what made me train as a journalist, because in 1985 when I was trying to decide what I was good for - I had a year of law and a year of a BA - I decided that writing was the only thing I knew, because I had my Grassroots experience, I had my CLOWU experience when we had this big media campaign - I had my UDF experience with (?) the UDF launch with getting pamphlets and newsletters together, and that was all I knew how to do. I was very good at media and nothing else, and that's why I decided to study journalism. And then I had to learn to write sentences of more than ten words and words of more than two syllables (Laugh)
- J.F. Do you want to stay with (?) the Argus, the mainstream paper?
- R.R. At the moment I have to - I need the kind of money that I can get paid there. I'd love to work for Grassroots, and Grassroots needs me badly, but I think I need - I still need the next couple of years to get my life in order - I need to be able to support my child - I need to be able to move out of my parents' home - set myself up, get myself a car - so I've given myself two to three years at the Argus just to - to sort myself out, but it doesn't lessen my commitment to Grassroots - I mean I - I still - all my free time is - I use for Grassroots work - and even at the Argus I mean I have access to all their information, I have access to all their photographs - I sit in front of my terminal doing Grassroots stories a lot of the time, so it hasn't interfered with my involvement there - it's just that I'm not able financially - I'm not able to work there full time now, and they understand it, so maybe in three years time, if Grassroots still exists (Laugh)
- J.F. And when were you detained this year?
- R.R. In - on June 15th.
- J.F. For how long?
- R.R. For 16 days.
- J.F. What was that about?
- R.R. I had given - organised accommodation for someone who had just entered the country from spending a year outside, and when he was detained I was detained, but I was released after 16 days - I was released after 16 days and I've never been bothered with again.
- J.F. And what about him?

- R.R. He's now facing terrorism charges - probably going to spend the next 20, 30 years in jail.
- J.F. And that was the first time you'd been detained?
- R.R. Mmm.
- J.F. Did you get interrogated?
- R.R. Once for about two and a half hours. It was strange - I mean they didn't know who I was - I had never ever been in that close contact with security police before. They didn't - it was their first contact with me as well, so it was little bit of discovery on their side and a little bit of discovery on my side. A lot of my interrogation dealt with where I came from and who I was involved with and what I was involved in and who I knew and who I didn't know, so I was - of- for the 16 days I was interrogated for about two and a half hours, which isn't bad, but now they know why (Laugh)
- J.F. What kind of stuff do you cover for the Argus?
- R.R. I - ja, this is a difficult question - I do the kinds of stories that I want to do in my own time - obviously the editor has (.....) tries to get me to do the old white women in Clifton who've just lost their puppies and are heartbroken and that kind of shit, but I do what I want to do most of the time, and I would do feature stories on unemployment and the Mitchell's Plain housing crisis and people who get detained and children who've been removed from their - I mean who've been without parents for years and years. About one out of every ten of the stories I initiate gets used in the Argus, and they all kinds of - if they loss - they get lost in the system or the lawyers take six months to pass it because of the emergency regulations, or they don't have space, or the editor doesn't really like it, but then those articles somehow - I don't know how, I mean somehow just appears in Grassroots about a week later (Laugh) but it's very frustrating - I mean Lord knows why I went into journalism.
- Ja, I - I'd say about one out of every ten stories that I initiate gets used, and that's just again this whole race thing I mean - at the Argus they expect me to do Coloured news. If something should happen in Mitchell's Plain - if there should be a fire in Mitchell's Plain, I should - I must get sent to do it because it's easy for me to move around in Mitchell's Plain, you know, and I would know what Mitchell's Plain looks like and so on. I mean my editor went to Crossroads for the first time two months ago, and he's the editor of the Cape Town daily newspaper, and he saw Crossroads for the first time two months ago (Laugh) They've got no understanding on what - of what motivates, or what interests, or what touches the lives of black people. The majority of the readers are black but they couldn't give a damn.
- J.F. The majority of the readers being Argus alone (?)
- R.R. Are black - are Coloured and black.
- J.F. I've got a whole lot of questions for all over the place. Did you go through a phase of - would you call yourself a so-called Coloured?
- R.R. No - no, I call myself Coloured. I've never went through the phase of so-called Coloured - why not, I don't know - maybe because I missed out on that Unity Movement influence, but I've always regarded myself as a Coloured.

