

UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN-WESTVILLE

DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

“VOICES OF RESISTANCE”

INTERVIEWEE: D SHONGWE

INTERVIEWER: MOE SHAIK

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PLACE: DURBAN

DS: My name is Dimakatso Shongwe from the Documentation Centre of the University of Durban-Westville. Today we are interviewing Mr Moe Shaik who is the South African Ambassador to Algeria. Welcome Mr Shaik.

MS: Thank you.

DS: Mr Shaik, would you like to tell us something about yourself? When and where you were born.

MS: A very difficult question but I will start. I was born in Durban, in 1959, which makes me 42-years-old. . But more importantly I was born in a particular area of Durban called the Overport Flats. So I was born in a flat, in a very working class area in Durban.

DS: Your schooling?

MS: My schooling? I attended two schools in life – the first was the primary school in this Overport-

Springfield area and the school was called the Springfield Hindu State- subsidised school. So it was a school in which took care of poor kids, it had feeding taking place in those schools they would feed you with you know lunch we will always get lunch. And I spent there until primary school. When I was in standard four they moved areas and then I attended my next school Gandhi-Desai Manilall-Valjee High, and I stayed there from Standard Four until Matric. And I graduated in 1976.

DS: Were your parents born in South Africa?

MS: Yes. Both of my parents were born in South Africa.

My Dad was born in Pietermaritzburg. He grew up in Pietermaritzburg. My Mum; and here I must say

there were two Mums. The first, my natural Mum, was born, I think, in Johannesburg and she lived in Johannesburg, but then she passed away when I was

two, three years old. I didn't really get to know my natural mother, but my second Mum, whom I came to know as my Mum, was born in Ladysmith and she grew most of her life in Durban.

DS: What was the type of work your parents did?

MS: My parents, my Dad and my Mum were, originally I would say, under class people, you know. You

would have to understand the particular context in which some South Africans grew up in. They were invariably working class people, poor, battling to make ends meet. And this is my memory of my young childhood. This is how we lived, we lived on a very stringent budget. We lived on, in fact, my Mum used to make ice blocks. And I don't know whether you know what ice-blocks is, but I suppose she was called the ice-block lady. You know she would make the ice blocks and people would come knock on the door and say, "Auntie, I want to buy an ice block." And that's the amount of money; like mealies, you know the mealies lady, but she was the ice-block lady. And that money would be used to fund the house; those were hard times, difficult times. My Dad, by trade, was an upholsterer. I think he learnt the trade in the leather factory in Pietermaritzburg. How to upholster, how to cover, you know, suites, lounge suites and cushions et cetera. And he specialised in covering these things for cars, and this is how he started he started, very slowly, by making these covers, and people would bring their cars to him and then he would cover it. First, he worked from home; and then he got into a

business; and then that business grew and then he became a businessman. He wasn't very good at it, so it collapsed in the end. So that's how- that's the background.

DS: You said earlier on you were in Hindu-Tamil School. Why particularly that school?

MS: Well it was just a fate of coincidence.

DS: It was nearby.

MS: It was right next door, you know, and we were very, very poor; very poor and this school next door was the Hindu school. But I tell you it's not something I regret. It's something, which has made me uniquely South African; because I told you that my Mum was, my natural Mum was, lived in Johannesburg. What I didn't tell you was that she was part white. She was part white; and her whiteness was a source of deep conflict between - I think, this deep conflict caused deep conflict in the marriage. My father was raised dark-skinned person. And I think they were issues between them.

And issues in which I think we would be able to deal with differently today. But issues then, especially when you are poor, magnifies into great tension. I think there was tension in their marriage. In a sense apartheid also robbed us of a mother.

But my second Mum was of the Hindu religion, and when I say uniquely South African; because I grew up with a Muslim father; with a living memory of the Hindu mother so I have all these different traditions or things that I could imbibe; but what makes me uniquely South African so I have no regret about it and that particular school was a school in which poor people went to. And one of my most embarrassing, yet liberating, experiences was when I was at university. I bumped into someone who was sweeping the university at UDW the cafeteria he was sweeping the cafeteria. And this guy and I were in class together. And I was so shocked about how we were in the same school together, same, we shared the same things together, but just barely fifteen, ten years later our worlds were too different. He was sweeping the floor, and clearly still within the working class I think I was attending university in the middle class you know. And that is the background. So this school looms very large in my mind. Part of it was shaped much of our political thinking. But also because it reminds us of what still must change in our society. I know I speak too long but you can stop me.

DS: It's okay. While you were in high school, how was

the life there?

MS: You know the problem of having colours, of different things this little bit of whiteness that my mother brought into us made us look not all that Indian. We didn't quite look all that Indian you know so I mean if you look at me I don't quite look all that Indian. But I don't quite look all that Coloured so that's the other part of the problem. And this gave a huge problem in our school life you know this problem haunted me for the rest of my life. Because when we were registered at birth my mother was looking obviously white, my father was looking obviously Indian, depending on who took the children the child to register the birth it influenced the birth registration. One of my brothers is registered as Indian, one is registered as Malay, one is registered as Malay/Indian, one is registered as Malay/Indian/other Coloured, you know. So we have all these differences in the same family; have all these different registrations. I, in particular, am registered as Malay. And this I went to school so when we moved from this area when we went to primary school went to live essentially where Vino lives, which is an area called Greenwood Park. But they had two streets to Greenwood Park, there's the

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border of the Indian area which borders the Coloured area. We were on that border that says we were a little bit on the Coloured area. And this made it fascinating because we were now going to school in town and coming home to the Coloured area. So again this brought new experiences to us. And these experiences were making us richer, we didn't know it at the time. At the time, it felt like this alienation always, a sense of alienation. We were never quite Indian; we were never quite Coloured. You know there was this sense of who am I, where do I belong et cetera. But coming back to your question about school life. School life for me was absolutely fascinating, really wonderful in terms of growing up in Gandhi-Desai,. It was in a sense it was a nice school it was a very, very competitive school. Some of South Africa's better doctors would come from that school. Very competitive, but very nice you know we played together. So I grew up there, but more important thing was we met; I'm sure Vino knows this, we met - I had an Afrikaans teacher. But before I had an Afrikaans teacher, I had two teachers; and they were two teachers; one was Naidoo teachers - two sisters, very political, but very subtle in their politicisation

of us. We had a principal who was very political, but very subtle in terms of things that we had to do and things we didn't have to do. But then we had Saths Cooper's Mum, Mrs Cooper, who was my teacher in Gandhi-Desai. I'm sure you know who Saths Cooper is, but she [Mrs Cooper] was in school with us you know very popular lady very, very popular lady, very upright, wonderfully caring, but remarkably strict in that caring. And I remember because my father used to get involved in what's called Black Consciousness, and so from about Standard Seven you know I started to interact with the political thought at home, political thoughts. And I don't know whether you remember this but the Natal Indian Congress once organised what is called a Human Rights Day it was held in one of the cinemas. And it was long before '76, and we went. And I was interested by what was being said.

