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TM: Tshepo Moloji

GM: Greg Malebo

Interview with Greg Malebo

TM: Today is the 20th of October 2011. I am Tshepo Moloji for the SAHA Tembisa Oral History Project.

GM: I am with ntate (Mr) Greg Malebo here in Hospital View.

TM: Ntate, thank you for your time to talk to me about the history of Tembisa. Like I said earlier, the focus now is going to be on the themes because we have done the interview before. So we don't need to focus on what you've already told me before. Uh...for background purposes, I would like you to tell us who is Ntate Malebo, where were you born and when, when did you finally arrive here in Tembisa?

GM: Okay. I am Gregory Malebo. I was born in Atteridgeville on the 27th December 1957. I came to Tembisa in 1969 to join my mother. Then I schooled at Umfuyaneni Primary School. Then we went to Kgatlamping Primary School with the tribal uh... What do you call ... schools ... You know, because at Umfuyaneni we were mixed with the South Sothos, and I was doing North Sotho. Then from there I went to Tembisa High School. In 1976 I was doing what was known as Form Three at that time. Am I right, Form Three?

TM: JC (Junior Certificate)?

GM: Yes, JC. Yes, during the '76 uprising where, I think, my political consciousness took shape. We were then, as students at that time, involved obviously in the struggle. At that time naturally we didn't have any direction. And the real struggle was against Afrikaans. We were affected like any other... We were also affected. I was doing Agriculture (*Landbou*) in Afrikaans. I also did Mathematics (*Wiskunde*) in Afrikaans, which really was a problem. Because to us Afrikaans was really unacceptable. Now the politicisation process started. We then recruited during the process. When, for example, yesterday's date (19th October 1977) came up already we were within the structures of the Black Consciousness. So those structures of Black Consciousness had people like Ralph Mothiba, James Moleya, Mazizi Mbuqe.

TM: Alright.

GM: And then we held meetings every Thursday at Ronnie Modikwe's place. We had Ronnie Modikwe as well. He was a teacher at Tembisa High School. So, we would hold meetings over there. The main purpose was conscientising people. We hosted a lot of activists that came this side. Amongst them there was Hlakura Chidi...

TM: Is it?

GM: [Phandelani] Nefolovhodwe, who was the deputy secretary. Who's this lady? She worked for the Daily Dispatch.

TM: Mtintso?

GM: Yes.

TM: Thenjiwe Mtintso

GM: Yes, Thenjiwe Mtintso.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes, she was there. We were a small grouping really. But we would then organise meetings. We would invite people. For example, we had Dr. Tlakola. We would invite them to give speeches. We used to hold meetings mainly at the Roman Catholic Churches. They were very friendly toward us. There were two Roman Catholic Churches. The one ... The Moya Church.

TM: Okay.

GM: And St. Vincent. Those were the churches that were supportive. And during that period Steve Biko died. I think just before this period. After Steve Biko died ... My first encounter with the police in real terms was during Steve Biko's funeral. We were going to attend his funeral and roadblocks were set up at both entrances of Tembisa. And the reason was that they wanted ... What do you call? I.D. (Identity Documents) books ... Uh, *dom passes* (Reference Book). But the intention was to know who we were.

TM: Were you many in that group?

GM: Yes, there were lot of us. There was a bus full of people.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes. We were going to Ginsburg to bury Steve Biko.

TM: But then how did the police know that you were going there?

GM: Well, one cannot discount the fact they had their own people within us. But even today we don't know who those people were. Now uh...

TM: Ntate Malebo, when you talk about yesterday's date, it was the 19th of October ...

GM: Yes. That's when organisations were banned and newspapers.

TM: Okay.

GM: But even prior to that ... Steven Biko died before that time. And we were arrested. And then on the 19th [of October] many comrades were detained. People like Percy Qgoboza, but here on our side it was James Moleya. We had not really ... Uh, James Moleya was an unofficial chairperson. I think we were finding our feet really in establishing what was happening. Because, as I said, during our days of political consciousness ... Uh, during SASO (South African Students Organisation) Trial, uh, during the [Onkgopotse Abram] Tiro speech, uh, the Tiro death, we had the likes of

Ralph who were at Turfloop [University], who would come over and share experiences with us. And I think it was during that period that we gained political consciousness.

TM: Yes. Was he sharing experiences with that small group that you belonged to?

GM: Sorry?

TM: It was that small group that...

GM: Yes.

TM: Who were the people in that group?

GM: Lazarus Mawela was part of us. Timothy Mabena was also part of it. Nicholas Molotsi, Kenneth Phasane, Alex Mogale, Mazizi Mbuqe, James Moleya, Ronnie Modikwe. Uh, there was Nyanya Molepo amongst those that I can recall now.

TM: Yes.

GM: There could be others, but I can recall those for now. So, every Thursday there was a political education period. The intention was to build an organisation in Tembisa. I remember at that time Tembisa was in a terrible state. We had a bucket system at that time. The roads were very, very bad. You know, generally we were ready to organise people such that when we called meetings, we called meetings as the BPC (Black People's Convention). The hall of that church would be very full. And we were raising bread and butter issues at that time.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes. So, on the 19th [of October 1977] we were banned - our organisation was banned. That is the Black People's Convention, the BPC.

TM: Yes.

GM: You know, what is important about the BPC I must mention was that as BPC, the Black People's Convention, we saw ourselves ... we saw our role as conscientising the people. We did not see ourselves as the substitute for what we called at that time the historical movements, the ANC (African National Congress) and the PAC (Pan Africanist Congress). We did not see ourselves as the alternative, but we saw ourselves as playing a particular role of conscientising the masses. And part of the constitution that I remember very well said 'We conscientise them and once they are politically conscious, as to what then happens, whoever joins the ANC or the PAC, will be the choice of that person'. Our role was to make people politically conscious.

TM: And this was agreed amongst you?

GM: No, no, it was the constitution of the BPC.

TM: Hmmm.

GM: So, We moved from that premise as we were busy.

TM: But were there any amongst you that challenged the constitution or it was just taken as it is?

GM: No, it was taken as it is at that time. Perhaps it was not threatening anyone, who was probably in the underground. It was not really threatening, because it would then be an area of recruiting them.

TM: Then how did you conscientise people?

GM: Generally, we were talking to them about their blackness; being proud of their blackness.

TM: Yes.

GM: Uh, discouraging the ladies who were using Ambie [skin product] and other products. And generally trying to instil a sense of pride in themselves. You see, the effect of apartheid was not just physical; chaining people, but mentally chaining people. So, the intention was to psychologically free people. You know, ensure that people are free from the mental shackles of accepting the status quo. We were saying that some things can be changed. And we ... In most cases we would operate in the shebeens, because shebeens were the areas where you would find a lot of people. And generally there people are relaxed

TM: Yes.

GM: You are able then to come up ... We were generally...

TM: But ntate Malebo, I am trying to think. I mean this is the 70's...

GM: Yes.

TM: You are young...

GM: Yes.

TM: And then you go to shebeens where people just want to forget about the injustices of apartheid...

GM: Yes.

TM: And you start talking about these serious issues which they don't want to talk about. How did they receive you?

GM: What is very interesting was that we were receiving a hero status. You know, that at our age we were able to say things that we were saying. Well, among others we were ... because we were reading. We were able to express ourselves in English. And there were times when I thought people were appreciating English we were speaking more than the real content. There were times when I thought of that.

TM: (Laughs)

GM: But be that as it may, as we were recruiting we told them that there would be a meeting tomorrow at a certain church. They would come to those meetings. And we would have high profile people coming in. In this case I would talk about people like Amanda Kwadi. I wonder where she is now. Amanda Kwadi would be there, who was a very powerful speaker.

TM: Wasn't she related to ntate [Musibudi] Mangena?

GM: No, no, not that I know of.

TM: Okay.

GM: But during the formation of the UDF (United Democratic Front) Amanda Kwadi was amongst the people who were in the executive of the UDF in the Transvaal.

