

## **Mbuso Mabuza**

Facilitator: This is an interview with Mbuso Mabuza, we are in Kempton Park, the date is 8 December 2011 interview is done by Brown Maaba. Thanks very much for your time, you can speak any other language. Just give me a background as to where you were born, your family, how you were raised, schooling activities and how you ended up in the world of unions.

Respondent: I was actually born in Piet Retief a long time ago, I came to Jo'burg looking for a job, just like everybody else who wants to start working, in my teens, I was about 17 by then. Because of there was this thing called Influx Control, you were not allowed to find a job in Jo'burg, you had to take any job and then you had to maybe go back home, the police were all over, enforcing the Influx Control law. I ended up taking a job with a meat manufacturing company, it was Hetti Gold Meats, it is related to Enterprise. So there as time went on, around 1982, me and the other worked decided that we have to join the union, we had problems with the wages, we were earning peanuts. So at the time to find another job it was very difficult because you knew that outside you will be arrested, you have struggle with what you have, within the company, find a way to improve your salary. So we decided to join a labour movement.

At the time it was FAWU, Food and Allied Workers Union. So we joined FAWU and then as you know in the labour movement there were strikes, and all those things. The relationship between me and my employer became unceremonious. They started hating me because they thought I was an instigator. They wanted to find ways to fire me, but they couldn't because the workers were supporting me and the labour laws did not allow employers to just fire people for no good reason. At the time I was already a shop steward. I was elected as a shop steward and also the chairman of the branch executive committee in the Springs region. So we used to

Facilitator: I come from Springs, I am from Thema

Respondent: we used to hold our meetings in town in Springs. I was living in Wattville at the time. So as time went on, I think two or three years down the line FAWU merged with .., there were different unions, Food Allied Workers Union, Chemical Workers Union, and the shop unions. Then in 1985 COSATU was launched. The unions were worried, they felt that the labour movement is no longer powerful, in order to be powerful they had to merge into one big federation, Congress of South African Unions (COSATU). I remember it was launched at Regina Mondi, I remember the First President was Elija Bagae, he was from NUM (National Union of Mineworkers).

We remained with the labour movement in the company, we would negotiate salaries and working conditions, those were the burning issues that the labour movement had to attend to – better salaries and better working conditions. As shop stewards we had meetings outside the workplace in order to plan for the meetings we would have with management to negotiate. We would also attend big meetings with similar organisations, shop stewards from different companies, different unions would get together and meet and share experience, some would be from wood, steel etc.

At the time you must remember that at the time the country's politics were not like now, things were difficult. The labour movement was linked with politics in this way: the labour movement was on the other side fighting against apartheid because inside the company, in the workplace, you would find that you are doing the same job with a white person but he is getting more salary than you, sometimes double or triple. Secondly you would find that you had been with the company for a long time, you are trained in certain aspects of the job and you excel, they employ a white man which you will teach and then he becomes your boss and earns more than you whilst doing the same job. So those were the challenges in the industry.

Most of the shop stewards in our time had to cross the country because they were vulnerable to the state machinery of the apartheid government. For instance if I can tell you something that happened to me personally when I lived in Wattville. I was visited by two white guys and one black, they were police, the Special Branch with balaclavas. They had first sent this black policeman to come and see me at work, he came to the office and told me that they would like to come and see me at home. They came to my home in Wattville. I was about to leave the house when they came, they pulled me on the side, there was a car there with two whites wearing balaclavas, I could not see their faces. They said to me don't be scared and started talking to me, I was so scared and didn't want to get into the car, the black policeman encouraged me to get into the car. We had a conversation. They were asking me to work with them, they explained how they wanted me to work with them and promised to pay me. They wanted information from me and they were willing to pay for the information, but the information must be valuable, they told me that they are paying a lot of money. So it was clear that the black person who was with them was on their payroll. These people were targeting the leadership in the labour movement so that they can destabilise unions in general. They wanted to see if the labour movement was linked to the ANC, the ANC was banned at the time. The labour movement was active, COSATU was very active and somehow the apartheid government suspected that they are linked to the ANC. It was also clear that labour issues were no longer labour related, they also had to do with the apartheid government.

