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DOCUMENTATION CENTRE
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"VOICES OF RESISTANCE"

INTERVIEWEE: NINA HASSIM
INTERVIEWER: D SHONGWE
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PLACE: PIETERMARITZBURG

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DS: Good morning and welcome. My name is Dimakatso Shongwe from the Documentation Centre of Durban-Westville University. Today we are interviewing Mrs Nina Hassim, at her home. Thank you Mrs Nina Hassim, or should I call you Nina?

NH: Nina.

DS: For your time and welcome.

NH: Thank you.

DS: Nina would like to tell us a little bit about yourself? When and where you were born?

NH: I was born on the 27th September, 1936, in Cape Town, in Walmer Estate, Cape Town.

DS: Your parents, were they South African?

NH: My parents were South African, but my father was a German Jew, who fled Nazism and came to South Africa, and met my mother in the Communist Party.

DS: And your mother was?

NH: My mother was, do you want their names?

DS: Yes.

NH: Sorry, my father was Hans Friederich and my mother is Amina Ghool. My mother met my father, I think, in the Communist Party and married. My father fled

Germany, and soon after that his sister and his mother came to South Africa. So they are really South Africans, made their home here. My mother came from a well-known Cape Town family that had a political background. My grandfather was an Indian, my grandmother was Malay. And they entertained in their home diverse people. From India, from Africa, the Khamas came to my grandfather's house and lived there, and other people as well.

DS: Okay. So your grandparents from your father's side?

NH: I don't know.

DS: You don't know? Okay. Would you like [intervention]

NH: No, I only know my grandmother.

DS: Oh, your grandmother.

NH: Only my grandmother and my aunt came[from Germany].

DS: Okay, would you like to tell us about the community you lived in?

NH: In Cape Town?

DS: Yes.

NH: I went to Coloured schools; and my father and mother separated, and when they separated, we had a period of instability and then we went to live in District Six. My mother's family, my mother's eldest brother gave her a little place to stay in. And I went to school in that area. I went to Zonnebloem, which was a very well known school, at the time, originally started, I think, for the children of the chiefs but by the time I went, it wasn't. It was a mixed school, not mixed no, it wasn't really mixed. And then from there I went to Trafalgar High

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School, which was, at the time, the foremost political school there, the political teachers taught and it had a very high reputation.

DS: Okay, what year was that?

NH: I went to Trafalgar in 1950, but I was already politicised before that because my aunt was Jane Ghool, and her husband was IB Thabata and my mother, even my father and my aunts, they were all a very political family. My uncle's ex-wife was Sissy Ghool, who was a city councillor, but she was on the other side.

DS: Okay. What do you mean on the other side?

NH: We were Unity Movement, Jane Ghool and IB Thabata were Unity Movement, All African Conventions Teachers' League of South Africa and Sissy Ghool was a populist. I have written an article but I haven't published it, but it is more for my sister - on District Six. She was what I call the original populist. She knew how to fire people with populism. But she was a city councillor. She is the daughter of Doctor Abduraman, who was the first Black provincial counselor, I think. But we all used to meet, high school days and holidays, we would fight. Scrap over big dinner tables, because the political ideas were being thrown around, all the time.

When I was at primary school, the first political act that I did and it is documented in the Torch, I had heard about the libel case by Golding who was a member of the Coloured Affairs Council and he had sued the Torch for libel because there was a cartoon. I forget what the cartoon was, but he said it

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denigrated him and so he sued the Torch Newspaper. You know the Torch, hey?

DS: Torch, yes I know.

NH: Yes so I heard that they were going to go out of business and I collected money and I must have been in about standard two or three. I can't remember. And I collected money – maybe standard four, but I wasn't even a teenager. And I collected money and I took it to the Torch to tell them it was pennies and halfpennies, but small but packets of money. And they wrote about me because I really felt very strongly. And then when I went to high school, I sold the Torch door-to-door, on a Monday night or Tuesday night. I think it was Monday or Tuesday night in the District, in District Six, which was absolutely safe to walk in, if they knew you. And we would knock on the doors. And in my article – no it is not an article. In this thing that I am writing about, in that period I'd say that we were safe and nobody ever chased us. They may not have bought, but they never chased us selling the newspaper. There were lots of us, young people, students. I was about standard seven, when I first started.

DS: You were selling the newspaper just because you were involved in Torch or is it because of hardship maybe?

NH: No, no, no it was a political newspaper. We got nothing for it.

DS: Oh it was a voluntary [intervention]

NH: We did it for nothing, yes it was voluntary. In fact, the strange thing, not strange, the thing is that, that group that sold, when I think back, there was a

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Zimbabwean with me. He and I used to go together because Trafalgar was a place when it was Rhodesia there were no high schools at one time there for the students and so they often used to come to Trafalgar. So Trafalgar actually was a place where you actually did meet other people from outside the border, but Zimbabweans mainly, ex-Rhodesia. So the Zimbabweans were often politicised at Trafalgar.

DS: So that is when you started to be politically active?

NH: Yes.

DS: So in high school?

NH: I was a member eventually of the debating – what did we call it, it was like a debating society. And there too, we were political. We had - one of our biggest meetings at the school was against the van Riebeeck festival, 1952. That was the first time I ever addressed a group in 1952.

DS: Would you like to tell us about the...?

NH: The van Riebeeck festival was going to be a very big festival celebrating the coming to South Africa of van Riebeeck. 1952 must have been 300 years of van Riebeeck's coming. And they had all sorts of smart things at the Waterfront and in Town and there was going to be big celebrations and we joined the call by the – the students at the school joined the call by the political organisations to boycott the festival. So people didn't go to the festival. Only the really – it was a very big boycott, yes in Cape Town. I also remember the Train Apartheid Resistance Committee. In fact I have given my badge – now that would have been in '47. '48 the Nats came in, and very soon after that the Train

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Apartheid came, and so it must have been about '49. So how old was I? I must have been about thirteen. I was about thirteen and it was a big – Train Apartheid Resistance Committee was formed, the TARC. Have you ever heard of it?

DS: The TARC?

NH: TARC – Train Apartheid Resistance Committee and it had various, it was almost like a united front of different organisations and there was a huge meeting on the Grand Parade. And I was one of the collectors and my badge, I had a badge. I donated it to the District Six Museum. We collected to go around the crowds. At those big meetings people would give, they didn't have much but they would give. And they would come flooding in. I think there was some trouble, because some of the students I think, after that meeting, they were told not to, but they did actually go and board trains. And I think some were arrested, but I don't know. I was young and I didn't do that sort of thing.

DS: So what was it really, Train Apartheid, all about?