TM: Yes.

GM: What was then Transvaal.

TM: Yes.

GM: She was in FEDTRAW (Federation of Transvaal Women). She was an organiser in FEDTRAW. It was part of the UDF structure in the Transvaal. So, uh...

TM: Uh, [speaking] English where does this come from?

GM: Well, most ... Remember that the people who were exposed to information were university graduates. So, then in the meeting they would conduct that in English. And then that set the pace for us to learn and to read. We were exposed to Kwame Nkrumah books and many African writers. Uh, what is this one, The River Between? Uh, Ngugi wa Thiongo'o. We were exposed to those books. We were encouraged to read. We were able to hold our own really. But there wasn't really, even at that time, political contestation. Some of the people who had light would listen to us. Black Consciousness was something new. You really had elderly people who knew about the

ANC and PAC at that time, but then they would listen to us because we were coming with something else, and very interesting because we were able to articulate it properly. To them we were not a threat.

TM: Yes.

GM: You know, when one thinks in retrospect about the people who then recruited us into the ANC, I mean in this instance thinking about ...There was Bra Steve Bopape.

TM: Mhhh

GM: Bra Steve Bopape had a shebeen - but he passed away.

TM: Yes.

GM: Bra Steve Bopape was a member of the ANC underground. Something that we did not know at that time, but as we were talking to him about it ... Uh, his shebeen became what we used to call the 'The Parliament' in Tembisa, because the battle of ideas used to be held there, when these were shaping the later stage. Yes, now uh...

TM: What was the name of his shebeen?

GM: It was called Steve's Shebeen.

TM: Okay.

GM: Yes. Now, uh, it is '76 things are hotting up. Then we were detained and after our release then there was a hero status of some sort. We are matured. We were top. We were up there.

TM: Detained when, in '76?

GM: Yes, in '76.

TM: Was it during the uprising?

GM: No, during the uprising I was not detained.

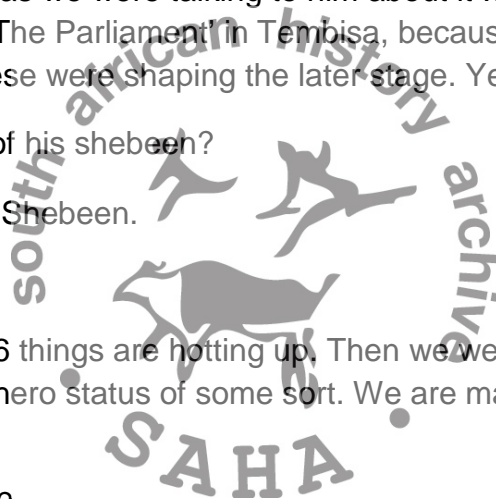
TM: When you were detained in '76, for what?

GM: Uh, no I was detained in '77.

TM: When you were going down to ...to...

GM: To Steven Biko's funeral.

TM: Funeral?



GM: Yes. But I think Brian Mazibuko was detained in '76. Brian Mazibuko and Figo Madlala were detained at that time. We were detained in '77 when we were going to the funeral.

TM: How long were you detained?

GM: For one night. It was just that night.

TM: Where - at the police station?

GM: Yes, at the Tembisa Police Station.

TM: Okay. The whole...

GM: Yes, the whole bus, except those who had their Ids ... the *Dom passes*.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes. They sought information about them and then they were released. And that then set the tone of the detentions. It set the tone for the detentions.

TM: Did you have a *Dom pass* during that period?

GM: I didn't have a *Dom pass*. I had gone to apply [for it]. I had a ...Uh, what do you called it, that thing that they gave you while you were waiting for a *Dom pass*? I remember. I had that. I didn't know where I had put it at home. At home they searched for it until they found it.

TM: And they brought it?

GM: Yes, they brought it and that was my release from there. But then to us it was more like we were now entering manhood. We were in contact with the police at that time. And then as I said there would be two days detention. And in the main they wanted to know our link ... Apparently they were planning to arrest James Moleya, because at that time James was detained. I am talking about '77.

TM: Yes.

GM: During this very period James was in detention. I think they were really trying to come up with charges against James Moleya. Detention in the main was what they were really talking to us about. And the, uh, the contact: who were the people James was with? That was the line of questioning.

TM: Yes.

GM: Are these people who had guns? Who were they? At that time a lot of people went out of the country. We had George - I forgot his surname. He passed away a year ago. People like George went out of the country. People like Tumi Sebone went out of the country at that time. We remained inside. We had our small cells that were not really your typical underground. But it was more like the cells where we were reading. We were exchanging books. We were generally talking, and were able to listen to Radio Freedom. Then the formation of AZAPO (Azanian People's Organisation) came.

TM: Before then you were talking about the two days detentions and stuff like that. Who were the police who arrested you? Was it the Special Branch?

GM: Yes, it was the Special Branch.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes. In the main there was a police man called Coetzee. He was ruthless. That one would *bleksem* (beat) us.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes.

TM: About nstate James Moleya, what was particular about him? How do...?

GM: Uh, James Moleya was what one would call a non-official chairman, because there was no democratic ...Uh, what you call a formation at that time. The conditions did not permit that.

TM: Yes.

GM: So, James Molea was our hero.

TM: How old was he then?

GM: James was more or less the same age as Biko at that time.

TM: Okay.

GM: He could have been 28 or 29 at that time.

TM: Hmmm. Where was he from? Do you know his background?

GM: Yes. James Moleya was from Venda. But he grew up in Alexandra. He schooled in Alexandra. His comrades or associates were Wally Serote, Thami Mnyele. Yes. I think, if I am not mistaken, Thami Mnyele was James' recruit, if I am not mistaken. But that, you know, can be verified.

TM: yes.

GM: So James was the key person. We looked up to him. James had the gift of the gab. James was a good speaker. You know, we saw ourselves in him.

TM: Yes. Was he employed during this period?

GM: No, James passed away.

TM: No, at that time?

GM: Yes, that time he was in detention. He was detained on the 19th of October. I think they were released a year after. I think it was just before or after the Easter of '78. So, then we were more on ... Then around the '80s. No, I think it was '79. I think that's when Figo was released. Then there was a call from outside about the formation of organisations. I missed other things there but'll have to go back and recall.

TM: Just touch on the formation of AZAPO.

GM: Oh, yes. Then whilst James was in detention then AZAPO was formed. AZAPO was formed in Hammanskraal. There was a place in Hammanskraal. I was a delegate. It was me, Alex Segale, Lazarus Mawela, who were delegates from here in Tembisa as part of the formation of AZAPO. We then came up and, uh,

TM: Who delegated you?

GM: We were delegated by part of the grouping that we were in.

TM: Alright.

GM: Those who were not in detention. It was only James who was in detention.

TM: Alright.

GM: The majority of us were still around. Others went to ... went out of the country. People like Tumi Sebone. And George went out of the country. I was part of those who remained. And then the formation of AZAPO came into the picture. But we were not part of the new executive. But we were the brains behind that executive. And thereafter the mandate was to go to our areas and form branches in our areas.

TM: Yes.

GM: At that time there was a move on our part to ... Well, I was not aware, but the likes of Alex Segale and Lazarus Mawela were already in the underground. And at that time I was more on the spotlight. And the exercise was that we should not really be part of AZAPO.

TM: Where was this coming from?

GM: Well, uh, Alex and Lazarus Mawela were already recruited. And at that time I was not really in the underground. I was not part of those who were recruited. And as such the formation of the civic organisation was the target. That is where our focus was to be. In line with the formation of the broader UDF that would be coming.

TM: Well, when it comes to the part where you say you were discouraged from being part of AZAPO what was the argument behind that?

GM: Well, already the question of contestation now - ideological contestation - was rearing its head.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes. The debates were coming up now - very seriously. Some of us were feeling that we would be able to change AZAPO.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes. Like here in Tembisa, amongst others, we were kicked out because AZAPO's BEC (Branch Executive Committee) had no direction. So, unofficially we were the leaders of AZAPO here in Tembisa. But decisions were taken by people like Khehla Mthembu, and the one who said the likes of us should be kicked out. So, the meetings were held elsewhere.

