

Wanda Mavubengwana

Facilitator: This is an interview with Wanda Mavubengwana, we are in Kwa-Thema, the date is 26 September 2012, interview is done by Brown Maaba. Comrade thanks very much for your time. Just give me a background of who Wanda Mavubengwana is, where do you come from, just the family background, including schooling issues and so on.

Respondent: Wanda is a Springs bonafide, born and brought up in Springs, attended his primary school in Kwa-Thema and his senior primary in Kwa-Thema. I spent year in Kwa-Phakama High School then I went to Amazintoti College and then I matriculated at Ohlanga High School.

Facilitator: In KZN?

Respondent: In KZN ja

Facilitator: And the decision to send you to Ohlanga high school, were there no better schools around Springs?

Respondent: No actually I was influenced by a friend. I actually was going back to school at one half year, I think it was half year, and I accompanied him to Germiston. You know all the vibe there, people seeing each other and they were happy for each other it kind of attracted me to go and study there, I wanted to go that route.

Facilitator: The students going back to school

Respondent: That's what attracted me and I came back I said no guys, I was doing Form 1, I wanted to go, they were more than happy because they felt it's an opportunity for me to further my schooling there, unlike here in the township where there are so many distractions.

Facilitator: And your parents were willing to pay your school fees?

Respondent: Ja they were willing though we were, they were more than happy because the prospect of me getting further as compared to here in Kwa-Thema in the township.

Facilitator: What was wrong with the township back then?

Respondent: Nothing wrong but the atmosphere in the township is not so good because of the looseness as compared to a confined space at the boarding school where you would be constantly watched and you couldn't go and do mischief, they will always be in the campus. That was their main attraction, you're far away from home and far away from some of the things that might be disruptive. Boarding schools were in outlying areas where you don't have anywhere to go – everything is out of reach, to go to town is very far and so you are confined to the campus, that was it.

Facilitator: What was your impression of Ohlange when you came in there?

Respondent: I think Ohlange, people used to boast that "it's a man's school, John Dube of Africa". From Amazimtoti where we were taught by white Afrikaners in the main, or the main principal called Van der Spuy, the atmosphere was different. You

were told that “look here you” – I was actually expelled at Amazimtoti and when I went to Ohlange it was just after Easter. I didn’t know what to do because I was thinking about my parents, what are they going to do, what am I going to stay. So somebody said try Ohlange, I thought it was late, after Easter I didn’t see any prospects. I was advised to try and was told that I have a real talent therefore the principal might be impressed with me. So I took a chance and went there. When I arrived there, I was pointed to his house. He was reading a paper, I could not see his face. I knocked and greeted him. He did not even look at me. He asked me what he can do for me. I told him I wanted to study in his school although I was late. He told me that you have answered yourself, it’s late we cannot accept you. I was rejected and told myself I was taking a chance, I told myself I must just go back and face the music at home with my parents. By a strike of luck, as I was leaving, he called me back. He called me back and asked me who I am. He dropped the paper and took me to the boarding master and asked him to find me a place to sleep and that everything will be sorted the following day.

The following day I was called to assembly and introduced to other learners, everybody was just excited. I didn’t realise that people knew me there. I thought I was only known in Amazimtoti because we would sometimes meet at the train station etc. So that’s how I was admitted to Ohlange. Now he asked me what happened, I told him that I could not go to class because I did not have soap to wash, so I had to skip class (phone rang). As I was coming back the principal was following me. I was expelled for that. I pleaded with the principal and he said no I’m expelled. So when I related the story to him, Mr SD Ngcobo, he told me that was uncalled for, we know the rules and regulations that cannot be broken but you know sometimes you just turn a blind eye to some of the things. That’s how he was, a very mean guy, Mr Van der Spuy, we called him Mpanda. He was a true Afrikaner. He would make you to hate white people. I think some of us that’s where the hatred for whites came from.

Things changed a bit for me, I was told I would not be expelled for things like that. I was told that they would not encourage me to do the same thing, they understood

problems faced by black children. The atmosphere was completely different, very conducive for reading. I felt that my dignity is back, there was no harassment like in Amazimtoti. I believe people like .., Amazimtoti was quite a big .., it had vocational training, teachers training high school and I believe Nkosazana Zuma was there but I didn't know her. In order for you to be known you had to be active in one way or the other. I was told she was there, maybe she was not active, also the school was so big you couldn't possibly meet everyone. So I went to Ohlange. I then came back here. I worked for some time here.

