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**Name of translator:** Bramage Sekete  
**Name of transcriber:** Moses Moremi  
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## **SECOND INTERVIEW WITH MALOME SERAME ISAAC MASIKE**

**Dale McKinley (DM):** Okay, this is the follow up, second interview that we are doing with Malome and thank you very much for making yourself available again. Malome, what we've done is that we went through our previous interview with you and then picked out some areas where we wanted to expand on and ask you questions more in-depth. The first thing – in the last interview we didn't catch your birth date, when you were actually born?

**Malome Masika (MM):** I was born in 1941 in Crown Mines.

**DM:** Tell us more about your family ... your father, mother, brothers, sisters

**MM:** As I was born in Johannesburg in Crown Mines at the compounds where my father and my mother and the family were staying. My father was working there, my uncle was working there while my mother was working just around in Johannesburg. From there they came here through my elder brother – my family was just in Johannesburg. My brother came here as he was working for a Mr. Cambanis, the first businessman that came here to have shops. So when my brother came here he bought this house, this stand. At that time that was the beginning of Viljoenskroon, let's say around 1921 that was the beginning of this township in the early days. Now he bought this stand and ... let's say there were no white people around here. It was the government who gave the farms around here to the whites and people were angry and they had to go out either to Johannesburg or here in Rammolutsi where there was a family – Setshogo – who were staying here in the village ... others were the Serame's who were staying in town ... by the time they (the whites) took over they disperse them and make this place here, Rammolutsi.

**DM:** That was when they gave the farms to the whites?

**MM:** Yes. My family came down here from Johannesburg when my father was getting old – they came to stay here. I'm the last born and I came from Johannesburg to come and rest, when I can't work anymore.

**DM:** When you were growing up on Crown mines, was your father working underground or was he a surface worker?

**MM:** When I was small I didn't notice. My father was a cleaner at the compound.

**DM:** And brothers and sisters?

**MM:** My two elder sisters were working in town and my brother was a school teacher. My sisters are still in Johannesburg. One was working too much with the ANC – going in and out – she was taking the children out to Botswana, Swaziland etc. That was my sister. They are still in Johannesburg ...

**DM:** Tell us a little bit about your most abiding memories growing up in Johannesburg. What do you remember the most?

**MM:** From Crown Mines my mother worked in Newclare – I stayed with my mother in Newclare. There everything was alright with me because we were playing together with white children, it was mixed up. There was no apartheid saying this one mustn't come to me ... in Newclare at that time and in Sophiatown also – we just mix up everything. I went to school there until I was Standard 1, when I came this side to the Free State. Life was alright there for me in those early days ... 1948 ... 1951 ... everything was alright ... In 1968 I went back to Johannesburg – I was a mechanic in Lesotho ...

**DM:** Okay, before you get to there ... when you moved in Std 1, why did you move here to the Free State?

**MM:** That was my parents' decision, I didn't know. They just sent me here to live with the relatives.

**DM:** How was that for you as a young boy ... moving from Joburg to here?

**MM:** Well, I liked it here in the Free State ... the life was alright for me.

**DM:** So you've been here from Std 1 until when .. you matric'd?

**MM:** Until Std 6. Then I went over to Kroonstad to do Std 7, and Std 8. After, I went to Lesotho to study practical mechanics ...

**DM:** Was that your favourite subject ... mechanics, or engineering?

**MM:** My favourite was welding, I liked welding ... but welding was only for white people. I worked in Johannesburg with brothers ... they were not banned from welding.

**DM:** Why were you told that welding was reserved for whites at that time?

**MM:** Your duty was only to give him these welding rods and change the machine ... not to weld. You can be fired if you can be seen, just to test. No, it was being tested by a white man ... you will burn the car, the factory.

