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Interview with Mncedisi Prince Sibanyoni

MPS: As I was saying that after I've completed my grade twelve in 1987, I went to working, so I was mentioning to you that now in the nineties something new now began after the release of Mandela.

TM: Before we go to the nineties I would like to ask you a question, just a bit, maybe Nonhlanhla has questions to ask also...

MPS: Okay

TM: You mentioned something about TRA and TCA; you said something about TCA that it collaborated with the system

MPS: Yes that it collaborated with the system.

TM: Can you please explain the two associations briefly.

MPS: Yes, the formation of TCA, the Tembisa Civic Association ehh... the very same people who ran it were also councillors and being councillors the communities viewed them as no assistance to people. Instead they were oppressing people. So on the other hand, also the TCA, it was more like the civic structure that ehh... the local authorities they gave it a thumbs up that they are the ones who are recognising it. It was run also by the councillors, because as I've mentioned, the people who were running it Mr Sothula, Mr Gobandlovu, they were councillors themselves and they were on the pay roll of the system of the councillors you know. So then it was seen as something that will never help the community, because the community on its own - we've got problems with the councillors themselves and the very same councillors they are running civic organisation. So we don't see any alternative there, that no the civic will do any changes to the people, instead ehh... we'll find a situation whereby there are some talks, you know, with the authorities of TRA and TCA, will come on the table and then you will find that there are genders that has been pushed by the TCA that one of [mqashi wabo] of their employer. So then the formation of Tembisa Residence Association - it was purely formed on the basis of our struggle as well, and you remember when the ANC was still burned? There were all these formations that were formed that they must continue to push the struggle of the people. So the TRA, it was formed around those hospices as well that ehh... it will fight the injustices of the local authorities and the oppression of the people... So the TCA, if I'm not mistaken, I found it here when I got to Tembisa. It has been there, but I've known about it up until now. The TRA was formed and it was brought to the agenda that the TCA, you know, it betrays people and then that's when we began to know that ohh... and then I even knew Mr Goba as a councillor. I've never knew that he is a part of the organisation - also Mr Namane and the stuff, those people were councillors on one hand and on the other hand they would say you represent the community. So the TRA enjoys a lot of support here in Tembisa ehh... I would remember when rallies were called and the stadium would be full ehh... when sectional meetings were called. Then the activities that were persuaded by the TRA - it wasn't only centred around the council issues, also other issues that affect people either domestically, issues of crime we'll engage with the police right there, dealing with matters regarding crimes. Other were political issues, because the end results was that the TRA is the product of UDF, yes the product of UDF so ANC did recognise it, that it's another wing to push the struggle

TM: And then the TCA when you remember where can you say it was getting its support from, who was supporting it?

MPS: Ehh... I would be lying that there is any meeting that we called where we say huge number of people were flocking in and say that the community was behind it either than saying we would know of TCA either on paper or individually and we believing that the main supporters were families of the leadership (laughs) so that's how I know, because I don't remember them, you know, convening any mass meeting whereby we would be able to measure that I've seen TCA meeting I've seen a half ground you know of people who attended meaning that it had supporters, so it was an... So their agenda you will never understand it up until TRA come up with something, then they will rise up too and oppose that you know, so those were the type of politics they were playing, that you as much as the TRA adapt themselves as the watch dogs of that communities and then the TCA also came up with the rectory that they are also the watch dogs of the community. Every time the TRA come up with the subject then they will also rise with the occasion that they don't support that etc., which they just faded out automatically. Nobody kicked them out, but they've never existed. It was just centred around few individuals, so you find that on the meetings you know when there are meetings. Gradually they started not to come at all; they just disappeared in to thin air.

NN: So like earlier on you mentioned that you were arrested at Rabasotho, but not for slapping Mr Pretorius, so what I would like to know is what were you arrested for?

