

- J.F. O.K., can I start by asking you where you were born and when you were born?
- M. I was born in the Freestate - town called Hebron (Haybron) 049 1957. *Heilbron?*
- J.F. And what kind of place was it - on a farm?
- M. It's just a small dorp in the Freestate - small town.
- J.F. So it was a township of a white?
- M. Yes, there was a township there called Peridona.
- J.F. And what did your parents do?
- M. My father was a worker at a milling company, and my mother was a domestic worker.
- J.F. He was at a what company?
- M. A milling company - Apol (<sup>Epol</sup>?) 056 I think they call it.
- J.F. And when you were growing up did you - were they very political with you - did they speak about politics overtly?
- M. In fact, I wouldn't say they were talking politics at all, because all that I remember I used to understand is just normal problems that they have as workers, and the whites as the employers.
- J.F. So how did they see whites - did your mother speak about the white women she worked for and - in terms that indicated that she had - that she didn't - that it was a bad relationship - did they speak about whites as the oppressor or the enemy, or how did they feel about whites?
- M. They were talking in terms of being regarded as semi human beings, and they had to beg in their places of employment, for instance, Whenever they would be getting to work in the morning, they would always be expected to say : Morro Baas, Morro Missus - if they don't do that they would be fired - that type of thing, and they would always have to be on their knees begging all the time, and they would be treated like nothing - that was the attitude as far as I remember them explaining it.
- J.F. But did they say that with bitterness - did they say : look at what we have to put up with, or was that just - did they accept it, or how did they feel?
- M. I didn't hear ...
- J.F. Did they accept it, or were they saying it with bitterness - that this is nonsense that we have to do, or did they say, : Look, this is the way it is in South Africa - did they accept it, or were they bitter.
- M. My father sort of accepted it, because he was saying it's just like that and it's tough in the world. But the mother was a little bit more emotional, and felt that that wouldn't take it at all and would be referring to them as blood suckers.

- J.F. Was that the word she used?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. What African language did you speak at home?
- M. Zulu.
- J.F. So what's the word in Zulu?
- M. You see, because she grew up with English people, working, as a young lass, the same time \*African people, she used to talk very mixed up language, so she was saying blood suckers in English - she was fairly conversant with English and Afrikaans - \*Afrikaans - some people even thought that she was coloured. That's why her only name was Selina, and no other name, but nobody knew exactly where she came from, but she said she was adopted by some whites somewhere in the rural areas countryside of Tabanju, and she came round Hailbron working on farms, then thereafter on some plot, and then she came to work as a domestic worker in town at Hailbron, so nobody knew exactly where she came from, and up until now I've never seen or heard of any of her relatives, or people who knew where she came from.
- J.F. So she didn't have an African surname?
- M. She didn't, but she had stayed with some people about ten kilometers from Hailbron, on a farm, and they gave her a surname of Mutembu, but she was not Mutembu at all.
- J.F. So when you said she was adopted by some whites - you mean they were good to her, or they just put her on as a labourer?
- M. In fact, they just put her on as a labourer, because she explained that she worked when she was as young as six, and she was told that her mother had died when she was three months or so, so she didn't know exactly where she came from.
- J.F. Tell me your full name?
- M. Mangezi Radebe. Mongezi Radebe.
- J.F. And so when you were growing up did you get bitter - did you accept that your parents were treated that way, or did you think : Who is this white madame who's treated my mother so badly - how did you come to have any - what feelings did you have about the way they were treated?
- M. In fact, I was always of the (.....) 114 that they were very cruel people, who seemed to enjoy doing down other people, and seemed to derive pleasure from hurting people - that was always my understading of white people in the Freestate where I was born, and I didn't like them at all because of my perception of them as such.
- J.F. And did you work as you were growing up - did you - you went to school there - were you sent away to school.
- M. Yes, I was supposed to have started school at the age of seven, but because my priest was semi literate - couldn't write properly, he made a mistake in writing out my birth certificate ....

- M. .... and I was told that I did not qualify to start at Sub A we call it - it should be Grade A or Grade 1, I don't know how it's called in other schools, but we call it Sub A - so I started schooling at the age of eight instead of seven, because when I was taken to a preliminary school I was told that I looked old enough to go to a primary school, and the primary school there said according to my birth certificate I could not start - I was only six, and they wanted people who - they started with kids who were seven, so I started working for white people, in the gardens, when I was in Standard Two, because there was not enough money for me to attend school, so I had to work after school, maybe upon stands (?) 139 and when school would be out at two, at about three I would be in the gardens until six - until half past six or so - then earning about 1 Rand fifty or two Rand a month, so I worked like that until I did Standard Eight, still working when I came from school and during vacational days - that's briefly.
- J.F. And as you were growing up did your parents never discuss politics - do you have any early memories of ever hearing the A.N.C. discussed, or hearing anything specifically about politics, or was that not in your home?
- M. In my home nothing at all, but in that township we had some granny called Mankele, who used to help us, for instance, mend our clothing, give us some old clothing - that type of thing, and she used to tell us a lot about black history, and later on when I was at secondary level, I started understanding that she - from explanations - that she had been a member of the A.N.C., and she knew people like (.....) Mandela (160) Walter Sesulu, Mbeki, Kathrara, Albert Lutule - she was working with them, and she had been sent to Hailbron under banishment, and it had since been uplifted, but she was still non to leave the town - Hailbron - so she used to explain a lot of these things - what it was like - what they were doing in the womens league - what A.N.C. was in the initial stages - when it became militant when the young ones like (.....) Mandela 169 came into it - these type of things, and was explaining its historical significance and why we should be proud of it, and why we should take on from where they've left - type of thing - and that's how we started understanding a lot of things politically.
- J.F. When you say (.....) 173 - I know the name but .....
- M. (.....) (Don't expect me to put this down - I wouldn't know where to start!) - it's Re
- J.F. I know that, but you don't say Nelson - did you always say (.....) instead of Nelson.
- M. Yes, she always talked like that and ...
- J.F. But what language did she speak?
- M. She was Tsutu speaking - (.....) 178 Tsutu speaking.
- J.F. Is that r-e-l-e?
- M. (.....) 179 that's Mamokhele.

- J.F. I thought you were saying Mama.
- M. That's Mama, but in Tsutu you say Mamokhele.
- J.F. And so her surname was Khele?
- M. Mokhele.
- J.F. Mokhele ....
- M. Was her surname yes.
- J.F. I see. So have you ever seen her since then - have you ever seen anything written about her in books, or was she just one of many FEDSO women or
- M. I would say she was many of the rank and file in those organisations.
- J.F. So was it just a select few people who came to listen to her speak, or did she influence many people in the township?
- M. Because she was sort of restricted and people were always being intimidated, and told her that she was bad - people shouldn't talk to her, because it's a small dorp really, and people were not that politicised, they would always be afraid to even greet her or get into her yard because they thought they would be arrested or that type of thing, which simply means that she was rather isolated when she was still supposed to be free - mix with people, but she had very few friends.
- J.F. Why weren't you - were you ever scared when you first met her?
- M. I was not, because I did not have a clear perception, maybe, of detention and arrests, and I'd not at any point in time at all think of a (.....) 203 person who could land in jail - that type of thing - I'd never had such thoughts, which explains why I did not fear at all.
- J.F. Who introduced you to her - older kids - or did you meet her yourself?
- M. I would say his son - Tabo Makhele - he's in Lesotho now - Maseru. Whenever he would be coming to Hailbron he would be friendly with everybody, and sometimes would take us in his car to his home. It was just incidental that I came to know of her. She was not going about recruiting people or talking to people in an organised fashion.
- J.F. And how far were you from Lesotho - how far was Hailbron from Lesotho?
- M. I think it's about 700 kilos.
- J.F. And what - you spoke Zulu in the home?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. But the people in that area - are they Zulu speaking?
- M. They are predominantly Tsutu speaking.

- J.F. So there's always talk in South Africa about this tribalism thing - was there differences that your family spoke Zulu and most people spoke Tsutu, or did that not matter?
- M. Well, that did not matter, although the system had divided people on ethnic grounds. We had some sections (226) that was called Zonde, or Zulu section. We had another section that was a Tsutu section - (.....) 227 but people were just intermingled, and we did have another place that we called Jhonsabek (229) that was a Coloured area, but people were just living together, and they had no problems at all.
- J.F. And they were allowed to live together that way?
- M. Yes - it was only, I think, about eight years ago that Coloureds were moved to a strictly Coloured area called Sandersville, and in the initial stages, after they moved to that new township, I mean, we would be told that by nine o'clock we should be in our own township and not in that, and we were not allowed to sleep in Coloured townships - in that Coloured township, because we did not have permission to stay in that township, it was said, so that's when there became some differences between Africans and Coloureds - so called Coloureds. It was only after they had been physically removed from other people that there became problems, but they weren't actually that pronounced at all, but there were some petty differences.
- J.F. And so then you had that one influence of the one granny - were there other influences on you politically back then - you had the granny that was educating you, but were there any other influences politically? (He didn't hear first time)
- M. Yes, I would say so, because even a teacher called (.....) 257 he's late now - he used to talk a lot about history, and saying what we were studying at school was history from the white man's side, and it's not true history at all, and would even make examples where, for instance, in text book history by some African whites (South African) 264 for instance, in the instances of stock farmers, whenever they would be raiding Xosas in the Cape, taking their cattle, their stock, they would use terms such as capturing, and when it's Xosas who are taking them in a war situation - taking cattle, capturing them - they would be using stealing them - that type of thing, and again, when they would be going out, provoking, attacking Xosas, they would be saying they're out on punitive expeditions, but when Xosas would be out on punitive expeditions, they would be saying they were aggressors attacking them, you know, because they're aggressors, and they are blood hungry - animals, type of thing, so we used to see such terms ourselves in our text books and we'd say : You should know that it's just completely biased and distorted version of history, and it's not history at all. That's where we became more interested in politics and at school, particularly history, and we were critical of it, and that's how we were politicised in the initial stages.
- J.F. But were there any organisations that you were involved with?

- M. There were no political organisations at all : Correction - There were no organisations at all - there were no organisations at all - it was only 1974 that there was established a youth organisation called Young Christian Association.
- J.F. Young Christian students?
- M. No, it was a youth league of the Young Women Christian Association.
- J.F. The Y.W.C.A.
- M. Yes - they had youth that they called YACA - Young African Christian Associations - Young African Christian Association, and they became branch organiser thereof - it had its head offices in Bloemfontein.
- J.F. You became branch organiser?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. Had you been to Bloemfontein much before?
- M. Only twice during conferences of that (this - the) 307 (Someone talking on the 'phone) - that was my first time of getting to Bloemfontein. Then we would be visiting, for instance, Kroenstaad - that's also in the Freestate, and that's where we started getting some experience of organised mini politics - I would explain them as such.
- J.F. So it wasn't just church issues you were involved with - (Repeat) - it was also political issues?
- M. Well, the leadership was trying to limit it to just church and simple community projects, such as help yourself projects, teaching the young ones in townships to be self-responsible and respect elders - that type of thing, but we were more interested in politics and we felt that it was not political enough, so we did have some problems with that the, because 1975 there were a lot of political events that were exposed to us, like for instance, the events of Maputo, and like, for instance the events of Angola and they would fight - Angola and the S.A.D.F., so we wanted to talk more and more and more and more about politics, and it was only talking about Christianity and help yourself projects - fearing God, elders, that type of thing, and in 1975 we felt that we should resign from it because we felt that it was serving no purpose at all, but in terms of the wars now, organisational activity there don't be at all (343)
- J.F. So then what happened - did you go on to work, or to study or - how did you come to leave the Hailbron township? When was that?
- M. After completing Standard Eight to go J.C., I went to Kroenstaad to do JMB - it's Joint Matriculation (353) and that's where I came into contact with the young Christian workers, and I joined it, and that's where I learned about a little bit of trade unionism - young workers ...
- J.F. You learned about what?

M. Trade unionism, and that's where I, at the same time, came to understand organisational structures, of awareness - promoting awareness - doing things in a very well structured organisational fashion, and for instance, their simple slogan is : See, judge, and act.

We were introduced into looking at things with open minds, open eyes, open ears, and being very objective and not just passively, but with the sole purpose of doing something about it - that's where, maybe, our political awareness was sort of nurtured and increased, but .....

END OF SIDE ONE.

M. ... but there was a clamp down by the system on young Christian workers, and they detained me twice whilst I was doing Standard Ten, and thereafter they arrested some leaders of the Young Christian Workers who were actually of the Roman Catholic denomination, and it was later told in court that they were busy experimenting on making bombs and they were planning to sabotage railways, and like (Very bad piece of tape here) and they seemed to have evidence, and it was said that it was a very severe organisation, and there was a clamp down and people in Kroenstaad were very much afraid of belonging to the Young Christian Workers, and that's when - it came to an end, I think, in 1978.

J.F. Was that true - what they said about (.....) 419 - you said they seemed to have evidence.

M. I would say there were some comrades who were very involved, but not as Young Christian Workers members as such - as individuals with some advanced political activity in the township, and they happened to be members of the Young Christian Workers at the same time. Of course, any activists worth his salt will always be in touch with organisations in his community, and that's how they came into Young Christians - maybe to mobilise, that type of thing, but it was not the work of the Young Christian Workers as a church organisation.

J.F. When you say that you learned to see, judge act thing, does that mean that before you were never taught that you should see and try to change your society.

M. Well, people used to talk about those things, but in an unmethodical fashion, and it never had any significant impact on me, but in the Young Christian Workers it was the emphasis of their lectures all the time, and we came to adopt it as our slogan and as our way of life, but before then people used to just sound out concern, and the need to be involved and participate, but they never were methodical about emphasising this. It was only in the Young Christian Workers that the methods they were applying there, and their singling out that particular slogan, that it became very, very significant to me, and I adopted it as a way of life.