So they talked to me, promised me a lot of money and asked me to give them information. I was not interested, I did not want to be *impimpi* – I was not interested in getting involved nor the money they were offering me. Yes I was earning peanuts but somehow I found a way to survive and my idea of getting more money was rather to go somewhere else to study and do something different to what I was doing rather than to be a sell out. I didn't want to sell my own people. In most detentions people would come back very badly beaten and others never came back, others were caught by the police because of the information that leaked. I could understand that also because my own people that I worked with, as a shop steward I used to call meetings in the townships. We would rent schools, community

halls for general meetings – everything which was discussed in those meetings during the weekend were known by management on Monday morning, as if they were there, they had their informers. Management would tell me that I am the one who is inciting the workers, they will also say the people do not want to strike I am the only one who is inciting them. They could not fire me because they were scared, they did not know what action I would take after that. All in all they were informed. I knew that if I accept the offer in my mind this was going to be short lived, I was going to sell my people for a short period of time, they would then dump me afterwards. It was not worth it, what was going to happen to me after I was dumped. I understood at a very early age that white people did not like us, they wanted to use us as their tools so that we can enrich them, they didn't care what happened to you, it's like, I remember, those people – before we joined unions and all those things, you could see our elderly people who had worked up to the age of 60, they would give him the salary for the month and three weeks leave pay. The poor old man had worked for the company for 40 years and got nothing. He would then go home and die of heart attack or strokes. I knew many of them. So I understood that we had to fight the white people hence when we were in union meetings we introduced the .., there was the pension fund and we introduced the provident fund, it was initiated by the labour union. White people had a pension scheme especially in government institutions, it did not apply in private companies. It also worked for the Post Office, Railways etc. but the pension fund was peanuts, they would pay you until you die without getting a lump sum. So the unions introduced the lump sum, provident fund, so that when a person leaves their work they must get his money, hence people are getting up to R400 000 others up to a million depending on how many years you've been with the company.

So those were the difficult times, we had to fight a very powerful government, it was like fighting a giant but eventually some of the things we were able to get them. We were able to win cases against companies when negotiating. We were able to get maternity leave for the ladies while they earned their blue card money, so they could stay home for about 6 months, at the time it was 3 months. So we negotiated paternity leave, when your wife has a child you come home and assist her for a few days, etc., because she is still weak. We negotiated a lot of things in the workplace.

Facilitator: how long were you in the unions?

Respondent: I was there for five years only

Facilitator: which means you left the employment?

Respondent: I didn't leave my employment but I joined another company and the company I joined they promoted me as a manager and I could not be involved in union activities, you are not allowed to belong to the labour movement when you are managing a company, you are given a company to run. I was given more powers because I was running the company until it was closed down.

Facilitator: But when you left your previous job in Springs was the employer happy, I'm sure they were tired of you?

Respondent: when I resigned after getting the new job, the guys were so happy I think they must have thrown a party somewhere. I tendered my resignation on a Tuesday morning and I said to them I am leaving on Friday because I got another job. I told them I will be with them for three days. I'm telling you the following day, on Wednesday everything was ready for me, packed – they said to me Mr Mabuza come to the office, we have everything for you, we've also paid you for three weeks, this is your Blue Card, and also the service letter to the new company. They wished me the best in the new employment. They were very happy to see me go.

Facilitator: what about the workers?

Respondent: they were very sad, and you know what happened after I had left, a big gap was opened. The employer knew that I was the only one who understood labour issues, during negotiations I was the one who drew the agenda. Most of the people who worked for the company were illiterate. I was the only one who was a little bit enlightened, so they took advantage of that after I had left. They started firing them, the ones that survived had to become *impimpis* in order to keep their jobs. It was a disaster after I had left. That led to the company not to operate like it did before, three years down the line it closed down.

