

Interview no. 21

**After Hiroshima
interview transcript**

Interviewee: Jim Radford (JR) born 1/10/1928

Interviewer: Emily Spary (ES)

Ruth Dewa (RD)

ES: *Ok, um so, I'm Emily Spary doing the interview on the 29th May 2015. Would you like to tell me your name and date of birth please?*

JR: Jim Radford, 1/10/28

ES: *Ok thank you. So if we just start off, would you like to tell me what you were doing at the end of the war, the Second World War?*

(J) At the end of the war, um, at the end of the war I was ashore, um, but I'd been a merchant seaman until from leaving school until that year, um, but um. I can't remember what I was doing exactly at the end of the war apart from celebrating. But I was a merchant seaman and I, I, for the first year, first year of my working life and then I went to Liverpool (1.00) to try and get a ship in Liverpool, couldn't get a ship in Liverpool so I, and I knew I was coming up for, you get called up, got called up at 18 even when the war was over, so I didn't want to go in the army, so I volunteered for the Royal Navy and while I was waiting to go in the Royal Navy I shovelled coal on a steam train as a fireman on a steam train for a while and I went the Royal Navy for the next seven years.

ES: *So when did you join the Royal Navy?*

JR: Um, on my birthday '46. My, my, uh, 18th birthday.

ES: *Ok, what do you remember of the end of the war?*

JR: The end of the war. What the celebrations, euphoria? Everybody was, yes it was a great celebration and lots of, lots of homecomings (2.00) and lots of reunions. Yeah, great time.

RD: *Sorry can I just jump in, when you consider the end of the war, does it immediately spring to your mind the end of the war in Europe, or...?*

JR: Yes, it did, it did, it did yes I must admit, that was, yeah. VE Day was the end of the war, yes uh yes. VJ day was, was later. So it was in, in that interim period yeah, um, that I don't remember much about.

ES: *Do you remember VJ Day?*

JR: Oh yeah. Yes of course I do, yeah yeah. I remember the celebrations.

ES: *What did you do on the day? Just took part in the celebrations?*

JR: Um, drink and dance, a lot of dancing. No, VE Day (3.00) was a much more, bigger celebration, more restrained and VJ day was less phonetic. But still, a big celebration. But, uh, I didn't get drunk on VJ Day, got drunk on VE Day.

ES: *What about the period between VE Day and VJ Day, what do you remember-*

JR: Not a lot. I don't remember a lot about that, I must admit. A long time ago. I do remember of course that, uh, the bomb was a, loomed large, you know. I don't think people fully comprehended for quite a long

time exactly what had happened and, yeah, it was just a bigger bomb. So, you have to realise that during the war, everyone (4.00), we'd been bombed, we'd been blitzed. I was just a kid when the war started but I've seen people blown to pieces and burnt alive and when I went to sea I've seen tankards explode and I've seen a lot of people killed, a lot more people killed than I should've done. Um so, we were at war and they were the enemy so we wanted to kill them. You know we weren't, I wasn't a pacifist, so these are the enemy you want to kill them. They were bombing our cities and killing us so we wanted to, we wanted to destroy their cities. And when we heard that they destroyed a city in Japan with one bomb, your first reaction was 'great'! If you could kill, we were sending a thousand bombers to Germany to Hamburg, Hanover, to, creating a firestorm, we wanted to destroy the cities. And yes, you knew that innocent people were being killed, but that was happening here too. (5.00) The only way we could defeat this terrible enemy was to give them more of what they were giving us, to destroy more of them than us. It was total war - that was your mind set. And obviously you wouldn't go out and kill a non-combatant, but you, in the same way as their German pilots, dropped bombs on cities not knowing who, we did the same thing. And you know, you couldn't separate people so you closed your mind to that, and said right, destroy the city the war will end quicker. And if you can destroy the city with one bomb, that's great, because you don't, every time we sent a thousand bombers to Germany a lot of them didn't come back, that would save our air crew. So people weren't, um, they were amazed by it, but they weren't appalled by it. They thought this was going to bring the war to an end. The general view then was that the Japanese were an implacable enemy, (6.00) the Germans were very good fighters too, and brave men, but we overwhelmed them in the end, but we overwhelmed them because we could concentrate, uh, we had control of the air and we could, more troops and the Russian bore the brunt of it so we could overwhelm the Germans. Japan was a different kettle of fish. Further away, much longer to get people to, much, much longer, land logistics. So, everybody anticipated that the Japanese would fight to the end and that we'd have to invade the mainland. It would be a long bitter campaign with terrible casualties on both sides. So, terrible as it was to wipe out a city, the general view was that that would bring the war to an end quicker and therefore save lives, Japanese as well as British, as well as American and British, less British well more American. So that was the general perception, (7.00) and it was quite some time before, you know, the full implication of what had happened and the future possible possibilities and consequences, we became aware of it. And also the nature of the, of the effects of radiation. All these things, it took time to soak in to people. So that's why there wasn't immediate horrified reaction against it. We'd been brutalised, we'd done 5 years of bloody conflict, we'd lost people. My brother, my older brother was killed, um, and lots of my relatives and friends. The street I come from in Hull, everybody went to sea and there was scarcely a family that hadn't lost someone. So, you know, we didn't have a lot of compassion for those regarded as the enemy.

(8.00)

ES: *Do you remember the day the bomb was dropped?*

JR: The date? I haven't got the date. I remember the headline, it think we didn't know 'til the next day, I remember, I can't remember where I was now but I remember reading the papers and then listening to the news and, that was my thought – this will make the war, this will make them, this will bring the war to the end.

ES: *And that was the general reaction everyone had?*

JR: I think that was the general reaction that I came across, yeah, and disgusted.

(9.00)

ES: *Do you remember when, later on, more things about the radiation sickness, do you remember when you started hearing information about that?*

JR: Over a period of years really. Um, it took quite some time. When I was in the Royal Navy, in 1951, some years after the war, um, they fished out 3 ships in Chatham, to go down to the Christmas Island to do these bomb tests, testing the bomb, and I remember everybody in the barracks wanted to get on these ships because was going to the Far East and Australia which was considered a good commission, a good run ashore. So we all wanted to go to Australia, and lots of my mates got on these ships and I tried to get on, but I couldn't fortunately for me, because most of the lads that did get on are dead now, (10.00) so it was only, so at the time we did not know about the effects. And it's always amazed me, I'm pretty sure that lots of people did know, and you'd think that the experts and the designers, they knew, and the people there who studied what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which most of us hadn't, but they didn't give any protection, so these three ships went out there and the lads were told to line up and watch this and the only protection they had was to turn their backs when the bomb went off, and then said 'oh it's alright look now'. Of course they were all riddled with radiation and they've all died of leukaemia and cancers and various things since then. And friends of mine who were on those ships started the, um, the, um, I've forgotten what they're called now, but the organisation, the atomic test ban, um, victims, um, campaign for compensation (11.00) that I don't think they ever got. So yeah, it was, it was some years after before it, it sank in, found dead all these other consequences.

ES: *Did that affect your view of the dropping of the bomb at all?*

JR: No. Um I became, er, I became an anti-war activist because after the war, because I saw how many people and Americans in particular had got this, had sort of embraced this concept of 'do it to them before they do it to us' (12.00), which I thought was very dangerous, and, and this whole business the American thing about massive fire power which the atomic bomb epitomises, wipe them out, never fire one bullet if you can fire fifty or a hundred or never throw a grenade if you can drop a ten tonne, all that nonsense. I mean they use a cruise missile, costs half a million quid to wipe out some individual and I mean it's, it's, and also I saw how, how, what I suppose really, really made me anti-war, was I, I spent seven years in the Royal Navy – I was a radar operator and they brought out, they built a new battleship, the British, called the Vanguard when I was in the royal navy, the one that took the Queen and the Princesses out to South Africa in 1946. (13.00) And I went on board the Vanguard at a different time, and they had what they called stag mountings, I had to do radar control guns and the complexity of the technology, the, the amount of effort and thought and skill and money that went into this, this, this, these guns that would, er, radar that would lock on, that would compensate for everything, and fire a shell 25 miles to, er, and I thought there are thousands of hours of effort and thought and it just struck me, I thought well all that effort and thought could have gone into preventing the need for it, you know. (14.00) [Recording paused] Sorry about that, and yeah I realised that, that vast amounts of time and skill and money and training were being spent to conduct and win wars and if a fraction of that was put into solving the problems that led to them it wouldn't be necessary and that's what made me anti-war. And of course I became very anti-nuclear as, as, 'cause I realised that war now wasn't just a question of killing a lot of the enemy, it was likely to be a question of wiping out whole communities and cities. If you wipe out a city in one go I mean that's not war is it, that annihilation. So the, the, the, (15.00) you know, there can be no, the concept of the 'just war' is meaningless in a situation where people have weapons of this magnitude.

ES: *So seeing, seeing the destruction in Japan did influence you becoming anti-war?*

JR: Yes, it did influence me. Um, I think there was a logic, a reasoning that led me to be anti-war and, and also, as you realised the enormity of the bomb, you thought 'right this could end wars', but only (16.00) if, my view about the bomb was what they should've done immediately, should of set up, they did set up the United Nations, but which has turned out to be not that much more effective that the league of nations after the first world war, but if they set up an international body and said 'this body will control, will have the bomb, nobody else', but they didn't, American got the bomb, Britain wanted the bomb, Russia wanted the bomb, China wanted the bomb, everybody wanted the bomb. Very understandable they want, now every, Iran wants the bomb and they're performing all kind of efforts and threats everything to stop them. It's nonsense, Iran has got as much right to have the bomb as anyone else, and if I was an Iranian, I, well I

wouldn't but, I can imagine being Iranian and saying 'yeah of course they should have the bomb'. And it's pretty obvious that Iranians (17.00) don't want the bomb in order to attack America or Britain, they only want the bomb to stop people who've got the bomb from attacking them. You know they're not mad, they know they'd be wiped out if they used the bomb, they couldn't hope to have enough bomb to destroy all the, so America's determination that they shouldn't have the bomb is a nonsense. Um, from their point of view, the bomb is a protection and that will be true of most world countries, and interesting thing when we first formed CND, we said, this is exactly what we said, we said we've got to stop because every country in the world will want to have the bomb, there'll be proliferation and everything we said back in 1958 has happened, everything we predicted when we were, when we were campaigning, when we first started the (18.00) major national and international campaign against nuclear weapons everything we said then has come to pass. Every country, there has been tremendous proliferation and there'll be more as they come to want the bomb, of course there will, while there are people, big bullies threatening them with it.

