J.F. I'd like to ask you to start by just telling me what you were just saying about - first of all tell me when and where you were born?

J.D. I was born in Johannesburg in 1953 in a place called Newclare, and it was an area which was I think one of the few like Sophiatown where there was an absolute mixture of people living in - in the community - we had - right next door to me was a family whom we still friends with, and my very best friend who now lives in Meadowlands - they were Sotho people - and we had Hindu people from - who were - I - I sort of saw them as Hindu because that's the language they spoke - but it was quite a colourful mixture of people.

We had a lot of mineworkers from the chrome mines area living around Newclare, and they were sort of referred to as the MaRussians - I don't know if you've ever heard that term, MaRussians - and there was always - my father was called Magabane, which meant of the Chief's people, because there wasn't a sense as a child that there was anything different between myself and people like Mantua, who lived next to me, or Sushila, who lived at the back of me, or even the - the guy who was the local policeman - I remember him quite well - his name was Swanepoel, and my grandmother used to have chats with him on the front veranda.

He was on a bicycle and would come past, and I actually never ever realised that he was different from - from any one of us - he was white and he was an Afrikaaner and we - we grew up in that atmosphere of non-racialism, if you, you know, call it that - this was - yes, the Group Areas Act was beginning to be imposed, but as children it hadn't touched us yet, and hadn't touched me as a child until much later - I mean I - I think in 1964 finally Mantua and her brother(s) Nkosi and her mother, Mapiet, were moved out of the area, and that was quite traumatic for me because in a child's sort of selfish way I couldn't accept that somebody who'd been my best friend for so long was just being taken away and I - I didn't understand what the problem was, and I almost hated anyone who came in who was new - I - I didn't like them, because they were replacing in my mind poeple that I really loved and the - the people that we had grown up with and that my mother knew and my mother's family knew and, you know, the generations of families had lived together there, and suddenly there was nothing.

There was just Coloured sort of kind of people moving in from Doornfontein, and people with very different value standards from ours as well, and I think my awareness of race became enlightened during the time when people moved in from Doornfontein, because they were the people who taught us about things such as the word kaffir - I never heard that word before until then until, you know, people like that came there - now these were people who traditionally lived with white people in - in a community that was so - so-called white I mean - whereas our base - background was more living with African people and - and there were very few whites who lived in Newclare in fact.

The only white, as I said to you, was this Swanepoel guy, and he lived at the top of the street in a house for the railway policemen, you know, and people didn't sort of pay him any undue respect because he was white - I mean he was just Swanepoel - Swanepoel was Swanepoel.

J.F. And he didn't have any attitudes against the black....

J.D. Well, my perception was I couldn't detect that - I mean I - I - I - I remember him when he wants - when he was arresting somebody - he would explain to people why he had to do it, you know, and there - when there were fights - like there were often quite severe fighting - severe fighting that took place between what I thought was Zulu people and these people that people called the MaRussians, you know, and he would come in and - and - and arrest people, but it was never like a - a question of he's doing it because they were black.

And then my mother was very involved in the garment workers - she was a garment worker, and she was very - she was also involved with the Federation of South African Women - she was a FEDSAW member and she was the secretary of the - the Newclare branch at the time - it was a very small branch - I mean I - I remember very little of that, but I do remember the people who came there who were coming to meetings and - or she would go to meetings, and the whole issue of the pass - pass laws were often discussed in our home, because my parents were very concerned and they passed that con - I mean you hear your parents talk and you remember things.

They were very worried about the people like Mantua, Mapiet and those people - what would happen to them in terms of passes, you know - Mapiet, her mother, her father, her husband and all her children had always lived there, and so had all the other families - there was a woman on the corner that had a shebeen, and I remember her name was MaBella, and she was the very first family that was moved out of the area because of the Group Areas Act, and we also often heard of people being arrested in - and one thing that often disturbed me was I would see in - in those - about the early '60s groups and groups of people being shackled to the - you know, in two rows to the arms of two policemen walking in front and two at the back.

And then my mother would explain to us that that was because of the pass - you know, they'd been arrested for passes, and being a FEDSAW woman she was very aware of all the implications of passes and - and things like that, and she, you know, was - was - was fairly involved in getting people out of jail who had been put into jail, except during the defiance campaign when she was very involved in getting - organising with the women who were going to jail - and she was never actually politically aligned to any one of the congress movements per se - she wasn't a Congress of Democrats or a Coloured - the Coloured People's Congress or the - she was -

She was not in any way aligned to the A.N.C. Women's League in any direct way, except that she had a consciousness because she was a factory worker, and through some of the women in the factory she - she became to know about FEDSAW, and that's how, you know, she got involved - but on the whole issue of - of non-racialism I mean we were brought up distinctly not knowing that there were differences until the Group Areas Act was implemented completely and we realised that O.K., we were all the same kind of people living together now in our community with Chinese people - two Chinese shops at the top of the road, two Indian shops here - I mean it was - it was that kind of community.

The shebeens were like all open - people went to these shebeens, and as children we were - were lookouts for the mama who made the beer, you know, for when the cops came and tipped your beer out - we would stand on the corner and be the arras (Laugh) as they called it in - and - and would actually go and tell them that the cops were coming, you know, and - and for that kind of thing they'd -

J.D. There was a very healthy respect irrespective of race - I mean one wasn't aware of class analysis at that age - nobody is - nor were you too aware of yes, there were - there were some - there were people who were very rich in our community and the - the - the distinctions were very stark - I mean there were a lot of Indian merchants living there who were very, very wealthy people.

And then there were people like ourselves who were extremely poor, but we weren't different from anyone else there, you know, and we shared a lot - I mean there was really no sense of people were Coloured and Indian and this and this and that - you know, maybe with adults, but as children there wasn't that sense.

My parents both spoke fluent Sotho - my father spoke seven languages...

J.F. What languages?

J.D. He spoke Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa - he also spoke Siswate, which was quite strange - I mean we never quite understood how he got to learn that - but he worked in the - on the mine, in the chrome mine's trading store - he was - he worked there as a sales - you know, the salesman for the Jewish family, and I think - we think he learned most of the languages working there - but he'd also lived in this community that was so completely hetereogeneous, you know, where there were all these different people, and so it was quite incredible his - his whole ability to communicate with anybody on any level and - I don't want to romanticise him because I think that's wrong, but he was fairly well respected because he was also one of the first of the poorer families who got a car, and I - I - I was about eight at the time, and all the children in the street we all had a ride in that car - it was quite funny - I remember it was - it was a lot of fun.

Suddenly we had a car from nothing ad it was - you know, it was weird - it was the kind of aspiration thing that people build into their lives - but as a child I never had - had a sense of - of being - of being anything but a person, and that so-and-so was just another person like myself.

I picked up things like - as I said, from the people who moved in - and at school I went to the Johannesburg Indian Girls School....

J.F. Why to the Indian one?

J.D. Because there was only one school in Newclare and it was an Afrikaans school, and by the time I went to school the families had started being moved out - like Mantua had moved the year before I went to school - we were six when they moved - I was six when they moved out, and Nkosi and - and the other friends and Sushila and them had moved to Lenasia by that time - they were the first families to move out - and Mantua and her family moved to Meadowlands, you know - very sad - I'll never forget that day because - my memory's very good, I must say - and the one thing I recall quite distinctly were these red trucks pulling up ad packing people's goods onto these trucks, bundling them on, and they in turn would sit on top of their - their belongings, you know, and would be trucked off and singing this extremely sad song.

And there was a guy who - we never knew his name - we called him the penny whistler, and he blew this tune called Meadowlands, and it was incredibly sad, and all the other little kids we - you know, you - waving goodbye to them.

J.D. My mother and father and all the others were crying - they were really like bitterly sobbing because yes, their friends - the people they had related to all their lives were suddenly being whipped away from them, you know, and it was quite sad - I mean I....

J.F. You don't have any recollections of some of the Coloured community saying good - it's good that they're gone to their area, that was rubbish?

J.D. There - well - of some of the teachers - there was a teacher guy who lived up the road from us too - I think his name was Aarons - Mr. Aarons - I can remember that he was quite horrible to - to Mantua and people like that, you know, and he was actually the one - he was - there were people who said that - there were people who said it's - it's - it's actually better this way, because they equated it with like when the fights took place, you know, we always had to hide in our homes and give space to the people who were fighting, and it was...

J.F. The gangs (?)

J.D. The - the - the gangs and - and - and so on in the community that were fighting, and I never put that down to ethnic fighting or black on black violence - I didn't think it was ever that - I think it was just simply people gangs - there was even two football teams who used to fight all the time - you know, physically fight one another - and the football teams were mixed and - and all that kind of thing - but there were families that did say that.

But the horrible change that came after that was then you - you became this completely insulated little community - we all were the same - we didn't relate to one another - the spice of our lives had been taken away - that's the only way I can think of it, you know - we'd begun to - I mean I - I hated Newclare after - after all that - and in fact when I went to school in - in - in Vrededorp my mother moved me to live with my grandmother who lived in Jeppe, funny enough.

Now again here was this kind of community that was a mixture of sorts - industrial labour living in back rooms, Indians and Coloured people and white people sort of working class white people lived in this Vorker (?) Street area where I - where I then went - was moved to by my mother - but it was never the same again, you know - it was just never the same - the songs - the games we learned as children had changed from - from singing Sotho songs with your skipping rope, or singing a song to - that was, you know, just a mixture of all kinds of words and - a little bit of Hindu, a little bit of this, a little bit of -

Suddenly we were playing funny games like English games only, you know - even our emphasis was beginning to alter, and it was horrible - and at the school that I went to, there is where I really felt that I was different - I began to - because people made me feel that way - we had mostly white teachers, and the - most of the kids at the school were Indian of very wealthy family type of Indians, right, and even - I mean some of those people I remember them, (.....) and the Myats and people like that, who today are fairly progressive people - their children weren't - they were Indian children to themselves - you know, they had a specific way of doing things, and the few of us who came from other communities were the Malay children - we were described as the Malay children.

J.D. And - and you got a distinct sense of that there was even a difference even in class sense - in a class sense because we were poorer than they were - and very often I went to school with a very tattered dress, you know, and I was refer - I was one of those kids who the wealthy used to give clothes to - that kind of thing - grey socks and - and - and stuff because we came from a poor family - and still through that I mean I - I - I still believe that even af - having had all those experiences I think that the Group Areas Act was probably one of the most damaging things that happened to South Africa because from my experience it was damaging to me as an individual, and I know that it was damaging to the people who had to move out to God-forsaken Meadowlands, where there was no transport.

We never saw - I never saw Mantua again until we were 13, you know.

J.F. How did you see her again?

J.D. Well, our parents met because they subsequently moved from Meadowlands- Mapiet and Gaga took their children and they settled in Mafeking - and my mother's sister lives in Mafeking - and we were visiting her one day and she said to my mother, you know, that your neighbour Mapiet, I've met her here and - and so on, and my mother was so excited because we had - from the day they left we'd never ever seen them again - and then we - we visited with them for a while, and we were - I was shattered because I had a dream-like thing about Mantua - she was really my closest best friend - we were born practically in the same month, we were the same age, we were really very good friends, you know, our -

When her mother used to make a dress for her she used to make one for me, and vice versa - it was that kind of close because we - we were both the only girls in families with many boys - I have eight brothers, and Mapiet had five sons and - and Mantua, you know, so we were a little special to one another - and when I saw her again at that age of 13 I'd by then developed a bit of like political awareness because my family was quite political - my brothers were very involved....

J.F. Who was quite political?

J.D. Our family's quite a political family, and my brothers, my older brothers were very involved - and it was a shock for me to meet Mantua who was now almost - she - she looked - she wasn't my friend any more, because she wouldn't talk to me, you know - she wouldn't talk to me as we talked then, freely - she just hello, how are you, and ran off, and there was a different human being there - somebody who I couldn't relate to any longer, but that - I think that happens to people who drift apart - whether it's because we have drifted apart in the distinctly racial manner I don't know, but it still - I still felt very robbed, and I know it's selfish to think that when you (?) multiply that by everyone else in the country who's had that kind of experience both ways, and I'm looking at it from a very selfish point of view.

It's just I know that as - as - as one grows older you recognise that the Group Areas Act should never have existed, should never have been implemented, but to - how could you argue that as a child who didn't know those things, and my parents certainly worked very hard to - to make people aware of things in our community, but there was a deterioration that took place as people evolved into this whole sense of the Group Areas Act where the Coloured became Coloured, you know - it was a different economic class as well.

J.D. They were a bit more privileged than - than African people - and Indian people were more privileged than Coloured people, and white people more privileged than Indian people, you know, and there was definitely a sense of that - like you - the face of the community changed - suddenly there were new houses going up everywhere, and many, many cars, whereas before there were bicycles and horses and things like that - it changed.