**DM:** So, did you weld in secret?

**MM:** Yes, I did cause I liked that thing too much .. but I couldn't go on.

**Ahmed Veriava (AV):** So when you left ...

**MM:** When I was in Lesotho doing mechanics ... I got a scholarship to Israel. They took me in theory ... in theory I made 86%. So, in Lesotho they wanted to send me to Israel for agro-mechanics where you do welding and are working with farming implements. So

I said I will do that because in agro-mechanics, welding is there. So they suggest to send me to Israel because my report was very good ...

**AV:** So did you go to Israel?

**MM:** No I didn't. Again, Lesotho gave me a scholarship to Germany ... to Volkswagen factory. But I couldn't because I was in the Republic and I can't have a passport. So I lose.

**DM:** So the government didn't give you a passport.

**MM:** No, they didn't give me a passport. I must go to my parents ... I've got a compass ...

**DM:** So what happened when you came back?

**MM:** I was desperate so I came back to Johannesburg to work. I worked for X Brothers, in Booyens Street, I worked at Exide Batteries, and I worked in most places in the city – I didn't know what to do. Lastly, I worked at Rapport newspaper, driving that big truck down to Cape Town, Durban ... anywhere.

**AV:** In 1948, your parents were still staying in Sophiatown?

**MM:** Yes.

**AV:** When you were growing up, do you remember that period after 1948, to the 1960s, when things start to change, when apartheid starts to get more severe ... do you remember that?

**MM:** The time that they took over Sophiatown and chased them to Meadowlands, I was there. People were not satisfied, really.

**AV:** Tell us a little bit about that.

**MM:** Well, I was there. The police were coming in with letters telling us to get ready that the trucks were coming to take us to Meadowlands, telling the people they must move, they must get ready ... before they sent letters it was a hailer ... telling the people they must go to the place where the government has built houses for you - Meadowlands. I don't know where that name comes from ... they just said Meadowlands and Diepkloof. People were not satisfied really, but they could do otherwise. There were others who changed their compass, they paid money to change the name ... so they can stay there. After the loud-hailer, telling the people they must get ready by next month to be removed ... the government is going to help them. So most of the people they couldn't do otherwise, so they packed and the trucks come in, street by street. The Indians and the Chinese were left behind. They take the Coloured people out also ... others they put them in Newclare ... they took the black people out of Newclare to Diepkloof and Meadowlands. Then they take the Coloureds and dump them in their houses in Newclare. It's why Newclare is now coloured. And then they build this township of Noordsig also ... next to Diepkloof. I know many of them because I was young and playing with many of them in Sophiatown. My father and mother, they went to Orlando East, just for a few years, I think 2 or 3 years and then they came down here. So for me, Johannesburg before that time – apartheid wasn't there ... apartheid came just after '48 .. speedily. So there

was nobody that was speaking for us so we can just say no to this thing which is happening. When I came here to Viljoenskroon ... I think it was fun for me ... I like to know everything. I got this history ... As I said, my family went to Johannesburg because they did not want to be the farm labourers. This town is born because of mealies, it's why we have a station and the old elevators there which were built with wheelbarrows ... it's why we can have a township here. There were the Serame's in town and they take them out and they bring them here. And those at the station, they take them out and bring them here ... the town now is becoming busy because people are coming in to build those elevators .. people from Lesotho .. building those elevators take time because they are using those wheelbarrows to go up again ... the town is getting shops, cafes, garages. I am writing a book about the town because I know .. the story of the town.

**DM:** And your family is very central to that history?

**MM:** Thank you, the Serame's. My uncles were staying here in town ... and they were taken out. Those people in town ... Mr. Cambanis, Mr. Richards, Mr Allams ... they were all from Johannesburg. They came here to make business and they make business and their shops are still there, their children are using them.

**DM:** So would you say that in some ways, from your story that you are telling us, that a lot of the initial people that populated this area when it began to grow, migrated from Joburg .. black and white?

