

Black Liberations Movement Mosaic
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Oral History Interview
with
Mr. Andile M-Afrika
By Nhlanhla Mosele
King William's Town, South Africa
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Interview with Mr. Andile M-Afrika

Interviewed on August 15th, 2008

Interviewer: Nhlanhla Mosele

Location: Ginsberg, King William's Town, South Africa

Black Liberation Movements Mosaic

Nhlanhla Mosele: Today we're at the Biko Monument in Ginsberg, King William's Town. Today's date is 15 August, 2008. We are interviewing Mr. Andile M-Afrika, who was involved in politics during Apartheid. Ok, eh, afternoon Mr. M-Afrika.

How are you today?

Andile M-Afrika: Okay. How are you?

Nhlanhla Mosele: Fine, thanks. Today we decided that we should take this moment to meet you here and we want you to tell us more about our history in the time of the Apartheid regime. So tell us your early life.

Andile M-Afrika: Um, there's nothing much interesting in my early life. I am now 42 years of age, and I still consider myself young and kicking. I was born in this town, quite a small town, I come from very small family, which was brought to this area by my own mother, when my mother came here to look for work, and we happened to find a place to stay here. I had grown at a time when this settlement had only teachers, priests, and police as representatives of modernity, or shall I say symbols of personal advancement, and like any other child I attended church, in my case it was a Catholic church, and I

harbored for a long time ambitions of becoming a father, or a priest, and until some intervention happened, some group of people who were around here brought a new definition of what personal advancement is – what it is to be somebody. And this was Steve Biko and his group - I would now understand to be officials of SASO [South African Student's Organization] and BPC [Black People's Convention]. They used to hang around in this house. They had very beautiful dresses. They would wear dashiki tops, black pants, bell-bottom, they would have high-heeled sandals, and I loved the way they laughed, they had long, clean, but uncombed hair. And most of them, including bra [sign of respect] Steve, had very white teeth. And so I loved all the combination and I looked upon them as a source of vision, and I would say 'That's what I want to be when I grow up.' From that point it has been fireworks, a lot of things have happened in my life, I met in the 80s when I was in my, when I was doing Standard 8, when I must have been 17 years of age, I got a chance to meet some of the colleagues that had been working with Steve Biko in the 70s. They had now emerged from Robben Island and others had been banned and resituated in their hometowns. But they were coming to Ginsberg to visit Mamcethe [sign of respect] Steve Biko's mother and Mrs. Biko, Steve Biko's wife, and they were coming to see the children as well. I had an opportunity to meet some of these people, who were so wonderful, who were so knowledgeable, and who were so eager to impart their knowledge. And little did I know that they were to be the beginning of me getting to be involved in the BCM – the Black Consciousness Movement – getting into the leadership role, such that I can arrogantly now claim that I was a part of the second generation of the leadership in the Black Consciousness Movement, after Steve Biko.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Ok, that was something that was really [incomprehensible]. So tell us a little more, what was your community like at the time?

Andile M-Afrika: There was... we had always expected that... we had always thought that this place was quite a highly political venue because from 1973, when Steve Biko was banned from Natal, he was trapped to come over here and be restricted in this house and in this environment. There had been a lot of activities – offices were opened up, there were projects, and a lot of residents of this... town were employed, or were working in the programs that Steve Biko had started and was involved in. So that left us with an impression... that these people were intimately and they were politically high or politically... deepened in the Black Consciousness Movement, but it was quite disappointing because of the conversations with these visitors, we weren't around to talk the same things, same issues, but we were disappointed, but in a way it also showed the... extent you know when you see things from a distance, and when you get closer to them you are able to see its detail, but nonetheless, it's been quite a very accommodating... it's still an accommodating community, but it has not been very political after Steve Biko. I don't think - it is not my view that it has been his fault, I think he has done tremendously to put into flow the people here. He had taken some individuals to conferences, and he has pushed them into structures to be involved, but it is always your own individual initiative that always counts in your involvement. So we were in a way a little bit disappointed, but life goes on.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Sir, we would like to know about your life and experience that you had with Apartheid. How was it? What I'm trying to say is that, what were your first experiences with Apartheid regime?