TM: Is it? No longer in Tembisa?

GM: No, it was in Tembisa, but in places we didn't know.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes.

TM: (Laughs)

GM: Because the question of Freedom Charter. Already we were pushing it at that time.

TM: Yes.

GM: And then the ideological contestation was starting to take shape now. Then this whole thing was getting hot. Then we met Goba [Ndlovu]. When we met him the stage was already set, because we were recruiting everybody. We were young at that time. And for us to have led the civic organisation at that time surely would have been a serious problem. Elderly people surely would not listen to us. Then we had Goba

Ndlovu - recruited Goba to be part of that steering committee, leading to the formation of the civic organisation.

TM: At that time what was nstate Goba doing?

GM: Well, nstate Goba was a journalist at that time of, I think, it was *The World* or... *Post*.

TM: Yes. But why him in particular? Why did you target him?

GM: Well, well, well, the people that worked with Goba ... Goba was the man. He was the man. That's why we targeted him. That's why part of ideological contestations, when it was to start between us and him during those days, turbulent days of Tembisa Civic Association. Goba was the chairperson.

TM: Yes.

GM: And there we were, gradually being recruited. At that time one could call ...Uh, I was a useful fool, if I should use that word.

TM: Mmm, in what way?

GM: Uh, I was following a program that I did not know of (laughs). And then Alex and Lazi would sit with me and tell me: "Hey, this is the line that we follow". It made sense to me. Little knowingly that I am in pursuit.

TM: The line that you were following before Lazi [Lazarus] came to the ... before they sat you down and ...What sort of line? How would you describe that line? What were the politics there?

GM: Well, we wanted to form a political party that would conscientise the people to fight for their rights, which was an ambiguous, very ambiguous kind of thing that had no direction, though the root was Black Consciousness. Yes, that was the line. But in retrospect the kind of books, the kind of influence by people like James and Alex. One was seeing that we were actually moving away during those small meetings that we were holding. We were actually moving away. Even the arguments that we were holding during this ideological battle.

TM: What were the arguments - can you still remember some?

GM: Well, the argument about the Freedom Charter, for example; that South Africa belongs to all those who live in it. Those who were in the Black Consciousness were saying South Africa is not a prostitute. It can't belong to everybody. You know, and then Bra Steve Bopape in a very, very subtle fashion, you know, had an influence on me in particular. At the behest of Alex and this one, uh... Well, I was the same age as them. I

would argue with them. They would not stand it, Alex and Lazi. They would not stand it. I would argue, put my case to them about how right the Black Consciousness was at that particular time. But then they would then recruit Bra Steve, because to them it was like I am incorrigible. But I honestly believed in what I was saying, with no real ...

TM: Ntate, would you say ... Within your cell - within your former cell, the group that you were in - others were in the same state of mind as you?

GM: Yes, they were. We had Thlaki Lekganyane, who then went to the PAC. We had others, but I forgot their names. It is just that maybe they have disappeared. Yes, there was Frans as well.

TM: Pale?

GM: Yes, Pale. Frans wouldn't stand that. Yes, he wouldn't stand that. Pale remained in the Black Consciousness. I am told he is a rich man somewhere.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes.

TM: The last time I saw him, I think it was in '94.

GM: Hmm.

TM: It was in 2004, I am sorry.

GM: Hmm.

GM: Yes, that was that. I am talking about '78 and... You know, until towards the formation of the civic association. As you are interested in what we debated about, then the question of the Freedom Charter came into the picture. We were able to read it and when it came to me I met with Lazi and Alex Segale. I read it, and then it was making sense. Then there would be debates about it. And you are not going to believe that just before that I was exposed to Jaki Seroke.

TM: Mmm...

GM: Uh, Jaki was part of us. And Jaki Seroke - I am sure in that meeting (Tembisa Exhibition) with Lazi Mawela spoke about this - was saying Oliver Tambo was globetrotting with white women. Jaki Seroke gave us a book. It was at the time when we were finding ourselves, me in particular. There was that thing now, the political climate was now changing. We were trying to find out politically where exactly we were. James and others would argue, but we would not really understand. But with that one ... He



[Jaki Seroke] was telling us about Oliver Tambo. But what was really interesting we would listen to Radio Freedom still.

TM: Mmm...

GM: But we would say that "This Oliver Tambo is now going elsewhere". We were not able to divorce Oliver from the ANC. You know, he was the president of the ANC and he showed us this and that. At that time, apparently, some of the underground structures of the ANC heard about ... My thinking is that, uh, they were seeing me more as "This one is not incorrigible. He'll be okay". At least that's what Bra Wally told me.

TM: Serote?

GM: Yes, Wally Serote told me: "He is not a problem. He'll come alright. He's got the capacity of being good. He's open to new ideas. You can talk to him". Now, uh, Jaki with that book and James ... There was a very serious meeting at Bra Steve's place about this thing I was preaching about.

TM: About this issue of globetrotting?

GM: Yes. I was preaching about that issue. We would go to shebeens and we would be listened to ... (cell-phone rings, GM answers it). Yes.

TM: Yes. You were talking about the important meeting at Bra Steve's place.

GM: Yes. In that important meeting - James Moleya was out of prison ... And the real serious discussion ... We came to know that James was in Botswana. And James knew we were doing this preaching that Oliver Tambo was going around. There was actually a song that said "We are fighting here, he is in London"

TM: Is it?

GM: "Why is he not in African countries?" That meeting was an eye opener. And there was a sharp mind of Bra Steve, who was really able to steer the ship. Uh, James was disappointed with me. You see ... And James didn't have a tact. But Bra Steve was there, very tactful, very brilliant, and he was then able to steer the ship. The outcome of the meeting was that, "Okay, are saying that this is the wrong path and you are giving reasons. We need to have another schedule, another meeting". And the meeting it was on a Wednesday, I think.

TM: In that meeting it was yourself...

GM: Alex Segale, Lazarus Mawela, Nicholas Molotsi, Kenneth Phasane, uh, what one at that time would regard as ... people like Mazizi were no longer really there. I think the question of fear had got into them. Nyanya. I think, but I could be wrong.

TM: Yes.

GM: But then they were not active anymore. Then there was this Bra Steve Bopape who then started. You know, I just found myself go through with him while I admired him for his intelligence. He was able to talk to an ordinary person. He had that. And he would always say - while we were laughing - to me "You know, these guys are telling me that you are a hard nut and I told them that, in fact, this is going to be the best cadre of the ANC". He was telling me that: "This one ... this one is going to be the best cadre of the ANC. He is not fighting the ANC. He was exposed to a book like an unfashionable youngster at that time information was dangerous, especially if he was not guided". You know, you read that and to you ... There was nothing; they were banned. There was no information. And you felt you were privileged if you had something from outside. Now, it was on a Wednesday and the meeting was scheduled for next Monday. Then on Thursday, Bra Steve fetched me at home. I spent the day with him. And generally...

TM: Just the two of you?

GM: Just the two of us. Then we were talking about some of the people in Alexandra. You know, the ANC people in Alexandra. Gradually now I am getting into this thing. I could talk and that's why there was a need to get me. Then Bra Steve sat with me. When I met the others on Monday I was a changed man. I was speaking a very different language...

TM: Mmm...

GM: Very, very different.

TM: Was it the language of the Freedom Charter?

GM: Yes. But I got the Freedom Charter elsewhere. When I brought it to show Bra Steve he laughed and said "You, of all people? You are the one who was kicking it". But he was saying "No, no, no, we've got it now. That's the right route. That's the route to take". Then he told me about some of meetings that were held at his home and, generally, mentioning people that were held in high esteem like Joe Nhlanhla, like ntate [John] Nkadimeng, ntate [Peter] Nchabeleng. I would read about them and I held them in high esteem.