I was supposed to go for an interview at IBM but prior to that I met Chris Dlamini, who used to be .., we had just moved to our area in Kwa-Thema ..(unclear). I had two friends who were discussing politics and he happened to join us, so we became close. We tried to spread the gospel, although we were against trade unions at some point because we didn't understand exactly what was happening there. I particularly became interested after reading the Vian Commission Report. I then went back to Chris and told him it seems we have something there. I was considering to skip the country at the time, I was worried about my grandmother, I couldn't just leave her, I was not at ease with leaving my grandmother behind. But when I started communicating with Chris, I felt there's another way of contributing to the struggle, whilst in the country through the union movement.

He then told me about an opening at Kellogg's, he asked me to join instead of going to Johannesburg. I readily accepted the offer and that's how I joined Kellogg's.

Facilitator: What were your exact plans after matric, did you plan to look for a job, or you wanted to go to university?

Respondent: I wanted to go to university but you know, my mother was the only bread winner at home, it was a bit difficult because I thought maybe I will work and

find my way back maybe. But I guess if you leave school and say you will go back it becomes difficult because anything can happen. I couldn't make it back. At one stage I thought of studying through Unisa but the activities did not allow me to study. So I just let it go.

Facilitator: But from Ohlange when did you come back exactly, when did you finish your matric?

Respondent: I finished my matric and came back, I started working for Van Leer, that's where I learnt about this Works Committees. I thought they were useless bulldogs, I was not impressed with them. But when I joined Kellogg's is then that we started associating with people Phil Bona, Taviela, Holten Syril. That's when we were sent to Wits to do Labour Courses, that is how everything was opened to us, we started finding direction. Well I guess Kellogg's was blessed with so many committed and talented people because it was virtually the father of unionism, especially in the East Rand.

Facilitator: Really?

Respondent: Ja, we used to organise these other companies, irrespective of the sector they were in, we would go for wage negotiations etc. By then it was fun, we would see people being happy and you felt that you were part of that, it was gratifying. We were doing something good for the people. The formation of FOSATU was another milestone, the Unity Talks to us at COSATU was another milestone. On the home front we were called Sweet Food, but because of the problems that existed at the time, there was a split in Sweet Food and FAWU was formed because of the mass roll, no mass roll was in the chemical industry. People like Sikhakhane so. And that as well I was a National Education Secretary, Maggie Magubane was the General Secretary of Sweet Food then. When we went over to FAWU, Jay Naidoo

was the first General Secretary. So many things happened I do not know where to start.

Facilitator: Just to go back, when did you join Kellogg's exactly?

Respondent: I joined Kellogg's in 1980. Before I joined, because I was always with Chris I pretended to be working for Chris. So we did everything together.

Facilitator: And the idea of going into exile, did you have connections in exile?

Respondent: No I didn't have connections but there are people who left the country, I didn't know where they went to but obviously I thought Botswana would be the first spring board or Lesotho. But after the attack in Lesotho it was a bit .., I found Lesotho to be a bit vulnerable, maybe Botswana could be the first port of call. That's what I thought because the people that I knew went through Botswana.

Facilitator: And the political mood here in the East Rand, or in Kwa-Thema in the late 1970s and so on? How was it like?

Respondent: I think the political mood here was inspired by the strong presence of the trade union movement. The trade union movement was very strong here and sometimes to complement that, ERAPO was formed, the East Rand People Organisation also contributed to the mood as well. People were inspired by the trade union movement because I think one of the COSATU locals that were strong was the Kwa-Thema COSATU local. It was very strong and its discouraging to see that it's no more. I don't know whether they still meet but then it was .., that's where people got their inspiration from, even politically.

Facilitator: ERAPO what was it charged with? I've never heard of ERAPO?