J.F. And how did that relate politically - was that something that was -

- J.F. ... was that something that had effect on you in a political way - that see, judge, act?
- M. .... I don't quite follow.
- J.F. Did that - when you were talking about the see, judge, act method - did that affect you politically - did you use it in a political way, do you think?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. How would that be.
- M. For instance, we - I started being aware of the need to do something about the lack of shelters for commuters in the township, because you would find, on rainy days a lot of people waiting for buses there, and no shelter being provided by bus companies, and then we would be thinking in terms of erecting shelters there - maybe shacks - or anything - that those people should have shelters, and we would be concerned about those elderly people who've got no one to look after them - who live alone in their houses and yards being dirty and so on - that we need to do something to help as much as we could - something that we did not quite get clearly before we got into the Young Christian Workers.
- J.F. What - before you might have thought : There's nothing I can do?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. Now, when you were back with the other Christian organisation, were there whites involved in that other Christian group?
- M. The Young Christian Workers ...
- J.F. No, before Y.C.W. - that you ..
- M. No, I had never seen a white person at all in Y.W.C.A.
- J.F. And in Y.C.W. were there whites.
- M. Yes, there were these church priests.
- J.F. And they were white?
- M. Yes, they were white.
- J.F. Now, had you ever had contact with whites before in that way?
- M. No, which had made me a little bit uncomfortable, but because of the teachings of that granny in the township - Hailbron, I mean - I understood that there are people who are to be regarded - who must be regarded as people, irrespective of their colour, and that there are others that are not good at all, as my parents had early (470) been explain to me, but I understood that it was not because of their colour that they are like that - it was because of their being what they are as human beings of that kind, not because of their colour, so I found it easy to work with those white priests in the Young Christian Workers.
- J.F. So that granny said that - about non racialism?



- M. She talked about that, and even talked about the problems that were there, and even explained to that (.....) 475 himself - Correction : and even explained that (.....) himself (Mandela) did have some reservation about whites, when he was from home, I think, in the rural areas, somewhere in the Homelands, he did have some reservations about whites, but as you grow, politically - as you mature, you learn to accept people as they are, not as symbols of colour as such, so those are things that I had understood from her.
- J.F. And when she said that, way back then, was that when you were in your teens.
- M. Yes, I was - not my teens as such because I was at secondary.
- J.F. So how old would you have been when you first met the granny?
- M. I think I was about nineteen ..
- J.F. About nineteen - like, say '76 or something?
- M. I would say '73/'74 - maybe about seventeen or sixteen years.
- J.F. And did that - when she first spoke to you about non racialism, did that seem a bit odd - I mean, you were living in the Free-state - every white you ever saw must have been quite racist - have you ever met a white who was not racist? (Had you ever...)
- M. No, not in that little dorp, but she had talked about comrades such as the late Braam Fisher, and she had talked about comrade Slovo (493) whom she had also described as a very good lawyer, and she had talked about again, comrade Goldberg, and that came to make sense, but first I couldn't understand it - that how could a white person die for me, for my struggle - what business did he have in my struggle, when he was a free man, had his own vote, he had everything - why did he die for me? Then it became important when she explained that it was because there was a democrat - peace loving democrat - freedom loving democrat, who felt that he was not free until you were free, too. Then I understood those things, and decided that I'd have no problem to get into the Young Christian Workers.
- J.F. And what did you think of those white priests?
- M. I found them to be completely non racial and couldn't find any traces of racism their side at all, although I had my reservations about them politically, because I found them to be too moderate and it was as if we were sort of expected to turn the other cheek when we were being smacked - that type of thing - when you thought that it was making us rather too humble and we would never stand up and fight for our rights if we thought that was the attitude that we were to adopt, and I did not actually like them at all, politically speaking, but as human beings they were O.K.
- J.F. But you liked Y.C.W.?

- M. The work that it was doing in Kroenstaad - I really liked it.
- J.F. It wasn't too moderate - the work - or were there blacks also who weren't moderate.
- M. I would say blacks, in my opinion, are never moderate, but they've got a way of pretending to be accepting things, whereas inside they are boiling, so in Kroenstaad I understood them to be people just like in my community in Hailbron - that they were not moderate, but they had learned to accept things that they don't like, superficially, but knowing very well that deep down in their hearts, they think the very opposite that they are showing out, so I wouldn't say they were moderate at all.
- J.F. Is this the blacks in Kroenstaad, or the Y.C.W. blacks?
- M. I would say blacks in Kroenstaad, including those in the Young Christian Workers.
- J.F. So, I'm a bit confused about why you liked Y.C.W. if you thought the priests were too moderate - were there some good blacks in it who weren't so moderate - what was good about Y.C.W. if the priests - the priests weren't the good part?
- M. I'd been exposed to its black leadership ..
- J.F. In Kroenstaad?
- M. In Kroenstaad - people such as Peace Modico (531) for instance, a young lady who was detained later on for a very long period, and those were people who were very committed to the struggle, in my opinion, and at the same time, we had been to what they called the head office of the Young Christian Workers in Springs, and I saw people like, for instance, Mulakhlekhle, who was always banned - always detained - even told not to go to bioscopes, that type of thing, and he was a young guy, and I remember Siya (539 - I thought he had skipped the country - now all these things showed me that there were some good people in the Young Christian Workers, who were not representative of what the priests stood for, but that isn't why I was not angry with them - it was because I understood them to be priests and I didn't expect anything more than priesthood from them.
- J.F. Are you, and were you then, a very religious person?
- M. I'm not actually religious, but I'm from a religious family obviously.
- J.F. So were you religious then - when you joined Y.C.W.?
- M. No.
- J.F. Then why did you join - why did you join a Christian group?

- M. It was because it was introduced to me as a youth political organisation, and not as a church organisation at all.
- J.F. And you were looking for an organisation and there was nothing else?
- M. Yes, and its attachment to the Roman Catholic Church - it was explained that its founder was a Kadain (553) I think so ..
- J.F. A what (I think)
- M. I think, a Kadain - he's called Kadain - his name is Kadain - whether it's Joseph Kadain - I don't remember his first name, but I remember that it was Kadain - I think he was born in Belgium, I think 1822 or so, but I've just forgotten its history - its origin - that he was Roman Catholic and since then the Roman Catholic had always been interested in giving very sound education to its youth in its churches all over, and its just educational programme which gives meaning to Christianity, as the type of religion that cares for the poor and suffering and the down-trodden, and the Roman Catholic Church, through its educational programmes, organisations such as Young Christian Workers, was actually giving expression to that realisation that God is on the side of the poor, down-trodden, suffering.
- I found it to be quite logical, although it didn't actually appeal that much to me in a religious way, but it made sense in the way it was explained to me, and whenever we were there, Bible wouldn't be discussed at all, and there were no church rituals that were conducted - that type of thing, because I was not Roman Catholic Church - I was always Zionist. My parents were always\*Zionists (575) so that I had gone there for that organisation and not for the actual (.....) 576 As a result I found no problem because they were not discussing the church at all, but just community problems, and how we should respond to them - methods of going about it, and that was all. \*Razanian (Could be)
- J.F. Were you Z.C.C. - that's not Zionist - what's it called.
- M. It's called Apostolic Church in Zion - it's an Apostolic Church.
- J.F. Was your family very religious?
- M. Yes, very religious.
- J.F. And you didn't get in any way turned off about religion - did you have any feelings about religion and politics - did you ever think that religion was trying to tell you not to be political, or did you ever think your parents spent too much with religion and not enough with politics - how did you feel about it?
- M. In fact, at secondary level my going to church with my parents made me realise that the priest was pushing some kind of propaganda of humility that, for instance, Vorster, who was then Prime Minister, was put there by God, and to defy him is to defy God, and any problems we have, God will solve them for us, that type of thing. Then I always found the church to be .....

- M. .... completely irrelevant and as if it didn't care at all about my problems, because it was always talking about me as a spiritual being, and saying : My physical being is nothing, because it's only a blanket that I live on earth : Correction - leave on earth. It'll rot, and it's the soul, the spirit in me that is important - that is the human being that they care for, and that must be saved for Jesus Christ, that type of thing, but then it didn't make sense to me because I saw myself as a physical being, and not a spiritual being at all, and if the church was talking about saving me, as a spiritual being, saving my soul for Jesus Christ, then I thought : Well, of course, if Jesus Christ saves my soul, then it'll have my soul, but I'm physical being, and if he doesn't care for me physically, then why should I care for a church (.....) 612 it.
- It was only in the Young Christian Workers, sometimes from talking to people - they were saying : No, it was not like that. You were made in the image of God - you are God's child - you as yourself, flesh and spirit, you are God's creation - God cares for you just as you are - it was a different interpretation altogether, but it had little impact on me, because I grew up having quite some negative attitude towards the church because of how it was explained to us, from childhood's (.....) 621 and I grew up understanding (622) very well that he didn't care for us at all - even if I could ask our priest a question that he regarded to be political he would never answer, but he would be quoting some relevant verses from the Bible, and thereafter say : Let us pray. It would be so boring.
- (This chap seems to have a cold or 'flu. He very often doesn't finish his sentence off, so one either takes a guess or leaves a row of dots. He also sounds as if he is growling in some places - due to tape or what, I don't know. Third problem, there has been someone in the background on the 'phone - hope he's finished now. However, I've done my best so far to get it as correct as possible, and will continue likewise! One last thing - when I can understand, to some degree, a person or place name, I try to put it in, but spelling is probably way off!)
- J.F. How long were you in Kroenstaad - when did you leave Kroenstaad?
- M. I was there for only two years - I think '77/'78.
- J.F. ... backtrack for a second - where were you in '76 - in Hailbron?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. Did you know about what was happening with the uprisings - the Soweto uprisings that went throughout the country.
- M. Yes, because it did affect us because I was a chief prefect in 1976, and people did riot - peoples did riot, and that is why they did riot - it was because it was happening in Soweto, so if they were not doing what peoples in Soweto were doing, it would appear that they were skaapies (639) or they were dong (639) they were daro (639) that's the language we use - so to show that they were not daro (Dull) 640 they were also clever, if I could put it that way.

- J.F. They also what?
- M. They were also clever - they had to do just like Soweto did, of course, having legitimate grievances, just like the kids of Soweto.
- J.F. And how did you hear about Soweto - through the papers, or through people telling you?
- M. Through people telling us, and at the same time papers, because as J.C. students we were given newspapers by our English teachers, that we should read in the little library we used to have : Correction : that we should read, and even in the little library we used to have newspapers all the time, so we used to read about these things, and even teachers would be sounding out that we shouldn't follow those bad examples of those irresponsible students in Soweto, and people would want to find out more about what is happening there.
- J.F. And when you say people told you - did people come down from Soweto or who told you.
- M. No, no, there were no people who came from Soweto.
- J.F. So who told you - when you said to me that you heard about it from other people - who were the ones who told you about Soweto?
- M. In the township, and the teachers themselves trying to warn us beforehand not to do likewise.
- J.F. So was Soweto an important influence, or was it just one - was it a big thing - '76, June 16th, and all the time after that - was it important in your political development?
- M. Very, very important indeed, because there came to be a lot of rumours about (.....) 664 (Dzidzi Mashimini - that's what it sort of sounds like) and he became a hero - a political hero of peoples all over South Africa, and everybody who wanted to show that was aware (668) politically would always be quoting Dzidzi Mashini's name to show that it was aware, type of thing, it was fashionable - it did have a very serious impact, and from there, even the hatred for the Afrikaans (African's) 674 language then became very significantly pronounced. At Hailbron, for instance, text books that were used for history, geography and maths - they were written in Afrikaans, and they were not new text books. They were from a local white school - old books that were to be burned - they were dumped at our school for our consumption, so teachers who were not very conversant with Afrikaans would be trying to interpret those books, like for instance, the maths teacher teaching maths would always be trying to teach in English, but reading from a book written in Afrikaans. And geography and arithmetic - it was forced - it was enforced - we were compelled to study that in Afrikaans, but after '76 peoples started fighting all over against Afrikaans, and it was fashionable and even teachers were agreeing that, of course, it became a serious problem in '76, so it will continue being so until things will be changed.

- J.F. And did you see '76 as an uprising against the whites?
- M. I would be saying yes, because people were not against Afrikaans as a language and in abstraction - not in the abstract at all, because they were saying the language of the oppressor in the mouth of the oppressed is the language of slaves - meaning that they were referring, in my opinion, to the white oppressor that they hated so much - that his language is unacceptable at all to them. More so, it was not an international language, so it was limiting one's chances as a student.
- J.F. I'm thinking about what the old granny told you about non racialism. Now when you saw that in Soweto whites were - blacks were confronting the white police - they were anti Afrikaans - many people just saw Soweto as black against white - did you see the Soweto uprisings as black against white?
- M. I saw it as black versus white, but not white as colour - white being coincidental to the pigmentation of the oppressor. It was black against the oppressor who incidentally happened to be white. That's how I understood it.
- J.F. Do you think you were different than other kids - do you think all your friends also saw it not as black against white?
- M. Many people did not understand it as I did - only those that we used to discuss these things with understood it that way, and many of them now came to be involved in COSAS in the Transvaal, and it was because of that base education, if I'm to term it that way. But generally people were against whites, and it was just as simple as that - against whites.
- J.F. Unlike you?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. Did you ever try to tell people : No, it's not against whites - it's the ruling classes, the oppressor, or whatever, or did you just figure that you'd just leave it alone (743) did you challenge them and try to educate.
- M. That I used to do, but it was meaningless because what was popular during those days was that that uprising against whites. If you say : But you need to be very logical and be very accurate, analytically speaking, they would say : But whites are whites, and you can't say that there's a better Mlungu and a bad Mlungu - they're all the same. That was the argument - it was popularly expressed that way, and even in Soweto that's how it was expressed predominantly.
- J.F. So did you just give up - it was just too hard to speak about it?
- M. No, I never gave up, because we always talked about it, and I derived pleasure from explaining there because I was actually proud that I understood it from a person who was much, much experienced, and who I regarded as a veteran in politics, and I always felt that I need to sort of give light to the people who haven't yet seen it, so I was never tired of explaining all these things .....

J.F. What does that mean actually?

M. Well, to say that we are looking forward to a future non racial South Africa, what I think is being meant is that there'll be no apartheid at all, there'll be no discrimination of people - other people referring to other people in a derogatory manner on the basis of colour, race, creed and whatever, and people

will be regarded as people, not as symbols of colour, and even residentially there wouldn't be any need - that's how I understand this whole concept of non racialism - for one to stay, for instance, about 70 kilometers, or 100 kilometers away from your place of employment, even if you could find accommodation anywhere conveniently near to your place of employment, but

because of apartheid you must be separated from another person, simply because of your different colours, and then you must go and stay far away where that other person won't see you, maybe for some ten, twelve hours or so - that's how I understand it all. That there'll be no reference at all to a person as black,

white, Coloured or Indian - it's just be South African, and there'll be no need at all for people to be bombarded with propaganda of the Nazi's Herrenfolk (027) type of thing - that you are superior, I'm inferior - that's the type of discrimination that I think that will be completely eliminated in a future non racial South Africa.

