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& Struggle Archives



RECORDING THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Oral History Project of the Alan Paton Centre,
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus

Interview with Dr Peter Brown
conducted by Prof. Norman Bromberger
in Pietermaritzburg
on 11 March 1996

8th interview in a series of 8

(Edited, corrected version)

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ALAN PATON CENTRE

“RECORDING THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE IN KWAZULU-NATAL”
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE ALAN PATON CENTRE,
UNIVERSITY OF NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG.

**Interview with Peter Brown, conducted by Norman Bromberger
in Pietermaritzburg on 11 March 1996**

(8th Interview in a series of 8)

(‘P’ shall signify the interviewee and ‘N’ the interviewer)

N: Okay, this is the eighth interview with Peter Brown, in Pietermaritzburg on the eleventh of March 1996, after a considerable interval. (Inaudible – the tape is bad in that a previous recording is audible in the background, at a lower volume) – we’ve just been running through a number of things, off tape, to get ourselves positioned, and so I think we’ll probably want to repeat a few of them. Where we are picking up is with work in, in the political line, in the second half of the seventies – after you were back in the world of politically free men. In particular, there’s work relating to the support of detainees, or their dependants, and I think, talking a little together we’ve established that there were probably two main organisations here, in Pietermaritzburg, the one that you were primarily involved with which was, or came to be the Dependants Conference of the South African Council of Churches and then there was another - Detainees’ Support Group or something of that sort which was more – perhaps closer to the UDF. Now, is the description that I’ve just given of those two – a rough description, has that been right, as you remember it?

P: Yes. I think our involvement in the Dependants Conference was much earlier than the Detainees’ Support Committee, or whatever it was called.

N: Yes.

P: No, I think you’re right, it was, it came post-UDF and was seen to be fairly closely associated with it.

N: Could you say something about the start of the group that you were with – the Conference, how you got into activity of that kind?

P: Well, it was after Harry Gwala and the group of people who were associated with him were arrested, I think in 1976, I can’t quite remember. But anyway we knew people like Mrs Gwala and some of the other members of those families. Norman Abrahams, who was a young attorney in ‘Maritzburg, was in some way involved, I think because,

the wives consulted with him, and he and Bunty Biggs, who had been a member of the Liberal Party, but was also very involved at Edendale and in the Quaker world, the three of us set up –well, it was hardly a committee. We used to meet and try and help the families with their immediate problems. Hire purchase things – I remember going round the town trying to persuade people not to re-possess beds and all that kind of stuff, and food and so on. So, it was really very loose, ad hoc, and certainly unofficial, not related to any other organisation or group.

N: Mm. And then, how did that come then to be linked up to Council of Churches' Dependants Conference?

P: Well I think what happened, Norman, was that on the staff of the Cathedral, (I think he must have been) was Bob Clarke, an Anglican minister. And, as far as I can recall, he was the moving spirit in getting a local branch of the Council of Churches set up here. And he then started coming to our meetings of that small group and subsequently, to our relief, the SACC took over looking after the detainees and this sub-group of the SACC, which either then or later was called the Dependants Conference, that became its function – to look after detainees, to distribute grants each month and so on.

N: Mmm.

P: And we were absorbed into that.

N: So there's probably been, I suppose, some local initiatives in a number of places which came to be subsumed into ...

P: ... into the Dependants Conference, yes, I think that is what happened.

N: Clarke, if I remember correctly, was involved in something called PUMP, at one stage, wasn't he – there was a Pietermaritzburg Urban Ministry. Perhaps that's – it was a rather separate activity, but I guess it would have directed him towards these – social actions of some sort?

P: I think PUMP came later.

N: Oh, I'm (inaudible)

P: What happened was that the Council of Churches bought a house in Pietermaritz Street – Ubunye House, as it came to be called.

N: Yes.