DS: How old were you?

MS: I was in Standard Seven so I thought - what would that make me thirteen, about thirteen years old, so I was interested. Had this fascination for this but because our earlier lives were influenced by these things. Poverty; and you know not knowing who we are looking different; unable to explain know trying

to find - for example I don't speak any vernaculars. My Dad used to speak Urdu, my Mum used to speak Hindi, but they forbade us, they stopped us from learning either Hindi or Urdu, so not knowing this it was different. So, I was building this up to this particular thing that my Dad I mean has been a phenomenal man. You know, I was telling you this because we know the poverty of that we came from.

And my Dad came from that same poverty and poverty can do two things to people; many things; but two principal things. One, you can forget who you are, where you come from, change your wishes and change your acquisition of wealth. Or, you can remember who you are, and remember why things were so bad et cetera and try to do something about

it. I think this affected my Dad very badly - poverty, his marriage had failed because, I think, of his dark skin. And he joined, he joined an organization, political - about Black Consciousness.

And that was a very important time; a very important organization; a very important philosophy; and I remember all the slogans of that time, you know. And my dad grew up in this and, of course, my Dad was my hero, he was my absolute hero, so whatever he did I did, you know, I tried to

emulate him and I think we all tried because he was really our hero because - hero in the sense so that he was a caring father. He took us through all these; he made, he made poverty bearable, you know. Poverty can be unbearable, but poverty can also be bearable by the way you do it and he did this. And of course, he married; he married my Mum who was much younger than him. So, there he had this wonderful, beautiful younger wife who kept him young and between them they had a, quite a fantastic chemistry. And they were caring people; they were people who would host things and you know open - they would have lunches either at home or in the shops when they had the business in Albert Street. It became a place where people could come to. And friends, my friends, your friends were always welcome people. And Albert Street was a very nice part; it was you know the part where Albert Street was here but if you could beyond this you go the white part of town, you know. So at that, he was in the very end of the limits of where Indians used to, should be. And it was very interesting who went [there], because everyone then who was going to town to do shopping or whatever from Payne Brothers had to pass there, you know.

Some of the legal firms were also situated on that side so people have to go past there so it was very nice spot for interaction. And this is where I met most of the people who shaped my life and my thinking. Because just sitting there as a young boy I would be able to see who's coming to the shop, who's speaking to my Dad and because the political community was very small, very compact, you know, and you would take care of one another. I mean I remember this short man with a beret, Docrat, would walk past, you know, who will walk past Albert Street he was banned and I remember the Congress Party was banned he would be there you know. And we would have a discussion, I remember in 1974 the FRELIMO rally; at the FRELIMO rally in 1974 it was a rally which was organized. I was in standard eight at the time. We were all there in my Dad's shop and he said okay guys he would have to take to us home because we would walk from Gandhi-Desai; it was not too far from where his shop was. We would walk there and then the evening we jumped into the car and go home. But this particular evening he said, "No, we are not going home, we are going to Curries Fountain." We were young boys you know, really

young boys so our father is keeping us late after five. So we get there to Curries Fountain and I think that singular event changed me in more ways than I can imagine because I remember 1974 very well. I can tell you we got there we had to park the car, or the van - we had a van, we parked the van somewhere, we jumped out at Curries Fountain. There were a lot of people gathering. There was discussion because Curries Fountain was locked. There were discussions about whether the people could go in or whether the people could go out or there was confusion so in all this we got separated, we all got separated - there was a lot of people. Curries Fountain is here; and there's the road; on the right-hand side of Curries Fountain was a little embankment. Now this embankment had then a field then the school was down there. And then all of a sudden the gates of Curries Fountain opened, people came rushing out with dogs and the top people came rushing out the doors. So you know people were trying to jump over this embankment and there was this there was a wire fence I don't know whether it was deliberately put there or whether it was always there. But there was this wire fence that when everyone stampeded this

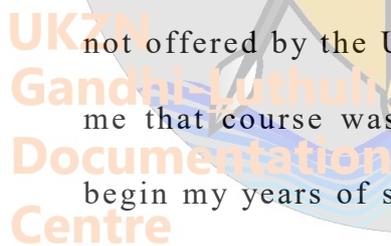
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dropped everyone; and the dogs were picking people; grabbing them; and police dogs - private parts you know. And this horror was unfolding in front of my eyes. And I didn't know whether to run; whether to stand; whether to do a thing; until someone grabbed me and says, "run" you know. So I'm shocked and I'm running and of course after all the confusion everything passed; just clothes were lying around; shoes were thrown all over, you know. You could see you; could see there was a stampede or something that took place here. This shocked me because this is something I personally saw with my own eyes and I think it was then I that realised that you know things are not going to be easy here. But also it was like a secret, you know, happened - something. This was a turning point in our relationship with my Dad and my own growth as a young boy into a mature adult - I've seen it. And then the next day, the next day, Mrs Cooper, who was my Afrikaans teacher who was very distraught, crying in class and a friend of mine was also Barbay Pillay who was also at this and he was also arrested. But as a young boy he was released and this was when Saths Cooper and them were detained. And I saw his Mum, you know, really crying in class,

broken by this experience. Shouting at us you know, "You are stupid, you are not going to change things, why are you doing this?" You know this is normal, a normal pain of a mother saying wanting to protect her son and the hopelessness of the whole situation that existed. But that changed my mind very much. And of course, my Dad and Mum also - they knew that they did something. Perhaps my Dad, I think, in later years - my Dad may have wanted to regret what he did because he didn't know that this act was going to politicise his children so much. I think he thought that he would always, as a father, be able to hold on to the politicisation. But then after that, things just got, you know, rapidly it went on. 1976 I graduated [from school]. By 1977, I was at university; but in 1976 because that was matric; in 1976 was matric. And of course, 1976 was the turning point for all of us; and we were pamphleteering the schools; we were, you know, destroying the - what do you call that, that old flag of South Africa - the mast you know. We started to engage in subversive activities; putting pamphlets in schools in the night; identifying, you know, things that we could destroy because that was naïve. We were naïve in

what we had to do; we know we had to resist. The school movement or the student lives of 1976 didn't quite come to the Indian schools at that time, it came to the university but not at the Indian schools. So it was also another moving year for us very rapid things from FRELIMO to the FRELIMO rally 1974, 1976. 1977 I was at university. And of course, in university it was just one political issue after the other. Just turning aside from the seriousness of this discussion, I will tell you a little joke. When I got to university you know this thing I told you earlier that I was registered as Malay right so I go University of Durban-Westville and I'm in the queue with all my family. We had no idea what we want to study. Except the pressures of our parents saying, "Study medicine, study medicine." So we all know we have to do the Big Four, do the BSc. None of us knew what we wanted. All of us were there because of the pressure of our parents. So we are standing in the queue. and the guy says: "Fine, do you have your results?" I said: "Yes." "Do you have your birth certificate?" I said: "Yes." He says: "Do you have a permit?" I said: "Permit?" He says: "you can't study at this university because you are not