J.F. What role do you see for whites?

M. I would say I don't think there will be any specific role for whites, because they will be regarded as ordinary human beings like any other human being, and anything that'll be expected of a human being it'll be expected of a human being or of a South African citizen, irrespective of colour race or creed, and there wouldn't be any specific or special expectations or responsibilities of maybe people who've : Correction : for maybe people of colour before whites.

J.F. When you look around you, especially the kind of people you grew up with in the Freestate - when you see racist employers - when you see the white Government officials, do you think to yourself some day they'll be living happily in a non racial South Africa?

M. It'll take some time to be normalised, but it will ultimately be the norm.

J.F. Your confident?

M. I'm sure of it, because the reason why it is regarded as something that will be a problem - it was because of today's experience, that seeing racial tensions as we are witnessing them today, they may still be there even after a war (046) Of course, in the early years of uhuru (047) and after uhuru, there'll still be problems to be solved, but ultimately people will be living together.

J.F. How do you see the change coming?

M. It'll basically have to be seriously encouraged by the governing power of the uhuru - after uhuru - that it must be made the sole responsibility, or the major responsibility of that state in power, that there must be education, there must be encouragement, there must be committed direction towards eradication ...

- M. .... towards the eradication of all those elements of racism that were created by the Pretoria regime.
- J.F. How do you see the change from apartheid to a free South Africa coming - do you think it will be through a bloody revolution - how would you put it in your words?
- M. I would say what will be a bloody revolution, in my opinion, will be the struggle for the total destruction of the Pretoria regime - that is going to need a revolution that it should be possible, but that people of different colours should live together as human beings, it won't need a revolution at all, because what made it very difficult and almost impossible for the majority of people in South Africa, of different colours, to live together as ordinary human beings, it was because of the Pretoria regime that endorsed racism - even went to the extent of putting it into their statutes, and making it a crime for people to live harmoniously as people, irrespective of colour, and the question of the time factor did actually contribute very seriously to that - that for many years now people have been living like that and we people, young ones who were born maybe in the fifties - we were born in a situation where there was apartheid - we grew up that way - it became a way of life, as if it's dictations of nature that we live as we do - some people take it to be like that, to an extent that some people can't even imagine that it can be possible that people should live together as human beings, irrespective their different colours.
- J.F. This is my last question - people often talk about the lessons of the fifties - do you worry that non racial organisation can be crushed now as it was then - do you think that there's going to be a chance that what the state is doing now may derail organisation, and cause great lull and lack of activity as there was from 1960?
- M. I do not think that it'll be like that, because just now the entire country is on fire, and it is clear, numerically and otherwise, that the level of participation, the level of awareness have increased tremendously, so much that the Pretoria minority regime wouldn't ask about (ousted out) 106 this force at all. In the fifties, I do agree that they - there had been a very serious clamp down on progressive forces, and thereafter there had been some periodical lull - temporarily I mean, but this time, because of the level of awareness amongst the masses, and because of the level of participation, the Government will have to arrest the whole nation before they can expect a lull for some years before there can be the starting of another uprisings - they'll have to arrest the whole nation - that's my opinion, and by, for instance, arresting and killing, and though they're not using banning methods frequently now, all these tactics that they are employing now will not stop the people - will not put them in some sleep of some kind, or some lull at all. Whether the others Bobutera 124 Gumede or whoever, the revolution will go on, because really now what is happening is, in my opinion, the initial stages of a revolution, and once it has started, it is my well considered opinion that the Government can't arrest revolution at all - it'll always be out there in the streets.



J.F. How long is it going to take?

M. What.

J.F. How many years before the Government topples?

M. To me it won't be more than seven years at most. In two to three years from now, the Government of today shall have changed into something that (.....) 136 Boer boys in the farmers or somewhere will not know what the : Correction - what type of government he's voting for any more, because their leaders are confused - they don't know what they're doing, and very soon,

as it has been shown in the papers and everywhere, they'll be coming up with a lot of confused concessions that will drag them deeper and deeper into hyper(something) 143 confusion until they crumble down like a house of cards, if they won't be seasoned enough to negotiate now with our leaders - that they release the Mandelas in prison, and they call back the Tambos beyond our borders, and come to a national convention.

It'll be advantageous to the Pretoria regime now because they'll be, in my opinion, negotiating from a position of power, but if they are going to adopt the die-hard type of attitude like Smith in former Rhodesia, they're going to go out of South Africa and be thrown into the rubbish bin of history, just like Smith - that's my opinion.

J.F. I have some more last questions - do you think that this whole hours that we've been talking with all my questions is at all worth while - do think I have a kind of a hang up about whites and blacks, or do you think it's useful to eliminate the issue of non racialism?

M. I think it had been some worthwhile exercise that helped me to bring into perspective all that I think about my country, and to bring into perspective again, whether I still remember clearly exactly what I think about my country, and deriving pleasure from explaining as an oppressed worker in South Africa to people like you, who will be telling, maybe the world about what people

think in South Africa about their South Africa, and about the future of their country - I think it's worth it - it wasn't a waste of time at all.

J.F. And I'm just wondering if you had any thoughts about - did you expect yourself to be detained during the State of Emergency - do you think being a trade unionist gave you some protection?

M. If they could detain the comrade (.....) 181 (Mandela) - Mandela as a very respected leader, as a qualified man of law and a man of integrity, I think I'm nothing compared to the comrade, and being a trade unionist means nothing. Even being a priest. The Fascist Pretoria regima will stop at nothing

to try and - in their desperate attempt to cling onto this falling tree, so I don't think that I'm protected in any way whatsoever, which is the reason why I do not sleep at my place frequently. I think I sleep there about twice or thrice in a month, and that way I think it may be one of the reasons why I'm still free, but I do not think that it's because of my being a trade unionist that I'm still free, because as a trade unionist I spent more than four months in solitary confinement whilst being a trade unionist - it didn't save me at all, so I don't .....

- M. .... think why it could this time.
- J.F. Another thing I thought of to ask you was your parents - are they still alive?
- M. No, they're both late now.
- J.F. And the people back in the Hailbron township - do you go back there at all?
- M. I do, but only maybe once or twice in six months.
- J.F. When you've gone back have you seen any change - you talked about how it was apolitical then - what's the name of the township?
- M. That's Hailbron.
- J.F. No, the township.
- M. The township is Peridona.
- J.F. Speritona.
- M. Peridona.
- J.F. Peritona, right. Are the people in Peritona at all changed - are they still quite behind the times - are they still quite not political.
- M. I find them to be the direct opposite of what they were in 1972. They are very, very politically involved now and they even have very militant youth organisation there, and I was surprised, for instance, I was from another township called Zonde, that I met a large group of school kids singing Oliver Tambo, Mandela, and it was after burning down the school there, and attacking their principals home - the very guy that I said was in form (221) his home was also attacked and his car was burned, but he was not in the township that day, so everywhere, even small dorps like Bothaville, which may be having about 900 people, there've been a lot of uprisings there - kids attacking Government installations and burning down homes of those that they regard as Government stooges - dorps that would never have thought that would come up - and it's always the UDF, all over.
- J.F. You're a leader in a community - if there were people trying to burn down the house of a community councillor - are there any community councillors left in Sharpville now?
- M. No.
- J.F. No, but if there was someone - a suspected informer, and they were trying to burn him or attack him physically to kill him, would you try to stop them?
- M. In fact, as a leader, in my presence, I would always stop it for many, many reasons, because the system could turn around and say my presence there incited people to do that, because they regard me, maybe, as a Communist or something, and besides that, the system would regard me as some anarchist who would gladly watch a person dying, but when it has happened in my absence, and the reasons being advanced being reasons that are ...

- M. .... aiming at ensuring some form of security for our struggle for liberation to survive, and they realised, I would always be frank enough to say it had to be done, just like in a war situation where you may say : I had to kill, because there was a war, but if there were no war I wouldn't have killed - just like that.
- J.F. What's the population of Peritona?
- M. I think it's about 3,000 people - not more than 3,000 I think.
- J.F. Was there any industry in Hailbron?
- M. Very small - just a milk industry - some (.....) 264 industry, a factory, and there's a coal little mine some few miles outside Hailbron - it's not so big.

END OF SIDE TWO.

- J.F. Did the B.C. point of view make it to Hailbron - did people find that that was a - an influence - did you hear about B.C. - did you hear about Biko in the early '70's or late '60's.
- M. In fact, Biko, like many people in South Africa, I came to hear of after his cruel murder in detention, otherwise, before then, we did not know a thing about him. The only thing that we had an idea of was the P.A.C. from the events of 1960, when they were burning passes, and we knew that they were saying Africans are on their own and whites were their enemies - we understood it as B.C.
- J.F. Did you like that philosophy - did you support it?
- M. Because I knew what P.A.C. was, and where it came from, I always regarded it as a run-away organisation from the main organisation, which was A.N.C., so what they did and what they stood for - it did not make sense at all, because this old lady again, had explained to me that P.A.C. was led by a hothead who would shout first and think thereafter, and who thought that the A.N.C. was led by Omakoko - the old ones - who were too dead alive to do anything, and who were cowards who were afraid to see blood being shed, and they thought they should do something. She explained them as that part of the A.N.C. that left before it was well cooked - she meant disciplined - and she made examples of their campaigns of hot-headedness that ended nowhere, and even further explained that I'll become an old man one day. P.A.C. will only exist in name, because that's exactly what P.A.C. is - only a name. And the A.N.C., she explained, was a government in exile, and after winning our struggle, that's the government that will be ruling, so I understood P.A.C. to be nothing but a splinter group, and she explained that they were very much in the minority, and the people of South Africa knew who their leaders were, and they knew exactly what their bandwagon to freedom was, and it was definitely not P.A.C.,.....

- M. .... so it didn't make sense at all to me what P.A.C. was standing for, and more so, when I was doing Matric I was exposed to some P.A.C. literature in Kroenstaad, and I found it to be quite racist, and reading it further, I found it to be, at the same time, rich, when it comes to African history, and I came to understand it as an organisation that may not be dismissed completely, everything that it's standing for, because it says a lot about our African history, our suffering as black men, under white oppressors, and their emphasis on going alone against the white racists, I came to understand it as an over-emphasis of the truth - that it is true that we are oppressed by whites, and we are black, but to exclude everybody - discriminate against everybody that'll never sit down with a person of - a white person simply because he's white, irrespective of what that person believes in standing for, and is proving to be practically, but because of the person's colour I'll reject that person - I regarded it as apartheid in reverse, and I came to regard P.A.C. people as advocates of apartheid in reverse - that apartheid is bitter when they are on the receiving end : Correction (I think) : that apartheid is better when they are on the receiving end, but it'll be very, very lucky (064) when they'll be meting out to whites - that's how I understand it.
- J.F. And did you ever meet a P.A.C. elder, like that A.N.C. granny - did you ever meet someone who had been in the P.A.C.?
- M. Yes, but it was late, whilst I was in Kroenstaad. At the end of 1979, I met one old father, whom I came to know later on as an old member of P.A.C. before it was banned, and the way he explained P.A.C. principles, I came to understand that it was anti communism, and one of its many arguments against A.N.C. when they split off was because A.N.C. was dominated by communists, and they felt that Africans must lead their own struggles, and communists must not be allowed in the organisation - must not be allowed to play any leading roles in the organisation at all, and at the same time, he explained that they were also white - whether you want to say they are red, whatever, they are white people - they are not of African origins - it didn't make sense at all. When I asked him about socialism within the context of Marx-Leninism, he said to me that those are foreign concepts. In Africa we talk about Ubuntu - Humanism - we talk about communalism, and we lived as not socialists, but communalists, and those foreign concepts must not be allowed to adulterate our struggle, and we must talk about nkomozi (096) too - our cattle, our land should be taken back from the dispossessor, who's the white man. At that stage I had a fair perception of the class struggle, and what he talked didn't make sense at all to me. It was as if he was preaching some form of traditionalism that I was totally opposed to, and I know that it could be wrong to say that person represented the P.A.C., and it was accurate - P.A.C. views, but that's more or less what P.A.C. is about, though maybe not most accurately now, but that's more or less what it's about.

- J.F. You don't have to spend so much time, because there's much more important things I want to ask you about, but just to wrap it up, just give me a quick answer ... so you didn't have - would you say you were totally uninfluenced by B.C. - you heard about Biko after he died - B.C. didn't come to Hailbron at all - you didn't find that it was a stage that made you feel proud of being black, or any of those things - you just didn't have any influence?
- M. I would say B.C. as a philosophy I was never exposed to, but all that I know was that, as blacks we must not feel inferior to whites, and that I got from my parents - I got from that old lady - I got from some many people in the community, and it was not because of B.C. philosophy. In the Freestate, particularly, there was no B.C. at all - there was no political movement at all except, for instance, in Bethlehem, in Bloemfontein, where A.N.C. had been active before it was banned. There was no B.C. at all. Maybe when getting down to Port Elizabeth, and in the Transvaal, there were some strong influences of B.C. as a philosophy, but my experience in the Freestate - it had never been a force at all, and I had never known it as a - known of it as a philosophy at all.
- J.F. And how did you feel - didn't you ever ask that old lady - so many people have said that they thought that the A.N.C. had died from '60 to maybe even '75, or the late '70's - when you were learning from her in the '70's, did you ever say to her: But where is the A.N.C. - why isn't it here - what is this lull - they always talk about the lull in the '60's - is the movement dead?
- M. In fact, what I understood was that it had been banned, and when it was banned it meant that it went underground, and it meant that even anyone with A.N.C. aspirations would keep quiet - would keep it in his chest, and it's only when it'll be operating openly again that everybody will stand up and say: Yes, that's my organisation - but that's what she said, and to a certain extent, I still agree with her today, except that my experience today is that, because of more political activities in townships, everybody's talking about the A.N.C., and everybody's (.....) 145 identifying himself with the A.N.C. - its leadership and everybody, in the Congress Alliance and openly - on stages, funerals, everywhere A.N.C. flags being hoisted, type of thing - meaning that one can see today that A.N.C. is THE organisation, and very careful people don't talk, but now more and more people are becoming militant, and they talk a lot and openly, so I can see now that that lull - it was because it had to go underground, and its leadership had been detained, banned, killed, and there had to be some leadership vacuum, sort of, for some time, and today I understand why the B.C. came to be important - that it came at a time when there was that clamp down on progressive organisations and progressive leadership, and they came to occupy a position at a time when there was a lull, and sounding out the message that you may be bashed but your head must be unbowed, and never feel small.
- J.F. You may be what, but your head may be bowed?