TM: Where were these meetings held?

GM: In Alexandra.

TM: Oh!

GM: Alexandra was one of the most important ANC areas, where important campaigns like "Azikhwelwa" (We won't ride (buses)) - very successful campaigns - were held

there. Now he was talking about some of those people, the [Nelson] Mandela Trial as well. We would talk about them. You know, I gradually saw myself shifting into that. And then...

TM: What happened to the relationship ...to the other guys now?

GM: We were drifting apart. I think Jaki was detained. Jaki Seroke was detained and he faced trial. And I lost touch with people like Thlaki.

TM: Now nstate Malebo you had this fragmentation of ideologies, whereas in the mid-'70s you'd call meetings and then advance the issue of Black Consciousness...

GM: Yes.

TM: So what was happening to the broader community now in terms of following or the thinking?

GM: Well, to the broader community we were talking about bread and butter issues. So, the question of ideology was not really a contradiction, except when we were going to start the civic organisation. There was a change in language. We were talking to people in their language. It was the same people. So, there was no problem that they said this yesterday and today they were talking a different story. Although some ideological people would raise that. And they had their own areas. For example, they were mainly concentrated in Difateng section. That was the area of the Black Consciousness people and the PAC. So, they were there. But generally the entire Tembisa ... Like we would go to these shebeens and really get into that.

TM: Well, some of those shebeens besides Bra Steve's which were the others do you still remember?

GM: John Moleya, the brother of James Moleya, had a shebeen. There was also a shebeen on the other side called Ha Marry (Marry's Place). And there were also smaller ones. Those were the shebeens we would go to and spread the gospel.

TM: Mmm... I would like us to go to AZAPO and move to civic, and then to UDF. I would like to ask you this, because you said something about ... when you were conscientising people, especially the ladies in terms of using creams and all that, can you remember one incident where you had to engage them and what did they say?

GM: Yes, we were pretty successful. We were eloquent. We were able to put our case. We targeted our peers in most cases. Obviously, we had affairs with them. And during that period we were able to talk to them. They were our peers. They were our girlfriends. We told them that those creams were not okay. We also used to organise bashes, and we would seize that opportunity and talk to them. James Moleya would talk

to them about Black Consciousness. He would talk about freeing the mind and all sorts of things, and also psychological freedom. And that they must be proud of being black.

TM: Mmm... were you able to recruit some of them to the PBC?

GM: Yes, we recruited them. But the repression was tough at that time and that created problems for us.

TM: Now, AZAPO was formed and there was that issue that you didn't have to join?

GM: Yes.

TM: And that lead to TCA?

GM: Yes. It led then to the formation of... I think it was the late '70s then. '79 - late '70s or early '80s. The formation of the TCA started as a Steering Committee. There were elections, I don't remember really. But then there was TCA. Maybe because of the repression, but we were endorsed by the community. Goba was our chairperson and we were addition members. And that time the formation of COSAS (Congress of South African Students) was taking shape, and also the question of Black Local Authorities, the Tri-cameral Parliament was taking shape, which then led to the formation of the UDF. At that time there was a formation ... When Figo Madlala and Brian Mazibuko were out of prison and then Moya Youth Group was formed, I think that's what Gezani [Ndlovu] was talking about.

TM: Yes.

GM: Uh, COSAS already existed at that time. And there was a formation of a youth grouping that comprised predominantly of COSAS members. We were also attending those meetings as well on Sundays. Those meetings were mainly influenced by the history of the ANC, the Freedom Charter and all that. Well, at that time I know where I stood politically.

TM: Yes. Who was facilitating those meetings on Sundays?

GM: It was Figo Madlala who facilitated those meetings. It was out of those meetings that the formation of ... The civic was already in existence. Now we were on course to form the Youth Congress and the Women's ... What was it called? Not the Women's League ... FEDTRAW, the Federation of the Transvaal Women. Yes, we used to call it the Women's Group.

TM: Yes.

GM: Now I was more like the eyes and ears of the civic within the civic. I was the one responsible for steering the political direction within the civic organisation. Lazi became part of us.

TM: Can you explain that? How did you do it?

GM: Well, obviously when the calls came for the campaigns ... obviously the TCA should be in line with those campaign calls. Among others, there was a question of the eradication of the bucket system, which then took the form of a march. Uh, we did that together with the Women's Group. Those were the campaigns that Goba Ndlovu did not like. Well, Goba Ndlovu did not generally have ... Uh, the Unity Movement did not have the mass based, particularly in the black areas. You had pockets of intellectuals that were there. Because if you look carefully most of Goba's recruits were intellectuals. They did not have mass background. Then it was during that period that, uh ...

TM: Sorry, Unity Movement actually existed here in Tembisa?

GM: Well, Goba did not really express where he belonged. And he was a very clever lad. He did not say, but he wanted to build a base. And as the chairperson of the Tembisa Civic Association that was his base. And we had young people who were energetic, who were able to mobilise. We had resources - human resources - in the form of radical COSAS at that time. COSAS was really able to turn things around. And among the mandates of COSAS was to assist the formation of a civic association whilst we were here, so that we could give assistance. Some of the parents were brought to us. For example, people like ntate Seeta, ntate ... who was brought in by [Robert] Serote. Do you remember ntate David Masina?

TM: Masina? Yes.

GM: They were brought to us to work with us. Then there was ntate Seeta as well. And we were actually trying to topple ntate Goba Ndlovu, so that we could put ntate Seeta to be our chairperson, because Goba had problems. So, there were serious contestations even during meetings. Among other events leading to the formation of the TRA (Tembisa residents Association) we called in Terror Lekota and Popo Molefe to come and address the meeting. And we used the TCA because that was before the formation of the TRA. And during the meeting ... We were dishonest with Goba Ndlovu. We told him that we wanted to call a meeting for the people of Tembisa. We needed to discuss the question of the problems of Tembisa. Goba Ndlovu agreed to that. He had no choice but to agree. But he could see that something was just not okay.

TM: Yes.

GM: And we were dishonest, because we didn't tell him that Terror Lekota was coming and Popo Molefe was also coming here, the Publicist of the UDF and the General Secretary. We did not tell him that they were coming. He did not attend the meeting, but his people came. And during the meeting...

TM: His people within the TCA?

GM: Yes, his people within the TCA came to the meeting. And there was Terror and Tembisa started now. And the ground was fertile now for us. So, the plan was ... Because Goba held a kind of disciplinary meeting for us...

TM: Is it?

GM: And, uh...

TM: It was yourself and...?

GM: And Lazarus Mawela.

TM: Yes.

GM: And we went to that meeting to answer why did we bring in Terror. We were really dishonest. I think it was during that time that our assessment was that there was no way we could be ... We were answering that. And were strong at that time. You know, the question of radicalism. We were radical at that time and a bit disrespectful to Mr Ndlovu. We were radical at that time. Our assessment was that there was no way that the civic association was going to be part of the UDF grouping. And we wanted it to affiliate as part of the UDF. We wanted it to be an affiliate. Coming to that, uh, Mongezi Maphuthi was tasked with the responsibility of building the youth league. And I played a part in ensuring that we do that. At that time we were coordinating the formation of the Women's Group as well at Mama Elder's place. There was Elder. There was Frieda Shaba. There was Tilly Mabena. We were then ensuring that the youth ... There were people in women's movement as well who, during the meeting, would draw in other shop stewards. And we were also recruiting people from the unions as well to be part of our civic formation. And having realised that we were not going anywhere with ntate Ndlovu, then the formation of the Tembisa Residents Association took root.

TM: When you formed it what do you think was going to happens to the TCA?

GM: We thought that it was a waste of time, and we'd leave Mr Ndlovu with his property. We were not going to win it. The conditions were conducive for us to come up with the body that would affiliate with the UDF. The conditions were okay. We would do without that. And we knew that we the masses behind us.

TM: But what would you say was so difficult for you to turn the TCA around within?