NH: Before the Nats came in you could sit anywhere on the buses and trains. Not on the mainline trains. I think they had what they call second class reserved or something like that, that is where you sat. You know if you came on the mainline from Cape Town to Durban. It was sort of segregation of some kind, but the local trains in Cape Town, you could sit anywhere and in the buses you could sit anywhere. When the Nats came in, it was on of the first – that, and the 'mixed marriages' [Act], those were amongst the first things that they did. And they made boards, and you couldn't sit anywhere

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anymore and so people were incensed because the trains in the Cape, those days, weren't like now. They were safe and that was our very big method of travelling from one point to the other to go to work, to go to school, that kind of thing. And there was huge outcry.

DS: Okay just to understand, so you are saying by this time you were at high school?

NH: Ya, I was at high school and I was thirteen. I am not sure whether I was at high school at that particular[time], but I think though I must have been.

DS: Your parents, especially, I think, your mother was ..?

NH: My mother was the backbone for her brother, her sister and the rest of the members of the Unity Movement. She supported them all the way. Her home, even, actually, when my father was still at home. Though he didn't really like it because he – the cleavage between Stalinism and Non-Stalinism in our home was quite pronounced. And my mother's home was open to them. They would have fund-raising parties and make money for the anti-CAD and for the All African Convention and CARTA. And then when my mother and father separated, my mother was always there to raise money. Help to – roll up her sleeves, make food, sell things to make money for them. Her home was also open. One year the CARTA teachers came, and we lived in two rooms. We didn't have a lounge. We had two tiny rooms and the teachers came, and my mother had to move all of us, and juggle and make place for the teachers from the Transkei. She was

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very supportive of her family. And in fact, she really wasn't a member of the Communist Party really, by then. She really did swing across to the Unity Movement.

DS: So obviously she was supportive of you?

NH: Very supportive, all my life.

DS: Doing all ...?

NH: Yes. No, in our family that was the given, and even those that didn't support the organisation were always there. Yes they always, they may not have agreed, but they never stood in anybody's way. And when there was trouble they were always there to help. This was the unusual thing about our family. That even when they belonged to different organisations or were apolitical, when trouble came, they came to help, always.

DS: So at high school, what school was that?

NH: Trafalgar.

DS: Trafalgar, was it mixed or...?

NH: It was mainly Coloured and Malay, and we had one or two African students, very few.

DS: How was the environment, you know, social life there?

NH: In what way?

DS: I mean was it – it wasn't racist, I believe?

NH: No, no, never, never, not like now. It was a different – the one African student that was in my class, his mother was a washerwoman. He was probably in the top ten of our class. And I knew – and in District Six as well, there were African families living there, and there were White families living there. Do you want to know about that?

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DS: Okay. You were still explaining how was the community in District Six, would you like to expand on that?

NH: Yes. There were small pockets of African families there, as well as White families. And so my feeling, when I started thinking about it about a year or two ago,was that the trauma, that dislocation of removal, I think, affected them as much as it affected the Coloured and the Malay community. And in – and I can give you examples. Would you like examples?

DS: Yes do that.

NH: There was a hostel for Africans in the District Six, in Searle Street, just a stone’s throw from where I lived. And those were migrant workers, mainly from the Transkei, and I befriended some of them. And they gave a lot of stability to that area because they were strong, brave men. When the 'skollies', the gangsters were around, those men would come from work; they were very respectable gentlemen. They were migrant workers. It gave that area a certain stability. And they were never, ever looked down on. I went into that hostel as a young girl of twelve, ten maybe eleven or twelve, thirteen and I was perfectly safe there. And I had made friends and we used to write a little newsletter and we used to – just three people would read it, but they were [interested]. And when they left there, when District Six was - people were thrown out, I often felt that those men must have had a very hard time in the townships because they were used to town life. You know what I mean? And unfortunately, the one that I was very close to, died in an accident. And I wish,

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sometimes, people would remember how hard it must have been for them as well. Then there were Whites. There was one White family, quite close to where we lived. They lived in the most peculiar house. It has a level below street level, and there was a man in that house who was a recluse. I don't know if he was mentally retarded or mentally ill or just depressive or whatever, but he just sat there, underneath this tree. You walked on the pavement, you would look down, and you could see him. And there were about two or three sisters, White sisters, they were Whites, sisters in that house. They were very reclusive, they looked, they were, they didn't mix with people. But you knew they were there, and you greeted them. You know, and they knew you and many - a couple of years after my mother was removed from the area, she met the one woman at a bus stop or at the station, and my mother said how she wept. She wept because of her own dislocation. And that is something sad for me, that we don't sometimes remember some of the others.

DS: Or maybe they don't come out too and say: "This has affected us"?

NH: That is right. And that was very sad because, you see, I suppose the community was a very giving community there. They took no notice of them. They could just be miserable or on their own or reclusive, with nobody interfering with them. What would happen when they went somewhere else? They might not have had that same kind of sympathy, even. Ya, it was very sad. There was another thing, if you are really interested in that period. There was a boy at school, he was White with blonde hair. He lived

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down the road from us, but when he got to university he suddenly became White. And how it happened, I don't know?

DS: What do you mean he became White?

NH: He never mixed with the Black students, he never – I mean you know.

DS: He just changed.

NH: He just jumped, so I am not going to say that, that kind of thing also didn't happen, you know.

DS: Then after – you matriculated at the same school?

NH: Mmm.

DS: And then you went to?

NH: University.

DS: Which one?

NH: Cape Town.

DS: Cape Town, then how was life then?

NH: Life was very exciting those days. There were lots of people. I mean Neville Alexander was there, and he took on the heavy weights and there were always arguments. There was a corner, called the Unity Movement Corner, and it is still there. And the arguments at lunchtime and the discussions that went on. I mean there was a Namibian, what is his name? Then there was somebody else from Kenya. There were students from all over, and the arguments. There was one who went to the United Nations, eventually, and I mean Neville would just demolish them. And then we also had meetings at the university, and that was also a time of great turmoil. It was the Universitys' Act. I don't know what it is called, and there were marches. I didn't join the marches. We didn't believe in that sort of thing. But there was turmoil, in the student

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population throughout the Western Cape or let's say Cape Town, I don't know the whole of the Western Cape. And so, by then, there had been a split in the Unity Movement, the All-African Convention section and the Anti- Cad section, which you know about. I am sure my husband spoke about it. And the students that belonged to the All African Convention wing and the students that came from the Anti-Cad wing came together to mobilise and to organise the students. Because there was this ferment and we met and we then broke all over again. Because the All African Convention wing were pushing for a proper student organisation and the other wing said they must come into existing organisations. And we said students have their own particular needs and agenda. They need to be able to express themselves, and we felt that the more organisations you could get people into the better. Especially the students who would go out eventually and take the ideas. And so we split again, and at that time Dullah Omar, Neville Alexander, myself and various other people I am now beginning to forget some of the names, were all in the original [organisation] when we were discussing and we actually split on the question of the organisation. And our group broke away from the sort of nebulous group, and we formed the Cape Peninsula Students Union and that was formed in Mowbray, must have been about 1955. I am not good at dates, hey, about that time, yes. About the mid-fifties.