Indian." So I said: "Wait, I went to Springfield Hindu School; I live in an Indian area; I went to school at Gandhi-Desai, you can see the results; it says Gandhi-Desai." So he say: "no but you are not Indian you are Malay. And because this university is only for Indians you need a permit." This is a shock, this personal, first confrontation with bureaucracy. Okay, I go home to my Dad, you know. I said: "Dad, we have got a problem." He says: "What's the problem?" I said: "You know I'm not Indian." He says: "You know, you are one day at university; just one day, and already you are a radical; now you are not an Indian." I said: "Well it's not me, it's what the university says." But I could only study at UDW if I took a course that was not offered by the University of Western Cape. For me that course was computer science. So I had to begin my years of study to include computer science otherwise I would have not been able to study at UDW, because I was studying there under special permit. So in a sense, I owe to apartheid my degree in computer science, otherwise I would not have studied computer science. So I have a degree in computer science, only because I would not have been able to study at UDW if I didn't take computer



science. And this is the kind of background that we were coming from. And I remember there was a guy by the name of Faulk; he wore short pants; long socks; puts his comb here on the side of this thing and there was just no - this guy was the epitome of arrogant, Boer, you know, attitude. We own this university; we own you; we are going to tell you what to do; and you walk in his office - he will be sitting. He doesn't even lift [his head], he says: "Yes?" His head is down, and you were there. You know this is most probably the first time you are speaking to a white man. "Yes?" By the time you speak to him, you know, you are stuttering and you think, in a sense, this reflected the power of God. I don't know if we must stop now because they want to leave so we can get rid of them. Pause.

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ON RESUMPTION

DS: Okay we are back. You were still telling us about your university life.

MS: Yes, yes okay.

DS: First year of your university.

MS: UDW in say 1977, we were grappling with the first time perhaps we were - the university administration was taking on non-Indian but indigenous African

students who had Pinkie she was a student at UDW. But of course, you can imagine the discrimination against Pinkie at the time. And the students organised a huge demonstration; huge demonstration; and it was about demonstrating; it was about shouting Black Power slogans; going to the administration, you know, feeling pumped up; you are going there, shout our slogans come back home. And this was happening at the campus at that time. Remember we were coming through this period. By October 1977, there was this huge clamp-down on a lot of organizations; but in the main the Black Consciousness Movement; the BCM was banned. I think SASO was also banned, all black. But there were nineteen black organisations. Resistance organizations; organisations that were influencing our political psyche at the time - you know all banned. So it was a bad time you know people were scattering. But remember, from 1974 up until 1977 you had this movement, a very crucial period, you know, our own struggles to be able to give us the power to start resisting again. And I think for me that's a very important thing because in a sense we were scared, we were intimidated, we didn't know the experiences of the

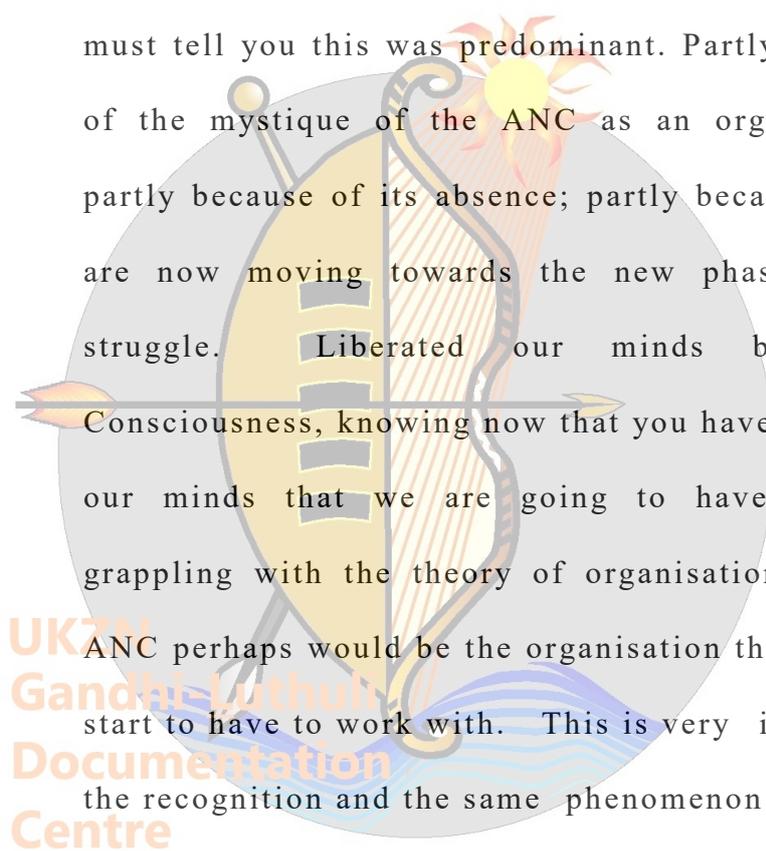
sixties were fading in the collective memories. And the new, the Black Consciousness Movement gave to South Africans and of course it shaped, it shaped the history of South Africa. Many people today who are ministers come from the Black Consciousness Movement and I must tell you that Black Consciousness played a very, very important part in my own consciousness, but in the consciousness of many people. 1977, the organisations were banned again there was an element of you know of - not intimidation - but a kind of helplessness coming back into the student movement. But roundabout the same time there was other thinking taking place; that perhaps new kinds of organisation was needed; so the whole concept of organisation as an instrument in our revolution; an organisation as an instrument of change rather than just mobilization - organisation. And this started to take hold. So roundabout 1977/78, there were good things that people were coming together to start talking about the theory of organisation. How would we be able to apply in the South African context. Would we be able to apply the principles of organisation that Lenin spoke about? We started to read about Marx,

and we started to study the Vietnamese Revolution, started understanding how the struggle was organised there. And of course, this immediately put us into the realm of whether - and for me one of the personal decisions having to make. We have come to the point where you know that somehow change in this government is going to be for the use of arms; for the use of violence. And would I, or would I not do it? Debated this thing long in my mind not for any moral position of not using violence against an apartheid state. No I mean for me the issue was quite clear. In 1974 when I saw the violence used by the Apartheid State against us, it was clear for me that some point we would have to do this. But I was petrified; I was scared. So I had to muster the courage to say: "Yes I will join." My brother Yunis, whom you should meet, in I think 1977 or 1978, made a trip to Swaziland just as a visit to friends. In Swaziland he met with the ANC leadership in Swaziland. And he was then given a kind of instruction to set up an underground ANC unit here in Durban. When he came back and discussed this with me. And of course we were very excited and because there was something which I must tell you the which loomed very large in the