It became like a - a - a petty bourgeois community from being a working class community where people shared to a place where people started putting up fences around their houses, whereas before then there were relatively few fences - the rich people had fences - none of the other people had fences - and we all lived in tenement houses anyway - you know, one next to the other like that - so that was where a sort of a sense of this destructive nature of the - the Group Areas Act and racialism for me began, and -

And this is why when - today when I look at how people organise I really am - I'm very concerned, you know, and I mentioned this to you before - this whole idea about if you live in Lenasia this is how it's defined in South Africa right now - although people don't directly say that they are organising people on a racial basis, the reality is that they are, and if we're working towards non-racialism we're going to have a hell of a difficult time, in my opinion, to reverse the process which we are - which we are ingraining into people now and it - it is an issue in - in the country.

I think it's a - an issue that has to be seriously looked at because, for instance, if one takes the Transvaal area, you have within the UDF affiliates of the UDF - you have the Johannes - the JODAC - you have JODAC, you have the anti PC of TIC - then you have the Soweto Civic Association, SOYCO, you had - and TRASCO, and the Alex ACO (?) and the Alex Civic Association, things like that - each one of us organising within a specific racial context.

I mean anti PC, for instance, organise Coloureds in the Transvaal - TIC organises Indians in the Transvaal - we work together as activists on that level, and there's no problem between us as people, a person from the anti PC and a person from the TIC or JODAC and that, and on the level of activists we accept the principle of non-racialism, and yet we inculcate racialism by organising as Coloureds in a Coloured area, and I understand the value of that kind of strategy also.

I mean there - there is some sense to that - it's easier, it's quicker- you're going to get the message across - people relate to you because you're from the community, all that kind of thing - at the same time you're actually pandering to a very backward mentality within the country - a non-progressive mentality by - by assuming that a Coloured person won't relate to a - say, an Indian person in Lenasia if they went there, or that a comrade from Soweto couldn't come and organise or work in a - a Coloured area or vice versa, you know - because we also protect the community in a sense from our own beliefs - from our beliefs of non-racialism.

And I've often heard activists say : If we have African comrades coming to - to say, Riverlee, maybe they'll have problems - my feeling about that is perhaps they will have problems, but isn't that what we fighting for - I mean problems, racial problems, like people would insult them and whatever.

J.D. I don't know - I can't say that they won't have problems - I can only - my belief is that fine if - it's not bad if - if that happens, because we must be able to expose the community to our beliefs - if we say that we are a non-racial organisation then we must do that - we're not a non-racial alliance, and I think there's a distinct difference, you know - people see - sometimes see us as a non-racial alliance, you know, an alliance of Coloureds, Indians coming together within the UDF at that level of - where activists meet there's non-racialism, but at the level where organisation is done with the community the principle of non-racialism is merely rhetoric.

People don't see that non-racialism - I remember quite well during the anti-election campaign going door to door one of the things - the arguments that I often came across was people would say : How come, you know, you people are talking about black majority rule, but there no black people here with you - there no African people here with you - why - you know, that kind of question would come up, ad you just like Botha and those people who believe in divide and rule....

J.F. And what did you say to that?

J.D. Well, be - because I believe in non-racialism I would say : No, we don't believe in divide and rule, you know, and - and - and then you have to start explaining the strategy of well, I live in this community and therefore I'm coming to - and you know, I'm coming to hand out these pamphlets - and we certainly had that argument quite often, you know - whereas I also worked with the TIC in some Indian areas, and never got that question there - I was accepted that - I think there might just be a different emphasis there, and I found that very difficult as an individual.

I still find it very difficult to equate the non-racialism with the strategy of working within your own community only, and that when you working in your own community you not really looking at the - the- the whole concept of how people see you, because in South Africa people actually want to see things, you know, like they do at the moment - there's a need for them to see this non-racialism that we talk about in practice.

And then I mean another issue that one could - could take is that what - the - the common argument used by many, many activists is that you've got to assess the organic conditions within a community and work on that basis - like you might go into an area like Laudium where everybody's very wealthy and they are - might be quite reactionary toward say, a person coming from Alexander or Soweto and working in that community, and therefore the gains that we will make - the gains that we might make towards a specific campaign could be lost when people see that, you know, there too many of - sort of an African person coming to articulate our campaign - I disagree with that vehemently and I always will, you see, and - and that's why I question the strategy of - of people working -

If you're a Coloured you going to work with the anti-PC - if you're an Indian you going to work with the TIC, and I - I - I think that we should've organised ourselves as the UDF and nothing else, you know - not having had all these little groupings affiliated to the UDF.

J.F. What are you disagreeing with....

J.D. I'm disagreeing with the ethnic principle of organisation - the actual practical thing.

J.F. But what - you've just said the example that people will have problems - which you think it is true that someone in Soweto isn't going to relate as well to someone from....

J.D. I don't that, because I think that if one is working towards similar goals as an activist or as people, then you - you all - you can articulate the goals equally well, you know, and I don't go with the argument that sometimes if you knock on the door of a very sophisticated person you must use very sophisticated language and all that kind of crap - I don't go with that at all - you know, what I - what I'm saying is if you look at the position in the Cape, for instance - Cape Town was different - there wasn't any ethnic organisation like the TIC or the anti-PC working there - there was just the UDF organising civic associations, organising youth organisations etc., etc. - it was not done on ethnic principles.

But in the Transvaal certainly that was the case, and in Natal certainly that was the case.

J.F. But just to play the devil's advocate, if you look at say, grassroots in - even in their own reports of critiquing what's happening they say one of their failings is that it's seen as a Coloured newspaper - as much as they've tried to outreach it just isn't going in Guguleto and Langa like it is in the Coloured areas - isn't there a reality that it's going to take a while for people - if you're really dealing with someone who's borderline or might even have wanted to vote for a Coloured MP in 1984, might you not just tip the balance the other way by bringing a black African person from Soweto?

J.D. But the whole - one of the things that we were saying during the anti-election campaign was that we reject the - the - the - the parliament, the - the new constitution and everything which flows from it and all - and we never ever argued the point about we rejecting this because black people were left - African people were left out of it - we - we said that we would reject it even if they were included, O.K. - I mean that's one of the points we made - but I don't believe that one can protect the community from one's beliefs all the time.

I don't believe that because even - even if it's going to take a long time for non-racialism to be effective you have to start at some point - you can't say : O.K., for now we going to work like this as ethnic groupings and then in the next five years we going to double our efforts to work so that people will accept one another as different races - the South African government has been very effective in dividing people and making them aware of their differences, and if we say we believe in the principles of non-racialism then we have to break down that particular thing that - that they have created - the whole question of divide and rule and the - that the perspective that because you're Coloured you're better intelligence-wise and - and skills-wise than an African person, you know.

Or because you're an Indian person you are better than that person - or because you're white you're better than all the others put together - that kind of thing - if we really believe in non-racialism then we will work within the framework of non-racialism and not entrench it by saying : Let's protect people in the meantime, because we're going to lose some gains in this particular way - or - or - or maybe we'll alienate so-and-so if we work together just in a non-racial perspective - activists going together into Soweto and working together there - they can knock on somebody's door - and I've done a lot of door to door work - and you say : I'm from the Transvaal anti-Presidents Council and we are here to ask you not to vote and giving you reasons etc.

J.D. And very often people would question that, you know, and say : O.K., I'm not going to vote anyway, but I'm not going to vote because I disagree that something like that should happen in the first place, and secondly not all the - not all the people in the country have an opportun.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. I don't know if I understand what you're saying - you're saying that's the people's - that's people's response to it?

J.D. A lot of people in the areas where we work are - asked that - on the other hand....

J.F. Asked what....

J.D. You know, asked : Why are you Coloureds coming to us alone - where are the - where are the other people in your non-racial perspective - and I don't think that's an unfair question to ask, you know - on the other hand there were some reactionary people that would - that we had to deal with anyway who said : You want the kaffirs to rule the country, O.K. - they are there anyway - they exist anyway.

J.F. But isn't - you can't - are you just dismissing dealing with them....

J.D. No, we not - I'm not dismissing dealing with them, but I'm saying we don't need to protect our beliefs from them by going there as a Coloured so that I don't antagonise them further, you know.

J.F. I guess the argument isn't that you're protecting the beliefs - the argument is if you want to move them you can't threaten them initially- that - that they would - that perhaps they wouldn't be moved....

J.D. But aren't we entrenching their belief in ethnicity by telling them that look - I mean we lying to them in a sense.

J.F. But if they - I guess that the argument would be that the first time you see them you gain confidence and talk about it and once they move to a position then - of trust then they could see the next time with .....

J.D. How are you going to do that if you constantly are organising in an ethnic way - if Aubrey Mokoena or Frank Chikane doesn't actually come to your community and talk to people on a door to door basis rather than talk to people who are activists anyway who go to mass meetings from the stage, and that's the level of our non-racialism.

J.F. You're saying the non-racialism only extends to the activists?

J.D. I think it - it exists on a level within progressive organisation - it has not extended to the grassroots material base, you know, where I go with you, Julie, to a door, knock on the door and we introduce ourselves as members of the UDF and finished, you know, and if people then question : How come you've got a white person with you - then I'm prepared to defend the stance of non-racialism.

J.D. Or if I have somebody from Soweto with me and people say : How come you're coming here with this person, you know - with this black person from Soweto - I can then say I can defend the - the - the stance of non-racialism - I certainly can't advance the argument for non-racialism if I only work as an Indian working in Indian areas and as a Coloured working in Coloured areas - I am not exposing the community that I want to accept the principle of non-racialism to the concept in practice.

J.F. What were you saying earlier when we were talking when you said - you said I don't have a base in my community that - I think it was the other side of the argument that to try to organise non-racially you were admitting that you were an activist who's trying to move that community - what did you mean when you said I don't have a base?

J.D. Well, what is - I mean the - the - the - the community that I live in is - is fairly conservative, O.K.....

J.F. Which community?

J.D. Riverlea - and the idea of a women's organisation there has never taken root - now my belief is - has always been that I will work wherever women are working, you know, where - I don't care where it is - if it's in Soweto, if it's in Noordgesig, if it's there, if it's anywhere one works there - one thing that I am concerned with is that the Federation of Transvaal Women, for instance, organises on a non-racial basis - you know, we have women's groups in communities all over the - the Transvaal, and some of those groups are mixed groups, like they - they not specifically African or specifically Indian or specifically white, you know - it depends on who comes together in a - in a certain geographical area.

In my particular area the women that have come together were only Coloured women, and for me that's problematic - it's - it's - it's in a sense like they never getting exposed really to the - to the reality of non-racialism, and they never are going to because of the constraints on our resources to bring women together from different communities and get them to work together collectively on campaigns, you know, so they get involved in a little campaign in Riverlea or a little campaign in Fordsburg or a campaign in Tzaneen, and they meet once every three months and share ideas - but when they come together even I have noticed this - they say : In the Coloured communities this is happening, in the Indian communities this is happening - and people talk about constituencies relating to Coloured being a Coloured constituency, Indian being an Indian and African constituencies, and I find that very problematic - I find that extremely problematic.

And yet on the other hand on a pragmatic level I can understand that we have to organise those women into projects within their areas, but we certainly haven't developed a way of overcoming the entrenchment of ethnicity which is now happening - the ethnic perspective that I'm a Coloured, you know, so I must work with Coloureds, and Coloureds have different ideas to Indians and Indians have different ideas to whites and so on, and we must all preserve our own little basis - base, you know.

So for me - a person like myself who doesn't particularly want to organise only Coloured people I have no base really - I organise them because I have to - I - I - I'm bound by my organisation to do that, but there's very little base for a total perspective of non-racialism, and it's something creatively - that hasn't creatively been attended to by the - by the activists or anyone else.

J.D. We all very busy organising people, mobilising people, and I believe we're going to have a hell of a problem after liberation, you know - I honestly think so - I think people can't - activists can't talk about non-racialism - I don't think even if the A.N.C. talks about non-racialism, and if the UDF talks about non-racialism, it necessarily means that it's going to exist in the country after liberation.

J.F. Are these the kind of issues that you talk about a lot or is there not time for it?

J.D. No, we raise them, and very often - I mean it's not as if I'm saying something which is ill-disciplined here - this is something which one raises in - in the UDF, and I think that many people in the UDF share my concerns - share the concerns I have, you know, and - and respect that one raises the issue, but have the same problem as I do as to exactly how creatively do we - do we - do we get to the point where we can actually work non-racially, where we can - our strategies can also include non-racial work - campaigns that everyone can become involved in, you know, and the - I think the UDF tries very hard - I mean really does try very hard to - to - to involve the masses in campaigns that will ultimately mean non-racial working together, but at the level of the community that has certainly not happened yet.

You know, where the community is exposed - communities are exposed to one another on a non-ethnic basis - and I fear that we are entrenching it by - by working in the way we do - and the younger people - the youth in my area, for instance, are questioning that - you know, like we formed a Riverlea youth congress for Riverlea's youth, and when we all came together some of the young guys said : No, look, you know, it's all right having a youth, we must have a youth in Riverlea and all that kind of thing, but when are we going to interact with youth in other communities - how are we going to interact with them - can't we go live in Soweto for a time and - and share on that level - we must get to know other people.