- M. You may be bashed but your head should still be unbowed - never feel small - be proud - you're black - you should be proud of being black, that type of thing, and saying simply : You are black, you are oppressed by a white man, and we will fight and one day we will win - that was simple, and it was very appropriate language that should be used in communicating with the simple man in the street, in the initial stages, but more and more political education should enable people to grow, and not remain at the initial stages of awareness - that you are black, you are oppressed by white man, but increased political education must, of necessity, enable people to grow, and people should reach levels of analysing class struggle, and understanding class struggle - class analysis, and adopting it as a scientific method that must be adopted if we really want to have a firm foundation to determine a direction, and never go wrong - that's how I understand it.
- J.F. Let me just get some of the concrete things - you told me that you could see why there was the lull, but what concretely told you about the A.N.C. besides the granny, through the '70's, when you were in your teens - did you ever see A.N.C. literature, or when did you first see it - did you hear the radio or did you see any court cases, or - how did you actually know that it was actually still operating then?
- M. In fact, it was just through reading mostly, that I became to understand - I came to understand a lot of things ...
- J.F. Reading what?
- M. Newspapers and books, and even banned literature of course. : Correction : banned literature of course.
- J.F. Even in Hailbron was there banned literature?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. I'm interested because there all these stereotypes about the rural areas, and someone might hear me interview - some of the statements you make, people might say : Yes, well, that's some sophisticated urban guy, and in the rural areas people don't know about this - so I'm quite interested that it was going on in the rural areas, so would you say it was available freely in your area?
- M. I would say, if you may go on a farm, where people are completely illiterate, it is not impossible that you should come across an old A.N.C. book, or Communist Party book, or some political book that would be regarded as subversive by the system, and there are people who may not be very literate, but who'll always be in possession of good books - relevant books, progressive books, and when he trusts you he'll say : I see you are a man, and I want to show you something one day, and he shows you a very good book that you would never have thought that a person of that calibre would be in possession of such material - that's my experience in townships. I know, for instance, three people in - actually four in Hailbron whom I had never thought were politically aware - I always regarded them as hobos and drunkards, and who were good for nothing. I got friendly with one, and she gave me The Struggle's My Life, by (.....) 226

- M. .... Mandela, and he said she'll treasure ...
- J.F. He said what?
- M. He said she'll treasure - should keep it - doesn't read it any more, only drinks, but it's a good book - it'll make me a man. You do get such things, and again, one gave me Let My People Go, by Albert Lutule, and people that you would have - even worked at John Pearce - they were selling coal there - there's a white man selling coal there, and he was a delivery boy. I had never thought that he had been to school, and I knew him not to be in a position to read anything or write his name, but he gave me that book, so it was like that in townships all over.
- J.F. What about the radio - did you listen at all to Radio Freedom?
- M. I would say when I was doing Form Four, we used to listen to that, and sometimes we would even dodge getting to night preps, because we would be interested in those programmes that probably would be broadcasting at, sometimes nine, sometimes eight, depending on where we would be - getting them and they would always be finding out (249) very clear, so we used to listen to those, and we would get quite some good speeches by activists in these revolutionary organisations that would be quite good inspirations to us. It was when I was doing Form Four, but since Form Five, my little radio - I couldn't catch it any more - I didn't know what happened. It's an old type of radio.
- J.F. And the banned literature - was it Sachaba's (257) and things.
- M. Only when I was at Ngoya that I first came into contact with the struggle of late, in Natal.
- J.F. I should ask you chronologically, but since it's come up now - lots of whites - I mean everyone sees the material, but the whites who see it often say : Ag, it's so much propaganda, it's so much rhetoric, I'm sure no blacks are convinced by it - did you think it was worthwhile - did you think any of the stuff was basic things you already knew - the argument they say is this : It's terrible that people get this literature because it's going to cost them a jail sentence for what? What are they learning from one of these issues of those magazines?
- M. In fact, in my opinion, A.N.C. propaganda - it's been read like hot cakes, and even a lazy person - person who wouldn't read a thing, the minute you show him this is A.N.C., this is SACTU, this is the party - Communist Party, that person will be so keen on reading that, simply because the system denies us to read these things - anything denied makes people to be as curious as anything, and it's very, very voluble, in the sense that we are bombarded with the Pretoria regime's propaganda - distorted facts all the time, twisting our minds all the time, and if one gets an opportunity of getting something genuine, people who are politically aware, who are committed, will stop at nothing to get that and read that, irrespective what the consequences may be, and for instance, I know one guy who was arrested for being in possession of banned literature. He explained that even whilst in detention, he had a so good .....

M. .... memory in detention that he was surprised himself that how come he remembered all that he read in that literature (bad literature) (?) 302 and it inspired him that much, so people may say it's just piece of paper that means nothing, that you don't have to go to jail for, but it's of valuable importance to us and to our struggle, that, for instance, in the papers, over the radio, Pik Botha will be talking a lot of bullshit, and when, for instance, comrade Tambo is to answer, they say: Unfortunately, he cannot be quoted, so you only get Botha's version, and when they tell you what he says, only a certain portion that they take out of its context, and distorted, you get a - and these things we are aware of - even a simple man in the street knows that the system is twisting our minds, and they are telling us lies day in, day out, so the moment you get some piece of document, or anything that tells you the truth, you'll stop at nothing to get it, and you'll always be prepared to pay anything to get the truth - the truth is very important, which is the reason why people are prepared to die for the truth.

J.F. And to you it doesn't in any way seem exaggerated or it's rhetoric?

M. I don't quite catch ....

J.F. When you read the publications, they don't seem exaggerated or full of rhetoric, or anything like that?

M. Because I'm reading a lot of A.N.C., Nkontu, SACTU literature, every time I read anything they write, I read my experience, my daily experience, and I've never seen any piece of document that I thought was exaggerated. I always read about my experience as an oppressed person in South Africa, and everything that is being said there - it's my experience, and I feel - I know it's never exaggerated. It's only from a person, perhaps, who's not conversant with what is happening in South Africa, or maybe who knows South Africa from the system's side - what has been fed by the system, and maybe their officers and whoever, but for a person who's experienced all that, he'll agree 100%, and even say they forgot to add this and that and that and that - that's my experience with that literature.

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END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. .... left Kroenstaad to go to Ngoya? Is that how you - what happened - did you go ...

M. Yes.

J.F. And you did your Matric and then went to university.

M. Yes, I was doing B. Prog. there - a law degree.

J.F. At Ngoya?

M. Yes.



- J.F. And why did you choose to go there?
- M. I had applied to Fort Hare, Turf, Ngoya, and that's correspondence that came to me before others, and I just responded because it came before - there was no particular reason why I went there.
- J.F. It didn't have anything to do with the fact that your mother spoke Zulu?
- M. No, not at all, because I was studying Tsutu in the Freestate at school.
- J.F. So if somebody says to you : What's your tribe, what do you say?
- M. In my Reference Book I've been classified Xosa, so I always go to there to which Pretoria wants.
- J.F. And why were you classified that?
- M. I think it's because of my surname that is Radebe, and they said Radebe should be Xosa group, and then they just decided that I was Xosa.
- J.F. Now, you got to Ngoya and - I guess I shouldn't move more quickly - just to say you tell me, rather than go through all the details - was that important for your political development - did you get involved with organisations, or meet any person or anything - what year did you arrive at Ngoya?
- M. It was in 1979.
- J.F. So can you tell me how it was important?
- M. In fact, I didn't take long there, because there were a lot of problems because when first I arrived there I was exposed to very raw tribalism, because even their director, Nkabinde (422) - he addressed us in Zulu, as if it was the official language at that university, where a lot of Tsutu speaking colleagues from the Freestate, Voertershoek - that Homeland in the Freestate - people from all over South Africa who did not understand Zulu at all, but he insisted - expressed himself in his Zulu, and when he was talking in English, he explained that if at all we were hostile to the KwaZulu Government, we must know that Ngoya University was not going to host its enemies, and we must be loyal to Ngoya - we must not be disrespectful of the KwaZulu Government, and he was talking that type of politics, and we were not interested in that, and he talked about his chancellor, Kacha Buthelezi (434) and it was all nonsense. So, very first month we were there, we had a very serious clash with him and we had to be expelled, because we refused completely that we should be told about INCATA and we should owe allegiance to Ngoya and KwaZulu and whatever - we weren't interested in that at all, and I didn't take long at all, which is the reason why I decided that I would never go to any of the tribal universities, so I don't have first hand experience of what it is .....

- M. .... like there because I didn't take much there, but I know that just a little contact with Nkabinda (442) and that Gacha nonsense, so that's all I can tell about Ngoya.
- J.F. Then where did you go after that expelling?
- M. I went back to Hailbron and I started teaching at the secondary school there. Then I was expelled because I was teaching English and history, and the principal - of course it's very, very rife in schools that principals are always informers - they represent the state like anything, as if they are voters in parliament or something - so he told me that I was political, and my speeches in the morning parade would always be political, I was told, and even my history I teach beyond the Bantu education syllabus, and I was conscientising kids - teaching them along the lines of Black Power - it was all that nonsense that was raised by that principal, and the school committee was only told that I was teaching kids black power, and when I wanted to find out from that school committee, which comprises simple parents in that community, in Sawu (45) school committee is constituted - so they were just told that I'm teaching black power and said : What do you mean, black power, then there were no explanations at all, and it was told that the Secretary (460) (Security) Inspector, A. du Preez (460) was very unhappy about that, and he was moving that I should be expelled, and ultimately was given one month's notice I should terminate, because I'm teaching politics, then as I explained, I was expelled and I went to work in a factory in Sasolburg, and I worked for - or before I went to work at that factory, I got a post at Sasolburg High School - that's (.....) 465 Dzandele Township - that's the township - Sasolberg township, but I taught only for one month there, because Second (467) Inspector furnished information about me and then it was : So sorry, you may terminate. And I went to work in the factory ...
- J.F. Why did you choose to go there?
- M. That's where I got a job quickly, after leaving (.....) 470 High School after a month there, and I worked there for about six months, became a shop steward after about two months there - of working in that factory I became a shop steward.
- J.F. Of which union?
- M. Of the South African Chemical Workers' Union.
- J.F. FOSATU union?
- M. No, it's COSA.
- J.F. CUSA.
- M. Yes, but it was before CUSA was formed, because when CUSA was formed I was already an official of the Retail Workers Union - that's KAUZA - the Commercial Catering Allied Workers Union - so after being elected the shop steward after six months, I was approached by Michael Surtees (480) who is now, I think, the General Secretary of this Chemical Workers Union - he was also shop steward at that factory - that there was a vacancy in .....

- M. .... a union - shop workers' union - I should go to Jo'burg for interview, then I left him whilst he was still shop steward with me in that factory, went for interview, then I started working for CAUSA in 1980, and after a year or two he also left the factory to become a full time union official, and that's how I came into the trade union movement.
- J.F. So tell me a bit about how you - when you went to the factory, what were the steps that led to shop steward - you don't have to tell me the details, but did you decide : I'd like to be involved with unions, I think I must run to be elected as shop steward?
- M. I didn't decide at all. When I got into the factory, the first month of employment there, I had a lot of problems with the employers there, because I found their attitude to be exactly what I knew it to be in the Freestate, and I couldn't stand it at all, so I kept on clashing with them, and whenever they had cases against me, taking me to their disciplinary committee, management, they would always be winning cases, because I could explain always, and you should always be corrected, so I think fellow workers thought that I could help as a shop steward, because I am in a position to explain and to always not agree when I'm not satisfied about anything that I don't like -
- I think that's the reason why, so when there was a meeting held, there were elections and they just nominated me and some argued that : But he's only new. They said : That's the very reason why we want him - he's new, he hasn't yet been conditioned by this company, and he's just the right man for us because he has proven himself fighting his own battles as an individual, and there's the murder (that's the matter) (509) which was revealed - will you help us? (509) (Sounds as if he's growling again!)
- and I felt that I shouldn't - I disagreed on, because really I was always interested in such things.
- J.F. In what things? Had you been interested - had you ever thought to yourself that you might get involved with the unions?
- M. No, I was always interested in opposing the system, whether it's in the township or in a job situation - I was always interested in that, but I had never thought along the lines of unionism as such.
- J.F. Had you read any history of SACTU.
- M. Yes, I had read a lot.
- J.F. And the whole - all the intricacies of the unions with the shop stewards system and just the structures - how did you learn about that - who taught you about that?
- M. Mr. (.....) 518 Lord, because I usually read widely and I knew a lot about trade unions, because when reading politics trade unions come in automatically, and one wants to know more about that, because when you talk about worker sufferings and maybe what can be done to help them in job situations, the question of unions come in, and then that's how I came to know .....

- M. .... about all these things, through reading, broadly speaking.
- J.F. And you, or someone with your education, if you hadn't been political you would have been at university - you're very widely read - did you feel any distance from the workers (distanced) 528 as an intellectual?
- M. Not at all, because they had never heard me, for instance, expressing myself in English, and in the township people who think that they know - who think that they are learning to think that they're intellectuals, will always express themselves in difficult ways, to make it deliberately difficult for others to understand, and if you don't understand, then you say (.....) 535 at least you don't understand, it shows that he's your intellectual superior, that type of thing,
- but I'm always against it because of political reasons more than anything, namely that those who did not get the opportunity to get to school, it was because the system had designed it that way - that made education very expensive for the man in the street. For whites, for instance, it was always free and compulsory to a certain level, maybe up to Matric level, I'm not sure about that - I know that it's free and compulsory to a certain level, but for blacks who are paid nothing, they are making sure that it shouldn't be free and compulsory at all, so you shouldn't afford, and that way you will be a good tool, so it's such political reasons that made me to be very pro uneducated people, because of the fact that it's the system that made them to be that, and I would never want to be identified as that lucky one who was not exposed to that situation which affected among white people in South Africa, so I would never show that at all, so they never invited me as : Correction : they never regarded me as an intellectual at all - only that I would be able always to explain, in a job situation, that which they may not be - they may not explain, which requires maybe some enlightenment.
- J.F. And ...
- M. And there were some other workers, of course, who knew that I was a teacher before I came there, so they would just regard me as Umapalani - they would be saying - Umapalani is someone who does a clerical job, and then Umapalani wouldn't be regarded as an intellectual as such, but just as a pen pusher, I would say.
- J.F. And so you were at the Sasolburg plant, then you went to apply for the job with - who was it?
- M. You want the person's name or the organisation's.
- J.F. No, the union was which one?
- M. CAUSA - the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union, yes.
- J.F. And what was the position you applied for?
- M. Organiser.