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minds of all people and I think in a sense I came across this phenomenon later, in detention. But this phenomenon was, does the ANC know about us? So the notion of recognition that somehow we had, in our minds, that if you, you know, if the ANC knew about you then you were worthy, you were you know okay you were doing things right et cetera. And I must tell you this was predominant. Partly, because of the mystique of the ANC as an organization; partly because of its absence; partly because as we are now moving towards the new phase in our struggle. Liberated our minds by Black Consciousness, knowing now that you have liberated our minds that we are going to have to start grappling with the theory of organisation and the ANC perhaps would be the organisation that we will start to have to work with. This is very important the recognition and the same phenomenon was in detention, but hopefully I will come back. Remind me about that. So we were then given instructions by the ANC to organise here in Durban.

DS: So before you went to the underground movement did you have any, or did you align yourself with any political organisation except maybe ANC?



MS: Before I went into underground I, at UDW influenced by my mind the politics of my father not wanting to let the image of my hero down. I was, when there were discussions about organisation and the formation of an SRC at UDW I was anti. I said: "No." You know which was the thinking of Black Consciousness, the thinking of Black Consciousness was no we do not give credibility to an apartheid education university. And remember, at that time, we had the Separate Education Act. And the thinking, correctly at the time, of Black Consciousness was saying: "We come to these universities, and we will accept that we need the education because this education will help us struggle later. But we will do nothing to give one bit of glory to this institution." So there was always this tension between the university trying to sell separate education to the world that, you see, separate education is working. And the students resisting any kind of attempt by the administration to market us, or to put us in a particular way in which we were perceived to the outside world that the Indians in South Africa is accepting separate education or separate development. This is a very important thing and I think Black Consciousness

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made a huge contribution to this very necessary phase of the revolution. Because after the sixties, and when apartheid started to have its segregation, separate hospitals, separate education, and they were really going into separateness there was a kind of sector within the Indian community that could have been co-opted. And were in fact co-opted, and if this co-option continued the message that would have been given to the outside world in particular to the indigenous African people is that Indians are on the side of the whites. So Black Consciousness helped us in terms of ensuring that does not happen, you know. Because if you take, if you take - I just want to go back a bit it really reflects in my mind now that I am thinking about it - when you are talking about the plays that used to held and we should have these plays or orientation days. I remember we should call it or black days or all of these plays but there was always a mixture of people. Indian activists together with indigenous African actors we were all together, everyone was together, you could see no separation- I mean from Ben Langa to there- so that everyone was together. I mean the unity amongst oppressed people that Black Consciousness produced was remarkable, you

know. And that bore out in my mind when I was watching that, and I thought you know this what also made it very attractive, you know, that Black Consciousness was able to break the bounds equally on both sides. So in a sense I would say yes, I was a supporter of Black Consciousness before I joined the underground. And at university I took a very anti-organisation position at university, I changed later but in 1980 I changed that position. But in the late seventies I was in the camp of the anti-SRC grouping, anti- SRC, anti-sport on campus. But, when I started getting involved with the ANC, I started to understand perhaps more and start to agree with the argument that this is a long struggle; it is not going to happen overnight. We need to organize; we need to equip ourselves; we need to start in a way broadening the struggle from beyond just a group of activists who were very, very excited about the revolution. But how do we get millions and millions of people involved in that revolution? And where our people will outnumber the dogs, so that brought us into organisation. And organisation was very hard and we had to come to understand the principles of our revolution, but I think you have a question.

DS: Okay you said earlier on that you were detained would you like to expand on that how did it come about?

MS: Well in I became a member of the ANC then from 1978; conducting ANC operations; identifying military targets; doing surveillance; passing this information on; recruiting other people for the ANC; but keeping our unit very intact. In 1985, I remember the UDF was formed in 1983, in the 1980's you had this huge boycott of students. So the activities of organisation were taking place. There was this big debate about whether now we intensify the armed struggle or not? Whether we start to say that we have reached the point where we can in fact engage in massive guerilla tactics against the enemy. And this was to be discussed in the conference in Kabwe. And the Kabwe Conference of 1985, required that the ANC send in someone into the country to get an understanding of the thinking of the underground units. So the person they sent was Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim. Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim was the guy who spent eighteen years on Robben Island; he came out after two, three years; he went into exile. He is a Member of Parliament, he was the chair of the

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Foreign Affairs committee and now he is the adviser to the Deputy President. And we met in our trips to Swaziland before - I met many times with Ebrahim. So Ebrahim was then nominated by the NEC [National Executive Committee] to come in; and he's an NEC member; he was a very important leader of the ANC and we were very honoured that our unit was asked to bring him in; take care of him et cetera, which we did.

I don't know whether you remember maybe you are too young for this but there was the case of Helena Pastoors and Klaas de Jonge. Helena Pastoors and Klaas de Jonge were also assisting the ANC and quite differently, they were detained in Johannesburg. And Klaas de Jonge became famous because he ran once. He said he wants to go and renew - he wants to go to the Belgium with the Dutch Embassy and he then escaped on the road, and ran in and

asked for asylum. And he was then kept in the Dutch Embassy and there was a big case. There was a big case, the Helen Pastoors and Klaas de Jonge case, but the police were actually watching them. And then they came across Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim,, and then they came across me. And we were trying after he was here for six months to get

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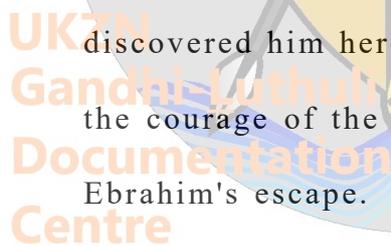
him back, but we were having operational difficulties taking him out. And we knew we were under surveillance, we were under surveillance.

DS: Can you remember when was that the year?

MS: 1985.

DS: 1985.