GM: Our assessment was that it would be a waste of time. There were a countless meetings and attempts to try and do that. COSAS tried to mediate; wanted to know what was going on. They were young and inexperienced, and really wanted to know which side Goba was in. And Goba was smart, very smart. And we then thought that it was not worth our while. What was the point? We could form an organisation. It was at that time we had funerals. People were toyi-toying. Our profile was going up because we were deeply involved in organising those funerals. Making political ...What you call...out of those funerals. So, already our profile was going up. And the TCA became irrelevant.

TM: And now who was in the leadership of the TRA?

GM: Because most of us at that time were already ... Me, for example, with the formation of the UDF I became the deputy chairperson of the UDF in the whole of East Rand. We had Msane, whose role was to organise the education sector. Do you remember that there was a formation of...

TM: NECC (National Education Crisis Committee)?

GM: Yes.

TM: What is nstate Msane's name?

GM: Amon.

TM: Amon Msane.

GM: Amon was part of us. Lazarus Mawela. Mabena. We then thought that we should have this person, who we thought was troublesome because we heard that he causes problems where he stayed. People were beaten up there. People were ... In fact, people lived in fear

TM: Mmm...

GM: Ali Tleane.

TM: Where was he staying?

GM: He was staying in Tshenolong.

TM: Okay.

GM: So, we thought we should give him the bigger responsibility of chairing the TRA. M: Because we were not going to give it enough time. Then Lazi was involved with the

unions. In fact, most of us were involved outside. We then thought that this one was troublesome in his area. He was a shop steward. He was working. He was involved with the formation of the civic, uh the M-PLAN (Mandela Plan), and others. Then we heard that people were scared of him, and maybe he could become the chairperson of the broader Tembisa Residents Association it would be better. Figo Madlala also became part of that. Figo was already in the unions. I think Brian [Mazibuko] had passed away at that time. Yes, he had already passed away. So, most of us were involved with the formation of the civic organisations around Ekurhuleni, East Rand: Duduza was part of the Duduza Civic Association. I was [involved in the formation of civics in] Daveyton, Katlehong, Vosloorus...

TM: So, now you were spreading all over East Rand?

GM: Yes, we were spreading all over at that time. So, the UDF in Tembisa was taking shape. Seeds were germinating now. It was ... We had the Tembisa Residents Association. We then had the Tembisa Youth Congress. The chairperson was Mongezi Maphuthi. And then the Women's Group was led by Frieda. And, uh, we had COSAS. So, generally we would say then that the front, UDF, had its affiliates around Tembisa and the affiliates were really in harmony. There was a working relationship within it. Remember that there was repression. And that then led to us going to prison.

TM: Mmm...

GM: I am talking about, uh, now going to '85.

TM: Yes.

GM: In the first State of Emergency of '85 I was detained for a short while and released. And...

TM: Where were you held - here in Tembisa?

GM: Yes. But then already the formation of these organisations was strong. We were sure of that. The sectional committees were taking shape now. We were sure then that our ideological position was going well. We knew who were in that, and then naturally those people were recruited into the underground. Well, which was not my job really. I was not supposed to be part of that, because I was playing the mobilisation role, which was part of the four pillars.

TM: Yes.

GM: Yes. As to who was recruited it was their business in locating good people. We used to get sectional chairpersons, street committee chairmen. A real mass organisation took shape as part of the TRA.

TM: Yes.

GM: And with hindsight we can say it was just good we were wasting our time with TRA because here we are. We are able... We have the capability to organise. And now detention...

TM: But now you have two civic organisations that were fighting for the same issues. I mean, these were bread and butter issues you were fighting for but holding different lines.

GM: Yes. But these other civic organisation was irrelevant. And there wasn't anything about it.

TM: Even if they called meetings people...

GM: There were no meetings that they called.

TM: Wow!

GM: Mr Ndlovu would release press statements. And that was all. There wasn't really a mass kind of ... We had occupied the space so to speak. And we were ... Comrades were now getting out of the country. Repression was becoming serious now.

TM: Yes.

GM: We had Lawrence getting out. Khulu moving out of the country. And we told those who were in COSAS they must go to school. We encouraged most of them, like Bheki Khumalo, for example. And then detention came in '86. I spent two years in detention.

TM: Where did you spend that?

GM: In Modder Bee Prison. Detention came in '86 on the 11th of July but I was released, which I suspect was a mistake. I was released in August. And I spent only one month. I was detained...

TM: Again?

GM: Yes, again. I was released in '88 in January.

TM: Mmm... In some of the areas during the State of Emergency, after the leadership was arrested, you'd find that there were problems caused by either *com-tsotsis* (thugs who pretended to be comrades), crime, I mean lawlessness...

GM: Yes.

TM: Because the leadership is not there.

GM: Yes.

TM: After you were released did you find that was the case?

GM: Once we were in detention we were getting information that some of our own were *com-tsotsis*. And that was taking place in areas such as Mthambeka and Mangweni, and Mqansa. That's where most of these things took place. And there were those that remained who were not in detention; those who were in hiding.

TM: Yes.

GM: For example, we had Yster. Have you heard about Yster?

TM: Yster, yes.

GM: The one who was exhumed.

TM: Was he the one who was leading the Toaster (gang)?

GM: Yes. And there was also another grouping that was in Mangweni. What were they called, man? And some of them were with us in prison. So, those who were released were given the mandate to go and see a particular person and start all over again and revise some of the structures. Meetings were held. And much as there were problems we were able to make an impact in some of the *com-tsotsis*. Some of them were, like Yster for example, were dealt with, much as one would call it brutality at that time, when the person was dead and exhumed and burned. It is really barbaric. But what would one do with those people who terrorised the whole of Tembisa, knowing very well that the police were part of the whole exercise? Those boys were ... When they realised that we were now gaining ground - part of our underground structures were now ... Some of our defence units were really getting into grips. Some of those who went out were coming in, training people. Defence committees were really forming around Tembisa.

TM: Yes.

GM: It was during that period that we were able to chase them out of, for example, from Mthambeka; and with obviously the help of the community of Mthambeka. Because they really harassed that area. Almost any family member of Mthambeka would tell a story about the role that they played. They would go into shebeens. The most barbaric thing that they have done was when they went to a shebeen and undressed men and made women to bath [in a bath tub full of beer]. And after women had finished bathing they said men must drink that liquor.

TM: They poured...

GM: Yes. Do you know about that?

TM: Yes, I read about that in the papers.

GM: Yes. So, among other things that they did they also did that one. But when our structures took shape ...When they came back to form those underground structures, then things changed to the better now. We were now getting the grip of things. Then they moved to the hostel. The intention was that Tembisa was supposed to be like Khumalo Street [in Thokoza]. Lots and lots of people lost their lives.

TM: Which hostel did they occupy?

GM: Enhlanzeni Hostel, and the hostel next to Enhlanzeni. They were based there. So, because they did not live with the community, they would come into the community and take people's property in shebeens and run back there, with the assistance of the police at that time. Then the situation was shaping towards the unbanning now. And then we were released from prison. And we knew that the situation was right since our underground structures were okay. We knew that the civic organisation was strong. The youth league was strong at that time.

TM: After you were released was the TCA still there or had it been disbanded?

GM: Well, well, TCA was still there. Some of the people had to leave.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes. TCA was not one really giving us any contest. There wasn't any. Already we had occupied the political space. So, there wasn't anything. But he [Goba Ndlovu] had people he was with who were playing soccer. There were what one could call prominent people in Tembisa, but then they were irrelevant. After we were released we were negotiating the issue of ... Electricity was cut off in Tembisa. Then our group came up. We were negotiating with what was then known as ERADEBO, East Rand Development Board ... The East Rand Development Board Administration. You know, there were those administrations.

TM: Yes.

GM: We negotiated with them to reconnect our electricity. Then came the issue of flat rates and other things. When that period came we were leading that.

TM: Ntate Malebo, still on that. As activists in the civic association were there any serious contestations or serious debates around whether you should negotiate with the authorities, particularly white authorities? Or you just decided that you were just going to confront them?

