



Crossroads.

Interview with Azanian Revolutionaries

"Growing Up in Azania Means You're Always Angry"

Following is the edited text of a recent interview with four Azanian revolutionary activists temporarily living abroad.—AWTW

Q: For almost a year now Azania (South Africa) has been the scene of tremendous upheaval; Western imperialism's apartheid "fortress" has been under siege and severely shaken. What does the situation look like in Azania today?

J.: I would see the current situation as being the weak point for the regime because I see oppression being two-fold. First of all, it is psychological, and there is the brute physical force of the state. When the government loses that hold, that psychological hold on the people, it is very weak. Like for instance, if you take the period after the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist

Congress (PAC) in the early 1960s, you had a state of fear at home, where people were scared even to talk about what they would call politics let alone mention the letters ANC, PAC, POQO—which was the military arm of the PAC. So with that kind of state, or with that kind of hold on the people, it ensured the continuation of oppression. But when you lose that kind of psychological hold over the people

and all you have to maintain power is the physical force, I think that is when the state is most vulnerable. I see the situation at home being at that state right now. People have been made psychologically conscious and they are psychologically ready to fight the government. That is why I would say that at this stage the South African government is vulnerable to civil war, to a successful revolt.

Q: How does this breakdown of the government's psychological hold over the Azanian people manifest itself today?

J.: The clearest examples are the uprisings all over the country. These are not only happening in certain areas that one might see as the "politicised" areas like Soweto, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. These are urban areas where people have more of a political and international outlook, places where there are generally more intellectuals. These are areas one would see as being the areas with a political flow of conversation and action. But when you have very remote and little areas around the country responding to the oppression without necessarily having had people come to address them and what not, then the hold is clearly broken. People are responding spontaneously. There have been attempts to coordinate the action but a lot of the action is just local effort. So when people are rising up all over the country like that—although not in unison so far—that is a manifestation of the hold breaking.

Q: Can you provide some examples of this mood change among the Azanian people?

R.: One good example is a conversation I recently had with my mother. I knew that she was conscious about our political situation but never did I actually hear her say that there were amongst us sell-outs and collaborators—those town councillors and people who work for the government in the townships—and that it is not brutality between blacks and blacks but that it was between those who are conscious among us and those working with the system, eliminating those working with the system. It came as a surprise to me. We never spent too

much time talking about these things at home because she was not always there—either she would be at work or I would be at school and when we were both home we were tired and rarely talked. Also my mother was in a trade union but there was never really any outward activity as such on her part—I mean our parents would encourage us in certain things but they did not engage in that much outward activity themselves. I think that the students and the activities of the students have had an effect on our parents—not only are the students ready to fight but they are influencing the parents.

Can This Upsurge Be Stopped?

Q: Is the open defiance of the government by the Azanian masses a new development?

H.: I wouldn't exactly call it something new because it has been going on for a while. I'll take it back to 1976, when the funerals started to be really political funerals. I remember that for a while you had funerals of key political figures and they were never really made that political. You had exceptional cases that were funerals of leaders, known leaders like the funeral of Steve Biko and the funeral of Sobukwe in Graaf-Reinet. It was a given that those funerals had to be political events. But the funerals of other political figures, maybe even people who had been known to have been imprisoned in Robben Island, the families always tried to make the funerals just funerals and leave the philosophy out. From 1976, '77, '78 and onwards, funerals have really been transformed into political funerals. The government used to go in after the funerals and arrest individuals—maybe those who had spoken during the funeral and a few others who had just attended the funeral—in order to intimidate the people so that you didn't have that many attending the funerals. But right now the people are prepared to go out in large numbers, you have many thousands attending those funerals. It is an expression of the defiance of the people and the level of their defiance. And to a certain extent it is a sign of the weakness of the regime. The Boers do come in and shoot and arrest people at the

funerals, that is a fact. But when the going gets rough, the Boers get out of town. I remember in 1976, around August—you know the unrest started in Soweto around June 16, and then in July in the Western Cape and then mushroomed all around the country. In Port Elizabeth it began around August and I remember that for two days you could say that the townships were almost virtually liberated in the sense that the police were afraid and unable to come into the townships....

