

Thamsanqa Mfazwe

Facilitator: This is an interview with Ntate Thamsanqa Mfazwe, we are in Botshabelo, the date is 27 June 2011, interview is done by Brown Maaba. Please can you give me your background on where you were born, how you were raised and how you ended up with the struggles.

Respondent: Actually my name is Thamsanqa Mfazwe, the other name is Meshack, that was used formerly by the boers. I was born in 1956, 24 April in the rural district of Thwarig now, but it was Rettisburg in those days. My twin brother's name was Gugulethile, he died in 1984 in a car accident. We were the first born to Thembali and Anna Mfazwe. My father was working with PAO at that time, the road association of the province and my mother was a domestic worker. At home we were 14 all in all, five pairs of twins

Facilitator: really?

Respondent: so we were the first twins, the second twins is our sisters and then my parents had two girls in between and then another set of boys and then another set of girls again.

Facilitator: that's unusual?

Respondent: and the last was a boy and a girl, so all in all we were 14. At the moment only 5 of us are left. I also have four pair of twins, I only have two who are still alive, my first born also has twins, girls, today they are 26 days old. We are a family of twins. I started schooling at Retisburg Farm, the farm was called Tweefontein, I started my Sub A there until Standard

4. In 1970 I was doing my Standard 6 at Ritesburg Bantu School. All the schools were called Bantu Schools at that time. I did not finish schooling that year because we were moved again to Thabanchu, and then I started schooling again in 1971. In the middle of the year again we were taken out of the schools because we were not from the Barolong tribe, so we were not supposed to be accepted at that school. So I only managed to find a school in 1973 at Thabanchu and the same year I passed my standard 6 with Second Class. The following year I was doing my Form 1, in 1974, in 1975 I dropped my Form 2 and then from there I had to repeat in 1976. The uprisings in Soweto started at this time. My twin brother at the time was in Form 3. I passed my Standard 7, when I was supposed to study JC, we started our own riots at school. I was not in the forefront of the struggle, I was just in the middle of things.

Facilitator: You were in Thabanchu then?

Respondent: Yes, Thabanchu, the school was called Marang, when we started Form 1, we were both at Kgoronyane, after three weeks I was kicked out of the school because I hit another boy with a stone, he was assaulting my twin brother, he was doing karate so I had to use a stone. The principal told my mother to keep me and he kept my other twin brother. So my mother had to find me another school, at the time the school was called Marang, it is now called Sedidi Secondary school. In that year we started the riots. So according to the plan, we were supposed to start the riots on a Friday, unfortunately we could not because the principal's child was one of us, he informed his father who informed the police about what we were going to do. When we arrived at school we heard that the police are on their way to the school. So our leaders said we should start they should find us ready. We then burned

the school office (interruption) – the police arrived while others were in class. We ran away and the principal gave the list of names to the police. He was forced to do so by the Inspector at the circuit office. The principal then told me that if I want to come back to school I can provided I can find myself a desk, the circuit office gave me a new desk and I went back. The principal had put me on a list of five stating that I am one of the leaders. I was the youngest in the list. I had to run away. I could not go home I had to find a place to stay, so I stole a chicken from grandfather's farm so that I can bribe the miners to take me to the mines. At the time in order to be employed at the mines they had to weigh you before they employed you. So I started working there

Facilitator: Where?

Respondent: Northwest, Vaal Reefs Number 8. I started working as a fitter and then later on I learnt carpentry

Facilitator: which year was that?

Respondent: 1977. It was tough in the mines. The war had started between the Xhosas and the Basotho people, it was terrible, Dali Wonga, the puppet president of Transkei went there and intervened. He was the only leader that intervened. Most of the mines had been burned down, people had been killed and there were no trade unions at the time. I think the following year 1978 after the war, Cyril Ramaphosa rose. He was the first person to organise a trade union there. It was very difficult because I was living with the Sotho speaking people although I am Xhosa

Facilitator: you came from the Free State so..?

