

## **Eazy Mmoto**

Facilitator: This is an interview with Easy Mmoto we are in Soshanguve, the date is 24 November 2011, interview is done by Brown Maaba. Thanks very much for your time. Please give me a background as to where you were born, the family, schooling, whether you came from a well to do family, your school etc., and how you ended up in the world of unions?

Respondent: I was born in Mamelodi in 1955 and started my schooling in Mamelodi, high school I went to Mamelodi High in 1976 I think. I was doing my Matric in 1976, but I left very early maybe in March so I completed my privately. I got involved in some formations in the township, at the time Black Consciousness was dominating. I was involved in something called MPANDO (Music Poetry Drama etc.) they were part of the BC Movement. But then in 1981 there was a union called NAAWU, National Automobile and Allied Workers Union, which was organising the motor industry. It was very strong in PE and in Tshwane, it organised companies like BMW, Nissan and then it was Chrysler at the time. The comrades who were in NAAWU, which was an affiliate of FOSATU. This is where people like Alec Irwin and Danny Lewis??, Jay Naidoo, Sam Shilowa. So the militant members of NAAWU in PE broke away. I can't remember the reason why, whether it was a living wage campaign or whatever, it was around the 1980s. they broke away and formed something called Motor Assemblers and Corporate Workers Union of South Africa (MACWUSA). They were working for Ford in PE, they became very popular – you won't believe that they filled this big hall I can't remember what it was called, they were able to fill a hall with about 50 000 members at general meetings, other people were not in the motor

industry. So they were forced to immediately start a union which organises outside the motor industry GWUSA (General Workers Union of South Africa), it organised across industries. So what happened is they had a similar structure, same GS, same national organiser, the same people trying to branch out into other sectors outside the motor industry. How I got involved? I am in Pretoria, I was working for Deskom, Detainee Support Committee and other commissions. The PE people formed the union called MACWUSA, there was a strike in Gauteng so the people from Ford, which was Chrysler then, they divisions amongst the shop stewards. The others decided to contact the others, they then broke away from NAAWU in Tshwane. At the time I am unemployed, so the shop stewards that used to organise the workers there, they contacted me because I was active. They asked me to come and help them. They were launching a branch here in Gauteng, the headquarters are in PE but they wanted to start it here in the Transvaal. Indeed I joined them. So we established both MACWUSA and GWUSA.

We organised but could not organise Chrysler, the union was very strong, NAAWU was very strong. We then decided to focus on other ..., imagine, at the time it was the time when the Labour Relations Act was introduced and at the time people did not understand what a union is. We started organising in 1980/81. We organised Pick 'N Pay, we targeted all the industries which were not organised. We organised quite a number factories, across industries, companies like Silverton Tannery, I think Dulux, Dry Cleaning companies, Pick 'n Pay across Pretoria was organised by us. In fact we beat CAAWUSA, although it was their terrain we organised the workers. We went up to Elandsfontein, Kempton Park and of course we worked closely with other unions based in Jo'burg. For instance GAWU, General and Allied Workers Union, Samson Ndou was the president,

Murphy Morobe was organiser, Amos Masondo was also an organiser at GAWU, there was a union called ..., which later on became Municipal Worker's Union, I remember the General Secretary was Joe Mabe, he died years ago and then there was another one Orange/Vaal General Worker's Union, there was also this old man called Philip Masiye and then us. So we formed something called Joint Union Education Project (JUEP). The project trained the shop stewards of the formations I talked about. You see you also had SACAWU, which was not affiliated to FOSATU or any other body, it was on its own. I think they had a problem ..., our unions were called community based unions. What they did was they negotiated the release of political prisoners, unbanning of the ANC, and we also organised consumer boycotts etc., we were involved in community activities.

So places like Orange Vaal and places like ..(unclear) had a problem to relate with us, although they were part of us but they were quite uncertain. Of we also tried to organise the old unions like TUKSA, some of the FOSATU unions. At the time they were called bread and butter unions because they were focussing on economic issues, they didn't want to participate in boycotts etc., they didn't want to involve themselves in politics. They believed the union should focus on shop floor matters. With time, if you remember, since the Unity Talks, I think they started in 1981 in Langa. People were beginning to think that ..., unions were formed everywhere, they became too many. We had become a group of 7 unions, outside FOSATU. FOSATU was strong, established and had a lot of intellectuals like Alec Irwin. We started engaging them, we initiated that we should come together and form one federation. We recommended that we form one union and get rid of all unions, there must be one trade union per industry. We did not mean that we must be absorbed by

