

Black Liberations Movement Mosaic
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Black Liberations Movement Mosaic
Oral History Project
With
Mr. Fuzile Ndaba
By Vuyokazi Duna
Zinyoka Location, Eastern Cape, South Africa
August 12th, 2008

Interview with Mr. Fuzile Ndaba

Interviewed on August 12, 2008

Location: Zinyoka Location, Eastern Cape, South Africa

Interviewer: Vuyokazi Duna

Transcriber: Vuyokazi Duna

Language: Xhosa

Translator: Vuyokazi Duna

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Vuyokazi Duna: Greetings, father.

Fuzile Ndaba: Greetings, my girl.

Vuyokazi Duna: How are you?

Fuzile Ndaba: Very well, thank you, how are you?

Vuyokazi Duna: Very well, thank you, we just give thanks for the sunny days. Elder, with the information you are going to give us, do you allow us to record it?

Fuzile Ndaba: Yes, I allow you.

Vuyokazi Duna: So, you don't have a problem?

Fuzile Ndaba: No.

Vuyokazi Duna: Could you please tell us your name, your surname, where you live and what is your involvement with the clinic?

Fuzile Ndaba: I am Fuzile Ndaba, I stay here in Zinyoka location. I am in the clinic committee as the secretary but I am also in commune in the location.

Vuyokazi Duna: Could you tell us a bit about the clinic?

Fuzile Ndaba: What I know about the clinic is that it was built in 1974 by a contractor called Toky who was colored. So it started to work in 1975, in February, under the supervision of Steve Biko. The only doctor I knew was Ramphele. What happened was that there used to be a project as well that made all sorts of things, but there used to be a project in the clinic those days of 1975-70.

Vuyokazi Duna: What were some of the sicknesses that were prominent at the time?

Fuzile Ndaba: There were a few sicknesses within our people, but we had things like TB, but there were very few, I would say. There were no high blood pressures, we just recently saw those.

Vuyokazi Duna: So is the medicine unavailable in the hospital?

Fuzile Ndaba: There used to be enough, but now people are complaining that things are not the same as before. For example, now, as the committee, we work really hard because we have a lot of applications at the department of health. Firstly, the clinic used to be open 24 hours. Now that does not happen because the government says they don't have money to pay for new nurses. There used to be an ambulance that stayed in the clinic, but it's not here anymore. So, what I'm trying to say is there is a huge difference. Now it works from 8 to 4 - in those days it used to work day and night. There are many proposals that we have made as this committee that were unsuccessful. For example, as I speak to you now I do not have a phone in the clinic.

Vuyokazi Duna: How do the nurses manage when there is an emergency?

Fuzile Ndaba: They call the ambulance from Bhisho. Sometimes they would tell people to make phone calls themselves, or sometimes they call from their own phones.

Vuyokazi Duna: You have mentioned people like Steve Biko and Ramphele. Would you kindly tell us how they came up with the Zanempilo clinic?

Fuzile Ndaba: I am not sure how they came up with the idea. I know a bit about them and that they came from Ginsberg, the leader was from Ginsberg. This movement operated during the times of separation so he got the land to build the clinic from the church, the Anglican Church.

Vuyokazi Duna: Why didn't he get it from the community instead of the church?

Fuzile Ndaba: It was because it was still time of separation and these organizations were banned, and he was in the BCM [Black Consciousness Movement] - even the ANC [African National Congress] and MDF, they were all unwanted.

Vuyokazi Duna: So which organization was he in?

Fuzile Ndaba: He was in the BCM, and the whites didn't even want to hear about that organization at all, so they came and asked from one of the church members. Here is one of the men that was there, but he is a priest now.

Vuyokazi Duna: So, what did BCM mean to you personally?

Fuzile Ndaba: We loved it, but whoever had love for the organization could not show it just like how the whites would restrict people from even talking about the BCM or ANC. Those days of 1979 and 1978. If the police would hear a word that you said about those organizations you would be chucked in the van and get interrogated.

Vuyokazi Duna: In the older days you used to sing those freedom songs. Is there any songs that you remember so that you can sing for us?

Fuzile Ndaba: [sings] “Eli lizwe lelokhokho bethu” [This is our ancestors land, this is the black man’s land.]

Vuyokazi Duna: When they sang these songs what feeling did that trigger?

Fuzile Ndaba: It triggered a lot of feelings, like emotions.

Vuyokazi Duna: So, how do you feel about the name changes of institution, streets, etcetera?

Fuzile Ndaba: I like it because in the ‘90s when Mandela was released, I was in the organization as the co-coordinator. We were being chased by the army of Sebe.

Vuyokazi Duna: Which organizations were you in?

Fuzile Ndaba: The ANC. I started in 1990, and I’m still in the organization.

Vuyokazi Duna: Did the BCM exist in 1990?

Fuzile Ndaba: Yes, it did.

Vuyokazi Duna: Who were the members then?

Fuzile Ndaba: I'm not sure, I wouldn't lie to you.

Vuyokazi Duna: Is there any place in Zinyoka where you would like its name to be changed and be called by someone else?

Fuzile Ndaba: No, we already have a crèche named after Skhenjans Rhotshi, but it is called Makana, his real name. You know the underground names for when you go on an underground mission, so he was called Mokana, so it was named after him.

Vuyokazi Duna: Does the youth of today still have that spirit, or have they lost it?

Fuzile Ndaba: You mean the struggle? Yes, they still have it, but not as much as then in the years of '90, '91, '92, '93, and '94. Then the liberation struggle was hot.

Vuyokazi Duna: Are you proud of your country, or are there things you would like to see the government eliminating?

Fuzile Ndaba: There are many things that I'm complaining for, like the one about the department of health. The situation at this clinic was never like this. Today it is just like a white elephant - even though there are people in the hospital you will never get any help at night, but at first you will find help even at night. When you speak about the government it is not the same as the older days. As I look at it, I notice that there are many things they shouldn't have removed, but instead they removed everything that was

owned by the whites. For me, there were times in Ft. Jackson and they are no longer there, scarcity of jobs is the first thing I discredit from the current government. In Dimbaza there was lots of work but there are no firms anymore, I'm not sure if there are 3 or 4 left but they are no longer there. There used to be a lot of people coming from nearby areas such as eThembeni passing by, going to contracting companies to work. There is a lot that I criticize, especially the jobs. I see that even the crime rate is caused by this lack of jobs. Crime never used to be this much before.

Vuyokazi Duna: If Biko was still alive do you think the level of this clinic would have been better?

Fuzile Ndaba: It would have been in a very good position.

Vuyokazi Duna: In what way?

Fuzile Ndaba: All these things I criticize would have not been.

Vuyokazi Duna: Is there a doctor in the hospital?

Fuzile Ndaba: Yes, there is. He arrives once a month.

Vuyokazi Duna: Thank you very much, that was it.

Fuzile Ndaba: Thank you.

[End of Tape]