Somebody else said : Oh, God, that sounds so liberal, you know - cultural exchange - and I thought about that and I said : You know, it's reality - how exactly are we going to get to that point where people are going to interact, because even after liberation it doesn't mean that we are suddenly going to have non-racial living areas, you know - it doesn't mean that, because I think for a long time after liberation there will still be Soweto and there'll still be Newclare, and there will still be Riverlea and Bosmont (?) and Fordsburg and so on and so on and - and the people who live there now will live there then, and a few individuals will move in and out, you know, but not on a level of like - because we are - we will inherit an evil structure and we are working within the framework of an evil structure at the moment, you know, and it - it's something that is - is very frightening because South Africa will not - we won't achieve all our goals in a - in a - in a system that is not completely committed to non-racialism, because if we don't have non-racialism we will definitely inculcate ethnicity and tribalism, and that's absolutely not progressive, you know.

I mean one only has to look at Gatsha's perspective on things to know that he's a prime example of the kind of thing that we have to counter, and you can't counter it by the NIC in Durban tackling Gatsha Buthelezi, you know, as the Natal Indian Congress, you know.

J.D. I also had grave problems with the establishment of an Indian congress during the second - during the revi - during the establishment of the UDF - many of us had a problem with that - why and a - why an Indian congress - why revive the - the Indian Congress - why can't we work as the UDF and - and get people from community base, you know, like a civic organisation here affiliating to the UDF, a youth organisation - on that level at least we coming together as the United Democratic Front - and the issue of it now becoming an ethnic perspective isn't so - it - it's not as pronounced as it is when you have an Indian congress.

And I certainly know that I would have fought tooth and nail not to have a Coloured People's Congress revived - I - I think that would have been totally non-progressive, you know, and I have - I mean the - the comrades in the NIC and the TIC I respect - I respect a hell of a lot - I just have difficulty in accepting the position of - of the NIC and TIC as a separate Indian and Coloured congress, and I have - even JODAC, Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee, which is purely white, and there aren't only white people living in the city of Johannesburg, you know.

What about the - the black people who live in back yards - in people's back yards - what about the black people who are now in Hillbrow - they not being organised into JODAC - they haven't got anywhere to go to - so we ignoring the - the forced - where people are living in white areas, for instance, but they're not being organised - what are we actually saying here, you know.

J.F. Wouldn' that be totally liberal for the people living in the white suburbs to go to the back rooms and try to take that from their class position they could deal with the needs of domestic workers?

J.D. But one isn't saying they must deal with the needs of domestic workers, but one is saying that there is - in the flats in Hillbrow there are residents living there, and that's fact, that's not conjecture, you know - why don't they get - get - get invited to JODAC meetings on the level of as an activist, you know.

I - you know - I mean that's reality and - and if one is saying that you looking at all - the needs of all the people in the country equally you going to look at the needs on a broad basis - that the needs of domestic workers need to be articulated by them to people who do the employing, and that class position must then become clear, and I think that would be very healthy if domestic workers in - in Johannesburg city areas were involved in JODAC where they could actually articulate directly their problems and - and - and, you know, it would be - I think it could be in tandem campaigns - although domestic workers are organising themselves in the suburbs into almost a street committee perspective, and that's very positive.

But again it's being done not on a political basis really, but on the basis of working conditions, more wages - all that kind of thing, you know.

J.F. You said that UDF isn't an alliance - what about when in the '50s there was the Congress Alliance and there was the Coloured People's Congress and the Indian congresses - are you saying you don't - you didn't accept that - you wouldn't have accepted that?

J.D. I don't know then - I certainly know I won't accept it now - you know, I would find it very difficult to equate non-racialism with saying - to me non-racialism is not a structured thing of two of you, two of you and two of you - that isn't non-racialism.

J.D. That is tokenism in a sense, so we all come together and we talk and - you know, so that people can see - non-racialism is a reality, and it can only be received as a reality if it becomes that - if the Coloured People's Congress at that time - and I'm going to be (?) frank, the - the Coloured People's Congress did not really organise mass Coloured - the mass Coloured people - the grassroots Coloured people, you know from - from what I can understand, and I was a - a baby then, you know.

Who they did organise were bourgeois people, academics and so on - and even today the mass of Coloured people aren't correctly organised - they not - and they still very reactionary - extremely reactionary in fact, except pockets in Cape Town - Cape Town area is great - but in Johannesburg and elsewhere they just sort of in oblivion - they sort of in the middle there not really -

I might have accepted it then because it was - and I'm not saying it wasn't positive then to have the ANC come together in that way - I'm just saying haven't we progressed beyond that point, and do we constantly have to say because the ANC did it like that in the '50s we have to repeat exactly down the line - we've grown - we 30 years older in our struggle, you know....

J.F. Sure, the ANC has also just put Coloured and white people on the executive....

J.D. Exactly - I mean it - the ANC itself is - is moving into the reality of non-racialism, and therefore we have to make the reality of non-racialism come alive inside South Africa.

J.F. It might - not despite, but you've said that - can I ask you some stuff about the Coloured community - what - why are they - you've said that they're mainly sort of reactionary - what's - what has been the reason for that?

J.D. I think it's mainly economic - in terms of their perspective of the economic situation - Coloured people in the Transvaal, which is where I work and know the most about, were - are traditionally trade - tradespeople - you know, carpenters and cabinet makers and - and - and factory - there were workers, factory workers - and what has happened is people are so afraid of losing their jobs and they - they've had a very privileged position actually, you know, where they've been semi-skilled, and they're afraid of losing their jobs in a - in a situation where there are - where everybody is going to have an equal opportunity and - and that makes them very reactionary, and in fact sometimes often very racist in their - in their approach to - to organisation, you know, and I - I think that also stems from the fact that tradespeople have not been unionised where - unionised correctly on a non-racial basis where the trade is what - what you look at at protecting job levels for, or the whole question of looking at people's working conditions as people.

The TUCSA unions have traditionally been very instrumental in organising Coloured workers, and the old Garment Workers Union, they were protecting race in the work - on the work - on the factory shop floor - you know, the old masters and servants perspective - they were not protecting conditions of work or wage levels or living conditions - they were protecting race - and at the moment the majority of Coloured people are not involved in the unions because the unions that are organising people are - are organising mineworkers, metalworkers, people like that.

J.D. The tradespeople, these cabinet makers are not being organised in such a great - great - to such an extent, you know, where they can perceive that : Look, our problem is not to be afraid of having ten million more cabinet makers in - if that's going to be good for the country well and good, and if at the same time we are going to have good working conditions, great - they can't see that yet - all they see is that if more African people are trained Coloured people are going to lose jobs, you know, and that's because they have been put into a position of privilege within the capitalist economy - they have been put into a position of privilege.

J.F. You see it totally economic - you don't see the kind of caught between, neither white nor black, mixed....

J.D. There's an element of that - I mean there is an element of that where I remember one man I spoke to when I went on this door to door thing - he said to me : I feel like peanut butter on a sandwich, you know - you can spread me any way, you know, and then I'm going to be closed in - one - one slice at the bottom and one on top - I'm not quite sure what I am - and I thought that was quite a (Laugh) strange way of - of putting it, but I could see his point, you know, that yes, he - he did see himself as peanut butter on the sandwich - and another (?) position that people very often articulate is that black people in fact don't like Coloureds because they not pure - I don't accept that one bit.

I mean I don't accept it because I think that's the kind of - of racist remark one makes when you have nothing - you have no recourse to another analysis to a problem - you say things like that - it's like saying European people always say are - are you ready - it's the kind of question that European Continent people ask African people - they always ask African people : Are you ready for liberation - they've never asked themselves, you know, if they ready for -

You know, it's that kind of thing - when you are at a loss for an analysis you use that argument - they don't like us anyway, so we have to protect our position and - but I do think that the level of race - a level of racism has been entrenched in - in all the different people in the country I mean by the - by the South African government - because of the positions of privilege they've given some and not others, you know - that yes, there is a certain element -

There's a lot of - of ill-feeling about the fact that Coloured children and Coloured people have a better education than African children, and there's certainly a - a fair amount of - of distrust of the Indian community, or as people call (?) - sometimes would refer to - to Indian people as the merchant class in a very derogatory way, you know, because they are a class of people who've been seen as having really taken hold of the small business industry in the country, and it's true to an extent, you know, and -

And you can see how people would actually become quite prejudiced in their perspectives, but I - what I'm saying is I don't think that's an absolute, and I don't think it's - it's so - it's so complete that you can't - you can't change it if you begin by changing it actually on the level of how you work - if you work in a non-racial way people begin to accept that this is a new way of working.

If you work racially people accept that also - and if you tell them that you are - like the - the Labour Party worked completely racially - the - the Federal Party in the - in the days of the CRC, the Coloured Representative Council, worked totally racially, even more than the Labour Party did.

J.D. They - they talked - called themselves a pure Coloured - you know, they were going to protect the rights of the bruin mense, the brown people, you know, and that's almost the perspective that - that the Labour Party and - and - have gone into the tricameral parliament with - they're there to protect the Coloured people's rights - it's the minority - the rights of minorities, you know, and I - I have - I don't believe in that.

I don't believe that one - there should be that kind of protection - everyone should have a vote, and a country must be run by the majority of the people who've been voted in on a party political basis - that's - that's actually my belief, if you like, at the bottom line of things, you know - I mean I - I honestly do believe in that kind of - of situation where you'd have a - a country which is controlled by a political party which is been voted in ultimately by all the people irrespective of who they vote in - if -

If ultimately we - we vote and there are - and everyone on - on - who's ruling the country is African, fine, because that's the leadership that the country wants and we must respect that, you know - and if we vote and there - and there's a mixture of people on a non-racial basis, great - but I certainly don't believe one has to actively say, you know, we must have 20 white people in the parliament and ten Coloured people in the parliament and five Indian people in the parliament because that's the ratio in proportion to the population size, because then I don't think we'd have advanced anywhere at all, and I think that unless we begin to work on the community level in that way we actually going to define our perspective in a future South Africa like that, the - the protection of minority rights - and then we in exactly the same position as we are now.

J.F. Let me get back to you personally, back to Newclare and growing up - did you have a sense of whites being oppressers, or did you have a sense of whites being totally O.K. - talking about that - the change with the Group Areas Act, but can you demarcate, do you remember....

J.D. When....

J.F. That you had a feeling of that - do you remember perceiving yourself as Coloured or perceiving yourself as black?

J.D. Well, I - we never had much contact with white people except on the level of that guy that I mentioned I mean - we - in fact quite frankly had no - no interaction with white people.

J.F. No white teachers, no....

J.D. No - I had white teachers from - but my earlier years I didn't have any recollection of that - but the white teachers I had when I came to primary school, my first teacher was my Grade One teacher, who was an Indian woman, Mrs - Miss Padayachee, and she was great - I mean she was just like anyone else I knew from my home town, you know - and the second teacher was a woman from Coronationville - I had no - no difficulties with that at all.

My first real contact with whites were at school on the level of teachers - my first real person to person contact where there was a - a person talking to me who was a white person, you know.

J.D. They never ever made me aware of the fact that I was different - I - I don't think they - at that time in the schools there were many of those kind of racist teachers, you know - we didn't actually have a racist teacher - (Laugh) as I sort of progressed in primary school I had a ballet teacher who was a Jewish woman who always referred to us as her little - my little Coloured babies - and I - I remember her because she was one of the few people who actually categorically called us something, you know, or other.

And when I began to perceive white people as oppressers was when my dad - I was a bit older and my father lost his job on the - at the trading store - and the reason he lost his job was because he had challenged a white salesman who had sworn at him, you know, in a - in quite a bad way, had - had called him a - something - koelie or something like that - called him a koelie - and my father lost his job because he complained to the - the owner of the trading store that he didn't want to be referred to in that kind of manner by anyone - lost his job, and it - it then became quite clear that white people could do things to people who were not white and get away with it.

And I did go through a - a phase in my life of being very BC orientated until I was about 19 years old - I was immovable in that - on that position - you know, I was very involved with SASO - became very involved with that - attended the Black Renaissance Conference at Wilgespruit - my peers were people like Vesta Smith - Mavi was then not BC but she certainly had a healthy respect for the idea that black people had to identify themselves as black and not Coloured and Indian and - and that kind of situation, and that we - we needed to grow through a period where we defined our own - we defined values in our own terms - you know, not in terms of the white colonialists.

And I did go through a period like that when I was extremely aware of the white person as the oppresser, and race was my only definition of - of oppresser - and the SASO years were quite difficult - I mean interesting because no-one else in SASO ever was sort of non-racial - basically I mean people were - Aubrey Mokoena was on the exec at the time, and numbers of other people - and I do remember that most of the debates were on BC, you know - developing the perception of BC, raising people's consciousness of themselves as people and not as a second and third and fourth class of people but just as people.