R.R. And especially in - living in Cape Town and organising in Cape Town where you've got such a big Coloured community, it's important for me to relate to another Coloured person as a Coloured, and I've never had problems with it.

J.F. And did it mean something - would it mean - has it ever meant something to you to know of someone who's been an activist who was Coloured? Had you ever heard of any people who were well known activists who happened to be Coloured? You could ask a black person - an African person and they'd tell you about Mandela, and the fact that he was an African person would mean something. Is there any names that you grew up with that happened that they were Coloured?

R.R. No.

J.F. Alex la Guma?

R.R. No - I mean I wasn't brought up with Alex la Guma, I didn't - I never ever regarded him as a Coloured leader or my hero or anything like that.

J.F. Basil February any....

R.R. Basil February, yes, I mean the young days - my early days when we were very excited about the ANC and MK and so on I mean, but - but if I were - I - if I went to knock on a door in Mitchell's Plain and I tell people about have you heard about Basil February, they wouldn't know who he was - but I mean we were very excited when we first started discussing MK to find out that Basil February was killed here in Zimbabwe, but it wouldn't be regarded as a Coloured leader or a Coloured hero or something.

J.F. Have you heard of James April?

R.R. Yes - yes I - ja.

J.F. You didn't see him when he - because he came out recently?

R.R. Yes - no, he came out recently - I have heard of James, but I've never met him, but we weren't - we never - I mean we would (?) discuss Robben Island and people on Robben Island, discuss Nelson Mandela and Govan Mbeki and Walter Sisulu and Ahmed Kathrada (Laugh) - those are the names we mentioned, and Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo were our - our leaders.

J.F. So it doesn't bother anyone that there's not a - there's Coloureds - that there's Indians and Africans but no Coloureds in the list you mentioned?

R.R. I don't know when one - when one talks about our leaders we don't say our Coloured leaders, our African leaders, our Indian leaders. We say the leaders of the people, the people meaning everyone - so I've never thought of it in terms of Ahmed Kathrada is the leaders - the leader of the Indians and Nelson Mandela is the leader of the Africans, and how come there's no Coloured outjie there (Laugh)

J.F. There's no Coloured what?

R.R. Outjie - guy, man, outjie - another Coloured word - o u t j i e.

J.F. Wouldn't be wise (?) that there (?) and Coloured - he's our leader because he's Coloured, but like if the Africans can regard Kathrada as their leader - he's Indian - that there's no Coloured, but it could be - I think it's (.....) - there just weren't that many in that era (?)

R.R. The Coloured community is apathetic - the Coloured community is bloody apathetic because half of them are aspiring to be white and the other half's aspiring to be African, and I think it's only since 1985 (Phone)

J.F. Like Basil February. So what happened in 1985?

R.R. Well in 1985 when the youth in - mostly in the Coloured areas in Cape Town took to the streets with their barricades and petrol bombs and stones and so on, that a lot of Coloured people in Cape Town became politically aware and much more active and much more supportive, and the momentum hasn't stopped since then I mean - much more - many more Coloured people got involved in organisations and in the struggle generally, so it had a marked effect on people in Cape Town, but I wouldn't say that that is the trend throughout the country - I mean Cape Town is completely different to the rest of the country when it comes to non-racial involvement in the struggle, and it's always been easier to organise Coloured people in Cape Town than it's been in any other centre, which is basically because Cape Town is a - what is this word that the government uses....

J.F. Coloured preference?

R.R. Coloured preference area, and you've got much more Coloureds living in Cape Town than you have anywhere else in the country, so organising Coloured people has always been a priority in Cape Town.

J.F. But why is it - everyone always makes that statement and I never hear that much explanation, that it's different in the Cape and (.....)