- J.F.       Organiser.
- M.         Yes.
- J.F.       And so did you get that job?
- M.         Yes, I did get it - it was in August when I had interview and they said I should start with effect from September 1st.
- J.F.       Of which year?
- M.         1980,
- J.F.       And so where were you organising?
- M.         At first I organised in Jo'burg here, and after some five months or so, I went back to the Orange Vaal area - the Vaal Triangle Freestate area, and I was to establish a branch there.
- J.F.       Because you knew that area?
- M.         Yes, and whilst working in Sasolburg I was staying in a hostel, so I knew the place very well, and there was that need that there should be someone who knows that area well, who would organise that area and establish a branch there, and after interviewing me, they then felt that I would be the man to organise in the Vaal Triangle Orange Vaal area, and establish a branch there.
- J.F.       So did you establish a branch?
- M.         Yes, that's why I'm branch secretary now.
- J.F.       When did you establish the branch?
- M.         I'd say in 1981, I think in April.
- J.F.       And where was it established?
- M.         In Viriniging - we've got an office now in Viriniging.
- J.F.       Is it called the Vaal branch, or the - or is it called the Orange?
- M.         It's called the Orange Vaal branch CAUSA - Orange Vaal branch.
- J.F.       So what does that mean, briefly, to establish a branch - what did you have to do - did you have to go into factories - did you have to - what did you do?
- M.         Yes, in shops where we have procedural agreements - I mean recognition agreements, I would be organising from inside canteens, but those where we don't have procedural agreements at all, we'd be organising from outside, and I would always be sending all that membership to the Jo'burg office to be processed, until such time that they were of the opinion that there was membership enough to establish a branch there, then they called workers in that area - all those who were union members, because (and of course) 601 I would be explaining what a union is - how it works, and how they can be powerful ....

- M. .... by coming together as workers and being a union, and they knew a lot about humanism : Correction : unionism that time when I was calling them to a general meeting, and I told them it was now time for them to elect their own executive committee - the branch executive committee, because we were having an office already, that had been organised by the Jo'burg office, and it would need people to work in there permanently - it needs staff, and it would need an executive committee to control all that - the office and that whole branch, and explain it all, and it was established and workers were elected into the committee, and they were functioning according to our constitution, that my salary is stopped being paid from Jo'burg and I was being paid by that workers' committee in the Vaal - the BEC.
- J.F. What's BEC?
- M. Branch Executive Committee.
- J.F. Now, when you went up for that interview with CAUSA, were there any whites in the head office there?
- M. Yes, there were whites such as the late Maurice Kegan, and that comrade Alan Fein (Fine) 623
- J.F. So were these the first whites you'd seen in a progressive position since those priests, or had you encountered any whites?
- M. Yes, those were the very first.
- J.F. And what did you think when you saw Maurice Kegan?
- M. I had seen his name in a Government Gazette, and he was cited as an adviser there, so when they said : This is Maurice Kagan, I didn't like him at all, because I regarded him as just the Government stooge who appeared in the Government Gazette as an adviser.
- J.F. Adviser to?
- M. His name was just written there at the end of the Government Gazette. I think it was liquor and catering.
- J.F. As an adviser to the union?
- M. No, an adviser in that Gazette, and he was, at the same time, an officer of oath. When you wanted a passport you would take oath in front of him, then he would qualify to say you have been to an appropriate officer. He had such status, but I didn't like that at all, because it showed that he was very deeply in the system, so that was my attitude towards him - that he's an adviser in that Government Gazette, liquor and catering, and later on I came to learn that he's also minister of oath, or that type of thing. Then they said that he was very deeply involved with the system, and later on I came to understand a lot of complications about him - his whole history - the fact that he was instrumental in creating an African parallel (650) union that would be called CAUSA because there was a Coloured union, there was a white union, then Christian African union, but I didn't like that at the same time, because it was separate development which I didn't like at all.

- J.F. Because it was what?
- M. Separate development. But then I came to understand a lot of things as time went on, and I learned to work with him, although I always thought he was not a very militant and hard lined type of unionist that I would regard as my hero, because he was saying he was about forty three years in the trade union movement, so he was fairly experienced - he knew a lot of SACTU leadership - he'd been to conferences, meetings with them, and he was experienced, he was saying, but I had never, never liked him particularly, because of such connotations. That's my waiting for (.....) 667 now.
- J.F. And what about Alan Fine - what was your reaction to seeing him?
- M. Well, I just regarded him as a white man with no apartheid mentality at all, and was even prepared to work for a black organisation and be employed by them, and be paid by black workers - that's all that I thought of him when I first saw him, but later on we exchanged ideas. He wouldn't talk much, but I could more or less get the message that he was really talking my language, and later on when he was detained for communicating with SACTU and sending information to SACTU in Botswana, he was sort of sad by the system : Correction : said by the system to be promoting A.N.C. and SACTU, and it was obvious, that type of thing, then I knew that he was always genuine.
- J.F. That he was genuine?
- M. Yes, and I always regarded him as a comrade, even before he was detained.
- J.F. And was that a surprise to you - having grown up in the Freestate and had so little exposure to whites - have never seen any whites other than those priests who were progressive - was that a surprise to see a white man who - just seeing him in the office working, that there were whites in the office - were you surprised about that?
- M. I wasn't surprised because I had read a lot about progressive whites, and what I saw with the comrade was a manifestation of that which I read in progressive literature.
- J.F. But was it the first example in reality?
- M. Yes, sure it was.
- J.F. And was that - I'm asking the questions because I'm interested in non racialism, but from your point of view is it important - was it important that you saw the concrete evidence of those theories, or would you have just have accepted the theory - did it matter that you finally saw evidence that here was actually a progressive white working in the unions - was it anything in your mind to think : Well, I've read it in theory, now here it is in practice, or did you not...

- M. Of course, that's how I correlated that - that here's a white man employed by black workers, and he was not called Sir, or Mister - he was simply called Comrade Alan, or just Alan, and his attire - it was so simple, so working class, and I later only came to learn that he had B. Com. - Bachelor of Commerce degree, that's what I mean, and he would qualify as a very prominent, middle class, maybe working for some well paying company, and he would be real bourgeois if he wanted to, but he just preferred to be toiling with simple workers, ordinary workers, man in the streets, so all those things made me understand that : Well, what I read theoretically, maybe, is being manifested - that was its manifestation, for me at least.
- J.F. And then you went out and established the branch in the Vaal, and when you spoke to people did you say anything to them about political - overt political issues, or did you just say : Look, you're a worker, this is to represent your interests, and just talk about the factory floor issues?
- M. In fact, there is no way you can talk as a unionist. You can talk about worker grievances in a job situation without relating to management government that side, workers this side, and the two sides have conflicting relations all the time - it's just that way. From that very same beginning, it becomes clear that it is political, because I would be explaining to them that : You, as a proud (758) worker, your is only to come and sell your labour to the capitalist, the one who owns the means of production, and as a person selling his labour, you ought to have determined the price - at what cost - at what cost you would be selling your labour, but it's the other way round. The capitalist determines the price, and it's always very low, exploitative .....

END OF TAPE.



- M. .... you are being ripped off day in day out by the capitalist. You are faced with hostile legislation - legislation that favours the capitalist who is, of course, the architect of that very legislation, and you've got no say, you've got no voting rights, you've got nothing - you are just a tool that was being tossed around by the capitalists, so you need to establish a base of collective power from which to launch a very successful attack against the capitalist. The initial stages should secure your rights in a job situation - decent working conditions, decent payments - bread and butter issues - those are short term goals - they will be expecting all these things, and that way, people would be understanding humanism (unionism) not only unionism pertaining to bread and butter issues, but unionism that I regard as progressive - that enabling a worker to really realise his muscle - that he may not be having the right to get into parliament or to have a say - to be in the decision making in running his country, but through collective power they can flex their muscles and they can acquire those rights, although those rights, in the final stages, and they understand that and say : You must learn democracy here, at factory level. After learning it, learning to fight together, because strikes are the only ways, the only weapons that a worker can rely on, because the law is not on your side.
- You don't have the means of production that you would determine : Possible correction : You don't have the means of reduction (027) that you would determine (Could even be reduction - can't make it out) how you should work, how much should you get, and what conditions, that type of thing, but through this weapon, which is strike weapon, you know that that's the only power you have, which is the reason why you must never agree that it must be taken away from you, whether through legislation or whatever ..... I'd also be explaining that they should never allow that that weapon, the only weapon they have, should be taken away from them - that's the strike weapon, and they would understand clearly that that's our only weapon and we must never allow that it should be taken away from us, whether it be taken through legislation that is very repressive, or whatever - they should never agree to that. They would understand all these things, and that way we will be forming the basis for collective power, and that's how we normally work in our union.
- J.F. In the whole talk you just gave, did you mention non racialism - did you say to them anything about blacks and whites, or did that enter into it?
- M. That needs me to go further than to explain all these things. I thought I was wasting time. I would explain that what is important is that workers must come together - all workers in a job situation, irrespective of colour, and there would be arguments, of course, from workers, but arguing that : But it's unfair for you to say they don't - we don't quite agree with you, because the person that you regard as a worker is not a worker at all - he's my Missus - he's my Baas - he's my boss in other words, and I can't see, if you say you are from a worker organisation and I'm a worker, I'm the boss of that organisation - I control it, and you say I must join hands with the boss - how can I join hands with the boss? I say : No, no, you've got it wrong. You may have a worker who has ....

M.

.... has been given privileges above you as a divide and rule tactic, and you need to see it in its actual perspective, that a worker who's as poor as you are, who's also suffering under capitalism as you do, has been given certain privileges above you to divide him from you, and if you allow yourselves to be

divided by the capitalists, you'll never be strong. We'll never be having very effective, collective power at work, but what you've got to understand is that the two of you should come together and that worker who's been given privileges above you must be prepared to turn his back against those privileges, and join hands with you and march for freedom together - that's what we're talking about. We'd be making examples such as, for instance, railway workers, who are pure workers - railway

workers and mine workers, for instance - pure workers, suffering like any other worker, irrespective of colour, but they've been given certain concessions that you may be a poor worker, you may be suffering, working hard under difficult conditions, but we'll preserve your job. No other person of colour will come and take your job away from you - that's how they introduced the job reservation, so that worker, being a simple worker who's been assured with the capitalist that : No-one will take

your job away from you, will just be grateful that, at least, my kids will always feed, I'll always pay rent, whatever, because my bosses - the capitalist that is - have promised me they'll never take away my job from me, and what it actually means is that some people will be blocked off - they won't get jobs at all - others will always be given first preference,

and other jobs will always be made inaccessible to other groups of workers, and those would be the divide and rule tactics employed by the capitalist I've been explaining all along.

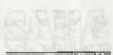
They've been explaining that now : Why are they doing that? They are selfish because they are also bosses. I say : No they are not, and that ultimately they would begin to understand that I would be (.....) 091 examples that it's just like your own black brother whom you regard as a worker just like yourself, but he has been told that for as long as he'll

spy on you, and be the informer, he'll be made an induna - he'll be a supervisor, he'll be given some extra money, and he's happy as a worker that : I'll get more money, I'll be an induna - supervisor, and I'll always have to spy on them, push them, let them do hard work unreasonably, irrationally, and my kids will always feed, and you can't say that person is not a

worker, simply because he's being used by the capitalist against you. Now we don't talk in terms of colour. White worker was given job reservations, some other concessions. A black worker - he's been given a position of induna when he's become an informer he's being given money, and they would see it strictly in non racial terms ultimately when understanding. There are lots of examples, but maybe these will suffice.

J.F.

And how did that go down with the workers - didn't they say to you : Well, what are you talking about - I see black versus white - did they ever say that, or did they understand?



M. We would have such arguments, but with workers, when one tells the truth, they never miss the truth - meaning they'll never disagree with what is right, and because they've been divided as workers, with capitalists in South Africa co-opting some other section of workers who, incidentally happen to be white, they understand that - at least my branch where I'm full time, they understand that as just divide and rule tactics that do

not end at dividing people along colour lines, but even setting a black against a black, so it's not a question of colour at all, and that is understandable, but if, when forming the basis as an organiser, I had gone to extent of saying : You are a worker, and because you are a worker, there are other people here whom

you may think that they are workers, and they are not workers, because, although they come at eight o'clock, knock off half past four, five o'clock just like you and they wear a uniform just like yours, but they're actually bosses, simply because of their pigmentation - that's what LBC is saying, and saying : therefore they are not workers - you are the worker, hence they say : A worker is a black man, and a boss, a capitalist is a white man, so there is no white worker - they're all bosses

because of their colour, and a worker is only a black man because of his being repressed, oppressed, suppressed by the white man, so that is the mentality of the B.C. movement now, hence when they talk in their propoganda, they talk about liberation of the black working class - the work - the black worker as the worker, and they say workers who are white are not workers because they've been elevated to the level of

bosses, therefore they've ceased to be workers, which is not very accurate class analysis, in my opinion.

J.F. But did the workers support that analysis?

M. They do, but they are very much in the minority, which is the reason why these B.C. unions, like, for instance, we're having a mini federation called AZACTU now - they're very much in the minority, because workers, in the majority, believe in non racialism.

J.F. What do you think it is that makes workers believe in it - I think it's quite fascinating because I hear it is so much more simple to accept a racial B.C. analysis - you know, you can tell them there are a few whites that are decent, and yet in their daily life there are so many racist whites they encounter - what do you think it is that makes the average worker be receptive to non racialism?

M. I would say a worker, or more specifically now, a black worker is by nature not racist. It was only that some people of colour came to oppress them and treat them badly, that they responded to that, and seeing that in terms of colour, but when explaining, when showing examples, colour stops to be the determining factor. For instance, in our case, as union-

ists, not long ago, a comrade died in detention - Neil Aggut - he was white, and people could easily say he was not genuinely ...

