



PROFILE OF THE CHIEF WHIP COUNCILLOR KHULU MALINDI SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

MY FIRST POLITICAL MEETING

- **The June 16, 1983 Commemoration Service**

My first experience of the brutality and humiliation caused by the Apartheid system and its laws was a very close encounter that I had to witness very often of our neighbour whose child was amongst my closest friend even up to today, comrade Themba Msukwini whose home was a diagonal opposite house to my home. This family would be kicked out so often and be frequently locked outside and their property damaged each time it is thrown outside by a notorious municipal police, Ntate Lukas because they could not up keep with high rent payment and this experience, although I was very young at the time, it always left me wondering why this family is 'picked' all the time. I suppose this is what planted first seeds of political enquiry in my 'innocent mind'.

The 7th commemoration of the June 16 anniversary in 1983 that was held at Roman Catholic Church was my real first inspiring and a significant organized politically conscious activity that I, together with comrade Khulu Mbongo and other comrades of our generation have attended. Comrade Gcina Malindi used to 'hide' at his uncle's place (Khulu Mbongo's home) to avoid arrest under Section 50 of Internal security Act for 14 days just to keep activists in detention until a commemorative day(s) has passed and on that day of the event, we quietly followed him to the June 16 anniversary event but we were refused entry into the commemoration due to our age; however we managed to sneak in unnoticed.

I enjoyed the atmosphere of liberation songs and slogans such as "Ayesaba amagwala! Dubula Ibhunu" and exclamation of "Amandla!!" and it was the beginning of a long journey towards direct participation in a popular and people's political struggle for freedom that we traversed together with these comrades of my

generation and a collective memory that we even cherish today and continue to define our character and personality in both social and political terms. To serve, to be of service and selflessness to the course of the people and for social justice is a virtue and values that we were taught in the organization at a very early stage.

The subsequent commemoration service of the year in 1984, young as we were, but we were even more radical and militant as the system and police harassment became more brutal having seen popular mobilization and rejection as well as the resistance against tri-cameral system that was introduced in 1983 and thus the June 16 commemoration service of 1984 was marked by violent disruption of this significant political event by the police. We threw stones at the police vehicles and barricaded linking roads into inner parts of the township and police retaliated by spraying us with teargas as we were marching in the streets singing revolutionary songs after a formal proceeding and a political programme was outlined by the leadership. I was still not aware of existence of political structures and of the fact that these political activities and events were the product of proper planning by organizational structures and a leadership which was coordinating all these events.

The year 1984 was a turning point in my political consciousness because shortly after the June 16, the entire Vaal was up in flames on the 3 September 1984, and perhaps this historic uprising, listening to the demands of our people at that time, the rent hikes was the main thrust of organizing communities behind programme of our liberation movement. I guess that demand alone of 'asinamali" resonated well with me and brought absolute clarity to me why this demand was crucial as it reminded me of the kind of frequent harassment my neighbour had to endure at the hands of municipal police locking them out of the house for nonpayment of rent. Since that incident has had an impact on me and from there on, I was even more determined and convinced on the need to formally participate on all activities that were meant to oppose apartheid government on all its manifestation.

Throughout this period of mass meetings leading up to the 3rd September 1984, it was such an inspiration and moral boost to find myself in the midst of senior and iconic leadership of the United Democratic Front

that was launched a year earlier in August 1983. We were at St. Michael Anglican Church next to Qhoweng Primary School in Zone 13 where Vice President of the UDF, Mama Albertina Sisulu came to address us and intimidation was at its highest level ever with high presence of police patrolling the area and as a result the meeting could not attract a large crowd but we went on with a meeting nonetheless and Mama Albertina Sisulu addressed us. It was in 1984

- **THE COSAS ERA**

COSAS was my first political formation that I formally joined and obtained its membership card and I was fully inducted into COSAS and fully participated in its activities and begin to learn how the structures of the liberation movement function. My closest brush with arrest was at a funeral I attended of the former COSAS leader, the late comrade Joseph Sithole on the 23rd September of the same year of 1984.

