



Mama Adelaide Mene interviewed by Koni Benson, New Crossroads, Apr. 15, 2005

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Mama Adelaide Mene, interviewed by Koni Benson, translation

Nomakhwezi Dlaba, April 15, 2005, New Crossroads.

Koni: Ok. Maybe you could introduce yourself. Is it better if

Nomakhwezi translates or we can do it in English?

Mene: She can, she must translates.

Nomakhwezi: But then Mrs. Mene is an ex-teacher!

Mene: She is lazy to translate [laughs]

Nomakhwezi: She is good in English.

Mene: My name is Adelaide Mene, but my maiden name is Makwetu.

I was born in the Transkei at Ewheta in District. Of Kofimbaba. I am the eldest of 13 children- 5 girls and 8 boys. I did my primary school in Kofimbaba as far as standard 6 because those times there was a lower intermediate and then you go to higher primary for five six... Then from there I went to Hershel where I did my junior secondary education which was standard 7, 8, 9. Then St. Teresa's Mission was a private Catholic school. When I finished Standard 10, then I went to do my teachers certificate in the Ciskei in Alice at Lovedale Training Institution. There I did my NPH (Native Primary High) under Cape Education Department. Then when I passed teachers certificate there, I went back home to start teaching. I was working at Nnuzo, Bantu Community School for 3 years. And I got engaged. In those times, when you get engaged and you marry, the department calls it broken service and you have to stop, it's finished, you cannot teach when you are married, unless you are called for temporary posts.

My husband used to work in Cape Town, he was a chef. Because I was not allowed to come to CT unless I get a special permit. In 1957 he applied for it for me to join him in CT. So I joined my husband. He used to work in Kalk Bay, at Strathmore Hotel. I joined him there with the special permit he sent me. I was lucky to work as a bedroom, what do you call it, a bedroom waitress.

I did the bedrooms and then when its lunchtime I came down to help him serve as a waitress. Unfortunately, in the long run that hotel was closed down so he had to look for a place for me. Then we went to Langa where I lived with his uncle's family. It was tough time because my permit had expired already, so it was not safe for me in Langa.

In that time, they were always raiding the illegal people, like we were called illegal people. My husband thought we had to leave Langa and look for some safe place among the colored communities. So fortunately his brother had a colored wife- they had to marry colored women to qualify to live in CT, (laughs). Then we went to Heathfield first where his father's sister lived and there we lived until they were removed lawfully to Gugulethu and other places. So we had to go deeper into the colored communities so we went to his brother in Retreat. There we lived the cat and dogs life. Because we were not supposed be known by the law that we live amongst the colored communities otherwise the owners [we lodged with] would be in trouble. We lived there until 1975, February, and by that time I had 6 children born in that area.

In February 1975 we were served with notices by Inspectors of apartheid regime and told to move to Crossroads to what they called a Bantu area. We thought we were fortunate, at last we were given a place to live, but we were not sure if that was true. We were given 7 days notice to leave those areas. One afternoon I came from my job in Bergvleit, and as I came down the road I saw my children playing on a heap of sand, to me I thought they were playing on a heap of sand- when I came nearer I saw oh my house was flat- flattened by bulldozers. Others had gone already, but I was unfortunate to be at work at that time. I had to hire a lorry to carry my stuff and my children, my iron and zincs, my wood, broken already. I don't know that I had anything to start my shack again. I was driven with my children and that rubbish to Old Crossroads. We didn't even know where that Old Crossroads was so we had to look for it. It was a bush, instead of a flattened place ready for people to live. It was in the evening and I saw some lights burning, and asked. They were also people removed from their areas of hiding. They told me this was the place, we also were told to come live here, but this place is not ready, it's no place for anyone to live, its not ready. It was just bush. And we just dropped our things, zincs and iron, and the following day put up shacks.