COSATU unions, they also must give way to new unions. Of course there was this debate about the banning of organisations etc. FOSATU had a problem but ultimately we influenced them. People who actually pushed for COSATU to happen, in my opinion is the liberal whites, Alec Irwin, they didn't care about any other thing. They wanted us to have one federation, that was basically their agenda. They didn't care about politics. There was this thing called "Progressive Caucus" that emerged. We knew that we were outnumbered with union density, the FOSATU unions. The way forward was .., "what do we do?" - we needed the numbers but also we wanted them to embrace our kind of thinking. We were talking about "Release Mandela, Unban the ANC, Freedom Charter" and they had a problem with that. One of the debates towards the formation of COSATU that we embrace that thing .., we adopt the Freedom Charter. FOSATU resisted. They had a problem for a long time. But as discussions went on, there was a time for nominations, we had to decide who we wanted as president, GS, etc., and we were outnumbered, we were the so-called community based unions. We had to support them. The first GS I remember was Jay Naidoo. We didn't contest it, we supported it but proposed that there must be a Deputy GS, we nominated Sydney Mufamadi, there was no contest. Sydney became the Deputy GS. The first president was Ntate Bagae, he was at NUM, something very exciting. You will notice that COSATU and UDF happened at the same time. The very interesting this was that there were other unions like the BC unions, Cyril was with them. Do you remember there was AZACTU, then there was Council of Unions of South Africa. So CUSA was invited to the Unity Talks. They sometimes came but they were very reluctant, even to the UDF, like I said the process was concurrent, they didn't want to participate in UDF, they also didn't want to participate in the Talks because they had a problem with the Freedom Charter. Cyril

took NUM from CUSA and took it to the UDF, and participated at UDF. Terror and other people had a problem with him because historically he is a BC person. In fact not even BC, at Turfloop he belonged to some structure, Christian Student's Movement or whatever, during the Frelimo Rally. So slowly they started accepting him because he was very forceful, both in the UDF and at COSATU. He could have been the first GS but because he was not trusted, they didn't know where he came from, BC and what have you .., people who knew him from Turfloop did not support him. He wanted the nomination, then we settled for Jay Naidoo because he was brought in by FOSATU. I think he was from Sweet Food and Allied Union. So we endorsed him.

We also had powerful people, there was guy called Government Zini, he was the National Organiser because our GS was Dennis Neer, Government Zini was very powerful, he was older but I think the police may have interrogated him until he retreated. He was a very powerful speak and aerator and all that. When COSATU happened he was no longer there. He just disappeared. He had taxis that is why I believe he was threatened. He used to work for Ford, he is one of the people who broke away form NAAWU. The people who broke away from NAAWU and went to FOSATU was Government Zini, Dennis Meer, Thozamile Botha, he is with Cope now, before he skipped the country, he was there and Siphon Pityana, younger brother to Barney Pityana. He and Thozamile skipped the country and went into exile, they joined SACTU.

Now all the general unions must disappear and give way to industrial unions. The people I was with at GUSA resisted the formation, it was difficult .., they were not against the formation as such, they were in a comfort zone in GUSA, now they had to start joining another union and

work with people they did not know. GUSA went on, parallel to COSATU for a long time but I joined NEHAWU. I became ..., initially an organiser for the branch. I eventually became the Acting General Secretary of NEHAWU for a long time and I was sole candidate for GS in 1982 by then at Wits, I had gone to Khanya College and so on – I studied BA at Wits and did not complete it, I went back to the unions. I then went back to NEHAWU full time. NEHAWU nominated me GS, there were elections coming up in 1982 and I was the sole candidate for GS. But I stood down because I had to attend full time at Wits to do my post graduate studies before I completed my junior degree. They said they will give me an opportunity on condition I do it full time. So I studied full time, Post graduate diploma in management at Wits. I continued to assist NEHAWU and so on because I was responsible for the negotiations with almost all the institutions, Unisa, Tukkies, Turfloop, Medunsa – all their first recognition and wage agreements I did them, even beyond - when I was busy with my post graduate diploma I continued assisting them. I made NEHAWU a very strong union. I also introduced the culture of studying, that people should study and not rely on union workshops to empower them. I pushed, there was something called USSLEP Unites States Sabbatical Leadership Exchange Programme. I went there and told them I want to bring 30 shop stewards into the programme. They asked me to also join them but when they interviewed me I can teach there. I took many people there. People like Mabudafasi from Pietersburg and a lady comrade, she was once an MEC cannot remember for which department, Madistella Mabitse-Segoale, she died, they wanted to study USSLEP it was too far for them to travel. We then arranged USSLEP to offer the course in Polokwane but we did not succeed. It succeeded in Gauteng. Many shop stewards attended the course, Makhura, I'm not sure if he was there. I employed him when he worked there, he ended up

working in the North West as the regional secretary and so on, I remember he studied CPIR in Wits, I did mine in 1983.