Andile M-Afrika: Like I said earlier, I said we came to this area through my grandmother who was working in white homes as a domestic servant, so I when I was born... it's not too far from where we are, I had to live between our house and the bedrooms in white homes. I had an advantage to see affluence. I could see kids, white kids, with shoes. And I could watch television from windows outside. I saw people who had cars and almost everything. And... yet I belonged to a community that didn't have some of these amenities and some of these things – I could see the vast difference in the society, and the distinctness, not only in its whiteness and its blackness, but also in its own confidence. I could see that I live with a community with a compromised confidence - very friendly, very small people who feel that they sometimes they have - they cannot overcome certain things. And yet on the other side I had a side of people who thought that they are victors of everything, sometimes they would even visit violence to other people - that is now my own people. So this was bringing to me, in my young, unsuspecting mind, a lot of lessons and a lot questions that I needed to see answered, so much that in my teens I began to be proud to be part of a group that was asking a lot of questions. We were going around seeking to find a semblance as to why do we live like this? Why- where is God? Why are things the way they are? What is our future, in fact, as a people? Why are these things happening to us? Also, I had an uncle who was involved in politics, who had been a young pioneer of Steve Biko, and who attracted for himself and for my family, too,

attention from the security police. So these police would come to my house and they would raid at any hour at their will. And they would walk in, and I didn't like the fact that when they come in... everybody freezed at home. And when I look around these are supposed to be my protectors, but they feared these white people who wore safari suits and who had long socks, and I grew up with all these images and I needed, and I sought for any pillar, for a clarity, for a convincing group of ideas, for a conversation that would say 'this is the situation in your life, and this is where it's supposed to be.' That's why later I could become part of a people who were highly reflective, who were in full detail about our situation and I said 'this is a movement that I can be part of.' And I was also happy because everything that was spoken of by this movement was accredited, or let's say, was credited to Steve Biko – somebody I knew, somebody I had seen, somebody I had enjoyed – we called him "Mandlamyama," "Black Power." So it was easy to be part of.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay. Yeah, I think in your time you lived differently as compared to today. So, it does make a difference, so now sir, we would like to know, what difference did the Apartheid movement make in your life as a person?

Andile M-Afrika: It has made me, I think this is a disadvantage that we have in your own time, you are not as advantaged as we are. Most of the African National Congre-, the ANC – the ruling party here – has made government to adopt a language that speaks so inferior, and so bad about black people. It would define black people as the previously

disadvantaged, and I disagree with that. Even if we didn't have big houses and cars, we cannot be measured by materials, but I think that the fact that we were a race that changed the course of history in this country and in this continent that has created a new world. We are then advantaged by the knowledge and the involvement into such ventures. So I am of the view that, in struggle, we have been shaped quite well, we have had a chance, we have had luck of being shaped by great ideas – shaped by great individuals. In our time there were no corrupt people. In our time, there were no people who would sleep with their children, you know a time - there were upright men and ladies, and we were part, we had a very important, a very very educating environment, the people, and the things that were happening during those times. I can tell you now that I was in 1977, on the eve of the funeral of Steve Biko, the night vigil happened in my school, and I was part of that, I came in to attend that occasion, and right around in the room were these night vigils happening before it went out into the open assembly, and when it was becoming a big occasion because a lot of people were now coming in for the funeral which was going to be the next day. I was looking at quite serious faces around me, people who were so content, and so who were very clear in their speeches and in their poetry and in their singing, who had profound messages for our standing as a people and for our future, where we are headed. You could know, when you are there, who are you. And who is withholding, who is holding you at where you are, and you could know, you could have a sense as to where you should be headed. So we come from quite great times – very good times. And I am very sorry for people who cannot take on that. I am very sorry for people who cannot be able to be critical about their own environment, to be able to be part of great times, to even take up great missions.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Oh yes indeed, yes indeed. Your time didn't resemble ours. You lived at the right time, but you were struggling. So, now, Mr. Andile, we would like you to tell us in detail, again, that each and every household at the time, there were things that your parents would say to you and something like okay, the Apartheid – how was it? So what I'm trying to get to here is that what did your family teach you about white people and the system of Apartheid at the time?