We marched in a funeral procession from Baptist Church in Zone 13 to Evaton Cemetery popularly known as No. 1 and it was during that funeral where most of the Vaal leaders were arrested at the graveyard and it was to be years before we saw some of those leaders who were charged with High Treason at an infamous long Delmas Trial and I can recall the names of comrades Gcina Malindi who was one of the 22 accused at that trial and Khulu Mbongo who was put under Section 50 of the Internal Security Act and was released after 14 days but charged with public violence together with Matebesi Mosime and Solly Songoane. I managed to avoid incarceration by hiding inside an empty grave whilst most of the leadership was incarcerated, others in hiding and whilst others opted exile, some of us were called upon to close the vacuum by resuming leadership responsibility and exile was never an option that ever crossed my mind.

Fortunately young as we were at that time, we worked closely with the Vaal Ministers Forum as suppression was at its highest and the ministers became the only voice available to continue talking and providing leadership. We were working alongside with the likes of Father Edward, Rev Koaho, Rev Liau (Mr. Armstrong Motale's father), and Rev Mthimkhulu, Rev Gift Moerane, Rev Kolokoto, Rev Bricks

Mokola, the late Father Phothoolo and others. These engagements helped me to mature politically irrespective of my age at that time.

The Vaal uprisings of 1984 had spread far and wide nationally and was seen as a campaign led by COSAS, and then COSAS was banned in August 1985, at the same time State of Emergency was declared and the regime, in an effort to try and displace and harass its leadership, I was later detained for few days by security police to try and link me on allegations of burning a house of the police officer and later release due to insufficient evidence, that prompted me to go into hiding, avoiding further arrests.

I was arrested again in October of 1986 at the night vigil of the late COSAS activist, Comrade Oupa Maloa, and once again I later escaped incarceration due to the wrong information and details that I provided to the arresting officers. However two weeks later I was arrested at our hide out in Sharpeville at around 12h00 midday together with comrade Blondie and the late Comrades Dinko Elliot Gubhuza and Tall-man.

During our arrest, we were in possession of 14 petrol bombs which justify that someone sold us out and at my arrest, I reconnected in prison with all other activists, and comrade Khulu Mbongo was already in prison for about a week before my arrest and I was detained from November 1986 – June 1987 under the State of Emergency that was declared on 12 June 1986, and it was an eventual end of running away from security police of about 2 years that started late in 1984.

Whilst in prison I met comrade Stompie Seipei whom I guess was the youngest detainee during that State of Emergency of 1986 but also a very brave comrade and he spent long years in detention without trial and I guess that is why the International Campaign of “Release the Children” evolved around him and the success of that campaign was seen with sudden visit to prisons by Judge Richard Goldstone who was there to check on the children in prison and interviewed all of us we were underage detainees and I guess he read that we were not even asking for mercy to be released and it was a posture I felt I needed to project when approaching that interview.

During my stay in prison, I candidly defied prison authorities who were insisting that I should stay in the children's block in prison and I refused as there were no political discussions in that block. They would take me out of the cell today and the following day I will be back in the same cell with senior/ leadership comrades and finally they gave up on moving me from that cell. Political discussions in prison prepared me to assume leadership on my release.

The political discussion routine of every night was the main highlight of my detention period and it was not an acceptable practice by the prison authority as they would from time to time, 'strip and search' to confiscate Mrabulo documents since their expectation was that after 20H00, everybody in every cell should be quite and go to sleep but we defied this order and political classes continued. The leadership and discipline was very solid for political detainees and all activities were centrally coordinated as we stayed in different cells and the most organized activity that comes to mind was our 1986 November/ December hunger strike.

The hunger strike was a weapon to fight for our rights in prison, demand release and to force concession on certain privileges and my hunger strike was for almost 12 days and was broken by instruction of the leadership that we should go and eat because of the fact that some of our adult comrades decided to break the hunger strike and started to eat again and the leadership felt it was disingenuous to expect youngest detainees to sustain the hunger strike under these circumstances. The hunger strike lasted for almost 21 days that was sustained by comrades Exec Moepadira, Jacob Macheli, and JJ Mdakane who were last 3 men standing and a delegation was sent to convince them as their health had deteriorated so bad and a week before Christmas of 1986, a big number of comrades were released including those who sustained hunger strike to the end, but many were back with us in prison by February of 1987.

I secured my release when the State of Emergency came to an end on the 12 June 1987 after a successful campaign through the international campaign "Release the Children" and the pressure was mounting against the then apartheid government to release children who were in prison and the

incarcerated leadership recommended that I should assume leadership outside on my release. Although I was released but I was charged with arson and public violence, and comrade Mohammed Jassat represented me in that case and we were found guilty but given our age, I was sentenced to 12 lashes.

