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3 **KWAZULU-NATAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

4 **INTERVIEW WITH AKM DOCRAT, CONDUCTED BY RUTH LUNDIE, JEWEL**  
5 **KOOPMAN AND JABULANI SITHOLE, IN DURBAN, ON FRIDAY, 22 OCTOBER 1999.**

6 **(‘D’ shall signify the interviewee and ‘L’ and ‘K’ and ‘S’ the three interviewers.)**

7  
8 Tape One: First Side

9  
10 L: This is a recording of an interview with Mr AKM Docrat, in Durban, on Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of  
11 October 1999. It was held at Phyllis Naidoo’s Flat, in Umgeni Road. Those present, as well  
12 as Mr Docrat and Phyllis, were Jewel Koopman, in charge of the Alan Paton Centre, Mr  
13 Jabulani Sithole, of the History Department, and Ruth Lundie, myself. Your view of Mr  
14 Docrat’s decision to start lunch and be interviewed simultaneously a rather convivial  
15 atmosphere arose and we have started the interview on 93, the number on this tape, cutting  
16 out the chat in advance which doesn’t really relate. If you hear, during the tape, interjections,  
17 they are made by Phyllis Naidoo, who also has a well-known political past. Prior to the  
18 interview we were given a sheet on Mr Docrat’s background, his postal address is 90A  
19 Victoria Street, Durban. From 1939 to 1943, he belonged to the Nationalist Block of the  
20 Natal Indian Association. In 1939 he joined a Liberal study group. In 1943 he belonged to  
21 the Anti-Segregation Council of the Natal Indian Congress, Central Branch. In 1950 he was  
22 named under the Suppression of Communism Act. In 1952, during the Defiance Campaign,  
23 he was jailed for thirty days. In 1960 he was detained in the State of Emergency. He was  
24 first banned in late 1962, he was charged for breaking the Banning Order, but the Regional  
25 Magistrate invalidated the Order on the ground that ‘name, address, and place of birth’ were  
26 normally cited in the Order. The Special Branch took the original Order. His second banning  
27 was from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December, 1964, to the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1969. His third banning was  
28 from the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1969 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 1974. House arrest first, 22 hours, and  
29 a few weeks later this was reduced to 20 hours a day. At the weekends he suffered complete

1 house arrest, from 2p.m. on Friday to Monday at 10a.m. His fourth banning was from the 31<sup>st</sup>  
 2 of October, 1974 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 1976. His fifth banning was from the 31<sup>st</sup> of October  
 3 1976 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 1978. After the interview Mr Docrat was asked whether he was  
 4 ever informed of the reason for his banning. He said 'Never...' except that of course, his  
 5 banning order included the words that his actions prejudiced the State. He said that he didn't  
 6 speak very much on platforms, but that at the time of the General Strike he was informed by  
 7 a security Policeman 'You down here, you're in the struggle but not part of it.' And he added  
 8 'that we must always remember that the Security Police were always paid for the reports that  
 9 they put in.' For further information on Mr Docrat, you should look at a book by Vichney  
 10 Padayachee, Shadi Voodah and Paul Teshram, called 'Indian Workers and Trade Unions in  
 11 Durban from 1930 to 1950', published by the University of Durban-Westville Institute for  
 12 Social and Economic Research in 1985. Chapter Five, particularly pages 147 to 169 quote  
 13 Mr Docrat. To hear the interview tape, you should turn to number 93 on the tape recorder.

14 L: That's alright. Now you ask AKM about his personal life. I'm interested in his political past.

15 K: Yes I'm very interested to know about your early days.

16 D: I think you - this is quite interesting background there - I was born in India.

17 L: Oh were you indeed? No one has told us that before.

18 K: No.

19 L: What a good thing you asked that question.

20 D: And this is interesting - being in 1937, the South African Government had - India - that those  
 21 who left South Africa during that period must come and reclaim their citizenship. Now, I'm  
 22 putting that because my father who left here somewhere in 1910 and he joined the South  
 23 Africa because his business connects up with World Deflation? Remember? To reclaim his  
 24 citizenship. Actually they kept up ?? things and agreement stresses that under-sixteen will  
 25 be allowed not? So I was ??? grant in 1930. And basically, deported because this is  
 26 interesting - the Home Affairs is the most corrupt department in the South African  
 27 Government. Because ? you went to live - you waited - there was some ? on the part of my  
 28 father or somebody else. I was allowed to come back into South Africa in 1938.

29 L: And by that time you were 13?

- 1 D: No
- 2 L: '38?
- 3 D: Well, I was..
- 4 L: Oh, fifteen from..
- 5 D: I was twenty when this thing happened
- 6 K: In your twenties?
- 7 D: Then I - this, as I say, I was supposed to be deported, but I got ? on that boat ? - got out of
- 8 there - about three or four years in Northern Natal, illegally
- 9 K: How did you get there? Somebody help me you two...
- 10 D: ..Home Affairs
- 11 K: So you managed to escape at the docks?
- 12 D: Ja, and then, you know, I started taking part in the Indian Suppression and so on and got the
- 13 detention from others and I was threatened to ??? you see And they held me too - I don't
- 14 want to ?? .. '35, '36.. to Belmont, then I worked. Still ??? allowed to ?? Legally, see?
- 15 Then, with the Union, now my ID book now only says - what they call it? ?? Stateless.
- 16 K: You weren't given citizenship?
- 17 D: No, not even now And ?? You see
- 18 K: So even after all those years of living here you still don't have citizenship?
- 19 D: Ja.
- 20 K: And you've been here ever - again - ever since 1930?
- 21 D: 1930 - no, 1938.
- 22 K: 1938..
- 23 L: It's not a bad stay, 60 years, without citizenship.
- 24 D: And you know, sometimes ?? Has a non? They thought it was this when I was banned, they
- 25 put down my - there are about five points they had there - my name, my address, my place
- 26 of birth ?? Natal.
- 27 K: They made a mistake?
- 28 D: They made a mistake and I ? by - with this - before my first banning order - that was there,
- 29 you see - my place of birth. I rejected it

