

1 **RECORDING THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE IN**
2 **KWAZULU-NATAL**

3
4 **ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE ALAN PATON CENTRE,**
5 **UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG**

6 **98APB10**

7 **Interview with Monika Wittenberg**

8 **conducted by Jennifer Verbeek**

9 **on 14 April 1998 in Pietermaritzburg**

10 **(‘M’ shall signify the Interviewee and ‘J’ the Interviewer.)**

11 (The start of the tape is inaudible).

12
13 J: I'll tell you when we are going to record.

14 M: Well, both my husband and I were born in the same year in the same hospital in
15 Tanzania, on the Lake Victoria. And both of us were at the same place(?), and when
16 the war broke out, our parents were interned by the English and we spent our
17 childhood in an internment camp, went to school together, first class and so on. Class
18 one, of course.

19 J: Mmm.

20 M: And we went through all the years of the War we sat in an internment camp. First we
21 sat in a camp near Sals - what was then Salisbury, it was built for Blacks. The
22 Zimbabwean people had townships exactly like South Africa, the only difference was
23 we had a barbed wire around it and armed watchers watching us - women and
24 children. The men were taken to South Africa, to Kimberly, because South Africa
25 didn't want to intern women and children - they would rather just have the men. (She
26 laughs). Anyway, so we grew up in camp, we were quite happy there, the women got
27 very busy quickly with all sorts of things - making something out of nothing and so
28 on. And that was my childhood. So when the War was over, '45, King George was
29 too decent to send us to work in Germany - he fed us another two years, three
30 thousand Germans. But we were then allowed to leave that - confines of that -
31 barbed wire township, and we were put on a very - a wonderful place which was a.

1 the - it was an - a - sorry (the tape is switched off). It was a disused aerodrome - sorry
2 my English doesn't sometimes come easily, and that was just a true paradise for us.
3 And now we were sitting there and the men, of course, didn't have jobs, which is
4 frustrating if you sit in close confinement and you haven't got a job. My father was
5 arrested here (?) as a Doctor - he was a doctor, but the Churches suddenly woke up
6 and it started with the Dutch Reformed Church of what was then Salisbury. They said
7 'Can't we use these people?' 'So, thank you very much, take them ..' said the
8 Government and the first to be taken was my father as a Doctor. So we were taken
9 out and put in a mission station very near Great Zimbabwe Ruins - I must just in two
10 sentences say that was paradise. If anybody had seen paradise, we've seen it there. It
11 was wonderful -all the fruit trees and then walking on foot to Great Zimbabwe Ruins,
12 and ogh (?), and a job and so on. We were seven children by that time and then came
13 the call that all of us had to go back to Germany, and it's this - the Dutch Reformed
14 Church started to fight very hard for these missionaries because all of - many of those
15 sitting in the camp were missionaries. And it said 'What valuable people - we can use
16 them in South Africa.' So General Smuts allowed every missionary that was signed
17 for by some or other mission society to stay in the country. The mission society had
18 to come up with all the monies, including pensions. The South African Government
19 didn't want to be responsible for anybody. So we were again the first ones, but we
20 were signed up by the Dutch Reformed Church - that's how we had those close links
21 with the Dutch Reformed Church through my remaining childhood...

22 J: Mmm, Mmm.

23 M: We then came to South Africa, with - I was at, at that time twelve. We came to the
24 Dutch Reformed Church, we were put on a mission between - on the border of
25 Transvaal and Botswana. That was exactly where Dennis Goldsberg and I forgot the
26 other one ...?

27 J: Bruce Dermer (?)

28 M: Bruce (?), crossed over the Marico River - that place, and ..

29 J: What was it all called?

30 M: Derdepoort (?).

31 J: Derdepoort.(?)

32 M: ...and Gunther was, and his family, were taken up by the Moravian Church - now they
33 really have a culture/suffered hardship(?).

1 J: Mmm.

2 M: And of course we came out of the camp with – have - owning next to nothing. And
3 we were - had to rely on the good will of people giving us clothes and things. You
4 know, we started sitting on boxes and that type of thing - it was quite hard times. In
5 camp we were all equal - all equally poor - it didn't matter. But there you were poor
6 amongst all the others - it was not so nice. Anyway it gave me a great inferiority
7 complex at that time. So I had to start going to Afrikaans school, which was very
8 difficult for me, I hated it. And when my father got this job in Derdepoort Hosp -
9 they built a hospital there, I had to go to boarding school - I went to an Afrikaans
10 boarding school and had to stay there - I only got home four times a year. I was
11 thoroughly, thoroughly indoctrinated into the thinking of the Afrikaners. Now that
12 was Zeerust ...

13 J: Mmm.

14 M: Zeerust is very near Lichtenburg ...

15 J: Ja...

16 M: It's all over that place - are the - real right wing (they speak at once) ..

17 J: ...very conservative...

18 M: ..conservatives ...

19 J: Mmm, Mmm.

20 M: ...and my father, of course, had to deal with them a lot with having a mission hospital
21 in the midst of all those conservative farmers. But later on the Botswana Government
22 allowed him into Botswana. At first they didn't because he was a German-trained
23 doctor. But then they did and the hospital there in Judi (?) grew and grew and grew -
24 a ward was named after my father and mother, now and it became very well know
25 and, in fact, in fact, President Masirwa (?) gave him an order of, you know, whatever
26 it's called. A medal for the work he did - he did wonderful work there. So that is my
27 childhood background. Because of my Afrikaans background and because we were
28 still German, we were not allowed to become Members - you, know, South African
29 citizens, unless you paid a high some of money which we didn't have. My father was
30 poorly paid ...

31 J: Mmm.

32 M: I had to become a nurse - where you earn money straight away. So I became a nurse
33 for that reason, I would have liked to become a doctor myself.

1 J: Mmm.

2 M: But wasn't able to. And I saved every cent ...

3 J: Where did you train?

4 M: I trained in Pretoria -

5 J: In Pretoria.

6 M: At that time it was an election in which I was perfectly (?) supporting the National
7 Party. (They both laugh).

8 M: We were sitting - we had hardly come out of camp - '47 we came out, '48 was the big
9 swing over to the National Party.

10 J: Yes.

11 M: At that time, I must say, I never heard anything that happened in Germany - we were,
12 of course, not allowed radio ...

13 J: Mmm.

14 M: ...in camp we heard no news ..

15 J: ...no news ..

16 M: ... of what's happening in the world.

17 J: Mmm.

18 M: And when we came out my parents must have heard but they never told us.

19 J: Mmm.

20 M: I don't know why but they didn't tell us. So I grew up completely unaware of what
21 had happened in Germany. In fact I was a bit proud of being a German and this and
22 that - och. Anyway, so I did very well at my nursing - you know, high marks and that
23 type of thing and saved all the money to go to Germany. And when I was finished I
24 went to Germany as soon as I could and it was in Germany that I met Gunther again.
25 He'd been staying in the south, in the Cape, going to Hermansburg School, always
26 using his brain - he was not indoctrinated, ever, by anybody.