MS: 26th of June 1985, we had a meeting in which Ebi said to me that we are under surveillance, we could see it you know. But the decision of the ANC was that he should escape. And that we must be the decoy, so that he could in fact escape. And we understood this, this was a very difficult decision, a very tough decision to have made, but it was a correct decision that Ebrahim was a senior leader and they would have killed him if they had discovered him here. And we said fine we will take the courage of the decision, and so we prepared for Ebrahim's escape. And I was left in order for them to deflect - so they detained me on the 29th of June 1985. But with me they detained a comrade of mine Sirish Soni, a cousin of mine Bunny, who had a flat next door where we were keeping Ebrahim. And then later because as the investigation unfolded there was another person detained Fish, Rajeshwar Maharaj; then my brother Yunis Shaik; then my



Dad; and my younger brother, Chippie. So we had we had a group of us who were detained from the same family, all at the same time. It was very difficult; not necessarily only for me; but detention is difficult. But I think it was a very difficult time for the family; it was a very difficult time for my Mum. I mean her husband was detained and then my Dad, my Dad suffered a stroke in detention. He was hospitalized; they released him. They then released, I think they released my cousin. In the end, it was just Yunis and myself. They released Sirish Soni after I think about after four months in detention, was declared mentally unfit to be detained any longer. It was very good because the detention took its toll on him in more ways than we could imagine. I, at the time, spent together with Yunis, I spent nine months in solitary confinement.

I was detained from 1985, 29th June 1985 to 22nd March 1986.

DS: So during your detention were you tortured, or would you like to expand on that?

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RESUMPTION ON SIDE B

DS: We are back. You were still talking about your detention in solitary confinement would you like to tell us about the conditions.

MS: You see, there was two - there is a little background about detention itself there. There are two different kinds of detention. The first is detention for the purposes of prevention, where you detain someone and it's public order detention. The person is detained they don't have access to what's happening outside but there is kind of other situations that go with it and most people there was detained under Section 30, whether you want to be a witness or whatever. But we were detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. Section 29 is the detention for the purposes of interrogation, for the purposes of extracting information. So you are kept incommunicado: so you don't see anyone; you are detained; you are kept alone; you are kept in solitary confinement. You have your cell. You are taken out of your cell only for the purposes of interrogation, and you are brought back to be kept there. You do not see your lawyer; you do not see your family. And all this was because for twenty-three hours you are in a little cell here, one hour you are allowed out for exercises, and this is what it

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is. It's very difficult, very hard, but it is something you - I had to survive, you know, so its harder to speak of it now but it's a - very terrible part of our, very terrible part of South Africa's history, of doing this to human beings. But I think this is what has made South Africa so strong in this area. To say that because now we are - we can look back into this area and say when we now speak of saying we must never again be in detention without trial, that the rights of people who were detained are very important. We do this because we know we have been there; we have seen this horrible thing of detention. But it was nine difficult months; it was not easy; cest la vi; that's life. It was the price we paid for our, our belief; it's made me - I mean I came out of this period more, more committed to the revolution to be very honest with you. Do you want to take that cellphone? No, it's okay. I came out of that detention period very, very committed. And I want to go back to my cell to see the things I wrote on the walls there, but there is something that really was when I first came there and, of course, it's shock of being there. And I would read the slogans on the wall you know Viva MK, Viva this and those slogans were important because it was the slogans

of another person who was there who was passing down history to you. And clearly, you would derive some strength from those slogans. But for me it didn't teach me how to, how to survive it. So I started to write my lessons on the wall, and the lessons were simple ones. If you want to survive this day; then don't think about yesterday; think only about now. Because you've got to imagine in solitary confinement, you are - your mind is racing with a million things, a million things, and you have got to say how do I survive now? So I started to put these lessons down, and years later, years later, another detainee was in the same cell you know. And he came to see me and I think he's a Councillor now, or he's a local government guy here. And he says: "You know Moe, I want to tell you something I was in your cell, and those lessons you wrote there really helped me." So in a sense it reflected how even, in our worst situations, we had to find the strength to go on, but also to pass on the lessons so that the one coming after you, you know also drew some strength from your own period. But detention for me was a very crucial point not only because of changing me as a person, but many of interrogating officers eventually came to work for the ANC.

Because what the enemy then didn't realise was that if you keep someone for such a long time. When you use a detention for the purpose of interrogation for such a long time, you know there is in six months, there is supposed to be a review. The review committee normally because it came after, it came after Section 6 of the Terrorism Act and when Biko was killed in prison, they changed the Act. When the Terrorism Act was scrapped, Terrorism Act number 6 was scrapped, and they introduced a new law called the Internal Security Act, section 29. And Section 29 said you can only keep the detainee for six months and if they are going to extend it, they have to apply before a commission. Of course, the commission was made up of apartheid magistrates et cetera. But in my case, they agreed to extend it. Why, I don't know, but so surviving the six months was not good enough, you had to survive another period. But I want to tell about a magistrate in detention. You know they would bring these - they called them inspector of detainees. And the inspector of detainees is - his name was Haasbroek. And Haasbroek in Afrikaans means the trousers of the rabbit. And Haasbroek used to come there every two weeks, and you would

be taken out of your cell and brought this guy in and he would ask you three questions. "How is the food?" "Okay." "How is your treatment?" "Okay. I have got some problems but I know I can't do anything about those problems." "Do you have other needs?" "Yes, can I have some books?" "No, you are not allowed any books." Three questions, every two weeks he would come and answer these questions, and then he goes. So they were making a mockery of this Inspector-General thing, but you know we started to learn how to conquer section 29. But it's surviving, it's surviving, believing in the reasons why you were there. I think that made a huge difference. Because the sad thing of our detention was I lost my Mum when we were detained. And they took is this - these things I think took the toll on her. So I came out, you know, I came out to a very different life situation.

DS: So you are not allowed to go to the funeral?

MS: No I was allowed. No, no I was allowed to the funeral. We were put in these handcuffs and we were taken to the funeral and brought back to detention. It was a mad time; it was a strange time for our country; so it's okay.

DS: Okay I just want to find out were you ever charged?