**MM:** No, black they were from Lesotho and those towns near there like Senekal and Kroonstad ... Kroonstad is the head town, the government of this town was in Kroonstad. Most of the people were from this side of Lesotho who came here to start this town.

**AV:** Were there many people living here already?

**MM:** There were villages here. Serame's village, Sethshogo's village .. that's what they told me. When they have feasts they just meet and discuss matters.

**AV:** So what happened to those villages?

**MM:** Those people of those villages, they get angry because they went out to Vreedefort, Johannesburg, other they went to Potch, Klerksdorp also ... most of them they went to Johannesburg for work

**AV:** In terms of the land, when they started the farms did they have to move people?

**MM:** Yes, they had to move people to start the farms. Because as I say, the Serame's were at ... so they just moved them out so they can have Viljoenskroon ... they must come to the township.

**AV:** When you moved to Soweto ... you said they built houses for people in Soweto when they moved you out of Sophiatown. How were the houses that your family moved into, in Orlando East?

**MM:** In Orlando East they were 3 roomed..

**AV:** Did your family like the houses.

**MM:** They didn't like them .. my father was angry, that is why he came down here.

**DM:** When you came down here as a young child, you were Grade 2 right?

**MM:** Grade 1

**DM:** As a kid from Grade 1 to Grade 6 here in Rammolutsi, what were your memories of this place as a child? What do you remember the most?

**MM:** What I remember is 1952 when we get those coins. Those coins were put here (*points to his neck*) and they said 'Republic' ... and I was asking myself why those whites they don't get coins, we get coins only. When was the Republic?

**DM:** Well, the Republic was only in the 1960s ... are you saying that the black kids were the only ones who had to wear it at that time?

**MM:** Yeah,

**DM:** Was it an identity tag?

**MM:** Yes, an identity tag, let's say that.

**AV:** For the Republic Day celebrations?

**DM:** The Republic was proclaimed in 1961

**MM:** In 1952, it was Masanye, Masika and Mabale ... we were working in town gardens after school. So I work for the teacher. Mr. Erasmus .. this Mabale was working for the Standard Bank manager. So always when we walked there, we went through the school and looked through the window .. it was Std. 2. And what we noticed is that these people they have big charts, skeleton pictures and others like locusts .. big charts for education. But we haven't got them ... so we stole them one of the days and brought them here ... they were used to us there and we tell the caretaker that we are coming to learn also and he liked that .. but by the time we steal those things he didn't see us. We come with them here and put them in our classroom. Monday morning our Mistress, Mrs. Molobela, she says where are these pictures from? We just kept quiet. Then Mabale said we picked them up from Std 2, because Std 2 in town they are doing these things and we like to learn also so that we can have education as those ones. Just after a few minutes, the police came in – I don't know who told the police the pictures are in our classroom.

**DM:** We need to pause ....

### Continues after the break

**AV:** What did the police do?

**MM:** They took the three of us to the police station. The Sergeant said let them go, the school must buy others ... let them go, they like to learn also. So he went to the Principal and said they must buy others but that we must never do that again, we must ask. He was good man.

**DM:** You said that you went to Kroonstad to finish your Grade 12?

**MM:** No, not Grade 12, Std. 8 .. and then I went to Lesotho for Std. 9. But I didn't get school in Lesotho so I went to the technical school ... they called it a technical school but it was not ...

**DM:** So, what was the first job you got when you left that school?

**MM:** My first job was in Johannesburg.

**DM:** What was that?

**MM:** Mixing oil ... this oil was for irons (?) at X Brothers .. we were doing that oil.

**AV:** When you were in Lesotho, what were the main differences between life in Lesotho and life in South Africa under apartheid?

**MM:** That time life in Lesotho was a free life but very poor. There were no passes, you know these dompass's. You know when you sleep at night and they come and tell you, you must go out ... those things were not there in Lesotho. Life was poor ... I was making money selling socks, underpants – at school, so I can just have money.