You know at the time the comrades were very critical for anybody who wanted to study, they thought there was something wrong with your thinking, studying through a business school, especially SAAWU. I forgot about SAAWU, it was one of the seven community unions, South African Allied Workers Union. It was much stronger than ours in Pretoria. Most comrades are from there because they were associated with it, Kgaugetelo Lekgoro and Titus Mafole a lot of comrades – we organised the rest of Tshwane up to Northern Transvaal, Turfloop, the hospitals, up to Musina, we also organised NEHAWU, we continued organising the institutions under the umbrella of NEHAWU. We would go as far as Rustenburg, we did the whole Transvaal at the time.

So sometimes I regret why I went to Wits, I went to Wits in 1992 – there was a possibility of me becoming a GS and I was the sole candidate and hoped I would return. After completing the course I did my Masters, in 1994 I studied full time for my Masters. I tried to come back to unions then nobody was prepared to take me back, they had a problem with an educated comrade. They were convinced by Philip Dexter. What he did was .., Philip and I were very good. At the time when there were talks about forming a union that organised in the public sector. Always in the workshops and meetings, Philip and I would be nominated to lead the process. He became excited when I stood down and he became the candidate, he was given the GS portfolio. What happened is he was studying with UCT, people did not know. When he was GS and the union needed my services, he would tell them that “the comrade has decided to study he must go and become an intellectual” – he was studying full

time, UCT did not allow correspondence. He used union funds and told them that he is trying to set up NEHAWU there whilst attending tutorials. He completed his course, BA full time with UCT, I think he now has a Masters. He was intelligent, I think he may have studied at UCT before he went into exile. People were terrified of him assuming that he is white. My colleagues at NEHAWU would say "where is the white man" I would tell them he is not white and that he is coloured.

Although I'm from Pretoria, I spent most of my time in Johannesburg at Khanya College. I would come to Pretoria, I always had a car, I would use my car, go to Tukkies and claim petrol money and he wanted to contest that. I remember one day I wanted to beat him up, people disappeared, he took out a gun and I told him I will beat you up. When I came back the following day he took me very cool as if nothing has happened. Recently he was trying to recruit me to COPE, I think he is back with the ANC

Facilitator: Is he back with the ANC? No I think he's still there

Respondent: because he and Terror, he is on the group that wants to disband COPE and go back to ANC, Terror says let's work with DA but let's not allow them to take us over, we will work with them as an opposition, so there's that tension. So there's a good chance that he went back to ANC. I read an article somewhere saying that Philip Dexter, formerly of COPE – I think he is still an MP, he came in with COPE but he is no longer a member of COPE.

Facilitator: ..(unclear)



Respondent: You know our government, as long as they see he is coming back to the ANC, they can change it .., just to allow that to happen, maybe the next elections they will kick him out. I wonder what he is doing at the moment. I have his contacts but I never call him. One of the things .., I think I'm different. At NEHAWU I successfully, someone was given the mandate to do organise Turfloop. He submitted a very stupid proposal. Our general secretary at the time was Siza Njikelani, he was working with a comrade from Mabopane. They asked me to handle Turfloop because of your experience with Tukkies etc., they had a problem with wage negotiations. They convinced me. I did not have a car at the time, I asked them how do I get there. They told me they will give me taxi fare, I am schooling at Wits. So I asked them to give me the proposal to study, it was not there. The guy had kept it because he was ashamed of it. I was an expert, I had studied CPI, I always studied.

I left here from Jo'burg and went to Turfloop, I did not know anyone. I found the shop stewards waiting for me at the gate, someone had given them my description. I was approached by some people "are you Eazy", I said yes, it was around 5 in the afternoon. So I asked for the proposal because Moropane did not give me a proposal, when they gave it to me I laughed, but not in their presence, I didn't want to embarrass them. They had set up an appointment with management for 7 in the evening. I told them I did not understand the proposal. We had about 52 shop stewards at Turfloop, the members were more than 2000. I said there is no way we can have a team of 52 people, I needed to have at least 6 people, they refused and wanted to all go. They didn't trust me obviously because they don't know me.

The shop stewards filled a class, management was there, they also came in numbers, there was some transition of management, from the old to the new. I only knew two of them. It was very interesting I will never forget it. I then told them that I have a problem with the proposal, I want to redo it. So it means we need a general meeting. The shop stewards said I should do it with them alone. Among their demands they wanted access to vehicles. The reason for this was we had Mabudafasi, so I said to them should every worker in Turfloop must get access to a car, I asked them that we delete it, they took me on. I asked them how many people qualified. The minimum wage at the time was about R280.