But it was not even a week we were there and the police came to raid the area. Some of us were arrested. So we had to hide deeper into the bushes. That was the kind of live we lived in Crossroads. Some others were arrested. We gathered as women and thought "this is just enough" because we were told this place was for Bantu people, now these people are arresting us again. We thought, we are not moving. Now we made up our minds, as women, to resist removals. So we organized some meetings as women. In these meetings we thought what is best for us is to look for some legal aid, because we were removed in our places of hiding, we were told that Crossroads is a Bantu area, and now these people are coming to interfere with us again, now let's look for some law. So the women had to collected some 20 cents, 20 cents to go to the Black Sash to seek for some advice.

We were advised by the Black Sash- in fact they gave us a lawyer that they knew was good enough to stand for black people. We resisted as women. When they arrested us we went to court and the representative, the lawyer, stood for us there, to stand for our case. What we told the lawyer is that we are not moving, because we have come to join our husbands, as families, like other people. People come here from Europe, from overseas and when they come here they are given a place with their families. Given houses. Given jobs. Why? That was the answer that we

were asking we were asking. Why? Because we have not crossed any seas, we were born and bred here, so we are not moving. So that was our stand. With the lawyers and we went in and out, in and out with negotiations with the government, until we were given some time for our case to be looked into. Because it makes sense. When we say that we have come to join our husbands to stay. When our husbands work away from us then there is trouble. They marry other women. We stay up country in the Eastern Cape suffering with our children, until others are divorced from their husbands because they marry legal women here in Cape Town.

Before I talk a long story about being arrested and in and out, but eventually we won our case in Wynberg and then we were given temporary permits. From those temporary permits, we negotiated. Then we negotiated with Koornhof, Minister of I- don't-know. We elected a 15 member delegation to go to him. Because when he started in office he said the removals must stop now. He wanted to go himself to Crossroads and see for himself. And people talked to him there, we had committees there when he went with his delegation to Crossroads. He had to negotiate with our 15 member committee. We eventually won the cases.

In the meanwhile before we got these permits, there were student doctors from Stellenbosh who used to come and help us but they couldn't do it [their medical work] in Crossroads cus we had no place. So they drove people in groups to that clinic in Bishop Levi's. This group that formed this play called Exodus, were the group who translated for the student doctors in Bishop Levi's who helped the Crossroads community.

I want to come to the Exodus play- that was the weapon for us. I call it a weapon, because if that play did not expose the conditions under which we lived here in South Africa then the other countries wouldn't have known that we were leading terrible lives. Because there was this Minister, Pik Botha, who used to go overseas and tell lies there- telling we lived peaceful there. We thought no man, this appears in [news]papers saying we live nicely in South Africa- let us expose this Apartheid government. So one evening we were waiting for these doctors to come with their transports and Mrs. Luke's house was very near to the school where we used to wait for the transport to go to Bishop Levi's. Mrs. Luke came out of her house carrying a load, with rubbish in fact, broken kettles, saucepans. It was a joke in fact when we started. We asked her, "where are you going." She said, "I am being evicted, I am going to be deported to the Transkei." So the play started that way. So everybody now stood up to say something. Like me and Mrs. Mkondweni and, Miss Bara we were women from the Eastern Cape, Transkei. Mrs. Mapisa, Mrs. Peter, the late Mrs. Ntongana, Miss. Mbobosi (Nomangesi) they were police to arrest us and deport this Mrs. Luke. The late Mrs. Ntongana and Miss Mbobosi (Nomangesi) were South African police. And Mrs. Mapisa and Mrs. Peter they were Transkei police. This is how we started this play.

Usually when these raids occur we usually [give] notice one and other by shouting "ukuvombu!, ukuvombu! ukuvombu!, ukuvombu!" and then the dogs will bark at the police because they are walking around with torches in the late night or early in the morning, about 4 o'clock they wake us. If somebody sees first then they are going to shout "ukuvombu." That means people must run, trouble has come, the police are in. So even if it is 4 o'clock you had to stand up and run- for our safety.

I remember one time I used to work in Constansia, at a private house there and someone shouted "ukuvombu" I had to get up in my nighties [pajamas] and run for my safety. There was no time to come back, cus the buses now, I was going to be late. So I went to my job with my nightie. Some other men were covering themselves with blankets and underwear and they had to go to work like

that. So people knew we were in trouble. So this Exodus play started like that- the purpose of it was to expose the conditions of the black man in South Africa.