**AV:** On your dompass, what did it say ... in terms of your classification?

**MM:** I think I got it here (*he produces it*) ... If you haven't got this then you go for six months ... hard labour. Sometimes you just forget it.

**DM:** Were you ever jailed .. taken in?

**MM:** Yes, when your family can bring it you can go out .. but you might have lost it.

**DM:** You had a range of different jobs in Johannesburg. How did you find relationships with your employers? By that time, also tell us about starting your own family .. when did you start your own family ... in other words, did you get married and have children? When did you get married?

**MM:** I get married in the 1960 (*meant to say 1970 .. as later confirmed*) here ... but I was in Johannesburg working for Rapport newspaper ... no it was Industria in Mondeor.

**DM:** And the woman that you married, was she from Rammolutsi?

**MM:** Yes.

**DM:** And your first child .. when did you have your first child?

**MM:** I married in 1970. I had a first born in 1972.

**DM:** A son or a daughter?

**MM:** A daughter

**DM:** So the first born was a daughter ... and then how many children after that?

**MM:** Two more sons.

**DM:** And all that time you were living and working in Joburg?

**MM:** Yes, in Joburg.

**DM:** You are obviously a man who likes education and studying. After you came back, did you do any more education ... did you pursue any other education in Johannesburg?

**MM:** No, I didn't. I noticed that education was down, it was not international education. So it was useless .. I took a drivers license and go to work for Rapport newspaper.

**DM:** Just to make sure our chronology is correct. When did you come to Rammolutsi to live fulltime?

**MM:** I'm about 15 years here.

**DM:** So you stayed in Joburg until the early 1990s?

**MM:** Yes.

**DM:** Tell us a little bit about that period in the late 80s and early 90s for you, when things started to change in the country, when negotiations happened and Mandela was released. How did you experience things there, did things start changing in your life?

**MM:** Well, myself I was also fighting because really I was behind the Youth League. I was helping them with transport ... I helped many of them when they run away from the country. I got a Ford van which I took some of the students there down to Zeerust – and from Zeerust they would get another transport to Botswana. I was really committed. When Mandela came out the person I was here in Viljoenskroon ...

**DM:** So you were part of the underground?

**MM:** Yes, I was part of the underground .. I was helping with anything, transport .. and when they wanted R20 I gave them R20. But what I told them is that they mustn't fight – they must just fight on the table .. but they were fighting councillors, they were burning houses. But we, as elders, must always say, 'no, don't do that, speak to him'

**DM:** As someone involved ... when the negotiations began what did you think was going to happen? What were you thinking at the time?

**MM:** Well, let's say at that time Mr. De Klerk was the President and I did trust that Mr. de Klerk is going to do it ... to give us independence. And it came just like that.

**DM:** So, for you, when they announced that they were going to have elections in April 1994 ... that was a happy day for you?

**MM:** Yes, It was happy days for me ... not one but many of them. Just after that conference in Kempton Park, I was feeling right but I feel pity for me because I didn't get my education in a good standard because I didn't like the education of South Africa. It's why I'm not educated.

**DM:** So at that time your children ... your daughter would have been about twenty years old in the early 90s. What did you see for the future of your children at that point?

**MM:** Well, the future, you can't just say you are going to build it in one, two, three years. You must try to organise first and do things alright ... My children were going to school ... one is a teacher, one is a Mistress ... well, they are alright. They are working ... one is working at Spoornet – he passed his Std 10. I am satisfied because they are working.

**DM:** You came to start living in Rammolutsi in 1993, that's 15 years ago. What made you come here at that time and leave Johannesburg?

**MM:** You know, as the last born in our custom you must come and pick up your family's house, your parents house. Well, I was asked after that custom and my wife was here and so it was better to go to them. And my wife also didn't want to go to Johannesburg.

