



Interview with Ntebele Dipale

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Tshepo Moloji [TM]: Today is the 25th of June, 2013. This is Tshepo Moloji and I am here with Rre [Setswana word for Mr or older man] Dipale.

Dipale Ntebele [DN]: Yes

TM: Grandfather Dipale. We are here in Braklaagte. He is here with Gogo [Setswana for grandmother or older woman] Elsie Tshegofatso. We are going to talk to Rremogolo and Gogo about Braklaagte. Let me start by thanking you for coming to meet with us. As we begin, please tell us your full names

DN: Mine?

TM: Yes

DN: My full names are Kedejoang Ntebele Dipale. That is my surname.

TM: Rremogolo where were you born?

DN: I was born in Braklaagte

TM: Do you remember when that was?

DN: The year I was born?

TM: Yes

DN: 1937

TM: If you still remember, where did your parents and your grandparents come from and how did they come to be here?

DN: The person whose origin I remember is my father's. My father comes from Dinokana [name meaning 'lake' in Setswana]

TM: Uh-huh

DN: My mother and grandmother come from Braklaagte. I once asked where they came from.

TM: As you were growing up in Braklaagte, what kind of place was it?

DN: It was a very important place. It was a very important place when I was younger and stayed here with my father, grandmother and mother. It not like now. Now it is all mixed up. It is a mess.

TM: A mess?

DN: Yes, a mess

[TIMECODE - 02m:24s]

TM: And at that time how would you describe it? What was home like? Was it a big village?

DN: At that time there was no village. It was just a small place

TM: Really?

DN: Our village was at the top there where the *Kgosi* [Setswana word for king or headsman] was born

TM: Oh! *Kgosi* [Setswana word for king or headsman]. What do they call that place?

DN: It's called *Modiseng*

TM: Modiseng?

DN: Yes. From Malebelele

TM: As you were growing up, how were people living? How were people sustaining themselves?

DN: When we grew up, people milled. We did not have many things.

TM: What did they mill, *Rra Mogolo* [Setswana for elderly man; grandfather]

DN: They would mill sorghum and maize. Each person would mill what they wanted to.

TM: Oh so each person had their own space?

DN: Yes, each person had their space.

TM: Really? Was it a lot of space?

DN: Well, it might sound like a lot to you. Well, you see that way I grew up –

TM: Yes?

DN: My father went to stay at my mother's. He did not build. My mother was the last *Gobejane* at home. They said to her then you are staying with your mother.

TM: Oh yes

DN: Her mother then passed away. So that space that was our grandmother's became ours. That space could start from here and end up there at the other school.

TM: Oh, okay. That means it was quite sizeable

DN: Yes. That was before. When I say that things were not the same as now: before, before they were born and when they died, they said this space was theirs. Even with their surnames that did not match

TM: Oh! Theirs and whose surname?

[TIMECODE – 05h:04s]

TM: Who was it?

DN: Theirs was Mafisa

TM: Oh yes !

DN: Ours was Dipale and theirs was Mafisa. They did not stay with their elders for a long time. Their elders, most of, had already passed away. They ended up staying with their mother and father, but their mother and father got married in the church

TM: Hmm?

DN: Yes, so when you see the women who were here (we are in a new system of government)

TM: System of government of all the land

DN: A system of government of all the land. They say we should leave and go back to where our fathers were born. It's not that we don't know, we do know but the thing is that we born and bred here.

TM: And when you are milling, *Rre Mogolo*, are you milling to sell or to eat here at home?

DN: We are milling to pack the sacks and – we didn't have these things- the palisades. We milled the sorghum and made the alcohol. We would drink the sorghum drink and it would be the alcohol.

TM: And you were full?

DN: Yes, we were full. And we would eat another type of pap called *Bogobe*.

TM: Yes

DN: With milk

TM: With milk

DN: So then you would take the pap and milk and you would just eat to be full.

TM: Who are you farming them for?

DN: We are farming for our fathers and uncles

TM: And what were they farming?

DN: Cows and goats

TM: And so where do you let them roam? Just here in the village?

DN: We would let them roam just over here and another would be there. We would also make sure that they didn't eat the sorghum.

TM: So they don't eat the sorghum

DN: Yes

[TIMECODE – 07m:44s]

TM: And what about school? Were you able to go to school?

DN: As time went on, when there were children of similar age, one of you would succeed and go to school.

TM: And where did you start going to school?

DN: I began going to school just down here called *Bana ba kae* [Setswana name meaning where are the children].

TM: Just down here? Yes I saw it

DN: So I went to school and when I finished 5 [Form 5, now Grade 12] I decided to leave and go find work

TM: Where?