So at Medunsa I brought the minimum up to about R800, this is what I wanted to do in Turfloop, I wanted to push it up to R900 the lowest being R800. Finally we agreed, we met with management at 08:00 in the morning, they said this makes sense, they typed it quickly and read it and they said "we will get somewhere". The following day we met at 10:00. Management was very progressive, they changed .., they came up with a set of proposals which changed the university. When they looked at my categories, I don't know what they were using, Hay or whatever, there were people who were in wrong grades. For instance a driver had been driving for 20 years but he earns like a general assistant. So management said before we go to the details and negotiations, we want to put people in the right grades where they belong. I remember a driver who was earning R350 at the time, after the negotiations he was earning R1000. I was a hero after two days. I then became a star, this thing was discussed all over he managed to get a minimum of R800 and then MEDUNSA.

When I walked into TUT, Pretoria Tech, they had appointed consultants to negotiate on their behalf. I managed to convince them, CSIR same thing,

RAAU, which was not my area, Wits didn't have a problem but RAAU had a problem. I went to RAAU. I walked in there first day and asked what was the problem. I asked if management was entrenched on their position because we as the union we are not entrenched, we are prepared to move .., to make adjustments here and there. They said "we are not entrenched at all" so I asked why is there a stalemate. We negotiated on day 1 things did not work out. The next day, there's a guy who was from Stellenbosch, he claimed he was an expert on industrial relations. When they caucused, I told them "you want to remain at R600 to R700 and right in Jo'burg, I do not understand you," I told them that I settled in Turfloop in the country side, a very good minimum. They looked at each other and asked to caucus. The other one asked me about Turf I said I am not prepared to discuss this – they asked me for a minimum. When they came back .., the negotiating team did not believe it, they asked me how I did it. They told me that they've been left right and centre for three months. I was very good with negotiations that is why I was the one who guided bargaining teams.

There was a group called Labour Research Services, LRC, they were good, they gave us information on how to deal with those people. They did surveys and gave us the info. You will notice that in most cases they did surveys for companies like Unisa, Tukkies etc. This is where I found out that a basic salary for a person living in Johannesburg should be more. Also the workers would sometimes expect 300% salary increases I would make them understand that I am the one who is going to negotiate and I must get my facts straight. I also explained to them what 21%, 10% means. There's a guy who taught me how to explain the percentages to the worker as well. So it was very easy for them to understand. I really enjoyed doing what I was doing.

But this thing of going back to school to study made me lose opportunities. When I joined NEHAWU I was told that they could not account for R102 million in those days, Siza Jikelani, Monde Mdiqwa and others. I joined them and approached the Japanese Embassy, they told me that Japan will not give us any funding. They looked at my proposal, it was very easy to fund raise as a unionist. I tried to do the same thing later on in my life with an NGO I could not get any funding. With unions it was very easy to raise funds, you have membership and there's proof. The Japanese Embassy gave me funding for training, Germany Embassy, Australian Embassy and the Dutch. People in Jo'burg used to borrow money from us and abuse the money. Then they started respecting me when I was bringing in money.

There was an opportunity at the time, RAU employed 2000 people, some of them are doing gardening, the same thing happened with CSIR, they told me that they are academic institutions and that their job is to create intellectuals, employing staff for doing the gardening is not their priority, they wanted to outsource the non core activities, this also included catering. I told NEHAWU that this is an opportunity for us as NEHAWU to form small companies to take over such jobs. I met a lot of resistance, people said I wanted them to become capitalist. I told them that in the UK unions are running companies, they told me that this is not the UK and that I am out of order. We then started losing membership because the companies were now outsourcing, we would lose up to 10% members, the other 10% was for catering. They refused my proposal.

Years later they came up with pension funds, they wanted to start investing now.

Facilitator: Just to go back a bit . . . , you said that you left schooling in 1976 in March and so on, more or less in the middle of the year. What happened?

Respondent: things were difficult in those days, remember the time of the uprisings, they started in Soweto, in Mamelodi the most difficult year was the following year 1977, but also 1976 did affect us, there was no school, some people managed to write but not everyone.

Facilitator: BC, was it vibrant in Mamelodi at the time?