Respondent: So I stayed with the Basotho people. So the problem was that the people who joined the union were Xhosa speaking people, therefore it was not good for us to join the union as Basotho people. Cyril did his best to get people to join the union. Anglo American company was against unions, also trade unions were illegal at the time, they were not allowed to operate in South Africa. Ramaphosa himself had challenges when organising members, he would get a few members, when he leaves the others would be fired or resign. In 1979 trade unions were allowed to operate.

Facilitator: how did the whites agree, you said they were refusing?

Respondent: The decision was taken by parliament at the time, it was now the law. NUM was the first to be out. I did not join NUM at the time, I did not join any union. I wanted to see what would happen first I must be honest. What I did was in 1978 I played soccer for Stilfontein Big 11, I was injured the same year. I became a patient at Vaal Hospital in Orkney. I was taken to Moria on 31 August 1980, I was healed there after I was baptised, then I was healed. I came back to the hospital and stayed there for two weeks, after two weeks my doctor came back from overseas and I was released. I went back to the mines. I resigned in 1981 and came back home. I started working in Interstate Bus Line. Interstate Bus Line is the company that assisted me at school, in 1975, at the time it was called Thabanchu Transport. They gave me money to study until I left. I approached them and they offered me a job. They gave me a job, my twin brother was already working there. He was a manager, he was the first black manager in the lower ranks of management. He was actually a senior clerk but they gave him the title of manager.

The same year we joined South African Allied Workers Union (SAWU). The same year I was elected shop steward.

Facilitator: Why did you decide to join the unions this time around, let's start with this one, why did you leave the mines and came back here?

Respondent: I left the mines because the conditions in the mines was terrible, even in the Western it was tough, it was not clean, although it was the first hostel that was modernised, Number 8, it had beds. All along the beds were made of cement. The conditions and the exploitation in the mines was tough and there was no salary, I was earning R48 per month which was too little. When I arrived here at home I earned the same as a clerk, they gave me R45, so the difference was about R3 less but I was at home. I joined the trade union here because the conditions here were worse than that of the mines. We started working at 01:00 am, early in the morning and we would knock off at 20:00 or 21:00 in the evening. The conditions were terrible.

Facilitator: so the morning just after 12

Respondent: It was a boere company, we were not allowed to use any other language even on radios, even English was not allowed, we had to use only Afrikaans. I remember a guy by the name of, he only spoke English because he did not know Afrikaans, he called himself Lehare, so he would say on radio "I am reading you over", they started attacking him, they would swear at him and say that he is not allowed to speak English the radio does not belong to the English. Although I've left many things on the side of the movement of the struggle, where I participated.

At the time I was aware of the ANC. Whenever I came back from the mines there was an old man called Malebo Carlet Motsake, he was one of the people who had served on Robben Island, he was just about to be released from Robben Island and was under house arrest in Thabanchu. He approached me when I came back from the mines. When we joined at that time it was 9 months, after that you are given 3 months, after a year you are discharged, they called it a bonus that you have to use, after three months you can rejoin again. The contract was called join. So he was criticising this but I did not understand why they are criticising it. The second person who criticised this was Dr. Moroka, he was one of our neighbours. So I would go to his surgery and discuss or play with his sons. He was a man of jokes so we all liked to be around him. So he told me about the ANC. I asked him when will Mandela be released, he then told me that I should not talk about Mandela because the boers will arrest me if they hear me talking about Mandela. He showed me the picture of Mandela, Dr. Dadoo and himself. So when he showed me the picture I said this can't be Mandela he is lying to me. He sensed that I did not believe him and then he said to me one day you will know. I was closer to Carlet Motshabi, he is the man that started discussing politics with me, talking about Mandela. I told him that Dr Moroka showed me the picture of Mandela, there was also an Indian guy there, he also told me he is also a Dr. He told me that it's true, Moroka was the president of the ANC. He is the one who told me about Moroka, that he left 1952, Luthuli took over. I asked him how he knew all of this, he told me he was also on Robben Island. He then showed me newspaper articles. I liked to be around the old man but not the politics. He then took my contact details (interruption) – after that he started recruiting me indirectly to MK. I remember in 1983 I was elected as a shop steward at the age of 27. He also recruited me to work underground but he did not say I am working