DS: Because, you know, most people we have interviewed, especially those who have studied at the University of Natal the situation there – the

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institution itself was racist. So I just want to find out whether at the University of Cape Town was it a similar?

NH: The university itself was racist, right, there is no two ways about it. And some lecturers were decent people and some were totally horrible. You got – I mean I did chemistry. The one class I was in, I had no partner, you can't do physical chemistry, it is like physics, alone. And when I went to say I am all alone this man said: "Well you will have to be alone there is nobody to work with you." But the Black students were very close and they met and they engaged on all – you know because it was such a – because people had come from all over. And you met Transkeins at the university who came from political families, as well. I mean Archie Makeje was there. I don't know if you have heard of him. He has written books. Archie Makeje was there. Fikile Bam was there, sell-out now, co-opted by rich Afrikaner firms. Fikile Bam was there. Neville was there, Archie Makeje was there, what was that other guy's name? Then there was the anti-Cad people who were there. There were lots of people and we would fight. I mean lunchtime was time to go and fight over anything.

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DS: Like?

NH: Konsangwisi was there. On any issue, whether you were joining the march or you not joining the march, or you're going when they are going to put up that thing. You know, the principal put up the plaque to say – what was it called? Something is gone, free education – the freedom university freedom. There was no such thing at that wretched

university, right. We were kraaled there. And a few students would bridge that, and I can remember a handful. I can't remember their names, but most of the time it was the Black students, and I use Black in the generic sense – African, Indian and Coloured.

DS: All right, after you finished your degree what did you do?

NH: Once I left university I decided that I shouldn't be in a student organisation. Too many students stay in student organisations for the rest of their lives, and this I would say to this day. Because you have got all these thirty-year olds in these organisations doing all sorts of funny things, right. I don't agree with that so I joined the Society of Young Africa. I joined SOYA.

DS: What was it all about?

NH: SOYA was the youth wing of the All African Convention sector of the Unity Movement. It was where we were going to be trained politically, and that is what I did.

DS: By that time, how old were you?

NH: I was quite old, twenty-odd. Now I am very old, right. Then I was quite old. I was I think about twenty-one.

DS: So after the university you joined?

NH: I joined SOYA.

DS: And then at SOYA, were you in an executive member or just a member?

NH: Cape Town Soya, I think I was on the executive eventually, not at the beginning, but eventually I used to, I think I did – yes I can remember going to executive meetings. I was on the executive of the CBSU as well. Ya.

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DS: So you and at the SOYA from SOYA where did you go?

NH: APDUSA.

DS: APDUSA, okay and then…?

NH: I don't know if I should. There was an underground structure of the All-African Convention – it wasn't of the All-African Convention, it was a cell. It was a party and I was invited to join that, and the decision to form APDUSA came from that forum. We were sworn to secrecy, and to this day I don't even know if I should be saying it. Because it was one of the things that I never even told the cops. It was so hidden. It was so deeply embedded in your psyche, that you didn't talk about it. But it was from that cell, that party that directed the formation of APDUSA and that actually directed us.

DS: So what was it exactly all about?

NH: It was a cell really, you can say. A cell of people, revolutionary cell.

DS: So it was an underground movement?

NH: Yes it was. You could say underground because nobody knew about it, hey.

DS: Would I say like the ANC, in those days, had an underground movement?

NH: No, it wasn't quite the same, no. It was more a core; it was a core group of people.

DS: So you never, you were just involved in this …?

NH: That was where you got your Marxist training.

DS: Marxist training, would you like to talk about that?

NH: Oh, I forgot.

DS: Or your favourite literature on life and?

NH: No I can't.

DS: You can't remember?

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NH: No, but that is where we got our training.

DS: So your working experience, where did you start practising or ...?

NH: I had a science degree, and when I came to Natal to get married, it was very difficult to get jobs. In the Cape you still could get jobs, you come to Natal, it is worse than an ox-wagon's laager. I couldn't get work. When I first came I had a job at the university, but when I came to 'Maritzburg that is when I couldn't get work. Eventually I did get work. Ya, I worked at the university as well, as a technician. And then I left there because I was a bit bored, and I got a job in a factory but then they tried to force me to do things, which they didn't force the Whites to do.

DS: Like?

NH: Hours of work, agreements that we made about hours of work, lunchtimes, little things like that. And then I was so upset that I told Kader that I couldn't stand it anymore. I had a child, I had ...

DS: By this time you were married?

NH: I was married, ya, and I said to him [Kader], I couldn't stand it anymore and he said I had better leave if I couldn't. And then I tried to force them to go back to the agreement that we'd made for the job and they refused and I said right, I am leaving and then they brought some – it was tough days those days. They brought somebody from Jo'burg to tell me exactly how even, till I go I have to do this, this and this ,and I said no you can take it off my pay but I am not doing it. I am leaving. And I was sitting at home - I have left out something. I will tell you that just now. And I came and I was sitting

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at home, and at some point Kader said to me at Easter that year, he would offer me a job. I could do law because otherwise I would drive them all mad. And so I said, "No, if you are prepared to do something for me, let me do something else. Let me do pharmacy." So he agreed, and so that is how I became a pharmacist. We knew that it would give me a chance to earn a living, if anything were to happen. What I did leave out was when we came to Pietermaritzburg – from the time we came to Pietermaritzburg we were politically active in the community and we used to bring out leaflets, have meetings and we were picked up on every single occasion we gave out leaflets.

DS: You were picked up?

NH: By the police. We knew as soon as we start, then we would be picked up and it was the height of the repression, at the time.

DS: What year was that?

NH: What year was that? I came to Pietermaritzburg in, I think, it was 1961 and it started from '61 to '62, it went on throughout that period.

DS: So by this time, you were also doing pharmacy?

NH: No that came after that, ya, that came after that. I got a bit mixed up there. First we came to 'Maritzburg. I couldn't get work there and I got work. Then I yes then after that I did pharmacy. I did pharmacy at Westville [UDW].

DS: Oh, I just want to find out your first, personally, I understand maybe experiencing, as a whole, racial oppression, but I just want you your first experience of racial oppression?

NH: My very first?

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DS: Yes.

NH: I can't remember a time without some kind of segregation or repression.

[MACHINE SWITCHED OFF]

DS: Okay I was still asking you about the question of your first experience of racial oppression.

NH: I cannot, ya.

DS: Ya,I understand you cannot really point out exactly but can you at least maybe have an idea when it started? Even if it means going back at your early age.

NH: Ya, it is because of my mother and father being different, I think, and also because of my mother and her family. There was a time when my father wanted to put me in the German school and my mother totally, point blank, refused. Because, she said, this is a Black child and I wasn't to be taken away from my environment and I, because of my mother and her attitude from a very early age, I knew that I was Black and I was very happy to identify as such.

DS: So earlier on you said like racial oppression was different in a way starting from a certain period. The question I want to ask is that would you at least explain to us exactly what was the difference of oppressions before Nats came to power and thereafter?