R.R. Let me put it this (?) - since the launch of the UDF in 1983 there was a lot of work done in door to door community work, where we'd knock on doors and tell people about the UDF and urge them to come to the rally. What we had was we needed everyone who could work to give all their free time to organising the UDF launch and so on, and we'd draw on anyone who considered themselves to be an activist, and we had students from NUSAS, we had the white members of UWO, which is now United Women's Congress, coming with us into areas like Mitchell's Plain, into Gugulethu, into Langa, to knock on doors and go door to door explaining about the UDF, and this was the first time that something like that has - had ever - had ever happened in Cape Town, that you had white people going into black areas to politicise people.

And that hasn't stopped since then, but the million signature campaign of the UDF, I mean we had white comrades who went with us, who went into areas that I'm too scared to go into, where gangsterism is rife and where young ladies don't walk around late at night - we had white women who went into those areas to get signatures for the UDF campaign, and since then it's never been a problem or a question of - of - of you a white person and therefore must only organise in your own area - whenever there's been campaigns or wherever there's been issues or anything organised in Cape Town, there's always been a dispersion of activists into the areas, and we've never ever looked back since then - I mean it's no problem for me to go into Sea Point and knock on doors and in the same way it's no problem for someone from Sea Point to come to Mitchell's Plain or to Lansdowne to get involved there.

And I think in Cape Town we have much more white people who are involved in the struggle. We have UDF area committees in white areas. The United Women's Congress is very, very strong in white areas. There's the student organisations. Cape Town has the only two white affiliates of SAYCO. So organising white people in Cape Town has always received just as much attention as organising in any other area, and that whole non-racial way of organising has been ingrained since the launch of the UDF.

J.F. What are the two white affiliates of SAYCO?

R.R. It's MOYCO, the Mowbray Youth Congress, and GAYCO, the Gardens Youth Congress. They were both launched this year.

J.F. That's a long way from refusing to let NUSAS into CAYCO?

R.R. A very long way. It - it's very exciting - I mean before in Cape Town white activists would be drawn from the university, and they would be seen as rebel students and student activists, and the populates and then (?) was white left, which is the term that is very seldom heard in Cape Town now - but it's just spread to white areas I mean with the - the anti-election campaign we had meetings held in black - in Coloured and Indian areas to tell people why they shouldn't vote, and we had meetings in white areas where speakers condemned the whole tricameral system, with the referendum where whites were expected to go to the polls to say whether they wanted the tricameral - the new constitution or not - the UDF went into white areas to tell people why they shouldn't - why they should vote no in the referendum - so we've always paid just as much attention to organising in white areas than we have in other areas.

With the Govan Mbeki rally, which was planned and banned in Cape Town, we had people going door to door in areas like Bishop's Court and Constantia, which is the Houghton of Cape Town, or the Avondale of Harare (Laugh) where people took Mbeki pamphlets saying that why it was important for the ANC to be heard to white areas, which was very exciting.

J.F. Why is it exciting? Why is it important? Why do you care so much?

R.R. Because it's the whole question of attacking and destroying apartheid on all fronts, that I feel also as a journalist that just as it's important for our struggle turn to (?) newspapers so that we can read about what's happening in - in - in organisations and in campaigns that the - the commercial newspapers won't be interested in writing about, that it's just as important for us to make white people aware of the reality of the South African situation, and the government feels threatened by it, it's obvious I mean - an organisation like the End Conscription Campaign, which is very strong in Cape Town - they are more harassed when it comes to security clamp downs than the Coloured comrades are, because they a threat to the government - it's dissention in the ranks - I mean God, you know, they traitors to their volk (?)

So I mean I feel, and a lot of people in Cape Town feel that it's just as important to organise white people, to get white people into the UDF, to get white people to - to help to destroy apartheid, as it is - I mean we don't pay any particular attention - we have white comrades in white organisations which organise in white areas, but an organisation like the UDF, the umbrella structures or the big bodies like CAYCO and the United Women's Organisation would see it just as important for them to have branches in white areas than it is to have in other areas, and it works - the organisations are strong, they growing all the time, and I mean the - the End Conscription Campaign at any meeting can draw 5,000 people - between five and ten thousand people - when P.W. Botha has a meeting in Cape Town he draws 500 people, which shows just how strong we are.