And then one does develop because I - I certainly did through that - through that period to the point where for me the - the - the - the concept of having accepted yes, I was black, and I was a valuable person, one has to go on now, you know - you've got a - and also I had learned that it wasn't necessarily people who were black - were white who were the oppressers mostly, because it also came into contact with some very oppressive wealthy people from other race groups, you know, and - and - and a consciousness of a different kind emerged, one of (Laugh) it doesn't matter what colour if one - if that person owns the resource to oppress you they will, you know, and I changed - I changed quite considerably.

J.F. Tell me what - that sounds like quite a.....

END OF SIDE TWO.

J.D. My very - it was all related to work really - throughout sort of my teenage years I had always worked to - to earn money to go to school and - and that kind of thing - and the first real job I had was at a - furniture factory in Fordsburg, Casmods, I'll never forget, Furnishing Store, and I was 18 I think, ja, and Mr. Casmod was absolutely atrotious human being - very, very wealthy Indian man who drove a very fancy car and all the rest of it, and he treated - he treated every one of us who worked for him like absolute shit, you know, and he - he was particularly racist towards African and - and the Coloured people who worked for him.

To him we were just the scourge of the earth and we were there to be exploited as his cheap labour, and I remember having an argument with him on that - on - about this one time, and he was quite taken aback that I would even raise it, because I don't think he realised that I wasn't completely Indian, because my surname was Dangor - it was a fairly Indian sounding surname, which it is - and Mr. Casmod was very (Laugh) taken aback when I raised with him the - the question of why did he treat the Coloured and African workers in such a bad way, and he - like all the people in the factory who had the better jobs were Indian people.

I mean all the people who worked in the accounts department and who were the managers were either Indian or white, you know, and everyone else was just nothing as far as he was concerned and - and totally expendable - he could - he hired and fired people at the whim - he could fire you for coming into work five minutes late with no understanding of you live quite far away and you have to take three buses and all that kind of thing.

I mean I was articulating it - I mean I was re - sort of looking at it from that perspective - he was my first experience with a black oppresser - a black person who oppressed other - other people. Another one was when I worked at a place called the Credit Information Bureau, which was my second job - I was kicked out of Casmods because I was too cheeky, as he put it - he - he fired me.

I worked at Credit Information Bureau, and my job was to in fact do credit references for places like Truworths and Foschini's and - and shops like that, and again here (Laugh) it was totally incredible because the management was all white and there were some - there was two black guys who worked in management, and they, the - the black managers were actually as oppressive as the white guys who were in - in management, you know.

They were really bad news as far as I was concerned - they - they were chauvanistic - it was on the level of most of the people who worked there were women - if you didn't sleep with one of those guys you were never going to get a raise, you know, and it wasn't their blackness really that was - was at issue here - it was the position they held, a position of power.

I remember them very well - the one's name was Josh and the other was Raymond, and they were both training - trainee managers - it was quite an interesting company, a British company, very into like the - what was called an up-grading programme for black people, and they had these two guys, and they were really like terrible in that sense - they had power and they used that power to oppress other people, and in that case it was more also a case of - of women being oppressed by these - by these men.

J.D. And we would very often discuss it, you know - the women would discuss it with - whether this was cultural - maybe they just thought that being men and if you a - a black woman and you identify yourself as a black woman, then you had to be overtly friendly - there was no - you know, there - there was that kind of discussion - to me it was basically power equals you can oppress - if somebody - if -

If you are in power you can oppress people, you know, and if you have - and - and also that went with finance, because they also would do the kind of thing and say : I - I can take you out to lunch and - and that kind of thing, and I mean I - I don't know - I don't completely think that I hated them in any sense - I just recognised that you didn't have to be white to be an oppresser, you know - oppresser could mean - could be somebody who was - who had power.

A black person can also oppress, and that's fairly evident in South Africa right now with community councillors who are oppressers, and the people in the Coloured Persons Representative Council who are definitely oppressers because they have powers.

J.F. Would you - did you come to that yourself totally - did you take that to other SASO people, and how did they respond?

J.D. Well, I think SASO certainly had a lot to do with my consciousness raising, you know, of - of oppression - of the concepts of oppression- and it's not true that the - the - that SASO never ever look at whether black people were oppressers - they did - there were a lot of discussions like that - my break from SASO happened when there was a - a great debate on whether or not we - one had to go ahead with BC and develop a - a party, a political party that was like - I think that was sort of the - the beginnings of AZAPO and - and so on, you know, and I - I couldn't accept that because I felt that you - you could not -

You know, we've come through this period where we said the issue of BC is to actually recognise yourself as a person and define moral values from your own perspective, rather than from a colonialist perspective, and I - just my own feeling was that we had become sterile - that that particular political - as an ideology BC is sterile as far as I am concerned, and it is not progressive, you know.

And I also had quite a lot of influence from people that I was associating with at that time - I had gotten to know, through my mother, some people in the union movement quite well, white people who were not oppressers, and my - my sort of perceptions were changing as well about people who were white and were not oppressers.

J.F. Through your mother - was she in the union?

J.D. My mother was a worker - she was a garment worker, and she was often talking about Solly Sachs and people like that, who were fighting really a - a - a cause for workers, you know - and also other people such as - I got to know Helen Joseph in those days I - I got to know her, not very, very well, but I certainly had a healthy respect for her - her position and - and the way she worked with people - and I also I mean -

It was also the time of one recognised that people - some of the white people who - who - what's his name, the guy who was hanged?

J.F. Neil Agget?

J.D. No, not Neil Agget - it was before Neil Agget's time this - the white guy, the South African guy who blew up the Johannesburg....

J.F. John Harris?

J.D. John Harris - I mean there were all those kinds of things that one - remember (?) it's not all whites you are oppressers - there were some whites who also fighting for the cause, but I wasn't a total romantic, and to some extent I still have a reservation where whites are concerned, you know - whether or not we will ultimately not still come to that clash of who - of who's to be the power here - I mean even within the progressive organisations and that's - that's a struggle I have with myself.

J.F. What's the problem?

J.D. Within South Africa there's - there's often a feeling that I get that and - and we discussed this last night - for instance, in the union movement that white academics control things, you know, and that they control it very cleverly to some extent, and I do have a problem with that and I - and I know it - it's - it's totally reactionary, and I know it's not progressive to have that kind of feeling, but I do, and it's a struggle I have with myself, you know, to - to have to work through - that ultimately if you are - believe in non-racialism then you've got to look at that position not so much as a race one but as a - a class issue rather than a race issue - it's difficult to do that.

But other things also happened - I mean one began to be more involved in progressive organisations where there were white activists, and you listened to them talk, and they weren't talking as if they were the know-alls - they were also ready to learn about other people's lives and they were ready to work with you and not you work for them, or they work for you in a very - you know, them work for you - that kind of attitude - I'm doing this for black people - they were working with, and for me that was very important.

That was really one of the most important things that happened to me, was the recognition that there were white people working with us and not doing things for us, or us for them, you know - that kind of patronising position - and that had a lot to do with my - my changing my attitude really to - towards white people.

And I spent a short, very short time in Cape Town at UCT, and there the position was much more progressive than in Johannesburg - there was much more interaction between black and white activists, and got a very healthy - it was good for me to go there because in the Transvaal certainly there's - was still in the early '70s - late '60s, early '70s a lot of polarisation, you know, in terms of black and white - and also what happened, I think, as I grew older, in '76 when things were very, very like at - at their worst I met people like John Marquard - I don't know if you ever knew John Marquard.

He was an editor for the World, the Post, and later became the general manager of the Star (Interruption) (Rest of this side not J.D.)

J.F. What year was it - December which year....

J.D. '84.

J.F. (.....)

J.D. In (?) - right now I'm still involved with FEDSAW quite heavily, organising, and I've become very involved with the national coordination between the various provinces on - towards the revival of the Federation of South African Women, so it's almost been like a progression, you know, from....

J.F. Is that going to happen (?)

J.D. It's going to happen, ja.

J.F. Is that going to include the groups in the different women's groups?

J.D. Mmm - what we planning to do is because of the state - we were going to have our launch this year because this is the 30th. anniversary of the FED - we thought we'd have our launch this year, but because of the state of emergency I mean that - that is thought to be not such a good idea because all we would be doing is identifying a - a layer of people for the state to wipe away - that we would just actually go back to our regions and organise tightly towards launching when the state of emergency was lifted or when things eased off, and that's our strategy for the time being.

But it is going to happen - I can't say when - I mean that hasn't finally been decided, but meetings between the four regions have taken place all through this year - reps, and I've attended most of those, which has been very exciting.

J.F. And are all these groups non-racial groups?

J.D. Yup - there is not one BC or one all white women's groups - we all come together as regions and all the regions are organised on a non-racial basis.

J.F. And how about all those concerned you were voicing about - is it really non-racial (.....too faint)

J.D. I don't think those concerns are going to be wiped away - I mean I - I think those are my concerns, but one individual's concerns cannot stop an organisation from being formed (?) - I do think it's very important for the Federation of South African Women to be revived.

J.F. But I'm saying is it truly non-racial or are there - do you have any concerns that people from different areas coming together, from different groups areas - is it truly transcending those problems or is it encountering those problems?

J.D. It is encountering those problems, you know, and I don't think that - I mean I'm not a romantic by any means - as I explained to you earlier, even within the women's movement there are let's say people who - who talk about constituencies, Indian and Coloured and so on, and I would- I still have problems with that - I'm not willing to be - to sort of have my problems make (?) - as an individual cast a total blanket of negativism on the whole movement itself, because to me ultimately I still believe that the women have to be organised basically, and I - I respect the work that the women in my group do.

What I have concerns with is the fact that they are not really interacting with women in other areas that much, and we haven't creatively found the means for - for people to do that, you know, and the regions - at the level of the regions, of the four regions and the - the sort of core groups of activists, there the concept of non-racialism exists totally, but that's not enough as far as I'm concerned - I think that's even a waste of time.

J.D. It has to exist within the women's groups themselves, and it's been very practical to organise women in areas - everybody lives in a group area - and I don't know if the - maybe one thing I should say is one thing that I have thought about, is that the non-racialism will also become a reality once apartheid has been completely wiped away, because then the - the idea that you have to work within a group area will also be wiped away, but the reality is, as I've said before, it's not going to be overnight when people are suddenly going to live in mixed areas.

That's going to take a long, long time, and I think the - the reality of non-racialism is - is also going to take a while in South Africa - it's not going to happen tomorrow, but we must start making it happen today - we must live it, we must - we mustn't just speak about non-racialism - we must work in a non-racial way - when we go door to door to people's homes it must be done by activists in a non-racial way - we mustn't select Indian activists to go to Indian areas - that's my real gripe, you know.

J.F. When you've been out of the country a bit have you felt that you've ever experienced non-racialism outside South Africa?

J.D. No, not yet I haven't - I certainly haven't experienced it here, and I think Zimbabwe isn't - there is very little - I experienced little non-racialism here.

J.F. What - why is that?

J.D. And the - just on the surface, you know - when you go - come into any country you look at things like that, and I think South Africans are particularly sensitive to that kind of thing - we look at things like that to see whether the bosses are all still white or the - I mean in Zimbabwe - or whether people are - are - are truly working together - I haven't had an opportunity to meet with organisations, so whatever I'm saying now is done on a very, very - from an uneducated perspective, you know, and I - and I can't be too knowledgeable about it, but at least on the surface it doesn't seem as if there's really truly non-racialism yet in Zimbabwe, you know.

There's still either a perspective of if you're going to sort of government - into state offices very many black people - mostly black people working there, which is great, and this seems to be almost a reversal perspective, like one for the other, you know.

J.F. Which isn't the goal (?)

J.D. First it was black and now it's just completely white - what about the other people who also live here, or are they just not - weren't they ever involved in the struggle?

J.F. You mean first it was white and now it's completely black?

J.D. Ja - I mean to me it seems like that, that - that first it was completely white and now it's completely black, so it's not really non-racial, and that's the question you asked - you asked me did I experience non-racialism here, and I'm saying no, because non-racialism to me would mean that I - that I - you know, I'm looking at it from a perspective of what I see and I - I reiterate that it's uneducated - I'm just looking at it from what I've seen.

J.F. But you haven't seen what that you'd like to see?

J.D. Non-racialism.

J.F. Which is what - mean that there'd be Coloureds and Indians....

J.D. There'd be everybody just working together in a - in whatever structures there are available for them to work in, you know, and maybe that's a romantic notion, but I haven't - I certainly haven't experienced it, and I think if one looks at Europe there certainly is no - I also think that the falacies of the reality of non-racial - it's a falacy, because in the UK there certainly isn't non-racialism - there's actually quite a concerted racialism - and in Sweden, the other place that I've been - in Sweden there're very few black people, and I don't think that one can really talk about non-racialism in that kind of society - one can talk about it where there are many different races of people together.

But I do think that in - in situations like South Africa and - and perhaps Zimbabwe where people have been forced into racialism, it's almost the opposite to want non-racialism - you want it - you want the complete reversal of the present order, you know, not a supposition of what was - that would be my ideal, and maybe it's going to take a long, long time - and I recognise that in South Africa it's probably going to take a while and, you know I - I'm willing to work towards that until it happens - even after liberation I'm willing to work towards that and to - and to fight a - a position where one is merely supplanting white nationalists with - with black nationalists or that kind of position.

