

KWAZULU-NATAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR DENYS SCHREINER,
CONDUCTED BY RANDOLPH VIGNE
ON 12 APRIL 1995.**

(‘S’ SHALL SIGNIFY THE INTERVIEWEE AND ‘V’ THE INTERVIEWER)

9 V: ...Professor Denys Schreiner, Pietermaritzburg, 12 April 1995. Professor Schreiner, what do
10 you recall about the formation of the Party in '53 - you were one of the Johannesburg..

11 S: I was at the meeting, at the initial meeting at which it was finally decided to start it as a
12 political party. It had, of course existed prior to that as an Association. I remember it - I was
13 there as a Transvaal Representatives and I had only very recently come back to this country
14 from America, having been away, effectively, since 1943. I got involved in a - the immediate
15 battle that was on the go at the time, which was the franchise one, and there was a group of
16 people who in fact wanted a qualified franchise and then there were the people who wanted
17 the unqualified franchise. Essentially the Transvaal was - the group that wanted the
18 unqualified franchise, and they in fact mandated for the delegates to the convention to vote
19 for the unqualified franchise. The other interesting thing that I remember very clearly from
20 that meeting was that it transpired that the Transvaal had more representatives than they were
21 entitled to and therefore, in fact the mandated vote was reduced to half a mandate, a vote for
22 each person. But...

23 V: It was the Cape that were for the qualified franchise?

24 S: The Cape were the qualified people and some of the Natal people. I can't remember - there
25 were a few - very few Free State people - I can't remember where they - where they stood.
26 But it was essentially Margaret Ballinger, Ruben, Oscar Wolheim speaking strongly in favour
27 of the qualified; Jock Isacowitz, Jack Unterhalter, speaking strongly and Marion Friedman,
28 speaking strongly on the other side. I myself was convinced that it would have been wiser
29 to have done the qualified franchise. Because at that time politics was White and there was

- 1 no possibility of including in the political activity anything other than the Cape political
2 Blacks. And it seemed to me to be important that you should have a political front as well
3 as a collective front of Liberals themselves; an association between them. However, I had
4 my mandate to vote, and that's the last time I've ever accepted anything mandated.
- 5 V: Oh, really, I didn't realise it was like that. Of course the Party, once the realisation came that
6 we were not heading for the green benches of the Houses of Assembly, and that we should
7 really work more with the National Liberation Movement setup, a lot of people moved across
8 to the unqualified thing - or to the Progressive Party.
- 9 S: I think it gradually - Well, yes, that's much much later. (R Vigne speaks at once, but he is
10 inaudible. '5/6 years later'..) I think it's true, but I was in the Transvaal at that time and I
11 think that the Transvaal didn't have a shift seriously away from its view - from the
12 unqualified franchise and it was of course the only place where anybody had - ever had any
13 political succession - Leon Cooper was elected into Provincial Council.
- 14 V: Leslie Kuper?
- 15 S: Leslie Kuper, ja. The failure was in fact that we never succeeded in getting a financial house
16 or something of that kind that would back the Party.
- 17 V: It was a hand-to-mouth, wasn't it - always battling.
- 18 S: It was hand-to-mouth all the time. But I don't want to over-stress the situation; I was not,
19 in any way, a leading political founder, but I went to meetings and that sort of thing and I was
20 on one or two ...
- 21 V: Provincial Committees, probably...
- 22 S: ...Provincial Committees - something of that sort.
- 23 V: You didn't go - you were too recently in the States to have belonged to either Isacowitz,
24 Unterhalter group or the Ballinger group which were meeting before?
- 25 S: Yes, no -
- 26 V: You came back ..
- 27 S: I came back virtually at the time - I came back in '52.
- 28 V: Oh right, yea.
- 29 S: In January '52.

- 1 V: But sadly, all the Unterhalter/Isacowitz Papers have disappeared.
- 2 S: Oh, really? I didn't know.
- 3 V: The Ballinger group - Jock has now, I saw ...?
- 4 S: Of course Marion did some writing, didn't she?
- 5 V: Marion, yes. Yes, but not in detail of that early period - but still - this - it's not...
- 6 S: We're side-tracking here now, but, I would have thought the possibility would be that the
- 7 Forum - remember the magazine 'The Forum'?
- 8 V: Yea, indeed, yes.
- 9 S: And Cope, the Cope family?
- 10 V: Yes.
- 11 S: Mike Well - those sort of people?
- 12 V: I've got a lot out of Forum, but certainly Cope - archaic, Cope - wasn't he?
- 13 S: Right.
- 14 V: Yes, because he was certainly one of that - but that's on the Ballinger side - I've quite a lot
- 15 of material there...Anyway, that ...
- 16 S: The - he would have followed a line of trying to balance things in the Forum itself.
- 17 V: Probably. Yes indeed. No, the Forum is a very good source indeed. So, but when you came
- 18 back in '53, and you heard this was happening, ...
- 19 S: There were a whole lot of reasons why I wasn't a political...
- 20 V: Okay..
- 21 S: I might have been convinced of the ? Of that sort of line in South Africa for a long time.
- 22 V: Is this your inheritance, do you think? Or your own?
- 23 S: I think it was my own, but it would certainly linked to my ancestry. I think it would be
- 24 linked most strongly to my father's sense of justice, which was that it must be fair. And that
- 25 the situation that we had was not fair and culpably not fair. So I'd - I can remember during
- 26 the War, Malherbe ran a parliament - he was Head of Information.
- 27 V: And then Army Education Service?
- 28 S: Army Education Service, right. And when we were in Egypt, we had a parliament, a mock
- 29 parliament, out of all places, I represented Stellenbosch. It wasn't even ? And I can