On my release I was directed to connect with comrades Saul Tsotesi, Chippa Motubatse, Tex Rantsatsi, Isaac "Qhawe" Ngobeni popularly known as Mdlalose and other comrades. The first task assigned to me was to revive structures of the MDM in particular the Civic, Women federations, Youth and students organizations and we undertook a research in Zone 8 to look at a feasibility of establishing a Vocational School which was the research that was supported and funded by Wits University through Professor Makhene.

During 1988 – 1990, as part of a collective of the Vaal Consumer Boycott Committee, we had managed to secretly meet with Comrade Mac Maharaj whilst he was still underground and operating inside the country on Operation Vula mission to brief us on the thinking and strategy of the ANC towards the negotiations and how important it was our action to Economic sanctions and mass mobilization to exert pressure to the regime for negotiated settlement as well as the state of health of comrade OR Tambo who had suffered a stroke.

It was a period of ungovernability, mass uprisings and popular mobilization in the townships and deepening the crisis at the peak of biting sanctions against the regime and at a local (Vaal) area and Vaal Consumer Boycott Committee was responsible to coordinate all the campaigns and comrade Zwelinzima Vavi was part of this collective when he was still the Regional Secretary of COSATU in the Western Transvaal and this was my first interaction with comrade Yunus Chamda in the negotiations to exempt South Africans of Indian origins who were owning shops in the towns of Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark

My schooling was increasingly being disrupted with police harassment, frequent detentions of various periods and even frequent attendance of the Delmas Treason trial on almost daily basis so much that it was a serious danger and a risk to go to school and at some point as I was highly wanted and ultimately I

was taken by my family together with comrade Khulu Mbongo to a hiding place on the farms on the road towards Fochville (Malegere) to lie low as the situation in school townships was very volatile. We were wanted by the police all over as our hide out in Makhethe Primary was now known and a search was conducted after rumour spread that comrade Tshehla Mbele who had already went to exile was around and he had hidden weapons in the school ceiling.

Our farm hide out was strangely discovered and fortunately, the Security Police came during the day and we were found there in broad daylight next to the Rietspruit stream sitting under the trees in disguise wearing typically like farm boys who were shepherds but the security police who were there to check us out could not recognize or recall us quite well and it was another survival/escape but that meant we should run away from that hide out as well in case they recall who really we were and it got even more suspicious that they will come back for us in the evening because those security police insisted that we should take them to where we stay in that homestead.

- **BACK TO SCHOOL**

The first test of my character and ability to follow leadership instruction was an order for me to go back to school by these leaders and my first semester was enough and suddenly mobilization and SRC demand once again attracted the attention of the Security Police and it was in 1988 that I was arrested once again under some partial State of Emergency that was targeted to clamp down on MDM structures and the defiance campaign that was launched in August 1988 to unban our organizations and the ANC, SACP as well as SACTWU flags were hoisted. I was then arrested for organizing students' mass action in the Vaal to protest the pending hanging of the Sharpeville Six that was scheduled for the 15 March in 1988.

My arrest was on the allegation that I was disrupting 'smooth' running of the schools and my school principal demanded that I bring my parents to school but my mother was gravely ill and could not come to school but my late brother (Madala Malindi) stood in and 'defeated' all the complaints raised against me and on realizing that they are unable to push for my expulsion from school, the principal insisted that my

mother should come to the school but she could not due illness and a week later, I was expelled from Thandukwazi Secondary and this action by the school aggravated my mother's situation and she later passed on and I was detained. In detention, I joined comrades Exec Moepadira, Jacob Machedi, Shele Papane amongst others and upon my release I found the political space in local (township) schools was gradually being closed for any political activity for all of us as activists through State repression in a form of State of Emergency of 1988 and I was ordered again to find an alternative school because it was a crucial teaching from leadership that, our political involvement should not reduce our appetite and yearning for schooling and learning. Otherwise a clarion calls by Freedom Charter for 'The Door of Learning and Culture Shall be opened for All' will be meaningless if it is not practiced by us as activists.