Andile M-Afrika: Well at home there wasn't much education, as I tell you, you know by my own surname you may really think [laughs] here we are. We are highly political, Ma-Afrika. But Ma-Afrika was far distant. Usually a surname was once a name. This Ma-Afrikawas is far distant from my generation. My mother, my grandmother is quite a very good lady. She has been - she is not cut out to really teach you certain things. But I can tell you that when Black Consciousness can- Look at me when you are interviewing – when Black Consciousness came around and defined that, the main feature of oppression, or the main feature the colonial hold of African people or black people resides in the avenue of the mind. That is what is so important to them is to oppress or imprison your thinking, your mind. That became an eye-opener, you could see when your parents are saying something that is out of line, you could see when they act in the way that is expressing mental slavery. So, generally when Steve Biko came from Natal, which was the time that he was political, because he had gone out here quite a very good man, he had gone out to study medicine, but he came back more of an animal in politics. The rest of the parent around here were quite you know normal people, who were just down, who were not so highly political, but it was beginning to see a few of the people coming out of

the closet, getting to know that it is time to do certain things. You must know that whoever was a parent in the 70s was already adult enough in the 60s. And in the 60s, early 60s, there had been the banning of the ANC, the banning of the PAC, the imprisonment of Mandela, Mbeki, and other people, and there had been also the Sharpeville Massacre and a lot of fear had been invested amongst black people so it wouldn't have been quite easy for our people to just naturally come out. There was a need for a designed program, such as was the embodiment of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay, we will go with it this way. What kind of relationship did AZANLA [Azanian National Liberation Army], PAC [Pan Africanist Congress], and Umkhonto we Sizwe had in exile – [incomprehensible Xhosa] AZAPO [Azanian People's Organization].

Andile M-Afrika: I can't get your question.

Nhlanhla Mosele: What I'm trying to say about, what I'm trying to figure it out that AZANLA and PAC and Umkhonto we Sizwe, [inaudible] relationship...

Andile M-Afrika: Okay. With AZAPO.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yeah, with AZAPO.

Andile M-Afrika: Alright, alright. May I just correct you in one thing: in South Africa you've had three major liberation movements, and the feature in the life of these movements had been that its structure would relate to itself. There has been very minimal lines crossing between organization and organization. And these organizations had existed in terms of prominence, at varying times, you know the ANC was the first organization to be established, and the PAC became a splinter group from the ANC and had its own prominence or big time. The BCM came around when the two movements, ANC and PAC, were not existing in the country. So, in [inaudible] there was not much cooperation, but they had existed in different periods. There was, to some little extent, some writing of letters, some conferring of messages between the people here and Robben Island and exile as well. And the ANC people would also tell you that were also underground people who would confer to certain individuals. There was also some convergence of meetings – convening of meetings between banned persons and those who were operating – that I would say the Black Consciousness people, who are operating and the criss-crossing. But now when we come to your question about armed struggle, it would have been very very difficult for MK to relate with BCM. MK would relate with ANC. APLA [Azanian People's Liberation Army] would relate with PAC, AZANLA would relate with AZAPO, or BCMA, because these armed formations were formed by their respective organizations. MK was formed by the ANC, it is the ANC that

made sure, that would make sure that the MK people are sent to East Germany, and they get the training, they get the places to sleep, they get the food and so on, and so on. It's not vice-versa, so it is inconsiderable that the other armed forces that is now the MK and [inaudible] would relate directly with us. In fact, it was AZANLA that would relate with AZAPO. Constitutionally, in terms of how all political formations operate, the structures become chapters of a constitution. Like if a party decides that now we can't do it by talking, we can't do it by campaigning, we also need to introduce a new element that is now an element that carries guns, and we can make our influence in that end. That is a formation which becomes a chapter in addition in its own makeup. So you can find that it is impossible to have that element relate with another constitution, you know.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yeah.

Andile M-Afrika: And I think it is still the case now.

Nhlanhla Mosele: No, I'm hearing you quite well because we grew up at the time of the saga of SAPF. We don't know any of Umkhonto we Sizwe. They were independent.

AM: That's a pity.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yeah, so another thing, sir, you were telling us a little more about AZAPO and BCM. So, when did you become affiliated with AZAPO?