GM: Remember at that time we had organisations that formed part of the UD, that were supportive. We had, uh, Planact. We would have meetings with Planact. And the fact

that there were no ideological contestations within ... We had people with the same ideology. It was easy. We would go to Planact and report back the advice they gave us. We would tell them that when you negotiate with them this was the line you should follow. The question of negotiating with them was part of our legitimacy. We were occupying political space now. Because if we didn't do that and Goba Ndlovu did it surely we would lose face. We had to be seen as the ones that were involved in ensuring that. As leader of Tembisa we got into negotiations. We did all sorts of things, ensuring that the question of buckets - we talked about with them. So, there wasn't really a problem of whether we should do it or not. I think the paradigm shift was already there. That the line of the struggle was not to blindly resist anything. When we thought that it was of strategic importance for us to go in; we would make our analysis that now is the time to make it. Or now we didn't think we should do it. There would be debates about it. We were not homogenous. There would those who would argue ... For example, there would be very serious debates about - in particular me and Ali Tleane - about how things should move. Ali Tleane used to take a radical stance on many things. And would always come up and say that was not the route we should be taking.

TM: Like what? In what way, for example?

GM: For example, we were negotiating over an issue of rent, and electricity was cut off in Tembisa. And we were thinking that when we talk to them ... He was taking a very radical stance that was not going to get us anywhere. And I was more like "They were talking to us and the people of Tembisa do not have electricity. The masses of Tembisa would turn against us". There was a need for us to ensure that electricity becomes our victory. So, he was really taking radical stances that "No, that thing won't happen. Why are we going to beg them? The masses are behind us". I said "The very masses that are behind us would turn against us".

TM: Yes, that's an interesting one.

GM: Yes.

TM: As you rightly pointed out it was leading now towards the unbanning, political leaders like nate [Walter] Sisulu were released and others...

GM: Yes.

TM: The impact of that period. I mean, when you starting hearing that the ANC was now having talks with some of the members of the National Party and the National Party was also fragmenting on its own, what was happening in Tembisa, locally I mean?

GM: Well, there were debates. Remember there was ... It is important to mention that as activists we used to meet. There was repression at that time. We used to meet. The

question of *Glasnost* and the question of strategies and tactics of the ANC as well. There were obviously those who were very stiff about how they held their positions. Regarding the question of the unbanning there were those that felt that we needed a total take over, The Samora Machel way.

TM: Yes.

GM: And some of us ... I was in the Transvaal branch of the UDF at that time representing the East Rand. So, the question of the discussions that were held there, one was privileged that I was able to talk about those things. We were able to talk about such things and the possibility of the unbanning. That once it came, how ready were we? Where were the masses? Were we going to marshal the masses to accept the unbanning? How to deal with the radical elements that felt that we should just run through. Some of them were trained and they believed they could simply take over. And we were saying no. At that time the question of leadership... Because the structures were there already - underground structures - were there. And the [inaudible] were above board. When they came they were informed by the underground. We were negotiating. We engaged people like Ali Tleane, because we really belonged to the same organisation. Some of the people we'd bulldoze them into positions. We used to bulldoze them into positions, because they did not understand. You could talk to them a whole year, they could not understand.

TM: Bulldoze them in what way? What do you mean?

GM: We used to call mass meetings and we were able to say this was the route that would be taken. We told them our leaders were going to be released and we were going to go to the elections, and there's going to be a negotiated settlement. Yes, we would then be ahead of them. During the meetings we knew those who were going to give us problems. And the person who was going to chair the meeting would know that certain people were supposed to be suppressed as much as possible. You are at a university and you would understand how these things were done.

TM: (Chuckles). Now the unbanning. But before that I just want to take you back because you were talking about repression, but also last time at the exhibition you said something interesting in terms of how people would protect themselves against repression. The issue of traditional doctors...

GM: Yeah!

TM: You said something ...I mean, that's something that is very rare in political resistance.

GM: Yes. The issue of traditional doctors...

TM: Mmm...

GM: During the time of repression, among others, you had comrades who would skip the country so that the police won't arrest him.

TM: Yes.

GM: So, that he could operate without problems. Then you had comrades like Mongezi Maphuthi who went ... There was a Maguduza, who was known. He stayed somewhere in Mpumalanga. Was known to be a very, very serious *inyanga* (traditional doctor). Well, he would give u *phunyuka ba m'phethe* (a muti that makes it very difficult for police to arrest you). You could feel it when they were around. Those things were not working. And some of us really felt that it was just nonsense.

TM: Mmm... So, this was discussed amongst yourselves?

GM: No, it was not a formal discussion.

TM: Okay.

GM: They knew where some of us stood. And I am sure you heard that at that time UDF was a bus: you had different people who had different beliefs. You had Christians and those who believed in those things. Some of them would go there to protect themselves against the police. Even if the bullets came they would just deflate. They believed those things. Mongezi and others went to that Maguduza. Then there was this particular funeral where I saw it in action. We were negotiating because we wanted the police to move ... We wanted the police to move so that the funeral can pass through. That's when then some of these people who went to Maguduza came, led by Mongezi and this comrade, Milford. Milford was a...

TM: Milford?

GM: Melford. Melford Lametjie. Melford and Mongezi were real believers in these things. But, you see, our position with Lazi was that "Hey, look here if they believe that this takes us somewhere why waste time in engaging them? Let us do our job in mobilising the masses. And if that worked for them so be it". At that time when we were negotiating with the police Mongezi came up. As they were coming to us we were negotiating. It was me, Amon Msane, Lazi Mawela. I think Mabena was part of us. As we were negotiating ...And Reverend Moloi. Yes, there was Reverend Aaron Moloi.

TM: Yes, I've heard about him.

GM: As we were talking then Mongezi went on to try and grab the guns of the police. (laughs). And the police came up. Because the police knew me they said to me "Kyk

(see), we are talking to you and these people... (laughs). Talk to your guys. We'd kill them".

TM: (Laughs)

GM: I said "Comrades please just hold it right there". Well, it did not work out.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes.

TM: That's interesting. And now political formations are unbanned

GM: Yes.

TM: People are returning from exile

GM: Yes.

TM: Those who were in prison were coming back

GM: Yes.

TM: These are people with different ways of thinking

GM: Yes. And those who were in prison were coming back. Those of us in the UDF thought that the people from exile were our leaders. And therefore there's space for them.

TM: Yes.

GM: And then the question of problems in Tembisa started, in particular we had XX, who was a commander. Generally, when things started we ensured, among others, that their children get to schools. Before they came back their kids came in. We sent them to schools around, particularly because Msane was at NEUSA (National Education Union of South Africa). So, most of them were able to talk to some of the principals who were friendly towards our course. So, then we placed them in some of the schools. Uh, generally, the problem started with the formation of the ANC branches after the unbanning, where I think ... We had a style of working as the UDF.

TM: Mmm...

GM: And, unfortunately, we were fighting for our own personal political space, so to speak. There was then, uh, a definite taking over, literal taking over. One could honestly say that the likes of XX in particular had some of ... He was a commander. He was leading some of the underground structures. And I think he placed them to good

use really to occupy space. And we found ourselves - most of us - marginalised out of the picture.

TM: Yes.

GM: Some of us were used. And the likes of us, me in particular, it was ensured that I got out of the picture. There would be lots of debates that you wouldn't understand where they were heading. But with hindsight, you would realise that actually it was part of that. You see that this grouping was out to take over. Probably they felt that we were not trained. Surely then there's nothing that we knew and they were the ones who would come up. And we realised at that time that the ability to lead mass organisations they never had a clue of what was going on. And at that time we were like pushed aside. Most of us were pushed aside ...

TM: This is from positions?