J.: So far everything said has been overwhelmingly on the side of depicting the country as bordering on civil war. But there are other difficulties that should not be forgotten. Although the psychological hold over the people might have been broken, the South African state will still concentrate on using its brutal physical force. And with that, they might be able, if the people cannot challenge it sufficiently, to hold the line and might even be able to not just hold it back but to actually go back to a state of intimidation of the people again. That might be possible. For instance if you look at the 1950s, the people were mobilised and organised by the various organisations. You had the campaigns all over the country—the Defiance Campaigns, the Women's Campaign of 1956 and so on. But when the government clamped down in the early '60s they were successful in causing the lull that there was after 1963 with the arrest of the leaders and the banning of organisations. I don't know if they can be back to that kind of thing now. Today it is not only a concentration of a few intellectuals as it was in the 1960s—that is what the organisations seemed to be at the time, a few doctor so and so's in the leadership. The rebellions today do seem to be much broader based. I don't know if the government can do what it did in the past, but that might be a possibility....

H.: I would like to comment on this point. As successful as the government was in the '60s, when they again clamped down on the people's organisation in the '70s, there was not the same kind of lull. When the 1977 bannings occurred

the first thing people did was organise again. The rebellions that are occurring today have been simmering since the 1970s. There were many areas where rebellions occurred but were not reported. I'm also sure that today there are many areas where the situation is very, very serious, where the contradictions with the system are very sharp, but there are no reports on what is going on there. There has been a lot of revolutionary activity that has gone on since 1976. Between 1976 and 1978 there was a period of confrontation with the government, continuous confrontation. At this time they might try, in fact they have tried banning meetings and gatherings—and they might even try banning organisations again—but I think that at this time they will not be able to suppress the people and their determination. The question of preparation is important. As much as the people have conquered fear and the situation is ready for engaging in a full scale confrontation, there also has to be preparation. The people have to be armed because we don't need people to be sacrificed in suicide missions. The people need to have more than just stones. There must be preparation.

“Hippos” No Longer Intimidating

Q: What kind of actions has the government taken to suppress the current upheavals?

P.: One thing is that now that they have used the army the only thing really left for them to fall back on is help from outside the country—for instance bringing in the U.S....The greatest influence on this generation, I would say, has been the South African Students Organisation, SASO, an early Black Consciousness organisation. In the 1960s they arrested and killed the leadership of the organisations and continued like this up until the 1976 uprisings. After 1976 nothing they could do, none of the brute force they could use, was able to stop the people. It's not that the government did not do what they did before, it's that they could no longer contain the struggle and revolutionary fervor of the people. The people can no longer be intimidated by the power of the state. Even with continued deten-

tions and killings, it is an instrument they can no longer use as a threat over the people.

R.: It used to be that “hippo”—an armored car that is called a hippo and is just as huge; it probably looks more like a German tank—was the state symbol of fear. But as was mentioned earlier, people reached a point where they no longer feared that. In terms of the force they use, I just wanted to bring out how many people don't have a concept of what the state does. In the '60s, after the leadership had been arrested, every time there was a court case you knew that at the end of it some people were going to be killed. In 1976 most people who had been shot would be picked up in open trucks. In the trucks there would be people who were alive thrown in with dead people and people whose bodies had been mutilated. The trucks would take the people, dead and alive, to the police stations and dump them. If you were alive and did not scream and yell there was no way you would be picked up, and I am actually sure that there were people who were buried alive.

Growing Up Angry

Q: What is “daily life” in South Africa?

H.: ...Daily life means seeing your parents helpless when their children are being chased by the police in and out. It means seeing your door kicked in at early hours of the morning, seeing your kids picked up and beaten in front of you, seeing your parents being abused and called names—your mother being called bitch and your father called this and that and assaulted. That is daily life? Daily life means seeing all these Western capitalist countries using all this rhetoric about freedom and free enterprise and all this nonsense when they are conniving in our oppression under the name of fighting oppression and communism....