MPS: Okay ehh... I've mentioned that I've been in and out of prison more than seven times ehh... main issues - it was the state of emergency intention, so why a person was detained you know to be involved in South Africa, to be involved in an old South Africa, to be involved in struggle in general ehh... you will be viewed by the system or by the regime, you know, as a trouble maker. So in the mid-eighties, ehh... early eighties, there were some serious problems in our school whereby the department will suspend schools every now and then twice a month or maybe for the whole month. When I remember well 1983 and 1984 - there was no schooling and all schools were shut down and when they were shut down and then now the system were on a campaign to identify the so called trouble makers. Even the learners themselves they were brought to point out the people who they think that... they used to call us the ring leaders. Yes... so and then at night we would be having, you know, unended visits. I used to tell Nonhlanhla that my escape point I would hide at her place under the grape tree, so all to find that I was fortunate sometimes when I got back, because normally we have our meetings at night and when I come back I would suspect that there is a van that I saw. Then I don't come because there is a police van. Then I would say "Oh, they are waiting for me". Then I would go to Nonhlanhla's place under the grape tree and sit there and they would come. I remember one night they turned the four roomed house into a circus. I found beds up against the wall and they were searching the house and all the stuff. Another thing that led to my arrest - I've mentioned previously to Nonhlanhla that during all these eras you know a lot of activities happened in the eighties whereby at some stage I got a military training as well ehh... as an operative of MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe), so all these deliberations they go and reach the ears of the system, you know, so while on the other hand they were on a campaign of eradicating all those they perceived to be trouble makers in the area, so those were that reasons why one was arrested.

TM: How were you arrested your first time?

MPS: Ehh... it's not nice to be arrested because is not in a sense that they don't just take you and put you in a cell. No, you will be questioned and you will be tortured a lot, so if then they don't get what they want from you and then they will keep you inside and they would be fetching you at intervals and then the feeling ehh... The first feeling is that when you walk in the township and see a police van you feel so guilty and end up searching yourself while the yellow police vans approach you, searching that you don't have dice, dagga or a knife, you understand? So now, once they came for you it becomes more scary because they don't smile when they come to you. You are harmless, but now they will point you with those guns in order for you to lie down ehh... Sometimes they will play to be smart in front of people, you know, they will take you and be like ["Okay Sibanyoni, we just need you for questioning"] and then that would be the last day your parents and family will see you, until through lawyers ehh... There are some people like the MEC of Safety and Security in Gauteng, Anza Khatshalia, he used to be my lawyer. The likes of Pricilla Jana, she used to be my lawyer as well. So those were the people who used to hide me a lot, so really it wasn't a nice thing to be arrested as I've mentioned earlier on - that that they take you to Spartan at Kempton Park. Then you must know that you are not going for the holiday there. You will be beaten up to such an extent that even when you wear your clothes you feel pain and then they had a system whereby they don't touch your face, because they know that your lawyer would see, but they would deal with your body then they would beat you up.

TM: What kind of questions would they ask you?

MPS: Ehh... mainly they are not interested as to whom you are because they've already caught you and then what they are interested in is that who gave you an order, and ehh... where is your cache of arms? Those were the things that were of much interest to them; that okay, we understand that you have done this and that, but who sent you to do that? Because they knew that you are not operating on your own. So, if they arrest you it's fine; they've got you it's fine. They don't care about you anymore but they want to know the person behind you. They want to know who gave you the ammunition to do this and they want to know that within your cell who you are working with. Then the last meetings you had - which operations that needs to be executed, those were the type of questions that they would ask you and want. Then, on the other hand ehh... as an MK, that you know you don't divulge any information. Also on some things you take the responsibility. And if you find that you have been piled up with questions; now you are under pressure, just act like a lunatic act crazy just to have their attention on you... (laughs) Then, how to act like a lunatic is like answering a question that no, you are fighting for a good cause, apartheid etc., and then you will distract them from what they want. Then now they will be angry and start kicking you and at least now you've got the breathing space to refill your position.

NN: So first time being arrested, where did they catch you?

MPS: Ehh... I've been taken in different areas. I remember the very first time I got arrested - it came... when they came at school. They didn't come with political issues, but they came with the criminal one ehh... But to my surprise, when they come to me at school, when I arrived at the police station the complex changed and they took me while we were writing exams. Then those guys came in and when they came in, you know, they looked for me, then the principal, Ralph Mothibe, told them that, you know, he's at the exam room. Then they came in and got the invigilator and told him that they want Prince and he said there he is and then they said okay, the principal said he is writing,

but it's fine, we will wait for him. Then they stood there at the door and you couldn't write, you just write one word and say I'm finish. Then they took you to the car. Oh, before I've asked them what was going on and they said there is somebody... apparently this guy came with a taxi then as he got out they attacked him and stabbed him with a knife and he fell and so on, and he went and died at Mr Khozas place, you know teacher Khoza from Mkhathini?