- 1 K: Oh, I see - so it wasn't .
- 2 D: The interesting thing was when the policeman came in the morning to deliver it he wanted to  
3 hand it over and I suddenly learnt that this is not me and 'now bugger off.' So he tried to put  
4 on a chair in my room. I put the chair and I ?? Bend one of us down. He said he ?? The  
5 chord that came - because we said after that 'I'll shut your blinkin' mouth any harder'?? And  
6 the court - the sad story was - you like this a lot - talking about ??? for interview and he called  
7 himself - the ? that submitted my case on that and someone ? along the line - something came  
8 up. the Magistrate asked 'but where is the man in the Special Branch?' ?? He know - what  
9 happened - he dropped it on the chair ?? And on that basis my ?? The Magistrate didn't want  
10 to hear my side of the story - he just rejected the whole lot.
- 11 K: That was very clever.
- 12 L: I think so too, I think so too
- 13 D: Sometimes you ?? Censored - how can I say. enlightenment, so to speak. Because when they  
14 came afterwards, when I was arrested ? on something in my possession, they will take it  
15 away. Technically they had no right to do that unless they gave receipt - I never had the  
16 receipt there.
- 17 K: What reason did they give for banning you?
- 18 D: No, no reason.
- 19 L: Tell me, what was this Liberal Study Group that you joined?
- 20 D: Liberal Study Group? 19 .
- 21 L: I mean this must have been early in your political education?
- 22 D: Oh very much. It meant only ?? Long way up - you know, coming from India, they used to  
23 make fun of me??? Ignoring and ?? Frankly you might say that I was an Indian Nationalist -  
24 that would actually be a good?? The fight of the ? in light in Bombay, I was always part of  
25 it, you follow? That was a small matter. Then in South Africa, there somewhere in 1930s,  
26 I think '35, '36, the ? started working and you would see it was the creation of sick leave?
- 27 L: Oh I see, yes.
- 28 D: But it was not effective in the manner in which he begun, that's the time I join up and this  
29 time I enlarge it, so to speak you see.

- 1 K: You were still very young then weren't you?
- 2 D: I was in my twenties.
- 3 K: Oh, you were in your twenties at that stage. Were you married, or were you ?
- 4 D: No, I was married in 19 - my wife - round ? we had contracted TB and there was no cure for
- 5 it and she died then - for the shame?
- 6 K: And how many children did you have?
- 7 D: No children.
- 8 K: You didn't have children
- 9 D: She died before .? - so that was no problem.
- 10 K: So she was quite sickly?
- 11 D: No, she wasn't sickly you know - TB is something strange, it comes up unexpected like - like
- 12 other things because she - finally she didn't make any ? everything around her. Why is this -
- 13 she says it is life
- 14 K: So you were unaware that she had it until she was very ill - or?
- 15 D: No No, she was never, never ill - she final - had this thing..
- 16 L: I remember when I interviewed Eunice Carrim, he told me how much of his political
- 17 education he had picked up at school in Maritzburg. The same school that Phyllis went to -
- 18 when I spoke to Baba Gwala, his political education, which was past onto all the ANC people
- 19 on the Island, was derived from Maimie Corrigan, who had been CPSA, and she left and ran
- 20 the Liberal Party, so it gives me pleasure to realise that people like Jacob Zuma, who went
- 21 to the Island with no education at all, got it all from Maimie Corrigan. And I wondered if
- 22 there's been someone in your background who said 'come on, join the CPSA ' or was it your
- 23 native intelligence?
- 24 D: ..in my life. The thing is - remember 1939 - I married, I came here. For a year I work near
- 25 Ixopo - as a shop assistant, and battled ? '39, '39, May or June 19 that - and there I took my
- 26 brother for the shop - that was the July, July August, '39. And then came the War, remember
- 27 and this type of thing..But my main education was my father had a missionary called contract
- 28 you see? Every decision in this ? would be ? and I was ? the leader - I learnt a hell of a lot of
- 29 things - from my work. And when I came across here, the people with ? education, I went

- 1 out of my way to learn myself, with great pleasure. So you might ? you might not say there  
 2 were ? in my life too? ideas - Indian Nationalists now come and ? you know. It's a - how can  
 3 I explain? ? Indian, African and you invite - like this is mine - I wasn't you see, there's a  
 4 slight difference there and you are born with your - this thing - you take your mother's ? with  
 5 apartheid? you see. You were not. But there were the British, one thing good was this that  
 6 Britain was not able to convert that to the ideas, and the street I was born in you see, was  
 7 British ? and ? and the standard was high. Gives you good training and all that, you follow?  
 8 So when I came here I had only the background in the sense of knowing things
- 9 L: Of course, and you had your wits about you?
- 10 D: Ja. And then I got into ? ? I went and hired a ? in Bombay a lot of teachers and some of us,  
 11 someone graduate, who was a - I had no ? You see. And I remember in India from the 1930s  
 12 there I was Muslim, he was a Hindu - so the relationship was very good then. He used to tell  
 13 me very nicely, quietly that one partner ??? (they laugh). No really, so one thing I was not  
 14 a chicken for leadership, so to speak
- 15 L: No, well that allowed you a freedom. Because you weren't controlled by what position.
- 16 D: Sometime, I think sometime comes amusing stories about that - the time we started - it was  
 17 a bit of national pride and all those things. When they had - I did something in Transvaal, and  
 18 called us, ?cell - we must listen to Dr Dladla say - but before he say anything, old Douglas?  
 19 said 'who is Dadul? Nobody tells us here what to do ' That made me ? ? now
- 20 L: Oh certainly .
- 21 D: Because Mandela is no God. ??
- 22 L: Yes, yes..
- 23 S: Can you tell me something, why did you ever think of why this group was called a Liberal  
 24 Study Group from the ?
- 25 D: No, never. I inherited so to speak. I had no idea of background of what it was. At that time  
 26 there were also this ? and session, do you remember that still?
- 27 L: I do indeed.
- 28 D: And this was - a combination of the ? Hindu study group ? and Sidby? I remember telling  
 29 them - you can't put your fingers in this ? - the one we're digging in ?