Andile M-Afrika: 1983. I was doing Standard 8, I was a student. I got involved in an organization called Azanian Students Movement, which is a chapter in AZAPO. I didn't last so much - I was too curious, I was too talkative. I couldn't match so well students, I had to be, I had to get to matured politics in AZAPO. I then became part of the founding committee, a committee that founded AZAPO in here, in where we are in Ginsberg - if I was in the corporate world you could say it was a promotion. I was promoted to become an organizer of a region, then called Border Region, it incorporated King William's Town, East London, towards the East, and Queenstown towards the West, Fort Beaufort. That area I was operating, part of my duties was to move around and make sure the branches that were there are being serviced and they are going on and all the program of the movement is going quite well. From that point I rose to become a secretary of Eastern Cape – Eastern Cape now meant a whiter geographical area, covering up Port Elizabeth and other areas. I became a secretary, there was an office in PE, I had to move from King William's Town to go and live in Port Elizabeth. I worked there in that office. AZAPO had established two other formations in response to certain other challenges. It established a general workers' union. I was drawn into that general workers' to become a general secretary of the Black Allied Workers' Union of South Africa, I worked there. It also formed - AZAPO - also formed an advice center as part of a national move to create centers where our own people can come whenever they have problems, whenever they meet problems in their lives, whether at workplace or whatever. Whether they have, they can't get an ID or they've been chucked out by some white attendant in the Post Office, they can't get a service in the Post Office, they would come to our office and we would

help them, either go and do the representation at that particular place, or sometimes, you know, engage that particular agency for redress. That advice office was called [inaudible] Advice Office, I also worked there. From there I, it's been fireworks. I became a top man for the province, the chairperson of AZAPO, and this also meant that I was going to become part of the central committee. Central committee is drawn from what they consider as credible leadership nationally, and it becomes a committee seats sort of a congress in perpetuation, and I would sit in those. I'm now at that particular level.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay, Mr. Ma-Afrika, as I'm listening to your statement here, there's a line here, which says there's BCM, and there's AZAPO next to each other. Tell us, how does AZAPO differ from the BCM?

Andile M-Afrika: There is no difference, you should put it in your question as well, there is no difference. BCM is Black Consciousness – it's a movement. And then AZAPO is a structure. A structure usually is a formation, is what you do, is what you form in a movement. It's like rugby, you know, rugby is a game. Not- it's not a game for Ginsberg only it's a game that is played internationally. But a club becomes a structure within - a team with a name becomes a structure within that particular club. And to come back to your question, AZAPO, then, became a structure but a leading structure, in the same way that BPC was, Black People's Convention, was a leading structure in the 70s for BCM - BCM being the movement, and then BPC being the structure leading at the

time, leading all other structures which fit in and it has commanding powers over it. So AZAPO had a leading role like BPC, and had its, each, other structures such as the structure I first was introduced to it, the Azanian Students Movement, all under its leadership.

Max Paschall: But, I mean, did AZAPO's philosophy differ from Steve Biko's philosophy?

Andile M-Afrika: I didn't see it differing, I saw it – and this is how AZAPO puts it – that they're a continuation of Steve Biko's philosophy. You must know that banning of an organization implies by law, by South African law, that a decree or an instruction from the minister says - probably the minister has been advised by his president or by his cabinet - that this organization or this individual is undesirable, it now may not be allowed to legally exist. And a discussion that took place amongst the activists was that the banning of BPC and the other organizations that Steve Biko has led, including the death of the Steve Biko, was not the death of the philosophy. It wasn't the snuffing out of our own mind, because we talked about something that is existing in our mind, we're talking about a view that is within us, so we can continue with that view, we can build up another organization of a different name, because in the statute books, or maybe in the betting order, or the letter that was brought down says BPC may not exist again, so we'll just put another name and continue with the same program. So AZAPO's existence is claimed those bases, that it is a continuation of Biko's program. The other justification

would be that the substance in AZAPO, or rather, if you were to talk in terms of the church, its gospel was nowhere else but on the writings of Steve Biko. Its own hero would be nobody else but Steve Biko, the father founder of the movement. It began - AZAPO's period was a period when the institutionalization of Steve Biko in the sense of putting him on t-shirts, in the sense of have commemoration services on the day of his death, in the sense of popularizing his teachings and all of his answers to the outside world. It became a major issue in the education of the organization for itself, and for the community. It became a major guide that this organization had, it became a major approach to the community and to the question of oppression.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Oh, okay, as I was listening to your statement again, that you became affiliated in AZAPO in 1983 I think at the time you were still young, and I am just wondering that if there are any, okay let me put it this way – what kind of influence did BCM have on you, personally?