ES: *So when you left the navy what were the first steps you took towards becoming an anti-war activist?*

JR: I would, when I first left the navy I went to live in Slough for a while to do a government training course there and I set up a, um, a humanist group, I formed a humanist group, became the secretary of a humanist group. Which became, there were humanist groups in various places I was a rationalist, and um, but my humanist group was (19.00) rather different I campaigned within the humanist movement to get, to make humanists more political and more involved in issues like, like the bomb, and so what, round about that time, I can't remember exactly what year it was in the fifties, round about that time the news was leaked, some paper discovered a scoop that for some years, American planes based in Britain had been overflying Britain carrying nuclear bombs on permanent alerts in case Russia attacked, you see, now people, we didn't know this, people in Britain had not known this, so this created an outcry and that started me campaigning then against the, particularly against the bomb, then er, I, I got involved with people involved in the Direct Action Committee who were (20.00) invading American bases and trying to stop, stop, they were building more American bases and extending, they'd taken, they were called, in many cases they were called RAF stations, they weren't RAF they were controlled by United States Air Force so we started going into these bases and trying to stop them and doing what the women at Greenham common do and what we did in the Committee of 100 and later in the bases, Direct Action, I was not, I was a foot soldier in the Direct Action I wasn't one of the planners like I was in the Committee 100 but I used to go along to demonstrations and in the er we called it the Humanist Action Group we got involved in the first Aldermaston march and I can't remember the context, we organised it from, it was, was um, Peggy Duff and people like that who organised it this end (21.00), and in London, but from Slough we organised it from Slough to Aldermaston, we, um, were, did all the research, provided all accommodation, looked after marchers, so I was involved in helping to organise the first Aldermaston march. Then it was after the first Aldermaston march that the CND was formed, that was 1958 and CND was formed then. And I was at the meetings that led to that, but we didn't think that the CND was going to be radical enough. There weren't, people weren't committed to direct action, so we formed the Committee of 100 which was sort of the direct action wing of the peace movement. And our, our job, our hope then was that we could get enough people to take direct action that we'd fill the jails (laugh) (22.00) and they'd have to change, change their, their policies, but we never got to that stage. Some of us went to jail several times unnecessarily, not unnecessarily, all helped, but didn't achieve our objectives. So I was an activist in the Committee 100 from its inception to its end.

ES: *So with, going back to the Humanist Action Group, can you remember specifically any of the times you invaded the bases?*

JR: Um, I can't, two or three that we did in East Anglia and the names escape me now, um, one up near King's Lynn, we walked on, that was the one where people sat in cement mixers, I didn't sit in a cement mixer but some people did, er, and er, the other one was called (23.00) RAF something, er, I've probably got a note of it somewhere I could dig out. It's a long time ago, and I've done a lot since then.

ES: *So do you remember how you felt when you were doing, taking part in the direct action with that group?*

JR: Determined. Convinced I was right, or justified, yeah um, and prepared, yeah, to, we all were in the Committee of 100, we were all prepared to make sacrifices and do prison time if need be, and many of us did.

ES: *So how did you get involved with the first Aldermaston march?*

JR: I can't remem-, we were known to be actively campaigning against **(24.00)** these American overflights, so we were I suppose on people's radar as a, a anti-nuclear thing. So, I can't remember, somebody contacted us and said, er, and I forget what they called the planning groups and somebody contacted and came down and talked to us and said 'this is the plan, we want to get people to march' and we immediately said 'yeah, we're in', we're in, that, and so, so as we discussed, I can't remember who, I can't remember the name of the person it was who came down, but various people liaised with us, but we didn't go to any of the London meetings that time but they came to us in Slough, and we undertook to organise the reception in Slough and the over night accommodation and then, down, down the road at Reading we organised that too, so we really **(25.00)**, when the march. The first march went from London to Aldermaston, subsequent marches except for one that we, George Clarke and I organised in '63 went the other way, and so, so the first one, we didn't come up to London to join the first, we waited in Slough, we met them at the outskirts of Slough. We had a big body of people, 100 or more, met them at the thing around Slough, took them into the Methodist Central Hall, bedded them down, made some speeches, fed them. Pouring with rain, terrible, we all got soaking wet. And then we, we had these places en route that we'd set up so we, we sort of, steward them, stewarded the march from Slough to Aldermaston where somebody else had done it from London to Slough. It's the sort of 3 day event thing. One day from **(26.00)** London to Slough and one day from Slough to Reading area and third day to Aldermaston.

ES: *What were you trying to achieve with the marches, what was the aim?*

JR: We were, we were trying to focus public attention on the issue. I mean until the first Aldermaston march, large numbers of people in this country didn't know Aldermaston existed, didn't know that there was a base in in, the countryside where they were manufacturing weapons of mass destruction and, and all the consequent dangers, in exactly the same way as later on, when, when we in the Committee of 100 in a course of an Aldermaston march, invaded the seat of regional government at Walgrave and, and exposed the spies that, friends of mine had broken into one of these **(27.00)**, one of these, regional seats of government and got all the documentation from it, and we planned it to, to publicise that on the day the Aldermaston march started, so I remember driving in that night, round, midnight around Fleet Street because we didn't have the internet in those days, delivering these.. we did these 'Spies for Peace' pamphlets, which was all official information which we'd stolen and we'd delivered it to all the er, newspapers. I did that. I was a press officer for the Committee of 100 at the time, and we'd been up all the night before, lots of us in my front room. I had two duplicators going all night duplicating these things, and various other people did. I always remembered when the police raided my house, which they did the following day, desperately trying to find out these copies, and er, we got rid of all of them by then but I had the master **(28.00)** copy and I just put I under the carpet would you believe that. It was under the carpet was the master copy and they never found that. They're very inept the police, every time they raided my house, which they did several times in those years they never found what they were looking for. Even though it was there. So yeah, but that was, another, um, exposure that people were totally unaware that there were these underground bunkers that the rich and powerful, were going to be shepherded into in the case of a nuclear war and they'd be safe and everybody else was expendable. So, yeah, publicity was our most potent weapon, we wanted to alert people to what was going on and, and hopefully create the same indignation that we felt.

ES: *And did you feel that that was successful, exposing in that way through newspaper?*

JR: I've run a lot of campaigns (29.00) and how do you measure success of a campaign? It wasn't successful in the sense that we didn't achieve our objective. It was very successful in the sense that we alerted, we did convey this information to millions of people, and, and quite a large proportion of them shared our, shared our concern and opposition to it. But not enough, so we haven't succeeded until we get enough people to force change and abolition of, of, controls, proper controls on these dangers, we will not succeed it, so yeah. We, I think we, we I think those rules are important because whatever happens in the future it's all building on that. I'm a great believer in platforms you see, they, you build platforms, you might not achieve what you set out to (30.00), but you build a platform and then people from that platform, they can see further and do more, they can step up so you. I've seen that happen a lot in my campaigning life.

ES: *At the time, did it, did it help to mobilise people to support the marches?*

JR: Oh yes, absolutely, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, we did yeah. The marches got bigger and bigger and I suppose they tailed away because although they got bigger and bigger, people got, people get to the point where they think well they're getting bigger and bigger, we're doing it. It's like a million people march against the Iraq war and we still go to war, so we keep doing it. You have to, you have to start looking for new methods because that isn't working just conveying your anger and opposition in vast (31.00) numbers doesn't seem to work, you've got to do more than that.

ES: *Do you remember, do you remember the details of when you went on the march, do you remember the details of how you prepared in the morning?*

JR: I personally? What sort of details are you thinking of I mean, usually, ah, most of the marches I would be, um, have number of roles, so, the ones that, I lived in Slough until '96 year and moved into London, so whichever way, I remember every Aldermaston march, I would have to load my car up with equipment and (32.00) literature. I was always responsible for literature, um, distribution of literature and I'd always have the job of taking people to different points to do different things and very often I'd transport food, um, on one of the marches, 1963 George Clarke and I organised the march and that year we, no I'm mixing up my year. We organised it, a two prong march, we went back to Aldermaston that year and we organised it in two prongs that met I forget where they were, the one I was on went through Windsor and we met somewhere and converged and that march was very (33.00) successful. I always remember that march because, um, I would've been in my mid, mid 30s then wouldn't I in '63. As you went through Windsor there's a big statue of Queen Victoria, have you seen it? With an auburn sceptre there on the hills where you walk to the castle. For that march I had designed, I haven't got one here to show you, a special CND lollipop, slightly oval shaped, fluorescent thing on it, and I'd made about 100 of these and I gave them out and obviously they were very effective because for years afterward they kept appearing on marches, people kept them they didn't throw them away like you do with these, these um SWP pamphlets every march they tear, make hundreds of them. Placards always get dumped – my placards didn't get dumped, they were kept. Anyway as went past Queen Victoria, on a sudden (34.00) impulse I left the march and climbed up the statue. Because she's cradling a sort of sceptre, I gave her the placard so, so some, it was a spontaneous thing. I always remember it because some journalist, some photographer spotted this and had taken a picture of it and the caption in The Daily Telegraph would you believe, so next day people coming up to me 'Jim you're picture's in The Daily Telegraph!' so I went to get The Daily Telegraph, and they, it was a good picture of me climbing up the statue, and the caption read 'An exuberant student [laughs]' because that was their assumption, that anybody who did things like that, had to be, had to be a student, it was. I wasn't a student, I was a thirty-five year old advertising manager, had quite a big job but there you go you had to be a student if you did things like that. That's the way they, if you were a demonstrator. It's (35.00) a, I wrote, I've done a lot of journalism in my time, I remember writing a thing where, analysing this, the development of the peace movement and it wasn't until the IRA bomb campaign started that they, they shifted their focus. It's as if the um, the police, er, secret police, the MI5 and the special branch and people like that they've got to justify their existence and so they, it's very clear from the literature and from what's written in our files, I've had a look, I haven't seen it but got people to look at my file in the special branch files that they keep on people

like me and its very clear that they thought we were dangerous, very dangerous (36.00) people at that time, it was only 'til they got really dangerous people that they suddenly realised that we weren't dangerous, we weren't, we couldn't have been more, yes we were prepared certainly to break certain laws, but we weren't doing any harm to anybody, we weren't out to hurt anybody we weren't stealing from anybody, we were, and we weren't offering violence to anybody. So it's amazing the extent to which they went to infiltrate us, and raid and all kinds of things, and relentless propaganda in the extreme right-wing press, in papers like the Express and so forth, that we were dangerous, Communist, undercover subversives. I had a friend, I digress, I digress a lot (37.00), I had a friend in the 70s, a woman friend, and her father was a, a retired army officer, brigadier, um, but he would, been in [unclear] Corps and although he was retired they used to recall him to send him to Northern Ireland to the, um, I forget the name of it, to the interrogation, to do interrogation, he was an interrogator, so he interrogated IRA suspects and in about 1971 he's doing a refresher course, he was called up to do a brief course, a week's course at Woolwich barracks, for interrogators a refresher, and he'd only met me once and he didn't like me, he didn't like, he didn't think I was good, because I'm a Leftie and he was right, you know he was conservative and he didn't like his daughter being friends with, (38.00) this agitator, and I used to get in the news a lot for organising, mostly um, by that time housing action campaigns and squatting campaigns and things like that, and he told his daughter, she told me this, he said oh he was sitting there not paying much attention and suddenly my name was mentioned and I was being cited and they were giving examples of er, er, subversives. And he said now this one Jim Radford here, he's a subversive he's known he's done this and he's done that and done that, but he's not a dangerous subversive and the reason they decided that, the reason you're not dangerous is because he does what it says on the can, you know he, he writes about what he does and so far he's always done, he's always stood by his you know, he's non-violent, he claims to be non-violent, he is non-violent he claims, so they'd come to the conclusion (39.00) then, correct conclusion that the dangerous subversives are people that are unpredictable. And they, you don't know what they're going to do and the people of course, the people who are committed to violence, make no bonds about it and er, and those of us who weren't committed who clearly anti-non-violent and did what it said on the can we weren't dangerous and I thought well took them a bloody long time to realise that because back in the 60s they were damning us as dangerous and the implication was that we were ready to commit all kinds of atrocities and violence and if you give these people any leeway they will, they will yeah.