**DM:** During those years when you were working in Johannesburg, your family was here in Rammolutsi.

**MM:** Yes, I was just coming every week at least because I was doing three days job.

**DM:** Where did you stay in Joburg? Did you have a place there or were you on the road most of the time?

**MM:** Well, my sisters were staying there and I've got many families in Johannesburg. But most of the time I was here ...

**DM:** So when you arrived here back in Rammolutsi, was that when you were retired or were you continuing to work?

**MM:** Well, I continued to work because I was working at SanWes(?) , when I retired from those people in Johannesburg. I worked here at SanWes .. it was an apartheid factory. It was me who organised the workers union there when they chased us .. but they didn't have a hearing and they said come back and work again. Mr Khumalo can tell you about organising for the people here in Viljoenskroon. Councillors are doing nothing for the people .. they are just buying cars and building big houses. Let's say you are a married man and your wife works at the factory ... when she is pregnant she must never come again, she is getting the discharge. So that's the worse thing I've seen at SanWes .. it was just like that. There was no maternity leave, they only chased you away and you must never come back again. It frustrates me that thing .. there were no hearings, you must just go out. Those people never had a hearing with me .. they chased me many times and I just come back and work again. I was just driving like anybody who's driving. But the management they noticed something with me ... whether they thought I was going to take it out to the government or somebody who can fight them, I don't know. Because one of the days at the factory (the head office was in Klerksdorp) .. this factory was for the farmers around Viljoenskroon. One day they took me to Klerksdorp and asked me to write everything they can do for the people/the workers. There were 1400 workers at that factory working 24 hours.

**DM:** And the union you were organising, was it an independent union or one allied with one of the larger unions in the country .. which union?

**MM:** It was allied ... to FAWU (Food and Allied Workers Union)

**DM:** Once you began to organise what was your experience as an organiser in that factory?

**MM:** Let's say at the newspaper it was me who organised that union so when I came here I noticed many things that were wrong. So, we are not allowed to make meetings .. so when I went Klerksdorp to write down those things those directors were happy for me because I have told them everything which happens at the factory. So things went well until I resigned .. they recognised the union.



**DM:** What kind of things changed?

**MM:** Like maternity leave and hearings ... many things ... they helped also with scholars

**DM:** So why did you resign?

**MM:** It was the time of retrenchment. I asked to be retrenched. It was around 1997/1998.

**DM:** What reason were you given for your retrenchment?

**MM:** Well, my aim was to come and open a small business for me so I did do that but we haven't got support.

**DM:** But what I was asking is what reason did the employers give ... why did they retrench you .. what did they say?

**MM:** They said that now there are big factories that are coming in like Tiger Oats ... and they are going to take over .. so the factory is going to run low now.

**DM:** During those years since you were here, a very important time ... 1993 and then 1994 happened, the elections, government changes ... did you see changes here amongst people, particularly white-black relations and the way people were treated in a place like Viljoenskroon?

**MM:** Last time I told you that things have changed a bit .. let's say that 99 percent has changed. It's only to say that people – they don't want to change. We blacks, we don't want to change (but) those people have changed. Because when you go to them and speak to them they say 'I am busy now' ... the white people in town and those on farms, they have changed and they would like to help us. It's only we ... as I said one time, the councillors they are part of this ... they don't speak to the business people and when they have a meeting with them they don't talk nice. The changes are there in Viljoenskroon but there are no people that are supporting that change ... we blacks, we don't support it.

**DM:** As someone who was involved in the struggle, in the underground and unionising etc. .... After 1994 and the election of the new councillors, you are talking about how they are failing to do their jobs here and are failing people .. how does that make you feel as someone who contributed for so long to freedom, to get that freedom?

**MM:** Myself, I am still going on. I'm still fighting these councillors, because they are doing nothing for us ... there is nothing that is going on in Viljoenskroon. You know, these two tar roads were made by those apartheid councillors, not these new ones.

**DM:** So tell us some of the things that you are doing now to try ... you mentioned employment and trying to get people to try to work, jobs ... give us some indication of some of the projects you are involved in?