Respondent: It was for the east rand people, it was like SANCO. Just to get people together so that this political awareness could be .., because in the midst of fear, people were fearful to talk about certain things because of the security police, but you know a civic organisation that will pretend as if it's attending to civic matters whereas deep down the intention was to make people politically aware. People like Enock Godongwane were in the forefront of that. We used to stay with Chris here because he was from the Eastern Cape. He was organising for MAWU, he didn't have a place to stay, so Chris took him to his place. So he was part of that ERAPO, people like Cyril Jantjies.

Facilitator: Did ERAPO achieve it's aims and objectives?

Respondent: Ja in the main I think so because people started to .., you know when street committees and everything was formed, people were active and it did find fertile ground to mobilise people. I think it did, although the trade union movement was still the main core. People trusted that the union movement is going to guide people towards liberation.

Facilitator: Just to go back. You mentioned the fact that before the formation of FAWU, there were issues within Sweet Food or problems within Sweet Food?

Respondent: Ja, you know when I actually got in there it was .., there were a lot of fights and I couldn't really put my finger on the pulse there. But when I joined Kellogg and that's when it was divided, Sweet Food and Food and Canning, that was Sikhakhane. So I really don't know the details of the split. But I think it was power, people were obsessed with power sometimes. That's what I assumed at that

time but because we were so much involved and travelling, organising, holding meetings all over the country. I couldn't really care that much about it.

Facilitator: But Kellogg's was under Sweet Food?

Respondent: Ja Kellogg's was under Sweet Food.

Facilitator: You came there in 1980, was the labour movement within Kellogg's vibrant already?

Respondent: Ja it was starting to blossom ja. Actually the Recognition Agreement was signed in 1979.

Facilitator: A year before you came in?

Respondent: Yes a year before I came in.

Facilitator: And then FOSATU on a bigger scale, was it taking off or was it struggling to take off?

Respondent: FOSATU was taking off. The main players there being MAWU, the Chemical Paper, Sweet Food ja.

Facilitator: And the driving force around FOSATU at that time, in its early days?

Respondent: I think the driving force is that people were willing to work hard without getting compensated. They will organise everything that is working, that was even before the sector agreement that unions will organise per sector, whether it's metal, wood or ..., people would be organised and put into those unions which they belonged to. And it's fires ran rapidly and very fast ja.

Facilitator: At Kellogg's, what were the pressing shop floor issues when you came in there in 1980?

Respondent: Kellogg's, when I got in there I was kind of amazed by the MD there, because when I came in there I was ..., it was towards the wage negotiations and I was elected as Chris alternate. Now this guy came to the meeting, he was alone and being Australian. I said to myself this guy doesn't he have people working under him. I expected the HR or Personnel Manager then should be part of this. Apparently he felt they did not serve him well. The negotiations were finalised with him personally. When he felt that he was cornered by a guy called George, he would kind of say "George we spoke about this yesterday" and George ..(unclear) he said "I discussed this with you yesterday" and then George said no this guy is lying. He then said I do not like the language used now, let us adjourn this meeting. And we realised after that he was taking a break from ..., he was trying to get out of the corner by saying he spoke to George. So it was interesting. But really the merger, there were no major issues except the day to day problems which we encountered which were prevalent in the apartheid era. Whites were not willing to accept blacks. The recognition of the union was inspired by the Head Office in America. Chris was detained here and the Chief Executive came all the way from America to talk to the government to release him. Clear instructions were sent to all staff that all staff members will use the same amenities, separate amenities were not supported. So it was a liberal kind of atmosphere because America wanted it to be that way. Well whites will always come up with things to undermine that but fortunately the union was very strong to return all those tactics of undermining the American wishes. And ja, those were the only problems or somebody complaining that somebody didn't say baas and now but no major incident because of the

American director. And we were very strong and hard on the Suliman Principle, that should be followed to the latter, no matter what. So it kind of helped to .., because even today that atmosphere is still there. You talk to America, you talk ill of the union, then you are inviting trouble even if you're a managing director. They will tell you that whatever you do, you start with the workers, you talk to them, you get their buy in and you agree, you come out with a mutually acceptable solution. You don't just do things.

Facilitator: So in other words as the workers you were kind of more like in a warm environment at Kellogg's?