M. .... committed to the struggle for total liberation in South Africa, but the fact that he paid the highest price for his commitment to the struggle, which is death, and he happened to be white, and fighting for, predominantly, black workers, these are practical examples from worker experience that they are witnessing, and they understand that colour, when one

wishes to see the truth, listen to the truth, it's not important at all, and can make a lot of examples, that when you give to workers, they analyse them, they realise that it's true, but the moment I say, like the B.C. movement is saying in South Africa today, that those are mere exceptions, so we can't quote

mere exceptions as the norm or the rule, those are mere exceptions and they are of no consequence, so that's actually overlooking the truth, and insisting on judging a person, using pigmentation as a criterion. which is very, very fallacious, very wrong, so when discussing these things, especially in seminars everywhere, workers do take their own decisions, and in

practical terms, in daily interaction with whites who are in the unions, they are presently in the minority - whites who are participating actively in black unions, predominantly black, but workers experience is that they are hard workers - they deliver the goods that are expected of them, they are not racist - they sleep where they sleep, they eat with them - they are human,

like any other human being, and this is their experience, and anyone who'll come and say : That person is not a worker, he's not a human being like yourself, but he's some white monster, is not going to make friends to the worker at all : Correction : it's not going to make sense to the worker at all, and this is exactly why, today, anyone who will come and say whites are bad and blacks are good, workers themselves, today, do tell that :

You can't say that because you can't tell me that Kacha Buthelezi is good, and you want to say the late Neil Aggett, for instance, is bad. You can't tell me that, for instance, Gacha Guteli (228) is good, and Comrade Joe Slovo (229) is bad - you can't say that.

It's not a question of colour. You must judge human beings as human beings, not as symbols of colour. It's workers who come with these arguments nowadays, after being given the truth in the form of education or whatever, so this is why today more and more people come to accept the concept of non racialism.

J.F. Given that, do you think that whites have to be careful of not being dominating, or using their skills or their education, or do you think that's not an issue.

M. I would say it shouldn't be an issue as such, because when one is equipped with certain skills, he's supposed to do some particular job, delving (I think he means devolving?) 246 from, or on his skills, it just must be done the way it must be done, and if a person is being charged with a responsible position, maybe leadership role, like any other person, black or white,

need to be very strict, he needs to be very uncompromising, irrespective of colour, but you do find sometimes, for maybe typical reasons, a person who happens to be white in a black organisation, when he doesn't like a thing, he's not feeling happy about something, he's afraid to just burst out emotionally like any other human being, and he'll be afraid to be .....

- M. .... himself, and saying he needs to be more diplomatic, more tactful than a black man. Of course, if he's exposed to a situation where he feels that people are not yet educated enough along the lines of non racialism, and are not yet in a position to see through the smoke screens of racism, as perpetrated by the white minority in the Pretoria regime, then it's understandable, but under normal situations in trade unions,
- I don't think that that needs to be the norm - not at all.
- J.F. If you can tell me, tracing from when you established the branch in 1981 to the present, through the founding of the UDF, through the tricameral parliament set up and uprisings that began after that - just thinking of all the events of the past couple of years - can you tell me if this in any way has had an impact on your work, or on the union that you're dealing with, for those workers - have they been affected by the outside political situation - have they concentrated on factory floor issues - is that good, is that bad, is that inevitable?
- M. I would say it all came to have a very significant impact on workers, and they tend to understand full well what was happening around them, I would say largely because of the contributions and the activities of the UDF, because in a very, very short space of time it spread like wildfire all over the country, even in small little towns like Parais (305) in the Freestate, workers came to understand what was happening, and when listening to their radios and watching TV's, all that propaganda, they would always be in a position to rationalise and say : But, this is wrong, this is right, because of their exposure to progressive deliberations by, largely, the UDF, so in townships community organisations mushroomed all over, most of them aligning themselves to the UDF, most of them affiliating to the UDF, and when they came to work from their communities, coming with a lot of political awareness, knowing full well what was happening and being in a position to say what they want, what they don't want, and we as union officials, like for instance, in the Vaal, a lot of unions are not actively involved in community organisations - community politics. They are just unions in town, in offices, maybe from eight until five, thereafter they knock off, go into the township, come the following day to work, and then maybe they may be having a meeting over the week-end, or they may not, and that's just the role they play, and when there are meetings, they are just ordinary residents in these communities. They don't play any active roles at all. They are not leading, or doing a thing. They just listen and accept decisions taken by residents as led by these organisations in communities. These workers would always be well informed by their communities - these organisations in their communities, and they would be always in a position to rationalise, as I have pointed out earlier on, and be in a position to tell what they like, what they don't like, and that way, we ....

M. .... find ourselves talking a lot of politics and coming from workers, and we normally don't teach them revolutionary songs, but whenever we've got meetings - I mean house conferences, singing Oliver Tambo, singing Mandela, singing Slovo and so on - all these come from communities where they live. They are seriously and effectively politicised, not so much by unions, because unfortunately, we've got a lot of unions that are very apolitical, who are only bread and butter unions, but the workers in those very same unions are very, very politicised by their communities, which is where I think those unions are going to experience very serious difficulties in due course, because as it is now, it is evident that they are - they've been overtaken by events already, and they find themselves quite with their pants down, workers being active in community organisations and toeing specific lines, predominantly UDF line, and with them as, for instance, union officials, being told that : Today you will go to work, or you won't go to work, and without, as they say, being consulted, without their knowing anything, and it continues to be like that. Sometimes they go to work - when they come back they can't get in townships - they are being stoned by kids, especially COSAS, which is active all over the country.

END OF SIDE ONE.

M. .... they found themselves faced with a situation wherein they've got no control at all, and they had found it convenient to say : You workers - because it's always the officials who are telling workers what to do, and they pretend to call it worker control - it's a fact of life, so these intellectuals and officials found it convenient to say, because they themselves were apolitical - they found it convenient to workers to say : We don't say you should be involved in political organisations, but all that we are saying is that you go in there as individuals. Now workers go into political organisations as individuals, and there are a lot of decisions taken in communities by community organisations - these were leaders who were at the same time union members, as individuals, have been active in communities, so unions today complain that they are being dictated to by community organisations, and that is unfair ....

M. .... and they talk of community organisations as organisations maybe from the abstract - in the abstract - as organisations who are not comprising of the very workers who are their members, and now they are saying that, for instance, FOSATU - they are saying they need to do something about that. Now

they're talking about getting into community organisations, no longer as individuals, as they said earlier on, because of all these uprisings in townships, and they find themselves help- less as unions. Now they say they must go in there as unions.

They're arguing that they should go in there maybe using their locals, maybe their branch or their areas - that have their branches in specific areas (026)\*- they call them locals, or \* 431 they should form their own workers political party, and with the sole aim of getting in there and controlling the whole thing, which is very oppurtunistic and very bad, that they

don't want to go there and be active and join hands with com- rades in communities. They want to go there and get control - meaning they want to go in there and hijack the peoples' struggle in political organisations. It is completely unacc- eptable to me. The reason why they say they must go in there and control - they say they must ensure worker control, and

worker control, in my opinion, will come on its own if they are doing their job well as unionists, through educational pro- grammes in unions that teach workers what worker control is, what democracy is - that when they go in there they do exactly that, exactly as they do in unions, but now, because they do

not have clear, I would say, and progressive political persp- ectives, they think that politics, especially community poli- tics, these organisations - political organisations are a threat to a worker. These political organisations are going to hijack the worker, take away from him his independence and deny him the chances of worker control, so they want to say

organisations such as A.N.C, SACTU, the Communist Party are a threat to worker control - worker independence, because they say they don't show structures that ensure and guarantee worker control and independence, meaning that they are, in my opinion, going to dream up some structures that they think will be better than all the historical significance of our struggle, from the

days that were up until now that it was all wrong, and they must dream up something better today to ensure what they call worker control and independence. It doesn't make sense at all, because workers have decided, in these community organisations, they're active and they do feel that these are going to help us. It's only that, when they get to work they are being told something different from what they experience in the communities. That's where the problem is.

J.F. Do you think that those people who hold that point of view which you disagree with tend to be white?

M. I wouldn't say they are which as such, although I would say the majority of people who talk like this - it was because of maybe inter alia higher standards of educations and that ability to really philosophise and intellectualise about all these things, and come up with a set of ideas that they identify as sound and very careful philosophy that would ensure worker control .....

M. .... they would like. Most such people are, historically speaking, white, and unions that are having these pronounced sentiments against all these historical movements are actually, predominantly white people with higher education and who say, without being racist, who say : You must be careful, those organisations are going to take away from you your independence, your worker control. Watch out their structures, and things such as structures and philosophy colour (496) arguments are concepts that are very complex and sophisticated to a simple worker, and it is this sophisticated mind that says watch out, but the worker, on his own, in his own experience in his community, he's part and parcel of all these progressive organisations - some of them of historical significance, such as, for instance, the A.N.C., SACTU, The Party, but intellectuals today say : Watch out, because they don't have structures that will ensure your worker control and independence, and they give a lot of historical analyses, which most of it is biased, in the sense that it doesn't take into account the objective truth that obtains in an accurate analysis - for instance in the question (510) (case) of SACTU. It's a fact of history that, in the initial stages, I do admit that the A.N.C., having been the bigger body in the Congress Alliance during those days, it had a lot of say, and a lot of things would be going A.N.C.'s ways simply because of its big size, and that was actually, in my opinion, a simple rule and principle of majority rule. It was the biggest organisation in the Congress Alliance, in my opinion, and it had to have a bigger say, and today they say : You see, SACTU, at some stage wanted to do this, and A.N.C. differed with it, and you see that therefore you are going to be suppressed by political organisations, and the fact that SACTU's participation in the Congress Alliance enabled workers to be actively involved in their struggle as the vanguard of the revolution, and they acquired a leading role, and leadership positions in the Congress Alliance, and SACTU became very very important in Congress Alliance and was, in fact, pointing the way as representing workers, the vanguard of the revolution. That is not being taken into account, and the fact that even the late Chief Lutule himself was always sounding out that the A.N.C. is the shield and SACTU is the spear - all these things are being sort of not being told as they are, but they're told that : You remember that what A.N.C. did to SACTU, when workers in SACTU wanted to do that and A.N.C. said No, and did not support that. The UDF will do the very same thing to you - which is completely unfair - which is completely unprogressive, in my opinion. It's actually reactionary. But I do take into account, at the same time, that fact that there is that need for workers to devise structures that'll enable them to independently determine their way, their path, to determine what direction the struggle should go. Of course, even Lenin and Marx do talk about that, an independent worker political party, and that we do know that when you talk socialism, when you talk Marxism - these are things that we talk about, but that doesn't ....



- M. .... mean that that shouldn't take into account the historical conditions obtaining at this specific given point in time, like, for instance, today, for instance, people who may come up and say : We are not going to support SACTU, A.N.C., the Party. We are afraid that they are going to suppress the worker because their structures do not indicate that and guarantee a worker control. We are going to establish our own political party here - a worker political party. It'll actually mean that there comes an opposition which is counter revolutionary, in the sense that our history, the history of our struggle up until now, indicate clearly that those comrades in those organisations that I've just cited were always committed to the class struggle, always committed to total liberation for the black man - for everybody in the country, and at no stage did they show signs of being counter revolutionary, and being sell-outs, but today if people want to say : Don't trust them, form something independent, let them go it alone - it simply means those people would be counter revolutionary, no matter how noble ideas they will purport to be having - it wouldn't be correct.
- J.F. What about the argument, though, that some people say that the reason the union should keep out of the UDF is so they don't get chopped by the state? (Slightly re-phrased - you're a bit faint)
- M. That's cowardice - that don't be actively involved in your struggle for total liberation, because if you are actively involved the state is going to crush you, so, that you shouldn't be crushed by the state, that you shouldn't be detained, that you shouldn't maybe be killed by the system, stay away from fighting for your freedom - that's exactly what it means, and it must not be encouraged at all, and anyone encourages that I regard as a coward. You can't say : Don't fight, because if you fight you're going to spill your blood, and you may lose your life, and you may be crushed by the system, therefore don't fight - that's what it means. If you talk about bread and butter issues and, like for instance, this is the case now. Trying to, as they say, build very strong structures in factories, and enable, or equip workers with the skills to negotiate, and be very well informed about how capitalism is structured, and to negotiate with the necessary ability, as if workers will be in a position, after all that process they're talking about will have been exhausted, as if they'll be in a position to negotiate capitalism out of existence, which is completely impossible and illogical nonsensical.
- J.F. But you're in the unions - don't you think that the unions will be important in bringing down this government?
- M. Unions? It depends on what kind of unionism is being pushed, but if it's, as it isn't the case in many unions, bread and butter politics that is being pushed, they'll never bring capitalism down.

- J.F. Let me just say - I think it's good if we keep the answers short, because I've so many more questions ... and also the other thing ... for about the events of '81/'82 to the present - in fact, just personally - you entertained at a certain point - if you could just talk about what started happening that affected the unions - we know what happened in terms of the Vaal Triangle rising up in September 3rd. and then moving on '84, but if you could just talk about it in terms of how it affected the unions - Sharpville was just the centre of all the uprisings - did your union get in any way affected by that?
- M. Affected in what way?
- J.F. Was it something that happened in the communities and didn't affect your people, or did the workers get involved as well.
- M. If I'm to start with September 3rd. 1984 - well, as we all know - it is known all over the world - there were uprisings and workers all over the Vaal did not go to work, and there were a lot of bannings : Correction : burnings of houses belonging to those described as sell-outs - people such as policemen, councillors and those that had been identified as informers, so a lot of people were killed - those sell-outs - and what happened there, I'm sure it's well known - it has been well publicised - well published - I don't have to talk much about it - and unions were, as it is still happening now, totally taken by surprise by those events, They did not know what was happening - and by unions I mean the leadership in unions. How it affected unions - when the stay-aways were called off, managements, capitalists all over reacted in many different ways, but those who fired workers, unfairly deducted their - monies from their pay packets, unions were faced with a lot of job - to fight for the reinstatement of those workers who were faced with the situation that no individual worker could control, but an individual worker could, for instance, say : I don't support that, I'm going to work (and go into work) 672 It was completely beyond an individual worker's control, so they had to fight for their reinstatements, and fight that they shouldn't be severely punished through deductions in pay packets, that type of thing, and whilst fighting such there would be stoppages again, stay-aways again, and more and more problems would be facing union leadership everywhere, to an extent that they started complaining that : But, we were never involved - we are never involved when these things are being done, and it's always our problems - we must fight for reinstatements, we must fight for all that workers want us to do, when we are never consulted - that's the problem, because they stayed away from community participation, and now the workers in the communities are calling the call, and they feel that they were not consulted, and they'll never be consulted until such time they become active in the struggle - no-one will be invited to come and join the struggle, that's the whole point. So that's how it adversely affected unions, and up until now it's a problem, which is the reason why, as I pointed out earlier on, that they are now trying to work out strategies to go in community organisations and try and influence some control, because they feel that it'll have to be made orderly, they say, that we should agree, all of us, that we don't go to work, we go to work, we do this, we do that, and we don't do that ...