NN: Yes

MPS: Yes and by that time we were from the train... we were coming back from the soccer practice as a team and we were from Knights and then ehh... Khoza saw me as his student and then when he called the police he told them that he is not sure what has happened; I just saw a person fell on my door, but the person that I think and saw him around and then he mentioned my name. So when they came they came with that thing when we left the school and when we got to the police station; the whole thing became a totally new ball game, that I was taken with the news of that person who was stabbed, and suddenly now they're asking me about people's names who don't even play soccer, that do you know this person? This day you had a meeting, then they've got the agenda and all the stuff, because it was another problem that, you know, during those days they would sit as comrades but then at the end the securities will get the information as to how, you don't know. So the first arrest was at school, then it followed by another one here at home, then others. I would be taken from the point of hiding and all the stuff. Then the last one, it was 1987. They had to stop the train between Knights and Germiston and then they came in there. Then I was arrested being that previously a year on couple of months an order was issued by Le Grange that when they got me they mustn't arrest me but they must shoot me. I used to have a copy of star and as I've moved around it; got lost so, such as to that they did this massive arrest, you know, whereby they stopped a train. It was that time I was attending at Soweto they stopped a train, you know, in between Germiston and Knights. They raided the coaches up until they got me, and then also on that one the complicity of it changed - it was not political now, but they wanted to make it a criminal case, saying that we took out people in the train while it was in motion you see. Because normally ehh... they were so stupid that they would act before they think and after they acted then they would think saying that ehh... we have messed up. Then they would want to change the story and cover up. Then I stayed there for about two months going to trial up until the case was dismissed by the magistrate.

TM: It's interesting that you mentioned something about military training. If you could tell us a bit about how it started - the process and why military training and where was it?

MPS: The process was like this, though normally the deeper part of it, you know, one needs to have authority for years, but ehh... briefly during the struggle it was more like soccer- when teams are playing there will be some sculptors around looking for good players; also politically they knew that within the students themselves, ehh... there are some people that might be recruited and then ehh... in the eighties you didn't join the military, but you will be recruited, so the criteria will never know up until you are inside. But normally they will look at issues like you know okay the certain organisation has called the meeting and then they will send in a scout to just sit down and you wouldn't understand him looking at everything. Then after that he will go and report back that he had attended a meeting and I've identified few people which I think, if we can get them, we can be able to build them up. Then as you will be sitting at home you will be having certain visits. There is this guy they call George Bila, he was a member of TRA at a same time an underground operative of

MK, so George will work more closer, I know him ehh... as a comrade... as my comrade I've never knew that he was working underground, so most of the time I would drive with him to KwaNdebele. He used to work with the guys like Ephraim Mokgale, the late Mokgale.

TM: He was in COSAS.

MPS: So, we'll go there and sometimes there would be meetings and sometimes you'll never know what's happening and sometimes he would send me there and sometimes I've got this material to take from point A to point B. He would teach me things, you know, how to do DOB and DOB is how to take material to one point from another without people seeing it. Then later on I found myself in training somewhere.

TM: Inside the country or?

MPS: No, inside the country. Normally they would conduct these things inside the country. Then we would go out once you know you are matured and understand what's happening, because the fear was that the boys are still young. You know you tell them straight that we do this and then they would get their girlfriends and they will begin to talk, so they teach you to operate underground, you know, understanding things very well, so...

TM: So how did you get there, did they take you there or?

MPS: As I'm saying, George was the link. Apparently he was the person issued to deal with me, though I was not aware, but he was the person, you know, appointed to deal with me. Up until now they began to undergo trainings, and then we will use not the township areas, but remember there is a chief somewhere I don't want to mention people's names, somewhere in Polokwane. One time we took there and on our arrival there I met guys whom I knew and I asked them what they want here.

TM: Guys from the township?

MPS: Yes, so and then we used to be practically trained, because we are trained differently, practically and psychologically you see

TM: Psychologically - what do you mean?