I don't know whether you have questions, I've said a lot.

Koni: So when Mrs. Luke was coming out of her house that day with her kettles and things was she really going to be evicted or was she just collecting her things and sorting out her house?

Mene: We were so fed up. Mrs. Luke was fed up. We wanted to play it, to expose it- even in Cape Town people do not know how we live. We even wanted to show the other communities, the white communities, how we live in Crossroads. So Mrs. Luke meant it. So we'd been talking about it amongst ourselves that people must know, it was high time that the people must know. Even this Pik Botha that goes overseas and tells lies that there is peace in south Africa- we must show the world. But we didn't know where to start. Some white people came- the first time we had community workers from outside, they organized a date and a place at the Space Theatre in Cape Town. So first we started playing it in the community in Crossroads, then from there we went to the Space Theatre in Cape Town where it was attended by white people, then it spread- we went to Johannesburg, even Johannesburg people didn't know how we live here! From Johannesburg to Port Elisabeth. Then to King Williams Town and then to East London, that was the last.

That play alone gave us some time to deal with the negotiations. When we play, the police were told was not to arrest us because we are old people and it was true what we were doing. It was happening. So they wanted to arrest us but they were not allowed to arrest us. There was some lawyer that protected us not to be arrested because we are trying to convey some message. Mrs. Luke, she was not deported at the moment. But Mrs. Lutango and Mrs. Yanta and Mrs. Nokilana and Mrs. Mgogo, these are the characters. And the dogs were Ntombosi, Notoli, Spogasi. There were four [girl children] of them. And Nomzamo was Mrs. Luke's daughter. And there was a blind woman in the play having her house bulldozed (Yanta) and this Spokazi [Luke] is Mrs. Yanta's grandchild who helped her move around because she is blind [in the play]. Mrs Lutango's house was fortunately not destroyed yet, Mrs Yanta's house was flattened already so Mrs. Yanta was accommodated by Mrs. Lutango.

Koni: In the play?

Mene: In the play, her house was flattened, but Mrs. Lutango

helped to accommodate her until she put up her house, because we were not prepared to move. The law broke our houses, destroyed, flattened them, and the following day, we put them up again.

Koni: So in the play, how did the opening scene start?

Mene: The opening scene was a chorus. And then,

Koni: What was the chorus, do you remember?

Mene: You want me to remember the words?

Koni: Yes.

Mene: Laughs

Zungoyike Crossroads. She will write it down in Xhosa.

Zungoyiki, Zungoyiki Crossroads, Lemini ibikade ixelwa ifikile. O yaya O yaya Oyaya.

That means, Don't be afraid Crossroads- the day we've been waiting for has come

When we get onto the stage, that is what we said.

Nomakhwezi: Can you please sing it for us?

Mene: [Sings] Zungoyiki, Zungoyiki Crossroads, Lemini ibikade

ixelwa ifikile. O yaya O yaya Oyaya.

So we were carrying our zincs on the stage- everythings: like poles, and zincs, and papers. Then we started building our houses on the stage. Building our houses. Then we went to bed. With our dogs, those dogs were keeping guard. We went to bed. Then I stood up and shouted because I saw torches, those were the police. Nomangezi, Mrs. Ntongana, were South African police. I said: "ukuvombu!" so we stood up and ran. So the police arrested us and broke down our houses. That's where they arrested Mrs. Luke. So we went to court. Mrs. Mgogo in the play was arrested and fined in court, but there were no receipts, there was corruption. So Mrs. Mgogo is busy demanding a receipt. So the Police were angry. So we shouted that is crook business. If you are arrested and you pay a fine, you must get a receipt so that tomorrow, you wont be arrested again, because they must give you some time even if they are going to deport you. That was the law. We were against being deported at that time, we resisted, because we had the law in our hands.

So, Mrs. Luke unfortunately she was the one deported with this Nomzamo, her daughter. Others were out on bail. Unfortunately she was locked up, then deported. Me, Mrs. Mkondweni, and Miss Bara, we are in the Transkei. Then when the train drops Mrs. Luke and her belongings and the daughter, it dropped her on the station and never cared where she was going. This poor woman was carrying this big load with this daughter of hers in her hands.