**MM:** I invited the manager of APAC (?) in Johannesburg ... he is an Indian man ... to come and help and have a meeting here because oil was being refined there and the packaging was here, Excella oil. Now, in Randfontein they just take the oil from here, they don't refine or pack it. So I spoke to that man and he said, 'I can't do things without going and having a meeting with the others ... I'll come back again'. He did come back and he said that we can start that thing but the only thing is that we haven't got the

machines here since everything has been sold out .. can't the council help with BEE so you can have oil so you can cook it and eat it ... we'll have an office here. So it's what I have tried – I went to the councillors and told them about that thing ... well, since then they took it and wrote it down but nothing has happened.

**DM:** How long has that been?

**MM:** It's about from last year August .. but they say they are busy .. they tell people at the meetings that they are busy with the thing but they don't include me .. they say do this and this. They don't say that Isaac Masike has done this and is right to make jobs for the people ...

**DM:** So, how is your personal relationship with the councillors ... it sounds as if they don't like you very much?

**MM:** No, the councillors they don't like me cause I tell them when they do nonsense .. I tell them ... I don't like the braaiivlies they are doing on the weekends, they are eating people's money and I tell them ...

**DM:** Besides this project to bring the oil company back into Viljoenskroon, what other kinds of things ...

**MM:** *(Take a bunch of letters/papers out and shows them)* I have registered Matlafala Construction to build RDP houses. Now, we have people who can build here and they are building but we are not given a chance so that we can do our own job. They are giving these tenders to the people who are outside in Kroonstad ... those people who are not building but just having tenders for Rammolutsi. We know we can work under them ... we have got many people .. we are doing the job here but they are just taking the money out and that's why I made that letter so that the Minister *(Provincial Minister of Housing)* must know what is going on.

**DM:** As an elder and someone who has been here for a long time .. why do you think the local councillors act the way they do, are not doing their job? Why do you think that that's the case?

**MM:** They are not doing their job .. what I think is this - they are too proud and they don't come to the people (as I am one of those that can help them). They don't want somebody to be in front of them so they don't come to the people, they don't know what we want ... the committees are for themselves. We don't have ward committees, street committees, nothing .. they are doing the whole job and reporting to the government. They are doing nothing for us, the don't come to us so that we can be involved also.

**DM:** Last time we talked to you, you told us about some of these things you were trying to do. Has there been any progress or are things still the same as they were?

**MM:** There is no progress, really. So what we are bust doing now is we are organising the ANC, because there is no ANC here since that time when the ANC was put down. We are still organising the ANC branch here.

**DM:** To try and build it up from the grassroots? How is that going?

**MM:** Yes, from the grassroots. It's going well.

**DM:** Are you recruiting members? Tell us what's happening on that front?

**MM:** Well, I'm not recruiting ... the small ones are recruiting and they are very busy.

**DM:** How have you seen the recent developments within the ANC at the national level .. the Polokwane conference, all the changes, the things that have been happening in the organisation over the last year at the national level? How do you view those things?

**MM:** You know at the national level I can say that they are getting too much money. They forget that we have chosen them and they must do something for the people. We have no jobs. At national level people are doing nothing for us because people are getting hungry and there is no job. We are trying to make jobs and they don't help us

**DM:** Do you think that the recent changes in leadership are going to help?

**MM:** I think that the changes in the leadership of the ANC will do something. But these ones, they are doing nothing for us. I have applied to do the overalls, I have joined the business association of Viljoenskroon so that I can have a factory for overalls to supply farmers here and the whole Free State. They said they will help me but the government doesn't want to help me. That's something we can do for the people so they are going to work. I applied for that certificate .. I went to Bloemfontein, I've seen the Department of Economic Development .. I went to them and told them about this thing and they said they will come back, but up till now ... I make a letter to the Premier to come talk and sit down so that we will get something better for the Free State. There are many things we can do right here in the Free State, but the Premier she doesn't want to listen to somebody she doesn't know. I've got a letter here and she told me she would invite me .. I'm still waiting.