Respondent: Ja really before this warm environment, because some of the companies I think today are still like, you go there and people step backwards. I think the people we had were very strong, people like Baba Maseko, they were very powerful individuals. You look at him and you know that he's never seen the inside of a classroom and you wonder how he did it. He had his way with him, he was very well organised. He was the chairperson for a long time there but it seemed as if he has a senior degree. Translations were done for him but whenever he spoke he made sense always, he was right on top things.

Facilitator: He was just good?

Respondent: Yes he was good, actually he was Jay Naidoo's friend, we used to asked them what do they discuss with Maseko because they were always together, he said "no we understand each other" don't worry about that. They told us that children are able to communicate irrespective of the fact that the other one is Sotho and the other Zulu they always find a way to communicate. They were in that kind of a relationship. He was a very brave man.

Facilitator: Other than certain personalities, what made the union to be strong at Kellogg's and beyond? It was FAWU then am I right, it progressed from Sweet Food?

Respondent: Ja. No I think they always strive to give meaning to the slogan of the union "an injury to one is an injury to all". People will always give meaning to that, you cannot hurt one and get away with it, they were so united – it was amazing. But one other thing, well, they will debate issues and in a true democracy, you reach a certain point where some of the people are against an idea, some but if the majority say yes, even those who are against would go along with the majority and stood by the decision. I think that made the difference, that people were united and you couldn't split them. I remember the first strike that we had there.

The guy who worked in the Personnel Department called us to a meeting, privately. He said that what he was going to tell us ..., he didn't want to be seen to be associating with that. We went to some place in Kwa-Thema. He told us that management is planning to retrench. At 11:00 when the shift was supposed to knock off and a new one to start, we went there and instructed the workers that they should leave everything, those that are knocking off should not go home until we see them in the morning. So everybody downed their tools. So when the morning people came they went to the canteen. So the employer was taken by surprise and wanted to know what was going on. We told them that we know that they are planning to retrench although they have not spoken to the union first. They wanted to know where we got the information from, we did not tell them because we felt it was immaterial. The retrenchment never materialised. It was a one day thing and was resolved.

The second strike I believe was the first of it's kind in South Africa. When everybody slept in the company premises at Kellogg's. They sang the whole night, the very same guy from America, Maree Rogers, he had to fly from America to come and intervene. That was also a successful strike. I am trying to demonstrate how united people were, it wasn't easy to come in between. We also did not have *impimpis*.

Facilitator: But was there any form of victimisation from the bosses?

Respondent: Not at all, in that atmosphere the bosses were afraid to victim people, they wouldn't touch anyone. One day we were busy working in the stores department. Artisans also used to work in that department. One of the days when we were busy working, a conversation started regarding whites and blacks. I told them that one day we are going to ring white people's necks, our sisters/mothers who work as your domestic servants would be given poison to poison you and your families. He took the matter forward, and this went as far as the MD. When the boss called me in I tried to explain, he didn't want to listen to me. He fired me. The following day some guy came and asked me to come back to work tomorrow. People had down tools because of this. I was so angry, I went back to work because my colleagues were willing to sacrifice their jobs for me. I didn't want to let them down. So I went back to work.

Afterwards when the matter was discussed, I asked them if what I said is possible? I was referring to the whole South Africa not him specifically. So the MD informed me that it was not relayed in that way to him. He then told them that it's impossible, how can they be afraid of such. So it is another way to say that you couldn't ..., an injury to one was an injury to all there. There was no two ways about it.

Facilitator: But were there other cases of ill discipline at Kellogg's and how did FAWU handle those cases?

Respondent: They were normal cases, in any given situation you will find ill disciplined people, stealing and absenteeism and it's still happening to date. It's something we spoke about over and over again but it's still happening, you know those normal disciplinary hearings.

Facilitator: But FAWU did have an upper hand here, in such cases did you have enough manpower to deal with such cases?

Respondent: Ja but you know the only downfall of that was that when people started to repeat doing the same thing again and again until he is dismissed and then we tell them "chief there's nothing we can do, we've spoken to you about this, you keep on repeating it, and we can't be held responsible". Things were so well to the point that there was trust between management and the union, that we feel no ..., sometimes we cannot really fight issues that we know people should know and should be doing. I mean like stealing we were always asking them not to steal in meetings. We would ask them to leave the property but people continued to do it. So in order for us to make an example, maybe to curtail that, someone must lose his/her job and then they will take us seriously. Those were the type of challenges we encountered.