DN: When I started working, I started working at a town close by

TM: Zeerust?

DN: Yes, and I decided to work on the railway

TM: And what did you did on the railway?

DN: We would perform maintenance. Once the track was worn out we would replace it.

TM: Oh, okay. And as you were working there, where were you living?

DN: At the railway. They had given us a hostel

TM: Oh really? Where?

DN: In Gauteng. At first it was in Potchefstroom that we had a place where we stayed. After Potchefstroom, I returned to Roodepoort.

TM: Oh yes, okay

DN: After Roodepoort, I left there and decided to look for a job at a cement factory

TM: Mm-hmm

DN: So I worked there at the cement factory, where they made the cement. So then I stayed, you see where they changed people, they send to rotate people, for example those who cooked. So I switched with the person who used to deliver the post.

TM: And that was in Roodepoort?

DN: That was in Roodepoort, still with the cement factory

TM: Really?

DN: I worked there a lot but then I was injured and had to come back home

TM: Oh I see. When did you return home? Do you still remember?

[TIMECODE – 10m:21s]

DN: Yes so I returned home

TM: And when was that?

DN: I forgot the year, but it was a while ago

TM: A while ago, yes. And was that before the conflict of Bophuthatswana?

[Audio cuts out intermittently]

DN: When I get some time off, I climbed on the train and came home to check on my family. That was still very important

TM: And were they still milling?

DN: They were finding it challenging right now. The older people had left it

TM: And what was their main reason for stopping?

DN: Their main reason was that our uncle...our father was old now

TM: Your father was old

DN: Our uncle then left and went into Gauteng, to Dobsonville to stay there.

TM: Oh!

DN: Another one took those cattle and took them to *Nokaneng*. He had built something at *Nokaneng*.

TM: Ja

DN: And he just stayed there. It was just wilderness there

TM: Just wilderness there

DN: Those who are fighting say that it is their own stand.

TM: They are saying that it is their stand

DN: Yes, they are saying it belongs to the people with their surname. Remember that the surnames are not the same

TM: They're not the same, yes!

DN: So the other surname...*Kgosi* was not a part of it

TM: Yes. So as you were in Gauteng, were there others that you left with here who you met up with again when you got to the other side?

DN: They were people who we had left with...honestly, the people we had left with

TM: Yes

DM: Were the people from the Railway

[TIMECODE – 12m:41s]

DM: You weren't alone. You knew that you would see one of your people when you got there. You could ask for some accommodation there at the factories

TM: As Bahurutse, did you have a culture of coming together?

DM: Yes, we would often come together when he heard that some are in Dobsonville, some are in Meadowlands. Others were in Naledi, and another may have been wherever. When the time was right, you would go to the place because you were working a few odd jobs. As you are leaving you hear that they are hiring over there and so you go off and get hired in the new job.

TM: So to get a job in those days, did you need to have an ID?

DM: You would take your ID and it would be taken to be registered so that you are not arrested in those other places. So as long as you stamp the book, you don't have to be scared as you move around. You do not have to hide. You know that you are going there because they are hiring.

TM: Would they arrest people at that time, *Rra Mogolo*?

DN: Yho! They would arrest people

TM: Over the ID?

DN: ID. Even if you didn't have accommodation, they would come and hear the municipal policemen arresting people. They would just arrest you and you would become a criminal

TM: Just over ID?

DN: Just over ID. If you didn't have it, you would live like a thief

TM: In what way?

DN: I mean you wouldn't stay. You would always just be waiting, like that

TM: Just waiting

DN: You would also live in fear. You would know that you could be sitting here and if they come in you're gone because they would just start by asking for your pass.

[Laughter]

DN: Just as they got off here they would ask "ID?" What could you do? When you try take it out, they would take you.

TM: Have you ever been arrested, *rramogolo*?

DN: I was arrested for not having a place to stay

TM: You didn't have a place to stay? And where did they arrest you?

DN: They arrested me near Stella's in Dobsonville

[TIMECODE – 15m:19s]

TM: Really?

DN: I was looking for a place to stay. I was taken in by the municipal police.

TM: So did they ask you what you were doing there?

DN: They asked what I was doing there, where my pass was and why I was there. They asked if I had moved to the township. They said I am only meant to stay here in the yard. That was the time they started taking people. After they had left you could try get away again if you found the opportunity.

TM: Is that the reason you did not want passbooks?

DN: Well, you see at first you think they are fine. Once you have lived in other parts of town. Passbooks can get you arrested. On the way from Dobsonville to Roodepoort, on the way there were coal beds. As the sun set, you would be in there. Right until I was hired. You see I was really desperate to get a job

TM: Hmm, a job, yes. And how much were you getting?