- 1 remember then making a speech saying that in fact after the end of this performance that we
2 were involved in we would have to end up with a political system which is - in fact included
3 all the South Africans, Black or White. But that was ..
- 4 V: Yea, no, but that ...
- 5 S: ..lot of people thinking that way.
- 6 V: But it was extraordinary the effect that the Education Service had through Malherbe and
7 particularly ? Lesley Ruhen was another of the ? He's ?
- 8 S: But he didn't have much of an effect. It had a temporary effect. It didn't have a lasting
9 effect.
- 10 V: Well, I think. No, the effect I meant was largely on the 200 odd people who belonged to the
11 Army Education Service.
- 12 S: Oh, I see.
- 13 V: It merely - a large number of them became active.
- 14 S: Well, they were of course active before.
- 15 V: Yes, a lot of them, yes.
- 16 S: They were, Malherbe was no mutt. He recruited chaps whom he thought would do that sort
17 of thing.
- 18 V: Quite. I suppose that would have..
- 19 S: That was the way they got into the ...
- 20 V: And so after the War they were primed...to get ...
- 21 S: Right. But the effect on the soldiers was in fact completely cancelled out by the lack of
22 concern of what happened to them when they returned here.
- 23 V: Oh, I see.
- 24 S: They had come back thinking that they were volunteers who had done their job well and that
25 they would be looked after fairly reasonably and that didn't happen and that I think just
26 counteracted any of the sort of better sentiments that did exist.
- 27 V: Oh really, I hadn't encountered that before. Yea - because of the Lost in - 2 years later.
- 28 S: Well - and I think because of that.
- 29 V: Ja, it must have played a part. Then - But just as one word on the sort of Ballinger region.

- 1 I remember hearing years ago that there was a suggestion - it couldn't have been your father,
2 'cause he was already on the Bench? Presumably? He wasn't ?
- 3 S: Well, I don't know - he went on the Bench in '36.
- 4 V: Oh, well, he'd have been - was he perhaps already at Bloemfontein - or in the Cape.
- 5 S: He was in Bloemfontein immediately after the War.
- 6 V: Well, then it must have been you - I remember hearing the suggestion that Unterhalter should
7 step down in favour of a Schreiner who was available to be Chairman of the Transvaal
8 Division - did that ever reach you.
- 9 S: It certainly never reached me and I can't imagine that anybody ever thought of me and my
10 brother was less political than I was.
- 11 V: Oh really - oh it must have been you then..
- 12 S: He was completely - no they might well have thought of him as the kind of chap who could
13 take over the Chairmanship - because he has an absolute integrity but an absolute skill in
14 bringing people who are opposed to each other, together and if they were going to - and - yes,
15 and he would have been not far removed in his discussions on the voting things for instance -
16 the vote problem. He would have favoured Jock Isacowitz and the group that had come out
17 of the Congress Movement - into the Liberal Party, rather than the ...
- 18 V: Parliamentarily-based - yea, yea - the Ballinger group.
- 19 S: The Ballinger Group, ja.
- 20 V: So then I don't think I invented it - I remember hearing that myself when I was - you know -
21 years ago.
- 22 S: Well, they may well have considered Bill, they would not have considered me, I'm sure.
- 23 V: You were too new on the scene.
- 24 S: Far too new on the scene and far too embodied - the thing - I came out here in order to do a
25 particular job inside the ? Institute - doing physical research - and that was the thing I had to
26 do and so I was not a ? Freelance ...
- 27 V: Ja, ja, your brother - whoever it was, which ever it was, turned it down.
- 28 S: I think it was probably a rumour that...because I don't think Bill - they would say that he was
29 a good Liberal and that sort of thing - But I...