ES: *So you said the media assumed that anyone who was an activist was a student, what were the ages (40.00) and the backgrounds of the people who marched with you?*

JR: There were, on is, um, on the Aldermaston march there were a lot of students and that, that was, that was the first and most fertile recruiting ground, young idealistic young people, who who, er, a had the time, who read stuff. And, and er took notice of what was going on as opposed to lots of young people who don't who don't take any interest in current affairs, so students were, were a very good recruiting ground so we had lots of students. But we also had lots of older people as well. And of course the propaganda, I always remember the propaganda was, The Daily Express was a, was a, was a, usually, because I was in the newspaper quite a big I used to read all the newspapers to make sure I knew what was going on, I always remember after that first Aldermaston march, they had a, they'd got reporters in (41.00) so that the hall that I had personally booked in Reading, the big hall, a school hall for people to sleep in, this reporter was in there, I was in there too, and this reporter was obviously in there and his story was all about how all these people were, were jumping in and out of others' sleeping bags you see, it was a sexual orgy according to him. And we'd actually walked all the way from Slough in the pouring rain, so we were soaked to the skin most of us and we were absolutely, most of us were totally knackered and yes, certainly I'm up to jumping into sleeping bags, but not that night (laughs) everybody from my observation just crashed out, just you know, just we had a supply of towels and stuff and a washer and queue for the washer. Once people had, had cleaned themselves up and dried themselves off (42.00) and eaten something they just wanted to get their head down and get some sleep, so there wasn't, there might've been the odd one or two, but that wasn't my recollection of it at all. But that's very often the case in my experience, you're, you're involved in something and when you read the press reports after you think I must've been at some other place because that's not how I see it, yeah.

ES: *So how many, how many days did the march take? You say you stopped off one night.*

JR: Er, a three day march yeah.

ES: *So where did you stop on the first night and where did you stop on the second?*

JR: The first night was Slough, oh no, no sorry, the first night was, er, er, West London there's a place, I can't remember the name of the place, there's a school that's right, something 'Green', can't remember (43.00) the name of it. It's up, it's up by the er..

RD: *Turnham Green?*

Turnham Green, Turnham Green, Turnham Green first night, and the second night was Slough and the next night was, er, Reading or Reading area and then the next day was Aldermaston. So one, two, three, so four days, four days, yeah, four days.

ES: *So how did you all, how did you feel travelling with all these people, what was the feeling on the march?*

Well it was, it was um, it, was a great, every little left group, including mine, we were, it was a great opportunity for prophesising, conversing, so we shared, you always came back from a march with a great pile of literature, you got everybody's literature, and every left wing paper you (44.00) could imagine was, er, being plugged or given away or sold and leaflets galore. And there were intense debates going on and a lot of people were, people got quite a good political education on those marches, you spent all day talking a arguing with people and er, we set up at the stops, we used to set up discussion groups. On, on the march that George Clarke and I organised, we produced a march newspaper every day, we, that, so I had, the, I had this van and I had the duplicator in the back and so, we'd write the thing, amazing how we, I can't, can't imagine how, how we found the energy and time to do it, you'd do the march and you set up the size [Paused]

ES: *You were talking about producing the march newspaper. (45.00)*

JR: Oh yeah, the, the, er, I think, I can't remember what the newspaper, I think, it might have been called 'The March Decides'. But that was the slogan we used, we, um, on the march we'd take decisions about various things, so at various stops we'd convene a meeting, we stopped for a break and everyone would discuss, we'd propose, we'd put to them and discuss. And that was certainly the case on the time when we invaded the, um, RSG at Walgrave, that we put it to the march, and there was some division – some people didn't want to deviate, we had to deviate and go to this, occupy this thing, and er, half of us went and half of us didn't, and so the march split at that point. And er, Nick, I always remember, (46.00) then we had a big debate, at the Regional Seat of Government we didn't, didn't go inside it, it had been broken into before, but we occupied the sort of entrance area, until the police came in large numbers to remove us, and then we had a big debate there about whether we should stay and be arrested or whether we should go, and I think my view, as I recall, Nick Walter, Nicholas Walter who was actually one of the spies people, one of the people who had broken in, I can say that now cos he's dead, and he said it himself too, but we didn't tell people who were the spies, the actual spies for peace were, we had a big row there I remember. I find it difficult to remember what the row was actually about, but we had a big row and we fell out. But we became firm friends later cos we were both in Brixton prison for 3 months together so [laughs] we became good mates, but um, (47.00) at that time we had different views. He was an anarchist or claimed to be an anarchist, a lot of peace claim to be anarchists but I don't really see that they were anarchists myself because they did believe in organisation. My understanding of anarchy is, but then the anarchist newspaper used to call me, they regarded me as an anarchist because they always printed my stuff 'Freedom'. Ever seen Freedom? Was

the anarchist newspaper. They used to, I used to churn out a lot of stuff and Peace News and Freedom, and Socialist Leader, and all left-wing papers printed it and...

ES: *So on that occasion did the police come?*

JR: Oh yeah they did, they did come, but most of us at that point we'd made our point, we got the publicity, the point, what we were trying to do was publicise the pamphlet 'Spies for Peace' that we'd distributed to all the press the night before and every paper, every paper did make (48.00) lead on it, and er, that, we, publicity – no point getting ourselves arrested outside the seat of government, nobody in there. So and the police arrived in numbers. It's interesting, some years later I was er, er, went North for some trip with a friend in, in my, I had a campervan, and on the way back we found ourselves in that area, and I said to this friend, I'll show you the, I'll show you where this, we'd talked about it [*the regional seat of government*], I'll show you where it is, and so we drove to the RSG, it's in the woods, it's hidden away in wood and parked my campervan to show this young woman where the, where the place was. And while we were (49.00) there we brewed up a cup of tea and we were sitting there and we'd been there sort of 20 minutes and 3 police cars turned up out of the blue in remote bloody wooded area of Berkshire is it? And wanted to know what we were doing there. So I said 'we're not doing anything, we're in a campervan, on a holiday, stopped to brew up' and, and er, very interesting, so they must have some sort of cameras or spies of something and they'd spotted my van. I did have a big CND stamped on the back of the van of course which might have, er, but they turned up in force, 3 police cars, that some campervan had stopped near an RSG.

ES: *On the marches were there often disagreements about what the best direct action was?*

JR: Yeah, yeah, there were, there were disagreements yeah, and people (50.00), different factions and different groups and, and as always a few nutcases, you know there's always the odd person who's, most people are, had lots of things in common, just different emphasis and approach, or priorities. But occasionally you get the odd, well you think what the hell are you doing here?

ES: *And so was everyone-*

JR: And of course there's always policemen, agent provocateurs, press, the right-wing press would put people in to, to, just as, um, in, in, lots of groups as they found in the ecological groups, they'd get agent provocateurs in there, who are urging them on to do silly things, because, so they can be locked up or closed down. (51.00)

ES: *Were there any times you can remember that happening?*

JR: Well, I, er on the march you mean? There were certainly times when I thought somebody was, er, a provocateur or nutcase, and my recollection is that because they're so crass, most people treat them and took the same view that you're either a, being paid to do this or you're a nutcase, so we they didn't get, didn't get any support as recall.

RD: *Just to clarify this, because I've not heard that term before, um, are you saying that you think there were people who were specifically planted to encourage people to cause trouble?*

Yeah, yeah, well I don't know that they were planted for that, whether they were going on a lone mission, it's like these policemen (52.00) that were planted at the, that went round screwing the girls they, I don't suppose they were told to do that, that was their own idea, I imagine they, they would be told to, their official brief would be to gain information and to sound people out and so forth, and then of course, some of them would be on that, so well they're well we're looking for people who cause trouble and the best way to do that is to catch them in the act and so let's suggest that they do this or that or whatever. So they, they you know, they enter into the spirit of things, they see it and start trying to stimulate action, they want action, they want excitement, want to be able to arrest somebody or to claim that they provide the information then these people can be arrested. (53.00)

ES: *And was anyone arrested on that march?*

JR: Which one are we talking about? By and large I don't remember many people being arrested on the Aldermaston marches. I've been on plenty of demonstrations where people have been arrested but the Aldermaston marches not as a rule no I don't recall any.

ES: *When, when did you get involved with the CND? When did you start-*

JR: When it was formed, it was um, '59 wasn't it when it was formed. Yeah from the beginning, I was a member from the start, um, I keep, my membership latched different years. I was in at the beginning of CND, um I wasn't a sort of instigator, I was very much more **(54.00)** involved in the Committee 100 than the CND. And er, and similarly with the, later on, ex-service CND I was in that from the start, just as Veterans for Peace now has taken over from the ex-service CND because they're all too ancient to march except me. So I was the, I was probably the youngest member of ex-service CND because they're all World War Two veterans, and I'm the oldest member of Veterans for Peace, [laughs] because I'm the only World War Two veteran I think.

ES: *So what did you take part in with the CND?*

JR: Every, I think every demonstrations, every major significant demonstration they staged I think, I've been involved in, all Aldermaston marches I think, **(55.00)** except one I think, think I missed one, although in recent years I haven't done, in recent years I must admit. Um, but throughout the sixties into the seventies I was always there. Um, but all their national demonstrations and of course all the committee demonstrations, and was also very involved in the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and ran an organisation called the Vietnam Organisation Group which you may not, may or may not have heard about, which was a stunt group really, a hard core of dedicated people who er, who did dramatic things, and we all finished up in jail.

ES: *Can you remember any of the early demonstrations with the CND?*

JR: Yeah, **(56.00)** yeah, most of them, the CND were less eventful than the Committee 100 demonstrations, I remember the Committee 100 demonstrations because we very often ended up in a police cell. And that was the object in a way, it wasn't, the objective was to get maximum attention, but in order to do that we did very dangerous, subversive things, like sitting down in the street you know! See that, that's an example of a time they regarded us as dangerous subversives, what were we doing? The first big, in '63, the first big, not '63, the first big, um, sit down demonstration that the Committee 100, was in Trafalgar Square. Now you can't, you're not obstructing anybody in Trafalgar Square, you know you're in the middle of the square they could've left us there, but no they came and dragged us all away and arrested us **(57.00)** in large numbers, and that was er, I always remember that because um, that night I got arrested 3 times that night, because they arrested everybody and dragging us off and taking us to Scotland Yard, the old Scotland Yard, you know not the new one, just round, off, off you know where it is, off Whitehall, and they, because they put you in in such large numbers, they put you in, and sit down there and later on some policeman comes along and take you to the desk to charge you, but the rule is that the policeman that charges you had to be the policeman that arrested you. So when this young policeman came and took me to the desk the first time, the Sergeant said 'Name' I said my name Jim, gave him my name Jim Radford, or did, yeah I did give him my name, and he said er, so he said 'What's he charged with?' **(58.00)** so this young policeman said, 'er, he was, he was sitting down, he was obstructing, causing obstruction'. So I said, 'hang on a minute', I said, 'you're not the officer who arrested me' and he looked at me and the Sergeant said, 'is that right?' and the Bobby didn't know, said, 'not sure Sergeant'. They don't remember faces, so said 'oh go sit down again you've got to have the officer who arrested you charge you'. They didn't know who arrested, so I sat down for half an hour and the door was open, the back, so I looked and I said, there were a dozen people sitting on this bench and I said, 'what are we sitting here for?'. I said there's, so we all walked out, went back to the square, all, and er, didn't get back to the square. Got to St Martin in the Fields and er, police were still trying to move people out, so sat down on the steps and got arrested again, twice we walked out the police **(59.00)** station,

so we got arrested 3 times. Yeah, did get charged, didn't get taken to court, they just arrested you, sometimes they arrest you and let you go after a while, they don't. But the, the reason I remember that, the first time arrested, I was there with the Slough Humanist Action Group and we're all sitting down together in Trafalgar Square and they came and dragged us, the police were quite rough, you know drag you, you go limp you don't assist them and there was a fringe demonstration – the League of Empire Loyalists which was the forerunner to the National Front and the English Defence League, you know flying the Union Jack, and, and I always remember this young skinhead stepped forward aggressively, he's got his head shaved, and he said, 'My father, my grandfather fought for you bastards!', he said [laughs]. **(1.00.00)** And I thought, hang on a minute, I didn't have time to argue but I looked round and on my left was Ernie Crosswell who'd been a Sergeant Spitfire pilot during the war, and on my right was, um, can't remember his name now, the Treasurer of our group who'd been a Commander, a Commander, and I'm a D-Day veteran [laughs] and that was, that was typical of the kind of prejudice that there was at the, the, you had to be, to oppose nuclear weapons you had to be a pacifist. We weren't pacifists, and, and, or a coward, and these brave, heroic skinheads who'd never seen a shot fired were denouncing us for our lack of patriotism, but there you go.