DN: Ah, not a lot. There were some who could say in a week they were getting 200 or 100. It really wasn't money

TM: It really wasn't money

DN: And so it only really started increasing once we had come back home

TM: And so when you got your 200 or 100, what did you do with it?

DN: 200 was meant to be saved. Food was provided by the factory. So you must save that and the next one and the third one. With the fourth one you would go home and see the old women. There was also something called "overtime". If you worked overtime, you may find that at the end of the week you get another 200. Sometimes you could even make 300. That way you knew that your children would get something. And you would like it. If you heard them say that there was a white man who was looking for people to do overtime from you, you go. It may not have been the people who you work for. They are going to give it to your boss. Your boss will then write to record how many hours you worked.

TM: And you didn't rest?

DN: No, we didn't rest. We didn't have time to go here and here and there. Sunday and Saturday we were just waiting for the boss to come in for something they used to call "imports". Imports were for cement. It was going to stop and offload. They said it was going to offload coal while the truck was being fixed. And you would know that there, there would be a lot of money. If you worked there Sunday, Saturday and then the next week as well Saturday and Sunday...if you worked for about at least 3 or 4 Saturdays, no

TM: It would be considerable?

DN: You would be a man, then.

TM: And was there no time for entertainment, *Ramogolo*?

DN: Well it depended. It was really up to you

[TIMECODE – 19m: 26s]

DN: It really depended. It was up to you. If you enjoyed life – like we were hopeful. If you just wanted to sit and then go home on Friday, you would be done. You would take then 100 or maybe 200 - or maybe they took 100 and gave you 100, you have been taken back a step. You could get change for the 100 and take 50 for yourself, but then again you would be putting yourself back a step. If you had gone to work, you may have increased your pay to make up for that money.

TM: And then you decided to come back home

DN: Yes, I came back home

TM: You decided to leave and come stay at home?

DN: Well then I fell ill. I fell very ill in a place called Nice. So at that place called Nice I stayed.

TM: And what was the problem?

DN: I was coughing a lot and they said it was the job because we worked in dusty areas. And so, I stayed there. Eventually after Nice I went back to the cement factory. I got there and they said I was still ill-I hadn't fully recovered. Honestly I could also feel that I was still ill. Then I came home. They paid me out my out my money, then I came to stay here at home.

TM: When you arrived home –

DN: When I returned home I decided well, I sat around for a while. Then I decided to go and register with the Commissioner. So then I registered for disability. And as I was registering and they registered me, I go to the stage where I gave in.

TM: Where was the Commissioner? Where were you registering?

DN: We registered in town

TM: Oh in town?

DN: In town, yes. You start with paper in the office.

TM: Which office? *Kgosi's* office?

DN: Yes. They write and write all the letters, then they put the stamp on at the police station. Then you would go to the Commissioner

TM: To the Commissioner, yes

DN: Then they look at your information. They look at when you were born. Then they would tell you to go back and they would tell you when to come and check. So you would come and check and then you would see your name and know that you were okay. It would only be that if you could not go, you would send a child here to go for you. Sometimes they would try to find out and would investigate if really you are alive. Then you would get a letter saying that you were needed in town. Then when you go there they would check on you and make sure that you were still alive

TM: They would check you?

DN: Well yes, they would check in the documentation.

[TIMECODE – 23m: 16s]

DN: You see they didn't trust each other so, you could go from one place to the next. You would go from office to office until eventually you go to the office they wanted. Only then would you be able to come home

TM: Hmm, so as you are sitting at home, what are you doing?

DN: What there was, to be just to sit where you were. We were separated –

TM: Hello, *Mme* [term of respect for older women in Setswana]

DN: They had separated where we were. So we divided up the stands to say, well you are going to look after this particular stand. Another person would be responsible for another place. If there is a place, you should start with finding out if people are fighting, how they came to fight.

TM: The people in the village?

DN: The people in the village

TM: Yes

DN: They should report anything that happened that was wrong to you. You should then correct it. If it is too much for you, we are here.

TM: Oh really? What kind of issues were brought forward to be argued?

DN: Well the fighting was such that even if you asked, you would not be able to resolve it.

[Laughter]

DN: And you would not be able to succeed. As in, be completely unsuccessful

TM: In what way?

DN: Well maybe you would not get along with a person and then I go fetch that person and say that you should meet and I would reprimand you and you would end up getting along. That other person may not be interested in hearing what you have to say. They would just look at you and say "I'm going to hit you". Even though you're the one who called them there to bring them together, they want to fight. Then you have to start separating them as you notice that this is too much for me. This is something that goes to –

TM: *Kgosi*?