- 1 V: ...probably not available?
- 2 S: Jock might have suggested him, but then you say it was to replace Jock.
- 3 V: Well no, it was somebody here - and Jock took - I remember it was actually Jock who told
4 me this years ago, years ago. But..
- 5 S: Well, Jock - through his association with Bill at the Bar. I know that they were very close
6 friends - and that might well have ..
- 7 V: Jock may have told him, you see, that he`s been approached.
- 8 S: ...had tried to get him to become a politician, but he wouldn`t.
- 9 V: It may have been that too. Then this - the next one was this question about - because there
10 was also the question of whether we should concentrate on constitutional matters and work
11 through Parliament. You rather felt that we should work for that.
- 12 S: I always believed - and in fact the only way you can do it is in fact through something which
13 is non-violent - I don`t believe ..
- 14 V: And through the political machinery...
- 15 S: I don`t believe that we have seen the end of the violence that we did have in this area, yet.
16 Despite all the effects of it - the reconciliation and that sort of thing - I think we will have
17 further upsets.
- 18 V: It`s not over, yea.
- 19 S: No.
- 20 V: But then of course the thing was that the Congresses were just limbering up - I mean the
21 Defiance Campaign in 1952 was a sort of rivalry that failed. I didn`t think it had any impact
22 - they think it did. The Congress - they think that it caused - led to starting the Liberal party -
23 but I - it`s actually - most people remember it for the ghastly aftermath - all those killings and
24 riots? Do you remember that? Kimberley, East London and so on?
- 25 S: Yes. Right.
- 26 V: At least they weren`t ? White people remembered over there - but I don`t know ..
- 27 S: The Congress Movement did have an influence on the Liberal Party`s act...
- 28 V: Oh, indeed, oh increasingly ...
- 29 S: It was via those people who came out of the Congress Movement into the Liberal Party, they

- 1 - chaps like Jock had a ...
- 2 V: But also, down here, Hans Meidner - people like that - realised that was where the future was
3 going to be and we should work with it. And then of course I don't know if you were around
4 - remember this thing in 1955 when they obviously called the Congress of the People, in
5 Kliptown?
- 6 S: Yes, but I wasn't there??
- 7 V: It was a great debate - as I understand the story, we were approached and said yes we would
8 consider going on a sort of ? Then we heard and or thought it had fizzled out and then
9 suddenly, ten days later they still wanted us to send people. And it was the Cape who
10 absolutely ? And said on no account should we ? This front. But you - that - I don't think it
11 was as lively an issue, now, then, as it appears to be..
- 12 S: Well it certainly wasn't as far as I'm concerned, but then - as I say - I wasn't really in the
13 centre.
- 14 V: Nor was I at that time. Nor was I but because of the primacy of the Congress today, the ANC
15 today - the others have disappeared really.
- 16 S: The one thing that might be relevant to that - the Liberal Party held its first Congress here in
17 Natal. There was the formation meeting - at the first Annual Conference of the Liberal Party.
18 It was down here and they invited Luthuli to talk to them.
- 19 V: That's right, yes.
- 20 S: Were you there?
- 21 V: No, I wasn't. No - but this is where I read it - yea.
- 22 S: And Luthuli had a very substantial input on that meeting. He was absolutely spit honest, he
23 made no - pulled no punches whatsoever and he was, I think, a very substantial influence in
24 actually weakening the parliamentary side of the Liberal Party.
- 25 V: Oh really?
- 26 S: There were a lot of people who thought the right line was no parliament and that some kind
27 of association outside of parliament was going to be the successful path. Now that I think
28 weakened the Liberal Party.
- 29 V: That's interesting, yea..

- 1 S: Quite considerably, because in fact it removed from a driving activity to come out of the ex-
2 Congress people - because they said that that was really the right of the human - so their
3 concern with making progress within the Liberal Party decreased.
- 4 V: Oh, I see, yea, ja.
- 5 S: So you lost some of its beef at that stage.
- 6 V: Because I mean a lot of people like me only came in the later 50's - I mean I joined earlier
7 on but I wasn't that interested when that obviously occurred? But in '58 was the general
8 election..and you put up a hell of a fight in Seapoint - I gather - for Gerald Gordon who was
9 one of these sort of Malherbe Army Education generation, and of course we lost badly. I
10 mean we kept on seeing this is ? You know - so we all said 'well done' but we realised that
11 we couldn't win Seapoint - you know with Gerald Gordon - we weren't in the Cape? I think
12 that affected our people a lot? But you felt it was a question of what were the objects of the
13 Party's existence - you felt that we could - what? Get a foothold in Parliament?
- 14 S: No, I don't think - well - I hoped that we could - it's an important ... we always did have one
15 - but not elected by Liberal quarters. As a native representative.
- 16 V: Exactly and we had a couple of Senators and that sort of thing.
- 17 S: Right, that sort of thing.
- 18 V: Well, we had Walters ? As well.
- 19 S: I believe that it was absolutely important that in what - the political powers was solely
20 concentrated in Whites at that stage and the voice that the country heard came out of
21 Parliament and we needed to be there and to be constantly putting the Liberal view there -
22 it was all very well having forums - it's better than talking through a magazine and things of
23 that kind could do - essentially putting forward the Liberal view. But that was being led by -
24 the people at the University and the people at the Bar, I don't know what the total circulation
25 was but I thought that it was probably less than ten thousand throughout its life and I felt that
26 in fact the parliamentary line was the line which entitled you to go and say - and if you didn't
27 impinge, it moved toward - it tried to move towards power, you're not entitled to go on
28 talking.
- 29 V: Oh, it's a key thing, yea. And of course another thing that happened to us in the Cape was