Once again I, together with a lot of activists from here at home in the Vaal, Soweto and Duduza, who were expelled from the government schools or were never admitted back after being released from prisons then enrolled at a private school known as Inter-church Tuition Project in Braamfontein and the plus factor for us was the fact that we were writing Joint Matriculation Board examination as oppose to DET examinations that we were opposed to for so many years. In the Vaal I can at least recall that at different times, myself, comrades Dikeledi Tsoetsi, Mkhambi Malindi, Jerry Thlopane, Jacob 'Rhee' Masangane, Solomon Skhulu Mthimkhulu, Jacob Tsoari, Dorky Matlala, Exec Moepadira, Thabo Bokwa, Lucky Tenyane (Sefatsa), Khulu Mbongo and many other comrades went through this school and some went further to do a bridging course at Khanya College before registering at various Universities from 1988.

The school program was designed and funded by the SACC to cater for students who, as a result of the circumstances I outlined above, were given an opportunity to be able to complete matric even fund you to go to Universities and comrade Beyers Naude was very central in mobilizing funding for this school.

I was elected as a chairperson of VASCO (Vaal Student Congress) in 1989 to close the gap left by comrades Rhee Masangane, Ace Motaung, Thabo Bokwa, Lucky Tenyane (Sefatsa) and Toy Manqa who were leaders prior to us taking over the reins. This is a period where I worked with Jacob Macheli, Ditaba from Sharpeville, Bob Msibi and Esther Mazibuko from Evaton to consolidate the Vaal region

organizationally with Northern Free State as part of the Vaal especially Sasolburg with comrades Ben Sediane, Toto Makume, Kennedy Mahlatsi from Zamdela and I will never forget bravery of the late comrade Esther Mazibuko from Zone 3 who was amongst the four women comrades including comrade Vivian Manyaka from Boipatong in our Executive Committee.

My baptism of fire in the leadership of Vaal Student Congress (VASCO) came through a very difficult assignment that I had to undertake with comrades Aviva Manqa, Esther Mazibuko, Khulu Mbongo and the late comrade Bob Msibi from Evaton and other comrades from Zone 7, it was the assignment to 'protect' the political space of VASCO when the PAC was planning to launch its student wing, Pan Africanist Student Organization (PASO) to make inroads into schools and that was considered our social base.

This move and 'invasion' by the PAC caught us unprepared and the eventual decision was to go to the launch of PASO Vaal region in Zone 7 to purely engage in discussion about why there is a need to launch another student organization when we (VASCO) exist but unfortunately we ended up breaking that meeting by disrupting that proceedings and comrade Thami Ka Plaatjie and the whole PAC and their student leadership entourage had to leave the church without launching PASO there.

It was also a period we had to implement the 'Back to school' campaign and promotion of the culture of teaching and learning in schools that was a campaign launched by the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and we worked with Wits University, SANSCO and NUSAS (predecessor to SASCO) to establish Saturday School for high school students at the old Wilber force College next to old Jordan High School in Evaton.

Education Support Programme (ESP) was launched by Ms. Maggie Toens and amongst key local activists who came on board were comrades Freddy Tsokolibane, Yunus Chamda; Solly Roets from Rustervaal and other Wits Students activists from SANSCO and NUSAS who taught at ESP and it was a resounding success for the NECC campaign.

It was a period of intense moments and immense pressure for the Apartheid regime and it was getting even more desperate to reverse the gains and strides the democratic forces have secured with the release of the Rivonia Trialists and eminent unbanning of the ANC. We collectively as leadership work tirelessly until the unbanning of political organizations and shortly thereafter progressive student formation, VASCO in high schools was formally changed to COSAS.

- **THE YOUTH LEAGUE ERA**

The Vaal Youth Congress was launched at the height of repression, police harassment and intimidation and I recall at the meeting (AGM) where Zone 13 Sub branch of the Vaal Youth Congress was to be elected, I was elected the Secretary and other positions were filled by the likes of comrade Swayi Mokoena, who later succeeded comrade Zwelinzima Vavi as the Regional Secretary of COSATU in Western Transvaal, the late comrades Mashintela Thakuli and Phineas Mothibi, comrades Paul Galane, Butisi Ngwenya and other comrades in the youth fraternity.

The launch of our Sub-branch was conducted by comrade Exec Moepadira and a masterpiece of this momentous event came when after all the positions were allocated and only one position was remaining, a very politically risk portfolio that linked you into the Mkhonto We Sizwe combatants and a regular customer with security police, there came in comrade Marvin Johnson late at the meeting that had long started making a grand entrance and he was allocated a position of the Internal Refugee Officer and we just laughed at his grand entrance to the meeting and the portfolio position he just landed himself in. So the morale of this citation is that, do not be late for a meeting because you can get more than what you have bargained for as comrade Marvin ended up in the underground and constant police harassment.