MPS: Ehh... how to deal with classified information and stuff like that. Like ehh... if today there is an operation to be carried in point B and then you are at point A then that information must be started and executed without being linked, you see, and then after the completion of the operation, how to report back, how to take responsibility, you know. Also you will be trained on disseminating the propaganda, which led me to have a full information of operations, not only in Tembisa and also you find that if orders from outside the province come and then there would be operation to be carried, then I will know exactly who must do what, how to get the material, how to deal with DLB. There are those training that they give also you will find, like if they are recruiting a person, let's say for example COSATU is regional council and then people will go there and somebody will come in part of the regional council and they don't participate. Then as people are focusing to the speaker they just go out maybe there they got the material. Material is in many ways, even the books like Mayibuyee material like that and then by then it was a very scares material. Then a person will go with those

things and just put them there. Then the first comrade to go out he will go there and he will see this book and be like Mayibuye ehh... But this thing has been burned long time ago and he would take it and hide it and when he goes to the township he would tell his folks that they mustn't look down on him because he is good. You don't carry what I'm carrying so the intension is not to say that he is brave, but that the information was disseminated so once many people got that material and read what's happening outside, then people get motivated again, you see. Also you find that they would attend all these meetings, identifying people where there is a potential and then they will be like ohh... if we could get that one and groom him and then they will take his particulars. They don't come to you then, they will go back to your area and investigate you more on what kind of a person you are so that's how they normally do. So working on the underground doesn't mean that you are not a real soldier; you work with them. If they came and there are things that are supposed to be brought to the country you are the ones who should even if you are here, but you will know about the material that is in Durban. Normally Durban will be run by us here at Gauteng because when they arrive normally we would be the ones fetching them from Rabatlababa in Botswana and we bring them coming here. It's more like getting material from the border to here - it would take a number of days because we would take it from this point to that one and you hide it and leave it there. You go and if you feel that your commander will issue somebody to DLB to go and get that material that you put there, then you take it to a certain place, so at the end of the day the first person who fetched the material doesn't know where the material is. You see, he doesn't know where the first interval material is at up until he will realise when the material has done the job that it has been in the process

TM: Approximately for how long according to the days, how long will it take you to get the material?

MPS: It depends in terms of security as it depends on an intense of the security, like sometimes it can be delivered over one or two days, yah... Maybe your contact from the border and the DLB will write you a letter and the letter doesn't say ehh... Nonhlanhla weapons are at a certain place. No, it doesn't go like that, because if they can reach security, it's trouble, but they will use mostly graphs that I'm here and then it will tell you from where you are, face this direction whether you face north or east; then from where you are you move so many kilometres on the same direction and when you get to those kilometres ehh... there's a tree it will show you a tree and once you say five kilometres you stop and look on your right and ten metres it will show a tree. It doesn't tell you what's going on and then on that tree you move five hundred metres on your left it will show you a green plant (laughs) up until you see that there is somebody who has tempered with the soil and then you will know that there is something there. Once you are certain that there is something you don't dig, you follow what is on the paper but once you are certain that you know this soil is being tempered with then you are sure that your material is there and then you start to do your own DLB. You don't take the material, you do your own DLB up until someone come and fetch it and take it somewhere. So, it was a process.

TM: So it was a process hey.

MPS: Also, the writing of letters when communicating we would use numbers, which at some stage, I remember, ehh... the security system, they did confess that this system I had, you know, in the olden days, the time we were writing letters they would scan them in the post office. So if we are three we are one unity so we agree that a certain novel our communication page would be page

ninety on that novel then we agree and then when we write letters we go on that page if I say I then I would start from the first word and look for I that where is the first I and were I find it I would count that it's on the third sentence first paragraph. Then I would go like one on the first paragraph and then three stands for a sentence and then twenty eight means that its twenty eight words before I arrive there (laughs).

TM: Ohh...

MPS: You see, so it will take you days to comply it into a letter and read it and understand it.

TM: And these are some of things that you are taught at the military training?

MPS: Yes, and then once you are done with that letter and understood it, well, you don't keep it, you don't even flush it, but you burn it. You don't keep a letter with you, you get the message then you eradicate it. Nobody must know it's only me and you who are supposed to read that letter. Nonhlanhla mustn't know that we wrote each other letters, it would be our part only yah... and then I would communicate with her and I won't tell you that I have communicated with her and I also instruct you to do certain things.

TM: When did you go for military training?

MPS: Ehh... it started in 1986,

TM: '86?

MPS: Yes, in '86

NN: How long does it take to complete?

MPS: Training is an on-going thing; even now I'm still the member of MK Veteran. Yes, I'm still a member of it, but there is a lot that is happening in terms of identifying people, training people, how people are trained and trained on what, but some of these things they are not more than classified. You know only to get permission in order for you to go into details, but it was quite interesting.

TM: But when you remember ehh... uncle Prince what did George saw in you in order for him to recruit you?