R.: ...Growing up in that society is knowing that maybe your mother won't come home because when she came home there was a police van at the station and people were being asked to show their passbook. Growing up in that society means that if your mother is picked up at the bus station or the train station

you have no way of finding out what happened to her until three days or a week when you will either hear a neighbor say that your mother has been picked up or hear from someone just released from jail that they actually saw your mother in prison....This is growing up in that system—your parents are never sure that when you leave in the morning you will be back at night. When you're growing up if you crave to go to the zoo, you cannot. Today they want the world to believe that barriers have fallen down, now blacks can go to the zoo. But there is still the Group Areas Act and if you are black you can't be in Johannesburg after hours and if you are you have to have that pass again. But even having the pass is not enough because the police have to open the pass to find out if you are allowed to be in that area of Johannesburg according to section 10-1A. Section 10-1A says that you are in Johannesburg because your parents sell their labour in Johannesburg, you were born in Johannesburg, or you are in Johannesburg because you yourself are selling your labor. Otherwise you cannot be in Johannesburg. It is not enough to just have a pass, if that pass does not have that stamp you will find your way into a van that will take you someplace else. So the Group Areas Act covers you while you are in white areas. Growing up in that system is knowing that you are not free, that you are not settled in your own country. There is no piece of land that you can call your own. There is nowhere you can feel that you belong except where they decide you belong—on the reservation. Growing up in Azania means knowing that if you are white that somehow you are superior, you are intelligent, you have the right to everything in life—in fact, you can make decisions for blacks because they cannot make their own decisions. Growing up in Azania, especially during the times where you have reached a height of consciousness and know that something is wrong, means that you are angry all the time. You cannot contain your anger because everyday you are reminded that someone else is running your life, that someone else is sending you off to the mines

to dig for gold and diamonds and there is no return for you or your family and your people. So you are this volcano that is ready to erupt.

Townships and Cities

Q: Much of the upheaval in South Africa today has been centred in the urban townships. Can you describe what these townships look like?

J.: Under the Group Areas Act each city in South Africa is supposed to be divided up into an area for whites, an area for Africans, an area for Coloureds and an area for Indians....Most of the physical division of the people was developed in the 1940s and '50s. This is when you had the physical separation of people who until then had often been living together. This process of separation is also what is going on with the relocations. I know that in the '60s in the place where my grandmother lived there were mixtures of people, Africans and Coloureds, and they were broken up and moved. This is the general picture. Physically even the houses in the different townships are different. Just by looking at them you see the steps of legal status of the people. If you go to the white areas you have some of the most beautiful mansions. They do have houses for poor whites and they have the same kind of uniformity that you see in our townships, but they are much bigger than anything you will find in the townships. In the Indian and Coloured areas you will find smaller houses but they still have greater facilities than the African townships, things like water systems and electricity....

R.: I want to add something about how the cities are set up. The structure of the cities is such that the rich whites live the farthest away from everybody else. These are the suburbs and then there are the downtown areas and the shopping areas. Poor whites live around these areas. Then you have a distance of about eight miles from the downtown and this is where the Indians live. About five to eight miles away from the city is where the Coloureds live—also separate from the Indians. Furthest away are the Africans. African townships, which are not cities because only whites can

live in cities, are 15 to 20 miles away from the cities and those rich areas. Another feature in the townships that we need to mention are those houses where the elite live. What happens is that when outsiders, especially Americans, when they go to Azania they always go to this part of the township. To paint a picture of how the township actually is, we need to say that before you get into what we call the boondocks, or the centre of the township, you will find those elite. Most of them have been in professions like teaching, nursing. These are the ones who have been able to take the four room matchbox and add on rooms to it. So these households look much nicer. In Johannesburg, every Wednesday there are bus tours where foreigners are taken on tours of Soweto and are shown these houses. The strange thing about these houses is that they are built along main roadways. So when you are a foreigner or a tourist, you tend to see those since you stick to the main roads....