1 the emergence of Patrick Duncan, who used this dirty word 'power' you know which
 2 everybody talked about. We were - the mother of Donald Molteno is supposed to have made
 3 this remark too - Alan Paton - the trouble with you Paton, you think the Liberal Party is a
 4 church - or you treat it as if it's a church.' Whereas power was, you know what we were
 5 sweating our guts out for really.

6 S: Ja, right.

7 V: I don't think in a personal sense, but to achieve our objectives, you know.

8 S: And although it was a ? That one couldn't win, under, in the circumstances that existed in
 9 the 50's, and that we would never pick up more than one seat here and a few votes there. But
 10 in view of 'in-parliament', it gives you the right to go and invade people's houses and to
 11 canvas.

12 V: Quite. I sec...?

13 S: You don't have that right if you're not in parliament.

14 V: That's right - otherwise it'd demonstrations and protests and so on.

15 S: That's right.

16 V: You know I'm sorry to say - I'm going to have to ask youif - yes the question was - to
 17 what extent you think - we the Party achieved anything in the longer term - particularly in
 18 terms of the sort of political language - and outlook - today?

19 S: Well, I think it did keep alive a line of thought which was foreign to the United Party and its
 20 gradual - its successors - the NRP and so on. They gradually lost all sight of anything about
 21 liberal ideas. They were never - I think - well below - perhaps if ?perhaps the most
 22 significant events, setback in that one was the death of Hofmeyr. Because he was the chap
 23 who amongst the conservative, part of the conservativists was the one fellow who held out
 24 on - kept liberal language and liberal thought operating. The other parties that have done that
 25 to an extent I think are not derived from the UP, although there were no people who went
 26 over that way. The Progressive Party and the Federal Progressive Party and so on was - they
 27 developed - they all played their part. And they played their part, of course, increasingly
 28 when the Liberal Party dissolved itself. Now there again I was in a minority - but again I
 29 wasn't involved, I wasn't even in the country when it happened.

- 1 V: Oh, were you not?
- 2 S: No, I was away at a conference - I didn't know it was going to happen - I might have taken
3 some action to try and prevent it - but I couldn't have made any difference, I can assure you.
- 4 V: Well, you couldn't have saved the party as it existed because it would have simply been
5 squashed - the criminal reaction..?
- 6 S: No, I - yes, I would have in fact - the line that was legitimate in the sense of not being - or
7 producing a closure would have been to have a Liberal party which was purely White and a
8 Liberal Association which was the by-product of the Liberal party and then I don't think -
9 they would have had to change the law in order to be able to sign up. They might have done
10 it - I don't think they had the system..? I believe that in fact the preservation of the Liberal
11 Party per se was important.
- 12 V: Even without its non-racial character?
- 13 S: Even without it, it would not abandon its non-racial character - it would say circumstances
14 outside ourselves have forced us into this position - we as a purely White party will consult
15 ? And keep that bridge open, as well as now trying to maintain an influence on the rest of the
16 country.
- 17 V: I think there was another factor - though - is that - you know I think it was 46 was the total
18 number of liberals who were banned and they were mostly in their current, you know,
19 leadership positions, if you like - Mick ?, ? And those provinces.
- 20 S: You said 46?
- 21 V: Just under 50 - 46, 47.
- 22 S: Oh, I see, alright - the numbers of people. I see.
- 23 V: The numbers of people who were banned.
- 24 S: I thought you were referring to a year.
- 25 V: Oh no, no - alright - so from '62 onwards, I think Jock Isacowitz was the first and that was
26 the days of Sophiatown and the riot was past and so on - but after that - in those days. And
27 you know Brookes gallantly came forward after Peter was banned and became Chairman,
28 National Chairman and so on - but I think really that we were pretty well on our knees.
- 29 S: I think we were.