Respondent: Yes, they had organisations, we had the Mamelodi Action Committee before the CIVIC was formed, it was led by a guy called Kanakana Matsena, he died, he went into exile and I think he died of cancer after he returned, and then we had Mpando, there's a lady who came back from Sweden, I think she now lives in the Vaal. She was in the executive of BC, national body, people like Aubrey Mokwape, an old lady. In Mamelodi it was Arts and Culture, Mpando etc., at the time I was a young man, I don't think . . . , or should I say, although I was an activist I don't think I was serious, it was the thing of the time, although I loved politics but I don't think I was serious, it was more like a hobby, sometimes they would look for me for a meeting and I will be no where to be found. I later discovered . . . , you know in 1985 there was a festival in Lesotho, Hugh Masekela, Mirriam Makeba, at the time I skipped the country and fell into the hands of PAC. I lived in their camps and met at the time the president of PAC was Nathi Pokela. I stayed with them for about 2 months and was then detailed by the Lesotho Army. PAC helped me to get out of prison and came back, they wanted me to go to Botswana, if I had gone to

Botswana I would have gone to ANC. So in Lesotho there was South Africa Lutheran ..(unclear) Council and then they had BCM and PAC. Those were small organisations. So I came back and decided to go the unions. I think it was before 1985, I can't remember the year.

Facilitator: who introduced you to unions exactly?

Respondent: this is funny, most people don't know. There was a guy called Donsi Khumalo, his history he was involved in .., he was a township guy, stealing cars etc. After coming back from prison he came back and decided not to get involved in such things. He came back and hung around with us, he was extremely intelligent. He got a job at Chrysler, he then made links with the group in PE, because he worked there. He introduced me to those people. So I can say he is the one who introduced me to the unions. Most people think I am the one who introduced him to unions. I can say I politicised him but did not introduce him to unions. I met the union people in PE through him. And then in 1985, ILO had a symposium in Zimbabwe, Harari, sponsored by the Canadian Labour Congress, they invited me through BCM. I went there and met the ANC for the first time. Thozamile Botha, he is from PE, and the ANC gave us an assignment together with Sydney. This is when I realised that Sydney belonged to the ANC. We were scared to go and meet the ANC elders, when they talk you could not differ with them, Sydney would argue with them. The guys have us an assignment. They told us that we must go back, there was a guy called Mark Shope. He told us that we must go and organise workers in the mines and the way to do that is go through NUM, they asked us to help NUM, Sydney was opposed to that. He started talking about Cyril, he talked about where he comes from, they are both Venda, he said he was not a comrade, he

said we can't work with Cyril. SACTU had a union in the mining industry, South African Mineworkers Union, he said we can revive it through the UDF, so that it can become a powerful again. Masope argued to say that it is not strong, so we agreed. We were given a task to set it up. The same year the boers were handling some guy in PE, Flint, we lost contact, I am not sure whether he died or what. Do you remember there was one year they bombed Gaborone, Lusaka, Maputo

Facilitator: the cross boarder raids?

Respondent: ja, our plan could not proceed, Sydney continued with it – because ANC at the time, what they could do is, the boers would refuse to grant you a passport/travel document – but if you can get to Harari they were able to help you. But when you arrive the document will show that you went to Harari – you would use a separate document. Sydney was very brave, I am not surprised that he now has a PhD, I am trying to find him. From long ago he's always been a key reader, he is extremely intelligent. I've always known he will get somewhere with the ANC, so that now with Beki changed things for him. I communicate with Monde a lot, the do meet from time to time, they meet and want to form something.

At the moment I am working on bio energy, Wits has also formed something called Global Wyoming something, it's a new organisation, it deals with issues on Global Wyoming. I want to link up with them.

Facilitator: So are you doing proposals for them?

Respondent: At the moment I am working on two projects, incidentally the projects are in Mpumalanga. There are communities which want to have their Land Claims processed, my mother is from there, Ga-Maubane, Seage or so, I am currently busy with two proposals, I am still consulting.

Facilitator: In terms of communication for instance MACUSA sprang out of the break away from NAAWU in PE, and then it was later formed here in Gauteng and so on, back then there were no emails, cell phones etc., how did you manage this?

Respondent: Telephone what else. I remember one day we were on our way to PE, we had a cheque and did not have enough petrol, Middleburg Cape?? – that was the last time we saw these boys, I think the guys were killed, Goniwe and them, Matthew Goniwe, Calata etc., they gave

Facilitator: Umkhonto

Respondent: they gave us money for petrol because it's not very far from PE. We had to phone PE and tell them we didn't have money etc., they then referred us to them, we found them, they were 3, they came to us, gave us food and money for petrol, it was a lot of money about R200, I think at the time a full tank was about R30. So we were loaded, R200 was a lot. When we arrived we still had change. This is the weekend when in Umtata they burned the Reserve Bank, the same week when the leader, can't remember his name, he wanted to raise the Ciskei Flag, that is the week and when we came back Matthew Goniwe and them had been killed



Facilitator: so it was just at that time?

Respondent: Yes. So that was the last time we saw them on our way to PE. But somehow we managed with communication, I don't know how.