J.F. But do you think it's important to look at the issue of non-racialism? Is it a key element? Is it a central element? Is it a peripheral element? It is one aspect?

R.R. Well, we fighting for a non-racial South Africa - that's what we want, right, a non-racial democratic South Africa. We don't want the problem of having to build non-racialism after the revolution or after negotiations or after whatever's going to happen in 1990, so (Laugh) if we can build non-racialism now through our organisations, through our activities, it's one less hassle after the revolution.

R.R. And it's important for us to show people that our organisations are non-racial, to show that we aren't anti-white, we aren't anti - we aren't going to do to white people what they do to us today, that we just as prepared to work with them now as we will be in a new society. I mean it - it - it's difficult to explain - in Cape Town non-racialism is taken for granted. We don't make any extra attempts to draw in white comrades. We don't see them as white comrades and so on - I mean if we have a meeting in - in Gugulethu tomorrow, if there's a hundred white people there it won't be something worth commenting about because it's - it's something that happens often and it's something that happens all the time, whereas in an area like Port Elizabeth if five white people should attend a rally in the townships, you'd have the crowd in the streets (?) applauding and it's something strange, something unusual.

But that's not the case in Cape Town - and in - I mean Cape Town has always been more liberal than any other centre - I mean Cape Town was the first area to have open beaches - there a lot of grey areas in Cape Town where whites and blacks have lived together for years, a lot of inter-marriage - it's just much more non-racial than any other centre in the country.

J.F. But I just want to make sure to see how you actually read it. Is it - does it have an ideological base to it? Is it just we want to show the whites so they don't get upset and worry and - or is it just tactical we want a co-op (?) we want (.....) the base, or does it have a deeper ideological core, or is it more of a strategic thing?

R.R. It is strategic, but it's not something that is - was created artificially. It's something that just happened that developed out of struggle. I mean when the United Women's Congress was formed white comrades came to the launch, and white comrades themselves went back into their areas and started branches. It wasn't something that someone decided look, it's important that we have a branch in Mowbray or Observatory, which is the white area. People - white people who are committed in the struggle came to these meetings and they themselves have gone back to work in their organisations. When the UDF was launched there was no special effort to get whites involved, but white activists came to the launch and they've been working, forming UDF area committees in their own areas.

So like I say, it's not an artificial thing - it's not something that someone decided or an organisation decided look, it's important for us to move into the white areas. It's just that there are - have always been activists and committed people in the white areas who've naturally become part of the struggle in Cape Town. UCT, for instance, I mean in August this year when there was a lot of violence at UCT when the cops moved in, it was wonderful for me to see white students standing with stones in their hands, throwing it at police cars - it was - it was just so nice (Laugh) but I don't think it's - it's been anything that someone sat down at one stage and said: Look, it's important for us to organise whites. There wasn't any white structure formed which organised only in white areas - it had always been linked to umbrella structures like the UDF or UCO (?) or the Cape Youth Congress.

J.F. Are you critical of like JODAC where the whites are separately in an (?) organisation, or TIC and NIC?

R.R. No, I'm not - I mean it - it's the - it's - for me it's the same principle that I'm a member of a women's organisation. Why do we have women's organisations and we don't have men's organisations? There are certain sectors of the community that need to be organised as a sector in order to draw people into the struggle, in order to ensure that when freedom comes that we are able to have as many people supportive and sympathetic of us as - as possible, and it's just something that's built into struggle now, but it's not -

R.R. I think the - the NIC and Transvaal Indian Congress and JODAC have an - a very important role to play, but it just hasn't been necessary for us to organise in the same way in Cape Town - but we're not critical of it.

J.F. And what we're talking about, is it the national question? What's the national question (.....)

