

**Black Liberations Movement Mosaic**  
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Oral History Interview  
with  
Mr. Stanley Roji  
By Nhlanhla Mosele and Kim Rogers  
Zinyoka, South Africa  
August 12, 2008

Interview with Mr. Stanley Roji

Interviewed on 12 August, 2008

Location: Zinyoka, South Africa

Interviewer: Nhlanhla Mosele

Transcriber: Unknown

Language: Xhosa

Translators: Unknown

Black Liberation Movements Mosaic

Nhlanhla Mosele: Good afternoon, sir, and thank you for being here with us today so we can get this chance to talk to you about the BCM, AZAPO, Steve Biko, and the clinic.

My name is Nhlanhla Mosele Umthembu. I live here in Ginsberg. These are my co-workers. This is Kyle and this is Max. They came from overseas. And this is Professor Kim Rogers. She also comes from overseas. They are here in South Africa to find some information about the BCM and AZAPO. So we would like you to state your name, sir.

Stanley Roji: My name is Stanley Roji.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Your name?

Stanley Roji: Stanley is my name. Here is my identity book.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay – oh, your surname is Roji. No, there's no need for an ID, sir. I would like us to continue. And you please tell us how old you are.

Stanley Roji: My age?

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yes, sir.

Stanley Roji: Hey! I didn't go to school in Libode.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Can I look for it in the identity card?

Stanley Roji: Of course you can.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay – 1924. As we go on, I would like to know how does Steve Biko, the BCM, and the AZAPO work with the people here in the community.

Stanley Roji: Biko helped us a lot. We were arrested here because of this thing. We are all working together here at the clinic, yes.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay, sir. Were you arrested by the Apartheid government?

Stanley Roji : Exactly! The Apartheid one.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay. What was the reason for your arrest, if we may ask?

Stanley Roji: They wanted to destroy the clinic so that no one would come here.

Nhlanhla Mosele: The same clinic Steve Biko built?

Stanley Roji: Because they wanted to build their own clinic. Exactly.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Were they [the government] against Steve Biko at the time?

Stanley Roji: No (sighs) – even I was afraid to walk around [on the streets] because I was afraid I'd be shot. Wait a minute. Do you know that I was bombed in my house?

Nhlanhla Mosele: No.

Stanley Roji: Didn't you hear?

Nhlanhla Mosele: No.

Stanley Roji: There was a bomb at my house. It was put there by Gqozo [person's surname – presidet/soldier of the Ciskei]. (makes loud clapping sound to simulate a bomb explosion)

Nhlanhla Mosele: Did it explode in the house?

Stanley Roji: One exploded outside. What was it doing outside [rhetorical]? It's because God stopped it from exploding [in the house].

Nhlanhla Mosele: So, you survived at that time?

Stanley Roji: Yes, we survived, but the side of the house was burning, and the furniture too in other rooms. But no one cared about that.

Nhlanhla Mosele: What do you think made Steve Biko build the clinic here? Because there are so many other places that he should have built the clinic.

Stanley Roji: There are some women who know about this. They say some men arrived here at the church to receive permission to build a clinic here. When I arrived [to Zinyoka], the clinic was already here.

Nhlanhla Mosele: The clinic!

Stanley Roji: Yeah – the clinic.

Nhlanhla Mosele: But you managed to work with the community?

Stanley Roji: I also worked here as a night watchman.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Oh. You were working here at the clinic.

Stanley Roji: Yes, I was working here when we were held hostage here [at the clinic].

Everything was locked down.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Oh no! We hear you, sir. So now, can you tell us, when you look back to the time of the Apartheid government and compare it to today? What changes did you see at the clinic?

Stanley Roji: No, it's very much better at the clinic today, as compared to the Apartheid period. It was very bad back then.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So let's go back to that Apartheid time a bit. How did the clinic care for the community?

Stanley Roji: We used to come to the clinic and everything was fine until Gqozo arrived with his corruption.

Nhlanhla Mosele: They spoiled everything?