27 J: Mmm.

28 M: He read, he was - his official subject was history and all the laws that came into being
29 - '55, and what have, you know, Bantu Education, he looked at it with great concern,
30 even as a scholar and a student, a school-going student. He was never ever
31 indoctrinated by anybody at all - of which in fact I am very proud. And so he was an
32 anti-National Party man from the very, very beginning. But I was happy member -
33 well, not member, but you know sort of linked to them (?). In Germany I met him

1 and suddenly it struck me he was studying theology and I really took a fancy to him
2 and all of this and all his family and his family were friends and we were forever
3 invited together and the relationship started. And I thought 'Whew, if that's ever going
4 to be something, if I'm ever going to be a Minister's wife, I better do something about
5 it - I don't know enough.' Even growing up as a missionary's daughter, oh, I was not
6 terribly interested in these things, you know. It depends, ja, I read the (?). So I
7 decided to go to a Bible College and in that Bible College I found to my great horror,
8 all the accounts of what the Germans had done to the Jews and to the opposition to
9 Hitler. I read, and I read and I read with shock, and shock and shock. I was so, so
10 shocked; I was sort of enveloped in all this history of Germany. If I had known it -
11 that's why it's possible. Because I was far away - I had the excuse of having been far
12 away, and in a camp, but my parents didn't tell me later. Even when I was big enough
13 to take such news they never told me. So I - I really suffered grave shock that time
14 and I read it all - as - everything I could lay hands on I read that time. Especially
15 about the opposition to Hitler.

16 J: Mm.

17 M: "The 20 July People" - and there is a very moving book, it collected all the last letters
18 of them, and I cried and I cried and I cried about these and then I felt afterwards my
19 answer - the only brother. My father was a Bonnheffer man ...

20 M: Bonnheffer was ...

21 J: Yes..

22 M: He illegally - or then he was illegally, by then a Bonheffer. He had a car at the time
23 and he distributed Bonnheffer letters with his car, by hand, which was much too
24 dangerous to go any other route.

25 J: Mm.

26 M: And he belonged to the (?) Church. It gave me such a good feeling - here is my uncle,
27 my father never was a Nazi. The internment camps had full of Nazis.

28 J: Mmm.

29 M: All of them had turned Nazi - they didn't know what was going on in Germany. Even
30 the missionaries. But my father never turned a Nazi. He was never a Nazi - so I'm
31 very proud of that fact and that's when I started to really, really think. I mean that part
32 of college I had to share a bath cabin with two Indian ladies. And when I heard I had
33 to share it with them, my first reaction was, being trained in Zeerust, and being very

1 strongly trained against the 'Coolies' ...

2 J: The 'Coolies', yes...

3 M: Don't ever buy from a 'Coolie'. I had nausea. And it shocked me so much that I was
4 indoctrinated to such an extent that I had a physical nausea hearing the news and I
5 worked hard on it and we became the best of friends - we loved each other in the end.
6 That's when, even my physical position to other races started to disintegrate. When I
7 finished my bible training I worked for two years in Northern Germany as a Church
8 worker and I still had lots of time to go to finish this - by that time we were engaged
9 to get married, so I did my midwifery training in England. And we were four White
10 nurses and seven Black in the course.

11 J: Where was this?

12 M: It was in England in - I did the first part in Leicester ...

13 J: Mmm.

14 M: ..and the second part in Kettering (?) - the District Nursing part.

15 J: Mmm, Mmm, Mmm...

16 M: And we sat in a ward, one nurse and I and at the - and discrim - it turned out that I had
17 forgotten that she's Black. We worked together. You know, in the night ...

18 J: Yes.

19 M: ..when you've done your work, you sit under the one lamp in the middle of the ward,
20 you wait for people to call. And suddenly I looked at her and I, I realised that I had
21 completely forgotten she's Black. And I realised that I was healed that time from my -
22 mostly, you know you can never say completely ..

23 J: Mmm, naturally ...

24 M: And suddenly ...

25 J: It sneaks back ...

26 M: Ja, it sneaks back at odd times. But I, I discovered that the most of my strong
27 prejudice that had been indoctrinated within that school had disappeared. So I was
28 able to marry my husband, who was never indoctrinated like me. So, of course, when
29 my parents found out - the sad thing is that my parents were so much under the
30 influence of the Dutch Reformed Church they turned against our - can you believe it?
31 Against our ...

32 J: Your marriage?

33 M: ...political - even against our marriage, because as I say they knew each other. My

1 mother and Gunther's mother and they grew up together, which is not, sometimes, a
2 good thing. Sometimes it is, sometimes it's not. And so there were a little bit of
3 tensions but especially they didn't like our political outlook and that was sad because
4 my father never was a Nazi, I couldn't ever understand that he didn't fully support our
5 stand. To me it was the same as - we were the opposition to the Nazis.

6 J: yes...

7 M: Anyway, to cut a long story short we got married, Martin was already born in
8 Germany. And we then were placed in Cape Town in a congregation, a White- the
9 Lutheran Church was divided. We immediately started making contact to the Black
10 Lutheran Church, the (?), what have you.

11 J: Mm.

12 M: And kept this up and it's - we started this process and it was then - it became known
13 that we swapped pulpits. Something that was unthinkable before that time and we
14 slowly got it to be known that we swapped pulpit at, at certain times and had meetings
15 together. But then the other trouble was that Gunther had to study theology in
16 German. A White Lutheran could not study theology in South Africa. The - if you
17 wanted a bursary - say from a Lutheran body, you couldn't study as a Dutch-
18 Reformed Church, they didn't allow it - they, the Grahamstown people didn't want -
19 they had enough of their own...

20 J: Mmm.

21 M: ...they didn't want the Lutheran, it was a big problem. So you had to study in
22 Germany. But if you went to Germany and you were poor, like Gunther, you never
23 could come back in all those eight years of study.

24 J: Mm, Mmm.

25 M: It was very hard, because his father died soon after he left and it was very tough on
26 him not to be able to be with his mother that time and to be with the family and so on,
27 so he decided 'This is nonsense, we must make a plan.' Of course, from the start he
28 was for a plan that involved everybody.

29 J: Mm.

30 M: And when he came back he immediately started to think 'How can this be done in this
31 apartheid South Africa where the colleges already exist?' You know, but a White
32 Lutheran was not allowed to study in the Black Colleges in that time. And he had -
33 um - vague support, not whole-hearted support, but he had that support - try it here

1 'it's difficult to send people overseas and we don't get Ministers again(?)'. To cut a
2 long story short, he worked hard on it and in the end we have this training now. here
3 in ...
4 J: University of Natal, yes.
5 M: ..in Pietermaritzburg, the University of Natal. And it's growing in the - amazingly,
6 into this School of Theology with really showing us something. Quite a good number
7 of post-graduate and undergraduate ...
8 J: ...and you're drawing students from all over aren't you?
9 M: From all over, of course, we don't - we, (?) society was not intended just having
10 Lutherans.
11 J: Mmm.
12 M: He was from the start opening up ...
13 J: Mmm.
14 M: ..inter-denominational, which is this School of Theology - completely inter-
15 denominational. Now that is our background in this respect. Of course, being in the,
16 in the picture, and having the sort of contacts we had, our children grew up in this
17 thinking. We discovered one day that our Gertrude never saw the difference, that she
18 didn't realise there was a difference, and we were happy to find out that they had
19 grown up not to look at who's, you know, Blacks being lower to Indians and so on -
20 she - they looked, we brought up our children - looked at everybody as equals.
21 J: Mm.
22 M: We were happy about it. And Martin was somebody, who, early on, read a lot of - we
23 had a lot of talks - but he was such a bright spark. Excuse me saying so myself. He
24 read the newspaper from a very early age and I one day wrote into the diary ...I must
25 tell this story because it has implications for later. I always wrote down in my diary
26 all the - you know, like a problem - I'd been cruel to the kids and (?) family through
27 faith ...(?). Now Martin, Martin was never funny, he was always serious. He said,
28 one day he read something. Unfortunately I didn't write, write down what he read, he
29 said 'this is so unfair. If I'm grown up ...' and he was not yet thirteen, he was twelve.
30 It was in December, and before he turned thirteen. I wrote down the date and
31 everything. He said 'This is so unfair, if I grow up I'll have to open my mouth against
32 this injustice. But that will be difficult because the police will want to detain me, and
33 maybe they will even put me in solitary confinement.' Now that is a twelve-year old

1 boy who talked like that.