MPS: Ehh... normally I think what he saw it's what others saw from me. Most people will regard me or characterise me as a very hard working comrade. I was a very militant so to say it. I was very militant because when they say something is going down I would do it and never back down and also, most of the time when we are discussing things, I was that type normally against the comrade discussing things outside us, because normally they would come back to us. He portrays as a person that you know can deal with confidential circumstances, but I used to be very militant in a way that most people here in Tembisa... they would remember me as that in the eighties. We didn't take any nonsense. If they say they are doing something I would go full force and at some stage I would use force so that people can understand my position, like in meetings whereby you get that we don't agree on a thing, I believe that my point is valid then I would use whatever it takes for you to understand what I mean.

TM: Force in what way?

MPS: No not physically, but ehh... I would persuade comrades to understand my point you know; I would be more like ehh... in normal terms that I more like a person whom they say is a [indlovu ayiphikiswa] when I'm right I'm right which it wasn't dangerous. Even today you find people like Mandela on what they believe on they would never shift in it, even the ANC executive now in the nineties they would say it was difficult to work with Mandela because if he thinks that he's right you know he doesn't budge. So I was nearly that type of a person also, but I was very much persuasive - I can turn a situation you know to benefit our objectives.

TM: So the time you were going through military training, there's evidence that's come up about the operation taking place inside the country, and some of the operation that happened specially here in East Rand Tembisa included where operation zero hour, you know if you participated to some of the operations.

MPS: You know operations I have been part of them up until the last operation I've been in it ehh... the issue of Khwesine hostel. I think you know about the cutting of the rail line, all the stuff, but as I've said, I don't want to quote the details about them, but yah... I've been involved in many operations - almost things that were happening in and around East Rand and others at Soweto. I used to have a fever on those things ehh... mostly they used to give me a codename I wouldn't mention it ehh... I was very good in moving materials around, yes I was very good.

TM: Material would be the big material like Mayibuye as you've explained.

MPS: Material comes in many forms ehh... even weapons are still materials. Yes, so I would juggle with material and they would wake me up telling me that there is material that has to go to maybe Soweto comrades are scared that maybe it can be the board one along the line, so I would be like guys so what do you want me to do and they would be like no we got trust in you that you can come up with space. I used to have that good luck that, you know, I would manoeuvre with things. I've never been arrested red handed with material, though the system will know that most operations that took place I had a hand on them. I have a hand in terms of taking this to that, you know, putting thing things together and all the stuff.

NN: So you are saying that even now you are still an MK veteran, so now do you have a position there?

MPS: No, now I'm just an ex-official, as to say that I'm more like a retired official, but honestly speaking, even in today politics I'm no longer participating at all, though at some stage comrades would come to me [comrade Prince there is a situation can you please help us or what is your take on this one?] I can say I work on consultative missions only I'm no longer a full time or directly involved, so mostly my involvement if it doesn't go well in meetings ehh...these meetings differ from the... maybe the comrades feel that the current leadership that is in government, they don't do their job, they don't carry their mandate. If they are discussed in the top normally they start to be discussed in the bottom first and then we will begin to have these meetings, you know, they will come [comrade we've got this kind of meeting and these are the issues that we are going to deal with ehh... could you be part of the meeting? Comrades have been deployed and we feel that they have moved from their mandate what do we do and all those things] so the hierarchy goes up until it

reaches the top, and you will see one day... seeing Jacob Zuma wanting the cabinet, but if you follow it you will find that it started from the bottom and it took time and all the stuff, so in such activities ehh... I do get involved ehh... much as you'll find guys in the local government in the municipality, they would come and say "Hey, do you still remember the objectives of the formation"? Or "How do you see it?" and then they would sit down and we would talk and talk and as you will be sitting you will hear that they have implemented something and then I would say ohh... but we spoke about it the other day and you would say ohh... this person was here to fish out the information...

TM: Interesting, then 1990, I mean the unbanning of political leaders especially rallies of Mandela, in terms of structures because now the ANC is back, what's happening here in Tembisa?