NH: It was no you didn't do certain things – well I was very small, remember that. I must have been six/ seven, you know. You knew you didn't do certain things and you weren't welcome in certain places but it wasn't so pronounced. It was more by agreement almost, that you didn't, and you lived in

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this area and you didn't, but and that you went to a Coloured school, and you didn't go to some other school. But when the Nats came in, it became more pronounced and more hurtful because it was legislated. And so the bus had a board, and the train had a board, and the beach. We loved the beach, and the beach was closed to us, and the beaches that we were used to were closed to us. And it was that kind of thing. And in our family, one of my cousins had to rush to marry because of the Mixed Marriages Act. So we were very much aware of it. That it was more pronounced.

DS: Okay, I just want to find out you – what the impact of Apartheid basically, socially to Blacks especially socially, economically as well as politically?

NH: Socially those people who were politically conscious never let it affect their social lives, and I would include the people who were not politically conscious but whose philosophy in life, and I am thinking in particular of certain Whites, who themselves, didn't take a political stand but were non-racial in their very being. They never let it stand in their way and they would still meet and mix, even at great danger or risk to themselves. That is socially. Economically, I am not sure that it wasn't just a perpetuation of what happened under the United Party. I think it was there from the beginning and so I don't think that it made – the class divide stayed, so I don't think that was so pronounced. So and politically, politically I think it did bring people together.

DS: I just want to understand, you know, because lately especially in schools, you find people talking about

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Apartheid, racism but they don't know exactly what it means. If I just want to find out your ideas.

NH: On racism is different.

DS: Yes.

NH: Because when Apartheid came – you see it is difficult for me in the sense that I came from a family that was not only mixed but had relationships across all the colour lines. So for me it is a little difficult to try to think of how other people perceived it. But that period was a period in which race was of less importance than political ideology, and if you were in the same political group then race was never an issue. And that is what I find so distasteful now in which people do not judge you by what you believe and what you think and how you behave but they judge you purely on race because that I don't find – I didn't grow up in that environment. And so when I had to be judged on the colour of my skin, I actually mind and that is too much today, and that I think, is due to two things and it is not just the legacy of Apartheid. That mustn't be used here as an excuse. I believe it is something to do with the rise of an elite that uses race to justify their ideology.

DS: So I just want to come back to the question about yourself basically. I just want to find out were you subjected to any arrests during your political involvements?

NH: Ya, apart from the times when I used to be picked up and my name taken and all that and then I was also warned not to take part in political activity by some magistrate, at some point. And then, but I wasn't banned, but Kader was house arrested. So I

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didn't have that fortunately, but after that I was detained in – what year was Kader detained 1971? Ya.

DS: Okay can I just pause for a minute.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

DS: Okay you have been telling us about your detention?

NH: Ya, in 1971 I was detained. I was detained, I don't know if it was about a week and a half after Kader, I am not sure. I have got the dates written somewhere. Anyway I was detained. They first came here and then they threatened me and they told me, and then they told me that they are giving me a chance, and then they just came because I hadn't satisfied them. And they took me away. I was detained at Hilton police station and I spent all that, the entire period was almost three months. I forget how many days it was. It wasn't quite three months. I was about fifty odd days, I think. It was about two and half months and it was all at Hilton police station. And the Security Police originally interrogated me there, and at times, they would bring me through to town. At that police station I have written about a man called Mr Rust. He was the commander of that police station. And he looked after me and, in fact, he treated me with great humanity. He, himself, had suffered in life and so he knew what he should do. What the correct procedure should be and he treated me in that way. He brought me warm water every morning, he greeted me, he locked me up at night, he would greet me. Because in solitary, that kind of little thing is very important. And so that greeting –that was after the Security Police had finished with me

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and I was just stuck in this police station as a detainee. And he told me, when I went to thank him once, that what I didn't know was that he had the key, that at no time could the Security Police come to fetch me without his knowledge. Because it required two keys, I think, and that he always had the one. And ya.

DS: While you were detained, were you tortured and in solitary confinement did they torture you in any way?

NH: Solitary confinement is torture in itself, but fortunately, I had managed to get some of my books out of them. I was a student when I was – I was in my final year pharmacy when I was arrested and I sort of complained and complained because I was very, I had very, very good results, and so on the basis of that, I had managed to get my books. But I will be very honest with you; you cannot study in solitary. But you pretend, and it is one way of making time go. And if you are talking about physical harm, no, but mental torture and standing for hours on end and lifting your arms and keeping your arms up and not drooping and all that, ya I know all about that.

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DS: So while you were standing and keeping your arms up, were they watching you?

NH: Yes, you were the [intervention]

DS: Did you ever put it down?

NH: Oh then they come and they push it up, and in fact ya, in fact, there is always the fear of danger, of physical danger to you. Because you would be all alone. Especially, I don't know if it is because you are a woman, but you are all alone with three or

four men and the way they do it, you know, the one used to play with pins. And I often used to think, now is he trying to tell me he is going to put pins there, you know. And I have heard of them with their guns and things. There is always physical danger. And on a very personal level I – when I was young I used to menstruate very heavily, and I on my, I knew I was going to menstruate, so luckily I had – I knew they were going to take me that day. Because they had been threatening, threatening the whole weekend. And I had gone to town and I had bought some things, and I had bought pads and things. So I actually had things with me, and that night when I was kept up I actually menstruated. And it was due, it wasn't the fear or anything. You know what I mean? I knew it was that. And I used to flood, and it was the most humiliating thing to have to tell these men that you are going to have to take me to the toilet and to the cell. I can still picture that.

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And the other most painful thing for me and I could blot my mind out to my husband, to my children, to everything. I had known of somebody who had broken down in detention. So the main thing that I was going to do was preserve myself. It was, everybody must preserve themselves. So one of my preservation tactics was not to worry about my children, my family were fine, they would do that. But it was self-preservation, that when you come out of here, you must be able to walk with your shoulders back, walk tall. And what you also – because you can't really study and do anything and they have a Bible. I am not religious. I mean, I

started that wretched Bible from the Old Testament, which somebody told me afterwards I shouldn't have. I should have read the New Testament, it is much nicer. I mean what do you know? You don't know how long you are going to be there. So you do.

DS: You start from the beginning.

NH: You start from the beginning and I used to hoard things. I was a smoker in those days, so I used to hoard the packets, the outer packets, the packet. I hoarded scraps of paper, I hoarded things. Maybe because I was stupid, I was dumb or maybe because I was just totally out of this world, and my hair I would stuff into these things, so that I could keep the place a bit clean. I was asked afterwards why didn't you ask for a broom? Why didn't you ask? You don't think of that. You don't even, it is preservation. And so the day when they said they were going to let me out – you know I was telling you about it, and they didn't come for me. The thing that I was most upset about wasn't that I wasn't going to be released, it was that I had cleaned up the cell and thrown all my little packets away. And I was so upset because now I had to start saving packets all over again to put my hair, to put my bits, my fingernails. You know, you cut your nails? That kind of thing.