- 1 L Yes, yes, well then - don't you want to go on with ?
- 2 S: I remember you saying in the early 1940s there was the Anti-Segregation Council...
- 3 D Now that came '43'
- 4 S: It was '43, ja. From '43. Can you tell us something about this? What was this Anti-
- 5 Segregation Council?
- 6 D: The Anti-Segregation Council came to me - well they ? off - they had Gandhi and Liberal,
- 7 Moderates Indian Leaders had made a ? and they should have buying property or not buying
- 8 property ? And it became known as the ? And then again the question of leadership being -
- 9 they cannot - the Transvaal leadership of the NIC, TIC, Transvaal Indian Congress, ? they
- 10 came round here and they charged with setting down ? That's the question ? from here... You
- 11 know - have you followed? There was a ? -but this is not good for us, it can't be good for
- 12 others, you see? And ? they call it - they recanted and said, 'no they didn't do anything on
- 13 that' But this, this concept, came to ? announced. He called another conference of all the
- 14 religious organisations. That was the ASC.
- 15 L: Oh, I see, yes, yes.
- 16 D: Again, well ? the National more or less came - they said 'we have ?' but then the Party of the
- 17 National ? - the party that called us to ? together, fell off? The National block moved out -
- 18 rather ignored. Then this was the thing - that we now sorry divide ourselves. You see, there
- 19 was a number of nationalists on the ASC, and come down amongst a lot of other things
- 20 S: This to me seems to suggest that your ideas - like the Group Areas Act, were being put into
- 21 practice long before this Act was passed, because these are early 40s, and you are saying
- 22 1943, what did it mean to businesses and properties. I mean - even the old businesses in
- 23 town?
- 24 D: Well, what it meant to them?
- 25 S: Ja, was this a suggestion that they had to lose property, or they could buy that property
- 26 D: No, the ? especially in Natal, in Durban, around there, you know. Ask them about the Indians
- 27 who suffered at that ? That were anybody who buys a property in a White area must not be
- 28 allowed. The government announced the amount that Indians can ? property, could not stay
- 29 there.

- 1 S: Meaning you can own property in a White area but not physically stay there?
- 2 D: That was the idea - they weren't allowed, and we rejected it completely. The one ? we went  
3 on - it really I don't want to say brilliant - it is not brilliant to all - this is one point that ?  
4 arrest because of this ? very big - bring in all South Africans, not just Indians.
- 5 L: That as why the Anti-Segregation Council worked so well, because everyone was against  
6 segregation, whatever else their views were.
- 7 D: In Natal had - we had the background of unilateral ? Bill on National ? and all that to find out  
8 In Natal we had that Provincial movement here - Socialist Movement. I think the took - this  
9 was in 1925? somewhere around there. To me it's a slight background, but they use that  
10 background, the feelings were so strong, this is like - ? being called out the racists and they  
11 changed the name of this quadrangle of this city - not one ? one six?
- 12 K: Well, thanks, the arrangement with the Durban Municipality - they didn't actually want  
13 Indians to buy property..
- 14 D: Is there an honest part of that?? Not happy - the Administration of the Natal was a merely  
15 White oriented. Not just White orientated, and Indian oriented. Because here in - province  
16 sent the word - they must understand Indians is also trade product?? Finance and all that and  
17 that don't create ? And they didn't want to face it that they developed. The poor economic  
18 practice coming up because they gave it a touch of colour..you see you have your internal rule  
19 - since 1948?, '41, '43 - see that. I don't know how you are going to isolate what aspect is  
20 ignoring the other...Well, we are ? Then you got Sonny ? The ASC, the ?Indian Congress,  
21 National WAF, CP??
- 22 L: But what interests me - what interested me very much in this book I read was the way you  
23 pointed out that they were - let's them call the indentured, the indentured grandchildren  
24

25 (The tape is blank for the rest of the side).

26  
27 Side Two

- 28  
29 D: ...sometimes it is supposed to be ? - well let's say it isn't yes (in answer to an inaudible



- 1 question, possibly from Phyllis). we have the National. Province, we had Moses from ? you  
2 see? But we didn't quarrel about that - we never - the Union as a ? of suppression, and you  
3 never allowed it to be. Sometimes it happens like in the National ? Natal Indian Congress -  
4 we had - I mean - ? Muslims and ? It was not my choice..
- 5 L: No, no..
- 6 D: The Muslims are -?? Remember? But we as Muslim parties we don't call it secular?? Because  
7 financially we were better off providers?
- 8 L: Well, yes, you see ..
- 9 D: But all the job - would ? depend on other ? ...you got that ? you got the Indian South  
10 African, isn't it?
- 11 L: Which book? The Trade Unions - South Africans?
- 12 K: By Lefetha Malooi???
- 13 D: Patche?? (Ruth Lundie interjects at almost the same time so that what she says is inaudible)  
14 ???
- 15 L: I don't know that book..
- 16 S: ...Bafana, yes they are - in the library
- 17 D: If you know the background, you must read that book and also Bunting.
- 18 L: Brian? Brian Bunting, ja...
- 19 D: ??? that book.
- 20 L: No, no.
- 21 K: What work did you do?
- 22 D: I was a ?
- 23 K: You know, what was your profession?
- 24 D: Well, somewhere socially, you can put it that way?? (They all laugh).
- 25 L: Well, we all did that at some time or other
- 26 D: And afterwards I've been a book seller??
- 27 K: Oh, did you?
- 28 D: And sometime my - I can do education - I'll tell you a nice story.. 1950s there was a  
29 movement - to break away from the Union - you remember Natal made a stand? That stand