Facilitator: In terms of recruitment, workers were they willing to be recruited in unions?

Respondent: It was the most difficult thing, imagine when you come to Pretoria, not just workers, even management did not know what unions stood for. I can tell you about a few places I went to who didn't know what unions stood for, I remember an Italian Company which manufactured emblems, cups, SAP Jocker Laforte, it was in town. This guy was running this company with his son in law, they were members of SIFSA, he told me "why do you want me to join you because already I'm a member of SIFSA", you are at SIFSA what about your workers. Apparently he had tried to do a close shop agreement with a union called TUCSA. We explained the difference to the workers and they asked us to disregard what he told them. We educated them about unions. It was also the same at Silverton Tannery, as soon as they sign you up you are a member of Textile something, we then arrived and organised that firm. The firm was owned by a guy called Chris Heunis, he was a member or Minister of Constitutional Development, his brother. Lion match the same there were strikes there. We had a very good agreement with them but then we found that the shop floor manager didn't follow procedures, he would dismiss people without following proper procedures. They had two strikes for the same thing. I was able to solve strikes, I've never had a strike that lasted more than a week. That is why the strike at Ga-Rankuwa hospital, it was handled by Philip Dexter, it's because he didn't

understand and caused a lot of confusion. I had a way of dealing with unfair dismissals, just one letter did the trick, no struggle. I've never battled with unfair dismissals unless if someone had stolen like at the Tannery, they had a lot of theft cases. Unfair dismissal has never been a struggle for me. I have always felt that these things need to be documented. Where we came from and how we got to where we are.

Facilitator: FOSATU why was their slogan "bread and butter" slogan, couldn't see that the struggle went beyond the fences of ..?

Respondent: There were intellectuals in between, the white left who encouraged this – or maybe they were agents or either they were afraid to get involved, they wanted to assist workers period, focus on bread and butter issues.

Facilitator: but did they eventually move beyond the fences of ....?

Respondent: yes they joined COSATU, for some very strange reason they were dedicated to one union one industry like FOSATU – they loved it. We could differ with many things but not with this one and they pushed it. At our meetings we had people like Dirk Louis – Jan Theron, who was with Food and Canning Workers Union, they pushed meetings – they pushed their agenda even if we wanted to stall it, people like Tambo also encouraged it. The people who pushed it more were not ANC, FOSATU pushed it – also some people from some union in Cape Town, something called Unity, they were not from the tradition of the congress. But COSATU and UDF moulded them and encouraged them, that Freedom Charter is the way, so they had to embrace it. That is why .., do you know how SACAWU survived? It was doubtful and did not like the Freedom Charter

and the FOSATU unions as well. But once they got into .., NUM? Came from BC, but ..(unclear) because it was the biggest union. Since the unbanning of the ANC, all the general secretaries except the guy from Alex .., they come from NUM, it's Cyril and others were from SACP, Gwede Mantashe.

Facilitator: Does Mbalula come from NUM?

Respondent: .. (unclear) he's young but he has got a chance, he will be the first who is not from NUM – Alfred Nzo ois from there, but after him, three of the GS is from there.

Facilitator: How did Cyril manage to build such a power base because at first you guys resisted, the guys from FOSATU resisted ..?

Respondent: that guy is fortunate, I talk about people I know personally, Terror Lekota, Sydney Mufamadi and others, in fact they hated him. They didn't want him any where near ANC issues. Apparently he testified when Terror was sentenced regarding the Frelimo Rally, he was on the wrong side, he came from some Christian movement, so for that he was not popular. They hated him. If you remember there was a time when it was assumed that after Mandela Cyril should be given a chance. We didn't support him. He is an intellectual and he's an attorney by training. I think later on he had a mind shift and started embracing ANC and so on. When he realised that the ANC was unbanned he must have seen an opportunity and he grabbed it. Nowadays when they talk about ANC giants, they are referring to Cyril, but I'm sure people like Terror are not happy, but what can they do.

Facilitator: The unions that sat outside COSATU when it was formed, do you think they lost out?

Respondent: some BC unions are still existing today, there's a federation called ..., I can't remember what it is called, do you remember that COPE wanted to form a union – the problem is that cannot happen. It shouldn't be enduring beyond the phase we are on. Look at what is happening with SADTU, the ANC is not treating teachers well, they're undermined and what have you. Agreements were signed and they did not keep to the agreements, they are not being treated well. They are unable to resolve this thing, they just need them for election purposes but they are not treating them well, as if they are not part of the alliance.

Facilitator: Issues of women, getting back to the days of MACUSA right through to NEHAWU, did they dominate the agenda?