Mps: Ehh... like any other place the structures are being renovated and then ehh... structures were urged also to be strong because now the face of our politics were changing by then, after Mandela have denounced violence and then now they were taking new face that we are pushing toward ehh... So the formed structures were very strong even before 1994 they started to change its face according to me ehh... by the lack of commitment by those who were placed on top ehh... when I say those who were placed on top I mean those who are now serving in ehh...fears of government, so our politics started to change. It was no longer the one of serving the people according to me, but now it became ehh... who enriches himself or herself and then that was the start of the squabbles and then everybody wants his stake there so that what I used to tell guys that I believe that to get your part there, you need to get educated first. We fought fights and we passed in those years and we never had time to read so I think that now what we need to do let us not rush these positions because at the end of the day they proclaim us as failures you understand, but let us fight the system by us to get education so that we occupy those positions based on skills, not based on political understanding, orientation you see. Yah... so our structures... now honestly speaking if you can look at statistics now of all these organisations the numbers are going down because people now they are losing interest, because there is nothing solid that makes people to be excited about a particular organisation, but the problem is that you know we would come to you saying that we see that Tshepo is intelligent ehh... We delegate him to present, and when you get there you change the phase, you take other politics and then you forget about people who placed you there and then it starts to come with squabbles as we see what's happening today. I feel that at one stage all of us, you know, the people who were in this progressive structures ehh... meeting and rethinking our position, I used to tell the guys that maybe the era was done by Mandela that no ehh... this whole thing of positions must be a full time job. Maybe if it was said that people should volunteer to be councillors, not getting paid maybe people were going to do their jobs, take for example ehh... I used to tell the guys as we were sitting and discussing our own situations ehh...

TM: ... [Inaudible]

MPS: Guys okay us pushed with them from TEYCO. Okay, we know them but they didn't have that opportunity of upgrading themselves, you know you can be matured political but you still need to acquire other skills to empower you. I can go out with you now and go to the councillor's office and go in there one you will see the desk when you enter that he does not know what he's doing then secondly you cannot run issues of the community over a cell phone, I used to tell comrade Duma ehh...our ex-mayor that [why don't you introduce the...] councillors must have full time PA's and also those PA's they mustn't be political appointed, they must get that job on a merit that that they

do qualify for it, and then he asked me why I told him that I'm saying this because most of time they are not in the office, but running around the township addressing issues and I believe that the problem that I see with the councillors, you will come as Tshepo with a particular problem you talk for thirty minutes and then you get out and then Nonhlanhla comes in. I don't record these things, then Nonhlanhla comes, then we would talk and she goes then I argue with my wife or girlfriend over the phone and then everything comes out, so why don't there be somebody that would be a supporting structure to these people. When he arrives in the morning the councillor must know exactly from the diary that how does his schedule for the day and not run it by head, and secondly we need to move away from this thing of appointing people because they were comrades. Now I'm talking about the ward committees; ward committees are being judged on the basis that if there is a meeting that has been called who talks a lot and I can talk because I need a position and once I've been given a position then I start to have a problem and then my due those ward committees are believe that they are advisors of the councillor, so my opinion is that they need to be educated, they need to have some skills, they must have managerial skills because if you got managerial skills then you are able to run things you see and you are able to prioritise and you are able to read and translate the objectives of your boss from the top that the mandate from the top is this, these are the objectives and how do I translate them today we are stacked up with people on the ground you know like the councillors because they believe that if there was granny no and you ask her what's her take on the councillors, definitely she will tell you that they are useless you see things like that. Because there is no interaction between them and the community and the problem is that a simple thing, I as a councillor, I think that I must educate people so that they can understand that I'm just like them and not different from them. Now we believe that the councillors are the ones who are supposed to give us what we want and we don't know that they are just messengers and when we go and negotiate with them and they might win or lose, and if they lose they don't report back, but they start to sit down and run away and that offends the people. So I think that we have to come up with educational programmes so that people can understand what kind of work do councillors do and people must stop to want unrealistic things, because people believe that if we have nine wards and people want these kind of things and each ward has got its own people that want certain things so obviously the councillor won't approve all of them, but they will look at the one that needs an emergency and then they will say okay let's look at this and the budget, does it allow us for this and then the others start to be frustrated that they didn't get what they wanted and now they start to talk lies or they run away from the meetings or stay the whole year without calling meetings. You see things like that and that offends people, so I believe that people need to be educated in this that... okay I'm not saying that they should be taken out of their positions, but the system needs to be derived to make them able, you know, to manage. They need to be given those managerial understandings so that they can be to manage you see, but I feel a bit ashamed to see the guys running office, work on their cell phones I mean you cannot do that.

TM: From my side I'm done and I would like to thank... but I just want to, when you started working, where were you working?