- M. .... because just now we just see things happening, and it creates a lot of problems for us as unionists... That's why they're talking, as I pointed out earlier on, using their locals, for instance, and maybe establishing their own independent worker political party, that type of thing - that's what they're talking about now, but the idea of a political party - it's quite remote now, because it has been debated a lot, especially in FOSATU and they realise that it won't work - maybe they'll make use of their locals now.
- J.F. But - was CAUSA in UDF - did it affiliate?
- M. CAUSA - no.
- J.F. Was CAUSA still in CUSA?
- M. It has never been in CUSA, but I must point out that our general secretary, Emil Mushinini (725) she was one of those people who were instrumental in the creation of CUSA, which in my opinion, was just ACFTU creation, because they were building, as they explained in 1980, developing black leadership.
- J.F. The international ICFTU?
- M. Yes. I had some talks with Andrew Kalembo - he's the director of African Affairs ICFTU, when Emma Mashingo was in detention. He was advising us to join CUSA, as he said, because it's a beautiful black baby that they've created - it must be supported that we will develop black leadership, so that I just concluded that it was nothing else but C.I.A. creation, and I told Andrew Kalembo that our workers will tell us whether to go in there or not, but presently they are refusing to go in there, and he tried to explain that : But Emma Mushinini was one of those people that were instrumental in creating CUSA but why are you standing away - why are you keeping yourselves away from it now. Is it because of my personal differences between Emma Mashinini and maybe some leaders in CUSA - I said : I'm not interested in that at all, but all that I know is that our union - workers (Above paragraph difficult to make out - may not be exact. In fact, it isn't exact because I did not hear him say "I'm not" - he was talking very fast and stammering a bit as well!) are refusing to get in that, and that's why we've ended with Andrew Kalembo. I was trying to explain that it was never a CUSA affiliate - CAUSA was never a CUSA affiliate.
- J.F. And the unity talks - is CAUSA in the unity talks?
- M. Yes, it is.
- J.F. And you think a federation will be formed?
- M. Yes, because last week, when we had talks - it was last week I think - Wednesday. They said it must be formed at least not later than October, and this very week, Wednesday, all unions must have submitted their credentials.

- J.F. And do you think that the UDF unions will be in the federation - were they there at the Wednesday talks?
- M. If by UDF you mean ....
- J.F. SAWU.
- M. ... If by UDF unions you refer to those progressive comrades, such as SAWU, GAWU and so on, yes, they are very much in the federation and they are, in my opinion, the very people who were instrumental, last week, in helping to bring the idea of a federation closer - as close as it is now, because there were a lot of compromises on their side, when emotions were running high and some people were not prepared to compromise what they regarded as very, very rational ideas to be accepted by the house on Wednesday. They did compromise a lot, and they were compromising for the sake of a federation .....

END OF TAPE.

- J.F. And would CAUSA ever affiliate with the UDF, do you think?
- M. There I'll give a strictly personal opinion. Judging from the developments that I'm witnessing in CAUSA now, as (.....) 006 secretary, more and more workers are, and are becoming UDF - songs they sing, UDF slogans, chants and everything, it's clear that ultimately the workers are going to tell the leadership that that's the path we want to follow.
- In the Vaal, for instance, it's just UDF that workers talk about, and our workers are mostly involved in community organisations in UDF. In Kröenstaad, for instance, Comrade Tera (016) and myself - we were organising the people there, that they should come together, they should try and establish their own civic association, and you find a shop steward, maybe at Checkers, O.K., Pick and Pay shop stewards being shop stewards - CAUSA shop stewards at the same time they are - they were, at the same time members of the ad hoc (021) committee that was organised, that it should pave the way for the establishment of the association the workers one thing (want thing) (023) Welkom, Bloemfontein, in the Vaal (.....) (023) and so on, it's just like that, so even in (.....) 024 in Port Elizabeth, and in Jo'burg here, you get a lot of workers who are very active in the UDF, and the very reason why today the workers pushed that a constitution should be opened, because it includes even whites now. It's these workers who are pushing and because of their broader awareness now, and their better understanding of what the concept of non racialism is all about, and that is basically because of UDF education in the communities - that is my viewpoint.
- J.F. And how was it that CAUSA opted to be non racial - was that a .... briefly (034)

M. Because it comes from those days of parallel unions, where Africans had to have their own union - Coloureds, whites and so on, workers had understood it to mean that because they're Africans they are on their own, and that was promoted by the Government - this racist mentality - that they are Africans - that's why they are separated from Coloureds and their white counterparts as workers - it became a problem when it was to be changed, because it has been like that all the time, and they had seen no problems of joining hands with maybe Coloureds and Indians and whites, so some workers were saying that CAUSA has been operating, paying its telephone accounts, offices, paying officials and everything - we never had a problem - now do you really need these other racial groups? So they were talking about strictly in financial terms, that we can afford - we don't need their contribution at all, financially (051) meaning that there was no political perspective at all there, which showed that CAUSA had nothing to - had done nothing to educate her workers politically, hence the problems now of joining hands with workers of colour, so there were those problems, but now because of, largely, their exposure to progressive politics in townships, and because a lot of activists in CAUSA, who are predominantly UDF, are now talking about these things frequently, they were now in a position to say : Let it be opened. It's only Emma Mashinini, our general secretary, who tried to stone it by saying at the annual conference, because she was at the same time - she's at the same time the Jo'burg branch secretary, she must take the decision by the conference - the annual conference, which is the highest decision making body in the union - that decision by the highest decision making body in the union, to go non racial. She says she won't say a thing about that. She's not agreeing, she's not disagreeing, but she's going to take that decision to her branch that they must discuss it, because she's got no mandate at all from her branch that she must accept non racialism. Now there were shop stewards representing that branch, and she said : Because I see you shop stewards from my branch, I bless you - she doesn't say : You voted for open constitution completely as mandated by your constituents - constituency, which is the Jo'burg branch. She says : I see you blessing this - it's O.K. You shop stewards are blessing it, but I'm going back to the workers to find out whether it's right or not. She's talking like that because Jo'burg branch is having very big membership - I think it's got about 20,000 - she's got about 20,000 members who are represented by these shop stewards, who, at the annual conference say people that we represent want the constitution to be opened, and as shop stewards and conference delegates, we say let it be opened, and she says : I'm still going back - because she doesn't believe that these delegates who were sent by workers from Jo'burg to go and represent them there, that they are representing them correctly, and she's going back to them. Maybe she'll come back and confuse things and say that they don't want to do that, but as a branch they simply can't change the decision of the annual conference .....

- J.F. So the annual conference this week decided to go non racial.
- M. Yes.
- J.F. How was it worded exactly - just : We accept people of all races - how was it worded exactly - not exactly, but was it just a motion saying : We open our ranks, or what?
- M. They were referring to a particular clause in the constitution, that it must be amended and read that : The constitution shall be opened to all persons. They then - they asked now that that proposal - that resolution - does it mean including whites? and they said : Yes, that's what it means.
- J.F. Does that mean in practice you're going to have white members, do you think?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. Is that ..
- M. Because for instance, in Durban they are saying white workers are approaching them - the same case in Cape Town, same case in the Vaal - that now, because it's open, they'll be accepted.
- J.F. What is your exact position in CAUSA - branch secretary?
- M. Branch secretary, yes.
- J.F. Orange Vaal.
- M. Yes.
- J.F. And your membership?
- M. Just now it's 5,000.
- J.F. And what I'd like to ask is just a bit more about the dynamics of the '84 to now - did you get detained?
- M. Yes, I was detained November 7th. last year.
- J.F. After the stay-away?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. And did your workers support it fully?
- M. Yes. I'm at the same time Chairman of the Sharpville Civic Association, so when the system detained me they were saying I was the ring leader - I called the stay-away in the Vaal, and because I'm a unionist and Chairman of the civic association, I'm very influential and I'm the one who called the stay-away, explaining why it was necessary that we should consider seriously supporting the stay-away call as announced by the stay-away committee of last year. I spent about 35 days at Krugersdorp Prison, under Section 29, and thereafter I was transferred to Central Prison in Pretoria. I stayed there for three months.
- They were charging me of subversion and sabotage, but I was later on acquitted of subversion and sabotage, but charged under Section 62 - racial hostilities. They found me guilty and charged me R800 or eight months jail sentence and a further nine months sentence suspended for five years minimum - I'm .....

- M. .... still under five year suspension now, which will expire, I think, in March 13th., 1990.
- J.F. So did you pay the fine?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. How did you get the money?
- M. It came from Father Smangaliso (.....) 128.
- J.F. And when you say they said you were the ring leader and all those charges - were those true charges?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. So you were encouraging people to boycott - for the stay away?
- M. Yes, and at the same time I've been negotiating with the development board in the Vaal, as part of the delegation that conveyed resident grievances to the administration board in the Vaal, so I had some several meetings with them, where I was explaining why workers were refusing to pay rentals, and showing why they were unreasonable and how they were actually exploiting workers, so they were saying I instigated them - they shouldn't pay rentals, and on November 5th. and 6th. I instigated them in my speech as chairman, not to go to work - to boycott industries, and even explained that we would be crippling them economically, and that's how we'll effectively destroy the system.
- J.F. So how were you treated in detention?
- M. Well, they generally are beasts (147) and I was no exception to their cruelty. They've got very horrible interrogation methods, but anyone knows how bad they are.
- J.F. And how did they have the information on you - was it through informers, or was it just public meetings?
- M. Yes, there were informers, and they played me a tape recorder of a lengthy speech that I delivered on November 4th., so they had the tape recorder, and probably there were some informers there who recorded whatever we were saying.
- J.F. Do you think they're informers in your own branch?
- M. Branch ...
- J.F. ... in your union.
- M. They're all over - that's the only reason why the Pretoria regime is still existing today. Without their network of informers they wouldn't be nowhere.
- J.F. Do you think that the whole non racialism line, in a sense, is proved by informers in terms of when you said you can't say Gacha Buthelezi is great because he's black - you were saying that - the same thing with informers - if you want to say whites are good - whites are bad, blacks are good - what about all the black informers? Do you think that the presence of informers makes people understand non racialism?

- M. Very well, which is the reason why today they say they know very well they've got very bad people who are worse than whites, because a white man he can see that that one is white and he's bad - I know him to be bad, but this one who is like a snake in the grass is the most dangerous. That's the reason why we'll be less hostile to a policeman in uniform, but an informer is the most dangerous person, that always when they say this one is an informer, he has been killed on the spot, but when we say this one is an S.A.P. - uniformed S.A.P., they say O.K., we know - we'll always see him - he's that, but we'll always (.....) 177 tell him to resign, and if he tries to be funny and he says funny things, he'll be dealt with accordingly.
- J.F. And how do you feel about - you know that Duduza woman who was mistakenly killed and they put it on the S.A.B.C. - that whole thing. How do you respond if people say : Oh, you know, it's one thing to have retribution but this is so bloody - this is so beastly, and all that.
- M. In fact, I wouldn't say that she was mistakenly killed, because that's a very, very difficult issue to discuss openly, because she had been identified as an informer by those who knew her to be an informer, and when she was attacked and killed, the way it was done it's true that it was very, very harsh, but that's exactly what happens when one experiences the peoples' wrath. It's very, very harsh, and it's completely unacceptable because it's very, very cruel, and such cruelty is not acceptable - it's not something that people like, and this is something that cannot be investigated and people talk openly about it after doing it. It'll always be something discussed underground, and the truth will never come to the open - at least not openly, which is where I disagree with Bishop Tutu that, for instance, if people kill informers he'll leave the country - that's what (.....) 202
- What happened there - a person who has been identified as an informer was killed for being an informer, as identified by those who knew her to be an informer, and if I'm to stand and say : People, if you kill informers like this I'll leave the country - don't kill them, it's barbaric - I don't think, personally, it's barbaric killing informers, but then, he was talking again as a priest, and people should understand him as a priest, that he's talking as a priest, but for people who are militantly and in a revolutionary way involved in the struggle, that'll always be the order of the day with all the impis. It's harsh; it's cruel, but maybe it's a necessary evil - that's my opinion.
- J.F. How about - there are these arguments that some people are making, saying : There was the uprisings and the communities and all that, but at this point lots of adults, lots of workers in the townships are getting pissed off with the continued disruption of their lives, and that - there's that one criticism, and then also - does the kind of petrol bombing, attacking the police, throwing stones - where is it leading - they've arrested so much of the leadership - are things out of control - is there any coherent way forward?



- M. Are you asking that - all that - is it of any benefit to the struggle, or what's your actual question?
- J.F. I'm saying what do you think is really going on - do you think that adults or workers are pissed off with the kids - do you think that there is a problem with the kind of dynamics - how do you feel about what's going on now - the State of Emergency - they've taken leadership to a large extent - there's this bubbling turmoil - what do you think about the whole situation. I'm not saying I agree with those criticisms - I've just heard them.
- M. In fact, I think that is a normal trend of events that is being experienced in any peoples' struggle for freedom. These things are facts of life - they are facts of history, and happening as they are happening now, of course, strategists may say it's very unprofessional, it's very amateurish and it ought not be that way. It must be well organised. It must be very, very orderly and more effective than it is, but people - ordinary people are responding to brutality meted out to them. They respond anyhow, and this is what is happening, and this is showing all over South Africa, showing the world what is actually happening in South Africa, and how bad and how repressive, how cruel the regime is, and how determined people are to fight for their freedom. I think this is its significance, in a nutshell, and how the Government responds, like for instance, with declaration of emergencies. It's just a pattern of repression, but it's nothing more than that, as far as I'm concerned.
- J.F. But have you heard any workers saying that they just feel like their lives are so disrupted that things should calm down - that they think the kids are pushing it too far?
- M. No. People just see the system being more and more repressive, and they understand that to be the tactics of a desperado. They see it as a manifestation of the fact that the Government is confused, it's panicking, and they've run out of ideas - they don't know what to do any more. It's affecting them adversely. They are being killed daily, and the police have been given licences to kill, if I'm to put it that way, and of course, they don't like it, and sometimes they feel afraid, because we're not all heroes - we are not all brave, but they do not regret at all that everybody, including the young ones, have pushed too far, but they are proud that, despite guns and everything, people are pushing forward unarmed against the most dangerous military regime in Africa.
- J.F. Where do you see it going next - do you think that the State of Emergency, that with all these mass arrests, they have pulled out the leadership - do you worry at all about what the next phase is going to be.
- M. I think the people have resigned themselves to fate - that come what may we push forward, and we'll never go back, and it's true that people will always feel hurt that effective, progressive leadership has been nabbed - detained - people are being shot and killed, but all those are casualties that they do understand that are of a necessity in order that we should reach our goal. There is no regret at all. People are quite determined, but when you talk to simple people, inarticulate people, they say .....