ES: *So when did the Committee 100 start, when did that?* (1.01.00)

JR: In, in er, just after the first Aldermaston march. We had a, the first Aldermaston march was organised by the direct action committee, Pat Arrowsmith and Peggy Duff and people like that who organised the first Aldermaston march. Er, and I think it was, and then I can't remember who took the initiative, I mean the first, the idea of the Committee 100 at first was to have a hundred big names, so we got a load of big names, we got sort of, er, Priestley and we got Bertrand Russell and we got you know a few philosophers and writers and big names like that and um, but most of them were figures **(1.02.00)** – they didn't take part in the action, er, and we very quickly, we went to the first meeting but we put these names forward but most of them, but we didn't get 100 so we very quickly decided that for organisational purposes we needed people who were representative. By that time I was living, where was I, I was still living in Slough, but, yeah the first meeting of the Committee I attended was because we needed representatives from the groups and er, there'd been a, there'd been a meeting before, one meeting and then a second meeting, we're talking about '59 aren't we? I can't remember where it took place now, might've been Conway Hall. **(1.03.00)** Where we decided that we needed to have, er, representatives who were involved in organising and that's how I got to be a member and I became, I moved shortly afterwards to South East London and I became a Convenor for South East London in Lewisham, Bromley, Beckenham, all this part of London. And we had, that was the, we tried to set up to have convenors in each part of London, um, so we had a National Committee 100 and we had a London Committee 100 and I was on both. Um, I mean most of the time we were synonymous because most of the big demonstrations were in London but we started doing things outside as well. Um, yeah and most of the big names fell away in due course. Bertrand Russell stayed though **(1.04.00)**. He, he, the second big demonstration we had was in Whitehall and when Bertrand Russell got arrested and I got arrested the same night outside the Foreign Office and er, I think, sometimes they'd arrest you and just keep you in the station for, until it was late at night and difficult to get home they'd let you go at the early hours of the morning, I think that time they didn't, that time we'd taken the decision not to give any names and addresses, so we didn't give name and address, so they remanded us, remanded me in custody for a week, Brixton prison it was my first week in Brixton prison, was it, I can't remember whether it was '62 or '63 now, that was, er, early sixties. Second big sit down demonstration. **(1.05.00)**

ES: *How did you feel when you were arrested?*

JR: Unafraid (laughs), not afraid of being arrested - I've been shot at. Didn't bomb them not worried about being arrested.

ES: *Did you have, did you have a set out plan of what, what you were to do if you were arrested, to not give details, or..?*

Yeah, yeah not give and information, not tell them who you were, not do, we, we did actually, when we went to Brixton we did give our name in Brixton, because we wanted, we, we didn't want our families to know where we were, so in order to do that we had to give our names, so we did give our names then. And, er, have to be remanded and let you out.

ES: *What did your family think of you going on demonstrations?* (1.06.00)

JR: My wife was always supportive, always, kids too, yeah.

ES: *So, going back to the beginning of the Committee of 100, what was the main focus, what was the aim?*

JR: The aim, to, to, to encourage, organise, and encourage by example, people to resist and oppose nuclear weapons by disregarding laws that were, disregard laws, instructions, stop, designed to stop you from expressing that opposition, (1.07.00) and, and er, in certain cases to, acts of sabotage, er, non-violent, we were committed to non-violence, weren't going to do anything that would hurt anybody, would cause individual harm, but we were quite prepared to damage property or to break and enter or, these were necessary and justified we thought. If, if, or depending on what were the circumstances, but... So publicity and promotion we felt would be achieved by setting that kind of example, and at one point we did, we did have this sort of grandiose thing, utopian thing that, that we might galvanise enough people to clog the jails, to, to get so many, there's no point in getting arrested for the sake of it, (1.08.00), every time I got arrested I was, I was trying to encourage other people to do it, you know sort of if we all do this we've got them, you know they can't arrest everybody. If, it's like you know, if you get 10,000 people on the street, if they all decide that they're not going to, then the authorities can do nothing about it, what they going to do, they going to shoot you down? So, we, we in theory we could've prevailed, but, um we never got enough people to do that. We got quite a lot of people, we did a lot of good things, I mean, one of the things we did, a by-product of that was um, a lot of us went to jail did, a lot of the Committee 100 did jail sentences, Nick Walter and I when we were in Brixton prison, we, we, we um, (1.09.00) when we came, well before we came out actually, we wrote about it and we drew attention to lots of things that were wrong with the prison system, and of course that hadn't happened before, most people who go to jail, are not particularly literate and not particularly well connected and don't know, so things that are common knowledge amongst, in the working class, or certainly most people who, who, er, go to jail from time to time, were not known to the middle classes until they started getting people in there who were, well I'm not middle class but I'm literate, who could write about it and talk about it and so I, when I came out I went round and talked about it and gave talks and lectures, wrote about it in various publications and so, we got some changes made, got a number of changes made. (1.10.00) I had a correspondence with Lord Chalfont in, in '66, '67, was the Minister responsible for prisons, so when I came out of Brixton, I wrote to him a detailed complaint which I also published and wrote me an answer, and he did what they always do, you know when you do this. See he didn't, I get an answer from him but what he does, he, oh complaint about Brixton prison, get the governor of Brixton prison on, what's the answer to this? And they tell him what's the answer, and he repeats, so the answer you got was the answer you got from, the governor of Brixton prison trotting out the same old lies, he'd always, which I can very easily disprove you see. So I wrote back and said that's not true for this and that reason and here's the evidence, and we had about 4/5 letters, and then I got the Guardian published all of them, published the whole correspondence, (1.11.00) so er, we got some changes made. What else did I complain about that er, you go to Brixton prison, Nick and I were both put on a charge whilst we were in prison, very, we, we were in prison for interrupting a church service you see, interrupting the Labour party at prayer in the Brighton church demonstration, every year, every time they ever annual conferences they start with a church service, and that year in '66, they were in the, Methodist church in Brighton, and they cleared the church, it wasn't a church service it was 'the Labour party at prayer' because all the normal people were excluded or told to go in the balcony and the whole church was full of delegates, which, which, the government, MPs, and, and George Wilson and I, Harold Wilson and George Brown were reading the lesson and so we'd infiltrated and got (1.12.00) tickets from a friendly MP which I'd printed and got my group in there, the Vietnam Action Group and we staged an intervention, but unfortunately for me [Paused]. Terry

Chandler was a peace movement printer in those days who printed the tickets for me, thought was such a good idea printing a lot of extra and gave them out to his friends who were also our friends in the peace movement, but they didn't know the plan so my plan as often, I'd done in a lot of places, each member of my group had, I'd written a statement, a short, concise statement, denouncing the Labour party for its complicity in the Vietnam war, its support from American genocide and every member had learnt that by heart and the idea was to get up and make that statement. If anyone was prevented or stopped, as they were, someone else would take it up where they left off (1.13.00) so the statement would get read. I've done the same thing in, in a dozen West End theatres in the interval, prior to that with great effect. Anyway but because Terry Chandler had dished out tickets to other people they didn't know the, the, the plan so Nick Walter came and he, he jumped the gun early and just said oh you, you hypocrite to George Brown, we weren't going to do it to George Brown we were waiting for Wilson, and he got arrested and then we all got arrested and charged with, they wanted to charge us with conspiracy, but conspiracy requires, conspiracy to, to riot, but that requires various components of that, they had to prove there was a plan, obviously a plan, they had to prove a ri- ri- to use violence. There was a lot of violence, it was all against us, but fortunately for me (1.14.00) I'd done a deal with Richard Lindley with ITN and got, briefed him on it, and he, for the first time he got cameras up in the church, up in the balcony, the whole thing was filmed, so that night on ITN showed the whole thing. And so when we went to court I was able to use all these photographs and say well look lots of violence here so show me one where any of us are the perpetrators, all the violence was against us, so they had to drop that and instead they got us with er, they had to think of an alternative charge and they charged us with er, indecency under the ecclesiastical court jurisdiction act of 1860 this is what brought church law into common law and into civil law, er, under the old church law it was an offence of indecency to interrupt a church service, in the Anglican church, and (1.15.00) that got that got transferred. Nobody had been done with this for 100 years you see, so they did us with that, so, er, in spite of the fact it was a Methodist church and the head of the Methodist church Donald Soper came as a witness in our defence and said it's in the best traditions of Methodism he said, to speak out against injustice, I totally support them, they still found us guilty, so I'm one of the very few who ever boasts about their conviction of indecency, anyway we got done, I was digressing, where was I, what was I telling you.

ES: *When you used that [paused], when you used the, the method of all learning the statement and then, you said you used it in some of the West End theatres, what, what organisations was that with, what demonstrations?*

JR: This was the Vietnam Action group that I, I coordinated and I had a dozen hard core, I had about 20 people (1.16.00) I could rely on, and we did stunts really to get publicity, so on that particular night at the West End Theatre, what I did, we went, we bought tickets, and we went to about 10 or 11 West End Theatres. I did the Palladium, the biggest one and the plan was, you wait for the interval and when people are getting up to go for a drink, you leap up on the stage and ring a bell, 'Hang on a minute people, very important announcement, sit down for a minute please I just wanted to tell a brief statement' and then, then you went into the spiel about the, the, the, and very effectively most people sit down and listen, then if somebody, if somebody realised, when they realised what you were doing, somebody violently opposed might shout so I had a couple of people planted in the audience who might shout 'No, no listen, I want to hear what he's got to say'. So I, I had it well planned and it worked very well. I had the Palladium, (1.17.00) which is several thousand people so that was good. The only, the only amusing, and of course it reached millions of people because the next day every national newspaper carried the story and, and so I, when I worked out the readership of the paper and, and the fact it was on the BBC I reckon we, briefly we'd reached millions of people, so that was very good for... the only amusing problem was that, um, my friend Andy Anderson, who was, er, a very good actor, he's dead now, he did the Mermaid Theatre, do you know it? It's a small, small theatre, small, good theatre, down um, I forget the name, very good character actor who opened it, (1.18.00) I can't remember his name. Anyway, anyway, good, nice little theatre, I've been there, and Andy was doing this one and he leapt up on the stage and rattled a bell and said 'Want your attention please, very important announcement', but he'd misjudged it, he'd thought it was the interval, but it wasn't the interval it was just scene change, and suddenly whilst he was standing there the bloody curtain went up and he's standing in the drawing room (laughs), with these actors standing, looking at him thinking

he must be part of the act, so that, that was a bit of a, that was a bit of an embarrassment, because we hadn't meant to interrupt, really to interfere with any of the performances, just to add to them, and yeah. It worked very well.

ES: *The Vietnam Action Group was just opposing the war in Vietnam?*

JR: It was for that, yes, we were, we're all (1.19.00) Committee 100 people and we were, yeah, we thought the war in Vietnam was, was a war of genocide and a war totally unnecessary and unjust war, we opposed it.