The structures of Vaal Youth Congress were later changed to become a SAYCO structure and upon the re-launch of the ANC Youth League in the country, that structure in Zone 13 was re-launched again as the ANC Youth League, which was known as Cuba at the time, and I was served until comrade Shimi, Puseletso Kgosietsile, Gogo Ntuli, Mosele Moisi and other comrades were elected to take over.

- **BEGINNING OF THE UNDERGROUND INVOLVEMENT**

In 1990 State sponsored violence moved out of Kwazulu Natal into Gauteng to continue to ferment violent confrontation between hostel dwellers who were mainly Zulu speaking and their surrounding communities carried out in many forms including the drive by shootings. Vaal area like any other region was also subjected to this State sponsored violence.

The national government had issued instruction that any application to march from the Vaal should be turned down as the Vaal was classified as a hotspot and launching pad for national campaigns which then spread throughout the country and attract international headlines and on the 26 March 1990, we organized the biggest march ever after even on this instance, a permission to march was once again refused by local magistrate but we went ahead in defiance. The march started from Evaton and joined at Sebokeng Post Office to Vereeniging to demand end to violence, meeting the demands of the Harare Declaration to pave way for a negotiated settlement and when the march was approaching Sondela in Houtkop, we were confronted by a large contingent of armed police.

The police contingent that was deployed, were there to stop that march and whilst the leadership was still negotiating and weighing other options of delivering this Memorandum, the masses from the back of about 5 km stretch were pushing forward and insisting that 'Houtkop' was not a destination of our Memorandum and moments later during the standoff, the police started to shoot, killing 14 people and over 380 people were injured and Nelson Mandela together with national leadership of the ANC, visited the Vaal area and went to hospital to visit the victims.

This brutal killing of armless people forced the ANC to demand a meeting with the Nationalist Party government for the 'Talks about Talks' as the regime was becoming extremely provocative and on the Agenda of this meeting violence was the first item and the meeting was finally settled for the 04 May 1990 and it was to be known as Groote Schuur Minutes which was later followed by a report back rallies across

the country and I remember a huge banner of SANSCO at the rally hosted at the Soccer City stadium, written “ No Slovo! No Talks!

This demand I guess arose after the Nationalist Party government demanded that comrade Joe Slovo should not form part of the ANC delegation to the negotiations and the ANC refused to be dictated by the regime about its delegation. The ANC scored a major victory at this Talks in that, government undertook to quell and restraint police killing only to resort to old tricks of arming, supporting and in some instances transport vigilante groups to attack communities leaving trail of destruction and killings as the Apartheid government got even more desperate to hold on to power.

The first visible and violent confrontation with the vigilante groups that were transported all over the Gauteng Province and KwaZulu Natal into the Vaal and broke out into unprecedented violence was on the 22 July 1990 on my birthday, when the IFP members marched through the township from Sebokeng Hostel to Zone 7 stadium and on their return from their Rally they launched unprecedented violent attacks, maiming, killing assaulting and damaging houses on their way to Sebokeng Hostel.

The residents of the Hostel and Community members were waiting for them and it was the most tensed and unprecedented standoff where large contingent of the police were in the middle of these groups and this experience will be edged in my mind for the rest of my life. The National leadership of the ANC posted Vaal leadership into the scene next to Zone 7 stadium so as to provide real time update to the national leadership about the real situation as it unfolds in Zone 7 and Sebokeng Hostel.

I was with comrades Chippa Motubatse, Tex Rantsatsi, Khulu Mbongo, Shele Papane, and Zwelinzima Vavi deployed at the scene of the IFP Rally in Zone 7 and when the first attack broke out, we dangerously advanced and I almost lost my life at this scene as we came at a close encounter with the late Mr. Themba Khoza who was leading that March carrying a firearm shooting randomly.

For some reason, I found myself in a direct confrontation with the late Mr. Khoza who was armed to teeth and exchanging heated words and I was in a fix and a tight situation but had no option except to deal with the situation head on. In October 1991, Government appointed Judge Richard Goldstone to investigate all incidences of violence and police killings and on the Sebokeng massacre of the 26 March 1990, myself, comrades Tex Rantsatsi, Tommy Maleka and other comrades were identified to give evidence at the Hearing in the Goldstone Commission but at the sitting, we were never called to testified but worked with Advocate Ishmael Semanya SC.