GM: Yes. But maybe I should take you back a bit when this started. It was a formation in '94, '95 ... No, we started building the organisation around '93 or so. We started building it. There were problems, but when the '94 elections were approaching we worked as a block. All of us ... We were sweating all of us (cell-phone rings, GM answers it). Yes, we worked together. We worked seriously for the elections. We ensured the victory of the ANC - all of us. Remember at that time, just after the unbanning, I was part of the East Rand - what was called the ANC's Internal Leadership Core. Yes, I was in the East Rand. It was me and Cyril Jantjies in the East Rand. We were tasked with the formation of the structures around the whole of East Rand, which I think problems started there, particularly here in Tembisa. We were answerable to nstate Sisulu. I had the privilege of reporting to nstate Sisulu that in the East Rand we had formed branches and in Tembisa we had formed a branch and in other places. But at that time those who were from exile were not featuring. We in the UDF were the ones who were tasked with that. I became the chairperson of ... When the local government was to be formed. By that time there was no ... it didn't have the constituency

TM: Oh, the Transitional...

GM: Yes. The Transitional Local...

TM: Councils?

GM: Yes. I became part of that. Then question now of the style of work came into the picture. Then the clash between me and XX came into the picture: "XX is your commander". XX would love to give you instructions. I am from the mass organisation. I believe in getting the mandate from the organisation. So, the question of the clashes ... And unfortunately it affected others in the process; those who were in the civic

movements with us. It affected them seriously. During that period... Such that when it came to the '95 elections I was marginalised.

TM: The local government?

GM: Yes, the local government. And the instruction was from XX that I must not feature at all.

TM: Mmm ... What was his position then?

GM: He was the chairperson. I was the chairperson of the Tembisa-Kempton Park. It was more like a metro here. We used to call it Kayalami Metro. He was the chairperson of the entire metro. I was the chairperson of the Tembisa-Kempton Park. And the sharp ... What you call ... And among others, my question of getting mandates... When we got to the meetings we would contradict each other. I then came with this idea of have a caucus before, so that we talked the same thing. Jesus, little knowingly that I was creating a monster. Those caucuses were there to try to fight me.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes. And those fights, among others ... You know, the question of strategies.

TM: Yes.

GM: Among others, there was what was called the statutory and the non-statutory. How this was organised was such that the National Party and others would be called the statutory parties, the statutory grouping. That meant that they were a homogenous grouping. The Conservative Party, they were the same thing. We who were non-statutory it was us who were in the majority. We had the PAC, we had IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party) at that time as part of the proportional representation theme. So, we had all that. Now the question of style - the question of strategy. Among other things, some of us believed that we were in a weaker position. In terms of votes, we could beat them. We were in a weaker position to do some of the things that we wanted to do. We didn't understand as yet what was going on here. And there was definitely a need - all the officials that belong.

TM: Yes.

GM: But that approach to them which, I think, was a sober approach towards things. Bheki Khumalo was radical and he felt that I am leaning towards the whites. I thought that it's okay to work with them, because this was a transitional period. We would still have a broader ... what you call? Let's work with them. We don't have a choice. We were in the same ... So, the question of strategies.

TM: What was their option?

GM: They were saying that we must fight them. It was this thing of radicalism that did not make sense. We were like a protest group within the council. Yet we were really a ruling party. So, those were there ... And now amongst them people like ... They would report to XX that this was my approach. Their approach was radicalism; that we must fight the officials. And my approach was what do we gain by fighting these people? We couldn't behave like an opposition party. We were the ruling party. We should, uh ... Let's do it then as a strategy. At that time there was no directive for local government as to what shape were we supposed to take. There wasn't any. There wasn't any workshops or anything. We were thrown into the deep end. And the question of those contradictions, uh ... Now, some of the things were informed by where you came from. We were with Planact. We were part of the Planact workshops. For us the question of peace in the local government was in the interests of the ANC. The question of fighting so that things won't work was surely not in the interests of the ANC. And the so-called radical stances that were taken by people like Bheki Khumalo, who ultimately came and sat where you are sitting and said "Listen, we did not understand".

TM: Wow!

GM: am happy because he came to tell me that "As for me I didn't understand. And I think I was used to come and destroy you".

TM: Mmm...

GM: Yes.

TM: It was a terrible time for you?

GM: It was a terrible time for me. I was suddenly now, uh, this lone figure, you know. While everybody felt that for you to be seen as if you were doing something was to pretend that you were radical. One of the worst things that happened was when we were supposed to pass the budget. We agreed that the question of planning for the budget - I was the chairperson ... The question of the budget was "What do we want in Tembisa?"

TM: Yes.

GM: "Let's sit. I know we want streets". I know we want ... Well, the bucket system was almost eradicated at that time. "We want streets, we want electricity". In some areas we wanted the building of houses". We wanted those things. So, the question was then "Could we come and then package these things?" Jesus! They did not come to that meeting. You could see that this was, uh ... What do you call? And for some reason it was ... I asked myself but why me? What did they see me? When I checked now I think I was too ahead of them. In retrospect, I was too ahead. And even in strategies and

tactics I didn't go along with them. I left them along the road. When we were discussing the budget, we told them they mustn't come. We wanted just a few and ... We were not able to make an input. Anyway we didn't have, what you call, Integrated Development Plan (IDP). We didn't have IDP's at that time. As such it was more like throwing what you know. And officials were just too involved. It was officials that would plan the budgets, you know. Because we would only endorse some of things, make arguments. And we were seeing things within the context of Tembisa only and not the broader picture. And unfortunately I was seeing it differently. For example, there was this new industrial area that was being built as you go towards Isando. And Khumalo and others were opposing it. And my argument was "That's the industrial area where our own people were supposed to go and work". So, looked at the bigger picture. It was our people in Tembisa who were going to work over there. But, you see, those things were making me unpopular. And, uh...

TM: Within the organisation?

GM: Yes, within the organisation. And I think it was part of the plan that "We know this was how he thinks and we'll throw in some of these things". Come the budget - the planning of the budget was approaching now - and people were saying they were going to reject the budget. And legally the budget has to be adopted. They said they were rejecting it. And the budget was rejected. After it was rejected...

TM: It was rejected by the party?

GM: Our party. Our own councillors stood up and said they rejected the budget.

TM: Mmm..

GM: And then we sat down, and then I sat with the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) ... There was what is called the Community Development Forum. Incidentally, it was led by Lazy Mawela and Jafta Mngomezulu at that time. Remember Lazy was at the forefront of rejecting the budget as well. Somehow I thought we were in the same thinking. So, I sat down with the CEO and I told him "You know, we don't have time. Legally, we were supposed to have passed this. We are supposed to pass this next time". I sat with him and said "You know what, let us ensure that the budget - all the Tembisa issues - we'd put them in the front". When things came we called Lazy and gave the ... They were beating themselves that there's victory in Tembisa. And we kept quiet. Little knowingly that all those things were there. We simply put them there. So, the writing was on wall for me because we had to choose. We were going to select the wards now. There were all sorts of things that I would hear. Uh, on the formation of the branch now. XX was chosen to be the chairperson of the branch. And now here in Hospital View almost everybody who was there became a councillor. They became councillors of the Wards they were staying in. I was the only one who was out of it.

TM: Mmm...

GM: One of the people then asked in one of the meetings. He asked XX where was Greg Malebo? XX a told him that "He couldn't be part of this because he was on the white's pocket".

TM: Mmm...

GM: And I am not sure what I was getting from the whites. We called him to order. For a very long time he did not listen to us. That was why he was not here". I was bitter. I was angry. But some of them ultimately were coming now. I went out of the ANC politics for five years.

TM: In that interim what were you involved in?

GM: I was the chairperson during the interim.

TM: Ah!

GM: Yes.

TM: I mean, after you left the ANC politics.

GM: I just sat at home. I didn't join any political party or anything. I just sat at home.

TM: Wow!

GM: Yes. There were problems that I was... They sent people like Mahlangu and others ... (Someone is knocking at the door. GM is going to check the door).

TM: So for five years you didn't do anything?

GM: Yes. I was at home for five years.

TM: This is from when to when?

GM: Since November '95 during those elections.

TM: Oh, yes.