DS: Okay you finally, by this time your husband was arrested?

NH: Yes he was arrested.

DS: Why did they detain you, basically? Was it because of your [intervention]

NH: To give evidence against him.

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DS: It was to give evidence?

NH: Ya, in fact I think, they thought that I would be able to be a witness because they didn't believe me that I was married and they eventually went to check and it was so.

DS: Okay. And then after your released, what did you do?

NH: I came – I was in 'Maritzburg. I mean my children were in Durban by then, and they were brought up and my family came and they surrounded me and they took turns and they were with me. And do you want me to say something about Mrs Christopher?

DS: It is fine.

NH: Mrs Christopher was an old activist. She wasn't in the Unity Movement, but she joined later on. She was more a social work, social welfare person, things like that. But she also took part in the defiance, not defiance – passive resistance campaign. And she was very well known, and she is older than my mother. She is my mother's sister. She is from Durban, and she is the person who brought my children up. And I was told I wasn't allowed to go and see certain people, and one of the people was my grocer. And so we went to town and we bought some food and we came home and a day or two later I think I said to her: "You know why couldn't I send you into Mohamed's Shop? Why did we have to go to the OK?" And she said to me, and I shall never forget this. It was really her humanity. She said: "I am just waiting for you to come back to normal." So I must have been slightly un-normal, you know. I shan't ever forget those words: "I am just waiting." Her name is Khadija Christopher.

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DS: So how did you feel when you were out, free?

NH: Very disturbed, because I was worried about what was going to happen, and in fact, I slipped out a letter to the exiles saying: "Don't send sympathy, send money for defence." And I got somebody to take that letter out of the country and post it to them. Because I was angry, because they had done things in our name that they had no business doing. That is besides the point. I don't hold it against them, it is an experience, life's experience when you do things you mustn't regret. But I was angry enough to send that letter. Then I started seeing what could be done. And as soon as they were charged, we went to the court and we checked what we could do. And then we started arranging for defence, and that kind of thing. And I would like, at this point, I would like to say that the defence, the person who really helped was somebody, who wasn't from our group. And it is an ANC/ Natal Indian Congress person. And when I met him, it is Rabi Bhagwandeen, when I met him that day – he said afterwards, I was still quite crazy. I mean I had just been released and somebody took him. He had come to 'Maritzburg, he had a hotel here and somebody took him. He claims I was still fairly nutty, but I wasn't actually because I went to tell him: "Now start doing something." And he said: "Don't worry." And I never worried. Which isn't what I can say about Ismail Mohamed, because he was a money-grabbing rotter. And in fact, at the time when we met to say: "Rabi says don't worry about the money, and he said, "No, money must be there." And Rabi said no, he has got some money, he'll get money for

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the defence. When my brother-in-law and I said, okay we'll put up whatever, we'll stand surety because I had a house and he had something else, and he wasn't satisfied with that.

DS: How much?

NH: Hundreds I don't know how much it cost, but hundreds and hundreds. I don't know but Rabi got the money from overseas for the defence.

DS: Okay can we pause for the moment?

[PAUSE]

We are back. You were still telling us about how you managed to – how was life after you were released from detention and can you continue from there?

NH: Ya, must I, just to remind myself, we started to see what we could do for the defence and then when they were on trial it was daily, and also we arranged and these people in Pietermaritzburg, each day a different family would make something for their tea. And I would get up early in the morning I would make a little thing for Kader, for his lunch, and also I would make the tea and the coffee. And I would go early to the court, and as soon as they came we would give it them so they would have tea when they came, or coffee I forget what it was, and then flasks for teatime. And then somebody would make something and give them. So our lives were really immersed in that. But I didn't – a year, just over a year, but at some point it was becoming very boring. It is not a pleasant thing to sit, hey, through court. And so, I also worked part-time, and so some days I would work a few hours at the pharmacy where I had done my practical training. I wasn't a pharmacist,

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but they gave me a job. I used to do their medical aid and that also took my mind off the trial, about half a day and then I would come home and see to the children. And my aunts and my mother and my family were rotating, I was very rarely alone. And during the trial one of the trialists mother was already bedridden, and my mother was looking after her here. So she was in this house too, and people would be coming, families, Fuzani's wife came, various people came and stayed, or if they weren't staying here, they would come during the day or evening. Ya, there was a coming and going, all the time.

DS: Okay, I just want to understand that your husband was eventually convicted and imprisoned for almost fourteen years?

NH: Eight.

DS: Eight years?

NH: Eight years. He was in detention for over a year and then eight years.

DS: On Robben Island.

NH: Mmm.

DS: So I just want you to tell us how did you cope, I mean being alone? You had to take care of the kids or?

NH: In '72 he was sentenced, I was at the university. I came up from classes that day to hear the thing. I went to a first class and then I rushed up. And the students were very supportive of me, hey, they would help me and do things for me. I shan't forget that. And I was doing my final year. I came up, he was sentenced, I went back to Durban. And by that time I was living in Durban with my cousins.

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Khadija Christopher had a daughter and she and her husband looked after us. We lived with them and they would take the children weekends, and I would study. They gave me a place to live, and a place to study. And then I qualified that year. An interesting thing that happened to me, it is nice. Do you want a little anecdote?

DS: Yes.

NH: I used to study, I study best at home, not in the library and also in an office. They used to give me an office weekends, so that I could cut myself off, no distractions. Because I had to get through to work. And one morning they knew I was coming, the students knew I was coming to university because I had to hand in my prac book. So when I got there I – they knew where I used to park, and I was parking and there was this whole crowd. I can't remember how many standing on the wall, near the wall waiting for me. When I got to them I said: "Hi, how is it?" you know the usual, and they said to me, all grim-faced: "The rector wants you, been looking for you since yesterday." Now who was the rector? It was that Broederbond guy, I don't know his name. So, and I was so untidy, I don't wear fancy clothes. But I don't know why that day I had to be untidy. I was untidy, I had odd things, I was just going to hand in this book and go back to study, I had odd things on. I had a pin holding something up somewhere, I think a jersey or something. Anyway I was untidy as anything. I will never forget that day. And the students were in a total - like stunned. So I said to them: "Don't worry, don't worry." Okay, now I am going, right, I wished I could have gone

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home to tidy but never mind. So I went there and this rector Olivier, I don't know, Olivier, he was there and I went there. And you know, I shall never forget that day. He put me in a chair and he had curtains which he opened where the light struck my eyes. I was interrogated for another time in my life. He was the most appalling, abominable man. He had me almost like the Security Police had me. And he questioned me but you see I had done so well at university, I could pretend, and I am an actress, when I want to be. I could pretend to be an academic and I couldn't be bothered about anything. And all I was bothered about was getting through, and going and earning my living, and keeping myself. So in the end he had to let me go. When I got out the students were there, aghast, waiting now, they waited for me. I shan't forget them, you know. The students at the university were first waiting for me to come and then panicking like that and then waiting for me when I came out of this interview. And they were worried. They didn't know what he was up to.