DN: To *Kgosi*, yes. So he would have to come in and break up the fight.

TM: Really?

DN: Yes

TM: So who had asked you to take on this responsibility?

DN: From the *Kgosi*

TM: *Kgosi*?

DN: Yes

[TIMECODE – 25m: 43s]

DN: And really, you don't get a chance to accept. You would be wasting your time. You just see Morafe,(tribe) but you don't get to see anything. Do you see those children over there?

TM: Yes?

DN: They are going there as I speak

TM: Going to the meeting place?

DN: One of them seems to be going one way, the other one is going the other way. Another one is going to the village there. Another one is going to the village there!

TM: And you? Where had they placed you?

DN: Huh?

TM: Where had they placed you?

DN: They had placed me...do you see if I get up right now? I would just go to that school over there. But there is a shop just ahead there. Once I am there, that is where I am in charge.

TM: That is where you are in charge

DN: It goes all the way over there! All the way that side. The way up to that top village there. Eventually I could tell that I could not go there. My legs were just not able to. There was another one who said that he used to stay in the hostel there

TM: Yes, yes

DN: So he lived in that home at the top there. So then I said that he would come and call me if there was a problem because honestly, they all found me in this group of *Kgosi's*.

TM: Yes. What kind of *Kgosi* was he? How would you explain it?

DN: Well this man was *Kgosi*. Truly and honestly. He would also argue out something that was significant. He did not want you to do things that you did not want done back to you. He would check to make sure that you did the right thing. You could sit just the 2 of you. He would ask you how things are going. If you had not said something right, he would tell you that you did not do something right. He would tell you to try it another way, or look at it from another perspective so that once we got into a matter, we would do it correctly. He did not condone anything. He would wake up early in the morning and he would start from all the way over there. He would walk and see people and how they were doing. You could just be sitting with friends and hear that there was someone greeting. Then he would sit down

TM: With...you all?

DN: Yes, he would sit and have a conversation. We would discuss many issues. If he knew you, and he knew what your problems were, he would not just leave you to be. He would tell you that he no longer wanted to see you on his land.

TM: Really?

DN: Yes

[TIMECODE - 29m: 12s]

DN: And once he told you, he told you

TM: Yes, he would speak the truth?

DN: Yes, he would speak the truth. When he was still here, if you came here acting as though you know everything, you would actually have to know yourself. He would take you here and put you there

TM: On his shoulders?

DN: He would put you on a farm far away, then he would hit you

[Laughter]

TM: Yes?

DN: I'm telling something that was real. He would hit you so that when you come back, if you have a house here, you would not go back to your house. You would go to your mother. You would go to your mother. If he didn't like that, you would ...

TM: And would they treat you badly there?

DN: They would treat you to a point where if you were walking that way, you would swear out loud and say "In my father's name...to all of you".

[Laughter; Coughing]

DN: No this *Kgosi* was a good man. And this young man's father?

TM: Yes?

DN: No, he was not thinking about all in this land

TM: *Ramogolo*, this conflict with Van Rooyen, when did you come to hear of it? Or when did you see it?

DN: I was here when he...when he got here. We were from here, a place called Mokgoleng. Him and I, and Morafe. There was a lot of *Maburu* [Setswana word for white, Afrikaans people] and black people. *Maburu* with big stomachs this big

TM: Big big stomachs

DN: They were this big

TM: Up to their thighs?

DN: And they ate meat

TM: At that *Kgosi*? Or, at that home?

DN: Well, at that home. Remember that the home was that one that united all of Bophuthatswana, right there to Mangope. And then we make a racket. We left here like this and make a racket right to where they were at that home. He didn't care, but if he had heard that they were looking for him – at that time he had enlisted. If he had heard that they were looking for him, he would run away as they were approaching. The Lorries gathered

[TIMECODE – 32m: 07s]

TM: Lorries of policemen?

DN: You don't know what I'm telling you!

TM: We they just gathered outside?

DN: They were all around, those lorries, and he was standing just in front there. Then he went and slipped through there. Hoebaaai

TM: They didn't see him?

DN: There is a place that they call Hoebaaai.

TM: Yes?

DN: He went to board the train there. And they would stay there, torn. He had just left, before anything had gone that way. Really, there was no time for these games or jokes for Magodi. So maybe I could say to you that Magodi does what he wants. Here, in this place, we have 2 *Kgosi's*. He was the *Kgosi*.

TM: What do you mean there were 2, Ramogolo?

DN: Some people decided that they belonged to *Kgosi* they were not supporters of this new *Kgosi* who was the first one just to be brought here. They just came here because they did not know where else to go. So they came here. They arrived here as though they were his. That means they were his people.