Respondent: Ja, remember there was a magazine called Transformation and Work in Progress (WIP) they pushed the issue of gender equity and so on. There were, especially Indian women of intellectuals, the gender issue was pushed. Honestly at the time of the formation of COSATU what have you, women were not .., I think the ANC pushed it more especially Thabo Mbeki by bringing women to the main stream, giving them better positions, unions not so much, they tried, they had structures which were not that powerful.

Facilitator: and then in the workplace, issues around maternity and so on and other things?

Respondent: That one we fought for, if you can look at the current Labour Relations Act, it took some of the aspects that we fought for

Facilitator: When you look back, was it worth it to be part of unions, or if you had to live your life again you would do something else?

Respondent: In fact to be honest with you, my biggest blunder was going to study further – I went there because I thought I was serving my country, as an expert, I was being patriotic, I didn't realise I would be sidelined. Nobody wants to see me at COSATU or NEHAWU for that matter. In most cases they want .., I would apply but nothing happened. There are other people who came out of nowhere and they are given those positions. I could have been somewhere in government had I not gone to study. When I decided to study it was not the appropriate time to do that. But also I didn't have political ambitions, I just wanted to serve and because there were no structures – our history is not properly documented. I read an article the other day, there's a guy who is doing an analysis of the UDF and ANC, I kept the article. The government did not give consideration to all the people who contributed to the struggle, some people who worked for unions were not taken into consideration, if you were not close by at the time when things were happening, forget it. After Mbeki to be honest in my opinion, I don't think there was a need for the struggle. People went there for positions. It is no longer about the struggle, I never missed UDF meetings – Consumer Boycotts, Black Xmas etc. – in fact one of my roles apart from being a unionists, all the marches in Pretoria, we had a structure where we met in Potgieter, we had an office in town, when we drafted the Memorandum for the Municipality, I was the one who submitted it to Pricilla Jare Attorneys. I became so good with these things that they even told me that it was properly drafted and taught me how to

refine myself. They told me not to come back, I just had to go and submit it to Munitoria. I was the one who delivered the Memorandum for all the strikes that were held in Pretoria.

There was a guy who also served at the Truth Commission, he served his articles at Pricilla Jare, I think he is currently an Acting Judge, I worked very hard.

Facilitator: Any bitterness maybe?

Respondent: Of course there is, I have contributed. When I go home my mother knows that she spent a lot of sleepless nights, these people came there looking for me, she says to me you sacrificed, went to school and currently you are not working. She is unhappy, she sees people who do not know anything and they are in parliament, or he's a Mayor or a Councillor, where are you, you guys didn't sleep. I want to work, I've got qualifications but I am nowhere, so it means I must fight again. I wish I hadn't gone to school to study further I would have been somewhere

Facilitator: You could have ended up in parliament

Respondent: yes

Facilitator: Dexter went to parliament in 1994 am I right?

Respondent: yes

Facilitator: which means the position you would have taken

Respondent: Yes because he became GS when I was supposed to have been, remember I was the sole candidate

Facilitator: Ja he became GS at the right time

Respondent: It would have been automatic, but because at the time of elections I was outside unions, I was studying and people were electing each other

Facilitator: you lost out?

Respondent: At least in the Northwest or even in the province because there was no organisation there, if you look at the boys from Atteridgeville, most of the ones who failed went to the Northwest. I am doing something at the moment in the mining sector maybe I will get somewhere. I am bitter I won't pretend. Younger brother to Nkosazana Zuma is leading this thing, so we're trying something, it's tough. Caesar, I was surprised he is an MP, he was once a councillor, but there are people who died poor. There as a GS of SAAWU, he died a pauper in East London, he was very powerful, do you know him, I can't remember his name (interruption) – I was very bitter. At some stage I was very fortunate when I wrote proposals. I was once awarded a tender which paid me R1 million for six months. My degree is in Policy in Communication, I did it at PNDM – I did the Diploma and the Masters, the CPR used to be at Business School, it is now at PNDM, I have also considered lecturing. I think this mining thing will work out, it is selling and buying commodities, so we have something coming up which might boost me.

Facilitator: Try and see. Anything that is important about labour issues that we haven't talked about?

Respondent: Ja I wanted to talk about COPE, they tried, I know a comrade who used to be a shop steward, did you know that Mondli Gungubele used to be a NEHAWU shop steward, he used to be a male nurse by training. There's a comrade, his name is Siphwe, he used to work with Mondli, he now works for DTI. He used to be with COPE. So one day they invited me, they wanted me to help them with policies, I asked them for what, they said for COPE. So I said to them if they want me to do it for them they must pay me because I am unemployed, I didn't believe in COPE. Dexter approached me and said I must work on the labour desk for COPE. So one day I was with him and Terror, they talked a lot of nonsense, look at what they did to COPE, their infightings made them lose people. Shilowa is going to die a natural death. Already there are signs. People like Philip Dexter are not honest, when he was in the unions he has never been a straight person, very dishonest, he used to mismanage workers subscriptions. For instance he studied and no one knew about it.