I would be willing to fight that because you grow, and I - I certainly think I've grown, and I'm not unhappy that I went through that BC phase either, because it did teach me a lot of things.

J.F. When was the Black Renaissance Conference?

J.D. In April - it was April or May of 1973 at Wilgespruit.

J.F. Now I've got a lot of kind of loose ends to clean up - just quick questions - just tell me that thing you were saying earlier about - what is your ethnic background?

J.D. (Laugh) I don't have an ethnic background - my father's family was a mixed family, Dutch and Indian - my mother's family was Javanese on the one hand and Xhosa from the Cape - although they were identified as Cape Malay - I can't think of why that happened - my - my mother's great grandmothers, great grandparents were - the - the - the combination there was Xhosa and Malay, and then I think that the subsequent generations married Moslem or Malay people as they went along and finally came to my mother's generation.

My dad was the third generation of that combination of Dutch and - and the Indian guy (?) and it's quite an interesting history - these two people ran away and got married, and then my father's father was actually quite a coward (Laugh) - he ran away too back to India apparently - he never knew his dad.

J.F. Who ran away, Dutch and Indian?

J.D. No, my father's father - my father's granddad married a Dutch woman whom he ran away with, and I'm not quite sure of all the details, you know, all the gory details - it was a bit of a scandal both sides - and my grandfather also - I mean this family had a history of running away with people, you know - also had some similar skeleton in his cupboard.

J.D. And my father never knew his own father, but he certainly did know his mother, and she was quite a wonderful woman.

J.F. What did she do (?)

J.D. She was a mixed - person of mixed heritage as well - she also had a position of one black parent and one white parent, you know, so from that side it was totally mixed and from the other side it was two things (?) so I don't have any ethnic heritage that I can say well, I am a one or the other - you know, I - I like to say that I'm a South African, finished, because I believe (Laugh) that's truly what I am.

We had no choice in - in - in - one never has a choice in - in how you come to be in a certain part of the world, and we certainly didn't - I'm just the product of what South Africa might be - have been like if there was - if apartheid definitely didn't exist, you know - although I doubt that very much because the British were as equally as racist as anyone else.

J.F. And so what is it saying, that you're black?

J.D. I am a Coloured, a 007.

J.F. You're not other Coloured or Malay?

J.D. No, I'm just a Coloured.

J.F. So that's your whole family?

J.D. No, we all different - some - the older children - I'm the middle child - the four older children are Cape Malays - I'm a Coloured and the brother after me is a Coloured, and then the three younger children are other Coloureds.

J.F. Why are they.....

J.D. I don't know (Laugh)

J.F. Because somebody in a government office classifies them - how....

J.D. We - you classified as when you - when you born, not when you - and the older guys were classified when they were 16, and I was classified when I was 16, and my younger brother was classified when he was 16, but the three younger guys they were - at birth they were given classifications, you know, and they were other Coloureds, all three of them.

J.F. But why are the older ones classified Malay - just how'd it look to some guy....

J.D. That's how they will - they were perceived at that time and I mean the religion is Islam - was Islam.

J.F. Were you brought up with Islam (?)

J.D. Ja, we were, so I suppose they thought ag, well, you know - then they sort of became more analytical in their approach towards - when I came along to be classified and I was just a Coloured - Coloured - (Laugh) and it's (?) quite ridiculous.

J.D. And my brother younger than me - there was very little space between us - we have about - I am a year and three months older than he is, so.

J.F. And your parents are classified how?

J.D. My mother's a Cape Malay and my father was classified as a Malay - very strange - so there was a time when evidently they saw people of mixed heritage as being Malays, you know, or Cape Malays, or Coloured, but both my parents were - one was a Cape Malay, one is a Malay, and the brothers were all Cape Malays, the older brothers, and they - they sort of progressed in different degrees as we went along.

J.F. And tell me about the (.....) the Dutch part of the family - did you grow up to see them or....

J.D. No, I didn't actually want to see them - I mean once, only once we saw - we met these people.

J.F. How did - but did somebody - did your mother want to see them or what?

J.D. My mother was curious, I think, because they had never been told about who those people were, you know, and my aunt lives - as I said, she lives in Mafeking, and she is - is - has got very little to do (Laugh) - she's sort of an - a great interest in who lives where and who's who, you know, that kind of person - and she discovered that there were de Bruyns living in Mafeking and connected with my grandmother, who was still alive at the time, and my grandmother sort of traced back and said : Ja, it could possibly be family of - of your dad's and people like that - maybe we should go and find out.

And they did, and they were distant cousins - they were related - but I went with because I was in - I spent most of my school holidays up to 14 years old on that farm in Beermansdrift with my aunt (Laugh) and she introduced us to these people, and it was I think for them a - a tremendous shock that they had family who were black - I think they were very, very shocked.

At the same time, you know, I later on - we often discuss it now - can probably understand their shock, because these people are arch, arch conservative types with the DRC, Dutch Reform Church - I can imagine if there were - if it was ever found out publicly that they had a few brown skeletons in the cupboard it might cause them a few hassles in their lives, a few difficulties, and I don't know, I - I certainly am not into that kind of thing of claiming heritage - I think it's disgusting when people do that and they constantly say : Oh, I've got a white uncle and aunt and a - you know, that kind of thing - I think it's just madness to do that - it serves no real purpose.

J.F. Would some people used to do that - were....

J.D. People used to do that, you know, like very reactionary Coloured people would never ever mention that they had black or African heritage, but they would mention that they had white heritage, you know, or they would - I remember meeting a guy once who told me he - he had a funny surname - he - an (?) McBain-Charles - his surname was McBain-Charles, and I said : How come you have a surname like Mcbain-Charles - and he proceeded into this long story of how white he was and how the South African government classified him as a Coloured and just - he doesn't even know if he's a Coloured and, you know, look at my children, they all have blue eyes, and I thought : God, I never want to do that.

J.D. I never want to be in a position where I'm claiming I'm white because I think it's better than being black.

J.F. Have you ever known any people who were Coloured who related well with those - with the black relatives - white relatives?

J.D. You mean playwhites?

J.F. Yes.

J.D. O.K., ja, I - I knew quite a lot of people who were playwhites.

J.F. What does that mean?

J.D. It means that people who are Coloured go and live in white areas and pretend to be white because - and then you can't visit them except at night (Laugh) when you a family like that, and I mus - I must say I never - I thought that was also really quite ridiculous - and in fact John's aunt is.like that and John's older brother lives as white.

J.F. Really?

J.D. Yes....

J.F. Did he get himself reclassified?

J.D. He was sent to a reform school because he was evidently very, very naughty, and he's very fair - he's extremely fair, and he was put into a - a reform school in a whi - a white reform school, and when he came out he was white - and they lived in Fordsburg at the time, and he never ever came back home to the family - he just continued to be white, and since I've been married to John we've also just seen him once, long time ago, and he was pathetic, you know, because he was obviously seeing his - his flesh and blood for the first time in a long, long time and he was like wanting to connect - there was nothing in common any more - they were totally different as human beings, you know - he had another life and they had another life.

J.F. So has he married a white person?

J,D. He's married.

J.F. To a white person?

J.D. Ja.

J.F. Have you ever known anyone who was in your position who had white relatives who was Coloured but had a good relationship with them - have you ever heard....

J.D. No, I haven't - I don't know anybody - it doesn't mean that there aren't, you know - I think there might be but I - I don't know anybody myself who - who was - or is like that.

J.F. Do you ever, or did you ever prefer to say so-called Coloured?

J.D. No (Laugh) - the word Coloured itself is - is sort of atrotious enough - now so-called is even less definitive - I mean so-called Coloured means nothing - Coloured means nothing - I mean if you called somebody a Coloured person what exactly are you saying about them.

J.D. And - I don't know - I mean it's - I know that the - from my understanding of it and I'm - I - you know, I really - I could be wrong, but I understood that people use the term so-called Coloured because it was in - in protest against the government's definition of a certain person - a person who looked a certain way or who was of mixed heritage, O.K., and also that the term was derived from the US expression of people of mixed heritage, that these were Coloured people, and I've always found both terms quite obnoxious actually, and I've always just preferred to be called black.

I think that's very definite - you black and that's it - I mean there's no need to be degrees of black - black is black, you know, and I think that perspective probably comes from the BC days.

J.F. Does your mother call herself black?

J.D. Yes, she does - she always has.

J.F. She always has?

J.D. Ja.

J.F. Now tell me when you were growing up - and your maiden name is Dangor?

J.D. Mmm.

J.F. What kind of name is that?

J.D. It's an Indian name, Indian surname - my father's father's surname was Dangor.

J.F. Did - what do you think was the first political organisation you ever heard of - would it have been the ANC or the Labour Party or the....

J.D. No, it was the ANC because we lived in Newclare where the ANC met in Hamilton Street - they held their meetings up in - at the end of Hamilton, and we lived in Russell, and I - the first political organisation I heard of was definitely the ANC because it had quite a - a big following in Newclare at the time - there were quite a lot of people who were members of the ANC and who actively worked with the ANC, you know.

J.F. Were they mainly African people - were there any Coloured....

J.D. There were Coloured who worked with the ANC - there was - he died in Holland recently - I forget his name - I mean he was quite a good friend of my father and he worked with the A.N.C., and he moved out of Newclare to - to Noordgesig - I just can't remember his name - there was him, and then there was a guy, Percy Peace, who worked with the ANC, and he left the country as well - he went into exile - he lived in the community.

And there were numbers of other people I mean from - from that area, from Sophiatoan, Newclare, because they relatively close to one another.

J.F. But they were a minority....

J.D. They were a very small group of people, but most of the people who belonged to the ANC were African people who lived there - and also where ANC had these massive meetings in Newclare in Hamilton Road - and I remember seeing - I can't - you know those - what we would call a hippo today - those funny kind of tanks that they used....

J.F. Saracens?

J.D. Saracens - I saw when I was a little girl - I remember seeing one of those things around that area when the ANC was holding its meetings - and then also my father's cousin is Amin Akachalia (?) so there was that connection, and they were not members of the ANC but they were within the Congress Alliance through the TIC and so on.

J.F. Were there any Coloured People's Congress?

J.D. There was a Coloured People's Congress in the ANC.

J.F. But I mean in the Transvaal that you were aware of?

J.D. There - not that I was aware of but there must have been, because there were people who were working with the ANC and they were - would have affiliated through the Coloured People's Congress.

J.F. Did you ever either with your awareness of the ANC or with BC have any awareness of an Africanism - blacks that were African and they were feeling that Coloureds weren't accepted either by the BC groups or the ANC?

J.D. Yes, I did - my - my - the - the very really the first time through the BC era I mean people always talked about the Pan Africanist Congress and their belief of Africa for the African and that an African was actually a person who wasn't a Coloured or an Indian or - or someone like that, but an - an - a black person from Africa, and I did have that - that kind of sense of things during those days and it was fairly disturbing, although - I mean it was disturbing to me because it threatened me, and that's very honest.

It threatened me as a person - I was what about me - I mean where do I fit - I don't want to be with the whites and I - this is where I want to be, and people are saying that probably it's not so good, you know, to have all kinds of shades belonging to the PAC - and there was one time again at Wilgespruit and I can't remember quite when, I attended a conference with my brother and his wife, and this issue was raised, and it was a BC conference, and the issue of what black was was talked about, and I thought that was very, very reactionary, because I had developed a bit by then, and I certainly do - did get a sense that there was a - very much an Africanist perspective even in SASO, you know, that it had to be like that, and that when you're that young and you haven't had too much political experience, and you also really scared of opening your mouth in case you - you saying the wrong thing at the time when you supposed to be learning about things, it's very difficult to articulate your - your - your perceptions of things, and I - I hardly ever spoke up in those meetings - I was very quiet.

It's very hard to believe now, I think, but I was then very quiet and just listened a lot and - and tried to learn as much as I could about things and people because I didn't feel I knew a hell of a lot - but I did get a sense of an Africanism, that even, you know, the question of who - who suffers the most kind of level.

J.D. People would say that kind of thing - the people who suffered the most are the African people and therefore they must be the people who inherit - they're the inheritors of this country - it's their country and their land and we - we are really intruders in a sense through the white man - we've intruded through the white man.

Very difficult because I think if I could - I mean I - I think this is why I honestly do believe that South Africa today and - and - because there - there are these different feelings, that non-racialism is the only way for us to go if we want peace in that country, complete peace, you know, because I - I certainly would not be happy to be in a country where the PAC was ruling - I certainly wouldn't want to be.

I would have a lot of difficulty with that because I think they would be very oppressive - and the other thing that was quite disturbing was there seemed to be a sense that I gleaned from people's discussions that they were saying they want what the white man has - like many of the arch sort of PAC people were saying that, you know - it was almost like a middle class aspiration to want what the white man has rather than to want a complete change for a new social order - I didn't accept that quite well.