- 1 V: But still to have retained the ...
- 2 S: But surely was the place to be in South Africa..
- 3 V: (They laugh, what is said by Prof Schreiner is inaudible). I see your point, yes. But you
4 weren't. I'm not aware, I mean - is it a question I've been asking you - I'm not aware that
5 there was much of a move - to keep things going.
- 6 S: No, I don't think that we here, down in Natal, I was by then in Natal, but not involved at any
7 kind of political level at that stage - but then again - here I was into a new job, I had never
8 taught before I was a professor of this University. And I was learning...
- 9 V: Oh you weren't an academic before?
- 10 S: I was in research, at Wits University - and then by ??not in teaching administration. I had
11 done no teaching at all. And I was now learning a big job, I was studying.
- 12 V: Quite - hardly take on a political role of having - but, as I say, that seems to be - that it
13 seemed a sort of inevitability about it. Others would say - 'oh why didn't you stand up and
14 make them ban you?' Well that would have put a whole lot of ? Behind you??
- 15 S: No, I don't think that's a useful ..
- 16 V: I mean even the communists in 1950s dissolved themselves, I mean, they were much more
17 likely to strike a gesture. I suppose than we would have though - different in that way.
- 18 S: But I would have gone for the compromise kind of thing in trying to force them into .. Doing
19 something more rather than ? Up.
- 20 V: Yes, to retain a Liberal Party.
- 21 S: In parliament.
- 22 V: ? Person first ..??
- 23 S: In the parliamentary system. You don't have to be in parliament to be in the system.
- 24 V: No quite, we could have done that. Ja, I mean there was - I stood as a candidate in '61, on
25 the one man one vote or something - their slogans would go down frightfully well with the
26 voters - but that's what we did it for and you know - I kind of saved my deposit - there was
27 no ? Support - but there was support actually. You had to work jolly hard for it - very good
28 meetings - but so often the candidacy results - people say 'well, I can't fight against the UP'
29 and then you'd have to explain - to try to get them out. And on the day ? Had thought to see

- 1 at the various polling booths, ? Didn't turn up, you know, and were crossed off. It was a very
2 hard.
- 3 S: Yes, no, I think the situation between the UP - because the UP never openly said 'we are not
4 going to win' it made them find their own people into a group which said 'we can't at this
5 stage let the show down' Although they would perhaps have been happier with their attitudes
6 had they been much closer to the Liberals.
- 7 V: I'm sure we could have tackled ? At that strong view - the only chance we still hold to get
8 our case in - in that side - which is what we all wanted. Did you have any - yourself - in any -
9 when you were in Natal. Of course it was much less of an issue here about the Congresses,
10 in the Cape and Johannesburg, the kind of - you know - confrontations were more ..
- 11 S: Oh yes, they were much more active.
- 12 V: And also the disagreements and competition in a sense. But here it was a much more
13 reasonable relationship with the Congresses. Well, the Indian Congress gave us quite a
14 rough time.
- 15 S: Oh yes, indeed, yes, and continued to do so. Ismail Meer was not a ? Never a Liberal.
- 16 V: Or Dr Derby - with the outset too?? He attacked the moment the party was launched - no
17 attempt to 'ah, another ally on the scene.'
- 18 S: Right.
- 19 V: And he went for us.
- 20 S: Well, I think he was in the position that he realised if in fact this made any progress, it would
21 be his people who would be drifting away and not others and the Indian community you've
22 got a ? Code of reason?
- 23 V: No, I suppose that was why. But, no, as I say, in the Cape particularly we had - particularly
24 with the Congress of Democrats - because the ANC wasn't all that strong in the Cape and
25 hence - even now - losing the election there - but certainly the congress of Democrats began
26 great animosities.
- 27 S: They were here??
- 28 V: Here too?
- 29 S: Yes, but our - you see our politics is always of a much lower key - apart from the chaps who

- 1 wanted to pull out all together and those sort of fellows - what was he - the old military chap
 2 - Martin - Colonel Martin - that bunch of ?
- 3 V: The kind of devolutionists..yes, all those - yea - he was one of those was he?
 4 S: He was one of those, yes, extreme-minded???
- 5 V: Take Natal out of the Union.
 6 S: Get out of the Union.
- 7 V: There was a comic novel 'The Day Natal took off' I remember - ? Devious?
 8 S: Yes.
- 9 V: ?? Satirical things in Cape Town. But yes, it - as you say, there wasn't that sort of COD
 10 Communist little scrap going on here?
- 11 S: It went on but it was it was - as all our politics are at this end, as far as the rest of South
 12 Africa was concerned, we're not really valid.
- 13 V: It is a difference, yes.
 14 S: We may have a quarter of the population, but it's a different scene altogether.
- 15 V: Yes, that's the case. This - the last question was this one about any - well, ? Put another one
 16 was of any particular recollections of the Liberal Party's final years. But, that's to say - was
 17 a time - when did you come here in fact?
- 18 S: I came down here in '59.
 19 V: In '59?
 20 S: Middle of '59.
- 21 V: But then in the mid 60's, you know - when the State of Emergency - in '60 - when Peter and
 22 Hans Meidner and these chaps were locked up - you know.
- 23 S: Ja, that was earlier than that - there wasn't - it started in '62.
 24 V: March '60/16th (?) was the Charter. It was after that they were ... then
 25 S: They were put under house arrest in the middle of '61, wasn't it?
 26 V: Well, first of all they were put in prison - and at the second time round there - in '61 - at the
 27 time of that stay-at-home strike. ? here in 'Maritzburg wasn't it - a big meeting they had -
 28 where they were - then of course Peter got those banning orders and house arrested in the 60's
 29 - In '64?