So we were sitting in the Location and somebody was coming, so me and Mrs. Mkondweni were talking between one and another, and Miss Bara was busy stamping millies, and there were flies that were annoying her. So me and Mrs. Mkondweni said someone is coming, lets go, it seems to us that that woman is very very tired, because she is sitting down. it seems like these people are lost. So me and Mrs. Mkondweni went to them. She told us she is coming from South Africa, from Cape Town, they have been deported and they don't know how to get home because they are tired. So we took them to our house and gave them food there. But all this time the Transkei police were following them. That was Mrs. Mapisa and Mrs. Peter. So they came to us and said that we have no rights to keep illegal people. When they locked her up and was in court, she told them there is not use in arresting her because she will go back to Cape Town. But Nomangezi had phoned to warn the Transkei police to say that she was going to try and come back. And she did, she came back to Cape Town and the play ends with her putting her structure back up. That is how we won that place, Crossroads. Resistance. Not fighting.

Koni: So that's how the play ends, with her putting up her structure again?

Mene: Yes, with putting up her structure, it ends there.

Koni: How did the audience react?

Mene: The audience was surprised and they were touched. That time there was a petition that was suggested by the lawyers that people from outside must help us. There was a Stand Up for Crossroads, what do you call those things? Yes, bumpersticker, and even all these people from other areas, whites, were having this sticker- all their cars were having that sticker, Stand Up for Crossroads. And we had the petition that was handed in to the government which meant there were a lot of people were with us. This play spread the message.

Koni: The petition was signed by people who came to see the play?

Mene: Yes because this play spread the message.

Koni: And what about the men in the community when they saw the women putting on the play?

Mene: The men were jealous [laughs]- the men were jealous and happy at the same time. We told them they must keep quiet and stand at the back. Because once they go to the front they will provoke and fight with the police. And

we told them we will have no fighting. We are not criminals. We want to come stay with our families. That is all we wanted.

Koni: Then once you won the right to stay in Crossroads, then what happened?

Mene: Now we negotiated for better houses with this Koornhof.

Was he as a good a man as we thought? We were not 100% sure. The government at that time said they had no money to build for us. For 20 years they haven't been building houses because they have no money. So that petition was to go far abroad to ask for donations. So the money that bought the land- donations poured in from people who had a heart. That's how we got this new crossroads. That was from people in Cape Town and abroad. That land and these houses were from those donations.

Koni: When did people start moving?

Mene: The first lot moved in 1980, 1981, 1982. That was not enough because Crossroads was crowded, overcrowded. This land was not enough. So we were promised to be given another land, KTC, across from Crossroads. If that was not enough, then Old Crossroads was regarded as phase 3. This land was phase 1. KTC was Phase 2. And Phase 3 is Old Crossroads.

New Crossroads was built. We were supposed to have houses built in KTC for the other group. Which would not have even been enough. We had tenants and our children were growing. So KTC was not built. There was conflict in the community, it interfered in the process, which I think was done on purpose because the government was not happy w our victory. The conflict in the community was done purposefully, yeah. People fought amongst themselves and that delayed the process. people were busy having quarrels and the government was busy filling that place w people we don't know where they came from. That was supposed to be for people of crossroads. we were quarreling (like KTC). And the government allowed others to put shacks there.

Koni: How did the government create fighting in the community?

People were fed up. They were disgusted. Even you if you don't get what you want you start blaming the other one. So things happened like that. People started blaming one another. Because of the delay.

Koni: Who decided you get this house, and you get this house, and you have to wait. What was that process like?

Mene: When we were moved from Crossroads the Bantu

Administration Office had a meeting with the Committee. There was a men's committee, and a women's committee. So the Bantu Administration Board consulted the leadership in the community and it's the leadership who decided how we move to New Crossroads.

Others moved voluntarily, and others thought ach, we can stay. In fact we didn't want to move from Crossroads cus we were suspicious of being divided... that gap in between would give the government a chance- because our weapon was our unity and it made the government weak. But some moved and some remained. The government said you cannot have both. You want rights, a place, the government must have a say also.