DS: Was it an interview or?

NH: I don't know. I still to this day don't know what it was about.

DS: Can you still remember exactly what things he ..[intervention]?

NH: Oh he asked me about my politics and what am I going to do now, and that kind of thing. But it was a fishing expedition. I don't know if he had been put up to do it, or if he himself was a Broeder and he was probably a SP [Security Policeman] himself. I am not sure, but he was doing his own thing. But I

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squeezed my way out of that, and the students were so relieved when I came out. We were going to write soon. And that was the feeling, you know, that common humanity amongst students.

DS: Okay, so you wrote your exam?

NH: Yes, and I got through, and then I went to see Kader. By the way, when he was on Robben Island, I used to go three times a year, sometimes four. But sometimes I used to go between December and January so I could have my December/ Christmas visit and my January visit. So that whole period I did that, three/ four times a year, I would go. And then I came back to Pietermaritzburg with my children, and then I got a job from the people I had originally worked for, but I was looking for a place. And I went to see - and this is also another odd thing. I went to a man who was really, he wasn't a government supporter in his own, but you know, you get people who are – what is the word? Opportunists, who would do things for the government, for the Apartheid government. And he was an opportunist of that type, and he had premises that I knew I would want. So when I came back, I went to see him and he saw me and I told him I want premises over where I wanted the premises. It was here, down the road because I wanted to work. And he said no, he had somebody there and he couldn't put them out but he wouldn't forget, and so I worked and once I was cross with somebody, and so I only worked half a day. You know, to me money is not such a big thing. So if I get cross then I work half a day, or if I get cross and I leave work, if I just could survive, I would. So I worked, and then I

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worked about a year and a half, no just less than a year and a half he phoned me. And he said he had the premises for me and the people were leaving and so in June of 1974, I started the shop on my own. But I had been earning, and we survived the children and I. And then I started the shop and then I worked there for seventeen years and I kept us all Kader, his UNISA fees, his pocket money, mine, my children.

DS: Okay I just want to [intervention]?

NH: I want to say something because I would like to record it. That, of all the political prisoners, I never got any money except for the defence of the trial for Kader, I didn't pay for that. But I supported myself throughout, and I am actually very proud that I didn't get money from anybody. Because too many people were corrupted by that money. Because I see the corruption as something that flowed from being corrupted by money from overseas and elsewhere and that independence I am very proud of.

DS: That you....

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NH: That I survived on my own, with the help of my family. My family were very, very supportive. When I was earning they didn't need to support me but when I – but I was short of no food and I was never short of their moral and other support. And I am very grateful for that. And the community, I wrote there this week the actions of the community in Pietermaritzburg, ordinary men and women of mainly Indians, because that is where I lived but others as well. Their deep humanity, and their care for me and my family, the caring goes just beyond just "hello how are you?" It was "hello how are

you? How is your husband, how's your child?" Those people who lived on the other side defended my mother, whom they didn't know, they would put their light on and they would call. And if the dogs barked, theirs or ours, they would come out no matter what time, put the light on and shout: "Are you people okay?" One night this front door broke, and I don't know, it must have been the women talking because I was working and I said to my mother: "We'll fix it, it is safe we will lock these doors, we are safe, we will fix it tomorrow." And two old men came and they had a drink. The one went to fetch his friend they put up the door, the door was crooked and I was quite mad. And then as I looked at it I said: "No, it is crooked and I will remember their kindness with that crookedness, for the rest of my life." And the kindness' that I was given as a person, it is impossible to relate them all, impossible there was so much of ,what is the word? So much care. It wasn't financial, it was just ...

DS: You knew ...

NH: I knew that I was safe, that my children were not alienated. That we were not looked down upon. That one day I yelled at the kids at the top and I said: "Come on in, you know I am alone. Get inside!" and a little while later a neighbour from the other side came down and he said: "I must talk to you," gentle, soft gentleman. He said: "Don't ever shout like that, and especially don't shout and broadcast that you are all alone." You know it, was that care, that love and care that this community gave us.

DS: Do you, if I may ask do you still see that caring?

NH: Yes I do.

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DS: It is there?

NH: To this day, I still do. I walk in the street every morning ,and they will stop and they'll greet me and old customers will meet me somewhere. I mean they gave us our bread, you know, and they will stop and they will hug me just to see me, you know, the women. They will grab hold of me and they will hug me or they will say: "Ooh I haven't seen you for a long time." And I am beginning to forget peoples' names, so it is getting a bit embarrassing but still, ya, I still feel that, that community, that feeling is still there.

DS: It is good that it hasn't died.

NH: No.

DS: It is not always the case that you still see people you know caring for each other like that.

NH: No they do, it is a strange thing, you know, it is true.

DS: So if I may ask I just want to find out what aspect of life under Apartheid most affected your willingness to engage?

NH: I have always believed that socialism, a more egalitarian, equal society is an ideal for which I would want to strive, and I know this sounds wrong but I always felt that Engels was an example of that kind of - the humanity, and that a political movement is actually a movement that believes, leave lone all their philosophical arguments, it is a humanist thing. So if you believe in equality of human beings, then it automatically flows to that.

DS: So would I be right if I say that Engels is your …?

NH: My hero?

DS: Not exactly but your favourite writer or?

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NH: I wouldn't like to say anything so definite, but in a sense he is. He was a very rich man, and yet he loved people, and he gave all to the movement for equality and for a better world, and so maybe he is a kind of person that one can look up to. Because he broke with his own class, he believed in ....

DS: Equality.

NH: Ya, you know, it's ya, and also he had to support the movement. The others had no money all the time. So he is something different, but yes, it is I think, socialism in it's purest form is really a humanist, and that is really what I believed in. It was more for that.

DS: Can we pause?

[PAUSE]

DS: We are back. I just want to find out who are your role models in the struggle, like in Apartheid?

NH: It is very difficult because some of the role models I didn't agree with at some point and then others disappointed me. But if I have to say, then a teacher who stayed with the anti-CAD wing and not the All African Convention wing was a man called Ben Keys. He was a top intellectual and theoretician of the non-European Unity Movement when it was that. Unfortunately he didn't, he stayed with the anti-CAD wing. I had another teacher who belonged to a totally different group. He was a Jewish man and his name was Meltzer. Now I forgot his first name. And he belonged to the Forum Club, which was an offshoot of a previous organisation and he taught me to think. He was a teacher who was a real educationist. So I wouldn't like to leave him out, though I didn't agree with him. And then of course,

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my family. Jane Ghool, I B Thabata. My uncle he was very flamboyant, Ghoolam Ghool. My mother and my father, because my father came across Europe to come here. And my mother, for her unending support. And then there are other people like Leo Sishlali who died, and suffered. I think of all the people that I know, he suffered perhaps the most. His child was killed. Oh he lived under the most appalling conditions. I mean there were times when he starved, really starved. And various others. I fought with Neville, but I still think Neville is one of the best brains of our generation, Neville Alexander.