R.R. The national question - I don't - you see, the thing is there isn't so much in Cape Town of organising Coloureds as a Coloured sector, or organising whites as a white sector, or the whole question of culture, the whole thing of building up Coloured culture and building up white culture and building up African culture - it's just taken for granted that we're all part of the struggle and we're all fighting for the same end. It isn't necessary for us to isolate any one sector and pay particular interest to it. I think it's more a question of non-racialism than the national question - how can I explain it - it's just something - I mean it's something that I don't take notice of any longer - I work - we work side by side with our white comrades and it isn't remarkable or - or artificial or anything like that.

J.F. But does it have an ideological basis? Is it just a pragmatic thing or would you say what you believe in in terms of what your ideology is, is non-racialism a minor aspect or a major aspect of that?

R.R. It's - I'd say it's a major aspect in the way that with the - with the Govan Mbeki rally we'd ensure that our literature and our pamphlets and our door to door work gets done just as thoroughly in white - in white areas than it's done in black areas. With the UDF launch it was just as important for us to go door to door in white areas to get people in white areas to come to the launch as it was in black areas. It's just the whole question of building non-racialism in the struggle. It's not - I mean it's just (Laugh) - it's diffic - I mean it's just - it's something that has developed out of 1983 with the launch of the UDF - it was the first time that we'd never - I mean people had serious prob - I mean people thought it wouldn't work - I mean how can you take white people into black areas, what will the people - how will the people respond - will they accept it - and it's been accepted - people have never had problems with it - I mean I can go into KTC and go and sit in a meeting there with no problems, or go door to door talking to people about the problem of vigilantes and no-one would say to me : What right do you have to be here when you are Coloured, you can't come and tell us about our problems and how we should solve it - it's just never been an issue in Cape Town.

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.F. How do you feel about the idea that - of putting people in positions because they're black, because you need African leadership or working class hegemony or just actually saying : Fine, I believe in non-racialism, but I'm actually going to make - or we feel that there should be a decisive effort to put blacks in the position because we just can't have whites doing people's history (?) we need black to lead (?) as well? Do you think that's artificial and just not on or do you think it's got a place (?)

R.R. I think to a certain extent it's artificial - I wouldn't agree with if we had a - a situation where there was a choice between a one - a white comrade for a position, and a black comrade, whoever's able is important - I feel strongly about the whole question of working class leadership, that for myself coming from a bourgeois background and having all the privileges that goes with it, I would have problems with - with if we had people from an area like Lansdowne deciding that they are now the vanguard of the struggle. I believe strongly in - in - in working class leadership, and because the majority of the working class in South Af.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

R.R. Shall I say it again - ja, the whole question of - of - of black leadership - we wouldn't want a situation where if we had a - a - a - a white person and a black person up for a certain position in (?) organisation that we would choose a black person simply because he's black and not because he's able to fulfil his role adequately, but I do feel strongly about the whole question of working class leadership, and because the majority of - I mean most of - most working class people in South Africa are black, it follows that it should be a black working class leadership and ja, so the whole question of - of - of working class leadership should be built into the struggle - I believe in that and - and we've made no inroads in organising white workers, and I doubt that we going to be able to organise white workers very effectively, and therefore we should concentrate mostly on organising black working class, but in Cape Town I mean the African population is very small - the majority of people in - of - of the - of people in Cape Town are Coloured, and then the white community's just as small as the black community, so it's diff - it - we work differently in Cape Town.

J.F. Do you find that you spend much time arguing about non-racialism these days? Isn't there a point of view that - where people are pushing another line? You do have the Unity - new Unity Movement, APDUSA, Cape Action League, those groups.

R.R. Well, we don't get involved in arguments with them often, but definitely they are very, very negative and very suspicious of our way of organising, but I find even in our organisations, in UDF organisations you sometimes have individuals who still have very, very strong BC tendencies, who still feel very bitter about the involvement of whites, because they would say things like : After all, it is a white government that's detaining our families - it is a white government that is beating up our people - these whities are only in the struggle now, but after the revolution just watch, when they have their property to defend and their interest to defend, they not going to be with us any longer - that - that attitude still prevails a hell of a lot in Cape Town, but in the UDF there's no hesitation or no suspicion about the motives of black activists who are involved in UDF structures, but I mean an organisation like the un - new Unity Movement is definitely very suspicious about the motives of the UDF in involving whites, but like I say, they aren't a mass organisation, they don't have mass support.