underground, he just said I will ask you to go and fetch the boys for me. I started doing underground work in 1983, I became fully aware of the ANC in 1983 when I became a shop steward. Early 1984 I was blessed as a priest in my church at the age of 28, also the same year my twin brother died on 1 September. In 1983 my first born was born in September. This was in those apartheid years, leading the workers and at the same UDF was born. Zingile Dinga, the secretary of parliament pushed for Motshabi to work with me, indirectly, I was not aware of this.

As a shop steward, in 1984 we had our first strike. UDF had called for a stay away, management informed the shop steward that if we join the stay away we will all be dismissed. I said I would rather be dismissed by the company than be intimidated by the community. I told management that I would rather stay at home and be safe, you can dismiss. That was the first stay away that was called by the UDF. At this time I was in the transport union

Facilitator: no longer Allied Workers?

Respondent: I'm NUMSA, but I was working with the Interstate Bus Line which was Thabanchu Transport at that time. If there is no transport no one would be able to go to work. So the stay away was successful for 3 days. I forget the month but it was in 1984

Facilitator: you were in SAWU then?

Respondent: yes I was in SAWU as a shop steward. In 1985 COSATU, SAWU got the momentum of the struggle, although it was an independent union. Jay Naidoo was with FOSATU, the federation at the time. There

was Transport and Allied Workers Union plus the Transport and General Workers Union. So in 1985 there was a decision for transport to have one union. After the formation of COSATU, we had pressure as SAWU that we must join T and G, it was under FOSATU and now they had formed COSATU so that we do not belong to an independent union. So T and G and SAWU merged. I was the first organiser of SAWU in 1985. The same year I was detained under the 14 days of ..., before June 16, there was this act, Act 50 of Internal Security Act of South Africa. I was detained in Jo'burg for 14 days in Modderbee. I met Dr. Berry something, an Indian guy from Natal, he chatted with me. We stayed 20 days, in other provinces people were released after 14 days, we were left behind Mogamisi and myself from Bloemfontein and two other guys from Welkom were released after 20 days.

When I returned to work I was told that I have absconded, the union took the case over. I was reinstated, now we were at T and G, after we were in T and G we were told that having a union is not enough, T and G had to merge to form a transport union again. This was a second merger (interruption) – so now I was so involved in the struggle, the trade union and underground work, taking the guys outside. I remember the first guy I took out in 1984 was Khoisan, I took him via Zeerust.

Facilitator: Khoisan X, Benny Alexander?

Respondent: not Benny Alexander, Khoisan from Bloemfontein another Khoisan, I forget his surname. I took him out via Ramatlabama. I know the area because my twin brother married there. I think it was November when I took Khoisan out, after that I took a group of comrades out through Lesotho. At the time I did not realise that these guys were MK

soldiers, Calep had said to me I will ask you to take the boys somewhere, he did not tell me that they were MK soldiers.

In 1986 the government of Lesotho was overthrown by Metsing Leganya ..

Facilitator: I remember that

Respondent: before Leganya overthrew the government, Calep and Chris Hannie had met before, Calep refused to take me with to Lesotho. After the meeting he came back, he called me and told me that we should prepare ourselves as workers because we are the ones that are supposed to liberate the country. When I stopped the transport, everything stopped, in actual fact everything stopped in Bloemfontein. We did everything through the trade union and the transport company. So we were about to plan the mass rolling action of MK to bomb Bloemfontein, unfortunately National Intelligence of South Africa was very strong in Lesotho at the time. The State of Emergency was declared on 12 June and then I was arrested, with Calep, everyone was involved. From the transport we were two, myself and Nhlapo. The whole township and surrounding areas, comrades from Botshabelo were four. The State of Emergency was declared. The State of Emergency was first declared in 1985 then in 1986 it was declared permanently. Some of the comrades were from Parys, Welkom guys were detained here, it was tough. I was under Section 31, others were under Section 29 which is the Terrorism Act etc. There were informers within us and we did not know, the police knew everything. The people who infiltrated us gave the police power to charge us, the charges would vary between Section 29 and Section 31.

