

**Continuation of the third interview with
Jean van Riet at Baralong Farm,
Excelsior, Free State, on 14 September 1998,
conducted by David Welsh and Peter Brown**

(‘J’ shall signify the Interviewee and ‘D’ (David) and ‘P’ (Peter), the Interviewers.)

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J: And as I say then Pat was our Chairman and we had a letter from a policeman from Ladybrand, a - who wanted to join the party and we immediately wrote him and said he was - get into the Party - but we very soon find out - oh and when they searched my house - over here - looking through my - they found this correspondence of this chap you know - this van der Westhuisen - when the police searched my house you see - there was this - this correspondence with van der Westhuisen and they took that away I think that - because we never heard again - so the bastards - it was a bloody plant you see ...

D: Ja of course.

J: It was a plant - yes, yes - and we never heard of him again - ja we never heard of him - it was very a - it was difficult those days to - to find - there was so much prejudice against - you couldn't find halls to meet and somebody would let us have - or - so we used to meet in the Anglican Church in Bloemfontein - Bailey was the - the pastor there and very nice people and we have meetings over there and then we have meetings at Pat's place at Riverside Lodge - that's on the border of Basutoland and the bridge over there and then we also had meetings at Michael Bolero - that - that...that you've just found, yes.

D: Oh yes...

J: Yes, we had this - we used to have meetings at his place and then we had meetings at Holwood - Horice Coker? He - he - he was in Maseru? And we went to have meetings over there in Maseru. That was - then of course, during that time of course you have warnings and some time people would 'phone - just bogus stuff and things like that - just making things you know nasty like - well that's about as far as my politics go I think - really. And ah...

1 D: When did they raid you?

2 J: Mmm?

3 D: When did the police raid - uh?

4 J: Oh, I'll have to look that up - I've got it over there..

5 D: Was it just once or did it happen...

6 J: Well, they came over here - I was out on the grounds - on the farm and I came back to the
7 house - I saw there was a big Pretoria car standing in front of the house over here and I saw
8 there were two people on the stoep there was having tea with my wife so I came in - I said
9 'Good day, Good day.' And I greeted them you know and we had some tea together and they
10 said 'Well, ' they said they have instructions to search my house. 'Oh.' I said 'Yes,' I said
11 'have you got the authority?' 'Yes, oh yes.' They had the authority. I said 'Well I've got
12 nothing to hide - you can come and have a look wherever you like.' And that's fine - they
13 go to my room in my desk over there - and they got all the correspondence you know and I
14 had a little packet of stuff - that if you make a fire - like here - you put that on and it burns
15 nicely - it burns quickly now - so they took that you know - I suppose they think the ? should
16 blow up something or - They took that and they took this correspondence with - of - of van
17 der Westhuisen you know - but the other - there was nothing about it - I said 'It's a legitimate
18 Party and there was nothing.' And there was the Rivonia - the Rivonia - uh - Trial business -
19 they took it - I had a copy of that - they took that and they took the other - which they gave
20 me a receipt for and afterwards returned. But it was not long when they were back here again
21 and I still said to them 'Heavens alive - why do you come all the way from Pretoria? You
22 want to go - why don't you ask the police here to do something for you? Look at the expense
23 it costs - it costs an arm - and I'm - I've got to pay taxes - I've got to pay taxes for rubbish
24 like this you know.' 'Huh.' So - now they've got to search my house - a search warrant.
25 Right. So now they go and they go through and they raid - they take - they had authority to
26 take my passport - they take my pass - I said 'Why?' I said 'What is the reason?' Oh they
27 can't give - they don't give a reason. So I said 'Do you mind taking a letter back to the - to
28 the authorities, I want to know what the reason why.' And I wrote a letter and they still took
29 the letter to the ? and I got a reply - the whole lot is here - and then my passport was taken

1 and they said 'That's it's not necessary for the department to give me reason for withdrawing
2 the passport and that sort of thing.' And then I had to deal with this chap - Buys - he was the
3 secretary - Advocate Buys - he was the Secretary for Internal Affairs and of course he's really
4 the big boss under the government name and somebody - after a couple of years then to
5 George and my farm eventually after a long time they gave me three days to visit the farm
6 for three - I've got to go six hundred miles to Masematche - so far to my farm - for three days
7 - to go - 'What the hell can you do in three days?' you know. And a couple of - I got a
8 special pass for a couple of times and after a couple of years then I got my passport back and
9 when I got back then I went over to the States to visit those people - the friends I told you
10 about -uh - anyway what was I ah ...? Um, yes, yes, well Pat was a great fellow, absolutely.
11 Uh, yes, and this - man I'm not sure whether it was Dr Menture or Maggie - but I think it was
12 Maggie - they had a big meeting on the Parade and that must have been in 1950. I think -
13 before the Party - 1951 - they had a big parade - there was a lot of people - I don't know how
14 many - but there were many and I was asked to address this too - I think through Maggie I
15 think - so she - Maggie had a lot to do with civil rights.