J.F. So you don't have debates very much on it any more?

R.R. No, we don't. They had a mass meeting in April, for instance - no, it wasn't April - it was September on (?) the question of the Dakar Safari, as they called it (Laugh) where there was this heavy attack on what the hell does the ANC think they doing talking to whites, and these are the people who sit in government and these are the people who make the laws, and the ANC has no right to speak to them because after all, the ANC doesn't speak on behalf of the people and blah, blah, blah and blah, blah,

R.R. And we had white UDF youngsters in the meeting who were very upset by this and who attacked them bitterly and (Laugh) in the end the meeting had to be called off because they couldn't continue, but like I said, they aren't a force to be reckoned with - if (?) they had about 100 people at that meeting - but there's a lot of trust (?) for white activists, and they have just as much commitment to the struggle as we are - they just as affected by repression as we are, and we work side by side and there are no problems - there's ja.

J.F. Do you ever worry that it's a fragile kind of - you're saying it's important, but that it could perhaps be destabilised or find (?) anything that the kind of - the brutality of the system is going to make for more anti-whitism that's going to threaten the non-racial tradition?

R.R. Not in Cape Town, I don't think so - I mean non-racialism is so in - so entrenched in our way of organising that I doubt it would have much effect. In other centres sure, I'm sure it would happen, but like I say, the commitment of white comrades has been proved in struggle and we have no problems in working with them, and it's just as important that we get as many white people on our side - an organisation like the ECC, for instance, I mean they doing very good work - they able to draw thousands of whites to be able to support their cause, and it's causing cracks - there cracks in the walls of apartheid - I mean they a major threat- they're much - I mean they - they get - they come under much more government pressure and repression than the youth congress would in Cape Town, for instance, because they seen as a major threat, and it's just as - I mean the ECC for me is a very important organisation, and we should support them as much as we can, and assist them and work with them as often as - as is possible

J.F. When did this whole question of socialism start getting on the agenda, and is that at all a threat to the congress tradition that's being reinforced these days when people start criticising the ANC or the UDF or the non-racial tradition from the left saying it's all well (?) so about (?) a non-racial democracy, but what about socialism, what about really injecting more radical?

R.R. Well, we had this debate with that whole (?) CAYCO debate about whether we were going to allow whites into the organisation - the whole question of having middle class dominance over organisations, that they only going to go as far as bashing apartheid, but when it comes to building socialism they going to be the ones who are going to be running back to their business interests and their fancy homes to protect it, and the - I mean as far as I'm concerned, as long as we - as we stick to the principle of working class leadership, we won't have that problem - if we're going to allow organisations to be controlled and dominated by bourgeois elements, we definitely are going to have that problem, and what - what I find very exciting and very stimulating in Cape Town at the moment is that we work very closely with trade unions - with trade unions - that when there are issues and when there are campaigns, like a rent campaign or a civic campaign or anything in Cape Town, the trade unions are involved, and the trade unions and the UDF and UDF organisations would sit down and work out strategy together and campaign together and work together, where if there's any work to be done in the community, the trade union would forward a certain amount of people and the UDF would forward a certain amount of people, and we worked very closely together. Consumer boycotts have always worked in Cape Town because of the close alliance between the trade unions and the community based organisations, and that's important, and we can draw membership from the trade unions because of the workers' close involvement in our campaigns and our issues and our organisations.

So that's another aspect of Cape Town which is different to other parts of the country, the close relationship between trade unions and the mass based organisations, and in that way that is one way of ensuring that we do have large amounts of working class people in our organisations at the leadership levels in our organisations.