MPS: Ehh... I used to work with my old man at Suzza Brothers. It's an engineering company, Suzza Brothers. Maybe it's also interesting to share this: then I worked with them for three... '88 in August up until '93. In July it's five years and then from there I went to work at a bank at Netco and then the reason I worked for a bank it was another political motivated thing. Then there were these thing we called bond boycott, yah... bond boycott was organised by us CAST ehh... it was us that felt that you

know the whole junk of bonds It has been introduced to black people without it being clarified correctly and then now people are faced with the real economic problems whereby people are losing their jobs, then their properties are being repossessed and at the end of the day now the banks are beginning to evict people. So bond boycott was introduced, then people responded on a higher note that they don't pay at all ehh... It goes hand in hand with the rent boycott on the other hand, so we had these series of meetings with the banks, yah... and then their association was under Ishmael Atoll. I know him and used to work close with him and then one day (laughs) while I was at work I got a call saying that they want me at Permanent Bank and there I must meet the guy who was a MD of a certain mean and then Dennis mentioned to me the whole thing that [look Prince, I was referred to you by Jimmy who is at FNB now I forgot his surname, we've got a problem and problem being that we have just formed this MHF properties they were home finance] it was dealing primarily with the problem of bond issues, non-payments of bond, so we've got the position on that one so you've been recommended then as a politician I came politically that ohh... you want to cope and I said no I hear you Dennis so let me go back to my structure and consult. Then I went to George, the very same George. George is very old. If I'm not mistaken he is running to sixty, if I'm not mistaken.

TM: Ohh... he's still alive?

MPS: Yes, so George said to me look Prince you must know that you've got a family and your family comes before any other thing, so if you've got a job opportunity then that's fine, you need to take it, and I said okay I hear you George. Then now we've got a meeting, an executive meeting of TRA - it was SANCO by then. Also SANCO was formed by us at Cape Town and I was announcing that I've got a job offer and then okay the comrades gave me a thumbs up. Then the president Ali Thiyane was abroad by then... then the comrades gave me a thumbs up that I can go and work. I'm raising this because it ended up being an issue even in the newspapers and it also came out on the Star newspaper...

TM: It did?

MPS: Yes, so when Ali Thiyane came back from America, he questioned that how did I get the job. Then the comrades briefed him, being that when Ali went overseas they wanted me to resign at work and run the office full time...

TM: Ohh...

MPS: But the organisation didn't have funds. They were saying that they will want every house hold to pay R1 a month. So I said they are not going to work for me. It doesn't have any security - what if I go to the elections and then they don't pick me, then the next general secretary will run the office, so Ali wanted me to come and run the office. So when he got back he wanted to know how I got hired and they told him but he didn't come to me. Then suddenly I was called at Pam Park, you see Pam Park when you go to... It's Netco Park now, you see when you take the N2 it says Bloemfontein and it says N1 on the other side; there is a big building next to the garage.

TM: Ohh... okay

MPS: Yah... it was the head office, then I got the call that I must come

TM: Head office of?

MPS: Of Netco

TM: Oh... Netco

MPS: And when I arrived there they said to me they've got a situation saying that Mr. Thiyane called them and then he wants you back, because you cannot work for an enemy and I said no guys I don't think when I was given the job I was given on the basis that I'm a member of an organisation. Ehh... you have given me a job feeling that I can be an asset to your organisation, so if Ali has got issues he should've come to me as my president and they said okay fine. Then they came back and said that Ali says fifty per cent of my salary must be sent to an organisation and I said that sound like a fundraising

TM: How much were you earning there?

MPS: It wasn't a lot of money (laughs), so to find that they are also having doubts about me, so now I'm responsible I said guys it's up to you to think what you feel about me, but don't forget that I've got a contract with you yah... Then they started to live me then immediately the ANC cheat in the problem. SANCO regional and national issued a statement that they don't have problem with my appointment by the bank. Also it is their wish for their people to be in this constitution to influence some of the decisions then the ANC cheat in and then now there is a battle between.

TM: It is a branch now, national?

MPS: Province because now Dan Tlome is the MEC, so now it becomes another political issue on my involvement. Then Ali restricted from his statement and that led me not to trust him again and I asked him what was hard for him to come to me as my comrade and we talk about this things, then I worked there which led to... I was very much influenced in giving ehh... bank association a good information that led to their contribution towards Botshabelo ehh... what was is called? The one that was ran by Joe Slovo Botshabelo court that led to the crime policy for housing in South Africa yah... So I used to you know some sleepless nights sitting in the board meetings discussing and also when they need political connections I would pull the strings. We go all over, you know, sit with the comrades and then we talk...