Stanley Roji: Yes, there were spies here who would go to Gqozo and say that we were discussing something.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Oh, those who take information from one side [and give it] to another. (Stanley Roji nods in the background) Were they allowed to stay with you here in the community, even though they were spies?

Stanley Roji: Uh-uh [audible]

Nhlanhla Mosele: With the help of Steve Biko and the people of Zinyoka, how do you see the clinic now?

Stanley Roji: It is not the same as when Steve Biko was here. He would come to see how things were going.

Nhlanhla Mosele: What do you think Steve Biko would say if he was here today about the new government of the ANC?

Stanley Roji: I think if Steve Biko was still here, things would be much better today.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Would it be much better?

Stanley Roji: Yes, if he was still around, it would be much better because he was really trying to make things better.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Are you saying he would have made out people live a better life?

Kim Rogers: (in English) Would it be okay if I took some pictures?

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) But he doesn't speak English.

Kim Rogers: (in English) No, no, no. Could you translate that? Please.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) Okay – what is the question?

Kim Rogers: (in English) Would it be alright if we took his picture?

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in Xhosa) My colleagues here are asking if you have a problem with them taking your picture and putting it on the website?

Stanley Roji: No, I don't have a problem with that. That is the right to do because Biko and I were very close. In fact, he was a friend of my son. And my son was also a convict.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Okay sir, thank you very much.



Stanley Roji: Okay, thank you, thank you.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So, in which year do you think it was the first time you heard about the Black Consciousness?

Stanley Roji: You mean, the struggle?

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yes, the struggle of Steve Biko.

Stanley Roji: I was living on the farm, but we left the farm because my son was in the BCM. And the white man didn't like that, so they threw us out. So, we came here to Zinyoka.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Was that the first time you ever heard about the BCM?

Stanley Roji: Yes, my son. And they didn't even want to see him.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So what kind of relationship did your son have with Steve Biko?

Stanley Roji: They were really close. And even when he died my son was at the funeral.

Nhlanhla Mosele: If we could ask you as the older generation about the things that could be destroyed in the new South Africa, what would they be?

Stanley Roji: It would be better if there was someone here with me because I don't really remember much. I was just set up with bombs.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So you never recovered from that?

Stanley Roji: No, I never recovered.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So, this bomb really disturbed you?

Stanley Roji: When I came out of the house, there were these cracking sounds [referring to fire] and we took the kids out the window.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English, directed toward camera crew) Is there anything you would like me to ask?

Person (unknown): (in English) I think ask him about Steve Biko's son.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) Steve Biko's son, Nkosinathi?

Person: (in English) He said he was close to him.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) His son, yeah I've already asked about that.

Kim Rogers: (in English) What about his experience under Apartheid, under the old resistance?

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) I'll try. I probably messed that up here but...

Kim Rogers: (in English) Okay...

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in Xhosa) So, sir, we'd like to know your experience as the old person, how do you look at the Apartheid government? How was your experience? Can you explain your experience to us? How were you treated by the Apartheid government?

Stanley Roji: Yo! It was really hard. The Apartheid government it was extremely hard. You couldn't do as you pleased under that government.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Were you not allowed?

Stanley Roji: During the Apartheid government, we had hard times but now we are happy.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So, now in your happiness, they say that there are no jobs for the youth, in this new government of South Africa, under the ANC.

Stanley Roji: You mean the youth?

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yes.

Stanley Roji: You mean jobs?

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yes. What is your opinion about the new South Africa?

Stanley Roji: At least there is better payment in the jobs.

Nhlanhla Mosele: As compared to before?

Stanley Roji: Yes. The people who are working are getting paid.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Were they not paid before?

Stanley Roji: No, they just worked.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So, were you just given money?

Stanley Roji: There was no money we were getting, just small amounts. But now people are getting paid.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) Okay, I think I'm done.

Kim Rogers: (in English) How have things changed since you were a young man, in terms of the way that people grow up? You've seen so many years, what were the big changes in your culture?

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in Xhosa) This question is going to be like the one I asked you before, but not exactly. The professor is asking what changes do you see as to compared to the time you were still young, at my age, at the time of the Apartheid government? 'Til now you grew up and became an old man. Our customs and traditions, are they still done, the way they were done before?