ES: *Did it, did it relate to your opposition to nuclear weapons, was that part of the action group?*

JR: Well, yeah, yeah I think so yeah. It's America's, the main threatener of nuclear war I think so, the main danger to world peace. But I'm just as opposed to Napalm as I am to radiation. I used, I did a pamphlet on the, on, on the Brighton church demonstration, an open letter to the judge and I used the picture of the little girl, running down the road naked, burnt, napalm, famous (1.20.00) Australian photographer took, you seen the picture? I used that, I used that a lot.

ES: *When you were working with the Committee 100, um, what was the general consensus on the use of nuclear weapons and, and the, the Cold War that was going on? What did people think about it?*

JR: I think they all, only disagreements on the Committee 100 were about tactics, I think we all agreed the use of nuclear weapons would be totally unjustified in any circumstances, there weren't any circumstances in which you'd be justified in using nuclear weapons. Um, they were an obscenity (1.21.00) and possible, the possible cause of the destruction of the human race. The human race and may well still be here, may well be the case and they wouldn't destroy themselves with nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons would destroy the civilisation and then, most of civilisation would only descend into barbarism and anarchy. You're finished as a species really.

ES: *Do you remember much fear within the general public?*

JR: Do I..?

ES: *Remember any fear of nuclear weapons within the general public? In the newspapers, for example.*

JR: I don't think a lot of people were, I think people are appalled by the prospect (1.22.00) and for that reason don't think about it a lot, and think, oh lots of appalling things might happen but are not likely to happen, so I wouldn't worry about them, and that's fair enough, because if you go through life thinking that there's disasters round the corner, all kinds of terrible things can happen, you know there's all kinds of bad things can happen, so that's rational and reasonable to think, well it's not that likely to happen so therefore I won't spend a lot of time even worrying about it. So I don't think people had a great fear of nuclear weapons, I think most thinking people are appalled by the prospect and I think there's, if it was possible to take, I think, think that probably a majority would say no, they should not be used and think, and even among those people who might think, oh they might serve a deterrent purpose, they don't, (1.23.00) they don't want them ever to be used. So I don't, don't think anyone's in favour of using them, and I think the people who think that, who still believe the deterrent theory, discredited though, it should be totally discredited now, because obviously it hasn't deterred, might, might have deterred people from dropping nuclear, but I don't think people would drop nuclear, if if you, if no one had nuclear weapons, if only one party, who would, why would they drop them? The only one reason you could have for dropping a nuclear weapon, now, I mean you're not at the end of a long bloody war and you now know the terrible, possible consequences of using nuclear weapons, the Americans were determined to (1.24.00) demonstrate their nuclear, that's why they dropped the bomb, they didn't need to drop the bomb, as we now know, the Japanese were, would've, would've surrendered, were suing for peace, so we now know that they didn't have to drop the bomb, and they knew that, we didn't know that, the general public didn't know, we all

thought it shortened the war, but it didn't, or if it did, it wasn't necessary, the war would've ended anyway. So they wanted to demonstrate their power and, and frighten Russia and what they did, they frightened Russia into making sure they got the nuclear weapon as quick as possible, and frightened everybody else into doing the same thing, North Korea and everybody else. That's so obvious and they don't seem to appreciate that, and I can't, even think America in the circumstances, nobody else had nuclear weapons, why would they drop a nuclear bomb on anybody? What would be the point?

ES: *Do you think people maybe feared it (1.25.00) more in the 1950s and 60s having just seen the destruction of the bomb in Japan?*

JR: Some people, yeah, yeah I think so, I think there was in that period, more, more yeah I think as people understood exactly what had happened, the horror of what happened, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, yeah I think there was a fear. Er, but it affected people in different ways, for some people they might think oh we've got to have the bomb to stop anybody using it on us. So that was the main argument, deterrence. But it's pretty, it's pretty obvious that er, (1.26.00) only a madman would use the bomb, but there are madmen about of course. No, no, no sane person would ever use the bomb, and I can't imagine any, any British Prime Minister saying yeah use the bomb, no.

ES: *What do you remember of, er, the beginning of the 1960s with the Cuban Missile crisis and the events that followed?*

JR: Yeah I remember it well, very well, I was, we organised the day that broke we wanted to, (1.27.00) I tried to get round every group I was convening then, a lot of YCND groups and youth groups in the, in South East London and get round them all. And we wanted people to turn up in their locality, in the afternoon, and then in the evening in, in, what was the evening, in Whitehall or Trafalgar Square I can't remember, a national demonstration and local demonstration, I remember it very well. I don't know what proportion the, I mean there was, everybody who, who kept au fait with the, the papers and the news, but an awful lot of people don't, they don't bother, so they don't know. (1.28.00) I remember it for a number of particular reasons, I do a lot of folk singing, Ewan McCall was a great folk singer, and he lived in Bromley, I knew Ewan, we didn't eye to eye on a number of things but I thought he was a good Socialist, and he was in the Bromley Communist Party and I went and I gate-crashed a meeting at the Bromley Communist Party, I was gate-crashing, and I went in and I said right, this is important I said, tomorrow, the, the we could have a nuclear war on our hands, so we, I want you all out, I want you all everybody, you get all your people out for these demonstrations. And I want you all, tomorrow I want you all in Trafalgar Square at 12 o'clock and they, and er, Mrs Ashworth (1.29.00) who was the Secretary, she said to me, oh we can't do that, she said, I said why not? She said because we've, we we've got a Shakespeare event. They were into culture at the Bromley Communist Party and they had a Shakespearean event that they'd planned and they weren't, I always remember that and I looked at, you're not clearly, and he said I've got to. I don't often tell that story, yes, most of my stories against Ewan are, are the fact that he didn't think that I should sing songs about coal mining cos I hadn't been down a coal mine. I could sing songs about the sea cos I'd been a sailor but he had that, well he had this rule that he didn't apply to himself cos he'd never been down a coal mine and never been to sea, but he sang and wrote some very good songs about coal mining and the sea. So he had a special rule for his, his disciples, I was never a disciple of his but (1.30.00) I admired his stuff, he was very, very, had a great effect on English folk music.

ES: *So, so when you were doing that demonstration in Whitehall or Trafalgar Square, um, who, who was that with, the CND?*

JR: This was the Committee 100, well everybody, I think CND everybody turned up, I think it was universal, I mean yeah, I was in my capacity I was going round in my capacity as a convenor for, I think everybody was turned out for that, every Tom, Dick and Harry that, who could, I can't remember how many were there, a big demonstration. In those days the police always used to lose to some extent, you go on a demonstration and you, you'd get a rough idea of how many people there and you'd read in the paper the

next day and it'd say about a third of that or a quarter of that. The police had their own, their own system for estimating numbers and er, (1.31.00) it was, it was, always finished up far less than ours. They got better at it, they're not quite so bad at it now, they used to seriously and deliberately under, underestimate the number of people at a demonstration. So at the Aldermaston march you see, they, you could always double the number the police gave you, it would be at least twice that many.

ES: *Did the media ever change any other detail of, of marches or demonstration you went on?*

JR: Well yeah, sometimes yeah, sometimes. Er, the Sunday Times wasn't too bad and the Guardian was, yeah different paper would, you could get the Independent and the Observer from time to time. You get, you get, it depends who, who the journalist was, some good journalists, um, and, and there's good journalists (1.32.00) and there's liars. Plenty of people employed by national press, who just make u stories or tell lies according to their, theirs or their master's political objectives.

ES: *So with the, the demonstration around the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, what, what were they aiming for?*

JR: Well, it was very much, er, er, an American thing and our, our, in, in those situations your, your practical objective is to get enough publicity to influence your own government, (1.33.00) in hope that your own, your government will then influence American government. Americans don't go the wrong way, but they like to pretend that they've got support and allies and although they're quite prepared to go it alone on occasion as they often have done, they, they didn't, er, the main reason they didn't, haven't got troops in Syria is because Britain wouldn't, decided against it we think, we think that was a factor, and the reason Britain decided against it was because the overwhelming opposition to it, that was manifest. So it does help, you do have some effect, you don't, we don't have the effect we should have but obviously the classic example is the massive demonstration against the invasion of Iraq (1.34.00), which they ignore because Tony Blair was committed to whatever devil's pact he had with Bush he was committed to supporting him, um, God knows what his reasoning was and I suppose he'll never tell us and he probably doesn't know himself, a rationalised, and gone over it so many times, and his excuse is, you do that you create excuses for something and after time you come to believe them, you don't know what the truth is.

ES: *So at, at that time did people ever worry that nuclear weapons were actually going to be used around the beginning-*

JR: I think at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis there was a genuine fear amongst quite a lot of people that yeah, this was it, this could be the crunch, because it would be something like that wouldn't it? It would be some ridiculous situation in which er, (1.35.00) somebody has to back down and they can't for whatever reason. It could easily have been this situation. Khrushchev was able to back down but it could well have been a scenario in which to back down for him would've been political suicide, would've been the, the, you could imagine, he did the assessment and when you make that assessment you don't just think about what, you don't just think about the good of the world or humanity, you think about your own situation. And his situation in the past and in Russia, his estimate was that he could do this and bring this to his advantage and maybe get the US bases out of Turkey and, and you know, get some concession for it. So he was able to do it, but you could well imagine a situation developing in which the, whoever, let's say I don't know whether it's Kim Il Jong (1.36.00) or somebody or whatever, or the madmen who rule Israel at the moment, you know, won't back down, they're ideologically and politically and practically committed to a course of action and they can't deviate from it and you can, yeah, you can, that's how it would happen if it happens, it would be a combination of circumstances and at the end of the day there are individuals involved and they've got to feel, be able to do the right thing and what, you never know what pressures they're under from what sources, but yeah I think there was genuine fear and justifiable fear that this could be the crunch.

ES: *But was there a great sense of relief when they weren't used?*

JR: Yes, yes there was, there was, there was. And again you think how crazy it is. America was prepared to risk nuclear war to stop (1.37.00) missiles being on a tiny, that could've threatened them being on a tiny, little, now missiles on that tiny little island could not have wiped out the United States. And if they'd ever fired them, Cuba would've been obliterated in seconds, all of it, every living creature in Cuba could be killed in seconds by America, they couldn't do the same. So they didn't, no one ever suggested that Castro was a madman, only reason he wanted nuclear weapons there was because he was afraid, like every other country, like Iran, of America. America's the big bully, America's the one who invaded Cuba, who tried to sab-, assassinate Castro, who's determined to get the mafia back into Cuba, you know doesn't like, can't bear the thought of a Socialist society on the fringes of their empire. Um, megalomania, it's a (1.38.00), it, unbelievable that the special pleading that they resort to, yeah. Amazing isn't it, there's some very nice Americans, I'm going to America shortly to meet some nice Americans, but there, the people who rule them are, are insane I think. Corrupted by power.

RD: Was the fear of nuclear war ever so prevalent that you personally kind of made a plan of what would happen if a bomb was dropped on Britain?

JR: I don't recall making a plan, no. Um, no I don't, I think, I don't think it was ever that prevalent, it was, er, (1.39.00) prevalent or imminent, the Cuba crisis was the only time you thought there was imminent danger, um, rest of the time you think the danger is there but it's not immediate, um, it would happen, there'd be a chain of events that lead up to it and um, that's what happened in Cuba, um, but I didn't make a personal plan about what to do about it, except to continue demonstrating and opposing the policies that lead to it. What was the point in doing anything else really? Nowhere to run to is there?

RD: Well I mentioned it, because interestingly enough I was at the Peace archives at Bradford yesterday and the archivist there told me that he basically didn't work throughout his twenties because he thought the world was going to end at any point, and him and his girlfriend had made a pact that they'd meet each other at the top of the Pennines (1.40.00) if anything were to happen.