2 J: Mmm, Mmm.

3 M: I wrote it all down and he said 'But in solitary confinement is not nice.' So I never said
4 to him 'Don't talk such nonsense, you will never land in such ...'

5 J: Mmm.

6 M: I never said that. I amazed about myself afterwards. I said to him 'Yes, it can happen.
7 But you know ...' and I told him about Bonheffer's time in solitary confinement and
8 dividing his time into meditation, prayer, reading, writing. He said, and he listened
9 intently, he said 'Yes, if I get to solitary confinement, I'll do that.' He said to me 'And
10 what will you do when I have been put into solitary confinement?' I said 'Martin, I'll
11 be so proud of you. And I'll pray very hard for you.' And we hugged and we kissed
12 and I wrote it down and forgot about it. Martin forgot, I forgot. And that was '78.

13 J: Hmm...

14 M: And in '88, Martin was detained ...

15 J: Mmm.

16 M: Sat in solitary confinement. Well, you couldn't call it solitary confinement - he sat on
17 his own.

18 J: Mmm.

19 M: But he was under Section 29, Solitary Confinement, but

20 J: (They speak at once.) ...solitary confinement, ja.

21 M: And my mother turned 80 that year and my sister said 'You always wrote well, I want
22 to compile something for our Mother - funny sayings to the grandchildren.' She is
23 very good at making drawings - she wants to make the drawings - going with the (?).
24 so I paged through my booklet and so, here I found this. I had forgotten about it
25 completely - even when Martin went into jail, I had forgotten about it.

26 J: Mmm.

27 M: I looked it up, I found it when I looked what my children had said to be funny for my
28 80th birthday, and I found it and I was so moved. I called Martin, I said, can you
29 remember this? And he couldn't remember either. I was so glad I had written it
30 down.

31 J: Mmm. Mmm.

32 M: And it came almost prophetic, as he said. That's why I'm telling this story now. It's -
33 so he grew up with almost in this thinking. Of course, then he overtook us in his

1 radicalism. He already early said 'Mangosuthu Buthelezi is not a peaceful man.' And
2 when we still thought he was a decent - you know - peaceful man. And he saw things
3 much clear (excuse me) - clearer than we did, in many respects. So we had a lot of
4 talks together, but he always went, and with his peers - they always said '(?) Hey look
5 here matie, you can be very proud of your parents.' Which was of course not pride (?)
6 because we, at all times, completely supported him.

7 J: Mmm.

8 M: Which was quite different to other parents (?) of his peers.

9 J: Yes, yes.

10 M: Some of them had a very hard time with their parents.

11 J: Mm, Mmm.

12 M: But, we of course, had known the trouble with my parents. My parents who didn't
13 support us, they didn't support Martin, and the longer it lasted, the more drastic it got,
14 the less they supported us, which was very tough on him and on us.

15 J: Mmm.

16 M: Very sad because we thought as missionaries they should actually support us, which I
17 still can't understand to this day. So we never talk politics - even today. And, Martin
18 was fetched and we wholeheartedly supported him there, of course. And (?), of
19 course, he is underground. They tried to detain him '86. They came on 12 June, on
20 her birthday, which ...

21 J: After that, um, the, the commemorative service in Imbali?

22 M: When everybody was detained - Peter Kerchhoff, and you know, when all those
23 people were detained, they also were looking for him but he was not in. He had
24 known to leave home and go into hiding already, but... And he was in hiding, in
25 hiding with the most influential, high-up people of the University that you can think
26 of. (They laugh).

27 M: They all loved to have him. And then when he swopped houses they came to me
28 again 'When is Martin coming back? We love to have him.' It was so nice. So we
29 were fully supported by the University community and by the churches in all the, you
30 know the UDF people.

31 J: Were you fully supported by the Lutheran Church?

32 M: Never supported by the White Lutheran Church, never.

33 J: Yes, I think you told me that before.

1 M: We had no support from our own Church. In fact when he was detained that
2 Wednesday, on the Sunday we sat and said 'Shall we go to Church or shall we not?'
3 We knew it would be difficult for us to go to church and we decided if we don't go to
4 church, we'd be cowering away(?) - we can be anything, but we don't want to be seen
5 as cowering away ...

6 J: No.

7 M: And it was really like we were wearing a cap to make us invisible. People didn't see
8 us, didn't talk to us. We went to Church, and it was amazing, the reaction, you know.
9 And - but they stayed, not unkind, but definitely not supportive. So, what else shall I
10 tell you? How I got involved?

11 J: Now, you, yourselves ...

12 M: Ja ...

13 J: ...started getting involved in it. Because you didn't work through all this time, you
14 were being housewife and mother, mainly.

15 M: Yes, yes, yes. So when my children are big enough and PACSA, this, this job was -
16 they wanted some - somebody for their resource centre. I said 'Well, I don't know
17 much about resource centres, but I can do my best and learn and clean up and (?) see
18 what you have, you could help me(?). And so I applied and they took me. Not that I
19 was the best person for that resource centre, but still. In a way, you know, they used
20 that kind of the Black youth - I had a very good relationship with them and so on, and
21 so - anyway, and the Germans that came in. I had a lot of contacts, so it was not bad
22 for PACSA to have me there. So we were there - I was there when we had that huge
23 search of thirteen people in one room (she laughs) - on a Monday morning. The
24 famous search when everybody was searched that day - the 9th September, '95 ('85?) -
25 that was the first big search. And it was quite funny, you know, I must just tell this -
26 how small the world is. They first came to our house, and to search Martin's room.
27 Martin was again not in, he had somehow had the inkling that something's going to
28 happen ...

29 J: Mmm, Mmm, Mmm.

30 M: ... so he was away, he had hiding ...

31 J: Mmm.

32 M: ...and they came and this person who gave me the warrant of arrest, the warrant of
33 search was Van Muldendorf (?). Now, in the mission station, where my father was

1 working was a Mr Mulendorf (?), it's a - it's a very rare name ...

2 J: Mmm.

3 M: So when I had caught myself and recovered from the shock, I asked him 'Now, Mr

4 Mulendorf is a rare name ...' - does he have an aunt, you know, in Jatude (?), and he

5 dropped his jaw quite visihly and said 'Yes...' that's his aunt. I said 'Well, the doctor

6 working there is my father.' (She chuckles). So, he was, it was sort of a sudden

7 difference which made a lot of difference to - for me.

8 J: Ja.

9 M: To find in the people, the personal, tried to find - even later, I tried to see in these

10 policemen, the person. you know, who has links and has family and this and that.

11 And it helped me a lot in - also of course, I don't talk Afrikaans, you know.

12 J: Mmm.

13 M: I never pally-pallied with them, hut I refused them to see them as the enemy and that

14 was quite amazing what reaction ...

15 J: ...it works, mmm.

16 M: Yes, how it helped, you know. And they knew quite well that I was not that bad, but

17 they also could not class me as an enemy, ever. So through PACSA I learnt a great

18 lot of course, it opened my eyes even more than.... people knew quite a lot through

19 PACSA of course (?) - collecting all the evidence, and you know. We, we - I learnt to

20 know a lot more about what was going on (?) and with the youth coming in we had a

21 lot of information from them. Often very first hand, and very often they came in

22 injured.

23 J: Mm.

24 M: And I was the first one to do first aid on them.

25 J: Mmm.

26 M: Bird shot, very often bird shot - that's a mean thing. of course, they put the - they heid

27 the gun onto the private parts ...

28 J: Mmm...

29 M: You know - nothing

30 J: A mess

31 M: Full of, full of bird shot, which is mean - and so on. We did a lot of first aid - stab

32 wounds, gunshot wounds, all sorts of things. 'Till we found the doctors would help us

33 greatly. Again, Islam doctors you know.

1 J: Mmm.

2 M: I was once asked to talk about all these ^{1,} tings in front of the Minister's fraternal. I told
3 them that not a single Christian lawyer has supported ever those detainees - those very
4 many detainees.

5 J: Mmm.

6 M: And not a single Christian doctor supported all those injured people, which is sort of a
7 shameful thing that they didn't. Anyway, they - these doctors and lawyers that we had
8 - I had a Muslim lawyer. His name was ~~Padjee~~ ^{(A) SEC}, who said 'Monika, can't you please
9 find the people hibles for me to distribute amongst the detainees?' (She laughs). And
10 then - a Muslim lawyer distributed Christian bibles to the - to his -

11 J: To the detainees, no?

12 M: To the detainees ... now that type of thing was what made our day in those bad times.
13 And the friendships with all these people, it was very valuable. So, of course that is
14 then now PACSA, and then we had - Martin had a lot of harassment. And then, of
15 course, this first ...

16 J: I'm - I am right in saying Martin was basically UDF? That was what they were
17 harassing him for?

18 M: He was ...

19 J: ...Far more than anything else?

20 M: He was Secretary of the UDF.

21 J: Ja, Mmm.

22 M: Ja. Chairperson was an Indian, and S¹¹kumbizo Hengwe (?) and Martin were the two
23 Black and White Secretaries of the UDF. That's why they harassed him. They hated
24 anybody with some brain, not towing the line of the Government.

25 J: Mmm.

26 M: ..but having his own way, I found that out quite often that - that the police hated him
27 thinking and they thought he turns everybody else's mind. But, anyway, so he was
28 harassed and he had quite some bad harassments, and then in the famous 12th June, of
29 course, we had this big clampdown on ...

30 J: Clampdown on (?) article ..yes.

31 M: And we knew, all along, that our telephone was being tapped. We found out that the
32 German-speaking policewoman, (?) - she was our special person - was quite some
33 story. We later found that log ... and they read our letters - we found that out. Well,

1 we came to know nearly everybody in the Special Branch. And Martin was then in the
2 underground, which he says was a tough time.

3 J: Mmm, mmm.

4 M: He had to change his appearance, not too obvious Martin and he had to change, and
5 we had to - I never was allowed to know where he was, which was fateful (?) ...

6 J: Mmm.

7 M: But when he came home it was very dramatic and our neighbours, the Crowvilles (?),
8 who were always informed by word of mouth, and they helped us a lot in patrolling
9 the street with the dog and so on ..

10 J: Mm.

11 M: When I think - those were the wonderful things of that time - the friends you had ...

12 J: Yes...

13 M: And the experiences you had with those friends. And well, we were not much
14 harassed at that time - personally, you know, that we were searched or anything. And
15 we were not on the detention list. Maybe they thought 'Well, caught one culprit is
16 enough ...'

17 J: (She laughs).

18 M: But, then of course we got involved, through my, I had foster boys in my house - of
19 the UDF, that was - who very bravely endangered their lives. Some of them died and
20 I think it was about 22, the hiding in houses - S[#]kumbuzo was amongst them and it
21 was a big, big

22 J: ...coming down? CABELA y

23 M: ... (?) and so on, and Siphon ~~Kabela~~ was my - he and another - Khiza Khanile (?) were
24 in our - first of all (?). And that is very interesting and sometimes we are fifteen in the
25 evening - we had to put the (?) to cook for them - to clean (?) to eat .. 1

26 J: Ja, ja...

27 M: ...and so on. So that was also, and they had to hide. You know the way they had to
28 come running one by one into the house...

29 J: Yes..

30 M: ...and again go that way - was because we had one neighbour who watched us.
31 Definitely ...

32 J: Well, yes, I know which one you're referring ...

33 (End of first side)

1 (Second side)
2
3 M: And even it was during the (?) and he was badly tortured.
4 J: Yes.
5 M: He was tortured, and after three months he was released, they came back to us, Doctor
6 (?) used to stay at home (?) - but we had always had contact with parents and the
7 parents were harassed badly and at some stage or other he went in and out jails at the
8 time, but at one stage his father was sbot at and just after that Siphso was - had - in '89,
9 so badly injured in his own - in the backyard of his parents ..
10 J: Mmm.
11 M: ..where there was a room where he slept - that he was, was debilitated for a whole
12 year - he had a blood clot on the brain. I was informed the next morning, I went there
13 very early. I saw him lying in the bed and - in Greys, och, in Edendale Hospital with
14 two heavily armed Kits Constables - it was quite a dramatic picture there - I will never
15 forget it. Siphso was, his face was completely swollen, it was a language of one that
16 had appeared for amnesty in - in the Truth Commission, um, I saw that ad (?) - I saw
17 (?) that man later in the Truth Commission. Eyes, and the whole face puffed up from
18 ..
19 J: ..beating ...
20 M: ...heavy blows, the whole body burnt by cigarette stumps and the thumbs and toes and
21 probably - you don't look - the genitals, because they always have it with the genitals -
22 electric fire (?) burnt - severely scarred by burn marks which were most probably
23 electrical and he - it took him a whole week to gain - regain his consciousness and
24 then he had to recover. Now af - when this happened, we - Peter Kerchhoff always
25 gave a report-back to community leaders - whoever wanted to hear, and especially
26 pastors of churches, and it was always very poorly attended, but AE was always there.
27 And when this had happened, Peter Kerchhoff asked me to give a report on this
28 family and all the harassment they'd had...
29 J: Mmm.
30 M: ..because it was so messy (?), and Graham Swan, of Africa Enterprise was there ...
31 J: Mmm.
32 M: ..and he then filed (?) the Imbali Support Group, of which immediately I became a
33 member and we found- I forgot what number of people - more - more than twenty ...

1 J: Mmm.

2 M: ...people prepared to go in and stay overnight, and we had a roster and we had quite
3 some rigid rules and quite - in the beginning we had called a meeting with the
4 community at which everybody was represented - the taxi owners, the Womens'
5 League, the Youth League, the (?) - it was a well-attended meeting in FedSem main
6 hall.

7 J: Mmm.

8 M: And they all gave us whole-hearted support except for Kubula Hlengwe (?), who
9 wanted us to join the UDF and we felt we should stay independent ..

10 J: Independent, yes.

11 M: ..because you must even be able to help Inkatha people ...

12 J: Yes.

13 M: They are friends and (?) and I once rescued a Xhosa man from certain death from
14 youth who were beating him up because he happened to walk - it was an old Kehle.
15 happened to walk outside a bouse where they had burnt seven boys - locked them
16 from tbc outside, set the house alight. And I think at least two died and one was
17 severely injured and the other less severely and I was the first to do the first aid of
18 those others that were less, had less burn wounds. Anyway, to cut a long story short,
19 it was good that we did not join UDF ...

20 J: Mmm, I think so.

21 M: ...and stayed independent and unto this day I don't regret that decision, but it was sad
22 that S^Hkumbuzo was not supporting us. So anyway, so we had the most horrifying,
23 interesting, moving experiences at Imbali Support Group. We started by - with that
24 we got money immediately, it seems when I join things ...

25 J: ..the money comes ...

26 (They both laugh)

27 M: People want to give money, so the first thing what we bought was fire extinguishers.
28 because the fire brigade ...

29 J: (They speak at once) ...doesn't go out there wither ..

30 M: ..cannot - doesn't go out there, second one was that we hought, and we also discussed
31 with the people how to fight fire and we often had to fight fire when we were there -
32 we were called. We came when we were called, they called us and we had (?) on the
33 ground there in Imbali in certain strategic houses. They were also the ones who had

1 the fire extinguishers and then the first aid bag, the first aid hag kit from emergency
2 support group (ESG) - a number of doctors supplied us and (?). And we did first aid
3 courses because in that township of Imbali people died because other people didn't
4 know ...

5 J: ...didn't know what to do, yes.

6 M: ..how to stop bleeding - they died unnecessarily. It was very important that they
7 learnt how to help their fellow people there in case of bleeding and gunshot wound
8 and this and that. So that was the things we did and then we got JJ. a Christian
9 workshop on how to be a good work man.

10 J: Mmm.

11 M: And that helped immensely because the people now knew the power of writing down
12 vehicle registration numbers and names, if they wore, very often police did not wear
13 tags. And of course the actual thing why we went in is because the people who did,
14 weak (?) or not, not - we did not go in against Inkatha or any of that. We went in
15 because it was the right reason we can help there - torturing people in that famous,
16 infamous red van, and later in the yellow van. And the red hi-ace kombi had to leave
17 the area because there was too much ...

18 J: Mmm.

19 M: ..noise about it, same went on doing this cheap torture in the yellow vans. But the
20 people learnt their power and writing down the names, the numbers of the vans. But
21 that was very helpful, especially in one ease I had to deal with - (?) the people came
22 immediately with the number; I phoned John Jeffries because I thought this is a
23 serious case and John Jeffries found out that Larry had been taken in the van that they
24 had switched off the radio. So they head-office police knew that we knew - but they
25 always denied ...

26 J: Yes, yes.

27 M: ... that something is wrong with the police. So now they knew, JJ knew, Human
28 Rights - because we went Germany with the Human Rights adverts - so we knew that
29 something was seriously wrong - the radio had been switched off, och and we found
30 Larry - they had thought they'd leave him to die -but he did not die. So we had the
31 first court case and, and where people had taken their registration number which
32 helped a great deal to the case, later on. they knew they had to find this van.

33 J: Mm.

1 M: So we had a lot - I could - well, write a whole book of course, about these experiences
2 we had .

3 J: Mmm.

4 M: .. and the warmth that people brought to us. Even today I can walk in the street and
5 they come to us and 'Oh, can you remember?' there were so many people, (?), but I
6 know quite well that I know the faces. That was our Imbali experience in which I got
7 very deeply involved. Now, because of that I think the police - they had an eye on me
8 anyway. You see I did things like Blondie (?) - I was not a normal run of the mill
9 person that they had to deal with.

10 J: Mm.

11 M: When I came up there they seemed to become a bit nervous - 'Now what's this woman
12 here doing again?'

13 J: Mmm, Mmm.

14 M: Because I received them at the door when they wanted to detain Martin, 'Och it's
15 awfully nice of all your people to come and wish me happy birthday.' You see it's not
16 the normal run of the mill thing that happens to them. So Monday first I was due to
17 visit Martin in jail, and I was bitter that day, ooh, I was bitter to think he would have
18 to sit alone at Easter and och, that day I was really grumbling in my heart. And I went
19 home and we didn't have one mattress at that time yet, so my path took me past East
20 Street Police Station, the 20th of May. And when I saw the poor child from far, you
21 know, my stomach just crumpled and suddenly I got this idea. And always, when I
22 went up to the Brigadier I prayed in my heart 'Lord, give me the right words, be with
23 me..' and so on. This night I didn't know because it was quite a cheeky thought that
24 suddenly crept into my mind. I said 'Okay' I'll do it when I get a parking space, if I
25 don't find a parking space, I won't do it.' And I found the most beautiful parking
26 space which I never got when I officially had to go. So I went and I rang the bell and
27 they came out and it was always like that when I came all the others also came out of
28 their offices when they heard it was me. I didn't imagine that it was like that, so I said
29 'I want to see the Brigadier.' 'Agb, sorry Mrs Wittenberg, he is not in. What can we do
30 for you?' I said 'Well, it was important what I wanted to do.' So then they let me in
31 and I said 'We are a Christian country aren't we?' And they all were highly nervous
32 when I asked them. 'Of course, of course, we're a Christian country.' I said 'Then
33 what in the Bible is - is - we accept what's in the Bible.' 'Of course, Mrs Wittenberg.'

1 They were highly nervous, I could see that, and my wrath and my, this thing
2 disappeared because it was to me a wonderful revenge. I said 'Well, in the Bible it
3 says that they will release a prisoner for Easter.' (She chuckles). And I had to put - I
4 was very happy that moment (?) it was a wonderful revenge from my side, you know.
5 I couldn't do anything to Martin anyway ...

6 J: Mmm.

7 M: ...but it did something to me. And they were highly nervous, you know, I had really
8 put the cat among the pigeons - they were really fluttering with nervousness. 'Of
9 course, of course, of course ...' I said 'Well, Christian (?) how about it?' I said 'It's not
10 necessary to be Martin, it can be the one that's longest in prison now without trial.'
11 'Sorry, Mrs Wittenberg, you'll have to talk to the Brigadier about it.' And I said 'Well,
12 that's sad that he's not in because it has to be organised before Easter.' Anyway I had
13 to appear before the Brigadier and he was not pleased with me at all - that's another
14 story. But that was the one thing I was able to do and on Mornday Thursday (?) and it
15 was to me - it was a revenge, actually, a peaceful revenge actually (she laughs). But
16 I'm reminded every Mornday Thursday, I remember my annual revenge.

17 J: You could do without that

18 M: (They speak at once and Mrs Wittenberg laughs, ending)... Yes.

19 J: ..once.

20 M: But they knew me and they hated me and it - they love hated me, but I did get a
21 'phone call on 2nd June 1990, of course, a lot of things - the Sipho Khubela thing
22 happened '89...

23 J: Mmmm.

24 M: And we were then in and '90 was the Seven Day War and of course I was involved in
25 that one. And we one day went into Imbali and our car was shot at and then it was
26 burnt. That was Graham Falk's (?) car in which we had come. So all sorts of things
27 have happened to us that were drastic. But now on 2nd June, I got a 'phone call on a
28 Sunday afternoon at two. 'Mrs Wittenberg...' it was definitely a Coloured man, and it
29 was peculiar, it was not a Black or a White man, and he said 'Mrs Wittenberg, we just
30 want you to, you to know that we're going to kill you like we killed Shakla.' Now
31 Shakla was the son of a woman I knew very well and her, her brother was sitting
32 opposite Martin in the two cells and they were able to - allowed to kick a ball together
33 for half an hour in the afternoons. So the eldest son was killed, her oldest son was

1 killed in a very pec.. peculiar way, it's - it's again a long story, but I knew all about it
2 and 'We're going to kill you like Shakla.' Now we had know, learnt from Peter
3 Kerchhoff and everybody who got that (?) all the time to say - if you get a death threat
4 or any other threat 'Thanks very much for telling me.' So I said to them 'Thanks very
5 much for telling me.' 'Mrs Wittenberg, we mean it.' I said 'Yes, thanks anyway for
6 telling me so I know.' And I said this part like I say it to you now and I said 'What are
7 you? You're not a - I can hear, are you a so-called Coloured?' 'Yes, I am a Coloured.
8 But Mrs Wittenberg we mean what we're saying.' and then he put down the 'phone.
9 And that's when I started shaking heavily and Martin took me by the shoulders and
10 said 'You're not taking that threat seriously?' I said 'I am.' And he said 'Okay let's go
11 straight to the police and report it.' And the peculiar thing is that the police, the
12 normal police, I had reported several things to them and this was the most serious
13 thing all looked so happy when we told them 'Who do you suspect of that?' 'I suspect
14 the Riot Squad.' And I have now find that most probably the person phoning me and
15 in the Truth Commission he gave evidence, was what's the one that was killed again,
16 what was his name? Terblanche, hey?

17 J: Terblanche, yes.

18 M: Terblanche's special man, I'm absolutely sure it's him who 'phoned me because I have
19 (?) exactly the same, and that's the only one of the constables, Terblanche's constables
20 who was Coloured.

21 J: mmm.

22 M: It must have been him. Anyway, I reported it - it already helped my nervousness and
23 then I sat down and I, I wrote down my whole funeral proceedings at Imbali
24 Furnishers, Funeral Furnishers, (?) and so on and so on and so on. I don't want this
25 and that(?) any, I don't want (?) the people want, and you must ... learn - you know,
26 everything sounded ...

27 J: Yes.

28 M: ...must be certified and so on, and after that I was at peace, I could go on with my life.
29 I put it in my drawer, I told the people that's where my funeral - the whole funeral
30 service is and I keep it and then it was very peculiar that on my birthday again, my
31 birthday, every year something drastic happened on my birthday, Baba Babela was
32 killed. Siphos father.

33 J: Yes.

1 M: On 2nd June I got the call and (?) was killed - on 20th - I took the children because I
2 could see they were so traumatised. The youngest was nine - she had the most
3 traumatic experience ever since she was five.

4 J: Mmm.

5 M: And that girl had to come out of that township for a while, so I took her and her two.
6 two brothers, just for a while (?) with their mother, took them home and had one - but
7 then I had booked a flight to Cape Town to visit my children.

8 J: Mmm.

9 M: And, so that, I thought, 12 o' clock, noon time, when - is a good time to take them
10 home - it's not dangerous. Of course, they - I always had this little bit cold feeling in
11 my back from them, and you know. And there wasn't a township that Black before
12 (?) part of it. But that day I just really thought 'How must I do it that I'm not a target?'
13 And so I took them home and when I stopped in front of their house, I looked across
14 at my (?) house, it's heavily barred, by at least 15 Kits Constables, they're all looking
15 my direction.

16 J: Mmm.

17 M: And that is a difficult thing for Mama Khubela, she lived ...

18 J: ..on the other side of the road ...

19 M: this feeling ...

20 J: Yes...

21 M: And that's where the killers ran into that house, her husband's killers. It was bitter for
22 her.

23 J: Yes.

24 M: Anyway, so I said to the neighbour, her name was also Monica, I said 'Monica, I'm
25 nervous, today I'm nervous with those people.' She said 'Och, they're cowards, they
26 don't do anything in the daylight.' I said 'No, I'm serious, please stand here in this
27 road and see me get out of Imbali safely because that road in front of Mama Khubela's
28 house overlooks the whole Zinkwasi road ...

29 J: Yes.

30 M: She can watch exactly how I get out. And she was the one to see how suddenly this -
31 och, we - I had to go through a whole court case, which I won, incidentally, against
32 the police.

33 J: Mm.

1 M: How it was possible that I went up - this road has right of way, right?

2 J: Mmm.

3 M: And I had a - there had been a big incident on the 16th of June in which I was
4 involved. And I took an eye witness to JJ to give evidence, he was with me in the
5 car, and because I was (?) to those Kits Constables, I was a bit fast, I notice on the
6 bridge that we were just - it stuck in my mind, just below seventy, and I said to myself
7 'I may not be in this township.' And then it goes steep uphill and I took my foot off
8 the petrol and I went uphill and I can't possibly have been speeding by the time I
9 reached that crossing ...

10 J: Yes.

11 M: ..Och, of course I didn't look back on - we look at the road. And suddenly this Casper
12 came up the ditch - there's high grass, ...

13 J: Mmm.

14 M: ...my lawyer affirmed it all how it's very possible that you sit in a small Volkswagen
15 and at times, it small, it's (?) small - to not see the Casper.

16 J: Mmm.

17 M: He took a film, half an hour film over that very crossing, how it's very possible to
18 happen. And that one was very fast and he cut me off - you know it was in front of
19 me before I could do anything.

20 J: Mmm.

21 M: ..what I later noticed, when I saw the police photos, which the police were very cross
22 that I saw them, but again. they got a certain stance - I always get into these
23 circumstances, I find out the truth ...

24 J: Yes.

25 M: ... that the police doesn't want me to find out, but I hit - I didn't look left or right at the
26 chassis, the steel chassis hit the rubber wheel and it spun me around and I was still
27 standing on the crossing, ...

28 J: Mmm.

29 M: ...on the left hand side of the crossing. I eventually spun round, I immediately noticed
30 a terrible pain in my neck, and I otherwise. when I stopped at - the Casper went uphill
31 for at least another twenty meters.

32 J: Mmm.

33 M: ..it stopped on the right hand side of the road. And I notice there's something very

1 wrong with my neck, but otherwise I could feel that I could move my legs and arms,
2 so I wasn't paralysed.

3 J: Mmm.

4 M: That was the first wonderful thought. The driver of the Casper ...

5 J: Casper.

6 M: ... came 'I forgive you.' That was the first thing I said to him. But he when he lied in
7 court I didn't feel like forgiving him any more. (She laughs). He lied like anything,
8 he said he stopped and I was at high speed, he never stopped of course. Anyway I
9 won the case and I - the other thing was that that Monica, who stood on her feet had
10 immediately run into the house and Mr Ntombela was still under the - her husband
11 had not yet been buried because of the 16th June - so she still had to sit and mourn - a
12 long, long mourning, and the whole house was full of people, so I had a lot of
13 compassion, all over Imbali, at that time. And they 'phoned immediately to PACSA
14 and Felicity came rushing as fast as she could - she must have taken - if not a minute
15 longer than 10 minutes, she was there. I said 'Felicity, I've got my camera.' By that
16 time I was bright and awake and thankful I was alive.

17 J: Mmm.

18 M: I said 'Felicity, I've got a camera in my bag, take it and take as many pictures as you
19 can, as you can, of the scene, and these pictures helped me win the court case.

20 J: Mmm, mmm.

21 M: Because it showed the police pictures never showed the - how the Caspers were
22 stopped uphill, facing uphill twenty meters, on the right hand side, of course, and they
23 didn't show that I was still on the - on the crossing, because if I had been speeding I
24 would have been out of the way where have you ...

25 J: Mmm.

26 M: You know. And she took the pictures and they helped me in the court case and the
27 police were very, very angry that time that we had those pictures, you know. I had to
28 explain before the court how was I able to ...

29 J: Mmm, able to have these, yes ...

30 M: ... to have those pictures. It was just given to me that I had the presence of mind that
31 time. And so I had to lie in hospital - I found out I had a - I could have very, very
32 nearly died, I had a fracture of the odonta pccg (?) -

33 J: Mmm, mmm.

1 M: which they call the hangman's fracture. And so I had to lie, pinned down, but they
2 didn't discover it - they only discovered it in Cape Town.

3 J: Yes, when you got to Cape Town.

4 M: Yes. Because of the great pain I had they put me in the scan.

5 J: Mmm.

6 M: Scanner - here in Grey's they thought I had whiplash. And to cut a long story short, I
7 lay two weeks in traction and I had to wear a halo, a halo screwed into my skull ..

8 J: Mmm

9 M: ...and you know, wear what they call a bullet proof vest, but I survived and I was able
10 to give evidence in court and I still see that (?) Rosenvelt who defended the (?) and
11 was responsible for Biko's death - he was with me. I had all those cases, it was (?)
12 that was giving everything - you know - they were against me and he wasn't able to be
13 sensible then. He tried and tried and tried in two court cases also Larry's one - they
14 won on this court case.

15 J: Mmm.

16 M: To get me to contradict myself, they couldn't and I'm very grateful in some (?) - I'm
17 actually very proud of it I must say, that Kobus Booysen didn't get me to contradict
18 myself and he gave up in the end, questioning me. as he said to the lawyer 'I don't
19 know what Mrs Wittenberg any more.' He couldn't get me to contradict myself,
20 because I was talking the truth. So that was my evidence, and of course, you never
21 had complete (?) we had to

22 J: Yes...

23 M: ...make them all trouble and so on, which I amazed (?) me well, so I'm thankful, and I
24 told Ilan Lax (?) to tell that man that constantly phoned me that I had to give an inch.
25 (She laughs).

26 J: Was that at the TLC?

27 M: Yes.

28 J: (?) Egliati?

29 M: And he was whisked away so fast I couldn't talk to him.

30 J: Now Monika after this accident you weren't in a position to do so much more - or
31 work, or anything,

32 M: Ja, we did, we did.

33 J: Mmm, Mmm.

1 M: Oh yes, we '92. (?) would have died, a filthy thing happened, it should be in the - all
2 my notes that are there.

3 J: Yes, I've got it, but I've also had other people telling me about it. You were rather
4 more involved in Skumbuza's death than most people realise.

5 M: Ja.

6 J: Because you were, of course, the one who went out to Imbali to tell the family,
7 weren't you.

8 M: Yes, at night,...

9 J: Mmm.

10 M: ...and those cowardly, agh, those police you know. We asked, now with all this
11 happening, and it was quite clear that the Awetu (?) family was involved.

12 J: yes.

13 M: And I guess at one of the - at least one of the Awetu boys was involved in the burning
14 of the car that I travelled in with Graham Spencer,...

15 J: Mmm, mm.

16 M: ...car - so it was dangerous for us to go out and we asked for, for, um, what is the
17 word now? An escort.

18 J: Escort, police escort.

19 M: And it took a long time to come - that's why they were informed so late - ooh, I'm
20 angry with them still today and then they came with the dogs squad car, and we
21 followed them, or they followed us, I forget which way and at the entrance to Imbali,
22 a highly dangerous place - to go to Imbali is not dangerous for us. They said 'We
23 can't go in with you now. We've got to leave you here.' I said 'But it's in Imhali where
24 is the danger...'

25 J: Yes.

26 M: 'No, we can't go in with you.' So we took the plunge and Peter Kerchhoff and I went
27 in - without police escort, into Imbali. We had to go fast to keep us safe, and yes,
28 fortunately nothing happened, we had to then get the mother and the wives out of bed
29 and telephone them and then all the neighbours who needed to come, like is always
30 the case, you know. Ach, ja. But he says Skumbuzo had already been taken to the
31 mortuary so next day, and they asked me to accompany them to the mortuary and all
32 that. So I was involved with looking for the coffin and all those things, you know, I
33 was really ...

1 J: But of course you worked with him at PACSA too?
2 M: In - not - no, ...
3 J: Did Skumbuzo come after you ...
4 M: Yes, that, that time he already worked at PACSA for a short while. But I knew him of
5 course ..
6 J: Oh, when Martin ...
7 M: ...Martin's companion ...
8 J: Mmm, mmm.
9 M: ...for a long time and when his house is burned his mother lived with us for quite a
10 while until she had other accommodation, so we knew that family very well, indeed.
11 J: Yes, that is lucky to be alive.
12 M: And when he was shocked, Peter Kerchhoff, I couldn't think of anything but come
13 rushing to us, ...
14 J: ..find Monica...
15 M: ...to find me and I was the one who said 'But we must immediately 'phone the lawyer,
16 JJ.' And JJ and I arrived together and JJ, the police were busy with the bullets ...
17 J: With the bullets of the heart (?) went out? Yes.
18 M: ...making signs where the bullets were and Skumbuzo said 'But we must find out.' (?)
19 And he found the eye witness, a young girl - I must tell this because it's a typical thing
20 of that time, he found a girl, she said she saw the car and there was a well-known car
21 that I suspect, I must say I suspect a (?) paper. I went and 'phoned the member, but
22 I've not proven, they were not found guilty - all sorts of things happened. And he
23 showed them to the police, I was there, that this is the eye witness, and they took the
24 name at 2 o' clock in the morning, she fortunately didn't go home, 2 o'clock in the
25 morning, four men appeared at the mother's house.
26 J: She wasn't there...
27 M: And said 'Where is she?' What would they have done if she had been there?
28 J: Mmm.
29 M: So she had to disappear immediately into witness protection programme - her life was
30 in danger. And that has happened all the time.
31 J: All the time, yes.
32 M: People didn't want to give evidence because they were shot dead ...
33 J: Mmm.

1 M: As it was ...

2 J: Mmm.

3 M: ...as it was murder. You know, any serious allegation that they made against them,
4 but they were shot dead, eye-witnesses were shot dead. All over the place, still that
5 was again with Skumbuzo, I was so shocked to find out that (?) stopped '92...

6 J: Mmm.

7 M: But then was then the end. We went overseas, my husband and I - on sabbatical - and
8 we came back I had left PACSA anyway because it was imminent that we were going
9 to do this other thing as things went on I had to tie up - shall I?

10 J: Yes, carry on. We've got time, if your voice isn't finished, we might be able to look at
11 Bishopstowe and that.

12 M: Ja, we, um, Gunther had long time away he had this idea of forming a community an
13 alternative community, with alternative gardening methods, you know.

14 J: Mmm.

15 M: Um, healthy methods, organic gardening methods and permaculture, and also to -
16 because our church - the - as I say, it has big problems, the White and the Black
17 Church then - was to be like the - the successful movement training programme which
18 would serve for this training programme because they're looking for (?) - there's a big
19 sponsor (?). But this was again to be something for the Church that crosses ...

20 J: Yes, yes ...

21 M: the barriers ...

22 J: Mmm, mm.

23 M: ..between the two churches. A training programme for women because women are
24 the ones that uphold all the ...

25 J: Mmm, mm.

26 M: ... church activities and wherever - they're the ones who do it, and unfortunately, the
27 Black Church was very corrupt, I must say - unfortunately. And the White Church
28 had its own problems, so we see that all those problems, Gunther was preaching once
29 a month for twenty years at Machabisa - so we were quite inside the Black Church
30 and the White Church...

31 J: Mmm.

32 M: And then he was able to get a piece of ground, through the help of a Bavarian
33 Mission, and we did start and we were able to send two women to Tanzania where we

1 found a community very similar to our ideas. And instead of them sending us people
2 to start our community, they suggested that we send them - across to them ...
3 J: ..people exchange (?) ...
4 M: ...and that was what happened and we were very happy to find a Black and a White
5 woman who were there - the one six months and the other one nine months and they
6 came back full of ideas that they had collected from this - it was a Black community,
7 (?) in Tanzania. And since then we started, we had to alter the house and we started
8 ...
9 J: Ja..
10 M: ...six women, five Black and one White, who is now studying theology, which - it was
11 very nice because we do want to show that we are non-racial now. But because of
12 our, my community in that area, where there are lots of conservative farmers ...
13 J: Mmm.
14 M: They were ...
15 J: You were always seem to end up among the conservatives (?) don't you?
16 M: Yes, and they were not friends with us at all, in fact it was such that we have a cottage
17 which we were intending to move into, Gunther and I - suddenly burnt, it was burnt
18 down.
19 J: yes..
20 M: And then it's been standing for 25 odd years, it's peculiar that it should just at that
21 moment burn down when that man had talked very bad words to Gunther. It was a
22 man who had been renting the premises for next to nothing and he was very angry that
23 we did all this, it was quite clear and he warned us that - the way that we were talked
24 about was bad ... (end of second side of tape).
25
26 (Second tape, side one)
27
28 J: There you are .. go on..
29 M: Well, it was definitely the case that - they turned funny when they found out that they
30 we had a mixed race community. They completely turned us around and they took us
31 all over - in town - we heard from Hilton. So we decided we're just going to go
32 ahead, work quietly, clean up the place - it needed a lot of cleaning up - it had been
33 lying empty for twenty years and all the growing - and, and it looked a terrible sight.