Stanley Roji: In the older days, we black people, were known as baboons. Even at work, we would get paid small amounts. It is now, that things are starting to be better, because we are known as people.

Nhlanhla Mosele: This is the emotional part.

Stanley Roji: Pardon.

Nhlanhla Mosele: The emotional part.

Stanley Roji: We were never recognized as people before. They would just make us work so hard and then give us little money. It is only now in this new government that things are starting to look up.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So, do you think that we really got the freedom since 1994? Are there any changes you see?

Stanley Roji: Yes, there are some changes. It's not like before when there were places you couldn't go to as a black person.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Were there places that didn't allow black people to enter?

Stanley Roji: Yes, if you were black.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So, in other words are you saying we were treated like animals?

Stanley Roji: Exactly. We were called kaffir. It was very hard for us.

Nhlanhla Mosele: Do you have an idea what the word kaffir means to black people?

Stanley Roji: It was just the way we were called.

Nhlanhla Mosele: What kind of experience do you have about the names you were called and the places you were not allowed to enter?

Stanley Roji: They would say you can't enter here because you are a kaffir.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So, how did this affect you?

Stanley Roji: It really hurt us because I was selling stuff and there were places that I couldn't go to sell my stuff.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So, did that make life hard for you?

Stanley Roji: We think that things are better now that Steve Biko is the government because now we are all people. This is no discrimination.

Nhlanhla Mosele: After Steve Biko's work, do you think that things are better now?

Stanley Roji: Yes. He would come here and look around the clinic.

Kim Rogers: (in English) And what is it like to see all the years he has seen? What is it like to be an elder?

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in Xhosa) What does it feel like to be an old man?

Stanley Roji: What do you mean?

Nhlanhla Mosele: I'm asking in terms of your health.

Stanley Roji: No, the health is fine. Even if you're working, it's not like in the older days, when you were pushed to work and the white man would say "come on, come on."

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yo! So things are different now?

Stanley Roji: Yes, there is a lot of difference.

Kim Rogers: (in English) Ask him if we can give him a consent form so we can put his interview in the archives, and on the website.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in Xhosa) So now we are going to give you a consent form to fill out and also we are going to keep that form for the coming generations.

Stanley Roji: So what?

Nhlanhla Mosele: We just want to know if you would have a problem with that.



Stanley Roji: Yes, I will have a problem with that, because ever since I was shot, I've lost some memories of some things.

Nhlanhla Mosele: So sir, what are you saying about the form. We just want you to fill in your name, your address, and today's date. This form will be taken and be put in the archives.

Stanley Roji: I am not educated.

Nhlanhla Mosele: I was going to write for you, if you have no problem. I would not lie to you. I am your grandchild. Your child, I want something better for the world. He doesn't want...

Kim Rogers: (in English) You are the interviewer. Let's see that he archive this one.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) Sir, what's your address. It's not here. The government has a program for you to get educated.

Kim Rogers: (in English) Is he here in the community?

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) Yes.

Kim Rogers: (in English) Okay then we are done.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in Xhosa) Can you make a signature sir?

Stanley Roji: A signature?

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yes, the way you sign in the bank.

Stanley Roji: No. There are things there (referring to the rubber stamps). I am not educated.

Nhlanhla Mosele: We understand that, just write your name here.

Stanley Roji: Where? Here?

Nhlanhla Mosele: Just write.

Stanley Roji: Where at the top?

Nhlanhla Mosele: Yes sir, just write today's date?

Kim Rogers: (in English) And you just put the date in the back, that you were the interviewer.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) 12, August...

Kim Rogers: (in English) 12 of August. Is there anything that you would not like in the archives or in the tape?

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in Xhosa) Is there anything you don't want us to put in the archive or on the tape?

Stanley Roji: What can I say?

Nhlanhla Mosele: Is there anything you don't want on tape?

Stanley Roji: No, nothing.

Nhlanhla Mosele: (in English) He is okay.

Kim Rogers: (in English) Thank you.

[End of Tape]