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MATAMELA cvhiL RAMAPHOSA

General Secretary National Union of Mineworkers. 1982 - 91

Secretary General, African National Congress, 1991.

1. Family

Born in Johannesburg on 17 November 1952. Cyrii Ramaphosa is the second of the three children of Erdmuth and the late Samuel Ramaphosa, who was a policeman. He grew up in Western Native Township and Soweto. attending a local primary school and Sekano-Ntoane High School in Soweto, before becoming a boarder in 1970 at the Mphaphuli High School in Sibasa, Northern Transvaal, where he matriculated in 1971.

2. University

In 1972 Ramaphosa registered at the University of the North (Turfloop) for a B.Proc degree. He became involved in student politics and Joined the South African Students' Organisation (Sase) in 1972. serving as chairman of the Student Christian Movement (SCM). an organisation dealing not only with christian issues. but also those political, moral and social issues which affected black people.

3. Detention

In 1974 a pro - Frelimo rally was organised at the university and as a result Ramaphosa was detained for 11 months under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act at Pretoria Central Prison. He spent the entire period in detention in solitary confinement. On his release. Ramaphosa became active in the Black People's Convention (BPC). holding posts on various committees. He obtained articles with a Johannesburg firm of attorneys at the same time.

In June 1976 following the outbreak of unrest in Soweto. Ramaphosa was again detained in terms of the terrorism Act. this time being held for six months at John Voster Square.

4. Legal Profession

On his release he continued his legal articles but in 1977 moved to a new firm of attorneys. He studied through the University of South Africa and obtained 7w ' 7 his B. Free in 1981 '. He completed his articles in the same year. but before being admitted as an attorney joined the Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa) as an adviser in its legal department. His involvement in the trade union movement arose from his disillusionment with what he viewed as the mercenary aspects of private legal practice. and he sought the freedom to help people through the labor movement.

5.

The National Union of Mineworkers

In August 1982 the Cusa national conference decided to form a National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). In December Ramaphosa became NUM's first general secretary. The union, which initially represented 6000 workers on eight mines, by 1986 had a membership of about 340 000, - and was the first unregistered trade union to be recognised by the Chamber of Mines as representatives of black mineworkers.

Issues with which Ramaphosa became involved included the removal of racial discrimination in the mining industry; equal pay for African mineworkers doing work legally reserved for whites; changes in the leave system including annual paternity leave to enable married migrants to see their families; extension of the white unions' pension fund to blacks; protection for workers on the introduction of new technology; changes in the hours of work; representation of miners on the Chamber's safety committees; and the introduction of a bill of rights dealing with safety issues for miners.

In September 1984 Ramaphosa was involved in the first-ever legal strike of black mineworkers in South Africa. Ramaphosa was involved as conference organiser in preparations leading up to the launch of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), a super-federation of trade unions which included the National Union of Mineworkers and unions affiliated to the federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu). Ramaphosa gave the keynote address at Cosatu's launch rally, held in Durban in December 1984.

In March 1986 he was part of a seven-person Cosatu delegation which met with the African National Congress and the South African Congress of Trade Unions in Lusaka, Zambia.

In July 1986 Ramaphosa went into hiding after security police swoops on the homes and offices of political activists. He travelled to the United Kingdom and appeared with NUM president, James Motlatsi, at a conference of the British National Union of Mineworkers in South Wales.

In August 1987 a deadlock in NUM wage negotiations with the Chamber of Mines led to one of the largest strikes in the country's history, involving 40 gold and coal mines. The number of strikers was estimated at between 222 000 and 340 000, but workers were eventually called back to work without winning the increase they demanded. In addition, nine miners died in clashes, 500 were injured, 400 arrested and some 46 000 fired (although most of these were reinstated). NUM lost about 50 000 members after the strike and had to cope with the disillusionment of members. However, NUM proved it could sustain a long strike and that it had substantial support in the mining industry.

In September 1987 Ramaphosa was refused a passport to travel to Britain but in October 1987, when he became the first recipient of the Dietrich Pratzen prize, was permitted to travel to Stockholm to receive it.

Civic Politics

Ramaphosa was also active in politics in Soweto. in December 1988 he and other prominent members of the Soweto community met Soweto's mayor to discuss the rent boycott crisis. He has played a prominent role in most of the campaigns of the Mass Democratic Movement, including resistance to the Labour Relations Amendment Bill.

At the 1989 NUM congress held between 12 and 16 April. a resolution was adopted calling for an anti-apartheid coalition to be formed and the concept of an anti-apartheid conference was mooted. This eventually led to the Conference for a Democratic Future in December 1989.

Involvement with the African National Congress

in January 1990 Ramaphosa accompanied released ANC political prisoners to Lusaka, Zambia. where a three day summit was held to discuss strategies for the ANC in the light of the new approach by State President de Klerk.

Ramaphosa served as Chairman of the National Reception Committee. which co-ordinated the release of Nelson Mandela and subsequent welcome rallies within South Africa. and also became a member of the International Mandela Reception Committee together with others such as Fr Trevor Huddleston.

Jimmy Carter and Mikhail Gorbachev. At the ANC national conference held in Durban in July 1991. Ramaphosa was elected Secretary General of the organisation. in this capacity he became the head of the Negotiations Commission of the ANC and participated in the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). He serves on its working group dealing with constitutional principles and the constitution-making body's process.

During October 1991 Ramaphosa was a visiting Professor of Law at Stanford University in the U.S.A

Ramaphosa is married to Nomazizi and they live in Jabulani, Soweto.