Because I was not aware that the boys I was taking out were MK. A guy by the name of Parks Ditsebe, he was arrested at the boarder. While we were in detention, we were detained on June 12, Leganya overthrew the government of Lesotho in March. Dintho was arrested in the same way, I was supposed to go and collect him but I could not, I then found him at Grootvlei, I didn't know him but he knew me. He told me that I arrived earlier and when he arrived I was not there. I was instructed to wait for the boys if they do not arrive on time I must leave. I had been doing this for three years and did not know that the guys were MK soldiers. Sechaba is one of the MK guys who were arrested in 1988. Parks told me everything. I was then taken to an ordinary cell, I met Calipa about this and he told me that he was not supposed to tell me because that is how things are done underground. He also told me that I am under the spotlight.

So it was the struggle of the working class and the struggle of the liberation. The working class were pushing to get a living wage and then there was the new slogan of "Living Wage" from COSATU. We were now fighting for the living wage and the liberation of the country.

Facilitator: were you still employed?

Respondent: No, let me share a joke with you. After three days in detention, I was called by the prison warders. When I arrived at the offices I found my bosses there, two members of the management team. They told me that I have absconded and that this is the second time I'm doing it. They told me that the company has the right to dismiss me because I have absconded but that I also have the right to appeal within three days. How can I appeal when I am in jail. I told them that in the

next five years the ANC is going to rule this country. I also said to them we will see who is going to own your transport business. And then I left them there. After June the same year the workers went on strike demanding that Nhlapo and myself be released. Management went to the security branch and informed them, the security branch refused to release me, they released Nhlapo. He was released after three months and I remained until 1 April 1987. So whenever they released other comrades, they would point a finger at me and say "if you can stop doing your nonsense we will release you, you're supposed to be released but you are full of nonsense"

Facilitator: were you charged?

Respondent: No, nothing, detention without trial. The only people who were allowed to visit me was my wife and my younger sister. After I was released I tried to get my job back, they refused to take me back, they told me that I absconded, they have dismissed me and I can take the matter to court. The industrial court was tough, the case had already expired. I then joined the trade union as an organiser of T and G, SAWU had already merged with T and G. So I became an organiser of T and G for Free State and Northern Cape. So in the field I met comrades like, the regional secretary was Mningo of COSATU, we also have Thabo Makweya he was the former MEC, he is now with the FDC here as Acting CEO. Jomo Bonokwane took over after Makweya, after Jomo it was Mashinini. The way we operated as organisers, things were tough in those days for trade unions to operate. We operated in such a way, if transport has a problem, all the organisers would come and assist each other, if foods have a problem we would go there. For instance if retail shops like OK and others, all the organisers, different unions would go to the table and

negotiate with management. They once told Janie Mohapi “this evening you will be in jail” and truly he was detained the same evening. If another company was on strike we would be worried asking ourselves who is going to be arrested. But we worked together as a team. The previous Act was completely different to the Labour Relations Act that we have now. The previous now, although it had loopholes, .., the new one, if the worker is not educated it's a problem for the working class, it would give the employer the upper hand. The old Act was simpler, an ordinary worker was able to apply for conciliation. It operated like CCMA. As an organiser you had the right to apply to the industrial court on behalf of the employee and represent the employee at the same as a union official. But the new Act states that only lawyers can represent workers at the labour court, which makes it difficult. What happens if the employee does not have money it means their case cannot be heard. The government needs to revisit the old Act and amend it accordingly. Union officials should be given the right to represent an employee, some people or even unions can't afford to pay labour lawyers. Although the new Labour Relations Act covers much more, things like harassment, the right to belong to a union. The good thing about the old Act was that it allowed the employee was allowed to apply to the conciliation board. The method of the conciliation board was easier. Cases were winnable then compared to CCMA, the procedures are tough. The employer also have the right to strike, which is terrible for the employee. The issue of casuals staff, it allows the employer to appoint casual staff. Before there were no casuals, you had to be employed permanently. The condition of employment was just the exploitation of white people. White people exploited employees. I am not supporting the apartheid government but things were much easier for the employees.