16 D: Civil Rights League - yes.

17 J: Ja. and I knew Maggie quite a long time - as a matter of fact they made me an honorary
18 member and then and I got up to speak and I spoke in Afrikaans and immediately I spoke
19 they booed and I stopped and Maggie took the microphone and she took the microphone and
20 there was quiet - and said 'Though this is an Afrikaner speaking - he's speaking - he's on our
21 side.' Just like that - jesem, and then they listened to me and they would after - I think - quite
22 a number of them came over to shake my hand - and this - at the meeting - here at the Grand
23 Parade. Now this - when my passport was taken - hell man, it put me into a predicament -
24 because my farms that I wanted to see over here so I pestered and pestered them so one day
25 I went again and I went to Pretoria to - to go and see this chap - Advocate Buys - and I said
26 to him, I said 'Chum.. Come on.' I said 'you know you know you'll come along with me
27 today.' And we got to him and we got to him in the office over there and his secretary - we
28 had to wait a quarter of an hour or so before we were allowed to go in, you know. So we
29 went in my wife with me - and he's a big office - desk well back over there - nice big desk

1 you know and the carpet that ? so I walk in - and as we walked in he got up from his desk -
 2 because I had been there a couple of times already - he came - you see - he came towards us -
 3 but before greeting hy se vir my 'En toe, en toe - waneer is it weer met jy and jou kaffertjies
 4 in die *Sunday Times*?' The *Sunday Times* - as a matter of fact - I've got it - they were here
 5 and hy se 'Wat is dit met jy en jou kaffertjies ?' I said 'Advokaat.' ek se 'Voor ons praat gaan
 6 ek en my kaffertjies die *Sunday Times* - let me introduce to you my wife - she's also a
 7 Nationalist.' God he went down like a balloon - like that you know - but it didn't help - I
 8 didn't get my passport.

9 D: What did he say? Would he give you no reason? Did he just stone wall?

10 J: You know he was so flabbergasted that - that this lady was there - I said 'She's a Nationalist,
 11 just like you.' You know - of course in Afrikaans you see. Then I also - with my passport
 12 taken away - first thing was that -then I - but that was afterwards - but the first thing I did -
 13 I went down to Cape Town - now there's a Senator de Wet which I know fairly well - Shillie
 14 ? de Wet and I thought maybe he could get my passport - so I went - I saw Gillian - I said
 15 'Gillie this is my position.? I've got the farm in Botswana man.' And I said 'This is a
 16 bloody nonsense man,' I said 'Damn it all - I'm not a saboteur or anything - what the hell do
 17 they want to take my passport?' 'Ja, Jean' he said 'I quite agree with you - I quite agree with
 18 you.' But he said 'But look, we can't go past your member of parliament - he's a senator -
 19 we can't go - we'll have to...' he said 'You're a ' He says 'I know, he's Oom Skater.' I said
 20 'Yes, he's Cater?' And he got a message and then he set the pace to go and find Cater. So
 21 we're sitting in the coffee - coffee room in parliament and he went off and William Temba?
 22 Was there and Cater came along you know and dinges - um Gillian de Wet introduced me
 23 to Cater you know and Gillie said to him - I said 'Well man this chap - they - they've
 24 withdrawn his passport and he's got a farm and that - he wants you go to get it fixed up.' I
 25 said. What he said 'Right ? with the Party.' He said 'You know this chap then? Why did
 26 they withdraw his passport?' He said 'Man,' he said 'Now this chap..' he says - he asked me,
 27 he says 'Who are your friends?' 'Oh well, ' I said 'Gillian de Wet, here with us actually -
 28 he's a friend of mine - he's a Nationalist Senator - you see.' I say 'He's a friend of mine.'
 29 I said 'Alan Paton is a friend of mine..' 'You see, you see - that's the kind of people he's

1 mixed up with.' You know...and I said 'Man damn it all - what's that got to do?' I said
2 'Look in any case I think they're very few people in parliament here that - the - that can hold
3 the candle to Alan Paton.' You know -something like that. Huh, and one thing and another.
4 So no. no they said 'Look, ag man, Jean.' he said 'Leave those people - ' he said 'They're
5 up to all sorts of nonsense in the country. Come and join us - we'll fix you up man.' I said
6 'What?' I said 'What?' He said 'You're ? you'll buy my farm but you don't buy for what
7 I stand for.' He said 'Oh please be - I.' I said 'I don't care - look, I don't care a damn if the
8 king comes in here, to hell with you chaps. I think you can bugger off - fuck your ass?' And
9 I got up from - I didn't hear who the hell got that? I was really cross and I got on my - and
10 walked out. That was enough and it was ? do you know - they want to - you know I felt like
11 shouting you know - ja, ja.