- 1           ? had children, a doctor in Maritzburg. He had ? So he asked me to come and work out the  
2           ? libraries in Natal ? on alone. ?? They did it in Natal and in Lesotho and then they ? for ?  
3           help. It can be reinforced.
- 4    K:     Oh, you put all three together?
- 5    D:     Ja.
- 6    K:     As a separate ??
- 7    D:     They were all linked together like, you see - physically, you follow? So I spoke to the  
8           Lesothos in Maritzburg? About putting in about thirty or forty students here and they were  
9           shocked. Remember this is the Indian speaking ...Suddenly there is a question of my  
10          academic background...? thought I'd see anything like ? he sent it ??? (They all chuckle)
- 11   L:     That was very splendid!
- 12   D:     ?? Talk of us and you don't know what the hell he's making of this thing, or might not be
- 13   L:     So how much of your day was devoted to your political interests? Once you were in the book  
14          store, I suppose, 19 hours?
- 15   D:     Oh, it was (Phyllis talks from the back ...very good. ^ - the rest is inaudible )
- 16   L:     Yes, and spreading the gospel, mmm?
- 17   D:     The Gospel according to Karl Marx.
- 18   L:     Yes, quite...
- 19   S:     That's interesting. When do you - you said the CP comes quite late to your life? When do  
20          you become part of the CP then?
- 21   D:     Province sent a ? I'd never been a party member???
- 22   L:     Really, well...
- 23   D:     ...as a member, and then they ? twice, somewhere along the line I was talking to somebody  
24          and they said that Trotsky was a genius. ??
- 25   L:     You were a Trotskyite?
- 26   D:     No, I wasn't, I wasn't you see. ...they put me up and that - the man who interrogated me knew  
27          very much less than I did. They all gone into the ? I was not officially in any part of the  
28          movement...
- 29   L:     Yes.

- 1 D: I'd seek ??
- 2 L: Oh I wondered about this.. you see the Liberals were terrified - well, it is a very powerful  
3 word - 'communist'. and many of the members of the Liberal Party were terrified of  
4 anything communist, without really knowing, in fact what was at stake.
- 5 D: Putting their ? You're a ..agenda for that - there a product of the communist were Whites,  
6 do you know the ? communists who were not???
- 7 L: Yes, I've heard - I think that's a point, yes. Yes, no it is a point. Yes They didn't want  
8 their own young to become communist and that's why they were so.
- 9 D: No they didn't tell the young - they didn't tell the Whites - the ..
- 10 L: The young White students.
- 11 D: Ja They couldn't help the Blacks - they can't control them.
- 12 L: No No
- 13 D: There were a few times - now we had the meeting when they call the rates were around that -  
14 they came with proposals. so I listened and I got a bloody good habit of listening to people.  
15 Not telling them buzz off. I listened to them and then refused to pass onto others..
- 16 L: Oh my goodness, we're now with - you were banned under the Suppression of Communism  
17 Act, but that wouldn't have been - when 1960?
- 18 D: Ja
- 19 L: Ja, no - '55
- 20 D: The Act itself was in the 1950s. I was banned in ?
- 21 L: No, but the War ended in '45, and the Nationalists took over in '48 - and they brought in the  
22 Suppression of Communism in 1950, surely?
- 23 D: Ja..
- 24 S: Certainly, yes .
- 25 L: And named you under it. or banned you under it?
- 26 D: No, named, but.
- 27 L: Named?
- 28 D: First the name then the banning...
- 29 L: Ah - and then you couldn't, as it were, minute, or be reported as saying anything

- 1 D: Ja.
- 2 K: What effect did that have on your life when you got named? Did it change anything?
- 3 D: For me? Or did I wanted the change? No, I didn't... ?? Unenviable position - living in ? which  
4 is dominated by Indians and I was more likely that when they banned me the house - the flat  
5 where I stay was - the back of this was ?? Natal??
- 6 L: I see... You did lead a jolly life, didn't you?
- 7 D: I did, and good ? I had the press conference, and the press conference is null and void. They  
8 put a ? into my box there - and I used to go and dig it out and dump it down there - it started  
9 so I said to them, I said 'Look I'm as ? trouble, I don't need to be caught with 'dagga'. But  
10 this guy stayed there. They ?? Along there to watch me - they couldn't get anything round  
11 it because before I get down, the boys will come and tell me that they are starting this side or  
12 that side... I was not in a bad position as a that banning. It didn't affect me so to speak
- 13 L: In those days there would have been hardly any Indian police, am I right?
- 14 D: No, you are wrong - there were...
- 15 L: Oh, am I? ...a lot?
- 16 D: Ja, but then again they couldn't buy the ? You see the youngsters were hoping to be the  
17 policemen themselves... okay in the sense that if they got any trouble, they will pull them  
18 out which is ??
- 19 L: Yes, so in fact you're carrying on as if absolutely nothing had happened and wielding your  
20 influence.
- 21 D: Oh, you've got it there...(he chuckles). (Phyllis, from the background says 'he was twenty-  
22 four hour house arrest'.)
- 23 K: The house arrest...
- 24 L: Yes, yes..
- 25 K: Did you hope to stay in the house for twenty-four hours to do
- 26 D: Twenty-two hours.. (Phyllis interjects, 'at first').
- 27 K: Twenty two hours?
- 28 D: Yea. ? I was there ..
- 29 K: So did you never go out at that time?

- 1 D: Obviously not...(they all chuckle). And somebody did mark this one - because I had more  
2 visitors than I had before.
- 3 L: Yes. I'm sure you did..
- 4 D: No, I tell you - I wasn't really ?? And I can't complain over having said what I did.
- 5 K: And you managed to carry on your life as if ? in spite of all these bannings and things?
- 6 D: I lived in my cocoon??
- 7 K: You didn't have regular surveillance? You didn't have people coming to check on you?
- 8 D: Look, it might be - like I said - back of my - they do call on ..
- 9 L: Yes, the word was passed around among them...
- 10 D: Ja..
- 11 K: So it got to you before the person arrived? You heard the person was coming before they got  
12 there?
- 13 D: Ja, ja.
- 14 S: I understand that after your banning as well, you participated in the Defiance Campaign?
- 15 D: Now that was in 1950 - '54?
- 16 S: It was in ? after the ?
- 17 D: Ja, ja, I continued - I didn't desire anything. I didn't do anything to ? contact..?"
- 18 S: Now what can you tell us about the Defiance Campaign in Natal, we have heard that you  
19 were quite successful elsewhere - but what about this?
- 20 D: In Natal we had it in two batches. About a hundred or so people there ... Judge Bates? and  
21 Doctor Naicker and myself and ? - we had about thirty. it was done at the ? You see now  
22 we were changing - the '49 business - you see - ? some people.
- 23 S: The '49 business you are referring to...?
- 24 D: the riots
- 25 S: ...to the riots..ja.
- 26 L: You haven't talked about that at all - please could we?
- 27 D: Now I sometimes wonder how I think ? it was incitement.
- 28 S: Can you explain that?
- 29 D: Yea. Back in, you know the Durban Court there? Making our march of people up there -