M. .... It's difficult really, we wish it'll all come to an end. Some people may interpret that to mean that this person regrets that all these activists in townships are doing all these things, which is not the case at all. If you are to sit down with that person and really dig deeper and deeper, and found out exactly what that person means.

J.F. What about this - the other criticism I've heard is the kind of mobilisation versus organisation - that some people are saying that there seems to be a lot of mobilisation but not enough organisation?

M. Yes, I'm aware of that criticism, and it's actually mostly from intellectuals who say, for instance, the UDF is just a populist movement, mobilising people, and no structures - effective structures at all - no organisation - no effective organisation, and it's a dangerous organisation that must be carefully observed, because there is no effective organisation, there are no structures. Intellectuals talk in terms of structures, and workers are not interested in all those intellectual ideas, and most beautiful structures that'll assure whatever. All that they want is that they must get what they want, and they do it anyhow - they fight anyhow - they go anyhow, and they want results and they want them very, very quickly. They want freedom and they want it in their lifetime, and to sit back and say :  
  
Let us plan over a long period, after fifty, a hundred years or so, we'll be having very effective structures, and we'll be having good organisational deliberations, and that'll be the time then we'll be going in now, and confronting maybe the well organised system with very well spelt out and elaborate form of structures. They're not talking about that, and now people are being told that : Stop being this active with your UDF with no structures at all. Mobilisation is dangerous if it doesn't have effective organisation and structures. That is some intellectual argument, which I feel must not be made an issue, and must not be used to counter the revolution.

J.F. But I don't know if you're answering it to me - O.K., you're saying it's an intellectual argument, but what about the actual basis of the argument - do you think that there is any need for just reassessing, and looking at the need for organisation?

M. Can you repeat the question.

J.F. Are you saying - I can see where your critique .....

END OF SIDE ONE.

J.F. .... need for that organisation - do you not think that that's a problem at all?

M. I think it is very important that there should be some specific systems devised. There must be some specific organisation - some effective organisation - a pattern, but the way it's being sounded now, it is sounded with the intention of stalling the ....

- M. .... revolution that is going on already, that : Don't join it. Have structures first that will guarantee certain things, and thereafter mobilise, go forward. Now, I'm against the "Wait a bit" part of it, and : Stay away from these UDF things -
- that's what they're saying, which is where I don't agree with them. Intellectualising is good. We can't do without it, but it shouldn't be used in a counter revolutionary manner. People, instead of doing jobs, sitting back and intellectualising too much - that's my whole problem.
- J.F. .... whites are especially prone to?
- M. I beg yours?
- J.F. Do you think that's a problem that whites are especially prone to - is intellectualising, or do you think blacks do it also?
- M. I would say it's not a question of colour at all. Black and white - people are the same. They think the same as people - they differ as people. Even black people - we do find people say that, so it's not a question of colour at all.
- J.F. Now the whole question of leadership - do you know other people who are the head of the civic, and the head of a union?
- M. Well, if I'm to quote people from - quote Oscar Mveta, for instance, who was the chairman of the residents' committee in Langa, at the same time being an organiser of Food and Canning, but now he's the president of the UDF, and just currently who can I talk about? I can talk about Chris Dlamini of FOSATU, who is president of FOSATU, and at the same time he's an executive member of ORABO - that's a community organisation in bringing together members of the community, and the youth in the East Rand, so both sides - he's still there (451)
- J.F. And what do you think of the charge that people have about leadership not being - working class - of the civics?
- M. Well, I think it's true that some of them may be students from schools, maybe from universities, coming back active in politics, and being elected to those positions of power, but I do think that it'll be an exaggeration to say they are not working class, because to say they are not working class, I think what has to be taken into account is their background. Who and what they are, and taking into account, most important, in my opinion at least, material conditions obtaining - pertaining to those people, I mean - you realise that a person in question is not a son of - maybe Oppenheimer's son, or Botha's son, but he's a simple worker's son, who acquired some level of education, whether it be Standard Eight or Matric or B.A. or whatever, it is not right to say that person is not working class at all, simply because that person has acquired a certain level of education, because then, if we talk about working class in terms of education, there is no specific educational standard where a person must stop, otherwise, if you don't stop you're going to be termed not working class - there is no such line of demarcation. It's not accurate at all - it's not correct. We do understand that, when you talk about classical and pure working class we mean the toiling masses - the man in the street, but that very same man in the ....

- M. .... street, who's got a child, and he struggles that that child should go to school and acquire some standard of education, you can't then turn (482) when a child maybe gets some diploma or some certificate of a degree of some kind, then you say he's no longer a son of that struggling worker, because of that level of education he's no longer a worker - you can't say that - it's fallacious, in my opinion.
- J.F. Just briefly - when did you first start hearing about socialism or communism - was that way back in your youth in Hailbron, or was that much later - when did you first read ...
- M. I would say I started in (..... Interruption). I'd say I started towards the end of '79, when I was doing Matric One, and I never stopped ever since.
- J.F. Who first introduced you to the concepts - was it books, or was it people.
- M. I would say I was just motivated by some books in libraries.
- J.F. So available books, or banned books?
- M. Available books I would say. For instance, there were a lot of books on Western philosophy - a little bit of Marx here, and a little bit of Lenin there - I used to read that stuff.
- J.F. And what was your reaction - did you go to Goniwe's funeral?
- M. I did not, unfortunately.
- J.F. What was your reaction when you saw in the newspapers about that Soviet flag and S.A.C.P. flag.
- M. I was very proud of it - in fact, I must say I was very, very excited, when I saw, in public, a very pertinent expression of what workers are and what workers identify themselves with, and what workers want. It was a very bold expression, and that made me to be very proud - very excited.
- J.F. And how do you respond when people say : Look, for workers, the issues are very concrete, it's - their wages - they don't talk about things in terms of capitalism and socialism - what's your experience.
- M. Well, it's true it's like that. People do not go about, maybe shopping political programmes - they're just simple people - when you ask them what their problems are, what they would like to see maybe the Government doing, what they would be doing if they were running the government, you would get the same facts that you see in the freedom charter, that they'll be talking about simple things such as job security, housing, schools and education, equality for (before) (522) the law, and such things.
- J.F. But does that mean they don't understand socialism and capitalism - because you just said that about that flag - I'm just wondering - how much do they understand about socialism or communism.
- M. I would say they're - their understanding of it all, in my opinion (..... Interruption) .... opinion of the flags - it is not born out of any intellectual practice, or reading broadly, or exposure to higher standards of education. It is, in my opinion, born of their experience, their history - history of .....

- M. .... their struggle, that they came to know all that, and identifying them with such, because that's their experience, and again there could be another factor, namely that the youth with more education are in a position to pronounce all that most ably, and in more elaborate terms - that's how I view it.
- J.F. Are the workers interested in - from your experience, do they express interest in the topic of socialism, or do they just want to know about wages increases and things like that?
- M. Unionised workers do understand now - I mean in those progressive unions - do understand that my suffering, my being exploited, my being ripped off by the bosses every day - it's this thing called capitalism, and a situation which will enable me to be the boss, run the factory, and the profits that I'll make will be getting back to me and not being taken by some - one big capitalist there - he may be termed director or a shareholder or whatever - his understanding of that opposite of capitalism - he understands it to be socialism, hence now workers will say :  
  
Pounce on capitalism - away with capitalism, and forward with the workers' struggle to socialism - these are things that they are chanting today, because progressive unionists are really sitting on it, and making sure that there should be no educational programme that wouldn't be having as its base this concept, and emphasis of socialism all the time - the need to work for socialism - for the attainment of socialism.
- J.F. Now, because of your emphasis on the class analysis, I'd just like for you to explain to me how you can accept both the class analysis and the four nations (570) period.
- M. I don't quite follow your question there.
- J.F. .... (Tape turned off)
- M. I think the class struggle and nationalist struggle are not two different issues, but it's a process that dictates that you start somewhere, because there's always somewhere to start, so before, in my opinion, emphasising extensively class struggle, you need to explain that, although our base is the class struggle, our historical development has indicated the need to now say we are firstly fighting an African nationalist struggle for total liberation in South Africa, and that is having, as its base, class struggle, but that's exactly what is being the first phase, and the second phase, which'll be more expressed after attaining the first phase of African nationalist struggle. What will be most important after this phase one, which is having, as its base, class struggle, people will then say :  
  
Then you are talking about two stages, and therefore it's unacceptable - it's not that, in my opinion. It's just that we need to say the majority of black workers are oppressed, and they are fighting for freedom - total liberation - that's what they're fighting for, and that's how they understand their struggle now, but that struggle, African nationalist struggle, is having, as its roots, the class struggle, which you may say you may push side by side, without leaving behind the other, .....

- M. .... which is also logical, but the most emphasis now is that of total liberation, and a total liberation, in my opinion, will mean the attainment of the African nationalist struggle - the goal must be attained.
- J.F. What about on a smaller scale - you talk about non racialism, but for the average worker in Sharpville, does he or she ever experience non racialism, because when you've got the, say, the release Mandela committee or the UDF civics or whatever in the black townships, then you have, say JODAC in the white areas, the TIC in Lens (621) civics in Eldorado Park - when do those different race groups ever get together - on the ground together - you get together at leadership level - you might have met with Raymond Sutner, or someone, but do those masses in the townships, or in Lens, or even the JODAC rank and file - do those whites and blacks and Indians and Coloureds get together, ever, to experience non racialism?
- M. No, they, as yet, haven't been exposed to that situation where they witness non racialism in practice. They understand it, maybe as a concept, and they hear about meetings that indicate that - maybe by leadership, or whatever, or whoever, and I think that's one of the many reasons why the UDF today is trying to bring together all these groups and they should act as one - that non racialism should be witnessed even by the man in the street, the rank and file. That's where I think it becomes very, very worthwhile to really push that these progressives should come together and operate as one, and we do have that forum already in the UDF, if people want to come and join hands. Otherwise, outside the UDF, there is no other platform of that nature that makes that possible.
- J.F. Do you live in Sharpville?
- M. Yes.
- J.F. Where do you live?
- M. In a section called Rayston (647)
- J.F. In a house?
- M. Yes - I mean I've got a room outside.
- J.F. And ... you wanted to come to the Vaal because you knew the Orange Vaal area - had you ever lived in Sharpville before?
- M. I've spent some long time in Sharpville, whilst teaching in Sasolburg and Hailbron, and Hailbron, by the way, is part and parcel of Sharpville, because it falls under what they call the Orange Vaal area. It includes the Vaal, which is Viriniging, van der Byle Park and part of the Orange Freestate like Parais 658 Kroenstaad, Hailbron - they fall under the Orange Vaal, which simply means Hailbron, Parais, Kroenstaad, Sharpville, Seboking - all those towns and townships fall under one area, and from Sharpville to Hailbron, it's only forty minutes drive.

- J.F. And was there ever any feeling of Sharpville as the historic place where the P.A.C. had some effect because of the March, 1960 massacre - was that seen as a P.A.C. instigated situation that led to the massacre?
- M. When people talk about the 1960 Sharpville shooting, or Sharpville massacre, that is always identified with the late Robert Sobuku, and I think that's the reason why people associate Sharpville very much with the B.C. movement, and maybe to a certain extent it had been like that for white some time after 1960, and at some stage Sharpville was described as a B.C. stronghold, but as far as I know Sharpville had never been any significant B.C. activity in Sharpville. It has never - it has always been just a token of B.C., and today, the very fact that we are discussing presently adopting the freedom charter as our programme, and affiliating to the UDF, and when I first addressed residents, explaining that they gave me the mandate to go ahead and investigate that and come back to them, and then see as to whether we'll affiliate and adopt the charter - that's what we are doing now, and there is no opposition at all, except some individuals who are saying : But we don't need the UDF, because they once belonged to that B.C. movement that was known - that used to be known as the movement in Sharpville, whereas they were always in the minority, as it is the case now. The B.C. movement - all over South Africa they were always in the minority.
- J.F. I guess just to close I'm interested in asking a kind of sweeping general question, which is two parts - how do you see just the short term future - what do you see evolving now - do you think that the State of Emergency - O.K., that'll be lifted eventually, but do you think that this kind of level of warfare that's going on between people in the townships and the police will just continue - don't you think that they will be crushed if it's just stones against hippos - how do you see it developing - do you think that there'll be more locally trained guerillas inside the country responding not just with stones - what's the kind of short term - the next year, two, three kind of do you see?
- M. I would say what we are witnessing now is, in my opinion, a phase that introduces us to a revolution, or as some people call it, a civil war. What is happening now is only an explanation of what is forthcoming, that when kids are throwing stones, and the Pretoria regime is throwing bullets - shooting at unarmed kids, we are coming to a situation - we are approaching a situation where, when the Pretoria regime will be shooting, the people will be shooting back. When the Pretoria regime will be throwing a gas canister, the people will be throwing hand grenades, and if we'll take, for instance, from the most recent conference that was held by the A.N.C., the strategy has been well evaluated, and the intensification of the waged war - declared war against the Pretoria minority regime is a reality, and like we are seeing now, hearing of a lot of armed guerillas in the country, people throwing bombs somewhere - no longer throwing stones - although I must add that, in my opinion, there are some instances where the .....

M. .... Government is coming in and causing confusion, especially with boobied hand grenades, and they pretend to be training to be genuine cadres who are training or recruiting young militants in South Africa, only to find that they are just killing them, in such a way that it'll appear that they couldn't handle hand grenades properly, but only to find that those were boobied hand grenades - they are using such tactics now,

but the fact still remains that people in South Africa are reaching a stage where, in my opinion, they'll be having bazookas and AK 47's against the system, and guerillas being trained in larger numbers from inside the country. There is a myth entertained by the Pretoria regime that's it's completely

impossible that guerillas should be trained inside the country - it'll never be possible, but that's mere propaganda that won't help at all - that's a possibility that I think that it's very, very much fast approaching.

END OF TAPE.