P: And that became the headquarters for PUMP, the SACC, Dependants Conference and all of that kind of organisation. Bob Clarke was, I think, for the rest of his time in

- 'Maritzburg anyway, Chairman, certainly of the Dependents Conference but perhaps also of the Pietermaritzburg Council of Churches.
- N: You mentioned earlier that he left in due course and went onto Grahamstown – right – that's to say, Bob Clarke?
- P: Yes. I think to Rhodes, and I think probably into lecturing Theology, or something.
- N: Now, at that stage, then, you in fact became Chairman of the local Dependents Conference, is that correct?
- P: Well, I think I did when he left.
- N: Yes.
- P: And, certainly from then on I was Chairman more often than any one else was, which was a bit ironic because I wasn't really a church-going person at all.
- N: Ja.
- P: But they seem to have a problem getting such a person to chair this thing.
- N: Mm. How do you understand that, looking back? I mean, was it that they saw it as ... kind of dangerous, or ?
- P: I don't know. I suppose you would have to be enthusiastic about doing that work. We also suffered from that fact that, you know, church people seemed to keep getting transferred so when we thought we were going to get a Chairman, then the next thing he – he wasn't in 'Maritzburg any longer.
- N: Yea, yea.
- P: I mean certainly people like Peter Kerchhoff, who, as you know, is a staunch church person ...
- N: Yea.
- P: ... was very involved, and his wife, Joan, all along – as a member of the Dependents Conference Committee.
- N: Uh-huh.
- P: But to get a sort of priest to chair the Committee seemed to not be easy.
- N: Funds, and so on came, did they, from ... ?
- P: Well, the funds came from Johannesburg, from the Council of Churches there, and grants were allocated according to need. But they were very small, something like a hundred rands a month for a family – but that must have made a difference – I suppose all those years because it was years that people were on those lists of beneficiaries.
- N: Mmm,Mmm. So the kind of people that we're talking about here very much included lots of the dependants of long-term prisoners. In other words it wouldn't simply be

detainees during periods of emergency and so on – people would go in for some months – but the Dependants Conference had on its books people who were the dependants of prisoners ...

P: Yes.

N: ... I mean Robben Island and that sort of ..

P: Yes.

N: Ja.

P: But both ...

N: Yes...

P: Both prisoners and detainees.

N: ... detainees?

P: Yes.

N: Yes, right. During, during that period of work did you have much to do, face to face, with the Security people? The police?

P: Not, not visibly. I'm sure that were very interested, but I can't remember them causing much trouble.

N: Yes. So they seemed to have accepted and assessed the legitimacy of relief work of this kind?

P: Although that may be putting it a bit high, I don't know (inaudible – he is laughing) – it was – perhaps they felt they had more important things to do.

N: Yea, yea. Right. You were not involved at all directly with the prisoners or detainees – it was more on the dependants; side – you didn't organise prison visits and so forth?

P: Well, we did, to this extent that the prison visits were financed by, by the Dependants' Conference.

N: Oh. Mmm.

P: So we ended up eventually with a person in the office, a secretary, and those prison visits were really arranged by her, largely.

N; Yes.

P: Well, when I say by her, I think probably the rules were that the actual dependent had to do the applying and so on.

N: Uh-huh.

P: But she helped in that process.

N: Oh.

P: And paid the fares. The SACC had a house in Cape Town to which dependents went and where they stayed when they were going to Robben Island, and she would arrange the bookings and so on.

N: Uh-huh. Ja. Did you, during that time, if you didn't have much kind of confrontation with the Security people, did you come to meet detainees and prisoners at all, or was that not quite how it worked?

P: Certainly the person in the office would have, when they were released.

N: Uh-huh.

P: But our main contact was with their families.

N: With the families?

P: Ja.

N: Mmm. Mmm.

P: And on the whole, what we tried to do was to give each person on the Committee responsibility for such and such families.

N: Oh, I see.

P: And so if they had a particular problem, you would go and see them.

N: Yes.

P: That was what happened at the end. In the earlier days, when we were just a small group ...

N: Yea ...

P: ... well, then you might have to go and see them all.

N: Mmm. Do you have, in your head, for any phase of your activities, the sort of total number of either prisoners and detainees, or the kind of number of families involved – just to give some notion of scale?

P: No, Norman.

N: Mmm.

P: What happened was that initially we dealt only with Pietermaritzburg.

N: Yes.

P: But, our Committee ...

N: Right.

P: ... And then we were made responsible for inland Natal.

N: Oh, I see.

P: So, obviously, the bigger area meant more families.

N: Yes.

P: But numbers I don't know...

N: Yea...