Another feature is that in every township, when you enter the township there is a police station, a beer hall and a gas station. None of these are ever owned by us. The whites own them and they find Africans to manage them. So when you walk in there you get the impression that these beer halls and gas stations are owned by the blacks. Away from the beer halls and the gas stations are what are called hostels. This is where they house migrant workers. They are migrant in the sense that they have just come into the townships. Those of us who have lived in the township came into the township as migrant workers but the tendency is that you live in the township, you have kids there, and then because you have lived in the township for X number of years you are qualified to stay in there. This makes you different from the current surge of people who are moving in. It feels like you are settled but you are not, because the passbook—which Africans carry, no one else but Africans carry a passbook—states that you are born of migrant parents who came to the township to sell their labour and have been there for ten years, and since you have been there you have

sold your labour to some white employer. So your status seems sort of permanent but it never is. Now there is supposed to be discussion in the Botha regime about making people who live in the township more permanent and making laws that say you can lease a house for 99 years and stupid things like that. But none of this changes the basic physical separation.

Beer Halls, Gas Stations and Police Stations

J.: ...I wanted to talk about one other aspect of the townships aside from the police station, that is, the beer halls. First of all, these are used to generate revenue for the townships. It is like the ghettos in the U.S. where there are so many liquor stores. The conditions of the masses are exploited even more. It is just the same in the townships in South Africa. One other feature you'll find in the townships is that around every corner there is a church. So you have the police station, the church and the beer halls. In riot situations people burn up these places and the first structure that the government will rebuild is the beer hall. They will even put up a temporary structure before the beer hall is rebuilt. They have even hijacked this certain brew—a home brew that is popular in the townships—they have hijacked it and made it even more dangerous to drink. It might take them years to rebuild us another post office or to rebuild us any other valuable structure, but they always start with the beer hall. It keeps people away from rationality and promotes things like alcoholism and so forth. These beer halls are used and owned by the municipalities. I think that they have now been given over to these town councillors. They use it to generate revenue....

R.: ...Another thing that I really want to pick up on is the hostels, those structures that house migrant labourers. Before, hostels used to just house male labourers. But now recently you find hostels, especially in an area called Diepkloof in Soweto, where you find female labourers who live in these hostels. The conditions there are so bad, they are worse than prison. You find that maybe 4 to 8 women are housed in

a room, an 8 by 15 room where they will have stacks and stacks of beds. This is what they sleep in at night, and then they will have lockers in a separate room. The locker is where you put your clothes, your toiletry and everything else that is personal. The living condition itself is so inhuman—it is hard to make a relationship as it is with strangers—but the situation in which they live makes life even harder. First of all, they actually never live in there except over weekends when the boss is “nice” enough to have given the women a day off. They wake up in the morning and go to work and, like it was said before, housing in the township is more a place where you put your head after a long day’s work. Another thing I want to highlight is that the hostels, even though they are in the townships, are structured in such a way that they are farthest away from the township itself physically. Secondly, the system makes it such that the people in the townships feel that those people who live in the hostels do not belong in the township...

Q: People from Azania always refer to “township life.” You all grew up in various townships—what was it like being a youth there?

P: You found things to do. Most of my friends were from my area, I didn’t know many people from other parts of the township. Most of my friends were workers, I was the only student in my group of friends. The biggest thing in Soweto was soccer, people looked forward to Saturday and Sunday to watch soccer matches. Another thing about South African youth is that there is a great curiosity about other places. You would spend time reading about other places and talking about other places. It is important to say again that alcohol becomes a major outlet for entertainment in the South African township. There is very little else to do for entertainment. Violence is another part of township life. In part it comes from alcohol. But mainly it comes from the oppression itself, having so many people in a clamped-down area. South African youth become very politicised. You belong to groups like a dance club, a karate club or a civic group and they are all actually

political groups, or they are often political groups.

Getting Socialised

J.: You get socialised to your situation as a black person very early. You are black and because of that you live in this township. There are certain things you are told from a very young age—you cannot sit there, that’s a white man’s place and you can’t go in there, that’s a white man’s place—you are told these things by your own mother even before the white man tells you. So from a very young age you become aware of the political situation. I mean to the extent that you don’t even say anything to a white kid that goes by. You are even scared at some stages, a white kid could slap you and the first thing that strikes your mind is that if I slap him back I will be arrested. You will feel that way as a five-year-old...

R.: I just remembered something very strange, well it is strange now but I remember it used to be fun. On Saturdays we would go to town to do the weekly grocery shopping. There was this one store we used to go to—the OK Bazaars—a chain store. We used to get a kick out of going into the supermarket and buying a lot of tin stuff and packing the tin stuff in such a way that the corners of the carrier bags would be all tin. When you walked downtown you would target a white coming in the opposite direction and you position your bag in such a way that you would hit the white person on the ankle and you would go on without looking back.