MS: No, I was exonerated from Section 29, as they put it. I want to tell you about this word exonerate you see. So after nine months I remember it was Sharpeville Day, 21st March, 22nd there was some demonstrations outside, and students who now knew I was there were, you know, shouting and screaming. So I was shouting back and then the police opened my cell and I thought you know today is the day in which I have had it. If this policeman comes here to beat me up I'm going to beat him up as well. So I had made up my mind. So he comes into my cell and he says "Vat al jou goete, get all your stuff!" And we rehearsed this moment for nine months you know, what would I do when I have to leave this cell you know, because it became my home? And I forgot everything and I forgot what to do. So I just started to grab things and you know walk out we really didn't have much stuff. Just had a few shirts or that so we grab it, and he was saying: "Come, you are going we are taking you somewhere else." I thought okay where is somewhere else? In the meantime all because we had codes so those of us who were in solitary confinement knew that I am now being taken out of CR Swart. When I come outside of the CR Swart he

tells me "You are being exonerated from Section 29." And for the life of me I don't know what exonerated means. So I look at him and said: "exonerated?" All I know is the lesson of the revolution that says do not show weakness in the face of the enemy. So I said: "Hmm, that's very interesting, exonerated." You know so. So he looked at me I looked at him. So I went upstairs he took me upstairs and the chief interrogating officer said: "Well, aren't you happy?" I said: "Happy about what?" He says: "You are going home." I say: "Going home?" He said: "Didn't this guy tell you, you're being exonerated?" I said: "Oh, is that what exonerated means?" So I'll never forget the word. But when I was released, they didn't charge partly because there was no evidence. And this is why they kept me in detention for so long hoping that they will find some evidence and partly because no one was going to give evidence in the case, in any case. But when we were released in March of 1986, they came back to detain us again in December of 1986 because this time they captured Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim in Swaziland. They had a few other witnesses and now they were looking for us to be charged in the same, in the same case. But

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by this time, we developed intelligence to know that they were coming. They didn't find me, they didn't find Yunis, but they found my younger brother Chippie, and they detained him for eighteen months.

So he was taken from December 1986 to two years later, they released him. So I mean that period changed my life because again from 1986 from when I came out in March they came to us in December and I lived underground for two years, two years underground. In those two years, I left the country because we developed out of - rising out of my interrogation I developed a very good contact with the security branch. Some of them turned, and started to work for the ANC. And they were giving us information.

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DS: So in a way they were informers or should I say they were spies?

MS: They were – no, the ANC never used those terms.

They were contacts of the ANC; they were resources of the ANC. They were giving us information. We took that information and then I had to take that information to London. So I had to get a false passport and everything and took this information to London. And invariably this took me in a path of my life, which I didn't quite intend, at that time. I

was, from London sent by our current President, current Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, who was the Chief of Intelligence then sent me to East Germany. So I went to East Germany, I trained in East Germany for six months, I was brought back into the country. So in this period of two years no one knew where I was but we were setting up intelligence structures in the country. And of course all this was in preparation for the next phase, which was Operation VULA, which is ANC underground operation, took place. But then from 1986 onwards I was fulltime working for the ANC. In 1988, I was given instruction to take a job with the University of Durban-Westville, you know because I was an optometrist, I graduated at UDW so I could apply. So I applied for the job. It was a test to see whether they also will now come for me because Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim was convicted; he was sent back to Robben Island. Eighteen years the first time; ten the second time; you know they put him back on Robben Island. And so when I was given this job at UDW; when I applied for it and I was given it; I was made a lecturer. So I was a lecturer at UDW I think from 1988 onwards 1988/89. Well of course, me taking the job at UDW was in order to legitimise

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myself again because the next operation was starting, which was Operation VULA. Well, by 1990 Operation VULA was discovered. By that time in the country I was working with some very senior people who now are either Ministers or Chief of Defence Force et cetera. But, we were very much involved in the ANC underground here. The 1990, I had to go back into hiding, you know, so they came again for me and I had to stay one year in hiding in the ANC underground in South Africa. And then I must mention two things: one was a man by the name of Mamoo Rajab. He was with the Democratic Party, democratic was it the DP ja. He raised my question because at UDW I was a lecturer then, and there was students who were saying that why is the police harassing this lecturer there was a lot of support for us at from UDW. And when this was, when he raised this in Parliament, I think the Minister of Police then was - who James Kriel or someone if I'm not mistaken said "No, no, no we don't want to detain him. We just want to have a cup of tea with him, you know." So for the first time, you know, detention was described as having a cup of tea, you know. But the ANC took up my question of indemnity with De Klerk, and I was

granted indemnity in 1991. So in 1991 I could then resurface back into the open. And I then joined the - I was asked to join the negotiation process. So I was in the negotiating process from 1991 so CODESA 1, CODESA 2, multi-party talks. I was nominated by the Communist Party to serve on the Intelligence subcouncil of the TEC. I worked very closely with ANC Intelligence and then because of the negotiations, I was asked to develop with others, positions on what will the new Intelligence of South Africa look like. What should it look like? I did a lot of research; we knew there had to be constitutional principles. We negotiated this with the National Intelligence Service on the other side. Then I was appointed in 1994 as part of a group of two people and I was the chair of the amalgamation committee to amalgamate the six Intelligence Services of this country. There was the NIS; there was ANC; there was the PAC; there was Transkei Intelligence; BOP; Ciskei and Venda. And it was a fascinating, fascinating period of my life, which I did from 1994 to 1997, the amalgamated all these services. I was then appointed deputy co-ordinator of Intelligence. The co-ordinator was Joe Nhlanhla, the Minister. I was his deputy so, so I was a deputy

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co-ordinator for Intelligence, working with the Cabinet, fantastic period. But then I decided that my life must not be forever locked into this world of Intelligence, and I then was asked to look at - Europe was starting its integration of Europe, the debate of the Euro, the single currency was taking place. It was also East Germany - the world at that time was the collapse - they used the term the collapse of socialism. And Germany was starting to integrate the East and the West. So I was asked to go and study this, because in many senses we had the same problem in South Africa. Now that South Africa is going to free and democratic how would you integrate developed South Africa to developing South Africa you know. And I went back to Germany to look at this you know I was appointed as the Consul General in Hamburg, and I was there from 1997 to 1999. I was then asked to come back to South Africa, which I did. Then they all said "Listen, we want to go and open this mission in Algeria." So I then went to Algeria and that's where I am now three and a half years. I have taken you through this rapid chronology of my life and you can pick phases or questions in there, yes.

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DS: Alright, I just want to find out what aspects of life under apartheid most affected you which makes you just going back a little.