12 D: I'm sure it did them good.

13 J: Ah, ah - oh yes, I told the meeting - I told you about 1942? The - where they had the meeting
14 in - I told you? yes, I told you about that hey? Naas Rautenhach and Dirk Pienaar - I told you
15 about them - and I've told you about now Buys now - Now did I tell you about my wife and
16 I how we got married with a special licence?

17 D: Yes.

18 J: Yes I told you that too - that was - and then the party asked me at one time - man I can look
19 it up - but I haven't got the times here - but it's just - they had a voorskoot creche - in
20 Bloemfontein and the Party asked me to attend this as an observer and to report you know
21 and it happened when I sit there - there was a Minister de Wet - now he was Minister of
22 Native Affairs. A big ? with a big ? man and I said to him, I said, I said to him 'Meneer,
23 Meneer Nel.' Ek se 'Julle het - it's a pipe dream.' Hy se 'Ek weet nie - hierdie ding kan
24 nooit Nasionaal kom nie - want..' 'What' you know - and he was so cross eventually you
25 know - he - he's now.... he - I - I think he - he would have liked to kill me you know because
26 I really let him have it in a big bloody way man, God he was - hell he was cross with me you
27 know.

28 D: This must have been the SABA Volkskongres?

29 J: Ja, SABA, Volkskongres...

- 1 D: Oor die 'Naturelle Kwessie' or something like that?
- 2 J: That's right - they had it in Bloemfontein and it was packed - you know - it was the
3 Tomlinson uh...
- 4 D: Commission?
- 5 J: Commission, ja. Ja, ja. because then they - it would have - the Tomlinson Commission
6 because they would have - the Tomlinson Commission said it would cost so much and so
7 much - I can't remember what you know and they said - they of course - no some of the ?
8 bloody oupas - the whole thing was a pipe dream - nothing ever come of it. And anyway that
9 was at the Volkskongres. Uh...
- 10 D: So you went as a waarnemer?
- 11 J: Then I had two wonderful tours that did not come off. The one was through Africa - I made
12 so much effort in getting the AA to write an get maps about - those days there were no roads
13 - like through Africa- wild you know - and I got all these things - there was Jim Leredo?,
14 John Ngubane and myself - the three of us were going to go on this trip - but they would not
15 give John and Jim - they wouldn't give them passports - we tried and we tried - no - to avail -
16 they couldn't get them - so we never got away on account of their passports - they couldn't
17 get a passport. My young niece - Phili - was - I told you about Phili - and they came from
18 America to Iceland - they wanted to join us - and they came out - but they - we waited and
19 waited - waited - and they decided to go and we'll follow up as soon as we - we never got
20 one. Then they went and they got befriended with a Kenyattas, and Margaret and Phili
21 became very staunch friends and they made a dingies - their headquarters there and then they
22 went around - that area - very interesting -ja, yes, yes, I told you about the house search over
23 here? Uh, yes, yes and now - I told you one of the hunting trips? And then what about our
24 fishing - as I said - with the fishing I used to make every year - for many years - made these
25 fishing trips to Bazeruto where we got beautiful fish you know and of course we had lots of
26 fun over there - on one ocaasion we were some - say about eight miles north of Bazeruto
27 Island when a - man the sea was like a milk pot and we were doing bottom on - there was a
28 reef there and we were doing bottom fishing over there - catching beautiful coloured fish -
29 Jakaropis and others and all of a sudden there was a jabber, jabber amongst the captain and

1 the crew over there - there was a captain, an engineer, two gillies - and they were jabbering,
2 jabbering over there you know. And they said 'Get, get - there's some trouble coming you
3 know.' Well I could see nothing - anyway - boy - oh - they started - we had a drum of - two
4 drums of diesel - also on the boat? and they tied up that diesel, there and then all our fishing
5 stuff and tied it up - it's still quiet you know and after a while there - the wind started coming
6 - first of all just whoosh - over the - and little waves like that - little waves - and eventually
7 got worse and worse - but immediately they started the boat and we headed for that - for the
8 nearest - for the dingies...

9 D: For the island?

10 J: For the island - to get in the lee side - you know - of this storm. My gosh - word - David -
11 you know most of the waves like this - God - they just go up like that, woow, down, right
12 down at the bottom, you know, you're actually sliding - just lie on your tummy and the boat -
13 it just can't - square - turned us over you know. So, old Fransie Klaassens hy se 'Oom Jean -
14 wat now?' Ek se 'Sing Sarie Marais man.'