R.R. But I mean we do have problems - it's not as easy as it seems I mean - like I said, a lot of people still have a lot of BC in them and there's sometimes a lot of suspicion towards the white comrades. There are always problems with links between Coloured areas and African areas, like in CAYCO, for instance, the youth congress - there isn't much communication and much interaction between the Coloured area and the African area, and in the student field especially it's - there's no contact.

We had the Western Cape Students' Congress, which organises at a high school level, which is very strong in the Coloured areas but has practically no support in the African areas. The African areas are still organised by the joint SRCs which were established in 1985 - so there are definitely communication problems - it's not as rosy - the picture isn't as rosy as it seems, but definitely compared to other centres of the country, Cape Town has a much more firmer non-racial line than - and much more interaction than other centres too.

J.F. I was going to ask you about some of those kind of bumps along the way. Do you never have criticisms of white activists you never see whites dominating, intellectuals dominating, that kind of thing?

R.R. In (?) an organisation like the - the United Women's Congress, which I'm a member of, the strongest branches are in the white areas - there's the Observatory branch, the Gardens branch and the Claremont branch - and you'd find that at general council level or where the organisation gets together to discuss an issue or something that there's a lot of dominance from the white comrades, which is difficult to criticise because they work hard in their areas - they build their branches strong and they are very, very active, but they much more articulate than the women from the African areas - they much more confident than the women from the African areas, so they do tend to dominate meetings, but it hasn't been necessary so far to take steps against them to tell them to quieten down or anything like that, because we have managed to get a certain amount of harmony in our meetings - it's never been a problem, but it - those kinds of things do happen - they definitely do happen.

In organisations like the Detainees Parents Support Committee we have a lot of white comrades who are working in that field - I mean sometimes you get families of detainees - people who get detained who are very simple people, not really politicised, and they come to these meetings and there a lot of white comrades who are very supportative and very helpful, but much more articulate than they are - very easy to dominate - it's easy for them to move around Cape Town because they have cars and they have (.....) and so on and so forth - there are those kinds....

J.F. They have what (?)

R.R. They have cars and they have money and they have big houses - they could have meetings in their houses and those kinds of things - but it hasn't been a big problem, definitely not - they definitely as committed as we are.

J.F. And how - to talk about the middle class issue - your background's middle class. Someone like Salim spoke a lot in the interview about how he came from (.....) upper middle class area in Durban. Have you noticed any pattern about people, activists, what their backgrounds are, leadership? The emphasis, the ideal is working class hegemony, but what is the reality from your experience?

R.R. Well, it varies, you see - let me take my experience working in the youth in the middle class area - sure, we'd have lots of time to sit and have political debates, and a lot of us are much more sussed than people who come from working class areas.

R.R. I mean we can sit down and discuss history of the struggle and a few analyses of the political situation, which people from working class areas don't have the opportunity to because they don't have their university education that most of us have, where you debate such things and you learn how to articulate such political analysis of the situation - but when it comes to campaigns, when it comes to issues, we - we stuck, because there's nothing happening in our areas around which we can organise, whereas in a working class areas there's always campaigns, events (?) around about high rents - when bus fares go up it affects them directly, when the price of bread goes up it affects them directly - unemployment is rife in those areas and it affects the community directly, so it's easier to organise in working class areas than it is to organise in an area like Lansdowne, where the youth are fairly affluent - their parents buy them cars when they 18 years old - they've got no problems - as long as the discos are open on a Friday night, they not going to be worried about the struggle.

So to organise in an area like mine is much more difficult than it is to organise in a working class area, and we tend to find that when there are campaigns or issues that the people from the middle class areas would move into the working class areas to go and assist in that campaign, but obviously as - because the - the - the people from the working class areas are affected directly, they feel the oppression much more than we do, and it's much easier for them to relate their experiences than it is for us - we have a - I mean we don't have an emotional - I mean what - how can I put it - you get intellectualised about what's happening in those areas, but we don't feel it, so I find to a large extent the stronger organisations like the - the civic bodies and the women's structures, and even the UDF, there a large amount of working class people who achieve leadership positions there because of their ability to transform political analyses into practical work and assisting with problems in their communities, which we aren't able to do.