- 1 they were ? march with stick on?? And from Dashville? They went into Grey Street and then  
 2 break this thing. On the Grey Street there - they break - now how can it happen. there is a  
 3 rates clearance? We had - you better check up that High Commission report there - we  
 4 submitted to the Dye? Commission that we had broke a ? of lamps and how to replace it ? to  
 5 fair That this was done that hot curries were given away? to the workers, to those marching  
 6 and the shop stewards.
- 7 L. Oh really?
- 8 D. Ja.
- 9 S: By Durban Authorities I'd say?
- 10 D: No we weren't ? Durban: they would say "the Government offered these under the Nationalist  
 11 ? We won't pin down the Government?". I mean we submitted this to the High Commission,  
 12 the High Commission rejected our proposal because it was - if we allowed to cross-examine  
 13 the witnesses. They were ? you see .?? And we submitted these factors - that it was  
 14 excitement - there wouldn't have been trouble from ?? Some people. The ? 1949 was the first  
 15 year the Nationalists come into power - they are showing this strength and power? ?...
- 16 S: So why would they do this - why would they - because from what you are saying that this is  
 17 a early. I mean these are the beginnings of conflict. I mean violence, and it's being driven by  
 18 some Trade Unionists..
- 19 L: But it suited them to have the Indians.
- 20 D: Look, I'm fully ??clue. in the Cretamin? Area. Indians are having ? It's such a reason that  
 21 something ? allies on both sides? Because they get rubbed in the one, they ? There is no  
 22 clean sweep ? or Indians are helping themselves? But this Nationalist Government that  
 23 wanted a march? and generally the ?.. They lived at ? to incite people against others.
- 24 S: To ensure that you remained violent?
- 25 D: Not only the ?
- 26 L: Not only ..
- 27 D: but to get Natal ? At that stage Natal was more or less a ? in that it was starting to ? be  
 28 called by ? here by ? what's his name? Chris? Supporting the national struggle??
- 29 S: Another interesting point from what you are saying is - I'm just thinking your Anti-

1 Segregation Council of 1943. was talking about the restriction on the buying of property.  
 2 Now in '49 these people who attacked Indian businesses. was there no connection in terms  
 3 of areas where people were trading and where Indian businesses were located? Was it not  
 4 perhaps another attempt to carry on and disrupt?

5 D: In 1949, the Indian traders -and I think on traders - I don't know the number that are from  
 6 Durban, ? one of the richest African town there? There's a Muslim man there - they ?  
 7 businesses - they call them businesses - most probably ? Indians. There was not the racist  
 8 with this ting - they were finance?? And slowly Africans are coming out now - 19 - end of the  
 9 War. Slowly small industries are there - ? in Natal...and that means that more - ? this thing.  
 10 Then this is Indian people, so slowly Africans began to have commitment? The area is  
 11 redeemed ? and the ? court. You see that? With the nature of hectic campaign today? I don't  
 12 like you because you are Indian, or you are African. We are ? over by God?... Simply pin  
 13 down on any aspect of this - at least the Indian Council and all our statements were - this is the  
 14 one thing only - for all, not for Indians.

15 L: I went once to a prejudice workshop - Hempson's brother ...was one of the people who were  
 16 running it and I was in a group with an African priest called Ernest Mkhize, who was about  
 17 my age. And the first question they asked us was 'Can you remember your earliest  
 18 prejudice?' And Ernest Mkhize and I - he was brought up in Durban, I was brought up in  
 19 'Maritzburg, had exactly the same memory. I had done something wicked, and my  
 20 Grandmother said 'Only Indian girls do that.' And Ernest Mkhize was in exactly the same  
 21 position - do you see? Now this is just prejudice.

22 D: You know prejudice has a strange character. Once I was at Jews? at another, a club that had  
 23 been anti-White. And the person sitting next to me - young Dr Ramazin? - well he is a bloody  
 24 anti-White person, but he likes me.. (They all laugh) And you know when I said that, I'm  
 25 sure I'm anti-White then, but I will tell - I'll know when it comes, and I won't let that thing  
 26 out there. ????

27 L: Well, my Grandmother, who was very much in advance of her time, would have tea parties  
 28 for Indian ladies, so it wasn't that she had an, a recognised prejudice, but somehow when it  
 29 came to wickedness, 'Don't do that, Indian girls do that. .'

- 1 D: You know I'm thinking of Indian - born in India, had ? of Hinduism, Muslim stand. I can  
 2 only think of it that within the environment which we know, we determine what happens and  
 3 what doesn't happen and other - all - tings out there - have daily contact with our people, you  
 4 follow? This is strange - how can I put it. In ? junk to this day???
- 5 L: Yes, yes.
- 6 D: You can't go and point a finger on anything then.
- 7 L: No, no, no. So then in the 1950s, a lot of protests were going on - I mean they were good  
 8 protesting years. There were marches against passes for women in which the Liberals and the  
 9 ANC, and (Docrat interjects, but is inaudible)...ja..
- 10 D: I don't know if you remember that - Richmond you know? The Tower of Richmond?
- 11 L: Yes.
- 12 D: On Anti-Pass and ? Movement?
- 13 L: Yes I don't remember that. I remember going to a place called Red Square in ? Maritzburg..
- 14 D: Oh?
- 15 L: With people like Prenan?, Vialane Junot and Co.. they were protesting against passes for  
 16 women. But then the Nationalist hadn't got into their stride and banned all these tings yet.  
 17 But they were well on their way to getting everything banned..But I don't remember any great  
 18 evidence of the Defiance Campaign in Natal, except perhaps in Northern Natal, when there  
 19 was a fairly big Indian population - am I right?
- 20 D: You are right. ?? In Natal..
- 21 L: Ladysmith (Phyllis also says 'Ladysmith' from the background, and then 'Dundee'). Yes  
 22 Ladysmith, Dundee, round about there . (Phyllis asks 'Who was the comrade ??? in that  
 23 area?')
- 24 D: Danny Churrin? (Phyllis says 'No, the African comrade. There was a Sada, Dr Sada..the ?  
 25 comrade, big set fellow?' Msimang? (Phyllis says 'No, Msimang is Pietermaritzburg ') Ja.  
 26 Simply I heard, the name ? I've heard. .it would be Ernest??.
- 27 L: But there were much stronger incidents in the Defiance Campaign in the Transvaal and so on,  
 28 but not here
- 29 D: No.