J.F. Do you - did you grow up - did you speak any Afrikaans in your house?

J.D. Mmm, we did - everybody in - in that area spoke Afrikaans as well as English....

J.F. You spoke both languages - what was your first language?

J.D. English is our first language but we all spoke Afrikaans as well because you - you lived in a community like that - Newclare, Sophiatown was like that, you know.

J.F. So when would you speak Afrikaans, in the house....

J.D. Ja, sometimes in - intermittently - or a neighbour speaks Afrikaans to you and you answer.

J.F. What about in the future South Africa, what'll happen with Afrikaans?

J.D. Afrikaans is there and there's a whole community of people who speak Afrikaans - I mean in the Cape you cannot communicate with people - with everybody in English - Afrikaans exists, you know - I don't think it's just going to be wiped away, by any means - I think it's - it'll exist as a language - it'll probably die out eventually because it still - it is - people recognise it as being the language of an oppressor, of - of the Afrikaaner - of the Afrikaaners in an attempt to obliterate any cultural links with - with - with black heritage and culture - Afrikaans was one of the things they - they developed, and actually Afrikaans is not their language.

It was actually the language of the slaves in the kitchens of the Dutch in the Cape who developed a sort of pidgin language that they could use with one another, bearing in mind that they were all people of a different - slaves from different areas - they had to communicate somehow, and they learned - it - it's a mixture of Dutch and - and - and all these other languages put together, and the Afrikaaners now refer to that original Afrikaans as kitchen Afrikaans, and they've purified the language by Anglicising it, you know, by - by just changing words from English into Afrikaans.....

J.D. .... but I certainly don't have any undue loyalties to Afrikaans - I mean I don't....

J.F. You have what?

J.D. I don't have any like great need for it to exist as a language, you know....

J.F. Do you have any fondness for it....

J.D. No, I don't - I think it's - I don't know - I think it's very difficult - not difficult but it's just a very weird language - it - it's limited - although some people might argue that it's very colourful - perhaps it is very colourful - yes, it is, you know, you - it could - it can be very descriptive - as an individual I certainly don't have too much fondness for the language myself as a language.

J.F. Why do you think that's - because of the way you've experienced it as - from white (.....)

J.D. Well, it does go with a certain mil - certain milieu, doesn't it, and it - it - it has got a certain cultural perspective to it that this is the language that they wanted all of us to learn because it was their language and it was - it was an imposition of their culture on the rest of the country, as they saw it, you know, and I just don't have too much fondness for it.

J.F. There are black people who do have a fondness....

J.D. I know - there - many black writers who argue for Afrikaans, and one such black writer is Hein Willemse - he's a white - not a white - he's an academic at the University of Western Cape, and he writes in Afrikaans and he writes beautiful things in Afrikaans, you know, very musically flowing things in Afrikaans, so when (?) I say as a language I think it will probably continue to exist and be used, but I certainly don't think it's going to be used, and it will probably die out as a national language - you know, it will become the language of people who (?) have dialects and probably remain a dialect in the country.

I certainly hope we won't retain it as a - as a second language in the country, because it's the language of a minority.

J.F. When you were growing up were you - was there any awareness of support for the PAC - did you ever encounter....

J.D. I never came across people who supported the PAC actively or knew about the PAC, and one's parents discussed the PAC and the ANC, you know, so you knew that oh, well, there were two - two types of things - one was the PAC (Laugh) and one was an ANC as a child - I'm trying to put it to you as a child would see it, but I never knew any person who actually - actively - I still don't know very many people who actively support the PAC - I mean even in SASO it was (?) very difficult to say who's actually supported the PAC.

J.F. Did you perceive anti-ANC in SASO at all?

J.D. Not anti-ANC - people didn't talk about the ANC as being negative, you know....

J.F. Like Saths Cooper?

J.D. Like - like Saths Cooper or people like that, but Saths Cooper came later on also.

J.D. I mean he was in SASO but he never actively said : I'm a member of the PAC, blah, blah, blah, you know.

J.F. What about Tsitsi Mashinini?

J.D. Yes.

J.F. Did you encounter him at all?

J.D. Very briefly, and he did articulate very strongly that he was a PAC man - the term PAC man actually is a - came from him - I mean people teased about that - there's the PAC man kind of thing - very difficult - but I don't know many people who are members of the PAC in (and)

J.F. What was your impression of Mashinini - did you hear him speak or anything?

J.D. The circumstances under which I met him were like damn brief (?) for me - not even for a very long time that (?) I remember him because of his - I thought he was very aggressive about his stand, you know - he wanted everyone to accept what he was saying without question, and I have difficulty with that - I can't accept anything without questioning it - you know, even some things I believe in I ca - I - I don't accept without asking questions ultimately - but that was - that's the only thing I can really say about him, was that I had that impression that he was very aggressive, almost imperialistic aggressive, you know, like we will - we will succeed.

J.F. I'm interested because I got an interview with him in which he just talks about how he hates whites and wants to kill whites, and I wondered if that ever was....

J.D. No, he didn't say that - no - appeal to me?

J.F. Ja.

J.D. No, I mean like....

J.F. In the most anti-white phase you were at....

J.D. No, it - I never - I never sort of had any inclination towards that kind of total perspective where you'd say : Whites are bad so they must all die - I know there were people who said : We're going to drive all the whites into the sea ultimately - that kind of thing - but I don't think that one progresses very much if you hang onto those kind of absolute, or if you are influenced by - if I was ever influenced by that I wouldn't be - I wouldn't have progressed or become as - as - as - I do think I'm progressive - I don't think I would have become progressive if I thought that the only way to solve our problem was to kill all the whites.

J.F. Did you ever hear of Unity Movement?

J.D. Yes, I did.

J.F. In - even in Transvaal?

J.D. No, there was no Unity Movement really - any real Unity Movement presence in the Transvaal - it was mostly in the Cape.

J.F. But how did you hear about it then, just this thing that's in the Cape?

J.D. Well, no - I mean people discussed it - I think the way I heard about it was in a - really in the late '70s, very late '70s, probably when it didn't exist really as a Unity Movement any longer, but people were discussing the types of organisation that existed during the '60s and one was the Unity Movement, and Unity Movement people apparently - again I might be under correction - was a bunch of intellectuals who - very, very intellectual who sort of saw themselves as paving the way for the working class and paving the way for the masses, you know, with ideas and pumping ideas into the masses, and that one thing I thought was quite quaint about them and very strange politically was somebody once told me that you couldn't be a member of the Unity Movement unless you had a Standard Eight certificate (Laugh) and I thought that was quite strange.

Fairly reactionary in my perspective, you know, that they - something like the Unity Movement existed, and I mean they were quite - I was quite surprised to learn that somebody like Neville Alexander, for instance, was a member of the Unity Movement, and I never quite understood that - I mean I - I am not - I'm not a follower of Neville Alexander's - I don't - I don't believe in what he believes in - I don't believe in his perspective on things anyway, but I was very surprised when I heard that he was a member of the Unity Movement because he's always talking about working class leadership, and I couldn't understand what he meant by if one is a member of the Unity Movement most working class people didn't have Standard Eight certificates and they were seeing themselves as a group of leaders, you know, developing leadership of an intellectual nature - I had - that's about as much as I know about them.

I don't even know how they organised or exactly who was in their ranks or anything like that.

J.F. You didn't get a sense at any early stage that this isn't the movement of the Coloured....

J.D. No ways - not in the Transvaal.

J.F. Now do you - when you - with that kind of Africanist feeling that - of exclusivity do you ever remember hearing of someone who was ANC and was Coloured and feeling that there's - that that made you feel more secure or interested....

J.D. Yes, because my father often spoke of Alex la Guma, you know, and - and of course I became to be aware of people like Reg September, Alex la Guma and quite a number of other people who had joined the - who were members of the ANC, and it didn't give me so much a sense of security as entrenching a belief that the ANC is probably an organisation that I definitely support, you know, in that even during the time when the ANC didn't have any Coloured and Indian people on - on its executive there were still people who were members of the ANC, you know, and that was encouraging towards the - the - the concept of non-racialism for me and - and that was something I - I believed in in a sense.

I mean the BC days also was a time, and I - I don't think people - one thing I want to make very clear is that having gone through that BC era didn't mean that I was myself a racist - it was a good thing to go through, accepting one's perspective as a human being, that you weren't a third class citizen - that's how I saw it, you know, that you - that you weren't - had to be subservient in any way, but you had to develop your skills and - and utilise them as a person.

J.D. And - and the problem I - the - the problem when - that BC held for me later on was when people began talking about it as if it was a political position and a political organisational position - I couldn't accept that because to me it could never be that - it was sterile thinking, but ja, there were - I mean it - it did sort of indicate that the ANC was more progressive than AZAPO or whatever, you know, or - or even BCM or BSM was less progressive than that, because my perception was that if you - you continue to be here in a supportive role, but as a person you're not quite accepted, and it's not accepted that you have equal right and equal say here.

J.F. Did you - this is pushing it a bit but did you ever hear of a person who happened to be ANC who happened to be Coloured who happened to be a woman?

J.D. I did - heard a lot about Ray Alexander - not Ray Alexander - the wife of - Mrs. September - Ray September - is her name Ray - she's - can I - look, I know - knew of her because I saw pictures once of women in Cape Town, and there was this short little woman with long black hair, and I've never met her, and she - she was - I'm sure that's Reg September's wife, I'm almost sure of that - according to my mum she was very involved with the union garment workers and she was herself was a garment worker and I had heard of her, and it was very exciting to know that there were women in the ANC, you know, who were Coloured and who were very deeply involved.

And then when I was in Canada I met Dee September.

J.F. Who is that?

J.D. It's the daughter of - of Ray September, this - this person I'm talking about - and she works at SOMAFCO - she - she teaches at SOMAFCO, this lady, and I was very impressed with Dee September and also her brother - I met him - younger brother - I was really - really extremely impressed with him, you know, and it was great to see that ja, there were these people in the ANC.

And I remember seeing an old movie of SOMAFCO once - people smuggled into the country - not SOMAFCO - the - not the new thing but when all - everybody was in Lusaka in these camps - there was an old, old movie and there were a lot of Coloured people around them (then) - I don't know who they were, but (?) there were - I saw that about five years ago, and I was very excited by that - I thought great, you know, there are, there are Coloured people, Indian people involved in the ANC, but I think there always have been, and I - I don't -

You know, I see what you're trying to - to - to do - you're trying to find out if I was influenced because there were Coloured and Indian people in the ANC - I don't think it was influence because of that - I didn't swing over from anywhere - I always had a basic support for the ANC - I didn't swing from being a - a non-ANC person to suddenly becoming an ANC person because there were Coloureds in the ANC.

I think I would probably support the ANC's principles anyway, and I know when the first time I read the Freedom Charter I was very excited by it and I thought that this was great, you know - I didn't really like the clause that talked about - I think it's the clause that says something about nations - each nation will have - you know, for every nation - but somebody subsequently explained that to me, that that was the terminology of the day - how people spoke about things, that every nation as - you know, meaning like every race group would have equal opportunity and protection of - of their cultural rights, which I think is - is fair.

J.D. I think it would be fair to - for people to have the right to protect as a - as a nation their cultural rights, and I hope that there will - some - sometime evolve a national culture for South Africa - I don't think there's one yet - I don't think that South Africa has a national cultural concept - but I don't think that I'm interested in the ANC or support of it merely because there are Coloured people in the ANC.

J.F. I'm just wondering about whether that reaction kind of gives some vindication or support or just makes you feel heartened in any way.

J.D. Ja - it is heartening - it's good to know that the ANC's working towards non-racialism - I don't think by any means that it is - that there are enough people in the - Coloured and Indian people in the ANC - I don't know why that is - I think they're all working back home, most of them - many people at home in the Cape and in the Transvaal who work actively are very supportive of the ANC, right - doesn't mean that they have to be like actively there right in Lusaka or be high up in the executive of the ANC to be supportive of it, you know.

To me it was enough that people - ja, others were also supportive as I was supportive - we had questions to ask we asked them - very often the questions we asked got us into trouble - very often some of the older people didn't like the questions we asked, because we were asking, you know, when - when you said - initially I used to say to people - I remember asking somebody once if the ANC had any Coloured and Indian people in positions of - of power, and they asked me what that meant, because they said that the ANC did not have that kind of thing, positions of power, and I mean I've - I've also developed now and I know that ja, there are positions of power in the ANC - there are positions of power in any organisation - you know, it's naive to think there won't be.

But I also know of people like Yusuf Dadoo and had heard a lot about him in the country, not - didn't ever connect him once with the ANC until I was much older, but I had a lot of respect for what he was doing, you know - I thought he was very brave and - and very forth-right and that he fought hard for - for what he saw to be right, you know, and subsequently discovered that he was a member of the CP, who was a - an alliance of the ANC, and not many people at age 18 then were too aware of all the different alliances that existed - people just sort of on face value accepted things, you know.