- 1 S: Was not that his second?
- 2 V: No, that was the second - but he was restrained in some way in '60 - I can't remember the
3 exact now? But I think this must have had a bad affect, generally on people, particularly
4 because Peter was so active.
- 5 S: But we lost people you see - Meidner went, (Derick) Marsh went - to Australia - when you
6 have six people who are active - very, very active people and you lose three - it would be
7 difficult?
- 8 V: Its like letting the tyres down, isn't it?
- 9 S: That's right.
- 10 V: For ? Value you have to ?
- 11 S: ? The other day when Brookes came in to take over - which he - about that same period, that
12 was in fact to try and save the boat. Kuper?
- 13 V: It was really, yea.
- 14 S: But you can't hring in chaps of Brookes' nature and age at that time and expect it to go.
- 15 V: No, he did a very sound administrative job, and of course he was such a fine speaker so that
16 he could well..
- 17 S: And he was also such a fine chap.
- 18 V: Yea, absolutely. And not - you could hardly rush to ??
- 19 S: Right.
- 20 V: But, so those years are things - that was what I was saying rather an inevitably about - pity
21 about all the closing down when the time came - taking your point about it might have been
22 the right route to retain some form about it.
- 23 S: I don't know whether it would have lasted, but it would have in itself been a protest, of a
24 different kind?
- 25 V: Yes, you know the last surviving Liberal party existed on Robben Island, in the person of
26 Eddie Daniels who got in fifteen years in 1964, and " the politicals on Robben Island were
27 organised in political groups, ANC, PAC, the Unity Movement of various kinds, and Eddie
28 was the Liberal party. And even when the Liberal Party was dissolved, you know, he
29 continued ...he's written a book, which ? Done - I think it's going to get published. And he

1 joined the ANC when he came out because they were his big supporters, particularly
 2 Mandela and Sisulu who stood by him, you know. Because it was impossible to get a
 3 popular - ? Oh yes, I've seen this Liberal Party - not a wide sellout, you know. ?? But he
 4 stuck - so in that sense, you - we did have a Liberal party. Anyway - do you think that..?

5 S: There are always the opportunities of ??

6 V: Exactly - he didn't never - he never ? His membership from a single figure. What - we've
 7 mentioned Brookes and Peter, whether there are any other particular personalities as having
 8 been effective in any more - you know - significant in any way.

9 S: Well there was the chap who went to Wentworth? Meidner. Meidner was a very powerful
 10 influence here.

11 V: Very dedicated, very good organiser too.

12 S: And Marsh was a...

13 V: I didn't know him - he was locked up..

14 S: He was locked up at the same time and he immediately went off to Australia...

15

16 (END OF FIRST SIDE)

17

18 S: And Jock...

19 V: Jock Isakowitz, yes, he made a very good impression...

20 S: But his health declined, if I remember rightly..

21 V: I don't know what he died of...

22 S: He - his health declined in the late fifties I think and so he was really a passenger in the
 23 critical last few years of the ...?

24 V: Because he was a tower of strength in the outset. The Cape people - did you know any of
 25 them - Lesley Ruben, or ???

26 S: I knew Lesley Ruben.

27 V: I saw Lesley in Cape Town.

28 S: Margaret Ballinger - best of the ...

29 V: Yes, she was a difficult person - oh, she...

- 1 S: She's like her own sister - intolerant.
- 2 V: Oh really?
- 3 S: I don't like my saying these things, but ...
- 4 V: I didn't join the Liberal party, the Liberal Party joined me - you know ... quite a bit of ego
5 there - ja.
- 6 S: And she also liked Helen Suzman - she's a very poor listener - tremendously strong people
7 internally - tremendously convinced of their own absolute rightness, but unable to listen in
8 any subtle kind of a way, to other people and both of them capable of being damnably rude
9 to people to whom they should not have been rude to - people whom they put off entirely.
10 But...
- 11 V: Yes, I see, at their love for each other at least, it's only one ...
- 12 S: Oh, no rivalry - ja.
- 13 V: And of course, Margaret was awfully jealous of Helen - having supplanted her ...
- 14 S: Right.
- 15 V: You know her due - she stayed loyal - didn't she? She stuck behind Alan.
- 16 S: ? Ja.
- 17 V: Eddie must have died before that I think - I don't know when he died.
- 18 S: I think he did yes.
- 19 V: he wasn't ? (inaudible)
- 20 S: Oh yes, no - when she was living - she was living at the Cape on her own at that place where
21 she had the birdwatching place..down near Lakeside somewhere.
- 22 V: Oh, was that where she was?
- 23 S: Ja she had a house which overlooked the ..
- 24 V: Cedarberg bay?
- 25 S: Ja, and she lived there for years on her own, when William died. William, I guess would
26 have died in late 50s.
- 27 V: ? I must check that.
- 28 S: Or even earlier?
- 29 V: Yea, he was waning - I think he was around - I remember the Liberal Party coming to - here -