**DM:** A lot of these things you are saying about the inactivity of the councillors, the unwillingness of the government to help the community ... we did an interview here with another young lady and she started to say to us that she thinks she is going to run for councillor because of the bad things. Do you think maybe it's time for the community to be more pro-active politically and take the positions of responsibility to replace those people?

**MM:** I think they have delayed because those people are doing nothing for us. They could have started last year to take them off and come in ...

**DM:** Clearly, there's a lot of frustration from your experiences. What do think is going to happen if nothing changes, if things keep the way they are in a place like Rammolutsi?

**MM:** You know I don't know now since they are getting ready to have this ANC up again on the stage. These people who are now with me, they are busy acting now as if they are going to change everything in the township ... we are going to be closer to these businessmen in town, so that we can run the town, we together. Everything is closing down there ... there is nothing going on in town. You will see people in town when they get this pay from the government – without pay there's nothing.

**DM:** So, what you're saying is that you think despite the problems ... that there is a positive future for change .. if you were to look and prognosticate into the future?

**MM:** Well let's say the future with this organisation, the ANC now, the people who in there ... no, the future is there for Viljoenskroon ... what they do is what I like, to be one. We mustn't say this is a black man, a white man, a Xhosa or what, we must say one Viljoenskroon for all of us as we all stay here .. be committed. That's what I like. I'm sure that this is going to be there, because these young boys that I've got now, no they are alright. Most of them, they are educated

**D.M:** So you have a mixture of young and older, and middle aged people that are coming?

**MM:** It is like that. Whatever they have seen now, they say they don't want to see it again. They say I'm going to die tomorrow and I've done nothing for Viljoenskroon, for South Africa. I tried by all means to help those to go to Bloemfontein, the Department of Agriculture ... I know something about agriculture, I can invent something which you don't know, but I haven't got that energy ...

**DM:** What would you want to say to the new national leaders ... what would you say to them now ... because things are shifting, times seem to be changing a little bit, people are moving ... what would you say as a community leader, as an elder here in Rammolutsi to those that are at the national level?

**MM:** I will say to them, please they mustn't steal money. The money is for the nation. They are getting too much money, they must go down with that money they are getting, so they can help those people who are voting for them. These people who are now on ANC, they are new, they are not new .. they have seen everything, the wrong that the government has done, they've seen it. As they've seen it they mustn't do it again, they must try to change, they must come closer to the people. We'll have jobs ... we've got people that can do jobs, that can open factories. They can't because they are not with them, they let them outside. These coming people are going to handle the government, they have seen what is going on. So they must change that, 100% ... they must listen to the people. They have said the people will govern, but they don't govern.

**DM:** Right now where you are, you're looking back on your own life ... you've told us a lot about your life, your experiences and things that happened. You've lived through very changing times ... from apartheid to the negotiations, to this situation. When you look back now from where you are, do you think it was all ... everything in your life was worth it, that it was good, something that you are proud of?

**MM:** Well I can just say that everything is good because there is nobody who say 'where's your pass?' ... but the only thing we lack is ... we are suffering. I'm just waiting to get paid from the government, because I'm not working. I have time to organise businesses in the township but the township hasn't got money. So I say, well let me see how can I live. Well I try ... those things I can do for the people. I'm just working for the people now, I'm no more working to get rich or to have too much money in the bank. This age where I am now, I am working for the people, so let the people work, let the people not suffer. But I haven't got somebody to support me.

**DM:** Well, there might be a lot of people that support you that you don't know about, maybe ... in the community. It seems to me that there are probably a lot of people in the community who respect you a great deal.