DS: Okay you fought with ideas?

NH: Ya, we disagreed, or at times, fight on a personal level but he is, he was. But other people. I am trying to remember people who made an impact. Nthatha for whatever reason, Zantsi. Zantsi was a member of the other wing, but he made contact immediately Kader and the others were arrested, and I never forget people, who no matter what their political allegiance was, who remembered to step in at a time. And also what's his name? He came to the trial, and everybody was so shocked to see him. Oh god, what is his name? I can't remember.

DS: Okay. While in the struggle, did you maintain a sense of hope?

NH: Yes, you don't, you have to, otherwise it is not worth it. You always hope.

DS: You always hope.

NH: Even if you think, it is not in my time.

DS: But you knew?

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NH: Even if it is going to be in your child's time, because at times you feel no, no not in my time. There are times when you are down and then you think that. But you always hope.

DS: What do you consider to be the defining moment in your life?

NH: Defining moment? I can't think of. There are so many defining moments of joy, happiness, sadness, I don't know. I really couldn't answer that. Maybe the day when I knew that I could never not have a political thought and I realised that for the rest of my life I would always have a position on something or the other, maybe that.

DS: Looking back is there anything you would have done differently?

NH: No.

DS: No?

NH: No.

DS: Why?

NH: You got one life, and I live by one thing only. When I get up in the morning, I must look into the mirror and I must know I did no bad thing to somebody, that I am ashamed of myself. So whatever I have done, I have always not been ashamed of and so that is it.

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DS: Okay. Now I just want to ask you about the post-ninety-four, basically. Starting back from the early nineties the unbanning of all political organisations, what did it mean to you?

NH: Freedom of speech.

DS: Freedom of speech?

NH: Ya, I wouldn't like to take freedoms and separate them because they are a unity but for me to be able

to say exactly what I feel without pretence, that is a very important freedom for me – freedom of speech. But I don't withdraw from the others. It must be with political freedom, obviously, but that is for me now this period that we live in. I mean even when I don't agree with things that are happening or I lambast or I am critical or whatever, at least freedom of speech, we have that. And if anything, as long as we have that we have hope again because this period we are living in is just a transition. There must always be something better than this for me, and so freedom of speech is my hope for a better and more equal world.

DS: In your understanding, why do you think the National Party agreed to a negotiated settlement?

NH: They couldn't manage anymore, I should imagine, but also because things had already broken down. And this part I think people have lost sight of. That by the eighties, say eighties, yes things had changed. We had gone, even under the Nats, we had gone far more forward, than under what I can remember as a child under the United Party, the segregationist period of South Africa. We had already, though it was by most peculiar means, like calling Japanese and Chinese honorary Whites, or having international hotels or allowing us to go to the Parks Board [places] or things like that. The society, the whole economy and the social and our whole society had actually gone forward and things were breaking down on their own. I mean you were already seeing, especially in Cape Town, you were already seeing people quite openly flaunting the Mixed Marriages Act, the sorry, Immorality Act.

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You would see couples, and occasionally you would see couples elsewhere, but in Cape Town it was very noticeable. So the whole thing was already disintegrating, and in fact it was momentum. They were pushed. I mean the momentum was there, and once it was going, I don't think they could have held on much longer. It suited them also, because that way they could still maintain control over things if they did it themselves. If they did it themselves, but it had been going on for a long time. Even when we used to go and visit on the Island, we would hear of things happening. Kaizer Matanzima was coming. He would fly with the helicopter from Cape Town to visit Nelson Mandela, and you knew that these things were going on. I mean there was a rumour, at one time, and it wasn't true that Nelson Mandela had gone to Zimbabwe and met somebody there but it was a rumour. And so you knew that these things were going on. And also there was a time when the Matanzima's wanted him to come to Transkei and Winnie had to tell him don't ever do that because your name will be forever mud. So there was a momentum in society that I don't think the Nats could, they just couldn't. There was a logic, and they had to and that was the best way that they could. And of course, international pressure.

DS: Okay ,do you think it was necessary actually to even go to, wasn't there any other way of, you know, getting our independence, except being involved in this negotiated settlement?

NH: The only other way, the only other way would have been a revolutionary army. And there was no

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revolutionary army. Don't believe that Umkonto could have done it. They were already in disarray and I don't think so. There wasn't a real revolutionary army to do it. It had to be that way because they couldn't have maintained a proper revolution.

DS: Okay can I pause?

NH: Mmm.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE 2

RESUMPTION ON TAPE 2A

DS: We are back. Right, we are still there in the question of this negotiated settlement. I just want to find out from you, what were your hopes for the country when the negotiations started in 1994?

NH: Oh I had no very great hopes. I must be honest, because a negotiated settlement for me was the opposite of freedom and I believed that only a revolution could have brought a better society. In a sense, we do have a democracy, even if it is on the paper, and even if we do have the franchise, freedom of speech, all those freedoms that we wanted. The truth of the matter is that, in Africa under colonialism, these negotiated settlements have merely exacerbated the inequalities, and so the only thing that can give me hope is that South Africa is so developed compared with the rest of the continent that I must live in hope of a new struggle for – that would have to keep me alive a new struggle for a more equal society. I am not satisfied with what I have got. I still am not satisfied, let's put it like that.

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DS: So in other words we are still going to see another political agenda if I may put it like that, emerging or a group?

NH: No better than that. That old slogan "Aluta continua", we are having to, that is what we have to believe in now, a new struggle. The struggle continues. It is ideological, it is political, it is everything.

DS: Would I be right if I say basically what is happening here because obviously the Whites if I may put it like that have are still owning the economy of this country, very few from the Africans?

NH: I wouldn't even be satisfied with that. I don't want there to be more Black, in generic sense, millionaires. And I am against all of them whether they're Indian, like Vivian Reddy or what is that man's name? No, I am thinking of that one that got a billion on that stock exchange.

[PAUSE]

DS: Okay we are back. We are still arguing that you like what has been negotiated basically is not what you were expecting in return. Now in other words you are saying "Aluta Continua" the struggle is not yet finished?

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NH: I would like to just clarify that, as well. Once you had a negotiated settlement on the go, you knew immediately that the struggle would have to continue because no negotiated settlement would have given us a more egalitarian society. And on the question of the economic empowerment. To me, it isn't important if the Johannesburg stock exchange becomes fifty-fifty, sixty-forty or whatever it is, because I see that merely as exacerbating and

increasing the gap between the poor, the very poorest and the rich. And I am, I couldn't care about the new elite and the millionaires whether they be Indian millionaires or African millionaires or whoever, because to me that wasn't what the struggle was about. And if we had to be honest, we have to start thinking beyond what we have got and a more egalitarian and a more, a fairer society and having all these millionaires and all these empowerment views is not helping the ordinary people. It is enriching an elite, under the guise of liberation. And for instance, let's take the African people. Let's leave the others out and take them, because they are the largest group. The gap between the rich and the poor is actually increasing under the democratic South Africa, because wealth is being concentrated in the hands of a few again. And so as I said the struggle had to continue.