Facilitator: really

Respondent: ja. So by then I was in another company. I became a foreman/manager and worked with the white people then years later I decided to venture in business because I was tired of earning a salary, I cannot earn a salary for the rest of my life, so I had to improve and get money somehow. I could see that I was growing old and the children were also growing. I was better paid but I was thinking that the money I was earning will not sustain me for the rest of my life or until my kids grow. I have another one who is studying at university, if I was still working I wouldn't be able to afford to pay her fees. I had to actually start doing something and stop working for other people.

Facilitator: but the working environment has it boosted your business, the experience and so on, you were in the labour and then also you went into management and you are also running your own business?

Respondent: Ja it helped me a lot (phone rang) – it boosted my experience and all this because now as it is, what I am selling, I didn't divert from the manufacturing because after studying sales and marketing management, I was told that you must stick to what you know best because you are going to fumble if you start selling tomatoes when you have knowledge about meat. Stick to what you know and you

will be the best. Even now, I know my product, it was easy, because you are doing something you know. So it helped me a lot because I was running that company, given that responsibility to run the company, in production I was there, I was helping other people to produce machinery, and in sales I was a little bit there, so I was just all over so it helped me to get the necessary experience. Even after I had left the company, I had an idea that I can start something on my own because of the market outside. I had to value the market. How is my market, is it really necessary that I produce myself or is it good to buy from someone else and sell? I realised that it is good when I buy from someone else because they produce for you and then you sell, if there is no more, if the market is not there for you you just stop and start thinking of something else. Other than that you going to get stuck with this expensive machinery whilst business is not going well anymore and you have invested millions in machinery. I had to weigh up things. So I decided that somebody must manufacture for me and I will just be in sales, it's easier for me.

Facilitator: You came to Johannesburg when you were just 17, quite young, why did you leave so early?

Respondent: I left school at 17, I was doing Standard 8, that was JC at the time. At home, we had a problem with my father who didn't take care of us, he stayed in Jo'burg all these years and only came home in December, whenever he came home he had nothing. I will tell you something very sad. I was actually a brilliant student at school, very smart, I wanted to study law after passing my JC, and then I had to go somewhere else to further my education in high school. I wanted to study at Ingoye study my law in KZN. I applied and everything came back, I had all the books, all I had to do was to pack my suitcase and R370 registration fee – this was in 1980. It was in December. My father came back home, I was very happy showing my father my results – I had passed first class Symbol C – I had worked very hard. My father arrives I show him my results with the excitement and the response from the vocational school where I wanted to complete my Matric, it was a vocational guidance school, we used to study Matric plus whatever you wanted to do, if you further your studies they sent you to a university nearby and if you want to work with

your hands like plumbing, carpentry, they would push you to it. The school was close by, it was called a vocational school. My father only had R90 and that was his whole life savings. I cried like a small boy and asked him "what am I going to do", he gave it to me. He was earning money while working, he had a problem with women. So I had to leave school and fend for myself and my siblings. I had to forget about schooling, I wiped it out of my mind. I had to help my siblings. (phone rang). So most of my siblings I pushed them up to Matric although others are working. I had no chance to go back to studying.

Facilitator: and of all places why Springs, Johannesburg is big you ended up working in Springs living in Wattville?

Respondent: ja and then I went to Pretoria where I got a new job as a manager. I ended up working in Pretoria, that's where I left when I started my business. But before I find the job I had to stay .., I stayed 1981/82/83 – I was unemployed for three years. It was the most difficult time in my life. I had to wear my school uniform as clothes because I had no money to buy clothes, my trousers were dilapidated, I had one shirt, when I have to change I had to change with my uniform. At school we were black and white on Monday and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday it was khakhi – I had a set of black and white and a set of khakis and I had to wear that for three years. It was a very difficult time. You are looking for a job – what hurt me most I had a job, other companies like Siemens, they were looking for people who had some education, I had my JC certificate and it had Maths and Science, so I had all the basic requirements required, they employed me because they had been looking for someone like me. When they employ me they would give me a letter to take to the "pass office" – the boers told me that there is no way I will work for that company, they would tell me to go back to Piet Retief, they would stamp it with a red stamp and give me 72 hours out of Jo'burg. So the "pass office" because of Influx Control, they wouldn't allow you to work for a better paid company. The disadvantage was that the people around here were illiterate, they were not interested in studying because they knew there was employment everywhere. They would employ you from the streets. So for me coming from Piet Retief it was so