We confronted this era informed by the UDF and ANC leadership call, calling on all freedom loving South Africans to defend our people during this painful and violence infested era and this violence led to loss of life, property in Boipatong, Sebokeng, Evaton, Zone 7, Sharpeville and other townships with rumours of attacks leading to people running away to police stations and hospitals. The painful experience that attracted myself, comrade Khulu Mbongo and other comrades in our area into the ranks of the Umkhonto We Sizwe underground unit, was the brutality and impunity with which these killing took place and the closest the victims have become was with the death of comrades Christopher Nangalembe, Nkosi Mthimkhulu, Mzwakhe 'Zwakala' Nhlapo, Jacob Macheli and many other comrades we grew up with in the organization. Vaal region was absorbed by fear and living under a perpetual state of terror perpetrated by well known criminals who joined the IFP and got protection from the police.

This episode of my life still invoke high emotions in me even today each time I think of it because it sounds like something that happened recently but also it reminds me of dedicated cadres, comrades and ordinary people we have lost their life and limb along this difficult road towards our liberation and in the main, comrades from Sharpeville such as comrades Jacob Macheli who was murdered in my company with comrade Khulu Mbongo in Sebokeng when he was in hiding against his own comrades.

We lost good and dedicated comrades like Mafutha, Gawula, Oupa Manete, Bikinyana Kolokoto and many others as comrades were infiltrated by the system to spread false rumours about each other so that, they start attacking and killing each other and unfortunately some comrades allowed themselves to

be used against each other and did fall into this enemy engineered plot and made the revolution to pay the highest price for this senseless agenda.

It was a period in which I and comrade Khulu Mbongo had to give hiding place and protection for our own comrades against their very own comrades in Sharpeville where they were hunted down merely on enemy manufactured false allegations that they were members of the IFP. Comrades Jacob Macheli, Baneyi, Happy, Papa and many others stayed at our homes until after Jacob Macheli was brutally murdered in Zone 13 that is when the remaining comrades decided to leave Vaal area to seek refuge with relatives in far and distant areas. This was the period in which the national leadership of the ANC after 1991 Conference frequented this region so often just to visit victims of drive by shootings and massacres in hospitals and even coming to attend mass funerals.

The beginning of tough decision making that I still maintain was well above our maturity at the time and the loss of my innocence that propelled me into instant adulthood within the cycle of violence, was when comrade Christopher Nangalembe was murdered and at his night vigil, innocent mourners were massacred and amongst those shot was comrade Esther Mazibuko who was one of only four females in the Executive Committee of VASCO but she survived that attack.

This tragic occurrence was then followed by the brutal murder of three (3) young comrades that were known and very brave activists in Zone 7 in particular the murder of comrade Nkosi Mthimkhulu with whom we spent long time with in detention who was brutally murdered by IFP members who stayed in Zone 7 led by Victor Kheswa popularly known as Khethisi. In a short space of time, comrade Mzwakhe 'Zwakala Nhlapo from Zone 7 was next to follow whom we also spent a long time with in detention before he went to exile, and was also brutally murdered in the daylight skirmish with those Zone 7 vigilante group of IFP members assisted by the police. It was at this point that we were then fully recruited into Wits/ Vaal MK structures under the command of comrades Viva Mkhonto and Tekere Monareng in 1992 and was involved in the establishment of Self Defence Units for communities as it became clear that the enemy will kill us one by one the same way.

This was a life changing experience to belong into the strict discipline of the uMkhonto We Sizwe where there were no debates and questions asked given the delicate nature of the period and the phase of our struggle under watchful eyes of seasoned MK cadres and command led by comrades Japie China Maphalala, Fihli Mbongo, Gift Thingane, Ernest Galawe, Makgwaba Ramafikeng.

Life in the whole of Vaal area changed dramatically for all of us, resembling a war zone and now even the police harassment was at its highest because the strategy was to scare us off the area so that we can leave our homes unprotected and the police accompanied by the vigilantes will attack our families in their sleep. On the 15 June 1992, that is, two (2) days before Boipatong Massacre, there was a raid of members of our underground unit by the security police, comrade Fihli Mbongo was arrested with some weapons in his possession and we got a message from progressive police officers that comrade Fihli Mbongo issued warning that we should get out of the Gauteng province as the security police were looking for arms cache and should we be arrested, the security police will demands weapons from us.