Facilitator: So did other people do things, I mean wrong things deliberately, with the hope that the union will protect them?

Respondent: Ja, but you know we would tell people that we are no longer in that era now, we've got unions who represent us. You cannot say jump and I ask how high should I jump. We would come out strongly there. Those were the issues that we dealt with, sometimes to the point where we felt like manhandling each other because other white people still wanted to be addressed as "baas" – what's the bass for, especially the artisans, they always wanted to be called "baas" and people refused to address them in that way but because it was entrenched to them, they found it offensive. We would tackle such issues head on. We would tell the white people that if they want to be called "baas" outside, not inside the factory, nobody was going to call anyone "baas". We nipped this at the but. We didn't have a lot of problems.

The other thing is the eating facilities were opened a long time ago, people sort of tried to integrate while “baaskap” lost momentum gradually and .., though they didn’t accept it, but they were forced by circumstances to accept this. Many of them left the company, others came back and when we asked them why they told us that there is no better place than our factory. We laughed, we talked, we fought but we eventually became one big happy family.

Facilitator: But did other firms around East Rand have a good time as you guys did at Kellogg’s, I mean Jabula Foods and so on. They were all under FAWU?

Respondent: Jabula had problems. Their problems I think emanated from their management, like I said Kellogg’s was driven from Head Office in America. Kellogg being a South African company, and with verkrampte management there were problems. They wanted to emulate what we were doing at Kellogg and put it across at Jabula but they would find steep resistance from management which eventually caused conflict between management and workers.

Facilitator: In terms of benefits, salaries and other things, were you guys okay? No complaints?

Respondent: Ja I think we were one of the leading companies in terms of benefits, salaries in South Africa. You know at one stage we formulated our wage demands but we decided to go and ask them what are they putting on the table before presenting our demands. To our amazement, they were not slightly but above what we were going to request. That was the end of the negotiations. We accepted their offer. When we tell people those things they said it was not possible. Maybe now is not possible but then it was possible and there’s no difference between negotiating then and now. And now you talking about proposal, we’re talking

about demands then. We demanded the increases but because of the relationship that was built over the years, this made it possible.

Facilitator: But what's their point then of keeping FAWU in ..(unclear) at Kellogg's if you guys had .., is a right?

Respondent: No we had .., I'm sure the tradition of Americans with the unions they want that to be translated to South Africa and now without a union I don't think we could have achieved what we achieved and ja, up until now, Kellogg is one of the companies that is still having benefits that are an envy of other companies. You know some people were just amazed sometimes. We had a German MD, he used to say if you play hard, if you work hard you must play hard. So we normally have this end of the year gala, where people will be presented with their long service awards. So he said this year, everybody that works for Kellogg we going to Caesars and we are going to sleep over. Now for two years running people were saying waw that's the only company in South Africa that can do that. So generally people envy people who work at Kellogg. I must say it's a good company to work for.

Facilitator: And did you yourself take a certain position within FAWU, as a union member?

Respondent: Ja, but not nationally because I was .., in the national scheme of things within FAWU Chris was the main guy, so I was an alternate, and I couldn't hold a position. I would go to conferences but not elected.

Facilitator: At shop floor level?

Respondent: Ja at shop floor level because Chris was mostly not present, I was very active at branch level, at one stage I was a secretary and I was the first secretary of COSATU local here.

Facilitator: You mentioned that COSATU used to be strong locally here, but it seemed to me things have changed now?

Respondent: Ja, I don't know, I think the leadership was not in the same drive that we used to have. Maybe I might be lying there, but when I checked it wasn't functioning like we used to do and, I don't know what was the problem there but it slowly died. I don't know whether is it because people felt now we have achieved our liberation and we don't need, I don't know. But just after that it went a bit dead ..., people were no more active like before. I don't know what happened.

Facilitator: The formation of FAWU did it have it's own challenges?