difficult, they made it even difficult for us in the “pass office” because my “pass” was not registered here, there was what was called Section 10 (a), if you had worked for a company for ten years, they will give you a Section 10 (b), everybody was looking for the Section 10 1 (a) in order to get a job. It was so difficult. The other thing that hurt me, most companies in Isando, I was still a young man at the time, I also liked reading the newspaper, I would buy The Post and call. They would invite you for an interview and ask for your credentials. They would appoint me and ask me to go and register at the “pass office”, they boers refused to register me, they asked me to go back to Piet Retief. That is why I was unemployed for three years. I suffered until I got a job with this company. We were not paid good wages, they employed people from outside and most of the people were not educated, they just wanted someone who would come in and help them cut meat etc., they will then teach you other things. I had no option, I had to go there. That is how I started. I actually I tried to make something out of it.

Facilitator: and when you came here was FAWU already established in that company?

Respondent: No I introduced FAWU to the workers.

Facilitator: really, so when you came in 1982, am I right, how did you manage to make contact with unions and so on and eventually establishing FAWU at work?

Respondent: What happened is, I had friends – I socialise, I drink and all that. So we would move around Daveyton, Vosloorus etc., Kwa Thema, Duduza, Tsakane – so we would discuss a lot of things while we socialised. That is how I got to know about the unions, I told them about the wages and working conditions where I worked. And then one guy from Springs told me about the union, he was from FAWU, he introduced me to the unions. He asked me if I knew anything about unions. He invited me to a meeting and invited me to Springs to the Branch Executive Meeting.

He introduced me to other shop stewards from different companies. Most companies there were from Kelloggs in Springs, Chris Dlamini etc. They were at that meeting, I think I met Chris Dlamini in Daveyton, I was already a shop steward at the time. So the first meeting I just listened and all those things and became interested, then I grabbed the idea and took it to my work. I then talked to the workers at lunch time up until I got forms and the workers joined. We joined. I told them we need only 50 plus one in membership, it happened like that. I told them that the union is going to help us improve our salaries and they won't be able to fire us, we will be well protected by the organisation, they were falling for this. The whole company joined. 100% people joined. George Matshatsha who was the then union organiser at the time, he came to our company and arranged a meeting with management. The boers lost it. I was already elected as a shop steward. Then the relationship between me and the boers was no longer healthy.

Facilitator: what were the pressing issues that needed to be addressed then, it was a new union in the workplace, FOSATU had always been there, but you guys introduced FAWU from the onset in the company. What needed to be done by the workers, what were the pressing issues for workers at the time?

Respondent: You mean the demands of the workers

Facilitator: yes

Respondent: First of all we were fighting for wages, we negotiated the wages and working conditions. The environment was extremely cold because we were dealing with meat, so they first had to buy us a uniform that is going to keep us warm because the place was cold. In that company the majority of the workers were women. So we had to also negotiate their maternity leave from three months to six months, we fought for it for a long time but eventually we got it only after we had

merged, when there was COSATU, it was negotiated nationally, that is how we won it. Basically there were two things, wages and the working conditions.

Facilitator: were the working conditions improved? (phone rang)

Respondent: ja they had improved. Do basically working conditions had improved in terms of .., lunch time changed from 30 minutes to an hour, tea time became 20 minutes from 10 minutes, knocking off time, we used to work up to 50 hours a week, it was cut back to 45 hours. So those were the things we won as workers.

Facilitator: You also mentioned that the workplace was pretty cold because you were dealing with meat, people were getting affected. Were there people who died because of the working conditions, after retirement or someone dying of pneumonia in between and so on, and when you look back you realise that it's because of the conditions you worked in.