DS: Okay in other words are you saying that these are the major issues or the challenges facing South Africa today?

NH: Yes definitely and because people are – it is a crunch time because people think they have struggled now they must sit back and so it is hard to mobilise them. And that is going to be what – well I am getting old now but the young, the intellectuals are going to have to take this and grasp it and find a way to mobilise and reinvigorate society and plan for a future.

DS: Recently we experienced a strike about the workers, is it Num/

NH: Municipal workers.

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DS: Municipal workers and what we saw in the cities, and do you think it is one of the things that we are going to experience in the near future?

NH: I don't know.

DS: Whereby people are or it will be a different scenario?

NH: I don't know, I can't say. I mean I don't actually agree with what they do when they go on these strikes. And I think that the other problem that we are going to have to face and that means that we already will antagonise people, is that within the trade union movement there is an elite there that merely perpetuate their own interests and entrench their own interests. I tell you the kinds of things that happen. I mean when they choose people for jobs these days the unions have got a say and they plan and decide on who they are going to give. Not on merit, not on competence, not on honesty. It is quite often for themselves. I mean you get workers who want a better, who want to be promoted who will whip up the unions irrespective of the …

DS: Political affiliations?

NH: In other words the union then becomes the employment bureau for people. I mean, is that what a union is supposed to be? I don't know. These are questions that we will have to address and look at. The union very often, I tell you that I have noticed, there isn't a culture of commitment, a culture of what's the word? Accountability. It is dog-eat-dog, who is going to get the best job. I don't accept that kind of thing, and I don't care who it is and what their struggle credentials are supposed to be, when they climb on the bandwagon for their own ends. I

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am against that. I think that actually we need a new cadre coming up to take on these old bureaucracy, they have bureaucratised themselves.

DS: Now I am going to like move on to a new set of questions. I will be looking at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I just want to find out from you whether you do believe in it, in its mandate?

NH: I didn't go. I don't feel I have suffered enough to go. Right I am not going to say somebody who really suffered shouldn't go. On the other hand a lot of money was spent on it. I am totally against waste. If they had a Truth and Reconciliation Commission where they gave their services free and they allowed people who didn't deal with their pain. I dealt with mine. I had therapy. I was given therapy. I am grateful for that. And yet in spite of therapy I still find things, years later, that I think about. I am not going to refuse that kind of catharsis to somebody whom I don't know. Right, if they needed it very good, fine. But I don't think anything can come of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as such. But if it helped even one person I would say fine but it shouldn't have been at that expense to the taxpayer. We have hundreds of people, thousands, millions of people without homes, without food. I actually think any commission that wastes our money and there are forever commissions. Right, you just sneeze, they have learnt from the Nats, you just sneeze and they make a commission. I am totally against that kind of thing. There were people who made under Apartheid. They didn't need reparations right. There are others that on their own

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or with their family's help got their reparations. There are people who got nothing. There are people who didn't even finish school because families were so pulled apart. If that money had been used for that, I wouldn't mind. But I don't see any of that having happened. And I saw a lot of fancily dressed people there. I am against that. And when I saw that one woman, I think she was the Gender Commission woman, I used to be so infuriated. She would sit there crying with the people, holding them crying. I mean I find that so offensive. The fat cats crying with somebody who really suffered right. So I am sorry. I don't think I have answered your question.

DS: No you did. Actually I just wanted, oh okay, now you did answer the other part but the second part whether its mandate was it a fair mandate?

NH: I don't even know exactly what its mandate was. You tell me.

DS: Okay its mandate was okay can we pause for a minute?

[PAUSE]

DS: Right we are back. Basically the or just say maybe half of its mandate was to investigate the atrocities committed by the perpetrators during Apartheid.

NH: Ya. Look, I don't know how much good it would do. In any case, the real people who suffered, I don't think some of them came forward. A lot of them had dealt with their pain. They had gone beyond that, they had got their education, they had survived. So I don't even know whether they dealt with the correct people, and as for the perpetrators they just got away scot-free. So that was a just papering over of

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the whole thing. I personally think it was a waste of money.

DS: What do you think they should have done I mean ¼[intervention]

NH: I think far more can be done, even now with this Ngema thing. I think far more could be done by the leaderships going out amongst the people talking and putting opposing viewpoints and engaging intellectually and theoretically and ideologiclly. If they were going to let all those perpetrators through the net then there was no sense and if that was what the negotiated settlement was about then they knew it from the beginning. That it was just, you know. When I was a child they used to say for the eye-blind. Do you know what that means? Eye-blind. When my mother eye-blind you think I am blind, you know you are just doing it to pretend and that is what it was. I mean – you take that whole thing about Winnie, I mean that spectacle of Archbishop Tutu begging her is so obscene that words fail me when I think of some of the things that came out of the Truth Commission, it is obscenity.

DS: So you are saying something about Winnie?

NH: Archbishop Tutu begged her to say sorry to Stompie's family or something like that and you know it, no it is obscene. She refused I think, didn't she, or she eventually grudgingly said something. No that isn't truth and reconciliation. And also you see on all sides there were perpetrators. Perpetrators from the ANC, leave alone the perpetrators from the Apartheid system, the system itself. There were perpetrators in the camps, there were perpetrators in Natal from the IFP and the ANC. I mean if they are

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going to do perpetrators they must do all perpetrators and unless they do all, then there is no sense in this kind of thing. Because both sides did commit murder. And so when the ANC blames the IFP and the IFP blames the ANC, it will go on forever because neither will admit to it that they did do things. So many people died.

DS: What do you think has been the impact of the TRC on South Africa's history?

NH: Not much.

DS: Not much.

NH: Because I still say that those that should have been helped or should at least – you see when I say that, I mean that they if they had found those people who had missed out, never. I mean from what I have heard there are people that are actually starving, who were actually involved in the struggle. And I don't mean all these ones who did suffer, but were given scholarships and went to school and went to university. If they had found them, then maybe yes you know but no, no.

DS: Nina just in closing, as we are about to wrap up our interview, words of encouragement from you?

NH: Study, believe in equality and never give up because society must move on no matter how bad the times look and hold the banners of the things that are important in life. We must have a country where everybody is really equal.

DS: Where everybody is really?

NH: Really equal.

DS: Now we have come to the end of our interview, I would like to thank you for your time. I believe that from this interview and also other interviews we

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will learn a lot from it and we will move on from that standard. Thank you very much.

NH: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW