

**KWAZULU-NATAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT****INTERVIEW WITH PETER KERCHHOFF, OF PACSA, CONDUCTED BY JENNIFER  
VERBEEK ON 10/11 FEBRUARY 1998**

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

V: ...is being made by Jennifer Verbeek of an interview with Peter Kirchoff, of PACSA, at the PACSA Offices in Berg Street on the 10 February, 1998.

V: ...being an editor? You can carry straight on.

V: The questions I want to ask you Peter is to tell me something about your background, your home life etcetera, so that we can see the contrast between what you were when you grew up...

K: Right..

V: ..and what you were as an adult.

K: Okay. Well, I was born in Johannesburg and grew up in the eastern suburbs of Johannesburg, Malvern and Kensington, and went to Leicester road Primary School where the great Principal, Frank Bulhorn?, who was very involved in the Olympics boxing in particular, was headmaster, and a really terrific guy. And then went on to Jeppe, in 1948 and finished at Jeppe in 1952. I was very involved in swimming, rugby and to a certain extent, cricket. And then from there started at the Modderfontein Diamond Mine Factory and my two aunts, one on my Mum's side and one on my dad's side were very involved in AECL - it was known then. African Explosives, in the Cape area and so it was, in a sense, a family linking into AECL. I was living in Kensington at the time and then commuted for two years.

V: (Knock and interruption)

K: Okay, so started work at African Explosives as a laboratory assistant and studied part-time through UNISA for a B.Sc before succeeding in getting together with a number of other folk at AECL, scholarships to go to University and at least three of us came to the Pietermaritzburg campus and the other party went to the Rhodes campus. And so I spent the next three years in Pietermaritzburg, studying for B.Sc but going home, back into

1 Johannesburg, for the holidays and working at AECI. But more of my background in  
2 terms of the early years of high school and then, then post-matric. We lived in a little  
3 house in Kensington, my Dad was on the railways and my mother was involved in some  
4 sort of secretarial work and I certainly did quite a lot of the household chores when my  
5 Mother was out working and my Dad being involved in the railways and got home late  
6 in the afternoons. And he had a wonderful rose garden and I can always remember  
7 coming over the hill from Malvern to Kensington, through Loak Street is quite a heavy  
8 place, his rose garden was admired by many, many people. Anyway, while at AECI, I was  
9 still involved with rugby and played for Jeppe High Old Boys, and I am saying this  
10 because this was my typical background - I was very keen on sport and in many ways was  
11 a typical White South African male, not really involved in politics and concentrated really  
12 on listening in on sport and enjoying it and not really being involved with societal issues.  
13 I certainly wasn't involved in the Church in those days although was never negative  
14 towards Church, I just didn't go along on a regular basis at all. When I moved to  
15 Pietermaritzburg, I got caught up with sport at University as well, that was '55, '56, '57  
16 and played rugby and... Well, mainly rugby for the University and continued in my typical  
17 rugby and sports - in that fashion, and that continued for a number of years. I - and I'm  
18 going to go back a little bit now to the time of high school. I can remember we had a  
19 Maggie and Piet Buthelezi, who were very close to the family, Maggie had worked for us  
20 for a number of years.

21 K: (Interruption)

22 V: You were telling me about the Buthelezis.

23 K: Ja, Maggie worked for us and Piet Buthelezi worked for the old Royal Dairy for many  
24 years, as a delivery person for milk, milk at various houses. And they stayed on the  
25 property and at one stage we didn't have a car, and so they stayed in our, our garage and  
26 I can remember one night in particular... typical of the old system of pass raids ... that the  
27 police raided our backyard to check what Maggie and Piet were doing. And I can  
28 remember it upset us as a family, but we didn't really think too much about it. I think  
29 probably we - more anger was expressed to the police because they - it was fruit tree  
30 season - fruit season and my Dad had a million dollar peach tree, beautiful peach - sorry.  
31 I'm digressing. And these blighters with their torches looked at the peach tree and took

1 the peaches, so that in a sense indicated where we were at - we didn't really follow up the  
2 - the harassment on Piet and Maggie - although we were angry that they had been  
3 disturbed. But I can remember that night very clearly, but don't remember anything in the  
4 aftermath, whether they were charged or what. My dad for a while, was involved in the  
5 Torch Commando and I remember that - he used to go away at nights to march with  
6 others in the city centre. And in a sense, I suppose, were typical United Party people, but  
7 for myself, really, not very political at the time. Anyway, coming down to  
8 Pietermaritzburg was quite a change, in comparison with the Transvaal and it was quite  
9 funny picking up the accent of the Natalians in comparison with the typical Johannesburg  
10 slang, as it were. And I can remember a friend that I used to - that I played rugby with -  
11 Julian Ward - you may remember him as well, and I really laugh at the memory because  
12 there he was, you know this typical Hilton or Michaelhouse accent, typical of St Johns in  
13 Johannesburg, and coming from the Transvaal and speaking like a mealie muncher, I  
14 suppose. That was just something that had struck me coming through the University here.  
15 Anyway, certainly during the University period - of those three year - again very apolitical  
16 and again rugby enthusiast and really involved in the sports side of things and through the  
17 University and other issues, other parties as it were I met Joan and we struck up a  
18 relationship - obviously getting married just six months out of University and then moved  
19 back to AECI at Mbogintwini and spent a year there and that's where our first child,  
20 Jennifer was born and then we transferred back to Modderfontein and we spent a year at  
21 the African Explosives Factory in Modderfontein before applying for a job and getting a  
22 job at Aluminiums. I came back to Pietermaritzburg in 1961. And still very much out of  
23 it in terms of politics, except when it came to the Referendum around the Union of South  
24 Africa and the Republic and can remember going to vote in that and rejecting the plan for  
25 a republic, to no end of course. That we all know. Anyway, in - during my time at the  
26 Aluminium Factory, initially very, very sports mad and very involved in sport out at the  
27 Aluminium Factory but then gradually became more involved in, in human relations work,  
28 if you like and the staff association and trying to see what we could do through the staff  
29 association for the members of the staff association and Huletts Aluminium and that's  
30 when I started linking in with the personnel management at Huletts and Dave Hanson was  
31 the personnel manager at the time and ja, I was very impressed by him in terms of his

1 progressive attitude, although obviously from a management perspective, rather than a  
2 worker perspective. And it was at that time that the Wages Commission got off the  
3 ground and certainly from my perspective, was very much more management orientated  
4 than the Wages Comm was, and I can remember Dave Hanson and I going to the  
5 Progressive Party Offices - when they had lunch time meetings in Harwins Arcade and  
6 coming up against Mark Du Bois, who was actually involved with the Wages Comm and  
7 he was giving a talk and I can remember interjecting when he was speaking about  
8 something and we got chatting afterwards and ... Trying to give him the management  
9 perspective and he was trying to give me the labour perspective. Later, a couple of years  
10 later, '67, '68, I was involved in a more production-orientated management job and  
11 started coming to grips with the issues of workers and their wages and I suppose that was  
12 one of the areas, or one of the issues that started my re-thinking about the situation in the  
13 country and was very keen when I got into my new role as Manager of the ? Department  
14 to see what I could do about these pathetic wages of the workers. Only to find myself  
15 bumping up against management in the form of the Wages Agreements which are  
16 conducted through wage negotiations with SISA, as it was in those days and management  
17 and realised that there was no way that I was going to change salaries at all. Anyway, it  
18 was then in '69 that I was given the opportunity of moving across to Canada on a training  
19 programme and I had the opportunity of getting out of South Africa for the first time. Let  
20 me just go back a brief moment to say that in 1964, I actually got up to the old Rhodesia,  
21 Salisbury/Harare on a - an assignment to investigate problems with the production line of  
22 the aluminium foil for milk caps and in that way - that was my first ever actual movement  
23 out of the Union of South Africa, or the Republic of South Africa - getting to Zimbabwe  
24 in 1964, which in itself was quite an experience... seeing a new country, another country.  
25 And seeing in the hotels the non-racialism that was not possible in South Africa and you  
26 know, Black and White going to hotels and eating together or in individually, certainly  
27 able to go to these places where in our own country this was not possible. Anyway, '69  
28 I had the opportunity of getting out of South Africa proper and got to Canada and  
29 England, and to a certain extent, that was part of my awakening, if you like. Seeing South  
30 Africa from the outside and learning more about attitudes to South Africa from people  
31 from the outside. It wasn't the only experience that impacted on my awareness. Joan's

1 brother, Derek, had left the country I think in about '64, on a Victoria League  
2 Scholarship, or Victoria Club Scholarship, I'm not sure exactly, and was out of the  
3 country - he had been out of the country when he returned in 1970, after my return from  
4 Canada we - they visited us, he and his girlfriend (who was very definitely from the  
5 Communist Party in the U.K). And Derek certainly was very much a Labourite, a  
6 Socialist and we had lots of discussions while they were here, particularly around the  
7 challenge that they posed to us - because we were involved by that stage in the  
8 Progressive Party. And were very challenging, saying 'you know well, what really are the  
9 problems? How are they making a break?' I mean here we were trying to say 'well, this  
10 is what they are doing, that's what they're doing.' And they were saying 'Yes, well,  
11 alright, but how effective is it?' You know, 'what are they really achieving?' And so in  
12 those discussions, planting seeds, if you like, of an awakening again, a deepening of  
13 awareness and certainly those discussions and challenges were helpful in - in a sense -  
14 making us re-think our position. And Joan, I think was very much more so than myself  
15 at that time, and so we started re-thinking things and it was at that time, '72, '73 that we  
16 were becoming more involved in the - the other groupings, if you like, like the Christian  
17 Institute and the Institute of Race Relations. Let me stop there because I'm not sure that  
18 I've covered enough of the earlier years, but I don't know if you want me to go back at  
19 all? You were saying...?

20 V: I think your early years have been very nicely covered, but what I am interested in perhaps  
21 a little bit more about the discussions between Derek and his girlfriend and yourself and  
22 Joan. Because as I can see that, that was the beginning point of the change.

23 K: Ja.

24 V: And you know you mentioned they asked 'what do you think you're doing?' What was  
25 your reaction to statements like 'what are the progressives doing?' When you say you re-  
26 thought, were you initially fairly open to their ideas, or did you find their ideas very  
27 foreign and difficult to accept to begin with? Was it a quick conversion or a very gradual  
28 one?

29 K: No, I don't think it was a very quick one, it was one that they posed the challenges, and  
30 I suppose we tried to justify the work of the Progressive Party and they were hearing us  
31 out and saying 'well, fair enough, you know, that is something, but really in terms of what

1 are they achieving in change, what are they - how are they bringing about the equality of  
2 the franchise, if you like?' And one then - the whole issue of the Progs qualified franchise  
3 came up and challenges around that as well. So, yes, in a sense, at the beginning, very  
4 defensive of the Progs and their position, so it really wasn't a bit of just accepting their  
5 views straight off. I can remember we travelled up to Giants castle, with the family, we  
6 were a large family and we did a hike up the Langelevele? Pass, some of us and that was  
7 enjoyable, but on the way back, Anna and Derek in a different car, stopped off to go and  
8 talk to some people in one of the kraals nearby, unbeknown to us and so we all got home  
9 and found that they weren't around and we then starting to get very upset, worried that  
10 they had had an accident, etcetera, etcetera, only then to discover that they had stopped  
11 off to talk to some of the African folk in the location up there. And I can remember us,  
12 you know, 'Do you think the ? know what you're saying?' 'But you know, what about  
13 your responsibilities to your family? You don't think about letting them know that you've  
14 been delayed', sort of thing. And so in that sense trying to, if you like, get back at them.  
15 But, ja, we - they weren't around all that long, but then, when, when they left and went  
16 back to England, we kept up on discussion and consultation and in some ways, started,  
17 you know, thinking about what they had been saying. It was then, as I say, in those early  
18 70s that I became involved with the Anglican Church, became, well, got confirmed in the  
19 Anglican Church in '73 and Joan started working for the Christian Institute and Manus  
20 Buthelezi was the Natal Director, and it was through those contacts that we really started  
21 meeting people from the range of South Africans. And I can remember going to a  
22 workshop that was run by Theo Kotze and Tony Sellington ? In '72, called 'Be  
23 reconciled.' And experiencing for the first time the Security Police's involvement, ?  
24 unknown to us, but was obviously to Theo and Tony, who could smell a rat quite easily  
25 and quickly, you know, advised us just to be careful. But they didn't - inhibit what they  
26 were sharing with us, and I can remember some of the graphics that were used in terms  
27 of helping us address issues of reconciliation and racism and some of them were graphics  
28 that Frank, Franco Frascuro? Had done many years - well, not so many years ago, but in  
29 the late 60s, I think, and I can still remember one of them to this day. Two men shackled  
30 together with chains and a great big ball and I can't remember whether the ball was  
31 entitled racism or something, but they - the graphic shows the two of them trying to move

1 forward and a cliff in the near vicinity as it were and indicative of you know one that goes  
2 overboard, where one is chucked overboard, one is so interlinked that, you know. it's  
3 going to - which was a fascinating little graphic, anyway. But that certainly put us in  
4 touch, very much more speedily, I think, than anything else - that workshop, with some  
5 of the realities that we were facing. But again it wasn't a sort of - from the '69 trip  
6 overseas, Derek's visit and discussions, and becoming involved in the Christian Institute.  
7 It was a gradual process, to a certain degree Joan very much more ahead of me, in a sense,  
8 pushing, encouraging me throughout. And then certainly the confirmation in the Anglican  
9 Church in 1973, and if I look back on that I can say that's really where my troubles first  
10 started. Becoming involved in the situations with the Church, with the Institute of race  
11 Relations, and the Christian Institute, and it certainly impacted on my work at the  
12 Aluminium Factory because although I've always been, in a sense, a workaholic. I started  
13 then moving away from taking work home at night, from the factory, into becoming much  
14 more involved with external issues, as it were. And although my memory is very vague  
15 on this, in the mid 70s we were involved, a number of us, secular and Church, in terms of  
16 what we described as a concerned citizens committee and we used to meet at the old St  
17 Saviour's Church hall, in connection with some of the concerns that we were having and  
18 even in those 7 - 20 years ago, trying to organise a joint calendar so that all these different  
19 organisations didn't clash when there were functions had to be held. I just want to stop  
20 a moment, I'm trying to think, am I right? I spoke of the Wages Commission, were they  
21 '64? Or were they '74?

22 V: I don't know, they were in the 60's.

23 K: Were they? Okay, I was just not - I'm trying to remember. Anyway. Okay. So, ja, my  
24 involvement then with the Christian Institute, Race Relations, and the Church certainly  
25 started impacting on our attitudes to the situation and becoming very much more aware  
26 and from there becoming involved at a deeper level with societal issues and also starting  
27 to find, as Joan had found earlier, frustrations within the Church relating to injustices and  
28 the Church's response to injustice and it was in that time, in the aftermath of this little  
29 concerned citizenship committee that I have vague memories of, that we moved into  
30 discussions around trying to set something up in Pietermaritzburg that would challenge  
31 the Churches, but that would also work with the Churches in connection with the issues

1 of injustice and trying to encourage action on the part of groups, churches and others into  
2 doing something about the injustices in our society and it was then that we started a series  
3 of meetings with church leaders, non-racial, ecumenical, and not only church leaders, or  
4 church clergy people, but also lay people in terms of moving towards looking at setting  
5 up an organisation in Pietermaritzburg that would help the churches in the work that we  
6 felt challenged to do. And it was at this time that we had the model, if you like, from  
7 DIAKONIA, that had been formed earlier, with Archbishop Denis Hurley and Paddy  
8 Kearney - got very involved in that. Perhaps I need to backtrack a little bit in terms of  
9 some of the memories that we have. Joan, as Secretary to the Director of the Christian  
10 Institute in Natal, Manus Buthelezi, first of all, they worked in an office, or house at 250  
11 Boom Street and it was there that we had a lot of CI meetings. We met with people from  
12 all around Edendale, Pietermaritzburg and also from Durban and the Lutheran College up  
13 at Mapumulo? And that's where we came into contact with Maxie Neurenberger and the  
14 others of the Lutheran Seminary at Mapumulo. I should really also mention another  
15 programme which had an effect on Joan and I, and I am just not sure when it was, it must  
16 have been '72, '73 as well. It was one of these basic education courses run by former the  
17 CELT (Christian Education and Leadership Training), now at KOINONIA, Botha's Hill,  
18 and the two of us went on this course as well and ja, it was also a very empowering  
19 workshop, quite a long one, four or five days I think, but it certainly brought us into  
20 contact with a wide range of people and again, South African, in the true sense of the  
21 word and that also had a powerful impact on us. Certainly for me, I think, more so,  
22 because I was very new in the Church and this whole sort of linking in to a group of  
23 people who were committed to so called justice, it was a very powerful linking of people  
24 committed and concerned about and doing something about security? So that was  
25 something that we enjoyed, enjoyed in very promising terms the challenge that it gave us.  
26 But it was another meaningful aspect to my - certainly my growing awareness of the  
27 situation in the country. Okay. I can go on now to talk more about the formation, if you  
28 like but I'm not sure if that's where? Is that alright?

29 V: Yes, I think this is doing fine, I must come back to some questions later on, but I think  
30 we're doing very nicely.

31 K: Okay, alright then with the example of DIAKONIA in Durban and the concerns that we



1 were having in Pietermaritzburg about social injustice and the - the complacency, if you  
2 like, of the churches, where they - you know they expressed concern and prayed about  
3 issues but they didn't do anything about issues. And that for me was where the Church  
4 was failing, and so it was that we came together with a wide range of clergy and lay  
5 people, as I said, non-racial and ecumenical. In terms of looking to addressing the  
6 situation in Pietermaritzburg, or the 'Maritzburg region. Archbishop Hurley had been  
7 approached by Catholic folk in this area to say couldn't DIAKONIA come up and run  
8 some programmes for them in Pietermaritzburg and Denis said 'Well, you know there are  
9 people in Pietermaritzburg that can quite easily do this for you. You need to encourage  
10 and get on with some issues there for yourselves and with others. Anyway, Denis and  
11 Paddy were very, very supportive and we had, over a period of eighteen months, five  
12 meetings of clergy and laity and they came, as far as I can remember, to all five of those  
13 meetings. They were very supportive. And this all started in 1976 and certainly, as I say,  
14 Denis was very involved. Wolfram Kistner whom I had got to know through my  
15 involvement with the Pietermaritzburg Council of Churches and the Justice and  
16 Reconciliation Grouping, I was representing the Church, Council of Churches in meetings  
17 in Johannesburg with the SACC, got to know more from his role? They had already  
18 known him from before when he was based here at the University and he was also very  
19 encouraging of the formation of an organisation in Pietermaritzburg that would get on  
20 with some of the issues. Now he knew the Pietermaritzburg Council of Churches, but  
21 knew that it was, in fact, a voluntary body and there was very - well, there was only one  
22 full-time person in the form of a Secretary so there was no actual office staff to do  
23 programmes and so he was very supportive of the idea of an agency getting off the ground  
24 in Pietermaritzburg. And also in that period, 1976, the Methodist Church had their  
25 Conference, Annual Conference, Conference that brings all the Methodists together and  
26 Margaret Nash, who was the Ecumenical Officer, at the time, at the SACC, was covering  
27 the Conference of the Methodist Church and I met her, I'm not sure exactly how, but I  
28 suppose it would have been through the SACC. She in her own way was encouraging  
29 Pietermaritzburg folk to look at establishing an organisation that would try and do some  
30 of the work that was so necessary in these areas. And I think Wolfram had tremendous  
31 foresight because what - what he was worried about, I'm sure, was that, in fact, pressures

1 could mount on the South African Council of Churches by the State and then could close  
2 it down. But if there were cells around the country, the work of the church agencies  
3 could carry on. And so with those three persons very supportive and encouraging we  
4 started these various, these five meetings and over the eighteen months or so, we had  
5 fairly good representation but we also discovered that the churches did not seem to be  
6 taking us seriously and so different people would come at different times and there seemed  
7 to be no continuity. And Denis Hurley said, you know, after the fifth meeting 'what you  
8 really need to do now is - we've had enough ground work, we need to see what we can  
9 do in terms of getting something off the ground,' And he said 'You know, I realise that  
10 you're not going to be able to draw on the local churches or well, the local churches for  
11 funding at this stage, because, in a sense, you're going to be challenging them to action.'  
12 And he said 'If you prepare a motivation and a budget, I will see to it that you get some  
13 support from international donor partners.' Which he did, and so in June of 1978, May  
14 of 1978, we had our last meeting and formed an ad hoc committee and that ad hoc  
15 committee met in June and Francois Bill who was one of those lecturers out at the  
16 FedSem, we invited him to chair that meeting and so out of that meeting came a draft  
17 proposal and a budget and also at that meeting I was invited to consider taking on the post  
18 of the first worker in the agency whatever was going to become known as. So we sent  
19 this all down to Denis Hurley and he got cracking and as proof of his promise he was able  
20 to get us some funding and the organisation was launched on a part-time basis from the  
21 back of our house in Bulwer Street, in a little room off the garage. And Joan and I were,  
22 in a sense, the first office workers of PACSA, as it became known and ja, it, I left the  
23 Aluminium Factory in October of '78 and then part-time started the work of PACSA in  
24 November and December of '78 and then started full-time in January of '79 in a small  
25 room at the back of the old so-called Bantu Presbyterian Church on the corner of  
26 Buchanan and Loop Street, behind, in fact the old Diocesan offices at 203 Loop Street  
27 where Ken Hallows was. So that, that in a sense was the opening of the organisation and  
28 the little vestry at the back of the church was our office and I think it might have been  
29 two-thirds of the size of this room - so it wasn't very big at all. But I remember that what  
30 we did do, because the door - the old door wasn't very secure and we got a special door  
31 made, and it was made of very good wood. In those days, the doors were not standard

1 size. and so we had to have it made up and I'm moving ahead, eventually when the  
2 building was demolished, long after we had left, the prize possession, our door, with its  
3 letterbox hole, was taken at a sale and we lost out - we could have used it somewhere  
4 here - but somebody got in ahead of us.

5 V: Very partial to the door are you? (They laugh).

6 K: It was good. One,one amongst many memories of that place - there were two Mennonites  
7 visiting from Swaziland and just passed down Buchanan Street, ja, by chance. part of the  
8 PACSA Ad, Pietermaritzburg Agency was social awareness, and that was in a sense, was  
9 a link that we had with the Mennonites Peace Church for the first time and of - you know  
10 - that and other links led us to being very involved in the Mennonites over - with the  
11 Mennonites over the years. Another memory that I have of that, that little place was that  
12 a Black colleague, or a Black friend came in and looked around and he said 'you know,  
13 this is as it should be, this is what it was like in King Williamstown in the small office of  
14 certain groups - ? From King Williamstown. In other words, the simple lifestyle, really  
15 not plush offices and things like that. And a third memory I have is of a clergy person who  
16 shall remain unnamed, came into talk to me about PACSA and he said 'You know, your  
17 language is too emotive for the Churches. Here you have in your little spiel, you want to  
18 challenge the churches. You know if you're going to challenge the churches, you're  
19 going to turn them off.' We've been challenging the churches ever since.

20 V: Yes.

21 K: Ja.

22 V: Peter, if I may interrupt, just at this stage, you've touched on the influence of the  
23 Mennonites and the Peace Churches. Because the Christian Institute at this stage was sort  
24 of discussing that whole concept of 'just war' and it was the beginnings of the ETC and  
25 one thing and another. And I know that you feel very, very strongly about this. perhaps  
26 you could explore your view? Towards the peace movement a little bit here?

27 K: Okay.

28 V: I think it's about the right time, do you?

29 K: Okay, alright. Let's go back a little bit in time then. In terms of 1975, '76, certainly  
30 pressures were mounting on the Christian Institute and I think it was in 1976 that they  
31 were declared an affected organisation, which meant that they couldn't get funds in from

1 overseas and then of course, in 19 - over 1977, they were - and outright with a number  
 2 of other organisations, but, yes, in that situation, the whole notion of non-violence or  
 3 using the word non-violence is awkward, because it's a non - especially if one knows what  
 4 we mean by non-violence, and certainly, I mean the Christian Institute was very much  
 5 involved in that process of engaging in direct, but non-violent means of challenge to the  
 6 apartheid state and in one sense, the late Mary Park-Ross, at one of our first PACSA  
 7 meetings, in the old Bantu Presbyterian Church, whispered in an aside, to some friends,  
 8 and this was of course, January 1979: 'You know of course that this is a Christian  
 9 Institute in disguise because the Christian Institute had been banned in 1977.' And Mary  
 10 had actually been a member of the Christian Institute. So, in a sense, yes there was a  
 11 picking up of the ethos if you like, of the Christian Institute within PACSA. And  
 12 certainly, in terms of peace issues, one of the founder members, if I am not mistaken, I  
 13 can't remember when Mark and Judy Povall were involved. Maybe not necessarily as a  
 14 founder member, but certainly if not founder member, very...

15 V: Very, very early on ...

16 K: ..early on in the time. And so we - that was our link with Quakers. And then I also had  
 17 links with Quakers through the South African Council of Churches and I'm trying to think  
 18 of her name - old person, old, old member of the Quakers, anyway...

19 V: In 'Maritzburg'?

20 K: No, no, in Durban, or Cape Town or Jo'burg.

21 V: Taylor?

22 K: No, Mary .... anyway, I'll remember it, but, so we had links with the Quakers from way  
 23 back as well and then also with the Mennonites, but a lot more of that was to come later.  
 24 Sorry, what - I'm jumping around, I'm sorry - what I also need to talk - in terms of  
 25 thinking of the ECC, I need to, to just mention family commitment. Through this move,  
 26 from Hullets Aluminium to PACSA, and I certainly our daughters were very encouraging  
 27 about the move and said 'You know we've been expecting this for a long time.' sort of  
 28 thing, so there was no discouragement from our daughters. The one possible area of  
 29 tenderness was with our youngest daughter, Gill, because of silly teachers who would say  
 30 to people 'you know did you see that programme on TV last night?' And of course, for  
 31 many years we didn't have a television, and ja, it was quite a change in terms of lifestyle,

1 from industry into a - the church arena. But, but apart from that, I mean the girls were  
2 very supportive and certainly two of them, the youngest two, Clare and Jill, were very  
3 caught up in the conscription campaign. And I can remember, and her names...again, but  
4 a clergy person was visited by Clare, I think it was, one of them anyway, to talk about  
5 ECC and he was very critical. He said 'You know, this is a man's thing, the end-  
6 conscription ...and it's all to do with army and militarisation and -'

7 V: Oh dear.

8 K: 'What are these women doing?' sort of thing and I can remember my daughter was, you  
9 know, quite hurt, but quite indignant too in terms of the attitude of the church and  
10 expressing this concern. One thing I do remember about the end-conscription campaign  
11 is this - this whole notion that they had in the various meetings where everything by  
12 consensus, everything democratically, organisations, so meetings were taking ages. But,  
13 ja, it was a good lesson, and certainly in those early formation years of PACSA we were  
14 very linked to the peace movement, if you like. I can remember going out to  
15 Compensation Farm, in Impendle, one of the resettle - so-called resettlement camps,  
16 where the end-conscription campaign - 'Maritzburg and Durban groups that had had a  
17 project out there - with planting trees and doing some other works, so ja.. So yes, the  
18 links with the peace e movement had been very important to PACSA, and in a sense,  
19 when PACSA first started, we were invited by Reverend Rob Robertson, who ran the  
20 non-violence desk of the SACC for a number of years, - Con gave us one of the - one of  
21 seven peace libraries that there are around the country, I'm not sure where all - which the  
22 others - other six libraries are, but certainly PACSA has a number of Ghandian and other  
23 non-violent books in our library that was donated through Rob Robertson from, from  
24 some peace programme overseas, and so that was - that was one of the first major  
25 contributions to the PACSA Resource Centre. And it - they - they've been there. I  
26 wouldn't say that they have been used that much, but nevertheless, they have been a very  
27 important part of our Resource Centre and are still there to this day. So, ja. Ja.

28 V: Alright I think we'll take a break now, because this thing has either stopped or is just  
29 about to....

30  
31 End of first side.

1 Second side.

2

3 V: Thank you. Peter. Right, this is the second tape.

4 K: Right, going back to Archbishop Denis's involvement, certainly he was able to put us in  
5 touch with a number of Catholic donor partners in Europe and in Canada and that served  
6 us well, if I can remember clearly, for the first three years, in terms of funding all our  
7 programme, which was quite small at the time, there was myself and Gay Spiller, who  
8 came in as a Secretary, Joan had been involved very much on a sort of honorary basis,  
9 part-time basis and she was actually working for the Council of Churches anyway. In  
10 terms of fundraising, we also got a list of trusts and corporate organisations, like Anglo's  
11 Chairman's Fund, etcetera, etcetera, and we certainly made the attempt to raise funding  
12 from within the country and we were rejected outright. They really described us not as  
13 Church, but as political. I mean to people of business, that that would be the excuse that  
14 they would use. So we were thwarted at various levels in terms of corporate  
15 responsibility programmes within the country - they weren't called for because in those  
16 days they were just Chairman's Fund, or whatever, I mean there were a number that we  
17 tried and I've got them on file here and they just did not support PACSA at all so we were  
18 then very dependant on support from Archbishop Harley's contacts and that grew,  
19 because with his support we were then able to motivate money from other church  
20 organisations, other than Catholic, and in many ways were supported significantly by  
21 groups in England, in Europe, particularly Holland and Germany and more recently in  
22 Switzerland and Belgium. And so there was no real problem, I guess one of the major  
23 problems that we faced with fundraising internationally, or fundraising in general was the  
24 danger of being declared, well, prevented from fundraising because we chose not to seek  
25 a fundraising number because that meant that we could - we would have had to submit all  
26 sorts of things to the Director of Fundraising, and of course we knew that that would then  
27 go straight into the system's hands and so we hung out and certainly didn't go for a  
28 fundraising number - as was the case with Lucas Breytendale White a bit later on became  
29 a support committee where they were also challenged, in Pietermaritzburg in terms of  
30 possible legislation against their ? Fundraising Act - but that's another story. So, yes,  
31 fundraising was a concern when we couldn't get funding from the then - but we could do

1 of course, was also fundraising through the South African Council of Churches, and they  
2 had what they described as ACCORD, the revolving fund, and a lot of folk, a lot of donor  
3 partners from overseas contributed to that fund in the early eighties and PACSA was just  
4 put on that programme as well. So, that, in terms of fundraising, it's something that we  
5 continually had to look at over the years, and we've operated on a sort of three year basis  
6 for evaluation and then further motivation for funding. Getting back to the launch of  
7 PACSA, and the whole notion of peace. Certainly when we first formed PACSA, our idea  
8 - our focus or our thrust was twofold. One was to be a servant to the churches - Christian  
9 organisations and individuals, the second was, at that time, to be what we would call a  
10 change agent - trying to help people come to terms with the fact that South Africa was  
11 going to change and that we needed to be preparing for that change and certainly part of  
12 that change in our minds was that it was very vital that it be a peaceful change. I  
13 remember being invited to a peacemakers' programme in Swaziland, it was established by  
14 the Mennonites and I attended that and I'll describe it a bit more fully. But let me just  
15 give some background to the Mennonites, certainly, as a peace church, the government,  
16 the apartheid government, it was a crazy notion on the part of the government, they'd  
17 seen, well, they hadn't seen, they feared peace churches because peace churches, for some  
18 reason, were an effect of the system. I suppose subconsciously they accepted that  
19 apartheid was evil and so a peace church did provide a major threat to them. And so  
20 Mennonites, from, outside, well Mennonites - there's no Mennonite Church in South  
21 Africa, or they may be one now in Cape Town, but in the - in the late seventies, the  
22 Mennonites could only pass through South Africa on a transit visa, they could never  
23 actually stay in the country, unless they had a special pass, so they were allowed a transit  
24 visa to go from Botswana, or Lesotho, or Swaziland, into the so-called Bantustans  
25 because in the Umtata area, Transkei area, the Mennonites were able to set up a base  
26 there. But never, within, within the country and these people that I mentioned on the first  
27 tape, passing by, were actually in transit through Pietermaritzburg, on to the Transkei and  
28 as I say, that was one of our first links. But our major link, if you like, was participating  
29 in this peacemakers programme in Swaziland and that's where I met for the first time,  
30 Peter Moll, the first conscientious objector to be imprisoned or put into detention  
31 barracks. Later I was to meet Richard Steele, but it was at that conference/workshop that

1 I certainly learnt a great deal about the Mennonites, and about their work programmes,  
2 about their peace programmes. And I can remember Shirley and James Mulder being very  
3 involved in that programme. all that way back in 1980, together with other people. And  
4 I can remember we were asked to give testimonies and again, I, I remember sharing my  
5 whole sort of upbringing of being what I described as a 'rigger-bugger' and having a  
6 change, which, which, certainly for me was a positive change and I have never really  
7 regretted the change, or the growth that occurred, but I certainly remember the  
8 peacemaking workshop well. And again, it brought me into touch with Southern Africans  
9 for the first - well, for the first time, when I say first time I mean in terms of Botswana,  
10 Lesotho and other countries as well. And I remember going down to a centre, away from  
11 Mbabane, where the Mennonites had a programme running in terms of education, teacher  
12 training and going down with two Mennonite folk to the centre and seeing what they were  
13 doing and also sensing their fear of problems from across the border in South Africa,  
14 because, even way back in 1980 there had been pressures from the security system to  
15 frequent Swaziland, of all places. So, for me that was a particularly moving experience,  
16 and being involved in the whole issue of peace, peace work and I think in many ways, that,  
17 that had its impact and although I can't remember the - the documents in detail, James  
18 Moulder had prepared for the Anglican Church, this whole set of bible studies, or  
19 documents on peace and a 'just war' etcetera and I think we've even still got a set of  
20 those pamphlets somewhere in the PACSA Resource Centre. But that certainly impacted  
21 on our work as a peace programme, in fact, looking back on the formation of PACSA's  
22 name, or the establishment of our name, Colin Gardner was overseas at one stage and I  
23 don't know how it came across, but he picked on the name PAXA, P, A, X, A. Peace  
24 agency...

25 V: Yes?

26 K: ..and apparently it may well be in terms of our recent strategic planning survey that we've  
27 just done, PACSA may re-examine its name in the light of its peace initiatives, with a  
28 whole Organisation being called, or seen as the Pietermaritzburg Agency, but seen as a  
29 peace agency. But certainly, I think, looking back from 1980 onwards, that, that work  
30 of peace was very much part of our makeup in PACSA. An aside: a friend of ours, in fact,  
31 Margaret Nash, who I mentioned earlier in terms of being one of those encouraging the



1 formation of that agency in the Pietermaritzburg area, when I wrote to her inviting her to  
2 become involved with PACSA, as a member or as a supporter, she said in her reply to us  
3 she suddenly was taken by the name and she was writing the initials PACSA.

4 V: Of course.

5 K: ...and thinking in terms of the political movement, PAC. Of course, at that stage, PACSA  
6 was predominantly White because the thrust of the formation of PACSA in '79, '80  
7 encouraged by Black clergy and laity was that because Black clergy and laity were doing  
8 things in their own areas, in their own churches, what Blacks felt we should be doing was  
9 conscientising White people because they said 'after all it's White people that have the  
10 vote, and if we can change attitudes of White people through the vote, then there might  
11 be hope for South Africa in that sense. So initially, certainly, PACSA's thrust was a  
12 White awareness programme but it was within a year that we realised that apartheid was  
13 being so successful that in fact, not that we needed to make African folk aware, in many  
14 ways they were certainly aware of their own situation, but what we did find was that they  
15 were not aware, or they were - they were kept out of touch, if you like, with- with things  
16 like the removals policy because ? Africans' idea of Whites don't always get the  
17 opportunity of getting back into the rural areas, and when I showed a series of slides on  
18 removals to a predominantly Black urban grouping, it, it was quite fascinating to actually  
19 see their sense of anger at what they saw, probably for some of them, for the first time in  
20 terms of the destruction of homes, and property by the apartheid regimes policy of  
21 removals, ja.

22 V: Yes.

23 K: Okay. So, in its initial work, PACSA was very involved with this policy of removals.  
24 Prior to the formation of PACSA I had been engaged in meeting folk, and I can remember  
25 meeting James Wiley. Joan and I went up to Ladysmith to meet James Wiley, to actually  
26 go to to Roosboom which was under threat and this was way back in 1975, we were - we  
27 had picked up concerns from others about this whole removal's policy and in our small  
28 way we were trying to see - and this was from a church base, having become involved in  
29 the Anglican Church. It was from a church base that we went out to Ladysmith to meet  
30 with James and Clare Wiley and he then took us out to Roosboom to meet the late Elliot  
31 Mngadi, who was the, the Mayor of Roosboom. And we met and shared with him and

1 many other people in that area, in 1975 or it might have been early 1976, I can't remember  
2 exactly, their, their concerns about the prospect of being uprooted and dumped in  
3 Ezakheni - which is on the other side of Ladysmith, towards Helpmekaar. And we had  
4 a fascinating meeting with Elliot Mngadi and I took some slides of the community as it  
5 was then and then I had - yea, that must have been '75, because in '76, in the aftermath  
6 of some uprootings, at Roosboom, which we weren't able to monitor or do anything  
7 about, we went and visited Elliot and his family in the place where they had been dumped,  
8 in Ezakheni. And interesting, we did an article on the removal of Roosboom and had it  
9 printed in the Natal Witness on a very significant day, June the sixteenth, 1976, just -  
10 quite, quite amazing how... anyway, and that- you know, that certainly, that period,  
11 '75, '76 was when Joan and I were involved through the Anglican Church with some of  
12 these issues relating to removals. In terms of what was happening at DIAKONIA and  
13 then the formation of PACSA, we linked up with Neil Alcock, the late Neil Alcock and  
14 Cheryl Walker, who were working, living and working at Mdukatshane, in the  
15 Weenen/Muden, Weenen area and out of that situation, and the harassment of what was  
16 called, what we commonly, people would refer to as labour tenants, Sheryl and Neil were  
17 telling us all that was happening in the Weenen area. The impounding of cattle and that  
18 sort of thing and the jailing of people, labour tenants, because they weren't getting off the  
19 land. And that work, that - those issues resulted in the bringing together of DIAKONIA  
20 and PACSA, with people like Peter Brown, Neil Alcock, Cheryl Walker, and this - this  
21 particular meeting was chaired by the - by Phillip Russel, who at the time was Bishop of  
22 Natal, but then went on to become Archbishop... He chaired the meeting and in a sense I  
23 think PACSA and DIAKONIA can claim some credit, not that we want to claim credit,  
24 but we were partly instrumental in the launch of AFRA, because out of that meeting came  
25 the embryonic seeds, if you - you know, the seeds for the establishment for what has  
26 become known as AFRA and the work of resettlements then was really taken over more  
27 by the AFRA staff. But PACSA certainly kept its concern and interest in the whole  
28 situation in the early eighties and the destruction of KwaPhitela, a Black, so-called 'Black  
29 Spot' near Underberg/Himeville, was very well documented and a slide presentation was  
30 put together in, by AFRA, in fact - so - on that removal of people from KwaPhitela to  
31 Compensation Farm. Kwavulamesha as the community called it, in 1980/81 and that -

1 that slide/tape presentation. I think it was - I'm just not sure of my dates, '80, July '80  
2 or July '81, I'm not too sure. But that slide/tape presentation was - was duplicated, or,  
3 well, numerous copies were made of it and actually, Jimmy Collett, the Methodist Minister  
4 in Johannesburg was very involved in the South African Council of Churches Justice and  
5 Reconciliation Committee, actually spoke at the United Nations on this whole problem  
6 of these settlements and had as material, as resource material, this slide/tape presentation.  
7 Which I think, went - certainly all around Europe and North America, so it was something  
8 that I think helped convey to international people the horror of resettlements and it was  
9 quite crazy that in fact you had this manager, or this foreman, sitting in his car or in his  
10 truck out at KwaPhitela and not really chasing us, not calling the police, and the workers  
11 certainly were not Zulu-speaking workers, they were brought in from somewhere,  
12 because, I presume the State or the system would want the same language people because  
13 they would share their concerns. And one was able to freely monitor what was going on  
14 there and it was quite incredible. Both at the destruction of their homes and also as they  
15 move into the new area at Impendle and the stories, the interviews that Cheryl and John  
16 Aitchison captured while this dumping was going on. It was something very, very  
17 moving, and ja, I think it certainly must have impacted on thousands of people. Sadly not  
18 the system of the apartheid regime in the country. So, ja in terms of our, our initial work,  
19 we were very involved in this area, of resettlements and as I say, then with AFRA,  
20 becoming much more involved, our work in removals - we continued our interest in it but  
21 a bit more of the work - was then conducted or carried on by AFRA. One area that we  
22 did remain in touch with was the restored community at Ezakheni, but in addition to that  
23 we then made greater contact with people in Ekuvukeni, which means place of  
24 resurrection, quite crazy, I mean I don't know where the system got these names, and then  
25 beyond Ekuvukeni, the Limehills community - and that - through, again through our links  
26 with the SACC, J and R, and that inter-related links between SASH, Sheena Duncan, the  
27 Grail, Mary-Lyn Aitken, the Mennonites, again the Mennonites, who made money  
28 available for a colleague of ours, Bhuntu Penyana to go and spend time in - at Ekuvukeni  
29 and to stay with family of Gugu Majola. Bhuntu was very keen to capture the story of ,  
30 as he put it 'two soldiers', his father, who was very involved in the Whittlesea area and  
31 the Catechist, Myaka, ja, in Ekuvukeni, and sadly both died and Bhuntu was never able

1 to finish the book. But that set up links for us with Ekuvukeni and in many ways we tried  
2 to keep in touch with Ekuvukeni as well. It is somewhat distant from Pietermaritzburg  
3 so it's not easy to do that but it's a fascinating story and I'm wanting in my own way to  
4 someday follow this particular one up because this Catechist was uprooted, he and his  
5 wife, uprooted from Umkosi, Steenkoolspruit, where they had this little Anglican Church  
6 and dumped in Ekuvukeni, for me that again reflects one of the weaknesses of the church  
7 because the church was destroyed, one wants to know what happened to the money that  
8 was paid by the Government for compensation and in a sense why it hasn't actually been  
9 ploughed back into Ekuvukeni in the form of a church for the Anglicans in Ekuvukeni.  
10 Because the wife, well, the late Catechist and his wife took with them some things from  
11 that Church in bringing the cross and the lectern, and I would be fascinated to see  
12 somehow the resurrection...

13 V: Resurrection of the Church.

14 K: Ja, in Ekukheni, to come to make up for the name. So, ja. So in some ways we - we tried  
15 to keep in touch with communities in that way, and wherever I can I try and see the  
16 Granny up at Ekuvukeni. but I must admit she's very frail now, and I haven't seen her for  
17 some time. So certainly in the '79 sort of through to '81, '82, PACSA was very involved  
18 in the whole removal situation. Then as I said, through doing that little booklet, I didn't  
19 mention the booklet, but it's a - it's a booklet that was funded by the Mennonites as well,  
20 on the whole process of resettlement in South Africa and it was published in 1983, and  
21 the whole concern of the churches about removals, and the lack of action on the part of  
22 the churches was raise in that booklet and the booklet challenges the churches to commit  
23 themselves to action in relation to their church lands. And it's only now really, in the  
24 formation of the Church Land project, with Graham Philpott and Phelane Zondi, it was  
25 a pilot project which they had from PACSA last year. It's become autonomous, but that  
26 church land project is picking up where that little booklet in 1983 left off. And it again  
27 reflects the inactivity of the church ...

28 V: Mmm, Yes...

29 K: ...over the period of fourteen, fifteen years and for me that's the indictment on the church,  
30 PACSA was formed. DIAKONIA was formed because the churches failed to get involved  
31 actively in the situation - they would pray about it, talk about it but were never really

1 active in terms of the issues. In a sense, looking back, if the churches were actually  
2 carrying out their mandate, PACSA and DIAKONIA would not have had to be formed  
3 ...

4 V: Yes...

5 K: ... because the reality is that - that's the church and we continue to challenge.

6 V: Mmm.

7 K: ..in emotive words, that's what .... 1980 ??? But we continue, and so, ja. Moving on then  
8 to this whole area of the state's action against treason trialists in then also against  
9 detainees. In '82, '83, the state was mounting a number of court cases against people  
10 who were charged with treason and we were engaged to a certain extent in that. Let me  
11 just recap briefly. Joan had been working in the Council of Churches as Secretary for a  
12 number of years. and a lot of her work was involved with what was called, what was  
13 known as the South African Council of Churches Dependant Conference Desk, and that  
14 desk was engaged in linking families, with political prisoners, particularly on Robben  
15 Island, and she - we, through, through that link, Dependants' Conference link, we met a  
16 number of families in the greater Pietermaritzburg area, which in many ways helped us in  
17 our outreach as PACSA in the early eighties, in terms of communication with people and  
18 that, that dependants' Conference work was, I think of particular value and certainly our  
19 experience with the grieving families of loved ones on the Island was particularly moving.  
20 There were difficulties, of course, but you know, not surprising that there were a lot of  
21 angry people around. There were some incredible people that we met as a result and one  
22 of them was the late Azaria Ndebele, who himself, was a prisoner of Robben Island for  
23 a number of years and then was released and released back into South Africa, to  
24 Pietermaritzburg - I can remember trying to get his job back. He was a bus driver  
25 with the Corporation. I can remember approaching the person involved in the  
26 department, at the Municipal offices, who is also a member of the Anglican Church, and  
27 in many ways, tried to say to this guy, 'as a Christian, you know what are the chances -  
28 of this guy getting his job back?' That failed dismally - that failed - the failure was an  
29 advantage for us because Azania became a field worker for the Dependants' Conference.  
30 And he with his experience of the Island and knowledge of the family, was always able to  
31 of a great deal of counselling for families and to join in that work. He also became

1 involved later with the detainees support committee - or DESCOM, as well. Okay,  
2 getting back to the treason trial. Pietermaritzburg, like Bethel, I suppose, and other  
3 remote places, remote in terms of commerce. We discovered that with these treason trials  
4 being set up in Pietermaritzburg, families of the awaiting trial people lived in places where  
5 it was very difficult to move from or to get to Pietermaritzburg and certainly our  
6 international visitors, do find it very difficult to get to Pietermaritzburg - because there's  
7 not an adequate train service and buses are not that frequent between Durban and Jo'burg  
8 or Bethlehem and Pietermaritzburg - so you can imagine what it's like for people coming  
9 from rural areas to get into Pietermaritzburg. Anyway as a result of those difficulties, we  
10 linked into families of these awaiting -trial people and were able to help them when they  
11 came to Pietermaritzburg and were able to help them was in terms of trying to get visits  
12 to their loved ones, but in addition to that, and I think this is something which helped both  
13 the awaiting trial people and also the families, in those early 80s, we set up a programme  
14 where we would take hot meals to the prisons. It was quite fascinating that this was  
15 allowed. And I can remember going to the prison myself, the old prison, and on other  
16 times being 'phoned by people to say 'you know, the prison authorities have refused to  
17 allow the hot food in today.' And we would then get in touch with the Cadre, or the  
18 person, or whatever and say 'what the hell is going on?' sort of thing, this has been around  
19 - you know. So that sort of thing continued for quite a lot, and that I think gave hope to  
20 people inside because they knew at least that there were people outside that were keeping  
21 in touch with their families, because they were getting clean clothes from families as a  
22 result of this, and in addition to that, they were receiving some additional nourishment and  
23 sustenance. Eventually this closed down because the authorities then said that you may  
24 be trying to poison these people. JA. stupid excuse, anyway, it, it was, if you like, the  
25 start of the Detainees Support Committee, which was supported by a number of  
26 groupings, including PACSA and Gay Spillay, in fact who was involved with PACSA at  
27 the time. became secretary for the Detainees' Support committee in the Pietermaritzburg  
28 area, and this, this process of awaiting trial prisoners a number of us were involved, and  
29 that reminds me of the groups involved, a number of UDF affiliates were involved because  
30 in 1983, the United Democratic front was launched in the midlands regions.. The UDF  
31 was launched in Edendale from the 31st of October in 1983. And in that link, PACSA

1 affiliated to the UDF that then brought us in touch with a whole lot of other people, and  
2 in various ways we were able to gather support. When I say we, a group of us, not  
3 necessarily in PACSA, but were able to rally support for the awaiting trial prisoners and  
4 their families. And I can remember, particularly the one in College Road, where sixteen  
5 were on trial and lunches were taken down and all that. So, ja, perhaps I must just  
6 mention the launching, the UDF - they would be launching ??

7 V: yes, yes...

8 K: With the formation of the UDF, in August 1983, there was a commitment from people  
9 from within the greater Pietermaritzburg areas to link in and certainly I was invited to be  
10 part of the launch out at the Lay Ecumenical Centre, probably in the region of the United  
11 Democratic Front. And one, it was, it was a massive turn out and I can remember clearly  
12 one incident - the aspect of that was Robert Manzi, whose family were near Slangspruit,  
13 he was actually chair of the SRC at the University up at Ngoya, just before the launch of  
14 the UDF, there was that attack, on the University, where all four student and another were  
15 killed and a number of student injured. And Robert Manzi was one of those that were  
16 very badly injured, anyway, he came to the launch and in his address he spoke to the  
17 group. And I can remember the group really getting quite vocal in terms of their anger  
18 against the perpetrators of the violence and Ngoya University ... Robert was in fact  
19 swathed in bandages, and that, also carried a ? Made it even? And - ja, sentiments against  
20 certain people made Gatsha ...