P: ... I can't remember what they were

N: Ja. So yes. The issue of the politics of the people who were being detained, or put away for prison sentences, was this a matter for concern at all, or was that really an irrelevance in the sense that they were – in some sense on the right side, and there was an un-ambiguous humanitarian need on the part of the dependants and that was enough to ...?

P: Yes. It would certainly have been the attitude.

N: Yes

P: There were problems, I think, or this is just my impression ...

N: Ja ...

P: that when the UDF/Inkatha conflict began to become quite a prominent issue ...

N: Yes.

P: ... I think that an Inkatha person who, perhaps, had problems with the Security Police, or maybe somehow went to the SACC, perhaps over some issue of violence, I suspect that such a person would not have been sympathetically received – that's a subjective view, but that's what I think.

N: Uh-huh. Can you, you know, help me on, on the dates? I think because I was so much involved in research in the 1980s, a lot of the politics kind of didn't exactly pass me by, but, to some extent, went over my head, and I don't have clear dates – would you? I mean, where does one put the UDF? An initial year in which the UDF gets formally set up?

P: Well, I can remember when and how it happened, but I can't remember what date that was.

N: Uh-huh.

P: They had that big meeting in Cape Town and set it off from there.

N: Uh-huh.

P: But when exactly that was, I don't know.

N: Yes. As between late seventies and early eighties?

P: Yes, I would think early eighties.

N: The problems that you were referring to just when I had to go – you know – with Inkatha and so on. Those, then, would have gained clearer definition after that, would they, I mean?

- P: Yes. I'm trying to think why I should have had that impression. Why Inkatha, would have been going to the SACC – which suggests to me that there was some kind of welfare activity for people who had lost their homes as a result of the violence – which I don't think would have been – anything to do with the Dependants Conference, but it, it may have been formed under the umbrella of their local Council of Churches.
- N: Mmm.
- P: I suppose somebody on Robben Island – they might have had their house bombed, or something and would have come to the Dependants Conference and so some Inkatha person who'd suffered the same fate might have felt: "Well, if they can do that, so can I".
- N: Yes. Right. If we could perhaps, take off from that point or perhaps before doing that, are there any other aspects to the work of the Dependants Conference that you were involved in that you think need some mention?
- P: Norman, I don't think so. In the end, its usefulness – well it ran its course.
- N: Mmm.
- P: And I don't even know whether it was even formally closed down here in in 'Maritzburg ...
- N: Mmm.
- P: ... but in the end, we just slowly stopped having meetings, and ...
- N: Uh-huh.
- P: ... by which time, I think, somebody else must have been the chairman, well, I hope so...
- N: Yes. At various stages when we were talking, we talked about a Detainee's Support Group, or something of that sort – more closely aligned to UDF – but we haven't pursued that – would that group have become more prominent as time went along, in the eighties – would they have been doing the same sort of work as the Dependants Conference?
- P: I don't think so.
- N: You don't think so?
- P: I don't know what they were doing.
- N: Uh-Huh. Perhaps a more political objective?
- P: Yes, I think it would be fair to say that.
- N: ... with making publicity – over the detentions and trying to mobilise against them, ...
- P: Yes, I think that's fair.

N: Yes, yes. It we talk about the period in which the Conference slowly, runs its course in the sense that there are less and less dependents of prisoners and detainees, are we talking then about the later eighties? I mean does it survive through to ... ?

P: I should think till the De Klerk statement then it started to run down, I think.

N: Yes, yes. Okay. And then with the release of prisoners ... and so forth, clearly come to the end, ja. Then going back to what I was suggesting, a minute or two ago, as a point of departure in the discussion, the Natal politics in the period, perhaps a little before, and then after that setting up of the UDF, what I think I'd like to do just to start with, is to recall the links between people like Alan, you know, and other Liberal Party people, including yourself, and what came to be the Inkatha Party, I mean Buthelezi, in particular. It would be true to say, would it, that at least from some not inconsiderable time, there were quite sympathetic relations between at least the leadership of that group and some Liberals, in the sense that Buthelezi was seen as an opponent of the regime – not that the particular strategy that he was following was always acceptable nonetheless, he was seen as a resistor, the refusal to take independence, the insistence on an unitary South Africa, and so on. Whatever the detail, am I right that there was some reasonable sympathy, or is that putting it too strongly?