JR: Who was this? Not Mike Randall?

RD: No, I'm seeing him in a couple of weeks' time. This was just an archivist at the archives.

JR: Mike was on the committee with me, give him my regards if you see him.

RD: I will do.

JR: Yeah, oh no I never let it stop me living my life. I worked hard and I loved hard and I sang hard and I campaigned hard, and you can't, you can't let these things stop you from living.

ES: So what do you remember of the, the period following that, almost heightened concern over nuclear weapons? A few years after that, what do you remember?

JR: After Cuba you mean? (1.41.00) Um, well I think, in a sense it was after that that the, the, the campaign ran out of steam. All the committed people remained as committed, but you didn't get the same response that we, I think the majority of people have, have sort of side-lined it. There is a danger, there is a possibility, oh it looms, and then it recedes, oh, you can't go on worrying about it, you put it aside. They didn't think the danger (1.42.00) was totally removed, but they don't think it's likely to become imminent again for a long time so I think, in a sense the nuclear movement ran out of steam after Cuba I think – slowed down. The, the, I don't know the figures if there's any figures, I would guess that the rate of er, of um, er, numbers of people joining organisations like CND, certainly the Committee 100 declined after that, and I would guess that CND fell away too although it's had a resurgence since, but, but if Stop The War hadn't been created, CND would've taken on that role I think. But, um, yeah people can't live their lives in fear, or, (1.43.00) or anticipating bad things to happen.

ES: *What did you think of the, the Test Ban Treaty?*

JR: This is another thing that, we would like people to be indignant about, that the, we are ruled by, it seems to me, by frauds, and, and liars. I, I, when I talk about this I get very cross about, we signed a non-proliferations treaty and we've done nothing, which binds us, which requires us to take steps to get rid of, and we're doing nothing about it, we're, we're renewing going to renew Trident. This is what, this is er, the odd thing about the British public, the things we let them get away with, we let them, a certain amount of licence is **(1.44.00)** understandable, we all want to be able to interpret things to suit ourselves, but, but you can't interpret the, a commitment to, to reduce and get rid of, move towards the abolition of nuclear weapons, you, you can't, you can't reconcile that with, with getting more, or renewing them, or making them more efficient, and that's what they're doing all the time. America admittedly has reduced it's, it's, it's, er, the quantity, but it's improved the quality. They're, they're, they didn't need all those thousands of bloody warheads that they've got stowed away, most of them were obsolete, you know, so they just updated them. We've now got, we got rid of all those several hundred bombs at 10 kiloton bombs, but we've now got a 50,000 kiloton bomb that, you know, don't need to wipe out cities now, we can wipe out the whole bloody country. **(1.45.00)** I think they're working on, waiting until they've got a bomb that'll take out the whole of North Korea in one go. That might be the next danger. And that's what they work on you see, that the bomb did not deter North Korea, it just made North Korea determined, whatever the cost were to get this nuclear weapon, which they did and then they threatened America as well with it because they're run by unstable people. So what's America going to do? They're not going to retaliate against these people who've actually got the bomb that they could actually deliver, until they feel they're in a position to do so, and that's what they'll be work, they'll have people working away now, teams of people on, on how to take out North Korea, how to fight North Korea without letting them use the bomb, so there might be various plans, but one of them it seems to me would be to have a big enough bomb to take out the whole country. **(1.46.00)**

ES: *So you don't think the steps taken to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons in the 1960s were very effective?*

JR: No, no, totally ineffective. Haven't, course they, what we've seen? We've seen a constant spread haven't we from exactly what we said in the, in the, in the 50s that the, if we don't get rid of it, every country in the world is going to want the bomb, and they're going to get it. People, and that's what happened, they get it and some, some admit to having it, and some pretend they haven't got, like Israel they pretended, I don't know if they're still pretending, but for years pretended they hadn't got it, and locked up for Mordechai Vanunu for blowing the whistle on them. And America does that, they persecute their own people too, who blow the whistle. **(1.47.00)** There should not be any bombs, and if there was a bomb, it ought to be under international control. Retained for use against aliens from outer space if they ever come, but then we wouldn't know where to send it would we. We don't need a bomb.

RD: *Do you mind if I go back and ask you just a few things about some of the things you've mentioned?*

JR: Yeah.

RD: *So you kind of keep talking about the pamphlets and the literature and everything that was going round, and I didn't realise until yesterday when I was in the archives just how prevalent these were as a mean of communications. And can you tell me, kind of what, for you, um, about the importance of pamphlets, and what they meant and kind of how they worked?*

JR: Er, yeah, we didn't, we didn't have the internet, we had, pamphlets were **(1.48.00)** very er, um, common and, and useful. We did the thing, I mean I was always, throughout the sixties and seventies I was a pamphleteer, I churned out pamphlets, and, and, and we did collective ones of the Committee we did lots of that. We did what we called the 'Black Papers', have you come across them? You know the government does the 'White Paper' and we did the 'Black Papers' and we were, were, whistle blowing exercise again, we ferreted out information from various sources that the government didn't want you to know or never

drew attention to, and we, about the effects of nuclear weapons and where they were, er, what they could do and had done and where they were stored and so on, and we circulated them, um. Another very useful pamphlet what was it called (1.49.00), and of course 'Spies for Peace' I mentioned, that was quite an important document. And er, yeah, there was, I used to have a vast collection of them, I think I, I think I may have lost them in one of my moves at some point. I kept them all at one point, um, or kept all the ones that I wrote anyway, as you do – vanity. (laughs) Don't know where they are now, might be in the attic.

RD: *While today I suppose that leaflets are very disposable, I got the impression that these pamphlets would be kind of passed between houses to houses and um, kind of passed on to the people who could read them and pass them on.*

JR: Oh yeah, yeah, they were, yeah, yeah. I'm sure they were, yeah. My, in those, back then my house was always full of pamphlets. (1.50.00) My, my, er, my daughter was telling me the other day that she, that she's, she got her political education from all the literature that what lying around, I mean we, we'd talk as well, but she said I read all the stuff, she read all the stuff but she, she read all the stuff that came in our house. She remembered when she was going to school, she would write essays and the teacher would say how on earth, where on earth did you learn about that, and where did you, where did you get that from, who taught you that word or? You know, all from the pamphlets that her dad brought home or wrote, yes she got a good political education. Yeah there, there is, there was, they will have a whole collection of them I'm sure they have, yeah. Yeah.

ES: *Do you think they were important in encouraging people to join in with the protests and demonstrations?*

JR: Yeah I think so, yeah. (1.51.00) People read more, like now some read I suppose but, I read more, I read less now, my eyes aren't as good as they were, but er, I read voraciously.

RD: *Other than literature, how would you kind of recruit people to the cause?*

JR: I think throughout, throughout the sixties, quite apart from all the national meetings, Committee 100 and CND, we'd meet always central – Conway Hall and Friends Meeting House or Camden and Islington. There'd be lots of local meetings and I'd certainly convene, when I lived in Beckenham I used to convene local meetings in Beckenham, in Penge, in Bromley (1.52.00) and I used to, er, every Saturday I would take a step ladder and stand up first on Bromley High Street and then outside Bromley Station and harangue people for an hour or two. And we had people doing that all over the place, we had a lot of street, street, er, meetings. Got arrested on one of them too, in Beckenham, I'd been doing it for a year, then suddenly the police came along one day and decided to er, move me on and I refused to move so they arrested me. Charged me with obstruction and I brought lots of people to the court to prove that they weren't obstructed, and did a diagram to show you know the pavement was quite wide and there was room for people to move, and er, magistrate said to me, 'Mr Radford', he said, 'do you know giving me all this evidence', he said, (1.53.00) 'the fact that no one was obstructed is irrelevant', he said, 'you were charged with obstruction by the police and therefore you're guilty'. I said hang on, but he said, 'if you're charged with obstruction that means in the police's opinion you are causing obstruction, if in their opinion you're causing obstruction and you don't move, then you're, you're guilty'. You don't have to, they don't have to prove that anyone was actually obstructed. It's like, a number, I'd written a lot about court cases I was involved in. I was involved in a court case once and er, I was explaining my motive and the magistrate said to me, he said 'Mr Radford, your motives are completely unimportant', this was another obstruction charge, different situation. He said, 'I'm not interested in your motives', I said 'what are you, you're telling me you're not interested in my motives', (1.54.00) I said, 'are you telling me', I said, 'that if I had been charged with breaking a car window, and I, my motive was that there was a child suffocating in the backseat of the car, that that would be irrelevant?'. And he, he had no answer to that you see, they come up with nonsensical statements. Of course your motives are important, of course it matters what you're doing. If you're, if you're thumping somebody on their back because they've got something stuck in their throat, it is different from thumping

them on the back because you don't like them, or (laughs), I mean all kinds of situations in which your motive is crucial, but then they don't, they don't, it applies, and they know that, but they, they only apply this to political things, if you, if your motive is to draw people's attention to a danger that they don't want, that they don't recognise, or don't want to, or think is political. Magistrates are very incompetent on the whole **(1.55.00)**. I had a case in, in, er, Stratford Magistrates Court, when I was part of the squatting movement, where I turned up to court and a magistrate, in a very small courtroom and wouldn't allow the press or the public in, and start the case, I said 'Hang on a minute, before we start', I said, 'where are the press and the public, I know they're here', I said, 'because they came with me. There's 50 people come with me, and a couple of journalists, where are they?'. 'Oh there's no room for them'. I said, 'In that case there won't be a hearing,' I said. She didn't know the law you see, she did not know, that she is required by law to admit the public and the press. So we had, fortunately I had a clerk tell her, and had to backtrack and move some tables back so they could get the press in and **(1.56.00)** a couple of the public. But they can't, they can't, magistrates can't conduct their hearings in private. Not allowed to.

ES: When you were recruiting people, when you were in the street talking, um, how did the public react to you? Did anyone ever say anything?

JR: Yeah, yeah, yeah you'd get heckled sometimes, but by and large you'd get a response, and mostly you'd get people listen, you can see whether they agree or not and you can recruit people. In um, Bromley and Beckenham I recruited a lot of people for the peace movement through street meetings, I used to, I was known for, I'd pop up in various places and yeah, people knew me and er, yeah, we recruited quite a lot of people. And you'd occasionally get the odd opposition from somebody but that led to an interesting discussion or debate **(1.57.00)**. And that quite often happened and enabled you to see where your support was, you'd get some argument going and then other people would join in and you'd see where, where your support was.

ES: And what, what was it that people would say if they opposed you, what were their reasons?

JR: Oh, they're nearly always on, on, on similar lines, you could almost tell which paper they read, you know they're, they're... You're a communist and they're anti-communist, or, or er, or you're a terrorist or the, some cliché that they'd taken from the, the right-wing press and they've applied to you. Don't usually get, don't often get coherent arguments. **(1.58.00)** Hyde Park Corner, I cut my teeth with public speaking in Hyde Park Corner for the National Secular Society, I used to go up there with them every week, you get some well-informed hecklers there, sometimes catch you out you know.

RD: And can you tell me a bit about your personal experience with any individual policemen that you remember?