That is the way they wanted to divide us.

So some moved and some remained. It was impossible to build houses in old crossroads cus it was too crowded with shacks standing almost against one and other. So the government was very clever in saying we cannot build houses here you must get another land. We were worried about being separated from our neighbors.

Koni: Do you have the same neighbors here?

Mene: We members of the committee said we wanted to be as near to each other as possible- we women were stronger than the men in our demands. So Mrs. Mapisa, Mkondweni, Peter, Mgojo, Ntongana are saying near to each other. Mrs. Nokilana remained in Old Crossroads had a house built in KTC (our phase 2) and Mrs. Yanta is not far from us and Nomangezi is very near- a walking distance not even 5 minutes. Because we told the BAAB officials we want to be as near as possible to one another.

Koni: What were some of the demands the men's committee put forth?

Mene: The men are always leaders. They had to help us with our demands. We demanded that we wanted to live as families. Our men lived in bachelor quarters. We went and got them, we forced them to come live with us. So they supported our demands. We had joint meetings with the men.

Koni: what happened to the women's committee when you came to

New Crossroads?

Mene: Some members of the committee with our chairperson

remained behind. We said we should rotate meetings one week in Old Crossroads and

one here. They continued until there was that conflict wanting new houses built like

New Crossroads. But the department delayed building more houses like New Crossroads

on purpose.

Koni: so once witdoeke happened did women still meet?

Mene: There was no more that unity. Here we are mixed as

residents, we don't have a women's committee. Just a residents committee and the

community, that's all.

Koni: would it be a good idea to have a women's committee here

now?

Mene: Its unfortunate that we are mixed here, we don't know one

and other. That is our wish, that if there was a women's committee things would move

faster. The government, when the women stand up, they will listen to women because

they have done it.

Koni: you came here in 1981, so in the last 20 years the women

haven't gotten together?

Mene: When last did we meet? In those years, 1985, 6, 7 there

was that huge misunderstanding amongst people. Because the government wanted to

separate people to Khayelitsha. That was another thing that separated us. People of

Crossroads were required to go to Khayelitsha. We told the government we will never

go to Khayelitsha. We told them we wanted places to stay closer to our places of

work, Khayelitsha is far. But there people of Crossroads resisted removal. But then

people are tired of struggle since 1975, a long struggle, that they eventually went

to Khayelitsha. Not all, but some. That's where the government started dividing each

other.

Koni: And are there new young women meeting?

Mene: I don't see youngsters meeting. They get nothing from their meetings. They do meet. Sometimes we even call them to our meetings as old people. But if they see that they don't get jobs, and it doesn't lead them to get jobs then they withdraw and go sit again in the sun. There is nothing that motivates youngsters.

Koni: Around the time the government was changing in the 1990s, did life change in Crossroads?

Mene: Yes, in 1985,6, we were faced with higher rentals we started gathering together as women to go to the government to say we cannot afford these higher rentals. We had meetings that were labeled unlawful that time. We used to meet together as women, but we were arrested, the government saying our meeting was illegal.

Koni: and in the 90s?

Mene: The difference between that time is now we can meet. You can meet and toyi-toyi as far as we want. Whether we reap nothing from toyi-toying we were not arrested.

Koni: in the 1990s what did people meet to discuss? What are some of the issues now?

Mene: Now the issues is that our children have no houses. They pass standard 10, have university degrees, they sit in the sun. There are no jobs. Even big people have no jobs. Our children stay hungry. Jobs are very scarce.

Koni: So what can people do?

Mene: I don't know. Even the projects. To me I don't see even what people will get from projects. If you come with your project, say perhaps beading or sewing- where are you going to sell those things? Who is going to buy

them, because people are not working. People are discouraged because you saw those things, you do that beadwork, and people have no money to buy, because there are no jobs.

Koni: How would you compare life in New crossroads with life in Old?

Mene: In 1975 to 1985 life [was better] we lived very nicely- that's why we didn't want to move from old Crossroads to here, that unity- when we did things we did it together. Even when you go to the government you know everyone is saying the same thing. Here we don't know one and other. And when there are no jobs and people are hungry, people tend to see it like why should we stand up because we are going to reap nothing. That is why we didn't want to be removed.