Facilitator: it was about him?

Respondent: Ja, that's Dexter for you. So he's jumping around, he is now at SACP, he is very articulate, to become the Treasurer of a party he doesn't deserve that. He can talk. He used to be the CEO of NEDLAC?

Facilitator: really?

Respondent: Ja, he's been somewhere. He also had a position at the HSRC, he was something, Project Manager and so on, Limpopo, he was



CEO of the Provincial Something .., the investments of the government of Limpopo

Facilitator: he's been around

Respondent: He is good. But you know when he became GS he had only been in the trade union for 6 months, 6 months only

Facilitator: How did he get that position?

Respondent: He speaks very well. You can go to a conference with him, he will shine because he talks. If he participates the participates fully and he makes a meaningful contribution. That is why Mandela loved him, he wanted to appoint him as the Chief Whip, people said no, I think he didn't get it simply because he is coloured. Titus told me about it, this is when he was still Mbeki's advisor. He also claims he was an MK. Willy Madisha apparently also told them not to form a Labour Union. He advised them not to because the NAC made the mistake by taking COSATU on board. He disputed the name. So Willy Madisha disagreed.

Facilitator: but it never took off that thing?

Respondent: It never took off, who were they going to organise. I asked Siphwe where are they going to start. He came with figures, he told me the percentages of unemployed and employed. And then I told him look at the mines and so on, people who want to join unions have already joined, if they haven't joined now they will never join

Facilitator: ja they've long made up their minds, you can't change their minds.

Respondent: I asked him what is he going to organise workers for, to tell them not to Vote for the ANC to vote for COPE, they will never. That is why some workers would tell you, we don't care whether you are at ANC, CWUSA or whatever, we joined the union, we want a better salary and what have you. You will be wasting your time. You have to find another way of approaching it but don't use COPE.

Facilitator: there's no space for another union?

Respondent: there's no space, COSATU is now very powerful on its own. The alliance thing, the fact that they cannot solve their problems with SADTU – so far with the majority of their workers. NUMSA is doing well. It organises across no longer in the motor industry only. It also do mines, it's a strong force, so where do you start

Facilitator: exactly where do you start you won't be able to infiltrate them they're solid.

Respondent: Forming another political party for workers is not going to work. In fact rather COSATU can form a political organisation

Facilitator: they will be able to take a chunk from the organisation

Respondent: another organisation from scratch?

Facilitator: it was likely to hit the rocks. How do you view the Bargaining Council?

Respondent: Look there's always been this debate in the past. Collective Bargaining is it appropriate for it to be at factory level, or central level, it's a long debate. For instance NEHAWU in the beginning, at the time when we had Provincial Administrator, TPA, CPA etc., ..(unclear) something called CMA, so when you negotiate issues of wages for instance, substantive issues etc., you meet with the body because it is a national body, all the provincial structures belong there, Free State and what have you. But when you negotiate other issues, you go to the level of the province, the Transvaal and so on, Cape and so on, so it's bait, and when you go to unions in the metal industry, SIFSA pushed for central bargaining. It's better for them the motor industry because they are representing the employers, the employers are represented by one body, so the one who organised Nissan wants to talk to Nissan alone, and so on, so it's better for them if they go to the bargaining council in the motor industry, it suits them well because they belong to one body. So I don't know because sometimes you find there are other issues, I'm not sure because it's been a while since I've been involved in union matters – I think other issues need to be negotiated at the plant level. Major issues like wages there's nothing wrong if they are negotiated at a central level like a bargaining council.

Facilitator: but is labour broking not a threat to unions or is this the beginning of the end?

Respondent: Personally I have a problem with labour brokers. I think they have service, the problem is that the people who are criticising it – people

like Matthew Phosa, they own these things, they have labour brokerage, Cyril himself, do you know that.

Facilitator: I did hear about that

Respondent: so it's so unfair, if really genuinely we say we don't want them we must be exemplary, you have a way of making money in a certain way but publicly you want to give a wrong impression. I would say I'm neutral with labour brokers. And then of course I know that sometimes they underpay etc, but I don't have a firm ..., whether we want them or not.

Facilitator: Let me set you free. Thank you very much for your time

Respondent: today I was free, when we communicated yesterday I was in a meeting, today and tomorrow I am free.

Facilitator: thanks

**END**

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