Respondent: Ja maybe it used to happen before I arrived but after that some of those things didn't happen when I was there, I do not know of such a case. But there's one incident which happened there, which I still remember. A lady was cleaning the machine after working, after 3 we used to clean the machines we were working with, this was a filling machine, it was used to fill Russians, Viennas etc., the machine is manufactured in Germany. The lady was cleaning the machine and she put it on by mistake. The machine swallowed her whole arm. We were not in the same room with her, we just heard her scream, she was lying on the floor, blood all over, the whole arm was still inside the machine. So we started negotiating on her behalf, that she can still continue working with her one hand, so the company had to see to it that she still has work and continue to earn her salary. We also negotiated for to get money for the loss of her hand. She was there until I left the company.

After that the employer told the technicians to ensure that if the machine is not in use it remains off. This improved the safety conditions.

Facilitator: Food and Allied is an industry which was dominated by women, was it easy for instance to recruit women to join unions because people had the tendency to say I am working for my children, we don't want to get involved, my husband my not allow me to join the unions because I will come home late, this is trouble?

Respondent: yes it was so difficult. For instance as indicated earlier, we had people who informed management – the people were attracted with the cash and they would say I am working for my family if I lose this job my family will starve. But when I recruited them they were so overwhelmed by what the union was going to do for them, they realised that they have to fight for those things they will not come easy, we have to get involved and that they needed the strength and the commitment of all workers. They joined nevertheless – most of the women were not married and those that had husbands their husbands were unemployed who were not able to provide for them.

Facilitator: you also mentioned that there was this tendency to have shop steward meetings from different companies, between your company and other companies. How did that benefit the struggle as a whole?

Respondent: We started this thing, this actually benefited shop stewards because we were learning new things, new tricks and new tactics, on how to approach management, others would come and share with us their experiences when dealing with the different cases – we all learnt from each other's experiences. It benefited all shop stewards because we had what we called "each one teach one", we started it then. Other shop stewards were extremely intelligent, people like Chris Dlamini, people like Chris were intellectuals, he always won his cases and taught us a lot. When we had difficulties with employers we would call and assist us. As time

went on he no longer had time to assist us, but he has done a lot. The federation moved him to higher ranks.

Facilitator: you also mentioned the fact that the boers were beginning to wonder the struggle of the workers is influenced by the ANC because of the activities that were becoming more and more militant. Do you know of any links between the unions and the ANC at that time in the 1980s?

Respondent: I cannot specify a particular incident, what I do know is that all of us, the working class had some influence in terms of in our labour movement meetings we sang struggle songs. So there was a link between the workers and the political party because the working class were in favour of the ANC although it was banned at the time and they could not be members, hence it was replaced by a certain organisation, UDF, there were links between – most of the workers were members of the UDF. The UDF talked a lot about the ANC. The aims of the ANC were furthered by the union movements in terms of mobilising, that was the idea.

Facilitator: Recruitment of other people other than black people, coloureds, Indians, was it easy to do that, to join unions?

Respondent: You couldn't recruit Indians because naturally they are the kind of people who do not believe in the struggle, everywhere, even in our company, the Indians were supporting management. So they would say let us go on a strike, then we would say we are not going to strike we would rather stay away, they didn't take sides. Coloureds were very clear, they refused to join unions, we couldn't recruit them. This was only for black people because we were the most pressurised group, we are the ones that felt the apartheid. It wasn't easy to recruit the other race groups.

Facilitator: what about workers from outside South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and so on?

Respondent: those were easily recruited, they used to form part of unions although there was the issue of Influx Control, but some of them had a chance to get the "pass", so immediately they are registered and have a "pass" they joined unions, they were easy to recruit.

Facilitator: you also mentioned that there used to be meetings in the township of the workers. Did that benefit the union, what about workers from other townships, did they lose out from these meetings?

Respondent: we used to have a problem of attendance, sometimes it would be poor and all those things. We had some problems, even if we were going to negotiate wages/salaries you could see that people were not as active as they used to be. This made it difficult for the leadership – those were the challenges of the labour movement because they used to leave you, you felt all alone – you would want to attack the white people in the office alone with no support from my people.