JR: Yeah there were quite a few, I have been threatened with violence by policemen on a number of occasions. I mean I've been roughly treated, I haven't been, I haven't been attacked. I've been dragged by the feet when it was unnecessary through, through a muddy, Por Ton Down, is the German warfare place, the police there **(1.59.00)** seemed to take delight and... The technique, they arrest you, you go limp, you don't assist them, so, so then they drag you and well, sensible policemen would grab you by the arms, a nasty policeman would grab the feet to get you covered in mud and stuff. So I've had some rough treatment and the, the first time I was, er, er, that time I was arrested with Bertrand Russell and did the week remand in Brixton because I wouldn't give my name, before they sent me to Brixton, this er, this Special Branch fella came into the cell, I think it was at Marlborough Street Station I was at, and er, tried to bully me in to giving my name and details, and er, when I refused got quite, he didn't get violent, but he got, he wanted to frighten me into thinking he was going to get violent so he clenched his fists and er, and grabbed hold of me and warned me of what the consequences were **(2.00.00)** and I told him to get lost and he didn't follow through. And a billion situations, sometimes it's very clear than a policeman is getting, is trying to arrest you, so I remember one occasion, think it was in um, where was it? It was, some public space near Downing Street, it was a demonstration and I was speaking and this policeman, I can't remember what he wanted me to do, but

he obviously wanted me to shut up, but um, but he'd clearly made up his mind to arrest me, I don't know why I fall on that conclusion, but I did at the time, and you and er, (2.01.00) so he approached me to arrest me, and I had, so I had to back off down the street, I didn't want to be arrested at that particular time, so I backed up down the street and drew attention to it, because he was, I said 'this is what's happening, this policeman is about to arrest me on the grounds that.. so and so, so and so (whatever it was), which clearly is not the case, on the grounds of provocative behaviour,' that's right, he was accusing me he was trying, he was trying to suggest that I was using threatening behaviour and um, what's the word he used anyway, I'm going to arrest you and I knew he'd made up his mind to arrest me. I said, 'I'm not being threat, threatening behaviour, I'm not doing any of these things, as everybody here can see'. So you do this, you get witnesses – 'so I would like a few witnesses to come forward please if I am arrested, give their names to my friends here' and then he backed off with that. So sometimes you've got to, got to be noisy (2.02.00) and a bit aggressive so, to deter, if you didn't want to be arrested, I didn't want to be arrested on that occasion for some reason. Um, and then, there was a good, some policemen are alright. The very first token squat we did to launch the squatting campaign with which I was centrally involved in, we, we took, took over an old vicarage in, in er, East London somewhere, empty, been empty for years, so token, so we decided to put people in for a weekend and get some publicity, before the squatting campaign, before we started taking, so I got all the press down there and announced that we're going to occupy this house to draw attention to the fact this house has been empty for ten years, it's a perfectly good house, it's a vicarage, and it's going to be pulled down at one point, we don't know when, but meantime it's empty and this is in a council that's got X number of homeless families that they turn away, why not put one, (2.03.00) a couple of these families in this house. This was, this was our logic, our reasoning, our argument. So I, to get that message across I put half a dozen people in the house and announced we were going to do it you see. So when we did it, we got the people in the house, but the police arrived before we could get all the equipment in, so we struck, so upstairs, so I was throwing stuff upstairs, so I'd thrown the sleeping bag up to a lad in the, so 'Catch this' and as I threw it up, this policeman came and stood in front of me, so I piece of string tied round the sleeping bag brushed his helmet. And he said 'ah I've got you now! Assaulting an officer, arrest him!' Assaulting a police officer you see, so the, the large group was very indignant about this so they mobbed, they tried to stop him arresting me and er, and I got, I had a loud, I'd appealed to him and said 'no, don't get yourself arrested,' I said, (2.04.00) 'and don't, don't, don't, I appeal for calm and non-violence,' you see. Unfortunately one of the lads who was trying to stop me being arrested, a young student, he got arrested and charged with assault as well. And that was the case when I went to Stratford Magistrates Court and made them let in the press and I wanted to do that because of this young student who was going to be done and er, unfortunately he got found, he went, they had to acquit me because, because I had, a hundred witnesses to explain what had happened, and it was nonsense to say you'd assaulted a policemen and this, this young lad got done for assault because he'd tried to wrestle me free from the policeman. It's rather sad, does not look good on his record, didn't matter on mine. Yeah.

RD: Did you ever meet any policemen that were sympathetic to the anti-nuclear cause?

JR: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yes (2.05.00). Had one in, in, in Slough, one of the lads who, um, in my Humanist Action Group in Slough was a policeman. Be back in a minute, loo. [Paused] Where were we?

RD: Talking about sympathetic policemen.

JR: Yeah, yes, I've come across them, one or two. Not a lot, but a few.

RD: And, and the big topic which we haven't covered in much detail is your music, and-

JR: What's that got to do with it? That's not relevant is it?

RD: Well I was wondering how much, um, your music and other music at the time was influenced by and influenced protest?

JR: Well, I mean, I always have been into folk music. I didn't become sort of (2.06.00) known as a folk singer until I retired really, but I've always been into it and we used, a lot of our meetings in the sixties and seventies were in folk clubs, and we had this famous folk club in central London, the Partisan Bar, which we used to meet in and er, a lot of folk singers supported us. Um, and of course there's some very powerful song, and then Dylan appeared of course, when Bob Dylan first appeared his first albums were very, fantastically relevant to what we were doing, so we, we, we hail him as a, as a, one of us, um, and now, now, I usually, um, do this thing for CND at the Hiroshima Day demonstration, I usually sing at Tavistock Square, that's a, that's an event. I can't be there this year because I'll be in America, but I've got two other guys coming (2.07.00) almost as good as me (laughs)

RD: And can you tell me about the presence of music in the early Aldermaston marches?

JR: Yeah, that, well I mean there was a lot of singing on the marches, we did a lot, and some good songs were written, and different groups, I mean, I remember the Scottish CND used to come down and they had a lot of really good songs you know, er, Scottish songs, anti-Polaris songs and er, yeah. Yeah some very good songs, and of course we used to get the Spanish civil war veterans used to come on the march, so we learnt all the old Spanish civil war songs from them, which I didn't know before, so we still sing them, but yeah some really good songs, um.

RD: And what effect did music have on the march? (2.08.00)

JR: Well I think it was, a, a unifying thing, isn't it, it's like if you, whenever you do things together, and if people sing together, they feel, they feel, it's a, it's a tie, a cord between you. I remember one particular Aldermaston march, um, and for some reason, we didn't finish up in Trafalgar Square, well we did finish up in Trafalgar Square but a round-a-bout route, round the Embankment and coming up to, um, where were we going up to? Coming up to the Houses of Parliament from the Embankment don't know why we went that way but some, er, and the police didn't want us to go that way, they wanted, (2.09.00) they didn't want us to go past the Houses of Parliament, and we wanted to, and so we were, we needed get the whole, and they wanted to restrict us to half the road, and remember, I don't know whether it's deliberate or not, we swelled up to cover the whole road, we massed up. We wanted to be, go past the Houses of Parliament, and the police were trying to stop us on diverter, or pushing back on the one side to send us down one of the side streets, we didn't want to go. And what made it, in my view, what made it very effective were to, unified the march to follow the leader, the leaders, four, was the fact that we got them singing 'We Shall Overcome' and that's a very powerful song, and if you're singing that (2.10.00), you're not going to take police direction to deviate you from your route, you're going to, you're going to go where you want to go, where you're being, where you're, you're group is going and that worked very well. I remember that – took the whole road and we were singing that very loudly and passionately and we went straight past the Houses of Parliament. Yes, music is a powerful thing, and powerful force.

RD: And was there a kind of a fashion, in terms of clothing, um, that people would kind of adhere to etc. So for instance I was speaking to Carl Dallas..?.. and he said that he was very into fashion and he'd always, um, be very conscious of what he was wearing on the marches and he knew other people would specifically dress up for the marches because they didn't want people to think it was a kind of rag tag group.

JR: Er, I'm sure that's true, I wasn't particularly aware of it, I, I, (2.11.00) I didn't, I didn't dress up, no, I always wore a red neckerchief so people could identify, recognise, you know for a recognition thing but, I, apart from that I didn't dress up. I, I, always remember (paused). We were talking about, talking about, I was going to give you an example of something.

RD: Fashion?

JR: What was the last question?

RD: Was it, was it about fashion or did we move on?

JR: Oh yeah, fashion, fashion, was it fashion? Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, no, I don't, I think I wasn't aware, but I think people mostly dressed casual on the, on the Aldermaston march because they were, they were going on a long hike. But I always remember the, there was, always a chap on the early Aldermaston marches, he was, went up to him a couple times, two or three years he turned up, (2.12.00) and he always turned up in, in a full business suit with a collar and tie, carrying a briefcase. And we always, we always remarked on it because he looked so odd, the only, he wouldn't have looked, I worked in Fleet Street at the time and he looked like hundreds of people walking about wearing a briefcase and a collar and tie, but not on the Aldermaston march, but this chap didn't, he did the whole way, he went the whole way, and, and never saw him carrying a sleeping bag or anything, never saw him wearing a backpack, he just had a briefcase and collar and tie and didn't think he had a bowler hat, but still wearing bowlers in the sixties, they were. No, mostly casual, I was, as I say my only concession to it was to wear the red, red neckerchief. So, so my gang could know where I was.

RD: And you were talking about these, um, CND lollipops that you made (2.13.00).

JR: Yeah, yeah.

RD: And can you just tell me a bit about the process of making, of kind of banner making, is it, is it kind of a group, is it a group activity, or...?

JR: It can be, it was in my case, that wasn't that, er, yeah, you would have groups to make banners and placards. I always carried a Floormaster, you know what a Floormaster is? It's like a pen, with an inkwell, with a very broad nib so you can do, you can write half-inch letters, write, felt nib that you put in, and you, you take out your pocket, unscrew it, and I can do placards with half inch letter and if, if you look up old pictures of me with placards, I was, I was very, always making placards, but those ones I made with er, in my garage in Beckenham, I made er. The march of shame was the last big (2.14.00) demonstration that the Committee 100 did in 1966, and I was, er, largely responsible for it, it was my idea and it was my, er, this was one where we, a Vietnam thing, where I got the Queen and the and Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson on the platform at Trafalgar Square all people impersonating them to give confession, public confession. And, and it was the only, the first march ever that went from the, not ever, first march since before the war that went from East London to Trafalgar Square. We went from Collins Street where the anti-fascist march, where the Eastender's stopped Moseley's march there from, from er, from there to Trafalgar Square over Tower Bridge and it was a very successful (2.15.00) demonstration and the reason it was successful was because two days before, I was a bit worried about it because as I said support was falling away and we, and people getting a bit jaded with demonstrations and I was a bit worried no one would turn out. But two days before it happened, a commission of police called, summoned me to Scotland Yard to ask me about this demonstration, they wanted to know, he said, 'you can't impersonate the Queen', I said, 'well we're going to', 'So what are you going to say? What are you going to say?' I thought, oh 'I haven't written the speech yet', I said. I wrote all the speeches and I'm not going to tell you anyway. He said, 'well in that case I can't allow this', he said, 'I'm going to have to ban this demonstration'. Course they often did that, commissioner's instructions, you could ban things at short notice, so he said, er, I said 'I'm sorry about that, you see, I'm going to ban the (2.16.00) demonstration', and it was very good because I went out there, exulting you see, to the first phone books to ring up the Press Association and writers and say, 'right, just told me this demonstration is banned but it's going ahead' so, cos I knew instantly that everybody, all those hundreds of thousands of people who might think oh not another demonstration, I'm not going to, when they read in the paper the next day it was banned, they would turn out, and so it proved. So we not only had 10,000 people coming over Tower Bridge, we had another 10,000 waiting in the Square, so it was a good demonstration. That, that, that I did a lot of placards for that. Yeah, um, what do you want to know about making placards? The, these were rather special, I cut the lollipops out of hardboard and put the board on, I use fluorescent stick on paper to make the stripes, I might have one somewhere.