We immediately left the Vaal area upon receiving instruction from comrade Fihli Mbongo and took refuge at the Wits Student Residence (Esselen) staying with current ANC Spokesperson in Gauteng comrades Dumisa Ntuli and Pule Zwane who were students there already but on the 17 June 1992, we got the sad news that people were killed in Boipatong and we immediately went back home despite the danger and possible eminent arrest for underground activities and had to strengthen the Defence Units in Boipatong area. In the hide out at Esselen we stayed with comrade Thami Ka Platjje who was also in hiding there and wanted for APLA activities and the Zone 7 IFP group wanted him too and they knew him well since they grew up with him in Zone 7 and the incident of PASO launch disruption was a source of laughter and a political debate at our hide out.

At some point with our underground work, we infiltrated Kwa Madala hostel where we got tipped off when those vigilante group and police planned to attack our own homes as it became their modus operandi to kill people in their sleep especially houses of the activists and there will be emphatic response by MK cadres to this information

- **DEMOCRATIC ERA**

In 1989 I went to further my studies in Johannesburg at the Interchurch Tuition Project, a school that was founded and funded by the South African Council of Churches and soon after I started at the new school, I participated in the structures and the formation of the National Reception Committee to prepare for the eminent release of the Rivonia Trialists and comrade Oscar Mpetha in October 1989. After the unbanning of the ANC and other organizations in 1990, I was elected in the Provincial Council of MDM/UDF together with the current ANC Spokesperson Jackson Mthembu and later co-opted comrade Mzwakhe Mbuli to lead a cultural Subcommittee of the National Report Reception Committee.

We were organizing all the Rallies in the PWV region especially the first public Rally that was organized to welcome back leadership from exile who were the first delegation to prepare for the first formal meeting of the ANC and Nationalist Party Government. We organized public speaking events for the leadership who had just been released from prison especially Rivonia Trialists and comrade Oscar Mpetha as well as the historic Rally where comrade Nelson Mandela was to make his first time appearance in Johannesburg after 27 years in prison at the Soccer City Stadium.

The democratic process unfolded and that led to the first democratic election in 1994, during this period, I was an employed by the Wits - Vaal Peace Secretariat as a Train the trainer including monitoring of violence and elections, during that process I worked closely with IMMSA and learn the mediation skills and shortly after the 1995 Local Government Elections, I took a conscious decision to occupy the back seat and to allow others to lead due to complexities of and frustration with the slow transformation in Local Government at that time.

In 2006 I was elected as chairperson of Fihli Mbongo Branch where we took a resolution of reviving 3rd September commemoration events and in May 2007 I was also elected as a Chairperson of the Sebokeng –West Zone. We declared that the 3rd September will be different from other years; indeed we all know what happened at that GALA dinner (Where Terror's downfall started).

The main highlight of my term as the Chairperson of Fihli Mbongo branch, was to organize a thanksgiving ceremony for the ANC veterans and the elderly people in my branch for the loyal support they have given to the ANC over the years especially during the difficult times of our struggle providing us with places to hide as well as the momentous gracing of that occasion by the Mbongo's family to officially inform and honour them for allowing that our Branch be named after their son, my own leader and commander in the underground days.

I was elected deputy chairperson of ANC Sedibeng Region during the 5th Regional elective conference of the ANC held in September 2009 and in the same year; I was deployed into Sedibeng District Municipality as a Councilor and I was subsequently appointed Chief Whip of Council.

I have always relied on the wisdom of our people since I joined the struggle for Freedom at an early age and I have always been humbled by the humility of ordinary people who continue to place their trust and hopes in the hands of the ANC to change the quality of their lives for better and this is a historic mission we cannot afford to fail them. It has always been about their highly informed judgment, guidance and choices that the membership of the liberation movement, ANC continue to place upon my shoulder a responsibility to lead and to serve in different capacities over the years for which I am grateful and humbled by this honour to serve.

In many instances when this call comes from the membership of our movement, I performed to the best of my abilities in those assignments because I am standing on the broad shoulders of a giant called ANC. Now comrades, struggle for A better life for all is not over yet but together we will speed up the process of change in our region. ANC LIVES! ANC LEADS! VOTE ANC!!