- 1 L: ...is my memory of things.
- 2 D: No, that's correct.
- 3 L: Wouldn't you like a five or ten minute break why we change a tape? Are you happy to go  
4 on?
- 5 D: I'm happy in that you were as long as ?..
- 6 L: As long as the?
- 7 D: You've got me at my pleasure - until three o'clock
- 8 L: Well, I'm sure that can be done.
- 9 S: Yes, indeed
- 10 L: Yes (Phyllis, from the background asks 'How much did the taxi cost you? On te Alert  
11 Week?')
- 12 D: The change is large enough ... (Jewel is suggesting in the background 'there's still a bit on the  
13 tape - I'll just let it go to the end.' Ruth says 'Unless he ? again - I'll just say it might give  
14 him a bit of??' - Docrat is talking to Phyllis - this has not been transcribed as Jewel and Ruth  
15 are discussing the tape.
- 16 L: ...what's the time now?
- 17 K: Nearly an hour now .tape?
- 18 L: Well, then comes, young man, the State of Emergency, and what did that do to you? (Phyllis  
19 says ??'locking up people He threw hot coffee over people at the table.')
- 20 D: You tell her that..
- 21 L: Oh, that was horrible.
- 22 D: It was her ex-husband, but that's a different matter (they all laugh heartily)
- 23 L: We know that's why she ex-ed him
- 24 D: No, the Defiance Campaign, you know this is quite amusing and sad at the same time, that  
25 the Defiance Campaign, we were locked up here on the first floor of the jail there.
- 26 L: Which jail? On the Bluff?
- 27 D: No, not on the Bluff, here in that central jail. Now listen to this. We had - on the other side  
28 of the first floor was a - I don't think it had been everyone's ? unless they were arrested for  
29 dealing over the 7<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> place ?? I don't know whether you recall that?

- 1 S: Yes I do - I do recall that - ja. during the marches and things
- 2 L: What's that ... yes?
- 3 D: Now listen to this - they were on this side and we were on this side but by that time I was  
4 stated as a Emergency Detainees - was ? in demand with food and so on?? But what I could  
5 be ? there, we knew we ended up at this time - about 3 or 4 o'clock, and this voice came from  
6 the jail, from the court at about that time So what I would like - supper would be handed  
7 to us by some ? device. And ? can drop us the papers ..? That's the time her husband tried  
8 to interrogate me when I was ?? Hot coffee .
- 9 L: Was that the time when the Cato Manor people tried to get Luthuli out of jail? Wasn't he in  
10 jail then?
- 11 D: No.
- 12 L: In Durban, no?
- 13 D: No. I don't think so. (Phyllis says 'Are you think 'Release Our Leaders' - that's not true.')
- 14 No, that was true (Phyllis says 'That was sixty.')
- 15 L: I must talk about 1960.
- 16 D: Can't we?
- 17 L: Can we talk about some other time?
- 18 D: I can't remember - let's see...oh, ja. that time - 1960
- 19 L: It was 1960, I think Ja.
- 20 S: Ja. it is connected, is it not connected with Cato Manor? This beginning in '59 and then  
21 getting into '60?
- 22 D: Look, Cato Manor was there - in a shack called place - that township there, they built a few  
23 houses and you know in summer - they get all this - they give you the anti?? They printed  
24 something and gave that around there - that was the 100 ? you find there - but it was not  
25 colour - it was finance...
- 26 L: Yes, yes.
- 27 D: So I mean you had to learn there - if they release half of this people, and without any ex? that  
28 occurred on the ? there - it ? for money You see here in South Africa, whether we like it or  
29 not, ? not only in the town, all over, township people didn't ? on the other areas - because of

- 1 townships We had no, and we have no clear cut demarcation of our nationality
- 2 L: And you were detained, when? 1962? Go on - you have a good section..
- 3 D: ?? They did the opposite thing (Phyllis says ' took the hawkers.. '). Ja.
- 4 L: I think what was written on your heart for this.
- 5 D: And they lift it.. They didn't read it.
- 6 L: Yes. You must have a very good constitution to have stood up to all this?
- 7 D: I don't know about that - I live that high?
- 8 L: But did you get your glasses when you were jailed and all that sort of thing
- 9 D: No, that was alright, that was no problems, now I'm going blind???
- 10 L: Oh, I see, I see, ja.
- 11 D: No, I had no political problem at all...
- 12 L: Well, with the Defiance Campaign you were jailed for thirty days, and then you were banned
- 13 in 1962
- 14 D: Ja
- 15 L: Was this a twenty-two hour ban?
- 16 D: No, twenty-two hours ban came in '69/'70.
- 17 L: Oh, yes, Busseridge - twenty-two hours and a few weeks later reduced to twenty hours - that
- 18 was generous of them. (Phyllis says 'They wanted to go to Mosque ')
- 19 D: No
- 20 L: Did they not? (Phyllis says 'They didn't ')
- 21 D: I asked for it ...(Phyllis says 'You asked for it but you didn't go.')
- 22 I was not allowed there. Sometimes it's amusing. My Auntie died - listen to this
- 23 L: Yes, we will
- 24 D: I told my lawyer to enquire could they give me permission to be at ? They came down from
- 25 ? and I see they are still watching and the one nurse, she is ? when I walk round this - when
- 26 ? gave me a lift - when this one comes round I will go???
- 27 L: Was it awful?
- 28 D: I tell you ..
- 29 L: Did you sit and read?