Andile M-Afrika: It was important for me to find BCM because I had great personal challenges. My own mother died when I was very young, and very soon my father died after my mother. And I lived with my grandmother, as if she was my mother, and I lived with my uncles as if they were my uncles. My name is Andile, it has something to do about somebody, some young man who comes in to add number to the other men that are around, and this means, you know, it was my grandmother who gave me that name. I hadn't heard a time to consider my orphanage situation, the fact that I'm parentless, but I

had felt the absence of a father figure, I had felt an absence of a teacher around me – a guide. You must understand that I told you that my grandmother was working as a domestic and most of the time she would spend the time at that place. It was important for me to find a source of understanding life, and how Black Consciousness came around, when these individuals [unknown name], [unknown name], Peter Jones, [unknown name], when they were visiting this place, the first lesson that came to me was a sense of familiness. These people were concerned about a mother of their friend, or their colleague, or their [inaudible], these people were coming to look at the welfare of his wife and his children. And if these people were a family, then I should be part of these people. This is something very very good that's happening here. So it became so important for me, it took up quite a very important part in me. The rest was also fulfilling because here was a philosophy that was so well-rounded, that had been deeply researched in terms of the situation of a black person, and when I compare it with anything else, because it doesn't- Black Consciousness doesn't say that don't listen to anything else, but when you listen to something else and you listen to terrorism, terrorism is a philosophy of the ANC, when you listen to Pan-African, you listen other things, you really find that no, Pan-Africa-... Black Consciousness was never found wanting. It had been well, well, well thought of. It was profound. And all this I credit it to braSteve.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay, as...

Andile M-Afrika: I walk around today, you know, many a times I want to continue, so confidently with my head high up, I am able to make a very qualitative relationships with a lot of people, not only in this country and somewhere else, because I think that Black Consciousness has been able - has enabled me to unravel any pretense that would have been had I not met it, because I see a lot of other people who are groveling, who are so small, and who cannot be themselves because they are suffering from mental slavery. It's not an easy thing, you don't learn Black Consciousness and you just suddenly be free, it's a process.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Oh, as you were saying, the way you are putting it, about BCM, there's no difference between BCM and AZAPO, so for me as a young person, wanting to know what kept the BCM united or AZAPO united? I mean this way of struggle...

Andile M-Afrika: It's the strength of the idea. I don't know how much you know when - religious people stand in the rain and pray, you know because they so believe that what they know is very, very strong. The power of knowing can outwit, can outdo a number of things, my brother. One time I was made a guest at the offices of the security, now this is just a modern way of saying it - I was arrested, and, we were having a discussion in the security offices. It's supposed to be an interrogation, and I passed out a joke to one of my interrogators, in fact a chief interrogator. He was a white fellow who was a ruggerite - a player of rugby - they had been playing rugby in the previous weekend and I asked him what was the score when the game had ended. And this guy stood up, he was so furious,

he was so shaken, and was so worried that he didn't know that I had been watching that game, because for them they used to have their own games – white clubs and white audience. And for him it sent a fright in his little heart that we, as black activists, or black fighters, were also monitoring their own movements and their own lives. And for him it was like “hey, I was vulnerable because I was in the field, I didn't have my gun.” And he was so furious and so frightened and he shouted out and that was the time when I sat back so proudly, and I saw what power can be carried by a word – not even a gun – just the word. You can twist and turn somebody because, I think that's the area that has held so steadfast this movement. It has been going on because it is, it has had very, very powerful ideas and that has been the case. And I think also even during the 70s, during Steve Biko's time, that has been a running chord. He was young, he could address older people, he couldn't be young because his ideas were matured, the ideas that he was dealing with were matured and were powerful, and so he couldn't be young, he had to be a matured person he had to be a big person, and he had to be a very, very strong person, up to the point of the end of his life, he was still strong.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So sir, we would like you to tell us more because as a young person who grew up in Ginsberg, and I didn't have much time to listen to all the people talking about Steve Biko, about his life, about his teachings. And, we kinda having some confusion about AZAPO and BCM and all that you declare to me that – you did make it clear to me that BCM and AZAPO are the same thing, and it is like, is BCM still relevant, or AZAPO? If so, among whom?