Koni: if you had to choose a word or a symbol to describe life when you first got to Old Crossroads, then life when you came to New Crossroads and then life now?

Mene: I want to describe it in Xhosa. We don't know how to translate that one from Xhosa. It means, if we were listened to when we said they must leave us alone and build houses for us there where we were, we would be very far, and Crossroads would be an example to other communities, as an example, because of that unity. But government was in power, he must always say the last word. I don't know how to put it.

Koni: and when you first got to New Crossroads?

Mene: Those early years were alright. I remember one time there was a white man amongst those officials who asked, when you go to New Crossroads will you be united as you are now? You see that questions alone said a lot. That is why they tried to scatter us, to go between and make us fight. Because we were a problem really- a problem of that white government because of that unity, they had no chance, no chance of dividing us. The only chance they had was when we moved to

New Crossroads. And they had their chance.

Koni: How has Cape Town changed since when you first came?

Mene: I think, if I can put it in Xhosa, Cape Town is "aging"-

I don't know to call it aging or getting old. Because we are getting poorer and poorer. Poorer by day. I don't see, when it's 10 years of democracy and I don't see anything. Our children have passed standard 10 and others are graduates and instead are sitting in the sun and doing nothing. They smoke dagga and doing drugs because they don't have nothing to do. They sit in the sun thinking of what to do to making a living. But that living they choose drives them into jails.

Koni: When you came to CT did you continue working as a teacher?

Mene: Its very funny to me. When I came to CT, I'm a government employee in Eastern Cape, and it's the same government, and no I'm illegal and unqualified cus I don't have a dompass. We had two schools in Crossroads in the 1970s: Nxolo and Sizamile. We were voluntary teachers. Quaker Peace Fund paid us. First we were paid by the community through school fees, then as time went on Quaker Peace Fund paid us. Then when it was declared an Emergency Camp. So I worked in private houses because I didn't have dompass. I only started working as a teacher in 1978. and we started as if we had not been teachers before. I was a teacher from the Eastern Cape, but because I got married- the government said you must forget about teaching. And if you are pregnant, you are sacked and you will not get a job again. That's why old women teachers from that time have no children. They are old grannies. Not even grannies. Cuz they have no children. Opposite to today because children go to school with their big tummies, pregnant. That is why teachers from that time are old with no children. I was working as a teacher, but no papers so no money from the govt. we were paid by the Community who gave us fees, then Quaker Peace Fund. But when we were declared an Emergency Camp, then the dept of Education

came in and all the government departments were interested in Crossroads cus they could sense victory.

Koni: were you teaching in New Crossroads?

Mene: we moved with our schools.

Koni: I taught until 1999 and retired.

Nomakhwezi: She was my teacher in Sub A.

Mene: she was very small.

Koni: did the curriculum change when the government changed?

Mene: to me if they kept the curriculum of the 1960s, that was a good one. From 1960s, 70s it was Bantu Education. Bantu Education deprived of a better education because you were taught in your mother tongue. Now they go back to the Cape Education Dept, which is better. What can you do with Bantu Education? It was killing our children.

Mene: the residents have their own organization now

Koni: Am I missing any important questions to know about the history of women in Crossroads and New Crossroads?

Mene: No you have done a lot. Unless Nomakhwezi will remind you?

Nomakhwezi: What about Yanta and Nomangesi's house?

Mene: There was political conflict I was telling you that ended up driving Mrs. Yanta and Nomangesi Mbobosi out of the community. They were forced by residents using the youth. When the political organizations were banned there was the UDF structures that was influential for the youngsters. I think it was not good enough because it divided the community and the people ended hating one and other. That UDF was using the youth to drive Mama Yanta out of this community, but she was the first chairperson of the women. I forgot to tell you, she was the first. When she got tired, because we used her a lot- sending her to Black Sash, to negotiate

with Koornhof, so she got tired and so she said find another someone, which was when Mrs. Ntongana came in.

Koni: so when we go speak to Mama Yanta can we ask her, or not ask her- its difficult to talk about that time?