1987 I was an organiser, 1988 I was detained again (interruption) – before I was detained, the struggle of Botshabelo was incorporated to XwaXwa in 1986, although we had revolted here since 1983. On 18 February 1988, central government declared this place incorporated to XwaXwa – on 20 February we were supposed to be at the stadium to announce the Day of Botshabelo. I was the one who led the whole forces to distract Mopeli from speaking because if he was given an opportunity to speak, old people would have supported him. The youth were against him. So we made the place ungovernable, all the main roads were blockaded with stones so that they should not be able to go in, unfortunately the apartheid regime was using helicopters to move around, to monitor the situation even to disperse the students. We were supported by students, because we were younger at the time they thought we were also students. So on the morning of the 20th, there was a wall called Jacaranda wall. It was the 20th, we were 20 in number and went to the stadium. Our mission was to take people out of the stadium, irrespective of their numbers, we knew there was a chance that we might be killed or arrested. We planned to come out alive all of us. We had to wear the Basotho blankets and hats in order to achieve this. What we would do is when we leave our different sections we must all have our blankets, hat and the knobkierrie. What we did was we would take the blankets from the people and assault them. The interesting thing is that they were all younger than me, and they were all armed. We went into the stadium and found the cultural groups there. They were waiting for Mopeli to talk, we wanted him to just greet the people and not say anything. At 11:00 they announced that Mopeli will be speaking, so they were singing the Basotho songs. So before he could speak we started singing our song, you are a lion but you can see the nation is dying. We started pushing the older people and then one senior police took Mopeli away, so we pushed

people out of the stadium. As people were running out, the police and the army were standing outside, they had to let the people get out of the stadium. So as they go into the stadium, we were crossing the street. All the blankets were lying on the floor, we also left our blankets. So when I got home I put on my church clothes, the khakhis, I prepared my church drink. As I am sitting drinking the hippo arrives and the policeman says yes that's him I saw him, the white police man said "not this one, this is a man of God, he was not there". That is how I survived. This was in 1988.

I was detained around August 1988, on 24 December 1988, we started a national hunger strike, we started it here at Grootvlei, all detainees we were demanding to be released or die, we wanted to go and eat at home. The strike started on 24th, on the 25th people were given Kentucky fried chicken and nice food and stopped the hunger strike. So I was alone on the hunger strike, I continued. Now Calep Motshabi said to me "Mfazwe, so you don't eat chicken"? I said no comrade we agreed that I don't eat chicken we are on a hunger strike, why should I eat. So he said so you want to go home for Xmas. So on the 27th they joined the hunger strike. On the 29th I vomited blood, and they took me to Pirinomi Hospital. So when I was there, the national police, it was Law and Order, Adrian Vlok, his spokesperson Greg something, he announced that one of the detainees in Grootvlei is on hunger strike and is now vomiting blood, so the nation should not say we have killed him, that man refused to eat. What he did not realise was that by making the speech he was mobilising other prisons to join the hunger strike. On 30 December other detainees, Moddebee, Leewfontein, Kimberley, Cape Town, they all announced that they joining the Free State. So that is how it became the national hunger strike. Rev Frank Chikane visited us and encouraged us to push further. He visited me on the 31st, he was with a lot of doctors from the prison, from