I mean it's not a sophisticated as it is today when everyone is very aware of who was what - like Moses Mabhida was CP and Dadoo was CP, but Tambo, Mandela and Sisulu were with the ANC and that kind of thing, and that the CP's - is aligned to the ANC and supportive of the ANC and that Joe Slovo is the CP but also on the executive of the ANC and all that kind of thing - I don't know if he is on the executive of the ANC or not - ja, he is.

So today all those things are known (Laugh) but at the time when I was a teenager and one didn't know those things and you didn't dare to ask, because people were scared to say - I mean if you asked a lot of questions about the ANC and the C - and the CP and things like that people thought you were a spy.

J.F. Did you ever have occasion to think about and discuss any similarities between what you're saying, from a point of view of someone who's from a Coloured background and is comparing with from an Indian background, do you think - have you ever....

J.D. There have been times when - I mean within the women's movement we've - we've had discussions like this, you know, about things, especially about non-racialism and national unity on the question of the combination of those two, and there were individuals I mean who would talk about their own perspective on things and how they perceived the ANC, and they - most Indian people that - that I know were very - were sort of - knew of the ANC through the alliance of the - the congress, the Indian Congress - the Congress Alliance, you know, and so that they would have been totally like supportive of the ANC because that was the alliance that their particular organisation belonged to, whereas my own background was perhaps slightly different.

My parents didn't belong to any congress, you know, but they were supporters - my mother was a supporter of the ANC and she was in the women's sort of movement and - and things like that, and there - there might be a slight difference there because I couldn't claim any historical family - familial alliance with the ANC, whereas a lot of Indian people who are progressive have that particular history, which is entrenched, you know, and not many Coloured people have that particular history which is entrenched, because the Coloured People's Congress was small.

I don't think it was as big or as - as impressive certainly as the congress, the Indian Congress was, you know.

J.F. But just that feeling of an Indian person discovering Mac Maharajah on the NIC (?) - do you think that was kind of (.....)

J.D. Well, one person who was in detention, a good friend, told me a story which I thought gosh, it could be related, I don't know - he was at John - he was also at the Square - at John Vorster, and this toilet story about draining the toilet and somebody shouts up and he shouted down, and a man gave his name and he shouted up at him (.....) - and he said that excited him tremendously and I - I think you shouldn't use the name, but it was an Indian man who replied MK, and he said that excited him tremendously, that he thought there were actually Indian in - in MK, and nobody has that kind of perception really, you know.

You don't think that Indian people will join MK - I know there're a lot of Coloured people in MK - I do know that now - I didn't know that before, but I do know that many Coloured people leave the country and join MK.

J.F. And that - when that guy who was Coloured was killed - an MK guy was killed, you remember....

J.D. Yes.

J.F. What was the response in the community to that?

J.D. Wonderful - I mean very sort of like a hero kind of person, you know, for - for progressive people who knew what that meant, the guy from - the Brown guy - are you talking about Brown from the Cape?

J.F. Cliffie Brown....

J.D. Cliffie - also many of us knew Cliffie, you know, but it was wonderful - I mean it was ja, there Coloured people in MK as well.

J.F. And have you ever been detained?

J.D. Twice.

J.F. (.....)

J.D. The first time I was detained I was fourteen, and I had a job at a shop in Roodepoort selling records, and I was detained because Ahmed Timol used to come to that shop, and so did all the other people who were detained with him, and my aunt was detained - my mum's sister was a very close friend of Ahmed Timol's - so they picked me up and her because we worked together, and Ahmed Timol was of course detained and killed, and that was the first time I was detained, and it wasn't very pleasant, because I was very unaware of things - I mean I - I didn't know what the hell was going on.

And I was detained, I think, because they thought I would be able to tell them who my aunt's friends were, and she was detained for nine months - and then the second time I was....

J.F. How long were you detained for?

J.D. I was in for about seven weeks, I think (Laugh) - it was terrible - and the....

J.F. Did they interrogate you the whole time or....

J.D. They asked me a lot of questions - they didn't, you know - I mean at fourteen you don't know what an interrogation means, but ja, I was - I was interrogated for - that was - I was asked all sorts of questions about her - where she moved, who she went with, who her friends were - did I ever go with her - can I describe cars that I'd seen come to our house - does my aunt have a typewriter - did I ever see her typing envelopes - you know, that kind of thing - did I know Ahmed Timol - did he ever give me books to read.

J.F. And how did you answer those questions?

J.D. I didn't know what the fuck was going on when I was a kid.

J.F. So you just answered honestly (?)

J.D. I say no - I said : I don't know what you talking about - I mean my aunt and I - I work there - she got me the job on a part time basis - I've met him - comes and he buys records and then he goes - he's a teacher, that's all I know.

J,F. Did you realise that he was political, that something was going on - did you know when he was killed?

J.D. Of course everybody knew when he was killed.

J.F. Were you still detained when that happened?

J.D. No, I was out already - I was out - because we were detained before he was detained (Laugh)

J.F. And did it politicise you - did you understand more from it?

J.D. After that, yes, I mean it - it did politicise me quite a lot, because what had also happened it - it - it consolidated things in my family quite a bit - you know, my mother was like really rooting for us all the way - she didn't know what was going on - my mother in fact thought that I might be involved.

J.D. I was a very precocious child and I - I read a lot and I - very inquisitive - I asked a lot of questions and things like that, so people thought that probably likely that I would, you know - I'm the kind of person who would get involved in something like whatever it was, but I wasn't - I was just doing a job earning seven bucks a - a week for Friday afternoon and Saturday, all day working in the shop and that kind of thing.

And all those people frequented the place - they frequented this record shop and my aunt was friends with Timol and that was it, you know, but it did - it did politicise me to quite an extent.

J.F. Did she get persecuted, your aunt (?)

J.D. No, she was held for 18 months because she refused to be a state witness.

J.F. And then they let her go?

J.D. Then - well, after 18 months they had to let her go - 180 days.

J.F. And the second time?

J.D. Second time was in 1976 very briefly - I was detained for questioning in '76 because they wanted - they - they had seen me driving people in and out of Soweto after the uprising, and also that was two weeks - just two weeks of detention, nothing else - and then in 1980 I was detained for three weeks, preventative detention.

J.F. What was that about?

J.D. During the school boycotts they detained a number of us who were seen to be organising students - just three weeks and then released - I wasn't even questioned.

J.F. And at any of those times when you were detained did they ever abuse that you were Coloured, why are you helping Africans - was that in their mind at all?

J.D. No - they were rude about the Bushmen, you know, but they never said : You are helping out African people - I mean they made comments but they didn't like abuse one in that way - one of the people in 1976 mentioned that he thought we were all - we were mad to - to - to help out what he called the kaffirs, you know, but it wasn't anything significant - I mean it wasn't like pressure, why do you do it - why do you people get involved - it wasn't anything like that at all.

J.F. And has there been any - was there an awareness in your background of Labour Party - your brother in law....

J.D. In the youth, ja.

J.F. Was this - is Mohammed - is that....

J.D. Ja, he - they - he was also involved in the Labour Party.

J.F. But wasn't he with the CRC?

J.D. No, he was never in the CRC ever.

J.F. He was in ACSTOP - was he in....

J.D. He was ACSTOP but not CRC.

J.F. So - and he was with the youth?

J.D. The (?) second eldest brother was with the youth (Interruption)

J.F. .... could just answer the question, do you think this is important - here's someone spending a lot of effort on this topic of non-racialism- is it worth all the interest?

J.D. Well, it certainly is - I mean for you as an individual obviously it must be worth all the interest, but it's interesting to us in the country because it's important - the whole issue of non-racialism is key to - to the - the - the fight we waging right now, you know, is - is actually a struggle for a non-racial democratic South Africa, and so whether or not that is actually happening right now that is questionable, but that that is certainly a goal is, you know, is not you - one we can - we won't doubt that or I mean I wouldn't doubt that at all - so the question of how non-racialism is to come about is of course important to people inside and outside, because somehow I think people look at South Africa as the last hope for non-racialism even internationally - if it can work there it will work anywhere in the world, you know, because it - it actually -

My feeling is that it's not working anywhere really, and that governments, even though they might say rhetorically they talk about non-racialism, they don't do anything in practice to implement non-racialism, or to make sure that it does happen on all levels, you know, within their own countries, and people are spoke of as minorities and majorities and that kind of thing and - and that is difficult because I think in South Africa we'll also go through that phase where people will talk about minority interests and majority interests and so forth, but key to our struggle is non-racialism.

We fighting the Afrikaaners because they have a nationalistic perception of one race owning all the rights and owning all the resources in the country, and we want that to change (Interruption)

J.F. What about when people say - perhaps conservative people that you might be trying to talk to, if they say : Ja, but what about our identity as Coloured people - maybe it doesn't mean anything to you but it means something to me - what do you - do you get that?

J.D. Yes, well, I think everybody does because that's exactly how apartheid has worked - it has inculcated in people a sense of - of - of separate identity, you know, and we - I think it's not just Coloured people who say that, so - I mean my premise for working is not just with Coloured people but I - one gets it with - with - with white people and Indian people and African people too.....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.D. .... and the answer's simply that well, we trying to build a nation which has got different - perhaps have - might have different cultural groups or groups with different cultural basises, but we still wanting to build one nation.

J.D. And so the - the question of whether one is protecting somebody who is light brown or white or pink or blue is - is not really a - I mean we must make that very clear to them that that is not the issue, and it doesn't mean that once - that non-racialism necessarily implies that your - your specific cultural perspective will be demolished, like you wouldn't be able to practice certain cultural things that you would do if you were a Zulu or a Sotho or an Indian or whatever - that doesn't -

Non-racialism is not tribalism, you know, and I know that certainly we trying to break down the whole concept of tribalist - tribalism within the country, that it shouldn't really exist - we are one nation - yes, there're many different cultural perceptions within that one nation but we definitely one nation.

J.F. The thing I was quite keen to follow on was when you spoke about the talking to whites, that call to whites thing, the experience in the Northern Transvaal that - when you were....

J.D. I'm not going to say people's names because I think that we are - I also prefer if you don't use my name....

J.F. On this?

J.D. Mmm.

J.F. Maybe we should just talk about (Tape off)

J.D. I - I think it's important because the point about - I think the whole ECC thrust has been that there are white people in the country who feel that they are fighting a - they are being called on to fight a war which they didn't create, and essentially it's a - a race war - it's a - the - the - the power of one race, the Nationalist Party being white trying to maintain control by developing an armed force which is completely powerful, using young white people as - as tools to protect an ideology which is even unacceptable to the people who - who are called on to - to go and fight on the country's borders or go into the townships, so when one calls on white mothers to join hands in - in fighting against the call up I think - I don't think that one is asking them necessarily to become totally un - unconscious of the fact that - that there is a law that exists - you - you're merely asking them to observe a moral position, that as mothers they are rearing children to the age of 18 - the state then takes those children, uses them to fight other children which - and shoot other people in townships and kill people, and when - when you ask them about it then really what are they rearing their children for.

What are they raising their children for - to go out and kill, to go out and be cannon fodder for an ideology that often they don't even believe in - and when you - when we had the call to whites campaign in - in the country many, many, many white mothers expressed that kind of sentiment that the difficulty they had was living in a country where if your child didn't go to the army you're going to lose them for seven years in internment to pay for the - the fact that they - they didn't go into the army - or you had the choice of sending them into exile - or the ultimate choice is go and let them do the army training and let them go into the townships.

J.D. And what was disturbing and interesting for all of us was that the basic interest of mothers was the question of what kind of s future society are we building here - on the one hand white soldiers who are being - being brought up very normally and then suddenly at age 18 white young men become soldiers and then they have to become killers, and come back in society and - and are expected to be normal, O.K. - on the other hand black youth who see white people as monsters because that's all they - that's the only contact they're beginning to have is white soldiers in uniforms, white soldiers at roadblocks, white soldiers in town watching every move you make - white soldiers at your school asking for an identity document - so that the relationship between the youth of - on a racial level is bad - it becomes a race issue, you know, maboeroe is the - the - the enemy, and maboeroe, the enemy, is somebody's son, and that son of a white mother is killing black people, so it begins to develop into a - an atmosphere of white against black, and that's how it's perceived by many, many young people, black young people, and they question why.

Why would somebody want to go into the army to come and kill us - why would somebody go into the army to defend a policy that if they say they don't believe in it, why go into the army to defend it - and this is basically why I would support the ECC, the End Conscription campaign - I think it's different if people volunteer to go into the army - then they are - then they are placing their commitment, let's say, to apartheid fair and square - they're saying : I believe in white minority rule - I believe that we have to protect ourselves from a free and - and non-racial and democratic South Africa - but conscription implies that nobody has a choice - that somebody up there's making that choice for you, and from the - from the aspect of non-racialism that's very, very negative, because even if we achieve a non-racial and democratic South Africa in 20 years time the people who will be the adults then are those very youngsters who are being brutalised today.