GM: Yes, November '95 ... But the rot had set in already. Divisions were taking shape now, where the same people who were together fought among themselves. XX's faction started fighting with XW's faction.

TM: Mmm ... What was the contention now?



GM: The contention, I was told, apparently they had gone to some hunting area. And in this hunting area there were tenders.

TM: Alright.

GM: Those tenders, uh, there was a problem. I don't know what was that tender for. But the real fight came here. But it started in that hunting area. And when they came back ... As to who the owner of the game lodge was or whether that person had to do with that tender or not? But the whole thing came from that. After they came back then things started to take another shape. There was now XX's group that comprised Jafta Mngomezulu, that Swazi fellow who used foul language, uh ... On the other side, there was Figo Madlala, Lazi Mawela, McDonald, uh...What's his surname? Uh,...McDonald.

TM: Mmm...

GM: I'll try to recall his surname...Mothlake.

TM: Mmm...

GM: McDonald Motlhake was XW was the chairperson. Remember that XW was among those who led my removal. McDonald was the chairperson - it was one Tembisa and it was combined.

TM: Oh, yes.

GM: It was Lethabong now. McDonald became the chairperson. Now the factions were taking shape. And those factions had CEO's siding with particular factions, which was very interesting. For example, XX's faction sided with Muller. There was Muller, the CEO of the metro. Whilst Johan Liebrandt sided with XW's group. It is a very, very complex thing as to how the CEO's supporting particular factions.

TM: Did this have an impact in the mobilisation of the community?

GM: Yes, it had a serious impact in the sense that, for example, when electricity was going to be installed, because we had what you call intelligence metering system. When it was going to be installed we needed community buy-in. And during that period you needed everybody in the ANC to talk to communities, to show the community the importance of this thing.

TM: Yes.

GM: Their fight took shape into this whole matter. And Lazy's group, on the other side, had Sephira who was the mayor. And we had McDonald who was the chairperson. Lazy, the deputy chairperson. It was also taking shape in fighting the metro. The metro was led by XX and they were fighting XW on the other side. There were two groupings

now. It led to the suspension of the CEO for the misappropriation of funds, but the suspension was ultimately lifted. And then he took over, Johan Liebrandt. He then went on to become the Strategic Director. So, then those divisions really became bad. People were not ... Even now people are not talking to each other.

TM: Is it?

GM: [the year] 2000 when, uh, was approaching the divisions were serious now. In 2000 ... Uh, do you remember when they removed the premier and the chairperson of the ANC? The structure of the ANC was disbanded. Mathole Motshega was the chairperson. He was linked to the grouping - before all of them were part of campaigning for Mathole Motshega. Mathole Motshega and Sicelo [Shiceka] were part of that faction. But with the twist that took place, people like Luzzy Mawela and McDonald ... There were newspaper fights that took place, that Lazi's faction was investigated and all that. Luzzy then ... According to Luzzy, it was said that Mathole Motshega's legal team was supporting Mahlangu's group.

TM: Ah!

GM: To advice them legally what they should do so that the paper war, the media war, that Mahlangu' group was launching against Lazi's group had the legal backing. And Luzzy's group turned against Mathole Motshega. And this then led to ... It was part of the contribution towards the dissolution of the province. Because the region ... It was a region at that time. The region was in a mess now because of infighting. The organisation could not operate properly. There were serious problems in regional meetings. They could not move or do anything

TM: Yes.

GM: I was in the sidelines at that time.

TM: Yes.

GM: But because I am activist I could understand what was going on. Now when they moved that I be called I was part of David Makhura's team.

TM: You were called by whom?

GM: We were called by Ppresident [Thabo] Mbeki at that time.

TM: Ah!

GM: Then I was part of what came to be known as GILC, Gauteng Interim Leadership Core. I became part of that, and I was responsible for the Kayalami area. Yes. The objective was to try to make peace and plans must be made towards the formation of

the new provincial body. So, at that time there was a realignment of the local authorities. There was a realignment of the formation of the Ekurhuleni Metro.

TM: Yes.

GM: And during the formation of the Ekurhuleni ... At that time we were then condensed ... Not condensed. We were then put to what was known as the East Rand Interim Leadership Core. What was it called? I forgot its acronym. So, there was that, and I became part of that. And then I was then drawn into the interim provincial structure.

TM: Alright.

GM: The chairperson was - he passed away. He was from Daveyton. He was the chairperson and David Makhura was the secretary. It was Bavumile Vilakazi [the chairperson]. Now I was then drawn into the local authority then. I became a councillor again. And then I went into the executive, which was called Mayoral Committee. At that time we were trying to get the organisation working, creating conditions for fresh elections and peace amongst the activists. And thereafter that led to the elections. I did not stand for the elections. I became a part of the Mayoral Committee for about ten months until Bavumile Vilakazi was moved from ... (coughs) ... was deployed as an ambassador in Uganda. But the fights continued.

TM: Is it?

GM: Yes.

TM: Well, in terms of developments, because one of the major...the key factors that led you to become involved [in the struggle] was the issue of development in Tembisa...

GM: Yes.

TM: Way back in '79.

GM: Yes.

TM: Post '94 was the development happening?

GM: Yes. Well, development really took shape in 2000. In fact, from 2004 real development started taking shape. One, the question of tarring the roads of Tembisa that ended in 2009 ...Part of that programme ended in 2009. Regarding this issue of roads, we agreed as councillors of Tembisa that we should take, because we had new areas that have come in, for example, Phomolong, Winnie Mandela... We then agreed that as a strategy than fragmenting resources was it not better to focus on, for example, the old Tembisa. Tar the whole of Tembisa and ensure that we have the sidewalks and all that. As I am speaking to you 98% to 99% of Tembisa has been tarred.

TM: Mmm ...

GM: So, Tembisa has really developed. The question of access to electricity came up. Access roads were developed and electricity installed for people who didn't have it, in particular those who were poor. We also implemented the question of free 20 kilo litres and free electricity to people. Those were some of the things that we managed to achieve.

TM: Yes.

GM: Generally, there's a serious development in Tembisa. The question of the building of the Makhulong Stadium; the building of the Thami Mnyele Precinct that is starting to take shape; the building of the Moses Molelekwa Centre where the intention was to build an arts centre is now taking shape, with the agreement of almost every councillor in Tembisa, of course, with the backing of the community. Because we took the community on board...

TM: Yes.

GM: That this is what we intended doing. Surely, there were problems. It was not smooth sailing. You'll surely have those that won't go the same direction as you. But all in all like, uh... The building of the taxi rank in Oakmoor, which was a mess. The building of the taxi rank in Tembisa. There was a problem when it rained there. And also access of many pay points. Generally, I would say we ... Many developmental projects until 2010-2011 had started taking shaping. If you ask me as to whether I am sleeping at night I would say yes. There were things that we were not able to do. The question of employment, for example, is something that is beyond us. But in the projects that we had, local labour was used. And also during the electrification of Winnie Mandela [settlement], where I was a councillor, local labour was used. Unless that needed a scarce skill that we didn't have, then we would bring people from outside. But generally, we empowered people here. Others had small companies, and even now they are progressing with them. Others are electricians around here in the township. They gained those skills in those projects.

TM: Okay.

GM: Yes.

TM: Ntate Malebo, we've come a long way.

GM: Yes.

TM: We've come a long way. I think we've covered all the questions that I had for you, in terms of themes. I don't know if there's anything else that we've left out that you may have wanted to talk about.

GM: Uh, no I think I said everything.

TM: Yes. Generally, I think we covered most of ... Was nstate Steve Bopape related to Bopape from...

GM: Tsakane?

TM: Tsakane.

GM: No, they were not related, because I asked him.

TM: Oh, yes.

GM: He did not know him.

TM: Yeah. David Bopape?

GM: David Bopape, yes. He did not know him.

TM: Well, on that note I would like to thank you.

GM: Yes.

TM: And then hopefully this will help in terms of the history [of Tembisa].

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The End.....