the hospital and the security branch police. They were with Chikane and they told him to ask me to start eating, they told him that the doctor says I am left with three days I will die. The other comrades stopped the hunger strike again, I continued alone, one man show. So when Chikane left he did not say others have stopped, he said the comrades at Grootvlei, the hunger strike has gained momentum, they are very strong. So he was encouraging all comrades to do the same because if all can continue with the hunger strike, the apartheid regime will fall on its knees if those people can die. So they took me to the hospital, they thought that if I'm outside the prison I will eat. I said to them they must call Vlok to me, I want the agreement and the date of release, so if I don't have a date of release I am going nowhere. When I was taken to hospital, Motshabi and Itumeleng Segabi were released with restrictions, they were both under house arrest. They then charged other comrades, they were charged with arson, others with trespassing. They were just formulating charges. They took them out of Grootvlei to Bloemfontein prison which was called Ramkraal at that time. So I didn't have information about the prison. The following day they came to me and informed me that Vlok has released all the comrades, you are the only one not released with your skinny bones, they said you must eat before you die here. So I'm thinking the comrades have sold me out, there was nothing like that. Very late at night I feel an injection between my fingers – I wake up only to see a white doctor leaving. I was worried I didn't know what he had injected in me and remember I was tied because I am a prisoner. 10 minutes later I felt a lot of strength and realised that it is not poison after all, or is the injection making me stronger before I die. I informed the nurse that a white doctor injected me at night, the nurse told me that she cannot say anything to me because she will be fired. The following day the group of special doctors arrived and begged me to eat, they told me that I look

better than the last time they saw me. They could not say to me that the injection had made the difference, obviously they were informed. They told me they were negotiating with Vlok. I told them I want to know the release date, Dr. Viviers, one of the hospital doctors told them all he wants to know is his release date. So if this person dies here the hospital would be responsible. He then told them he is discharging me from the hospital. I told him I am not leaving the hospital until I am released, I am not going back to the prison I am going home, you have to release. They told me they will come back in the afternoon. They came back with a letter that stated the release date as 20 January, so they asked me to eat. I read the letter, I kept the original then I ate. I was given soup and six cans of milk, I ate that for 3 days, on the 4th day they came and took me back to Grootvlei, they took me to the prison and asked me to collect my stuff. When they released me they gave me a restriction form. I refused to sign it. The head of the prison told me that I did not detain you, the special branch did, tell them that you don't sign the restriction, please leave my prison. I left with them and signed the restriction. They then went to Jo'burg and arrested Andy in Jo'burg, he was heading Saico??< he was also restricted, they brought him back home to Bloemfontein. So all in all we were four in the Free State that were restricted. In the Eastern Cape it was Govan Mbeki, Trevor Manuel, and Cape Town, Gauteng it was Mama Ssulu, Winnie was still under house arrest, Natal it was Archie Gumede the late, he was one of the guys who was at NUMSA, Moses Mayekiso was also restricted, Mzwanele, his younger brother was also restricted, Ronny Mamoepa was also restricted, the Alexander guys, Paul Mashatile was one of them. The hunger strike continued in other areas. When other areas heard that I've been released under restriction, they continued with the strike, others went as far as 21/29 and 31 days. They were all released. I was restricted, I would go to work once a month with

a permit. So I was working underground, I had to strategise, things were now serious. The comrades that wanted to go outside were so many, more than 2000 comrades left Botshabelo to join the struggle, Dulfontein about 100 to 200, Thabanchu it was three under Mangope's pressure, Bloemfontein started increasing, but they were not as many as the ones in Botshabelo, Botshabelo led with numbers, the second one was Dulfontein, there's a lot of MK soldiers, Welkom, areas like Parys etc.