MS: Yes, what affected me most? Ben Okrey says it very well. It was the invisibility of our existence. We were invisible to white South Africa. You know they its the humiliation that comes with being invisible. Just the inability of human beings to look at other human beings and say they too are human beings. So there was a kind of irritation with this we were invisible. That really, that personally really affected me, that I could not, I could not go to these white movie houses. I could not you know bear to be humiliated by apartheid and even today it still affects me that if I and I travel very often to Europe. At the slightest, slightest insinuation of racism I can feel myself getting very angry. So as for me the - this humiliating insulting invisibility of apartheid really affected me badly. Now that I am a bit older I think I could rationalise it. It affected my family throughout our lives you know it just - and for the first time I really felt complete and whole was when I was sitting in Parliament when President Mbeki made his "I am an African" speech. When for the first time in my life you know, I felt I

belong, you know that this is why I refer to you as indigenous African because I too am African. But if we have to make a distinction then we have to make the distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous Africans. So I was bothered most by what apartheid robbed of so many of us. And this is why even I think by them calling us and we carrying on with this tradition of calling people Indian South Africans or Coloureds or whatever. I've never set foot in India. I share many traditions of India; I share its good traditions; its cuisine; its music; its culture; et cetera. But I have never been to India. I've lived all my life in Africa I've lived all my life in this country I'm 42/43 now. And I think I claim because I live here and know that also I will die here that I claim the right to be an African. And this is the very important thing that I think what is starting to affect our own country that we need to start claiming these rights you know. I think the Indian community in South Africa needs to do that, to claim the right to be African. But that I think we don't intend to go there. Your next question?

DS: Okay I just want to find out I'll just go back a little bit the feeling how you felt when you realised

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that the unbanning of the political organizations, I just want to know how you felt.

MS: I was on a special operation of the ANC at the time in Johannesburg when the announcement was made.

And I must confess as maybe one of the few times in my life I broke discipline. I danced on the streets with everyone else you know. We were toi-

toing; we were you know just going a bit crazy; we were supposed to be hiding and all that but we were just in front of the policemen with their cameras

and we were dancing so it was a moment of uncontrollable euphoria, uncontrollable euphoria, uncontrollable. It was a wonderful moment,

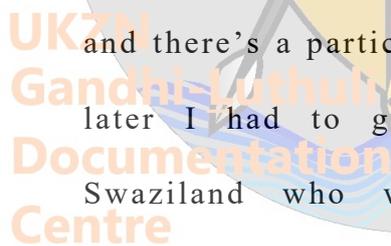
wonderful moment. But of course we had to wake up the next day and say okay, now what? I mean and there's a particular problem because a few days

later I had to go and pick up someone from Swaziland who was crossing the border and

clandestinely come into the country. And we had to meet we said: "Okay, why must we all risk our

lives now and do a clandestine crossing when the organisations are unbanned he can just walk across

and come into the country." Huge confusion, huge confusion to the underground operatives what do we



do, do we bomb, we don't bomb, we operate, we don't operate? It was a difficult time.

DS: So how did you manage to collect that person from Swaziland?

MS: Well we did it clandestinely we asked him to cross the border we didn't want to take - [laughs] we not sure we didn't want to take the risk. We asked him to cross we picked him up and we brought him in for operations. But of course the connectivity of the ANC the networking, the communication system filtered through that we had to stand down from operations you know. Stand down and things will normalise, I mean the funny thing is, right, with the unbanning of the ANC, some people had to be brought into the country, the leadership. Some of those people, in fact two of those people, Mac Maharaj and Ronny Kasrils were already inside the country, you know, when the ANC was unbanned, and then the debate about bringing them from outside inside. Now we are sitting in the underground and we are saying "My God, how we are we going to do this now?" We have to send these guys out you know and then bring them back legally in, you know. And we had to that it was a it was a joke but we had to do it in order to keep,

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because we didn't want to be arrogant in demonstrating to the police or because we didn't know whether negotiations was going to go this way or go that way. And it was very important for us to keep our structures intact.

DS: Okay in the negotiation process, so I just want to find out from you what do think made the National Party to agree on negotiations?

MS: Well I think in the country at the time, the 1980's was really a period in which three or four things were happening that was producing the irreversibility question. The first, was internationally it was the collapse of socialism, but there was a lot of pressure on South Africa. You know there was the Harare Declaration, there was a lot of pressure from the UN on sanctions. There was Eminent Persons Group visit to South Africa. So internationally, the world was focusing on South Africa - much credit to our anti-apartheid movements that were out there organizing, putting a lot of pressure on South Africa. And the anti-apartheid movement made a huge contribution to what we called this defining moment.

The second was our people, our people were starting to resist in inexplicable, you know, courage. They

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were taken to the streets we started to talk about millions, one million march, you know one million signature campaign. If we had a meeting in Durban I was looking at some old photos, thousands upon thousands upon thousands of people would converge. So the UDF, the ANC started to capture the popular imagination of people. And our people were starting to rise up in - no longer could the apartheid government govern. They could not, they could not intimidate and they could not govern. In fact the concept of dual power existed in some of the township. In some of the townships there was no way the army could go in there was no way the military could go in or the police. So dual power was starting to, to emerge.

The third I think, was that our ANC units or the armed struggle was reaching the point of sophistication it was reaching a point where we could bring in huge amount of weapons, where we could start attacking military targets in a very significant way. So I think, and the apartheid government started to realise this that there are these things. Of course you know by then that in the northern parts of the borders of the country, they lost the war in Angola. Cuito Cuanavale was

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the turning point; Namibia was now free; Zimbabwe was free; Mozambique, even though they had the Nkomati Accord, was free. So South Africa started its retreat into its own laager. And all these things were; were turning. So, I think it's a combination of things, I think it was the anti-apartheid movements, world solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa, the efficiency of the ANC's work and other political parties outside. The collapse of socialism; our victories in - of our African brothers and sisters in the north of the country. And more importantly, and I want to tell you this, it was due to the fact that the spirit of our own people here was unbreakable. And I think the Apartheid Government came to understand that to continue with apartheid now is going to cost more lives they can ever imagine. They knew they were at this very crucial point of if they continued it would have destroyed everything. And of course we also knew that, that we continued that no longer could we justify only - no civilian targets. At some point we are going to have to say and you will notice there was the Magoo's bombing, there was the Pretoria bombing, there was the Amanzimtoti

bombing; we were starting to say: "We've got to take civilian life."

DS: So those bombings were not mistakes?

MS: They were not. I think perhaps Toti was a mistake, Magoo's was not necessarily a mistake. And we were not; we were not comfortable - they were in that grey area we were not comfortable about taking civilian life. The ANC was very strong on that - no soft targets. Military targets, we must be able to justify these targets to our people to our revolution et cetera. But what I am saying is that if we continued, if we continued, as the enemy was killing us, we would started to also by necessity would have to engage in those operations where we will start to take life.

DS Okay.

MS We didn't. Thank God we didn't. But we all knew that if it continued, victory or defeat will come at a very dear price. And that was the point in which our contact between the two sides were taking place and that's how the negotiations started.

DS: Okay. So I just want to change my question; just focus on the TRC? I just want to find out whether you gave testimony at the TRC?