- 1 meeting in the Liberal Party Offices in Cape Town in 60/61. ? he actually died in 1961...?
- 2 S: Oh, well - ? Quite substantial.
- 3 V: So, no he certainly was around then. Otherwise...
- 4 S: Neil, of course was a chap whom we ? Further to the left - he was a traditional labour party
5 candidate.
- 6 V: Yes, sort of English socialist - ??
- 7 S: Ja, that's right.
- 8 V: What about the Blacks? Did you know Selby Msimang at all?
- 9 S: Selby Msimang, down here - quite well - quite well indeed. Yes.
- 10 V: Because he always impressed us - ? The Congress that he used to chair and so on - very calm
11 and sensible sort of way. Jordan Ngubane?
- 12 S: Yes, I knew him , hut nothing - I mean if you want information about him - Pete's the source,
13 that's...
- 14 V: Yes, quite, yea, yea.
- 15 S: There were no - none of the Black politicians that had an impact on me within the Liberal
16 party - they were all in the ANC - they were chaps like Luthuli and I was always frightened
17 of the ANC's tendency to believe that you could govern by a process of consultation which
18 went on continuously throughout the whole process of governing - I don't believe that it's
19 possible.
- 20 V: Really? That's how you see their ?
- 21 S: I think that was their sort of - they were holding a powerless body of people together -
22 powerless, excepting one thing - numbers - they could get coordinated action in numbers that
23 was it- and therefore their policy was quite right for them from their own point of view. But
24 it - because it kept the ANC together and it was the hope that the ANC, by keeping together
25 could in fact exert an influence by mass action - what it called mass action in those days -
26 that was the background of it - it was - came out of Ghandi's Civil Disobedience kind of
27 thing - those sort of mass concepts. But it produces - and this is for me the difficulty that
28 I've always seen in that if you have trained people up for the mass action operation, you
29 can't suddenly switch it off. And you don't in fact get wise kind of young? Readily out of

- 1 mass action.
- 2 V: Ja, the age of principle.
- 3 S: It's an almost impossible danger to overcome.
- 4 V: Particularly when it drifts into violence as it did - I mean that's even harder to switch off.
- 5 S: Right.
- 6 V: Added of course to the sheer physical complication of the vast amount of hardware. I mean
- 7 all the bloody firearms that are floating around, isn't it.
- 8 S: That of course is terrible - how many of those were actually under the ANC control I have
- 9 no idea - I'm not sure that there were a tremendous number of them.
- 10 V: No, I really don't know - but I mean with wars going on in Angola and Mocambique I
- 11 suppose they you know - there was a market and they were leaders and there they are.
- 12 S: And I believe that the chaps that manufacture these things have no morals whatsoever - they
- 13 would sell them to anybody that will fight.
- 14 V: Remember back in the thirties it used to be a great source of protest about the arms
- 15 manufacturers - I mean people like ? Shaw - for example. Didn't Major Barbara worry about
- 16 that?
- 17 S: Absolutely.
- 18 V: And one of Graham Greene's novels is a sort of evil arms manufacturer in the background -
- 19 nobody asked you questions any more because governments were behind it - that's what ?
- 20 S: No I think the real change there was the Atom Bomb?
- 21 V: Oh, I see, yea.
- 22 S: Because the atom bomb changed people into this enormous fear ? Life scale and it matters
- 23 if you've got a revolver or an AK 47, ...
- 24 V: The fact that you can sow hundreds of square miles of land by this and destroy millions of
- 25 children - and other people and so on?? It's - that must have affected the ??
- 26 S: I think so, I think people gave up thinking of being able to control the only thing you could
- 27 control would be atomic power - and so the whole of the rest of it - the eye was taken off the
- 28 normal arms as it were
- 29 V: And any move that might have been killing game now, has now been overtaken by our