21 V: Ran very high...

22 K: ...were very high. But it was a very significant day and a very important day in  
23 Pietermaritzburg's history with the launching of the UDF and certainly, PACSA, not really  
24 political motivation, but in terms of what the UDF stood for, we affiliated to the UDF  
25 because they were echoing what PACSA felt was the new society, the new mandate, if  
26 you like, for a new society in South Africa,. So it wasn't in the sense that we were being  
27 political, well I suppose we were being political, but we weren't being party political in  
28 actually affiliating to the UDF. In some ways there was a bit of backfiring because some  
29 of the churches felt that, you know, we were taking sides. And I know DIAKONIA's  
30 experience was such that they, they took disciplinary action because of the pressures  
31 brought on them I think, by the churches in terms of their ...

- 1 V: affiliation, ja.
- 2 K: Affiliation, but, ja, we remained affiliated until the UDF closed down, and ja, if it backfired  
3 against us it is in ways, I think it had positive aspects in other ways, so there is no regret  
4 on that side and it certainly - there was a a lot of joint effort work between groups that  
5 were linked to the UDF in terms of the struggle in the Pietermaritzburg area, mainly from  
6 1983 onwards and certainly with the detainees Support Committee which eventually had  
7 to change to DACOM - the Detainees Aid Committee, and there was a change there. But  
8 I think some very, very moving experiences out of that. I can remember on one occasions  
9 the Sharpeville day Anniversary, at the Cathedral. It wasn't so much in terms of Detainees  
10 Aid Day but it was linked to the commemoration of Sharpeville and we had a rousing  
11 sermon or address by Chris Langeveldt, and the roof in the Cathedral, you know, in the  
12 evening sort of making a real noise that even a birds in the belfry were sort of moved to  
13 move. That, that, ja. Then other occasions where we have had inter-religious DACOM  
14 days, where recognising and commemorating DACOM Day and having inter-faith prayers,  
15 even with the Muslim, Jewish, Christian, two people that come to my mind, Jeremy  
16 Kronin who came and spoke to us and read some of his poetry and he - Ina Ghandi, who  
17 spoke at one of our meetings as well, and well,.... Ja a lot of water under the bridge, but  
18 you know, memories are there and ja, some are stuck at the moment - I'm not sure.
- 19 V: One of the things that I wouldn't mind you touching on is the whole Sarmcol dispute.
- 20 K: Okay, I've put a little bit in that story there.
- 21 V: Okay.
- 22 K: Okay, alright, that's - okay, that, that comes up to April., May of 1985... We became  
23 involved in the Sarmcol story through the links of the UDF, COSATU, as a result of the  
24 dismissal of almost a thousand workers from Sarmcol and the majority of them actually  
25 being based in the Mpophomeni and a lot of the work linked to that was to try and  
26 provide sustenance for families and their workers as a result of the dismissal and I can  
27 remember going down to a number of meetings down at the old trade union offices in berg  
28 Street and being moved, by, by particularly in the Trade Unionists, who many people  
29 would see as 'somme' just communists, but opening their meetings in prayer and really  
30 showing their commitment to the struggle, not simply from a socialistic point of view, but  
31 from their Christian point of view.. And our involvement there was to try and help in



1 various ways, encouraging people to be involved and to make money and food available  
2 for the victims in this crime? And in addition to that, the Catholic people were very  
3 supportive because Denis Hurley was able to get some land available to them and they had  
4 that garden project. But in addition to that they also had a tea-shirt project and a drama  
5 project.

6 V: That's right, yes.

7 K: And the - in the aftermath of the strike, there was this boycott of White supermarkets  
8 which we tried, through PACSA and others to encourage people to distance themselves  
9 from White Supermarkets who were not really supporting the Sarmcol workers and  
10 families. But in addition to that there was that call for a stayaway, I think it was the 17th  
11 or 18th of July, 1985, in solidarity with the workers of Sarmcol, being supporters of  
12 Sarmcol and it was a Thursday, and I always remark to people, when they talk about it,  
13 that, in fact, it was quieter than a Sunday...

14 V: Yes.

15 K: .. It was such a successful boycott. I acknowledge too that there were - you know there  
16 had been some harassment by some of the youth - which forced people to stay at home  
17 but, nevertheless, whatever people say, with that arrangement, nevertheless there was that  
18 commitment to the people of Sarmcol in Mpophomeni,. And ja, it certainly made me  
19 think. The horrifying situations related to Sarmcol was to come later. And that was in  
20 December of '86, when those two Unionists, Ngubane and Sibiya, Phineas Sibiyé and  
21 Flora Nkabinde were abducted, together with Mikael Sibiya, and Mikael was able to  
22 escape the car when the car stopped and he rolled down the bank in the dark and sort of  
23 lay quietly waiting to see and the car drove a little bit further and then he heard the gun  
24 shots and saw the car go up in flames and that was the death of his brother and friends,  
25 and then later that morning, in Mpophomeni, another youngster was. Ja, he was killed,  
26 but direct for me, apart from that, that story was the moving funeral service that took  
27 place at the Catholic Church in Mpophomeni and Archbishop Harley was there, together  
28 with Larry Kaufmann who was the parish priest at the time, and the contingent of police  
29 outside the church was incredible, it was such a large grouping, and the attitude the  
30 negativity of the police, that they would not allow a mass funeral at all, they said 'no, each  
31 coffin must come out independently from Edendale.' So the service took place from about

1 eleven o'clock through to five or six in the evening before the bodies were buried. And  
2 you know the attitude of the police at the time. But the attitude of the crowd was  
3 incredible and I can remember Philip Dladla, who was a great friend of Phineas, when,  
4 when the service was - when they were laying to rest, or doing the service, Phineas's  
5 remains - they - they would raise the coffin up a number of times and I just can remember  
6 Phillip, you know tears in his eyes when he was raising the coffin up and down. A very  
7 moving, one of the most moving funeral that, that I attended was the one at ??

8 V: Yes.

9 K: And Phillip, to this day is still very involved and we have got strong links with  
10 Mpophomeni at the moment, but ja.. An absolute waste, I mean, two tremendous  
11 unionists, and ja, just the negativism and the situation in Mpophomeni, it's well  
12 documented by the fact that someone was able to switch the power off so that there  
13 were no lights in Mpophomeni that night on the 6th of December, 1986, when these  
14 people were abducted from their home, taken to the hall and harassed and tortured, and  
15 then taken away to be killed and to this day, after the court inquest with the Magistrate  
16 in Howick indicating nine people who should be taken to court. To this day I don't think  
17 anything has happened about that court case. One of those alleged people was that leader  
18 of the Youth Groups, Joe, I can't remember his name now, but he was killed in a car  
19 accident in Edendale - but he certainly was one of those that was named by the Magistrate  
20 in Howick as being very, very - well suspectedly implicated in the situation, and to this  
21 day, of course, Sarmcol really has not recovered adequately from the Mpophomeni story  
22 from the Sarmcol strike. Try as they might, they were never successful.

23  
24 End of the tape.