Andile M-Afrika: Can we take a break? I need some water.

Kyle Coston: [inaudible]

(break)

Nhlanhla Mosele: Oh, as I was asking before we go to the break that is BCM still relevant, if so, among whom?

Andile M-Afrika: I'm all the time shocked when this question comes around. You know last year - this is now 2008 - last year was the 30th anniversary of Steve Biko and everywhere it looks like this was a question – journalists were asking is Black Consciousness available, what's it, is Black Consciousness relevant? And a lot of people were at issue trying to answer “Yes it is relevant, because of this and that.” I am amazed, and I'm sometimes shocked, I'm, you know, I'm laid back. Why is that question being asked? You're a black young man. You're asking me if an idea that was conceived by a black man, if it is relevant? You are black, and that idea was about you, and your situation, and your future, and you are asking me if it is relevant. In essence are asking me “are you relevant?” You're asking yourself... “am I relevant, am I supposed to be around?” That's what we don't seem to be looking at. This idea belongs, or majorly, was conceived to a higher point by Steve Biko, and it was based on his study, on the study of the movement, on our situation, and on our future, on our aspirations. Why should it be questioned? The fact that you question yourself resides in the Black Consciousness. The

nature of colonial occupation, the nature of mental slavery is to a point that you must view yourself in suspect. You must always say “I don’t know if I’m Andile or not, you know, I don’t know if I have to be around or not.” It suggests to you that, ‘hey, am I human or not human?’ You don’t know. Because, precisely, I think that question is, in itself, an expression of mental slavery, the very thing that Black Consciousness seeks to address. It also tells us the very question you’ve now asked me is saying Black Consciousness is relevant, because I have to stick to that question in order to show you how much relevant is this philosophy. Next question.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay, no, as a young person who is living in this liberated country today, I must say this, if it is relevant, we are still facing a leadership crisis, we are still facing identity crisis within us blacks. I think it is - we really need someone or something that could still preach or teach the teachings of Steve Biko. So my question is now, what other people were instrumental in the BCM movement other than Steve Biko?

Andile M-Afrika: I want you, or no I invite you to widen your eye and look right across the political spectrum of this country, and tell me in all the chaos that is happening, is there no confirmation of the absence of Steve Biko or an individual like Steve Biko? Because, it is not only the Black Consciousness Movement currently, or today, that doesn’t have a leader of this caliber. All organizations, right across all, the whole country speak to the poverty of a leadership, of a caliber of this man. Somebody who is able to rise above anything – somebody who has a different set of ambitions. We don’t have that

person now in the country. And all the chaos is, to some extent, is a result of not having such an individual, and such an individual cannot be appointed – and the certain individual emerges out of a situation. We don't have that. We don't, and it's a very, very sordid situation, we don't have that, the country is in a deep crisis. We do not have somebody whose entire focus is about doing for others, who knows quite well that whatever would come his way, would come by itself. All others that are now here are busy with selfishness. They're [inaudible] on themselves, and they're too busy about themselves, and therefore they are in own personal or minute crisis. And they cannot resolve the crisis of the country, they cannot resolve the crisis of the continent or of the world. They are in a crisis and crisis is within them. Steve Biko was different – he lived in oppression, but he was not oppressed, he was free. He had the free-moving mind. We don't have such an individual. We don't have somebody who is at ease with everything. He was at ease with everybody – with a diplomat, with a lowly person, with so-called ordinary, and so-called sophisticated person. He was at ease with anybody. He knew clearly where he was headed. He had a very clear mind. He was at peace with himself. That's why he could confront his environment. We don't have such people today. I think now if I want to have this car and that car, and these, my children must go that way, and if they get there, they must get somewhere else. I'm not at peace with myself! You know I'm in constant fight for personal gain, for this and that and that and so on. My marriage is not okay, and I do quite a lot of things. My other girlfriends are not, you know, there are quite a lot of things that I'm busy with, at the same time I say I am at the forefront of resolving problems, or of advancing humanity. You know this man, this man that we're talking about, if you really are serious about him, he was a man who knew his