RD: Speaking of the police, you just reminded me of something you said earlier. (2.17.00) When you said that they raided your house and you hid the original copy under the carpet, what was their justification for raiding your house?

JR: This was, er, if they could've caught, they were looking for the people who had broken into this RSG and stolen documents and, no doubt if they'd caught any of them, or if they'd found me with the pamphlets they would've charged me as an accessory or something, er, it was, against the Official Secrets Act, obviously breaking and entering was against the law, but disseminating information that was restricted under the Official Secrets Act would be an offence, so they could have had us for that, yeah, they, they always had an excuse. I always remember I had a, in that house as in this house, when I come, I always put trap doors in the floor, we've got trap doors in every room. There's a 4 foot (2.18.00) space under here and there was there, and it was a bit, when I lived in Beckenham, a bit prone to flooding so it didn't flood the house, but it did flood, water got underneath and they took up the trap door, and when they saw this trap door, ah they said, and they went and they crawled all under the house and they came out covered in mud (laughs), and they didn't find anything, but, they, they did the same thing when, um, I mentioned Terry Chandler before didn't I? He did, he was a printer in the peace movement, an anarchist, and Terry had, during the Vietnam Campaign he did, um, we, we printed off for the, for the action group, tens of thousands of litho printer you print anything you see, a US dollar, a dollar bill, faxed a dollar bill, same size, oh actually maybe even slightly larger, but it had a box on it (2.19.00), and the box said 'is this worth all the slaughter and genocide in Vietnam?' so it was clearly an advertising thing, and what we used to do with them, we used to go to things like football matches, or I remember doing Selfridges in, in, in, Oxford Street, going up in Selfridges up on the stairs to the top floor at the window and throwing them out in the rush hour, so they scattered like snow and stopped the traffic and everybody goes to pick up these, what look like dollar bills you see, 'til they pick them up and look at them then they realise it's, so it was clearly a stunt, and very effective. But the police raided me and various other people to try and find the source of them and when they raided my house they couldn't find any, but they rifled through the bookshelf taking books out and shaking them, and they stopped halfway, and (2.20.00) there was a tin on one of the shelves. If they'd opened the tin it was full of them. If they'd looked in my garage the floor was thick with them because kids used them like monopoly money to play games with and they played in the garage and they never looked. And he, he stopped there and he said, 'look where are they Jim? You must have some!' I said, 'well if I did I haven't got them now' I said (laughs), and they didn't search, very desultory search. But they were, were um, yeah they search, they'd sent over, the American government had sent over a FIB or whatever, Treasury Official, to track down the source of these, and arrest Terry Chandler, no secret, no secret that he'd done it so they were after Terry and he had to go on the run for a couple of years, because they were going to take him and get him extradited to America and charge him with fraud, counterfeit, making counterfeit money. And we said, so when the police, I said 'that's nonsense, he's gone the wrong colour, he's got the wrong paper, and he's got a big box (2.21.00) on it saying this', he said 'ah yes' he said 'but people have been passing these in nightclubs in the dark you know, nightclubs'. I suppose that's just feasible, but I doubt it, I suppose it's just feasible somebody, some idiotic barman in a nightclub might've taken one without looking carefully at it if they take dollars, I don't know that they take dollars do they in night, maybe they do, anyway that was their story. Yeah we had thousands of them, they were very effective, especially scattered from high buildings.

RD: And can you just tell me a bit about your time in prison as a, as a result of the Committee of 100, um, demos? So were you treated as a kind of, put this in air quotes 'normal prisoner', or if you were in there for a political reason were you treated differently?

JR: The week I spent in remand, er, (2.22.00) we were treated quite badly I think, um, I think they, they depends on the screws you know but they, they regarded us as, as, I don't know what they regarded us as they didn't say but I suppose they, they must have had different political opinions but they made sure that we had ill-fitting clothes with no belt so you had to hold your trousers up all the time. Um, at the time I was, um, prone to asthma attacks, and so they didn't let, get me any medication or let me have any, so I wasn't treated very well. The second time, the second time was a Vietnam thing, the Vietnam protest but was again a Committee 100, we were all Committee 100 people, and um, again the, the (2.23.00) screws were pretty

distant and I had problems with them, but most of the prisoners knew what we were in for, and were quite supportive, you know we did not, um, because it was in the papers and they'd read, read the papers where people come to see, oh yeah, yeah you're the guy that shouted Harold Wilson, yeah that's right, you know, so there was a good amount, fair amount of support from the inmates, who weren't er, we didn't have any problems there. Any problems were with the screws.

RD: And would you receive any support from the outside world in terms of fan mail?

JR: Oh when, the second time, yeah, yeah, first time yes, I got some letters of support, the second time I got every week, every weekend there was a massive demonstration outside the prison, the people (2.24.00) would meet at Brixton tube station and march up the hill to the prison and demonstrate outside and we could hear them from our cells, we couldn't actually see them, we could hear them shouting and they, they had a badge for Nick Moulton and Jim, Free Nick Moulton and Jim Radford freed, the Brixton Two (laughs). Yeah there was a lot of support and the pamphlet I did called 'Indecency in Church', peace news printed it and they had to reprint it twice. They did 5,000 first and they had to reprint it twice while we were inside, because demand was so great, and they, they did it again later. Yeah we got a lot of support there, and when we came out there was a big, big crowd and all the press there to meet us and all my kids now have got a picture of me and the kids coming up to give me a hug when we came out, there on the mantelpiece, (2.25.00) I haven't got one here. I've got a picture in there that was on the front page of The Sun just before we went to jail, The Sun, which wasn't such a right-wing rag then, it was fairly new, and it was still in slightly in the style of the old Daily Herald, which it had been, so it wasn't a right-wing rag it was, and, and they did, they did a, a front page story, said, 'Should this family man go to jail?', which is very sympathetic, to you know, really pointing to the absurdity of the system which puts people in jail for expressing their opinion. Yeah.

RD: And what was your day in the life like when you were in jail? What were the kind of usual activities that you were expected to do?

JR: Well first of all you get up in the morning and you get your, your, your breakfast, after you'd had your breakfast you line up in the hall, and then you deter off and there's (2.26.00) a desk, it was the prison officer, the principal officer's stand and he delegates people. I complained, I was complained on one occasion to, um, complained to the Governor, um, I had been allegedly loitering on one of the gangways, and I was, bullied and threatened by this screw, it was against the regulations to loiter, and so I said to him 'how do you expect me to know that?' he said, 'it's all in the regulations'. I said, 'well how do you expect me to know the regulations?' so I complained anyway and I saw the Governor and I said to the Governor, I said, a couple of times, a couple of things have happened (2.27.00) and I've been told, threatened, I hadn't been punished, but I'd been threatened with punishment or, or, or repercussions if I don't stop doing, if I don't do something, I don't stop doing something, so, which I'm told are in the regulations, but I haven't been given the regulations and so, what, where's the regulations? 'Oh,' he said, 'here's the regulations', I said, 'where can I see them?' he said er, he said, um, he said, 'good point,' he said, 'I'll put them up, I'll have them put up on the wall in the hall'. So he did, and put them on the wall, pinned up on the wall the, various regulations that govern what you can do inside the prison, the rules, all of which, you know, you've got to obey or you can be punished. So next morning when we line up at the desk, well the morning that he did it I saw these things on the wall, so I went across to look at them (2.28.00), whereupon I was threatened by the Principal Officer, 'Get back in line!' I said, 'But I want to read the regulations!', 'You can't read the regulations!' (laughs) so I, I complained about that to the Governor again and er, he didn't do anything about, but one of the things I brought up in my correspondence with Chalfont afterwards is this story, and I told this story, and the Guardian printed it, and I said, and the upshot of that was that they did one of the changes we brought about, Nick and I did, was that after that they decided to give every prisoner entering the prison a copy of the regulation and the rules, the internal rules of the prison. And because I found out before that, lots and lots of prisoners, I talked about, had, had been punished, had been restricted or had, had privileges withdrawn for disobeying regulations (2.29.00) that they didn't know existed, obviously a ridiculous situation, so, so one of

the changes we were on about was that, that they each got a copy of the regulations, but yeah, need to complain, lots of nasty things go on in prison that you don't want to know about.

RD: *Is there anything you feel we should've asked you or that we've missed from this period?*

JR: Well I'm not sure what you're, what you're going do, I'm not sure what you're going to do with this information, what you're, what, what, I'm ready to assist you in any way I can, but what, what's, what's your, give me a vague outline on what's going to, what's going to be the result.

RD: *So we'll take the transcripts from these interviews and if anything kind of comes up in the interviews that we don't know about we'll kind of research that with another team (2.30.00) of volunteers, and then this research and these transcripts will be brought together and there'll be a kind of team of, kind of drama explorers, who will go through this information that we've gathered, and think about how they can interpret that and create theatre from it and kind of turn it into a script.*

JR: Theatre? So, yeah, so yeah.

RD: *So that's why it's really interesting for us to get the kind of personal memories and the things that make it three dimensional and the things that we can't read in a textbook about, the kind of the effects on the music on you and that's why we've been asking about that.*

JR: Mm, mm, we used street theatre a lot. Um, not a lot, not, every now and then we used street theatre. There was, there was a group called, um, Red Ladder, you ever come across them? (2.31.00) Were run by a Canadian girl called Cathy something who worked for a Canadian Broadcasting corporation but she ran Red Ladder in her spare time, and I used them a lot, mostly in Secular Association but we used them, them, or their techniques certainly on quite a number of demonstrations. One of the things that we did in the, um, in the Vietnam, anti-Vietnam war period, um, quite often we used, for instance I wanted to demonstrate outside, um, Australia House, Australians were involved in Vietnam, they sent troops. Um, they sent troops to Vietnam and I took up the, I digress briefly, there was, was a young lad who I think was called MacDonald, something MacDonald, (2.32.00) an Australian soldier who refused, volunteered but refused to go and fight in Vietnam, and he was court marshalled and imprisoned. I always remember it cos, and the judge who imprisoned him said, in sentencing him said, 'we can't have soldiers deciding which war they will fight in, which war they won't'. And I wrote a big, I used to write for a magazine called Help at the time, I wrote a big piece about this that was taken up elsewhere and said this is precisely the issue you know, as human beings, sentient, thinking people I, this is the right that we must all demand. We can't have other people telling us which wars to fight, we must only fight the wars that we think are just. You know, no man should be forced to fight in a war that they think is unjust, and that, that was a closed case to me, and so I wrote about it. Anyway, so, I organised (2.33.00) a demonstration outside Australia House to draw attention to this, and in order to publish this, what I did was I got a lot of people dressed up in sort of, as um, um, well with, coney hats on and so on, so Vietnamese, in smocks and things, and then got other people in surplus army uniform with the American guard and we marched them down the Strand, Australia House is near Aldwych, marched them down the Strand, and er, as prisoners, and we treated them, and as, as the Americans did in Vietnam, and to make it very realistic we had these rubber clubs, foam clubs, that looked very real, and every now and then the guard would beat the prisoners with them and they'd fall down, and we had blood on them and everything. Quite effective, as an awful lot of people were quite taken by this, amazed (2.34.00) by this, they couldn't believe what they were seeing. We took them down the Strand to Australia House and tortured them outside, on the pavement outside Australia House, they were being tortured and screaming whilst I was explaining through a loudspeaker, that this is what Australian troops were being required to do in Vietnam and what were they doing there and it was very effective demonstration. So street theatre is quite a useful tool, we used it on one or two occasions in the Committee.

RD: *Brilliant. Thank you very much. Do you have any other questions?*

JR: No I don't, that's it. Thank you.

RD: Brilliant, so I'll just pop this in here. (2.34.45)