Q: What kind of relationship exists between the different African, Coloured and Indian townships? Do you find a situation where the various townships participate in the rebellions and support one another?

R.: That kind of stuff goes on, especially now. Remember when I was talking about the physical separation of the people and how the Coloureds were closer to the Africans than the Indians or the whites. So there is, between these two, that freely going in and out of each others’ townships. But again, the structures, you have to see what the structures do. Coloureds have Coloured schools in their Coloured



townships. Africans have African schools in their African townships. So there is really no reason for you to go to the other place. Sporting events bring us together. There is this one stadium, Orlando Stadium, where people would go for soccer matches. The one difficulty I found was between Indians and Africans. The only reason an African goes to the Indian township is to go to the movies, or to go to the stores because most Indians are merchants. They have it somewhat better, they

(Continued to page 86)

(Continued from page 29)

have suburbs. But I would be failing if I said that Indians didn't mix with Africans, particularly today where in AZAPO (the Azanian People's Organisation—*AWTW*), for instance, you will find Coloureds and Indians and Africans in the organisation. Soyes, boundaries are broken.

J.: ...It was the Black Consciousness Movement that as a matter of policy put all of these groups of people together and said that you are the oppressed people, you are all oppressed, you are black. Hence the use of the word black in Azania, which meant that you were not African or Coloured or Indian, but that all of these groups are bound together by their blackness and that their exploitation largely stems from their blackness. It was then, after Black Consciousness, that you saw a lot of cooperation. In 1976 there was a lot of cooperation between the different groups of people. Coloured schools would rise up in solidarity. There were even meetings conducted together and that goes on right up to now.

Forms of Control

Q: How much control does the government actually have over the townships and how do they exercise it?

R.: It used to be that the whites ran the townships directly, the guy at the top would be white and so you would see these white faces in the municipality. After 1976 it changed because the first targets in the uprisings were those whites who were serving in the townships. People's anger was so much that they took it out on the one white presence that they saw. After 1976 the whites came back into the townships but the ones who came in were under heavy guard. These whites were given compensation salary for serving in the townships. But as the resistance continued the system realised that they could not do it this way. So now in terms of running the townships they have those black councilmen. They too are under heavy guard because the people have realised that they have to remove those people physically too. It used to be that the control came from the police sta-

tions. Again, the person at the top is white, is a Boer. He uses the blacks that serve under him. The way the police station is positioned the system can still have whites running it because they are out there overlooking the township so that their presence is distant in that form. But more recently control is through the army. What the system has done is go to these reservations and pick out its police force and the people to serve in the army from there. They are playing on what they call differences. They will go to Bophuthatswana and come back with Tswana-speaking people to bring them to Soweto. I think there is something I missed saying about Soweto. The government is trying to say that we Xhosa see ourselves as different from the Zulu, from the Tswana, from the Vendas. It is not true in Soweto. For one thing, most of our parents are mixed. For example my mother is Sutu, my father is Xhosa. Our neighbors, the wife is Xhosa and the husband is Zulu. So people don't really see themselves as such—in tribal terms or nationalities—except in the reservations. So, the army and police in the townships are made of people from the reservations, a group of people that can say we come from this group and these others are the enemy or we don't have anything in common with them. But then again, the system has found some problems because the same people that are in the army have at certain stages said NO, we are killing our own people. This is another thing that you will never find reported in the newspapers.

J.: Another way they control things is the separation, the actual distance between townships themselves and between the townships and the downtown areas. It is very difficult in most of the townships to walk to the downtown area. It is quite some distance. So it is not only the force inside but also the fact that the townships are almost like some kind of island. We are away from everything, even the industrial areas, although we are close enough to the industrial areas to get all of the fumes and toxins....So whenever there is a rebellion, whatever people do they

will do on whatever white face is seen in the township. People will attack white-associated business trucks, like a bakery truck. If there is none of that around and it is known that so and so's business is actually a white-owned business and only black-managed or is a shared business, then that becomes a target. People vent their anger in the townships. It is very difficult to go outside the townships in these situations because you will be intercepted by the police miles away from anywhere.