**MM:** I'm getting old now, when are they going to help me? To see that this somebody is really serious on this thing ... I don't want to engage myself ... what I like is that people must work. I don't want someone to get in there and just say, 'just give me one bag ... teabag'. I must go and work for the children who are going to school. So five children with one teabag, so that they can eat porridge and go to school. Next door here ... no, I don't want to see that, that's heartbreaking. But some people are earning R48 000 a month, R20 000 a month ... those people who are voting them there are getting nothing. No, the government is no good man, this one ... I don't want to hide it, they are getting too much salaries instead of doing job for the people, This market in Vereeniging wants vegetables, wants everything. Parys was the town of peaches. Why they don't make peaches there and sell the vegetable there ... Parys is near Vereeniging ... Sebokeng is a big place .. and it's only one market. Why can't they do a big garden there and supply the market? In 1956, the holidays, I was selling peaches from Parys in Krisis (?) station, number one ... there was a certain white gentleman who was supplying at the stations and I was one of the schoolboys who was working for him during holidays at the station. Nice peaches from Parys .. why can't we have peach gardens there in Parys, apricots, have a jam factory right in Parys, in the Free State ... because peaches are there. All over .. when you go to Qwa Qwa there are apples ... why can't we have a jam factory in the Free State and supply all of South Africa? There are many things we can do. Viljoenskroon is very rich .. these potatoes we've got a problem (?) there because of the councillors. We had a big factory there for the chips. Potatoes in Viljoenskroon are number one, farmers were supplying that factory with potatoes. It's closed – through water, water – our water is not clean here. It's in Delmas now. We can do many things, we've got mines here in Viljoenskroon .. but we have nothing in Rammolutsi ... we've got about four mines here, right in the Free State ... Klerksdorp, Stillfontein .. but they are not working for us. So that's why I say well, we can speak something to the government , so that the government can have something. I don't know whether that thing of railways is gone ,, because if ever our government in the Free State can have eight buses for those people who are daily to Lesotho ... to have that money, they can just improve the province with that money. Those people in the mines, they are going every day to Lesotho, coming back. Now those monies are being eaten by those people in NorthWest because they've got buses who are working here. We can do many things, we can have dairies ... because we know everything. Apartheid learnt us everything but we haven't got references. I know foundations, deep foundations, the foundations of the Carlton Centre .. I have built Mapetla ... foreman only on the foundations, the mixer .. I know everything about foundations and how deep it must be for the soil. Now I'm going to die and who's going to take over? Nobody is going to take over ... I have spoken to the government and the government doesn't listen ... I am going to do something for the township – when I die I must say well, I've done something for the township, that's better. It's no more I can engage myself, go to Zimbabwe, what what ... I will stay in Viljoenskroon, I will pick up Viljoenskroon. They say I am Malome here because I was feeding these creches .. it's about 11 creches, giving them oranges every winter, sweets ... that's why they say I am Malome, with the little money that I have got. So we don't

know, we are not ... I feel pit for the people who are now governing us, nationally and provincially they are the same. They have nothing to do with those poor people who voted for them so they can be there in those office. They are doing nothing there in those offices. They are just engaging themselves. Imagine I must take out one teabag for five children, because in the morning they must have tea here, with bread and porridge before they go to school. Sometimes they don't get food at school, that feeding scheme is not working. What I do now is not for myself, I'm doing things for the people. Now when you look at it, we are voting for the people get R40 000 and R90 000 per month while we are getting nothing here. We don't get help. Why don't they build a factory for the peaches in Parys, there are a lot of fresh peaches coming from that town, and there can be a jam factory there? Free State can have a large jam factory that can supply the whole of South Africa. I, myself, I 'm going to do something for this township, just before I die. They call me Malome because I was feeding the crèches with oranges and sweets, that how I got the name.

D.M: We've gone through all the questions I had here and you've given us quite a lot more information ... I really appreciate your .. the word I would use is 'candour' ... your honesty, your forthrightness in saying what you feel.

**MINUTES: 76:00**