Facilitator: what went wrong why did the support go down, the support of the workers?

Respondent: I will never know why the people lost interest. In the beginning we used to meet and negotiate .., but the problem was they were intimidated when they joined the company, remember the system used to send its informers, the informers would tell management and management used to ask us and I think generally people were afraid to lose their jobs, they didn't want the employer to know that they were involved in such activities. There was a white German guy who

was a supervisor who would go to the worker and say "I heard you want more money, what is the union going to do if you no longer have a job" – so I think that also contributed to people losing interest in the labour movement.

Facilitator: and the idea of moving from FOSATU to COSATU, what was the motivation?

Respondent: actually it was not a split as such, they wanted to merge, to make one big federation which is going to be strong and fight the exploitation against workers, they merged because they wanted to form one big federation, one union, the slogan used was "One country, one union", all the other unions affiliated in one big body which is going to be strong, that is the reason.

Facilitator: but there were people who then went into independent unions like NAPTU?

Respondent: that started after the unbanning of political organisations like the ANC. There was NACTU which was affiliated to PAC, COSATU was affiliated to ANC. So there was a split, there was a misunderstanding between NACTU and .., the workers would affiliate to a political party and to unions. In most cases in NACTU meetings they did not discuss labour issues, they were encouraging the land issue, they wanted the companies to pay for building their companies on the land that belonged to the black people, they felt strongly that black people must be compensated for their land. COSATU did not talk about the land we only negotiated salaries and people must be trained and paid the same salary as white people. NACTU was more into PAC ideologies.

Facilitator: so you in your company all the workers were under FAWU?

Respondent: ja they were under FAWU, there was no other union

Facilitator: so sweetheart union as well

Respondent: no

Facilitator: and did the whites belong to any union?

Respondent: no the whites no, we didn't have many whites there, there were 2/3/4, they were not interested in joining a union

Facilitator: the thing that you did the same job as white people, sometimes you train them and suddenly they become your bosses, was it ever resolved?

Respondent: ja I can say it was resolved because in our company, we didn't allow to train somebody unless they are black – maybe you're operating a filler machine, so we didn't want them to come in our place. They tried one guy, he was white, we isolated him. Even the lady who was working on the machine, the operator, she didn't show him how to operate the machine. If management forced us to train white people we were going to frustrate the person somehow until the person left. Those are the strategies that we used, until we won the battle.

Facilitator: in terms of training, did you receive training from FOSATU and so on as a shop steward?

Respondent: no, we didn't receive any training, but after we left the industry they introduced training programmes, after us, then they were being trained. We were led by enthusiasm – we were determined to do what we wanted to do, we were



teaching each other, let each one teach one, if you have something new today you share it with the others. When I have something new today then I teach the others, we learnt through each others experiences.

Facilitator: the lack of training, did it not affect you, for instance when you had to negotiate dismissals, salaries, safety at work and all those things, how did you put those things on the table if you never received any training as shop stewards?

Respondent: I would say on my side, I was smart, because I used to draw the agenda myself, it came to my mind to say write this way, invite those guys. I would just write a letter and say "dear sir, we would like to do this and that" and then the agenda and then afterwards we would discuss the conclusion. So it was easy for me because I actually wanted to be part of the negotiations. Other industries had difficulties because some of them would tell us, the executive committee and tell us the problems they were faced with. That is why I was elected the chairman of the branch executive committee. To me it was like I have all the answers to them all, if they came to me and told me they had a deadlock with employers I would tell them what to do. It was just .., I think the determination and the love I had for the organisation helped a lot.

Facilitator: and as a branch executive committee, what were you charged with, you were now very senior so to speak because you were now in the executive ..?

Respondent: I was the chairman of the branch executive, I was running the meetings, writing minutes, maybe sometimes organising meetings, I will draft the agenda and then afterwards we had discussions, this is where we all had an opportunity to share our experiences.

Facilitator: what about your life as a whole, you were once visited by police and so on, were you not under threat of being killed maybe or even losing a wife?