You know, the ones who are being shot at, the ones who are doing the shooting, the ones who are throwing the stones and the ones who are shooting, it's - it's - I mean it's almost impossible to think of those people as developing into whole adults who will not see one another as monsters, one who, you know, a sol - if that person then in years to come doesn't have his gun, that white soldier, won't he still feel superior because that's what he's been military trained to be.

Or the guy who's throwing the stones, won't he still feel the hate for the guy, for the white person even without the uniform - I mean these are questions that mothers address because they the questions that they have to deal with, you know.

J.F. How does - I can understand whites saying it to each other, but how does a white person respond to a black person raising those questions with them?

J.D. It - it differs, I think - I think it depends on where they - where they stand - white people, and there are many white people who don't support the policy of apartheid, would respond on the level of I don't support it, why should I send my child to defend it - on the other hand a white mother who believes that apartheid or the - the - the question of her and her family's minority interests need to be protected would defend the position of sending somebody into the army because what they would say is : You know, we've lived in this country and this country's given us everything - we should give something back to - to the country.

J.D. And of course the - the prime ideological perspective is always that you not really defending apartheid, you defending the country against communism because the only alternative to apartheid is communism, and that is just not true, because I believe the - the alternative to apartheid is a non-racial democratic South Africa, and that does not necessarily imply a communist state, but it's a catchword as far as, I think, the government is concerned.

J.F. But how does a white woman respond to you saying that to her....

J.D. Because she'd - she would respond in - in the way from where she comes from - if she is a progressive white woman who doesn't support apartheid she would tell me that : I don't support it and I'm not going to send my child - or I'm going to encourage my child that the military is incorrect - going into the military is incorrect, but she's fully aware of the fact that by encouraging her child to do that he's breaking the law, so she has a dilemma, O.K.

The other mother, the one who supports apartheid, will simply say to you that she supports it because she believes that it is correct, that her minority interests have to be protected, and that's it - you know, she's not going to - mothers in those positions think very practically - they don't actually think emotionally that much - they think about the consequences of what they say, many of them, and it hasn't been easy to win over mothers who believe that apartheid is correct - it has been very difficult.

We haven't won anybody like that over because those are the people who would join things like the (.....) or they would say that - the more moderate ones would say well, their PW's correct (?) anyway and one has to protect his perspective - and the more progressive ones say what I've already said, you know, that they don't accept it.

J.F. What about the mother who's lost a child in the townships due to the S.A.D.F. viz-a-viz a mother who's lost a son in the S.A.D.F. - is there any common ground for those two - can they ever meet - can they ever understand each other?

J.D. I think on the level of having reared a child, both of them, that has been taken away because of an ideology, you know, that has happened - there have been mothers who've come together and said : Look, I've lost a child because he had to go into the army, he was conscripted - you've lost a child or a shop (?) because he's fighting for his right to a proper education, to housing, to non-racialism, you know, and he faced my son with a brick or a stone, and my son faced him with a - with a gun - in the end we both lost out, and so perhaps what we need to do now is to look at how we can work together so that other people can understand how painful it is to lose a child merely for an ideology, you know - yes, there's a common ground there.

But I think that also the reality is that somebody who's lost a child, shot by the S.A.D.F., is always angry - they always remain angry, you know, and an S.A.D.F. mother who loses a child, on the other hand, is told that he was a hero, and there's a momument to heroes in South Africa, and it depends on exactly again where that person's ideology stands - if she's totally convinced by Afrikaanerdom and the - the whole question of white minority rule and the defence of apartheid then she's going to accept the story of him having been a hero and having fought for his country to protect it from the alternative to what they perceive apartheid to be.

J.D. If she's progressive and she - her son went into the army because he had no choice she's also going to be bitter, and that has happened - I mean there have been mothers who have questioned that this - you know, why - why did he have to die - and it - it - it all verges on the whole question of whose choice is it - who puts those people in that position - politicians do, and politicians then sit back like the generals on the hill and observe well, everybody down there is dying, you know, and then they make either heroes out of the dead or brutalised individuals out of those who do survive for their ideas, and that's how mothers would look at things - whether or not I had a choice in it, you know.

J.F. Do the black women you work with think there's any point in talking to whites?

J.D. They do....

J.F. And do you?

J.D. I think there is, you know, I - I don't think that - to me it's not a question of white or black - I can't think in those terms any more - it's a question of really ideologies - I think it's important to talk to people who see themselves as having a position of power and actually saying to them that your position of power is merely protected by brute force in this case - in the case of the S.A.D.F. versus the unarmed, right - and consider the situation when you won't have - if you did not have the S.A.D.F. - we would have to then talk to one another person to person and resolve this - this problem - right now you're hiding behind that machinery that has been created for you.

And I think that many, many black people - black mothers feel yes, we should talk to white women - after all, white women are mothers too - they not just monsters, they're mothers, you know, and I'm a mother - and we've appealed to them on that level, as mothers, you know, not as sort of on any distinctly political basis, but just as a mother - I'm a mother and you're a mother and this is the position, now let's talk.

It has been successful in some instances and it certainly has been unsuccessful in others, and again it depended very much on the person's development - in rural areas, for instance, there has been no talk between black and white women - there has only been hostility and anger - in the urban areas there's been more success, I think also because in the urban areas the relationship between black and white women is slightly different than they are in the rural areas, you know.

In the rural areas there's more - there's a stark racialism that does exist, whereas in the urban areas there has been more of a interaction between women either on - in - on the level of working in offices where there are black women or on the level of even maid and, you know, domestic worker and employer, or on the level of confrontation, you know, where you've actually confronted one another on a political level.

In the rural areas it's - it's purely a - a labourer, owner of land perspective, and there's just been a lot of anger, and I think - I still believe that it's very worthwhile for us to continue to talk to white people.

J.D. All white people, not just mothers, women, but all white people on that perspective that they have been told one side of the story by their government - we have a different side to that same story, and that's the side that says : Look, we on the other side of - of this policy - we're the ones who have to rear children and - and make sure that they healthy children, and at the same time those children go out and throw stones at hippos and it does something to them - it turns them into people that at a later time we might not like, brutalised people - you know, the same goes for you - you also raising people that are going to be brutalised.

And I've known many white people who - who've actually taken the option of leaving the country rather than have a son go to Soweto and man a roadblock, because they've said : What about if he's standing at that roadblock and somebody we know has to pass by and they see my son in an S.A.D.F. uniform pointing a gun, it's - it's too - it's impossible for me to - to imagine - on the other hand, you get the - you know, you get the - you get the - the reaction which says : No, there's no problem with that - he's defending his country from communism.

And I think it also hedges on the - the whole question of do white people see an end to apartheid as simply going to an ideological perspective of communism, rather than an end to apartheid could mean a non-racial and democratic country, and that's how I would look at it - perhaps that's very idealistic, but that's certainly how I would look at it.

J.F. What's - very briefly this anti-censorship group - do you know about that (?)

J.D. Yes, they were a group formed - who were formed in August - in July, sorry, to actually challenge the - the perspective that the government could just censor anything without being questioned, and that the censorship - the publications directorate could ban a piece of material without being accountable to the public about why he would ban something.

Secondly that the sommittees who ban could not remain faceless any longer, that they - they were people who were being paid by the revenue that came from people's taxes, so that in fact they were liable to being questioned - and then thirdly that people who'd monitor and - and actually challenge every single censorship and banning, even self-censorship in a sense where a newspaper wouldn't take an advert because they were afraid that they would be fined 20,000 rand or ten years imprisonment for defying an act of the - of the emergency act - one of those kind of things.

So the anti-censorship action committee consists of authors and publishers at the moment - journalists as well - people who are actually affected directly by censorship - authors because their - their ideas are being censored, publishers because they are liable to this intense government restriction on whether or not they are breaking a law of one sort or another - journalists because their mouths are gagged basically to report on the things they see and reflect on reality, and that goes for authors too, you know.

J.D. So what is coming out of the country at the moment is like a - it's like a sunset perspective on the media - the media's always in a twilight zone - there - there's always a twilight perspective to it - they're never going to be able to say the truth about what they saw - if they do it - it can get crossed out with a black pen - and what the anti-censorship action group is challenging is who has the right to do that in - in any country - who - what is being - what is exactly being protected here.

Censorship implies that you - the state is protecting some person or the - the morality of people as a whole, but in South Africa it's not a question of morality - it's a question of protecting an ideology against being questioned and against being made accountable to the community at large, and that's really the basis for the anti-censorship action committee....

J.F. Is it a committee or group....

J.D. It's a group and there's a committee which acts on its behalf.

J.F. What do I call it, the committee or the group?

J.D. Well, the group makes the decisions about what actions will be taken and the committee just basically would go and, you know, act on - on its - on the group's behalf, because not all 120 people can - can go around to....

J.F. Is there 120 people in it?

J.D. There's more - I think there's more - I can't tell you exactly how many there were, but the first meeting that was held was - there were about 120 people present.

J.F. And what would you say they've achieved or done so far?

J.D. They've done quite a lot - in the beginning of the state of emergency the CNA in South Africa, for instance, was pulling off books from the shelves because they were scared that they might be contravening the emergency regulations - the anti-censorship action committee met with Tony Bloem, and on the basis that he is sort of a progressive person sort of, and also he's the owner - head of the CNA - basically owns it through the Premier Group, right, because they own - that's one of their holdings - and they did achieve some - some measure of success - that in reality there wouldn't be that kind of indiscriminate pulling off of book on - on the shelves of the - of the CNA but that the CNA would protect itself legally - I mean if there was a book that genuinely was going to cause a problem or cause the CNA to have to pay a fine of 20,000 rand per copy, then I mean it's a financial consideration - so they did achieve that a little bit, one step forward.

But I think more importantly what they have achieved is to bring together the people who are affected by censorship and to raise the debate openly - not in little groups of twos and threes but openly, where people actually say : This is how we are affected by censorship and this is how we going to fight it, you know - making absolutely concrete proposals and decisions that can be carried out - and they've only existed a short while, but I - you know, they have a constitution - I don't know too much about it because I haven't seen it yet.

J.D. But they have raised questions, and they have in fact brought to the notice of the publications directorate that do they in fact have the right to be secret - does censorship have to take place behind closed doors - what is being protected, morality or political ideology, you know - the - there're differences here - I mean if - if this - if they want to censor things like bare boobs and things like that I don't - you know, I don't know if any of those people who actually fight about it, but I do know that censorship of ideas is something we all feel quite strongly about.

And in fact it - some of their questions were raised fairly directly and it did cause the directorate of publications to reconsider a book that was subsequently banned, and they themselves are appealing the ban - Two Dogs and Freedom, a book written by children, was banned by a committee, and the director of publications himself is appealing the ban - so I don't think that they are in a sense asking for clemency from the state, you know, for their work as authors, publishers and journalists, but they are challenging it - they're challenging a fundamental principle that they find to be incorrect.

J.F. The DHL story, is that....

J.D. Well, DHL story was what - DHL is a - a courrier service.

J.F. But they went and protested that they were opening up material and acting as....

J.D. No, they didn't - I don't know that they did that.

J.F. Nadine said they had a meeting with DHL - maybe that wasn't.... - just tell me what's your view of the commercial media - where do you get your news from - do you get it from a commercial media?

J.D. No, not any longer because I - (Laugh) I have no confidence in the ability of the commercial media to say anything to me that - that is really specific and not just in general terms - I - I just - look, I used to read The Star every day, and I stopped reading The Star because it - it came - became quite evident that The Star had become a mouthpiece for the Nationalist Party in a very direct way where the kinds of things they were doing was and - and something that really upset me was the terminology they use in The Star.

They don't necessarily give one details about things that have taken place, but they create impressions about things that have taken place- they - for instance, they refer to people who are killed by the S.A.D.F. as terrorists - they don't even know if they are - I mean they don't say that - they don't define their - their words any longer, O.K. - and I don't think there are any terrorists in South Africa anyway.

Or the other thing that they do is any action that is in protest against an ill in the country, like housing, women are referred to as marauding mobs by The Star, because they go to the council offices to complain about rents being increased - now that's a marauding mob. Youths are always referred to as angry youths, you know, or ill disciplined youths or killer mobs - things like that - this is the way The Star reports about events.

They don't say that on Tuesday morning 300 - I'm just giving an example - 300 (Laugh) people from the township of Soweto gathered at the Mufula Police Station to protest the detention of nine year old children, and during that time the S.A.D.F. shot nine people and those nine people were X, X, X and X.

J.D. They say something like the S.A.D.F. countered a protest against at the Mufula Police Station, period - now from that you can deduce anything, you know - that those people were there to burn the Police Station down, whatever, but it's always negative - it's always very positive in - in the sense of the state and negative against the people - therefore I don't think The Star suits my purposes any longer, so I get what I need to get from community newspapers or from word of mouth - I ask people what is happening - and in that way one can be kept in touch with what's happening in the country - but I certainly don't think the newspapers provide any kind of valuable service any longer.

J.F. Just one more question - .....

END OF INTERVIEW.