Respondent: Ja, no but the main challenges was to put bridges together throughout South Africa, but it had it's growth, the only thing was ..., from the split was how to put the mechanisms for the union to run smoothly. I think Sesi Maggie Magubane did a splendid job there in putting everything in place and it became a functioning unit again.

Facilitator: No squabbles for positions?

Respondent: No, not really, Chris was the president I think 7 times.

Facilitator: When you look back what were the major achievements of FAWU?

Respondent: I think FAWU played a very prominent role in the unity talks towards the formation of COSATU. FAWU was the main contributor there. There was strong resistance from other unions but in the main people were afraid to lose their power base. You know power will always disrupt things but .., but if someone realises that they are going to lose their power because of the unity, it was a problem. I know Chris was .., people were rooting for him to be the first president of COSATU, but there was Jay Naidoo at the same time this side, he was from where I was .., they said we would rather go with ..(unclear), Chris became the first president. So it happened that way, but fortunately Chris was in the forefront of the negotiations. Other people were saying "no I want that presidency" but it would have been unfair, one union taking two major positions. Even in NUM there was Cyril Ramaphosa, he didn't want to stand for elections, so that's how Jay was .., even then it could have been maybe Chris and Ramaphosa, but Ramaphosa did not want to stand in. Jay's name was forwarded and Chris had to step a little down to accommodate Jay.

Facilitator: Was Chris happy with the arrangement?

Respondent: yes he was happy, like I said that he wasn't a power monger, he was more of a unifying force than being obsessed with positions. So he was game with it.

Facilitator: And then did you guys have to experience police harassment?

Respondent: Ja no too much. We even took a resolution that at Kellogg we don't want a policeman. If you are looking for somebody you should wait for them outside, the security guard will call the person if the person wants to come he can if he doesn't you will have to go and wait for him somewhere else. To date that still stands, no policemen are allowed in the premises because of the harassment that was experienced in those years. A special branch guy will come and look for

somebody, they call him the next thing he doesn't return he is detained. So we told them it is not going to work for us.

Facilitator: Did you have the support of the township, as the workers or the townships when you had to organise stay aways, marches and everything as the workers?

Respondent: You know, a month or two ago, we were reminiscing about that ..., there was a ..., it wasn't a stay away, I don't know what to call it. But there was a protest against electricity tariffs around here, people were breaking down the offices and pelting cars with stones and all that. We said no look, we had marches here that were supported by the community. If we say no we don't go to work, we will go to ..(unclear) and present our petitions and it will be like that. No stone throwing, peaceful, then we come back. Things have changed now, but if you look deep into it today you get this tsotsi element in the people who are doing these things. There was a shopping centre here, Boxer, it closed because they came in and took stock. The old ladies are now complaining that Boxer was our only hope with less prices, they closed it, so they now have to go to Pick 'n Pay in Duduza. They wanted to attack the Pick 'n Pay as well. Someone told me that it's a franchise owned by a black person, it does not belong to a white person. Normally they would attack white businesses. All the Pakistanis and Sudanese had opened spaza shops in the township, they were destroyed but now they returned much stronger than before.

Facilitator: After 1990 did FAWU become strong, with the release of Mandela, when it began to face it's own decline?

Respondent: I wouldn't say decline, but I would say ja there was the element of power mongering was rearing its ugly head now and it was ..., those were the things that could be fixed but you know when we go to elective conference, they raise

their heads again and you get divided opinions about the things here. But I would say it's still going strong.

Facilitator: When you say people tend to squabble for power, is it because they want to go to parliament or elsewhere, deployed within the ANC?

Respondent: Within FAWU, I want to be the GS and I want to be the President and you have your own people who will influence that .., not in an open position that we used to, people will form their own silos there and when they clash now it affects the organisation. But yes is something that could be curtailed because right now there's this semblance of unity. Because even if I'm no longer a member but I keep in touch with the people who are involved.

Facilitator: And within Kellogg's is it still strong, is FAWU still strong?