mission quite clearly, and he was on it in a quiet, very dignified and purposeful way. I think that's one of the things that make me to stay stuck on him and his ideas.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay, my last question for you Mr. Andile Ma-Afrika, is that, if Steve Biko was still alive in South Africa today, would he be happy to witness or to see this terror that we are facing today, these challenges?

Andile M-Afrika: Steve Biko would not be alive. We would be lying to ourselves - he is dead. He was born on the 18th of December, 1946. He died on the 12th of September, 1976 [1977]. We shouldn't be asking ourselves questions that, for things that are not going- I'm a serious type, I'm very sorry. I know that people hinge on these types of questions because they have not overcome the death of Steve Biko. It was so brutal, it has not been answered to, even when some white little police were allowed to come to the TRC, they did not reveal all, so they left us still as a bruised people. So, we are still a people that are living in pain because of not finding closure or what is it now – explanation, and knowledge as to what really happened at his death. But I believe that he exists somewhere. He exists at a spiritual level. And in his spirit, which is a bit different than, you know, a physical life, he may be certainly driving a lot of things. Now here you are, you are young men, you are doing this particular work, you are involved in a serious program, it's a Friday, some people of your age are doing some funny things. But here you are, you're so serious. Others are coming from foreign lands, and they are so immersed, or they are so attracted to this individual and his ideas, and decide to take out

time to embark on a program like this, and I believe that that's his existence. He exists in that way – drawing us together, making us to do and reach certain areas and do the type of work we are doing, and that's how we exist. I am not - I don't really think that we - I'm very sorry that I don't think along the lines that he would have been a minister or whatever, well I don't even believe that this surrounding would have been around had he been around, because he was such a huge phenomenon that certain things would not be around when he was around. He had an aura, you know, you cannot just simply accept that oh, it would have been like this, then how would he feature in the surrounding? Sometimes you must ask would the surrounding have been there had he been? It's just as - I'm very sorry that I'm so useless to your question.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay, Mr. Andile, we would like to thank you for this time you gave us to interview you and tell us about Steve Biko and his ideas and his life so with these words we thank you about your time.

Max Paschall: I have some more questions to add, if you have time.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Max, please my brother, we have to go there.

Andile M-Afrika: He has question, I need these questions.

Max Paschall: Okay, I mean, they're not going to pick us up until 4:15.

Kyle Coston: We have two interviews, don't we?

Max Paschall: Yeah.

Nhlanhla Mosele: It's 14:45.

Kyle Coston: Just let me know and if so, I need to change this tape.

Nhlanhla Mosele: It's only one hour.

Kyle Coston: 47 minutes.

Max Paschall: 45 minutes? Well should be...

Kyle Coston: We have, like, 13 more minutes.

Max Paschall: It's not going to take that long, I've only got a couple questions.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay.

Max Paschall: I mean, how do you describe the identity crisis in South Africa right now?

Andile M-Afrika: Very severe. Very, very severe. We have been - we found a freedom that has done very little in resolving the identity question. We had a paralyzed society - black and white - and we had further paralyzed as colored, Indian, and African. And

sometimes paralyzed further in terms of language – Xhosa, Sotho, [inaudible], and a lot of investment by divide-and-rule had happened in to creating suspicion in our groups, and I think that those who are in power had not really attended to the question of identity sufficiently, because you needed to uproot it from that level. And even when, on the table, there was some great work already done by people such as Steve Biko. You know, he went to a medical school, and he lived at a hostel with Indians and Coloreds, and when they were beginning SASO, they began in their talks to see oppression, to see the, that the differences between them were not as such. He was at a school where there were white students, he became part of a white student organization and he worked with them and he- not only experienced but also spoke about non-existence of these differences. He understood the necessity of diversity in the same way that you see trees differently. We like trees, we like nature, and all of us are trees, and all of us give out oxygen that is needed by other elements of nature. He saw life quite better. I think that the regimes, the government since freedom, has not really dealt with that question I think we are in a - that the crisis is quite severe.