- 1 friend, Saddam Hussein, whom I have seen on today's news of being accused of - in spite
2 of everything - he's continuing to be ? Atomic weapons, yea.
- 3 S: ...going to use them - I don't know...
- 4 V: Exactly - well I suppose it's the Israel - would still be his great claim to eternal fame.
- 5 S: ...became fairly widespread at one stage - distinguished from atomic warfare there was
6 normal warfare, now when we start talking about normal warfare then you know the amount
7 - ? Changing ?
- 8 V: Yes exactly, ja. Pacifism and all those things are of the past. I don't think there is any - I
9 mean - we were - any particular events was the only other question - I mean you weren't
10 involved in the Congress of the People thing and the Natal Convention - that was on a
11 certainly upbeat thing - wasn't it? I mean I'm not talking about the ? Buthelezi Commission?
12 I mean Brookes' one in '71.
- 13 S: Yes, that was all full of optimism and optimism is sort of a thing evolved quite considerably
14 in Natal when the Buthelezi Commission was an optimistic kind of a thing.
- 15 V: Ja, it looked as if it was going places.
- 16 S: Everybody looked as if it - they would come partially along the lines of the whole settlement
17 - but of course nothing happened -
- 18 V: Exactly, but I suppose that was a - the Liberals - the Liberal Party might have seen that those
19 conventions developed into a national convention - that might have been a role for us.
- 20 S: Right.
- 21 V: Ja, which we did have in some of these - the Cape Coloured one we had - was the one that
22 Jordan Ngubane was the Chairman of the Continuation Committee and the African One, but
23 they all - I mean the state had held all the cards didn't they?
- 24 S: I think so, and the cards were made easier for them by the fact that - and here of course I'm
25 arguing against myself, that one did in fact get involved in the organisation of colour, or
26 organisation operations and ? Organisations and that was in part an acceptance of a most
27 revealing remark was made to me by a fellow called Webber, who was a senator - Senator
28 Webber, United Party (NRP) - at that stage when I met him during the course of the De
29 Villiers Commission - which was early eighties - he said when we were trying to talk about

1 constitutional things totally in this little Natal context - 'you needn't worry about the Group
 2 Areas Act and that sort of thing - it's done its job. And what he was saying - and it was quite
 3 correct - it has split people into not only in terms of their thinking, but in physically in terms
 4 of that. And that is the thing that we've got to get rid of, more than anything else because
 5 as long as we continue to live in KwaMashus and Wembley, Pietermaritzburg, the amount
 6 of real understanding and real concept of what the other chap is thinking and why he is
 7 thinking it is just not there. And until we can mix and - the real hope then is education,
 8 schools - that's where the make a difference -

9 V: But if the geographical problem ...?

10 S: But it doesn't...

11 V: Is the other thing, I mean...

12 S: If you look at it and you go back a little bit in time, big business has for years, recognised
 13 that. You'll remember, in fact the - first of all Anglo American started to try to get away
 14 from the compound system of mining people and Oppenheimer tried to get family ..

15 V: Family units as I hear..

16 S: Ja, that was the beginning of the kind of operation. Then they in fact actually did a form of
 17 affirmative action and have been doing it for thirty years - that sort of order - but what
 18 happens is - you bring in a chap - this is where I think they are being so stupid. You start
 19 promoting them through your organisation because he's got some sort of ability to learn,
 20 limited learning - only what you, the company want him learn - but that's okay. Come four
 21 o'clock in the afternoon, or four thirty, he pushes off down that way; his wife's
 22 corresponding up and coming youngster, goes with the boss, either to the golf course, over
 23 the weekends, or to the pub, for a drink - the Rand Club on his way home - he learns his job
 24 not while in his office, but in fact from his other associations. And no Black man will ever
 25 be able to compete when he goes back to Soweto every evening - not within those firms.

26 V: That's right - that social factor is critical isn't it in it?

27 S: It is absolutely vital, ja and it should start at schools and go on from there.

28 V: Well, one - I heard this one - I don't know if you've come across the Minister of Education -
 29 Benghu - I haven't met him, but he came to London actually and I was away. But I heard

- 1 him speak the other day at one of these television things - being quite well questioned by this
2 fellow and how you're going to overcome this thing about the schools, and he made the point
3 that the physical difficulty is that the previous government built the locations far away.
- 4 S: That's what Webber meant when he said you don't need to worry - and he was reassuring
5 himself that it will remain White.
- 6 V: Yea, yea, exactly and he was even talking about we're even thinking of schemes of building
7 schools equi-distant from country towns and so on.
- 8 S: Well, I thought - ? Pietermaritzburg Council - they started a thing called Pietermaritzburg
9 2000, or something of that nature and I suggested that in fact we should reorganise all our
10 schools into areas in which people can approach from the existing two sides - there's actually
11 a multiplicity of sides, but you then have common playing fields - you can even have separate
12 schools, if you want home language instruction and what have you - but you have common
13 playing fields and you have this sort of - just as we've got a greenbelt that runs round that is
14 supposed to be preserving the amenities of Pietermaritzburg, you had a school belt of
15 educational parks I called them - in which the young were faced
- 16 V: An ingenious way of approaching the ...
- 17 S: In an attempt to get around the nonsense, because otherwise you can go for the American
18 bussing one but that's (a) enormously expensive and secondly doesn't produce that
19 continuous contact - that you go away back into your other world..
- 20 V: No, of course, danger - it's like this one in Cape Town where they brought those empty
21 schools (the tape goes blank - nothing can be heard)
22