Respondent: Within Kellogg's I think it's .., the shop stewards are a bit out of touch with most of the things. What I've seen and have told them is that guys you are shop stewards here at Kellogg's, immediately you go off the premises, you no more a shop steward. We used attend ANC meetings, COSATU meetings where one would get ideas, you come back here with ideas you can do whatever you want to do. We have never lost an argument or case because of the knowledge we possessed. These guys have no knowledge. Currently I'm in management, I feel like I want to help them. They would ask for a caucus .., the Chairperson is the only person who is trying to keep the committee intact, but he becomes a victim, not a victim that they can victimise in such a way. But if they say let's concentrate on him, he runs out of ideas and that's it. No one will help him or come up with something that will counter the argument. The other thing is there's no depth, even they can elect other people it's still going to be the same.

Facilitator: So where did you guys lose it then?

Respondent: I think people who matter the most simply said we've been in this for some time now, we want to start preparing for our retirement as well. So we taking positions that are going to pay us better. One American guy I worked with when I was the Chairperson of the shop stewards, we worked together, he was the Supply Chain Director, he said "you guys have taken all the leaders of the union and put them into positions that is why you are having such problems". I said t him Walker, to you do you think it's right that the shop stewards shouldn't think about their future? He said ja they should think about that. I told him that if you were paying shop stewards the money you are paying in those positions they would gladly remain as shop stewards. Some of them have got families to feed, to take their kids to school, they can't be marking time here. We were there as part of the struggle for liberation, we were very active and didn't expect anything in return. That is gone and forgotten. You still find people who don't appreciate the sacrifices, if you do something they will put you down, so what is the purpose of serving such people. So you would rather move and say let me forget about the stress and go somewhere else.

Now my role is Employee Relations. Most of them still regard me as a shop steward. They will come to me for advice, some for disciplinary issues, now what do I do. I said now look, I'd be sitting in that disciplinary hearing as an observer, I should not be seen to be supporting the union, I would not be doing justice to my job. I think liberation made people to be relaxed, they assumed they've reached the promised land and therefore they don't have to do anything, whereas before you will find people, even though they are not shop stewards, you will find them in meetings, if there are rallies they are there, they come back they talk about that. Those who didn't go feel robbed that next time they've got to be there. And that's where you generate ideas to .., but now they will tell you about Bahama, they go to Bahama which is full of youngsters. I do not see a bright future there. It will only be because of the American connection that they still think the union is a vital cork in the

relationship. Otherwise if they find this, the then Afrikaners they will knock them of as soon as possible.

Facilitator: The legacies of the likes of Chris, is it remembered within FAWU and Kellogg's or it has been forgotten?

Respondent: 70/80% at Kellogg's know about him but the 20% that is still there they will always talk about the good old times when people like Chris were still alive, to the extent that even before his death people wanted to see him. So we invited him twice I think just to address our monthly meetings. So they were happy he is the guy who has done so much for the company. I think FAWU as well as you can see from the calendars that we ..., people like Ray Alexandra and Chris are still glorified as icons of the union movement, FAWU in particular.

Facilitator: Was FAWU in the 1980s strong in other parts of the country?

Respondent: Ja it was strong, KZN, Western Cape, Eastern Cape ja. No it was strong.

Facilitator: Any links with the ANC in exile in the 1980s?

Respondent: Not really visible because I remember there was a delegation from FAWU that went to Lusaka to visit the camps there. Ja, but you know people did not want to be seen to be engaging with the ANC then.

Facilitator: And the training that you received at Wits and elsewhere was it effective?

Respondent: It was the first exposure to labour law, and it was very effective and we ..., everybody just wanted to be part of that training and because it was very limited number of .., so people like Phil Bona will come here just to give some insights into some of the issues there, they would come and it will be well attended Holten Chiddle, he was always around here, it was as if he lives here. At some stage there was a strike at telephone manufactures – we had our place where we used to meet. Two ladies came and asked for our advise. They were having a meeting and told us their challenges. We told them to organise themselves and join a union. We told them that we will send someone to them, at the time it was MAWU because they belonged to the metal industry. The following day they went on strike at work. Chiddle was around here, we were sitting drinking – he told us that some of the people are detained etc., Chiddle went there and represented them. The magistrate asked who he was, he told him he is called Chiddle the lawyer. He asked why he was so informal. He said he received a call when he was on his way somewhere. Those guys were released on a notice after Chiddle’s intervention. So when we came out there, he was very popular – he walked around as if he was a resident. In those days it was very rare to see a white man walking around the streets of Kwa-Thema. Him and Jay would come here and Toughie Hedler will also join them most of the time. Phil Bona could find his way out as well because he was used to the .., so it was really good working with those guys you know.