15 D: But I wonder how they noticed that it was coming?

16 J: I don't know how they do - but brother how they do I don't know - hut we just - we - just by
17 the time we got into the lee of that island, boy that sun - that sea was dangerous - absolutely
18 dangerous. Now you know - they have the Equinox? The Equinox is the first full moon
19 nearest to the 21st of September then the Mozambique Current flows and the other comes and
20 the sea climbs up like that - my goodness - you get into that lot and boy - unless you have a
21 very big boat - I mean these fishing boats - forty - fifty feet - they - they tip you - they tip you.
22 In fact there were many people who were drowned over there you know. You know they had
23 fishing there - this whole business there belonged to a Portuguese chap by the name of
24 Weyers - Jakoman Weyers - he came out I believe from Portugal - with a couple of pounds
25 in his - what do they call their money again?

26 D: Escuedos?

27 J: Escuodos - yes - tickey - scuedos is tickey. And yes, eighteen escudos is a pound in those
28 days - of course - it's all changed now. And then he started over there and started fishing and
29 eventually got a net and there was - he got bigger and eventually he became a multi - multi

1 millionaire - he had the big hotel - at Inerzol - he had the big hotel at Valanculos - he had the
 2 big glass hotel in ah. Beira and he had a big boat that was plying between Dar es Salaam and
 3 Maputo, and he had four or five of these big boats that you go fishing in - and ski boats that
 4 he was letting out and I believe he had something like twenty three shops too - and then he
 5 had Copra farms too - the coconut business you know - anyway. And when we went over
 6 to these places - I used to - I used to go to them and you know - and I used to take a little
 7 friend for his wife often - they used to stay in a very simple house - you know - their offices -
 8 that was swell and big - but would be for the tourists that go over there - they never see the
 9 Baas or anything- but I made a point of seeing him and brother - that's why my parties were
 10 always such a success - if anything went wrong - if anything went wrong all I went and -
 11 when I see to Jako - I was amazed you know - 'Hi brother...' Two shakes of a bees' knee -
 12 everything is fixed up you know - ja. And why? Just because I friended - befriended them
 13 you know. Now he was married to a Black woman, she I believe was well educated but she
 14 couldn't speak - none of the two could speak English - they had an interpreter with them
 15 always, ja, ja.

16 D: How interesting.

17 J: Ja, ja, ja...with a ? catching plat annas and eventually fishing in the - afterwards - catching
 18 big fish - but one of my friends - Petoos. in Pretoria got a Black Marlin - 920 pounds - what
 19 a whopper.

20 D: Is that the photograph there?

21 J: No, no - that's that's Peter Tooth - he's got a nice - that's a nice Marlin - but -it's not a big
 22 one - but it's - they're nice fish. That's my old fishing friend - we fish together for many
 23 many years and I said to him one day -I said 'You know Vic we've been fishing together for
 24 nigh on thirty years man.' And he said 'My God - it is - as long as that? I said 'Yes.' I said
 25 'You know I think we must sign ? ' He laughed he said 'What for?' I said - then he was
 26 nearly - he was getting onto eighty - I said 'I think I'll fish with you for another thirty years'.
 27 He said 'And then?' I said 'Then I'm going to put you on for bait.'

28 D: Is he - he - is he still alive?

29 J: No, no, he's passed - no it's a good few years already - A good few years...

- 1 D: Yea, well just on this - are there fish in your dam?
- 2 J: Yes, yes, we're - it's only a - a bar...
- 3 D: Carp?
- 4 J: A carp, carp and barbel and - ? all the better - yes, yes, but lots of people come and fish over
5 here - that I let - just to come - and they're not - we don't allow any netting - only with rods -
6 and make no feeding places - feed for sport and that sort - now what I was going to tell you
7 about - was kite flying - fly a kite out to catch sharks and that. And this kite flying we started
8 in East London by a chap called Joplind, he had the sports shop in East London. And Alf
9 Crossley - he was the - he worked in the bank - not Barclays Bank - Standard Bank and we
10 were together - now Joppie he used to have a canoe and take our bait for - for sharks and that
11 - heavy bait - go out with his canoe. My goodness how he could manage that bloomin canoe
12 over the waves - but he took the bait out. But the bait - wouldn't - he would drop it well out -
13 say a hundred yards out you know - but the sea come in underneath and in no time washed
14 that thing away or got a tangle to that. And so one day we said - Okay what about using a -
15 getting a kite to take out the stuff?' That's how kite type?
- 16 D: How interesting. Yes.
- 17 J: Ja, it started in east London and you know it was not long when you started here - it was all
18 over - along the cost- people started fishing using kites for fishing - yes, but it was actually -
19 we three started that business in East London. With the kite flying, ja, ja. Now - now - now -
20 yes, uh, ...do you want me to?
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