We are now in 1989, the MDM, other organisations had been banned, MDM rose, encouraging that we operate under the mass democratic movement. We started operating. In June, can't remember the date, we were told to defy the restriction. They gave us money to hire cars so that they do not arrest us the first day. Segale and myself defied the restriction, the older guys refused to defy the restriction. Segale was arrested after 14 days, I was arrested after 37 days. One police lady gave me her number and I drove to Giyani, I stayed there for 14 days. The first week, after I told her that I defied a restriction and that the police are looking for me. I told her she can arrest me and get a promotion as a police. She said no I'm not going to be arrested I love you. The same day in the evening my face appeared on Police File, they said I am a dangerous man, I'm a terrorist and am fully armed. We were watching TV together and she said I am not going to arrest you they are crazy. She refused to arrest me. So I stayed, on the 14th day I had to leave (interruption) – I cooked for her, nice food and took the food to the police station, they said Sgt Mabunda's girlfriend cooks nice food. No one recognised me from Police File. I said to her I will see you later. I then left and went to Pretoria. When I arrived in Pretoria I called her she was crying. I was going to XwaXwa, I was there for two days, the third day there was supposed to be a show at Tourism Centre, they were playing the song, The Show Goes on. I went to

another kiosk, two policemen were following me. I pretended as if I do not see them, I managed to evade them. I went home, my wife was in Smithfield, I had to go and give them money. I then decided to hand myself over before they kill me. I left money for my wife and kids, I called another comrade Nkgabo, he was a shop steward. I told him that I want to hand myself over to the police. I asked him to organise all the shop stewards to come to the office. I then called the Special Branch so that they do not find me alone. I told them not to worry they will come and arrest me only, I needed the shop stewards for safety. I then called the office and ask them to come and fetch the car. I asked him not to use the car until I've been arrested because it will be a problem for him. I called Col Koetzee, he was in charge. I told him that I believe you are looking for me, he said yes you have defied the restriction, I don't want to talk to a criminal, I said don't drop the phone, I said I am at my office, do you know where my office is ..., he said yes I know you work at T and G, I then said to him send your guys to come and collect me. He said to me I know you terrorists I am going to phone the army first. So I said you can come and collect me I am here. Come and take me. So another guy came, Swanepoel, he came with a Caspers. When they arrived I said you are here to collect the president, I am the president, they said we don't have kaffir president nie (interruption) – I said to them first of all you give me a chance to call my lawyer and secondly I want to call my head office that you are here to collect me. We agreed, I called my lawyer and my head office. They told him that if you don't assault the man you can have him for free, not in our offices. So when we go out, I went into the car, a Monza, the other one said you must get into the Casper I said presidents do not get inside Caspers. I got into the car and he asked someone else to drive with us, he didn't trust me. We drove and arrived at their offices, there was a corridor there called Violent street, this is

where they kick you – they stood there. When they opened the door I came in, Koetzee says Thamsanqa Mafazwe, he said how are you. I said to him please just keep your dogs out of violent street because I am not violent today, I'm a peaceful man. I went to his office, he was ready with the charges. He just put the dates that I've been missing, so he said its 37 days, so its 37 counts plus 4 charges for declaring yourself a free man. All in all they were 41 charges, then he said in other words its Treason. Then they took me to Bloemfontein prison. When we arrived they told me I have a right to call a lawyer. So they charged me without going through the court. So I had to smuggle a letter to one of the ladies, Nontsokolo Msezwane, I smuggled through one of the prisoners, I forget his name. I asked her to come and see me at 2, I told her that I have been there for three months and have 41 counts, I have not been to court and I do not have a lawyer. She called Ismael and Ayob in Jo'burg, so I was represented by Adv. Husein, he is now a judge at the Constitutional Court. He came down here and asked for a court date. We went to court and I was given R1000 bail. So I called the office, they paid the R1000 and I was released. Before the date of the trial I took out the guys of MK through Zeerust, when I was away they came at my place, I had to sign between 5 and 5, so what I did was at 5 I would go to the police station and sign, and left immediately, then I took the MK guys. At 9 my brother goes to sleep at my place, his voice sounds like mine, so they left without checking. I drove back and went to sign again. I could only see 9 people, two visitors a day. If I want to go out I have to apply, they would turn me down even if I want to attend a family funeral. They refused me to also attend the COSATU conference. I would apply even though I knew they would refuse, just to annoy them.