MS: Not me, but the people who tortured us, they applied for they applied for amnesty from the TRC. And they had to give reasons why they are applying and of course they listed our torture as a thing. So I was away at the time, but we appointed my brother Yunis to be the person to speak on behalf of us. About the torture, about what detention did et cetera. And he then gave evidence to the TRC in relation to the amnesty application by the interrogating officers.

DS: Okay the reason that you didn't offer testimony is because you were not around by then or?

MS: No for, for me - it's a very difficult thing. I'm - and I'm not saying I'm right or wrong in this, but somehow in the sense that the TRC was not was not for us who were in the revolution. It was a necessary thing for South Africa. You will see how painful it is for me to talk of being in detention now, it would not be easy for many, many of our people who I know have suffered more than I have to go before the TRC and tell their stories. These stories belong I mean they belong to our own what you will call our own category of sacrifice. We can't impose it on our people. We can't extract one ounce of benefit from it. I think within disciplined

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cadres of the ANC, we come to understand this. We must not profit from our detention, we must not go out and project these stories and impose them, as brutal as they are, on the psyche of the nation.

What the country needed at that time and still needs, it needed ordinary people to tell their stories.

They needed us to say our stories are less important

than the stories of our people, which have to be told and they- so I'm saying for a few reasons, I would

not have gone before the TRC. I think it was

necessary for some people to go to the TRC. The

TRC and the process of reconciliation was the true

stories of what happened and the prices were paid.

It was more important you know; the removals of

people; the mass suffering of what happened in

townships; those should be documented as the

histories. The personal things, the torture, the

beatings, you know, those things live with us

forever. They the element of forgiveness not; when

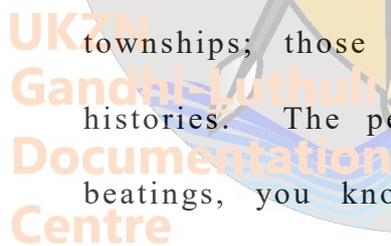
I quite understood the interrogating officer. He was

engaging more with me, that's fine. He should have

had he should have done it with a little bit more

respect. There should have, there should have been

rules and regulations enforceable for him not to



have done what he has done. But for me it's necessary that we move on you know.

So what I am saying is, I would not have gone to the TRC and said "Listen there's this man he did this he did this." For me victory, victory really was when he said you know, said he's not going to live his life properly if he does not go for to apply for amnesty, and that was a remarkable for me a remarkable victory. That he realised that what he did was wrong. And he had to apply for amnesty because he had to work out that if he did not apply for amnesty, perhaps we could charge him. So when he applied for amnesty it was a very nice thing because we could then tell the story, and we mandated Yunis to tell the story.

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ON RESUMPTION

DS: We are back, so I just want to find out you know there is a delay with the reparation and all that stuff. And apparently the people are not happy about that. So would you like to your opinion on that?

MS: Yes, I think my own view on this question is there is a misunderstanding of our political transition. Time and time I go back to that decision where we

did not win this revolution by force, it was a negotiated settlement. And negotiated settlement means a lot of compromises were made along the way. But in part, the outcome of the negotiated settlement allowed South Africans, each and every one of us, a second chance in life, to be able to reconstruct a better future. Personally, I don't think we can reconstruct that future if we are held victims to the atrocities of the past. I am sure there were atrocities. I'm sure the reparation issue the way I see it being debated now is that, in my opinion, the 70 or 80 percent of the people of South Africa who lived in apartheid South Africa who need some form of reparation or the other, reparation or the other. I'm sure each and every South African can claim a right to reparation. And that's unaffordable in terms of our State. What is affordable is that we can build a better future for everyone. A better life for everyone and I think to concentrate on building the macroeconomic or the macro architecture of this better life for everyone is the way to go.

So I personally think reparation way is not the correct way. We need to look at certain principles of reparation, reparation could be building monuments, could be building our history in a way

that future generations will know where South Africa was coming from. In terms of socio-economic issues, the right to build a society in which there is access to housing; there is access to water; there is access to electricity; there is access to education; so that the full potential of all South Africans is brought out. For me that is the better reparation than handing out money or whatever, because we don't have those kinds of means to hand out. And where do you start who do you say that "Oh, you were tortured less and you were tortured more therefore because you were tortured less you should get this amount because you were tortured more you'll get that amount." I don't think our society is, should be able to deal with such kind of problems. Building a better future is the real reparation.

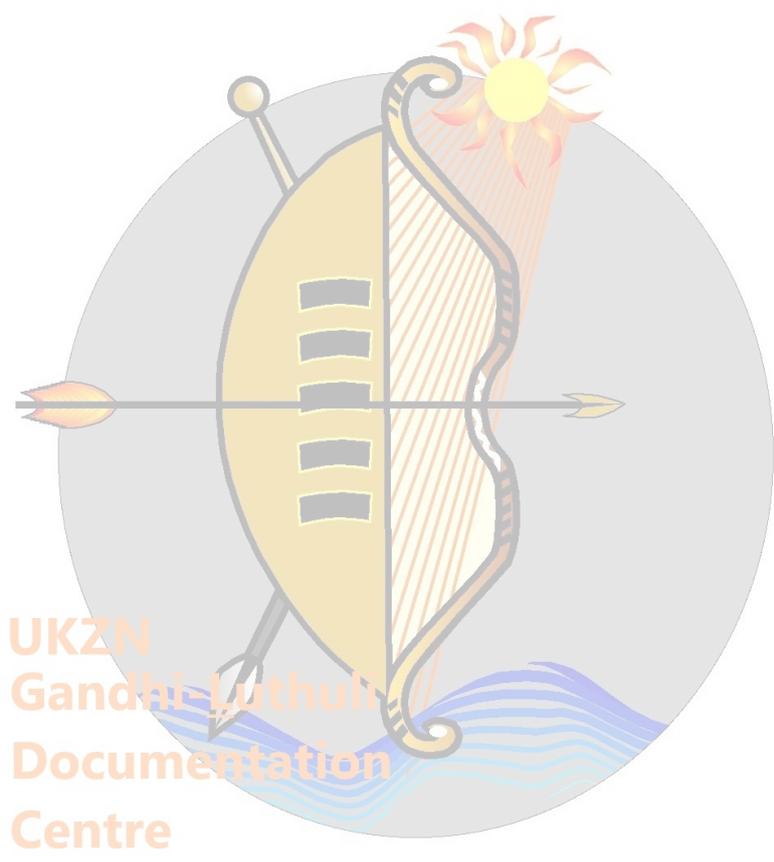
DS: Okay. I think we have come to our end of our interview. Thank you Mr Shaik for your participation in this project we really appreciate.

MS: I want to thank you for giving me the chance.

DS: Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS

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