P: Well, I certainly think there was – in the period when he was refusing to accept – initially the tribal authority, for his area?

N: Oh, I see...

P: ... and I suppose the person who did have the closest relationship with him, was Alan .

N: Yes.

P: ... because, as I think I've mentioned, I think he used to go there to see Alan, to really consult. I suppose one was in two minds – one supported what he was trying to do, but was concerned about that he, in fact, would in the end be made use of by the Nationalist Government. And I suppose he stalled their plans – which I think he did, but how much in the end they used him for other purposes, and I suppose, perhaps in the Magnus Malan Trial – one will find out a bit more about that – I don't know.

N: Mmm.

P: But, I think Alan was the person – and Neil Alcock. Buthelezi was Neil Alcock's bestman when he married Creina – I'd forgotten about that, but somebody told me that the other day. But, in the end, I think that they parted company because they were both difficult people ... I don't know whose fault that was, but ...

- N: Mmm. Mmm. Was it the case, you know, from somewhere back that there was also a – a question mark over what shall we call it? – the kind of social conservatism of a man who was a supporter of this hereditary principle, was himself appealed to as a Zulu aristocrat – you know, belonging to an elite of, of whatever Amakosi, and Chiefs and ... you know. Was that question one that caused one to have reservations about?
- P: I don't think he was seen as being strongly traditional at that time.
- N: Aha, yes.
- P: But that may just have been that one was blind to this – but I have the impression that that is something that has grown with time.
- N: Aha, aha. So that it may in his own politics have been something that – it became politic to come to emphasise...
- P: Yes, yes.
- N: (with time? inaudible because they spoke at once)
- P: Yes, yes. That may well – that could easily be so.
- N: Yes. Because he was rather projected as a Christian, wasn't he?
- P: Ja. Yes.
- N: In that sense at least, a new man, rather than conservative, I mean it's ...
- P: Ja ...
- N: The relationship to the ANC, the whole question of his relationship to them - a showdown wasn't forced as long as the ANC was basically restricted to some underground cells and messages coming in through the underground and all the rest of it. But once the UDF came to act as its sort of local proxy, or to some extent, at least – I presume there was some independence of the UDF, but once they had come to be there, then the issue of who had majority support, who was leading the local struggle – that came to be an issue that couldn't be ducked, and so hostilities were stepped up during the eighties, as time went by and so forth. Is that roughly right, as you would see it? You know, or are ... (it is difficult to hear as they speak at once).
- P: Well, one hears of this clash which is said to have taken place in London, between Buthelezi and his delegation and the ANC in exile. And that marked the beginning of the parting of the ways. One can only guess – but I suspect that hard liners who were almost like the Unity Movement, don't touch anything, anyone who touches or has anything to do with the regime, as they called it, is soiled by that. I suspect that in ANC circles, and probably in UDF circles, that those were, that those people holding that view, came out on top in policy making and they set the agenda for isolating him.

He's a very difficult person, I've got no doubt about that – but I just think that there must have been some way of coordinating what he was doing – and what they were trying to do – and well, tragically, it, it, it wasn't tried, or was abandoned – that strategy. One remembers that this is not the ANC – but with Sobukwe's funeral, where, I think the attack on him was probably initiated by Black Consciousness people, but 'though he was kicked out of that because of his, his association with the homeland system.

N: Yes.

P: For the people who kicked him out of there – it was just that you were either black or white, for or against.

N: Ja.

P: Mandela's release – I just think it's a great mistake that Mandela didn't go to see Buthelezi straight away to say 'thank you for insisting that you wouldn't do anything 'till I was released' – but I'm sure after however many years in jail, you come out, you don't know what the situation is – people are saying to you 'you can't do that, you can't do that in Natal, the ANC can't do that ...' So he didn't. I think it's part of the reasons for our present troubles, anyway.

N: Aha, yes. I suppose the fact that Buthelezi and his party, in fact formed the government in a homeland, complicated matters somewhat. In fact they were power-holders in an environment where insurgency was taking place, they would tend to be thrown on the defensive to some extent, wouldn't they, and they would have been the natural points of focuses of certain kinds of protests over, you know, local councillors who got hold of the land and were selling it off privately in townships and so on (they speak at once so that it is difficult to hear what either say)

N: ... and things of that sort...