TM: What was your position at Netco?

MPS: Ehh... initially I was an executive ehh... sales executive, because initially they were looking at to dissolve the stock that they had of repossessed houses

TM: Ohh...

MPS: Yah... so the approach was that the only thing to deal with this problem, we need to go back and renegotiate with the people and try to restore learner ship and do arrangements, because it's pointless to sit with this stock in your boot and act like you gaining money but instant you are the ones who are losing, then subsequently I was promoted to a national committee as a manager. Then now I have to run all over the country talking with all structures, so I would run meetings. So I pulled on up until two thousand from 1993, then they started to hire and they hired me a new boss who was from FNB and then we had some differences me and him. So we used to fight a lot, so he

decided to retrench me, because I was also fed up. I didn't challenge his gesture, I just quite the job yah...

TM: Mmm...That's interesting, I don't know if Nonhlanhla has got questions to ask but from my side I don't have.

NN: The last thing that I want to ask, like comparing Tembisa now to the old Tembisa - do you see any differences beside the infrastructures?

MPS: Ehh... yes there is a difference, there is no difference I feel that ehh... things have changed a lot ehh... We cannot rule out the issues of infrastructure because they form part of the change. To measure that there is a difference or not you need to look at what has been done, so I believe that from what it used to be and today I think that there is change. The only thing it is just that the we as people we are used to have unrealistic demands ehh... We look at the issue of change as to how it benefits me individually and tend to throw a blind eye of what has happened in general, you see, but when you talk of general, yes it has changed a lot. If you can ask me how, Tembisa is no longer the same as it used to be; I used to come in this township and the tar road was only one starting from Umthambeka and come John Chapman was not there it going at Mowedi close to ZCC and Sangweni and when it came to Thafeni it turns to Welamlambo and Straight line was not there and when it got to robots it will turn left till to the hospital and that was the only tar road, and today you can imagine how many tar roads we've got and we use to have only two entries in Tembisa in Umthambeka and close to the hospital but today we've got lot of entries ehh... We use to use a bucket system in Tembisa. Ehh... we use to use charcoal and we started to use electricity in the early nineties, so all along it was a privilege for you to have electricity. Unlike at Soweto if you can go to Soweto each and every household has electricity, but with us it was the issue that you've got money or not, you see, but today there is no house that is using a candle. If you are using a candle it's the one who can't afford to buy himself a prepaid electricity. And then ehh... also the transport system of Tembisa we say it has improved, you know, quite drastically. Ehh... transport was very scarce. When I moved here they were using vans as taxis, but today there are cars running around every now and then and also when it comes to properties we can see that people... it's a sign that people are affording houses are there and they are... even though the first sections are still showing that they were the first sections with no improvement. Yes the only thing that does not change is the issue of employment. Lots of people are still unemployed, but in terms of infrastructure, yes it is there and it's well just that the people who are providing it are the ones with a problem you see, whereby if there is something that has to be done they don't respond immediately up until certain damage has been done. But yes, I think that Tembisa, comparing it from the early eighties up until now, there is a huge difference.

NN: But going to the subject of the sections, like Isithama and Cubeni, do you think that it will ever change the fact that it's occupied by the Tsonga speaking people only?

MPS: Hah... they will not change; they won't change because why I'm saying that you know those are the results of apartheid. You know the infra control act was, the one that build that poison between people, whereby today when you are sitting at Tembisa when you think of Isithama you think of the Tsonga people, you understand when you think of Sedibeng, Mashemong, Moriting you think of Pedi people, when you think of Difateng, Setloana, Motheoung you think of the Tswana people you understand so that thing it will stay like that, but if you can go inside those sections is not

the people that I've mentioned you will find Zulus, Xhosas and so on, but apartheid has created that thing that it should always be there - that now there are Tsongas in a certain place, maybe it's better for Tembisa that there are Isithama, Cubeni and so on. Then you go to places like Daveton, there are sections that are being called by clan like Emashanganeni, you see, so political if you analyse these things they are against the constitution of the country, but I think what you are asking that will it ever change? I don't see it changing; maybe if it does it will be because of our children. You see, let alone those sections can be renamed but as they are still these names they will have that thing that this was a place for Tsonga people, a place for Venda people you see.

NN: Okay so now we are done with the follow up interview, and we would like to thank you for your time and yah... so thank you.

*****THE END*****THE END*****