Max Paschall: And in terms of the socialist aspect of AZAPO, what kinds of books were you reading about socialism, I mean where did the ideas come from?

Andile M-Afrika: They'd been quite different sources, and they were quite clandestine. If a book comes around it doesn't come as a book, it comes in snippets that's been photostated there and there, so you can't proudly say "I read Lenin" or "I read so-and-

so,” but majorly the - some people who were able to travel abroad would come with some literature. And I think Robben Island prison would also receive literature in that way.

But a lot of literature was manufactured internally, in the sense of discussions and debates that were happening. South African people have a convention of indigenizing a lot of influences. They, we grow up watching a lot of American and listening to a lot of American music and after listening from a tune in America, you can quickly twist it and grant it African rhythm, so a lot of literature had been homegrown, and you can accredit a lot of individuals around, because of what they had read which they would not declare, because if they declare it’s gonna be bad.

Max Paschall: And how do you describe the development - the first few years of the development of AZAPO, after 1977?

Andile M-Afrika: Very formative, very forceful. Here were a people who take an organization that has been put to a stop by tragic instances. You know when, there was a time when Steve Biko was viewed as superhuman. It never happened right across the movement that, you know, whites would do what they did to him, and everybody was so shocked. Shocked. How can we lose our best man? And now when AZAPO had to start it was so forceful, so you need a huge force to start something which has been stopped by violence, abruptly. And, it was so - the speeches that characterize, that you can read through in the founding of AZAPO were so harsh, and people were prepared to do anything. And a lot of people really suffered. There wasn’t much- I know later in the

80s you know there was much consideration and toning down in terms of language and urgency, but in the 70s, at the beginning of AZAPO there was much, much urgency, much, much urgency, in so much that a lot of people were really panicking. One instance that we show out would be the funeral of Professor Robert Sobukwe, who was the leader of the PAC. He died in 1978. AZAPO stood up to organize his funeral. The PAC was not much yet, it didn't have much presence. And at the funeral, somebody came, some Bantustan leader, some leader from the collaborators wanted to come over and speak. He was forcefully removed from the podium, that he cannot speak on a platform of liberation fighters. And for me, that is one demonstration of anger and urgency that characterizes the time.

Max Paschall: And what do you think caused that urgency? What were the feelings of people at the time – right after the death of Biko and the suppression of BCM?

Andile M-Afrika: What caused that anger?

Max Paschall: Yeah, you said there was a force behind the creation of AZAPO. What was it, do you think, in the community at the time that caused that?

Andile M-Afrika: Anger, of course, it was in 1977, I was 11 years of age. I had not attended my mother's funeral in 1972, and it happened at my home because too young,

they took me somewhere else to some family members. But when he was killed, I had a denim suit. It was secondhand clothes from Dion Hall, where my grandmother worked. I put on that, with nobody instructing me and I came over here. People had come from an assembly point and they were assembled here at home, and I came and I became part of the funeral. And, I shouldn't have been at a funeral at 11 years of age, but I was angry, and I became part of the procession to the stadium where they were, where the host ceremony took place, until the graveyard. Because I was angry, I couldn't understand why would people kill such a lovely gentleman, such a person who had time even to converse with young ones. He had a car, I had been anticipating that I would be - I would get a ride in his car. You know there were not so much cars around here. They had a telephone in this house, you know, when we looked after it, he came from university, you know, just to talk and have him in your proximity. There were all reasons to love him. And there were all reasons to be angry when he was killed. And right then at that time when the funeral was going on, from the time he had been killed right throughout the weeks, up to the time, and even in that period, there was a lot of presence of the police and the army. Helicopters were hovering over our town, and actually electrifying that anger, because now you could see in physical form who had taken away your man.

Max Paschall: I'm done. Thank you.

Andile M-Afrika: Can I get a copy of this tape?

[End of Tape]