P: Yes, well, of course. And, it brings you back to the question of whether, who in the end, benefited most from the way Buthelezi went, the Nats or the apartheid system – by in a way, discrediting him through what his government had to do.

N: Yes, yes.

P: Anyway, we'll never know the answer, I suppose, but how things might have been if ... the more pragmatic ANC people had to set the agenda.

N: Ja.

P: And he had been more amenable to working with them.

N: Somebody like Archie Gumede, whom you've referred to once or twice, as having, if I remember correctly, actually been in the Liberal Party at one stage. Was he not, and so on ...

P: Ja.

N: And, and held some office, was it in the UDF locally?

P: Well, not only locally, he was one of the national presidents.

N: Now did you, at any stage discuss some of these things, I mean latterly, with him – I mean – if you were talking about more pragmatic people, I was just wondering whether someone of that ilk, in fact was pragmatic and had he ...

P: Well, I don't think there's any question that he was very distressed by that split which developed between the UDF and Inkatha.

N: Uh. Okay. In this decade of the eighties with some people by mid-decade thinking that the end was nigh, and feeling that there were going to succeed in making the country ungovernable and take power, and then that danger, or hopeful prospect faded somewhat as time went by. In that decade is it true that the political interference act was – would have been scrapped? Was it somewhere – what I have in mind was that presumably in the Tricameral system we would have had mixed parties, wouldn't we have – so it would have been natural to scrap the a ...

P: I suppose it would have been. It didn't happen, I don't think.

N: It was, oh ...

P: (inaudible, as they both speak at once) – I can't remember ...

N: Aha, What I was getting to, you know, was this conference, which I think was '85, was it?

P: I think so.

N: You know, in Grahamstown, the conference on the history of the Liberal Party, in the aftermath of which there was actually some talk about re-founding the Party, but there wasn't much support for that... I was just wondering whether that it was possible for people even to mention it, to consider it, because, in fact that interference thing had gone by that stage? As far you can remember that wasn't the case?

P: I don't know, I don't know.

N: Right.

P: But I guess you might, but I don't know.

N: That could have been incidental at the time...

P: Ja, yes, I think...

N: Ja. The initiative for that conference, did that come from Peter Vale in Grahamstown, or is it a somewhat more lengthy story?

P: It came from Ernie Wentzel and Peter Vale. Now, Peter Vale at that time was I think in the Institute of National Affairs in Johannesburg I think he was.

N: Oh.

P: And, I think he and Ernie were both on the Executive or whatever it is of the Institute of Race Relations. Vale then got this job at Grahamstown.

N: Right.

P: At that institute there, whatever it was called. And I think he probably saw this conference as an opportunity to make a name for himself, but also I think he and Ernie were interested in putting the Liberal Party back on the map to a certain extent, I suppose. So, I'm, guessing, but I think that at the Institute, by the time Kane Bermann was, I think, the Director, and Ernie, I think, was Chairman of whatever the management body was.

N: Mmm.

P: ... And they, in a way, set about trying to reduce the Marxist influence amongst the staff there, which I think was perhaps quite strong, amongst research people and so on, And to build up the liberal image, so, I think one can say that the idea didn't come from the Institute, but it came from people like Ernie and Vale, who were sympathetic to one another's views in the Institute.

N: Mmm. Mmm. Now that conference, the delegates, the people who were invited to attend were former members of the Party, by and large,

P: There were one or two exceptions, but ...

N: Yea.

P: No, that's right.

N: Ja. The issue of what would come afterwards, was an issue to be talked about, was it? Whether liberal political issues, stances, etcetera, needed to be institutionalised at all in that phase of things. Now that was something which might have come out in the conference, was that not something that was sprung on the conference, but in a sense you went into it knowing that that was something to think about, or ... or not?

P: Well, I don't think so.

N: Aha.

P: Well, I certainly didn't.