- 1 D: In 19 I had no problem I can't claim that I suffered anything at all  
2 L: Ja, well that's what kept you going because you had messengers warning you, and you had  
3 your books  
4 D: I had no - you know when they talk of suffering with the banning - I had no suffering of any  
5 kind.  
6 L: Isn't that excellent, I'm so pleased. Well, that's why you've lived to eighty-five. I mean, isn't  
7 it, really - of course.  
8 D: Well, the children, they calm you down...  
9 L: Yes, you did what you could, you made the best of it, you were jolly clever, and .  
10 D: Some of it...  
11 L: ...and now, you see, you'll be enjoying the fruits...  
12 D: Well... (Phyllis asks him 'Are you enjoying it?') I enjoyed the food alright.  
13 L: I think he is - I mean you just have to look at him to see he's enjoying the fruits - there's no  
14 doubt about it.

15  
16 (The tape cuts out when Phyllis starts to comment.. there is nothing further recorded).

17  
18 (End of Second Side of First Tape)

19  
20 The transcription of the second tape starts on the next page

21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

1 **First Side: Second Tape:**

- 2
- 3 D: ... suffered in the ? moment and he came round and started you know, to ask me questions
- 4 'Do you know anyone ? in your work term? Do you know a different thing?' I know his
- 5 name. I know his face. that's all I don't know the man, I cannot know the man..
- 6 L: So you were released, ultimately, ultimately, in 1990?
- 7 D: Well..
- 8 L: There were you troubling no-one - you'd got your messengers, you'd got your supplies of
- 9 books and food, your health was good, your eyes not quite so good, perhaps.
- 10 D: Ja ..
- 11 L: So you can look back on a life well spent. .
- 12 D: Well. I can't complain, it's just that it would give me...
- 13 L: I mean you can't complain - how many people are in that position You did what you could,
- 14 you did it for the right thing - no trouble. Wouldn't it be awful if you thought of all the
- 15 chances you'd missed? Like.
- 16 D: You could dwell on that past there .All of us miss something somewhere along the line, hey.
- 17 We can't sit down and moan over it for a long time.
- 18 L: No. but you see there was this small group of you basically, in Durban whose influence was
- 19 going out with younger people getting more educated, in political ...'cause where else, except
- 20 from a group such of your - as yours, would they have got their political education? Not
- 21 anywhere. When I was talking about Eunice Carrim, he was at school in the 1980s, don't you
- 22 see - that was a big difference.
- 23 D: What's the time?
- 24 S: It's half past one..
- 25 D: Ah, half past one
- 26 L: You alright? We can go on for at least another half hour I should think..
- 27 D: Well, I've been sitting you - so I don't collapse ??
- 28 L: No that's fine..
- 29 S: I ? going back a bit - there is something interesting that you said about '49 - you said the '49

- 1 riots had opened people's minds. But I didn't have an opportunity of finding out exactly what  
 2 you had in mind, and that sounds quite interesting - what do you mean exactly by that?
- 3 D. Well, how will I put it? This way - I think that time though the - how can I put it - the whole  
 4 idea that nationalism is something changes. something out there - the people. when I said ?  
 5 something - the working types on the one side and the shop keepers on the other - they  
 6 opened their minds to something - both sides. The shop stewards can't get along - they go  
 7 along all the time - then they can do business. From that sense it was a step forward, not in  
 8 backwards, and of course that clashed with some religions, in terms of economic ? Necessity -  
 9 remember when you talk of '49, all the struggle, remember, Pietermaritzburg has a large  
 10 township - almost entirely owned by Indians and when you get nothing to the development  
 11 of the township - remember that thing. So it was ? that I was going to build up this little  
 12 church? that the demand can be more. it was natural for them to be envious. That was really -  
 13 you've got to be ? for ? you see - you can't be angry as well as that?? Those weren't the  
 14 racists then. .
- 15 L. No, it was competitive.
- 16 D. You know, you don't want Indians to kill Whites off and kill the Africans off, you can kill  
 17 Indians - it was more than that. Of course there was the criminal you would blame - even  
 18 now, you see. I think nine times out of ten a crime is committed not on the basis of ? of  
 19 business of ? but on the economy
- 20 S: Would you say the experience of '49 helped - I'm just thinking of people like your group and  
 21 African ANC people in Natal, did they help you to begin to work together during the 50s?
- 22 D. You see, again, this is the first thing - in Natal - more than this to say that from the ? moment,  
 23 and I see you as ? do you remember? And then something was ahead of me - something was  
 24 neither here nor there. So we came - on the ? there was a ? so to speak - a political  
 25 movement - of not only among Indians - there were Africans. Something was getting hold  
 26 - so he's worrying about his own business move and we came round and then chatted to a  
 27 degree 'help us'. They spoke to some of us, they didn't antagonise us and they ? funny  
 28 enough our - they sent us - the ANC dedicated a ? ? '40 or '41. And then interesting - three  
 29 of us went - myself, Sara Cadism?, Candism's wife - you know, and Piet Abrahams. You

1 remember ?

2 S: Ja. I remember the Order, yes, yes.

3 D: So we went to Maritzburg early in the morning, round that and the church meeting? rushing  
4 to put all the chairs and this thing and I didn't - this was our champion in ? this young ?  
5 Doctor. I am quite certain if that time I knew I was ? you see. So I spoke to them in Zulu  
6 and so on, and then there were ? of police. They came in ? together, because what a  
7 champion in ? all different things - for what being there? Champions was at that time not the  
8 ANC or the National African Congress?

9 S: Their aim was champion, yes, yes. That's an interesting point you are making - so you wasn't  
10 really working for the organisation - you were more interested in what you are going to gain.

11 D: We explain this and we bargain and see ? on top there

12 S: Now Champion then gets out of the leadership I understand in . ?

13 D: he had a clash with Codali? And he started his own type of ? in Natal, ANC, and I'm afraid  
14 he didn't succeed very well. We pushed at the ANC when under pressure - especially when  
15 Luthuli? Gave him this thing. He tried with all the infrastructure we could profess?