Mene: You can ask her. She talks freely. Its sort of healing for her to talk about those hardships. Mama Yanta had done a lot for the people of Crossroads and now she lives in a little hockey- she lives in a one bedroom. She has a 5 roomed house here.

Koni: and if the community said come back?

Mene: There is division about it. If the community can stand up and unite and say Mrs. Yanta this is your house you fought for it come back.

Koni: what would it take to get that unity again and to ask her to come back?

Mene: We are not far from that unity, as I can judge. Because we hear a lot of people say people must come back to their houses because it is unfair, they fought for these houses.

Nomakhwezi: I remember one time the witdoeke and the lights had to go off.

Mene: Some people misunderstand that witdoeke. At the time, me, Mrs. Yanta, Nomangezi, me, were driven out by the youth by force and threatened by hand grenades and what. I thought I must go back, 531 used by shack number and put it back up. Now, coming back to get our belongings was the problem. So the meeting at Nxolo- I was there- and we had to report to the community about our belongings that were behind- that is what I know about witdoeke. The witdoeke is a sign to know that you belong to me, that we are together. So that evening those people, the committee, they came to get our stuff. The witdoeke, they came with their white bands. Here these youth, these UDF youth- not youth man, it was old and young people, they killed someone, our chairperson, and his deputy, in the street just

because if you are at meeting and they see you have strong points- they tackle you and see you are a target- if you stand up and argue sense. So those people came here knowing that the UDF is waiting for anyone to come in and help us. So they kept those white bands. Somebody may tell you something else. But the reason for the witdoeke is to know you are with this group or that group.

Koni: was it always the same people?

Mene: it was people from Crossroads and when they move out of Old Crossroads they must know each other. Our chairman was dead and we couldn't get here to get our belongings. Witdoeke are people from old cross who were coming here to rescue our things because our chairperson was killed already. But others died during that.

Koni: then they took your belongings back from New Crossroads.

How long did you stay there?

Mene: So they came and took my things back to old cross for me.

My children said no this is our house. They stayed. And I came back in 1992 from Old Crossroads. 1986-1992 I was in Old Crossroads. I took a chance. They could kill me anytime they wanted. But it seemed to me the violence was a bit less.

Koni: when you were staying in Old Crossroads from 1986-92 did you ever come visit here?

Mene: It was difficult. At that time I used to come from Old Crossroads to the school because I was teaching at this school. But the women, they drove me out of the school.

Koni: the women's committee?

Mene: No, the UDF women. So I had to stay in Old Crossroads. That's when the Dept got me a school in Khayelitsha (Emithini Primary School at the A Section), that is where I taught until I retired in 1999.

Koni: did you meet people from Old Crossroads in Khayelitsha?

Mene: Yes. A lot. Mrs. Yanta in G section, and other at the J

section, others at the A Section of Khayelitsha are from Old Crossroads. Others are at the C Section and the D Section. But J Section were not active in Old Crossroads so its useless to go to them. Go to A Section- Nomangezi is there, and C Section. And site B.

Koni: Since you came back here in 1992 you had no troubles?

Mene: No.

Koni: UDF women still here?

Mene: they are still here. They are not friendly. Most of them are members of the ANC now. They still spend time in their groups.

Koni: Do the women of the play still get together?

Mene: The women from the play are always together, we are friends. We are praying that when we have lunch will watch footage from that play (that you can find).

Nomangezi: when we were chased away, you forgot to tell her about when the woman was giving birth as the dog was giving birth. You laugh but at the very same time its not funny. You forgot to tell her that part of the play.

Mene: Mrs. Nokilana is pregnant in the play (she was pregnant at the time). She lives in KTC. Its to show the cruelty that's been done to us is worse than a dog. A pregnant woman is not supposed to be arrested.

Nomangezi: but tell her what happened in real life. Was it Mr. Mchobololo's wife?

Mene: Mr. Mchobololo will explain. He keeps a lot of dogs. From those days. And I'm not clear about that story of what happened to his wife.

Mene: maybe when you come back I will remember oh I didn't say this one! And my colleges, what are left of them, will tell you.