N: Yes

- P: You may remember that towards the end – well, as often happens, everyone's very enthusiastic and says 'well, we can't just stop here', and so there was this resolution adopted as far as I can remember, about some ongoing organisation ...
- N: Yea ...
- P: ... and eventually that (end of the first tape)...
- N: This is side two of the interview on the eleventh of March with Peter Brown. If you'd continue, Peter?
- P: Yes, I was just saying, eventually it was set up – the Liberal Democratic Association. But I have to say that I was never very enthusiastic. It seemed to me that there was really no space for – certainly in the political field – for reviving the Liberal Party. The Democratic Party was there and functioning, and there simply weren't the resources – apart, I think from the fact that the possibility of getting the support [was] was pretty slim, and I think that remains the case today. There may come a time when the ANC starts to disintegrate, or to produce factions and so on and as perhaps the economy improves and so on, that there will be an opportunity to form a fully non-racial Liberal Party again. Something which will absorb the DP and elements from the other political organisations, but, I don't know, but certainly not, at the time of that conference, was it possible that one would take off in that direction more that I think it is, is now ...
- N: Ja.
- P: We'll have to wait and see. I'm very sceptical about this new Nat move to get some sort of – well, cross-colour, new group going. I don't think it's going to happen, yet.
- N: Mmm. Why, is it basically that the cohesion of the ANC and, in its historic field – the loyalty and so on to it are at this stage, strong enough to prevent any major move?
- P: Yes, I think so, I think so.
- N: Ja, ja.
- P: I've got no problem with the Nats moving in that direction. I mean towards a liberal solution, 'cause it seems to me that, surely what we were trying to do was to persuade people to do that if they start doing it well then one must welcome it.
- N: Ja.
- P: But it also seems that as a minority, now, the Afrikaners, if they're going to continue to operate constitutionally, or in a normal political way, that, inevitably, they are going to have to adopt liberal principles to protect their own interests – I mean all the things

we used to root for (inaudible) – like the rule of law and so on are going to be absolutely vital to them.

N: Aha.

P: So, I just think that the Nats haven't really thought this thing through, yet, and I doubt if it'll work, at this particular moment.

N: Mmm. Given that your judgement in 1985 was as you outlined it, it was interesting to see that you felt drawn to the Five Freedoms Forum when it was established in South Africa, I mean in Pietermaritzburg, rather. Or it was I think a Johannesburg initiative?

P: Yes.

N: ... and one which then spread. I think that almost from the beginning, the kind of founding conference, you were present, were you ?

P: Well, I never went to the one in Johannesburg.

N: Yes, yes. But in Pietermaritzburg?

P: Yes.

N: Yes. Yes. And what you must have felt was that there were opportunities through that organisation which were not available through any kind of suggested, more kind of (inaudible) – historically-linked, sort of liberal grouping ... Was it as clear as that? Perhaps you could say something about your thinking and feeling at the time that you committed yourself to working through it?

P: Well, initially, I think, I was a bit sceptical about that too because I was concerned that it was just going to be another UDF front. But, they all went to that Johannesburg conference. When the people who came back here called a meeting, and one got the impression, well I did anyway, that this was something which might be more than a UDF front. And so, I think, I must have gone there initially as an LDA delegate – because I think that's what they did, they invited people from various organisations. And, I think that the people involved were quite careful, from the beginning, to try and pull in as many different anti-apartheid organisations as they could, or individuals from those organisations. So, that's true that through that, one did get to people who would not have joined something like the LDA. The Five Freedoms Forum, of course, like a lot of other things, is now, in many of its activities sort of atrophied. But I think it has been able to a certain extent, to preserve that image of being, in a way, a neutral group. Initially, I'm sure we were regarded with suspicion by the conventional white community. But we did manage to get some of them to come along to things. And once we started these workshops in the various Focus Groups, as they were called, by

trying to insist that everyone who had an interest in the subjects that we were talking about, we invited to those sessions. I think we did establish a reputation as being non-partisan, whatever you like to call it. Our main problem has been always, to get Inkatha people to go there, who obviously did regard it as a UDF front.

N: Mmm.

P: But now we just ask individuals to whatever we're trying to organise. But as you know we're now down to more or less the agricultural group. But that, I think, has been quite important because William Mullins, who was the predecessor to MacIntosh, the Chairman now of the Natal Agricultural Union here, admitted at a big workshop, that the NAU organised, that the first time that he really got to talk to Black people with an interest in the land question, was when he came to talk at a Five Freedoms Forum workshop. And he was obviously influenced by that to the extent that he was very good in his last few years of office in pushing the NAU towards an acceptance of change.