16 S: Would you say then - the leadership of Luthuli made it easier to work?

17 D: Oh, ja. They had Durban, they had ? They came on both sides..

18 L: And he worked with the Liberals as well. I always - I met him but once really...

19 D: Well I made a ? on the ? Non-White situation? - you remember this thing - when Alan Paton  
20 recognised that type of thing - they were very pally with us - the Non-Whites, they were not  
21 pally with the Whites..

22 L: No, no that I can see (They have been chuckling). My memory is that after the protesting in  
23 1950s, the 1960s with the Nats really entrenched.. Closed down on everything, you didn't  
24 know what was happening in Pondoland, or what, what, what, but you knew there was an  
25 awful lot of suppression going on. But as you got to the end of the 60s and young men like  
26 Steve Biko were being educated at the Medical School here, various other lights seemed to  
27 arise..

28 D: You know you might say this when the little incidents in Natal, Transvaal transpired and so  
29 on - it galvanised the people - who were people on the move, and that's what the Nationalist

- 1 can't cope with them. They can suppress, they can build, but they can't delete the wills, the  
2 forward march..
- 3 L: No, no, no.
- 4 D: That's where the Indians win in Sheila Carter's book - you know - from protest to challenge -  
5 that's where the challenges came .. back in 1960, we challenged - we protested. now with  
6 a gun in your hand - round there and support from the world wide - now those challenges  
7 came. There was a lot of this thing - worked up - Edward Roux..
- 8 L: And the CPSA, now, how do you think it's going?
- 9 D: Ah..
- 10 S: Can you elaborate?
- 11 D: It has no influence of any kind
- 12 L: No. It's too small isn't it?
- 13 D: Not just too small, look at this fact that - how would I say - in a lot of industries it has taken  
14 place.
- 15 L: I must say I dislike that very much.
- 16 D: Well, 'Maritzburg city - it has its turn in the power - that can happen isn't it? Is it? So when  
17 it's simply ? simply unfortunately has one disadvantage - that should be as you - Soviet Union,  
18 must die. A socialist it is said must arise from the people - not from the ?
- 19 L: Well, will it?
- 20 D: Yes, it will...you take ? option then of being in the ? millions of people all night - ? a  
21 generation.. we are in for a hard time economically, as far as we can be here? We have to  
22 change the develop - to show the people where to go - how to go - at the moment the ANC  
23 is in power, the ANC has the majority - the ANC is controlling. In the reality the ANC is no  
24 different from the NP. Its control and powers - but that's no the end of the thing - you see  
25 the Np couldn't last so why should the ANC? And of course this is the important thing too -  
26 the whole nationalisation will come - get together, the more organised it will be the more  
27 organised it is - the more chances of that of ? and learning about socialism.
- 28 S: And yet I'm just thinking, if you say this - the Communist Party is failing work - who's going  
29 to be the vehicle of that mobilisation



- 1 D: Oh, that will arise out of people - don't you worry about that..
- 2 S: If more spontaneous, you're suggesting?
- 3 D: Ja. it's spontaneous and it's small building ?? All political moments can end with a small  
4 beginning? Somewhere along the line all the townships will link together and there is no  
5 ANC?? At this moment the ANC is in control, but most of their expatriot ?? you know .
- 6 L: The exiles..
- 7 D: The exiles...
- 8 L: This is something No one has explored publicly - the difference between the stay-at-homes  
9 and the exiles.
- 10 D: You know one thing you say - that when they - this ended that I exploited them - I exploited  
11 them because all the activities and all the ideas and talk to them within those - that was the  
12 mistake I made??
- 13 S: If we could go back a bit there is something that you are glossing over which is the 1960s ?In  
14 1960. '61, there is a turn to the armed struggle I understand - from some literature that is  
15 there is that some discussions took place in Natal around Durban about this turn to the armed  
16 struggle - is there anything you can tell us about that period?
- 17 D: ? but we discussed the problem in June itself, 1960 - was a then 'wait and see.'?? My  
18 background ? and so on, I suggested that ? I was right. Only the ? is a ? organisation, with  
19 millions of people, not just one group - three, four .so we didn't, we didn't endorse violence.  
20 we didn't reject it either This is what happened, afterwards when we were released as I was,  
21 some of us worked together and we were excluded - those who opposed my ?? Because they  
22 thought the Indian has been killed, you see?? They supported us - they relied on us for some  
23 support degree? But they had not considered understanding of this to happen. They don't  
24 know - no solid background to go on - with the change from ? 112, it's not enough that you  
25 must ? So can it happen that in Natal there was Ronnie - that was two of the people - it  
26 started it there and then it killed? You see here in Natal I'm not interested in - would be nice  
27 - you know in 1960, the position - called me - there was an Indian girl - she had been away -  
28 they had a small business, they had a small ? so they were not seeing the claim, because the  
29 business will not like the change at all They can - so the support was not hundred percent

- 1 so to speak. Then they did the same thing under the bomb? Bought some ? somebody's not  
2 drinking - there was no dialect contribution? to make. And sometimes the point was 'so  
3 you're getting a carload?' I remember the ? hospital - bombed, that blast there. There was  
4 a parking ? go in charge there. I knew about the McCord bomb there - somebody asked a  
5 question: What do I think about violence? That if I had the ? 'Look I'm too drunk to argue  
6 this point.'
- 7 L: He's always had his wits about him, hasn't he (Phyllis laughs and concurs from the back).
- 8 D: Now she does ask me that question. Because the bombing Natal out ?? They get all - well,  
9 it meant an excitement for a few people..
- 10 S: So opposition was largely because there was no strategy, no organised clear strategy...?
- 11 D: There was no (Phyllis says 'There was nothing there - you knew about it ') ja (Phyllis says  
12 'That was the opportunist??') But some we knew, others we don't. (Phyllis says 'You knew  
13 what happened, but we had no part in the struggle??') ...the striking of it there???
- 14
- 15 L: At this stage the conversation became rather general on current affairs because of Mr  
16 Docrat's wish to get home by a particular time, so the interview, as you might say, has ended  
17
- 18 There is nothing further on the rest of the tape.
- 19