Facilitator: What is the future of COSATU?

Respondent: That’s a tough one for me. I think we, COSATU is in a stage where it’s very existence is going to be shaken by the alliance because my sense is that some want to remain in the alliance, some don’t want to remain in the alliance. And if they are not careful, it’s going to damage even the confidence of workers to .., you know, this thing started with the Marikana issues when NUM is splitting. It could be the trend there because those who are against the alliance might find fertile ground to sow the idea that COSATU is no more concerned with the workers struggle, it is concerned with the political. It’s spending most of the time trying to put his position

on the political front. Hence Marikana they feel it was not handled properly, people were busy positioning themselves for Mangaung and all that. So I think they realised this in the recent congress, they know that they need to do something about it. Workers need to be serviced and now is not the case. What they've got and they deem through militancy, now if you reason with the employer, you talk about the LRA, it looks like they are not going to .., all the sporadic downing of tools is because of the militancy of those people. People feel that their wage demands should be met because they've got the power to make them do that. And if they don't get it, supposing NUM doesn't reach that .., those people are going to join other unions. Eventually this is going to spread, not only in the mining industry. SATAWU is on that, if they don't .., COSATU affiliates, something will erupt, they are not satisfied and say what they want. SATAWU is the backbone of the economy SATAWU thing. If somebody comes in and get something better, they will drift away from COSATU affiliated unions and that could be the trend in the future. But I think it's strong for now, they should look into that very seriously. AMCU I don't think they have the capacity to serve their members as well as NUM. The excitement will slowly subside and when they go to the thick of things they will see that no here we chose the wrong horse, they will go back, provided NUM plays it's cards well.

Facilitator: Is there anything else that you think is important which should have been part of this interview?

Respondent: At Kellogg's we invited the different units of the company, finance, marketing, sales to come and make presentations to workers so that when we go for the wage proposals, you're talking to people who kind of have a base of what is happening around. In that way it has improved the .., maybe I'm too hard on who with ridiculous demands of up to 22% - they need to understand that the current economic environment cannot afford such an increase, others ask for as much as 40%. How does a company give an increase of 40%. The expectations are high. After interacting with the workers they were able to see how business is run. We will also encourage management not to punish them by saying you don't have money because you think they understand. Let's go there open minded because we have

to work as a team and reach a settlement as quick as possible. We didn't have a problem. Up until now there's no problem in our wage negotiations. We will all come out very happy, at one stage we took one day, the negotiations were over and I think the highest negotiated was 8%, we came up with 13%. For us it was a win-win situation on both sides. So that has been the trend all over. I think if companies can adopt that, I think it depends on the relationship that management has with its employees. Once the relationship is not good, there will always be suspicion. If the relationship is open then they will see good in what you are trying to do to avoid the Marikana incident.

Facilitator: Just one more thing, women, I don't know whether there's enough percentage of women within Kellogg's, the working force?

Respondent: No it's not enough but we are trying to get there. We've got a three year target where we want women involved, every time there's a vacancies we prefer women than men.

Facilitator: But at the moment it still remains largely male dominant?

Respondent: Ja it's still largely male dominated. Sometimes it's perception, you go to .., for instance McCain is one of the companies that fall under FAWU. I went there and found women driving big trucks and then I said no man, the reason why men are dominated, some of the jobs we feel women won't be suitable, without even asking them you see. It opened our eyes that we should also open such positions to women and see how it works out. And to our amazement those jobs we said are not suitable for women, they actually doing it better than men. So that opened all the doors for women. What we're having here, from January we're embarking on an apprenticeship, we need 10, 5 mechanical and 5 electrical, 8 of which should be women. We want to give them exposure to the artisan stuff because they can do anything. So we agreed that should be the path we are taking.

Facilitator: Any closing word?

Respondent: No – you took me down memory lane without having prepared but I think I've tried to cover as much as I could.

Facilitator: Thanks for your time.

END

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