Respondent: I was still very young and didn't care much about those things, you know when you're a young boy and you're ..., it's like boys you see they take risks, I was taking risks, I was very young by then. I didn't have any problems but I diverted my ideas. You see I used to read a lot actually, I used to read a lot of books, I read about Winston Churchill and all those things, what motivated me to get out of the labour movement ..., I was thinking that you cannot be respected in this world when you don't have money, capitalism exists and it is working all over. You cannot ..., it's like when you fight capitalism is like fighting ..., it's like an ant fighting an elephant and so you will die, he is just going to tramp on you – so in order to compete with an elephant you have to grow somehow, you have to feed yourself until you are the same size then you can fight. So in my own mind I started moving out slowly from this, I was looking at the history of the unionists, their history, what happens to them and where do they end. So I decided I should move out of the organisation and start something that is mine and grow myself financially for the benefit of my kids and my life as a whole. Being a unionist is not going to contribute to the things I want, all the people in the union movement, I did not like how they ended. The one person who had a positive ending is Jay Naidoo, he was our general secretary, he succeeded because eventually he was recruited by the government, he became the Minister without Portfolio, they just fitted him anywhere, they created a position for him even though he didn't have a portfolio. That guy was ..., for the ANC to absorb him, I did not understand because he was not in the struggle, he was the general secretary and wrote minutes. An effective person in the labour movement today is Vavi. Jay Naidoo was just a quiet person writing only minutes but being a general secretary. I decided to move ..., in my mind I told myself I didn't want to end up being poor. I didn't like the lifestyle of being poor, I wanted to work myself up, so that I can end up ..., in my old age I should be able to show what I worked for, I bought a house, a mansion, a car, whatever and here are my children they are educated and had the best of everything. So I had to move out from the labour movement. I also decided that you are fighting for someone's property when you are in the labour movement, the company belongs to someone else, so you are

fighting for this person to give you a share of what he is making. I felt that this will not benefit me in my old age. I had to do something else. So I left the union and took the other job as a manager because I wanted to improve my business skills – I never had a chance to study so I had to do something else. When I wanted to study there was no money, when I started having access to money I couldn't stop working and go to study. There was no way I could work part time. I was able to study Sales and Marketing Management part time. I got the diploma and that was it, the rest I couldn't make it. I worked myself up from that company and went up – I learnt a lot. I also studied their books and understood what was going on with the hope that one day I will run my own business. The people I worked for were able to afford a Mercedes Benz and a double storey house, her children had a swimming pool and I live in Thembisa in a very small house. So I wanted to be a better person.

Facilitator: anyway, anything else that you think is important that we didn't discuss?

Respondent: All I can say in conclusion is that the labour movement did their work in the beginning, they fought for worker rights, they also fought for the working conditions, and also fighting the apartheid government at the same time. It was effective .., the labour movement was effective at the time. I want to compare it to today, today it is not as effective as it was before because the younger generation are not interested in unions – they ask you what are you going to do for them, what is wrong with the company. "You guys are going to start with our bosses" – they are right and do not need the help of unions. When you try to recruit them they would rather join white unions, my friends who are still in the unions tell me this. The younger generation is not interested, they are happy with the salaries they are earning, that is the difference in the labour movement.

The other thing is .., I forgot to tell you this, is that what also made me lose an interest in the union movement, is that you make efforts, join the union, and do all the other things that the union wants you to do, but once you leave work you are no longer a union member and nobody is taking care of you – you must fend for yourself, find

ways to survive. If you do not plan when you are still working, for instance packages etc., you will end up a hobo, you are no longer a union member, nobody is going to look after you. Once you are out you are out, because you no longer subscribe to the union and nobody is going to represent you. You are on your own. Those are some of the facts that the workers do not take into consideration while still in unions. If you lose the job you are forgotten, left in the cold. You still have a family to look after, children, pay a bond etc., you end up in the streets. Those are the disadvantages of unions.

Facilitator: Thank you very much for your time.

**END**

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