In 1989 Sisulu was released, after Sisulu's release, I was taking the MK boys out, when I came back they had information. They took me detention and added further charges, now I have 45 charges, they locked me up and terminated the bail. I had to go back to court in order to get bail. So Husein came himself and told me to stop being naughty. I sat with him and told him that because he is my lawyer I have to tell him the truth, I told him that I am working underground for the ANC movement. Now he understood. So he came with a plan to get bail for me. So he told the court that de Klerk had asked that all prisoners be released. They turned it down. Mandela was released on the 11th, the 15th I received a call from prison, Husein told me that because Mandela has been released I might find a way to have you released to. So on the 25th we went to court. (interruption).

Look at the photographs that were taken at the COSATU conference, (he was showing you pictures). So Husein continued with the case. He asked the court about the new act in the government gazette. They had brought a lot of witnesses. He did not want to ask the witnesses questions, I was getting angry and did not understand why he is not asking them questions. He told me that in order to minimise the problem he must first question their boss. My younger brother was also called in as a witness. The boss informed the court that his boys had been following me they have the evidence, also the extra four charges. He also said that he has 16 years of experience of the ANC, the lawyer asked him if he was referring to me. He said no, my lawyer said my client is a member of COSATU and T and G not a member of the ANC. So he said can you please withdraw your ANC experience. He withdrew it. He then quoted what was written in the Act from the gazette. So your boys were able to see him for 37 days but they did not arrest him because he was supposed

to be arrested within 24 hours. My lawyer asked him to read the gazette for the court. The sentence in the gazette was R20 000 or five years imprisonment. The lawyer asked him whether I should be sentenced in the same way. He said no I am not the magistrate I cannot propose that. The lawyer asked him to call his boss, Adrian Vlok from Law and Order and make a decision on this case because you have failed to do your duty. You failed that is why my client defied for 37 days, you were running after him and not arresting, what did you want from him. Why did you not arrest him? It did not make sense. My lawyer said call the Minister of Law and Order. He then asked the magistrate to postpone the case until Adrian Vlok came to take over the case. And then he asked the court to release me. The magistrate released me but he wanted to emphasise the condition of the restriction. The magistrate said its up to me whether I report or not. I was released and I did not report to the police. So I was given a new date of 2 April 2000. So when I arrived the case was withdrawn.

From that time 1990s, the exiles coming back, the situation rose in the country, more comrades left the country to join MK until 1992 when they stopped it. This is when Nelson Mandela suspended the armed struggle. Hani was murdered in 1993, I have a photograph of Hani, this was at his memorial service which was held here. This white lady (showing picture), Rev Konutse's wife was with us here, this is the march, Fikile Mbalula, Itumeleng Segabi (pictures) – the MEC Seiso Moahi and other comrades. Here I was released by Mangope, he is the only person who arrested me when I was working underground with the MK issue, no white guy was able to arrest me, they were just talking about it, they were never able to arrest me. So here is while I was a shop steward driving (pictures). This is the first victim that was killed, they had killed 9 here, 8 was buried without

the other people, the family was forced to bury them. We were able to bury only one, here in Botshabelo, this is a funeral in Smithfield in 1989.

Facilitator: How was Smithfield, was it hot?

Respondent: ja it was hot, we mobilised Smithfield very strong although we did not have MK guys there but it was very hot. This one is the funeral in 1982 in Ciskei. The guy was driving busses with us and he overturned with the bus. The soldiers were there. This is my twin brother (interruption). This one is the first TLC here

Facilitator: the changing times?

Respondent: ja the changing times. So here in 1989 after I was released after the hunger strike, this is how I looked like. Here it is 1994 when I married my second wife. My first wife had left, her mother told met that her daughter cannot be involved with an inmate.

Facilitator: so this actually affected your family

Respondent: this is my wife who died in 2004. This is our first baby who died last year. Here I was doing walk about with Tokyo Sexwale, after he was released from Robben Island, he was deployed in the Free State, he worked with us.

Facilitator: I had some few questions maybe I will follow up later. Please sign the attendance register. Thank you for your time. I will call you.

END

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