1 J: Mm.

2 M: So, that's what we did and we only contacted the very next door neighbour was very
3 near and told him exactly what we planned to do and that nobody needed to fear and
4 the Councillor of the region, the IFP Councillor can be seen, Mrs Candy Seymour, she
5 was - she was involved - we informed her and then she was quite happy to have a
6 word 'They're no danger at all to the community.' (She laughs).

7 J: (They speak at once) ...could they tell you (?)?

8 M: And then we cleaned up and we cleaned up and the garden started to look nice and the
9 vegetable garden looked absolutely wonderful. And I one day went to the neighbours
10 to buy some eggs and milk - they always sold sour milk, never mind, we made cottage
11 cheese out of it and decided in future we rather buy fresh milk, fresher milk ...

12 J: ...(?) (cannot hear) ...my word.

13 M: ...he sells. But she even said 'Are you the wife of the Professor?' Of course I am a
14 stranger, 'Yes' I said. That's how I found out that the community talks about 'the
15 Professor'. And I said 'Yes.' So she said 'We're all watching you and we're all amazed
16 about what you are doing there. So, and that is - we found now that they look at us in
17 a very positive way.

18 J: Mmm, mm.

19 M: It was nice to know, you see. And now we are there two years and we've already
20 trained, we - it's a one-year training programme.

21 J: Uhmm...

22 M: With lots of church, and bible subjects, but also, and we do an AIDS, AIDS education
23 workshop in ATTIC, they do a - they get a - we get a lady from Town Health
24 Department to brief them on health care. I do first aid with them, they do practical
25 subjects like childrens' ministry and they collect the children from the Tembalethu
26 Informal Settlement and we had, before Easter, 71 children - it was always around 50,
27 and then they sing a song, tell a story, do something and then in the end they get
28 something to eat, these children. Especially in winter they get the hot soup and bread
29 because they -

30 J: Mmm.

31 M: ...they are really a poor settlement. And that is the type of thing we do -

32 J: Now where are your people going back to?

33 M: Ja, they come from - well, we've only had a White woman one - the first years - it has,

1 I think it's been seen by the White church as a Black project.

2 J: mmm.

3 M: It's a pity, so no White woman come, never mind, they come from, of course,
4 townships in Johannesburg, they even came from Northern Province, one Venda girl,
5 a Chief's daughter, a beautiful girl, Ermelo, they come from all over South Africa ...

6 J: ..and go back to their own community again?

7 M: They go back to their own community. Now the one we want to send to Tanzania, as
8 soon as we can, to do a music training - she's very musical, she comes from
9 Vereeniging. And I forget the name of the township, anyway, it's a very well known
10 township. And the Ermelo one, number one is a family mother - she always - if she
11 came she had two children at home. So she is at home, but the other one did the
12 gardening project in that appalling ugly township of Ermelo...

13 J: Mmm.

14 M: Um, one studies theology now, the Venda girl and the others we didn't, unfortunately,
15 hear from them any more. So we hope they're doing what they planned doing their
16 courses now(?)...

17 J: Carry on(?)...

18 M: But, the idea is that if they go back they know exactly about AIDS, they know about
19 primary health care and decent nourishment, they can help their fellow people if there
20 is an accident and they can help the church with catechism class and their school - that
21 type of thing.

22 J: Mmm.

23 M: But it seems so far that it has been suppressed still. One of the first, we planned to -
24 as soon as we get the finances, we're begging with the big beggars (?) now, I think
25 Germany, and from everywhere we can. We've been asked from all other places can
26 we take AIDS orphans. Now I myself have been nursing an AIDS ..

27 J: Yes, you were involved with a little baby, yes...

28 M: ...baby for five months because of there was nobody to look after the baby so I had it
29 for five months until the baby got an adopted mother. And through that we got aware
30 of this problem, even in our Bishopstowe area - full of AIDS and child workers asked
31 'Can't you please take some AIDS orphans?' And that is what we intend doing as soon
32 as we get the money - put up one of those small units ...

33 J: Mmm.

1 M: .. a mother of six children, and the mother - she has already got - she's already doing
2 the training, for care givers, she comes from the first course, so that we are quite
3 happy to - to have - contact with all the others. And one of our first group is our
4 house mother - she does our books, and she is our house mother and the other one
5 Gunther wanted to form a Sister Board ...

6 J: Mmm.

7 M: You know, sisters?

8 J: Mmm.

9 M: Convent, and we've got one who is already been inducted as a mother's - she is now in
10 Switzerland in a community to get a one year's training and then when she comes
11 back, she'll get I don't know what you call it, another blessing and then we want her to
12 study her a little bit of theology. So if she started the course, she has a good ...

13 J:position/mission (?) to go to, yes, yes.

14 M: ...good basic education...

15 J: Yes, Mmm.

16 M: ..to do it.

17 J: Monika, can I ask you a couple of questions? Dr Kissner ...

18 M: Ja.

19 J: He must have been quite an influence on you in the early years here in the University?

20 M: We know him even long before that because the school that Gunther went to, his
21 father was leading that school, and of course he has been now Gunther's friend for
22 many years, ja. And in fact Gunther called him to come and join him here ...

23 J: Mmm.

24 M: But that time it was very frustrating - the thing didn't get off the ground - there was
25 lots of things, and you know, I think the Department didn't actually want to extend to
26 the Lutheran Church ...

27 J: Is this the stage - it wasn't ...?

28 M: They were disappointed that they didn't bring (?) to swell the numbers unfortunately
29 not, it didn't work like that.

30 J: It works the other way (?).

31 M: And so Kissner was very frustrated because it was not enough work for him...

32 J: Mmm.

33 M: And that's when he joined the Council, the South African Council of Churches.

1 J: Yes.

2 M: Ja, ja, we know - we're very good friends with them.

3 J: And, what else did I want to ask you? No, I think that's about it. The only thing is, I
4 don't know, I must ask Joycelyn on my way out whether she has a copy of that video
5 that was done of you by the City Council, you know when they gave you that award
6 which you didn't mention on this? They gave you - the TLC gave you an award - do
7 you remember?

8 M: Well, they didn't give me an award, they gave me an honourable mention.

9 J: A certificate ...

10 M: no, no, not even a certificate.

11 J: ..I saw that...um.

12 M: That (?) me.

13 J: I saw that video and I must find out from her if she has.

14 M: Ja. I forgot it even.

15 J: And if she has got it, if we can copy it.

16 M: That's (inaudible)...

17 J: Now, we do have all your books and all the rest of it, here.

18 M: Ja, not all, because it - one was published in German, in Germany, but that was now
19 before all these -

20 J: Ja ...

21 M: ...that was when - ja, but it involves Martin's detention and all that.

22 J: Well, I think that's about all we want to do right now.

23 (The tape is switched off).

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33