Peasants and Labour Reserves

Q: The South African government states that one of the most worrisome aspects of the current upheaval is that it has spread to the rural areas. What's the significance of this?

R.: First I'll talk about the difference in the living conditions in the rural areas and the urban areas. Most people who live in the rural areas live on some white man's farm. The whole family works for this farmer. The families in the rural areas are isolated. In Soweto we are all bunched together, so whatever affects Orlando East as a township affects Dube as a township. So in Soweto the reaction of the people and the townships is more spontaneous or quicker to come about as opposed to the rural areas. In the rural areas dependency is even more than the urban areas. The parents will work on this farm so it depends on the *baas*, the boss, whether or not they will eat. Most of the time they don't get a wage but get wages in kind, they will get food, clothing and so on. So yes, it must shake the country and shake the government to know that the resistance has come to the rural areas....

J.: Life in the rural areas is two-fold. That was just one aspect of the rural area where you have white farms. The other part of the rural area—way out in the Transkei, the Ciskei and some of the other reservations—is where people live on land and plant what they eat. They attempt to sustain themselves from planting. My grandmother used to have a small plot in these areas. You still have this kind of life in South Africa. And this is the

source of poverty in these homelands because you will have this land which is barren and very unproductive. Where in the past these people might have been able to sustain themselves, today they just can not. Their land is unproductive. The people living on the farms are tilling on the white man's land and it is very fertile. In the barren rural areas, you still have the old colonial setting, you have in the same area the church, the police station, the white man's big shop, the school and so on—all in the same area, in the middle of this area. Every now and again at this central place you have the contractors coming in to contract the people out to Johannesburg and the mines or wherever....So in these rural areas you have people trying to till the land and being unsuccessful and starving in the process, and then you have people waiting to become migrant labourers. You also have others escaping out to the urban areas on their own to form those squatter camps. The government is worried about the rebellions spreading to these areas because first, they are spreading. They are not confined to five or six areas around Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. Usually the government just sends out its army and police to those urban areas. And they have other areas to contend with too—they have to be in Angola, they have to be in Namibia and they have to guard the borders. So the rebellion spreading out means that the government has to spread out also, they won't be able to concentrate in just the usual areas where they have other forms of control like informers and town councils. Also, in these rural areas it is much bushier than in the townships and the government would have to deal with this terrain if they were to go in and out. Which also means that if guerrilla war were to intensify people could hide in those areas without the government being able to successfully track them down. So spreading out of the unrest means a spreading out of the terrain they would have to deal with.

Q: The bantustans are one of the pillars of the apartheid system. What are they, and what are the conditions faced by people there?

J.: They are the barren areas where people live in peasant-like conditions. These are areas that the government has collected and put together as the homelands. They are ruled by brutal regimes—the Sebes, the Matanzimas and so on. In some ways they are more repressive than their master the South African government. They can just blatantly beat up people. I remember in 1980 when we had a student walkout in the Ciskei. In Port Elizabeth, when the walkout occurred the chairman and the vice chairman of the organisation leading the walkout were detained. But in Ciskei all of the people in the walkout were arrested and brutally beaten. The government has put up these brutal puppet governments to maintain their control there. The bantustans are just reserves for cheap labour which can be dipped into whenever it is needed. It also helps to keep the cost of production down because should people strike for better wages or conditions, the government can just put them on buses and dump them into these areas. At the same time they can just ship some of those eager to work in the bantustans back to the city to replace the striking workers. The government has called these reservations "independent nations." Why? Partly because it answers international criticism—in this day and age you have a government that has no franchise for the majority of people it controls. Now the government can claim that we vote, we have our own Prime Ministers and this or that. The government divides our country into white South Africa and other nations. The ethnic groups that we have are supposed to be nations, they call them nations. Therefore those homelands are supposed to be nation-states in themselves. The productive and industrial parts of South Africa are what the government says is white South Africa. They claim that this has a basis in history, that when the whites first came to South Africa the Africans were just coming down from the north and these homelands are where they established themselves. Their ideological justification for imposing separate development is that they want people to supposedly develop

at their own pace. This is how they justify the existence of the homelands policy.