So it is important for us to guard against middle class dominance in organisations, but I think that because working class people are much more involved in the day to day struggle against oppression and exploitation, that it's much more easier for them to organise, and they draw much more people into organisations than we do, so it might not be that much of a problem - do you understand what I'm getting....

J.F. Ja - I was also just wondering if you noticed any patterns of leadership - if you just take the leadership, what their backgrounds are?

R.R. In Cape Town leadership - just generally - I think that generally we can pay much more attention to getting working class people in leadership of organisations - that we do find often that middle class elements do dominate in organisations, and I feel - I think sometimes that the question of working class leadership isn't tak - taken up seriously enough by activists and people don't pay enough attention to it and that it could be a problem, but I don't see it as a major problem at the moment - it is a consideration, but I doubt that it's - it's threatening organisations or threatening activities at the moment.

But I mean an organisation like Transvaal Indian Congress or Natal Indian Congress is definitely dominated by middle class elements, but the other - UDF and the youth congress isn't so - don't have that problem.

J.F. How - UDF - you have to be (.....) by affiliation through an organisation, so what organisation is your lead in (?)

R.R. I belong to the United Women's Congress - I'm a member of the United Women's Congress.

J.F. And I don't know if we just briefly took up the socialism issue enough. I'm just wanting to make sure that - does that come up? Has that been a concern of yours, the....

R.R. Well, after working in a union I mean I became much more aware of - not much more aware - I felt much more strongly about that the kind of future we want for South Africa is a socialist future, and I know - I'm aware, and I'm sure lots of people are, that it's impossible for us to build socialism in one day, but what is interesting is because we have the Freedom Charter as - as a basis for moving into areas to discuss problems like socialism, obviously the Freedom Charter doesn't mention the word socialism and the Freedom Charter is definitely the minimum demands of the people, it is possible for us to go to people to talk about socialism, because the Freedom Charter talks about nationalisation, the Freedom Charter talks about restoring land to those who work it, so I've - I mean it's going to be impossible for us the day after the revolution to build socialism immediately, but we definitely working towards that and we - I feel strongly about it, and I do in my day to day organisation, to make sure that we do bring up the whole issue of - of socialism, that we do explain to people what socialism is like, and when we do talk about a future South Africa that we make sure that people understand what kind of future South Africa we talking about.

But I think that my trade union - that the year that I worked in the trade union made me feel much more strongly about building a socialist South Africa.

J.F. And lastly, how do you see the future? How soon will that happen?

R.R. Well, I think that what's happening at the moment is that - I feel that there is a definite possibility that we going to be forced into negotiations quite soon - that the Americans and the British and the Germans would love to see us negotiate a - have a Lancaster House discussion in South Africa - that is a big threat and I feel that we should look seriously at it - it's - I mean for South Africa at the moment it's - well not at the moment - for South Africa it's important - I mean it's impossible for us to have an armed struggle and a revolution and we all march to (?) Pretoria triumphantly I mean - it's a fairy tale - that's not going to happen with the kind of - of - of - of country South Africa is.

Negotiations I think is definitely on the cards for us, but it'll have to be negotiations on our terms. The demands of the ANC will have to be met that all exiles return, that all political prisoners be freed - and I think another important consideration is that during negotiations it's not the ANC versus Botha - that we should ensure that all our mass organisations should be drawn into negotiations, that COSATU should have the same amount the same voice as the ANC at negotiations, that the UDF should be drawn into negotiations as well.

Obviously Botha doesn't want negotiations, and I don't think he's going to be - facilitate negotiations in the near future. I don't know what he did with the release of Govan Mbeki, what kind of stunt that was - I'm still puzzled (Laugh) but I - I feel that he's going to be forced in - to the negotiating table, and very soon, but we have to guard and make sure that it's negotiations on our terms and not on maybe Thather's terms, and not on Ronald Reagan's terms, and not on Schultz's terms. How soon - maybe 1990 (Laugh)

END OF INTERVIEW.