N; Mmm.

P: And the Natal Agricultural Union now is something quite different to what it used to be. Certainly at the higher levels, anyway. And this year is planning to disband and reform as a thoroughly non-racial organisation, so ... that's an area where one thought change would never come.

N: Mmm. When you were speaking about neutrality and so on, just now, this was as between the kind of local contenders, was it, the UDF and Inkatha, is it?

P: Yes.

N: That was what you set out to do?

P: Ja.

N: ... the line was .. (what he says is not clearly audible as they speak at once).

P: Yes, but, also those other outsiders ...

N; Mmm.

P: ... I suppose, well, often, if not always, from the White community ...

N: Mmm.

P: ... who at that stage were, perhaps, terrified of anything which they thought had a UDF, and therefore a Communist association.

N: Yea, yea, yea.

P: But in the end it turned out to be easier to persuade them than it was to persuade Inkatha – that one wasn't trying to push any particular line ...

N: Mmm. Was there any kind of unofficial division of the constituencies? I mean, was it the case that the Five Freedoms Forum was primarily something intended for primarily Whites? And, secondly, is that the way, whether it was intended or not, that it largely functioned?

P: I think that conference in – the Johannesburg conference ...

N: Yes, yea.

P: ... that what it set out to do was to create an organisation which would help Whites to accept change.

N: Mmm. Mmm.

P: I think that was the motive behind it.

N: Aha, aha. So it did ... (they speak at once so one cannot hear what is said)

P: So, it did have that ...

N: focus?

P: Ja.

N: Yea. Right. And the Five Freedoms idea was, as I recall it, quite an interesting one – given what was to happen, in a sense in the big wide world, namely that although I can't list the five freedoms ...

P: ...nor can I.

N: ... my memory is that it combined, on the one hand, some, you know, classic freedoms from things of the Liberal tradition...

P: Yes.

N: ... I mean you know association, speech and freedom of arrest without trial.

P: Ja

N: ... these kinds of things. On the other hand, it had a little of the Atlantic Charter of 'freedom from want, from hunger, from ...'

P: ... discrimination, and so on...

N: Aha.

P: Yes.

N: So that you'd get a bit of a –

P: ... mix...

N: ... with a social democratic sort of flavour to the mix. Yes.

P: Mmm.

N: Which under the circumstances ...there was quite a 'clever' sort of desire and I think it was also appropriate...

P: Yes, I think so, ja.

N: Making clear that the emphasis on the freedoms was not simply ...

P: ... Bill of Rights etc. it went a bit further than that.

N: Ja, ja. Locally, here it was a summit just, wasn't it that you'd got, briefly anyway, well, perhaps not so briefly, but some new talent came in, didn't they?

P: Yes, yes.

N: In the sense that, at leadership level people like Krynauw ...

P: Ja, yes.

N: ... and then Burton (inaudible) whom I imagine had probably had some political involvement, but not locally... came and there may well have been others, you know, that I'm not aware of ...

P: Yes.

N: and the Krynauw case, well, one was getting at the Democratic Party weren't you?

P: Yes.

N: 'Verlig' Afrikaners now going beyond those initial steps into commitment to a democratic future.

P: ...and often, I suppose, going further than, than – I mean when you think of people like Cronje ... who are going further to the left than a Liberal would feel comfortable doing.

N: Would it be true to say that in the end... I mean. to – periods around about now, that the kind of people who, you know, sit on a committee, and, I mean this is as I suppose the Five Freedoms Forum was also, as you were saying, sort of tailing away – as such, limiting its activities as at least some of its objectives were, were achieved, or taken over by others, that a fair percentage of the people left in a kind of (inaudible) in fact for the whole liberal constituency that some others have come in, but ...

P: Well, it's also, I think, the case that, some of them ... were probably left-liberals in the UDF ...

N: Right...

P: ...but in fact feel a bit more comfortable now in a group, like we are.

N: Mmm. Mmm.

P: More coffee?

N: Yes, thank you. I think maybe, this...

P: That's about it isn't it?

N: Ja. Ja. (inaudible) at that point, thank you. (End of second side of tape 8).