Role of Urban Youth

Q: Can you talk some about the role of Azanian youth in the struggle?

J.: This role of youth in the struggle goes back beyond even the '60s in Azania. Even the ANC was catapulted into the actions they took by the formation of ANC Youth League. The youth got frustrated with the ANC at the time, in the '40s, and they formed the Youth League. Its members included people like Robert Sobukwe, Anton Lembede and Nelson Mandela. The ANC has been around since 1912, but it was only in the '40s, under the impact of the Youth League, that it started to be more active. Youth also played an important role in breaking with the ANC and in the formation of the PAC. With the banning of the two organisations in 1960 you find the youth in the late '60s in the forefront of the formation of the Black Consciousness Movement. You had people like Steve Biko in the early '70s again beginning political action. Some of the things that the BCM did was the celebration of the victories in Mozambique and Angola. In the '60s we were totally deprived of any political information. Our parents wouldn't talk at all about politics. You had this reign of fear. So I was thinking that this contributed to the activity, because here you had people who could see that they were oppressed and yet it was difficult for them to talk about it or even to understand. At least our parents understood that they didn't want to talk about it and they didn't want to be active because they had suffered in the early '60s, a lot of people were arrested. People were sold out back then, they had high hopes, they really expected liberation in the mid-'50s and early '60s. They had high hopes and big disappointments. So at least to them there could be an understanding about why they were inactive. But the youth didn't have all that information, all they knew was oppression. So that made for even more anger which was an incentive to organise and mobilise the youth. It was such that when they burst into

action in 1976, they never stopped.

Women : Urban and Rural

Q: What kind of things do Azanian women face?

R.: An Azanian woman who is in an urban area is there most of the time because she is married. The law is such that as far as your husband is concerned you are a child. The house that you live in is under your husband's name. There are things that you cannot just do independently as a woman. The laws are structured to ensure this. For example, when you get married, your passbook is taken and changed to name your husband as your guardian. If you lose your husband, if he dies, then the woman loses her right to the house. This remains true even though the government today is trying to say things have changed, that women can now buy houses. But this has been the standing law....

J.: In the urban areas you find women just traditionally holding these very menial jobs, mostly domestic servants. For instance, the position of a teacher is not traditionally the job of a woman. Look at even the language people use, when they talk about teachers they say a teacher and a "lady" teacher. If you are a woman you are a "lady" teacher, not just a teacher. But mostly the jobs for women are domestic servants, cleaning houses,

taking care of kids and so on. In fact that is why they allowed women to be in the urban areas—to take care of their houses because that is a serious job and the Azanian woman becomes the housewife of the house. Back in the rural areas you find that with the man going away on these contracts, it is the woman that is left to deal with that difficult soil and try to keep the family eating, whatever family is left back there. It is the woman who tills the land, it is women who do all these things. My grandmother used to do this. They have to take care of the children, they have to be doctors, they have to do everything. They have to feed the kids, educate them. And also, when men are out on these contracts, after the passage of time some of these men will just break their marriages. I mean sometimes if a man has been in Johannesburg for six years he will just stop sending that check at the end of the month. In some cases you know somebody in the township who is sitting there nicely married and you hear that he left a wife and family back in the homeland where he used to be. That happens a lot of times. And lately the government has begun to realise that women can do other things too, and of course can be paid very cheaply. When I left, a lot of women were beginning to be employed in jobs like running gas stations and other jobs not re-

quiring great physical strength. They have also begun hiring women as drivers. Even though the man and the woman can do the same job, they pay women far, far less than they do the man.

R.: As to the woman in the rural areas again, you get to see your husband once a year when he is away on contract labour. You see your husband when he gets that leave from the mines.... But the worst thing for women is that every time your husband comes home from the mine he leaves you, when he goes back to the mine, he leaves you pregnant. The system actually determines when you can bear children. I don't blame this on the male as such because, as we mentioned earlier, to try and sell their labour the men always have to leave the reservations because there is no work there. So they get back and they have raised a certain amount of money so that they can get married—the men traditionally pay the dowry. So after they have done that they want to make sure that they will at least come home and find their wife there. The one way they do it is to get the wife pregnant everytime they come home.... □