TM: And who did they come with?

DN: They came here with their father

TM: And who is their father?

DN: His father is Moela, he is Sebodi (reference to Edward Moilwa? Mangope sent him)

TM: Yes, and where do they come from?

DN: They come Dinokana

TM: They come from Dinokana

DN: Yes. It happened that when he died, they decided that we were also to be of the *Kgosi's* group. And so they argued about him, doesn't matter if he was there or there, he was being argued. Just as people were being beaten...he comes from far away. They once made him carry rocks from there, where the taxis are. Then he would have to unpack the rocks.

TM: And the police made him do that?

DN: Yes, the police. They would come here trying to take this house when he came here and slept at another house. He said that there was no such thing. He did not want to refuse, they just were not there. They came and tried to look for him and they would have, he was a man. We stayed here knowing that when the year was over – he lived over there – you would go there and find an elderly woman at *Rre Mosadi's*, the wife would say that you should enter, the bedroom was just in there. You would pour water and she would say “here is the water for you to wash your feet”.

[TIMECODE – 35m: 28s]

DN: Then you would get dressed and you would leave. Only then would you go and sit down there. Then they decided that they would send the ones from down there. They would send bullies. But they would be the ones who died. It was the bullies who would say that there was one of their own who would pass by here trying to throw something over, and it fell on him

TM: It would bounce back on him?

DN: Yes, it would bounce back on him. He was a man just like *Kgosi's* father. He wasn't just a young man, he was an older man!

TM: And the water he said you should wash in?

DN: Yes, the water was a lot. He would go. He would leave early in the morning. The men of the meeting place refused. They were strong men those that I found there. They all sat as part of the same group. Then you could see that these type of people were not okay. He would leave asking questions, knowing that when he comes back...he would travel to Gauteng, this side and that. He would travel quickly along that side of Gauteng. Then for about 2 or 3 weeks, he would be home and that would be okay. He would sound the trumpet and the men working there would work and work. Then he would say "okay, call *Morafe*. Call *Morafe*". He knew what he was doing. He didn't care.

TM: So once you called *Morafe*, those others, do they come?

DN: No, they don't

TM: They don't come.

DN: And even that way, I think they are afraid of him. They don't come here

TM: *Mme Motsusi*?

DN: Yes, here when she is home, then she comes. If she does not come, they may even be willing to pass by here.

TM: So *Ramogolo*, when did you become of the *Kgosi's* advisors?

DN: Well it was that we would change it around

TM: Oh yes

DN: Really, we would get in at 07:30.

TM: In the morning?

DN: then we would know that something past 11 we would leave again

TM: You leave again

DN: So if he had delayed us, then perhaps we would wait there and maybe he would arrive at 10.

TM: Oh yes

DN: Then he would keep us, although it would not get to 12:30. If it was his father, then maybe we would be done by 12 again.

[TIMECODE – 39m: 04s]

DN: Rather that once the clock struck 12, he would want to stay here

TM: Oh, not there

DN: If it was that there were no issues to discuss. If they were not finished

TM: They were not finished

DN: Then you would need to sit here. I would end off there

TM: Oh. So for you to have this opportunity to be part of the committee, who were you appointed by? *Kgosi*?

DN: I was appointed by him

TM: Oh yes.

DN: Once I was back from Gauteng, then he called me. Then he just looked at me. The part where he looked at me it was to show that is where he was from. He found that all the men who were from there were dead. Then he came here. He took one of the other men and put him there

TM: And who was that, do you remember?

DN: He was called *Rre Mafisa*

TM: Mafisa

DN: He then passed away. And then I continued on there until now

TM: Until now. Okay, so when the decision that this village should fall under Bophuthatswana, were you here?

DN: Under?

TM: Bophuthatswana. The government of Bophuthatswana

DN: The issue of us being under Bophuthatswana started while I was here

TM: And how did this issue arise?

DN: It started by them saying that we were going to be moved from here and going to a place right down there called Phe-phe. As we listened we realised that Mangope's soldiers were also there. There were those of Bophuthatswana. They said that they were from Bophuthatswana. We were camping out over there where an old lady stayed at that place near Zeerust, over there

TM: Yes

DN: They were camping there. They were very strict. They made people all come together. People were being beaten! If you were not one of the *Kgosi*'s – the one that we said was the *Kgosi* here – you would have needed to be brave. They would ill-treat you and you would run off to the camps. People were being beaten. As they were beating people, this *Kgosi* ran away. There was some scuffling with the *Kwela-Kwela*'s [name for the police vans with sirens] they were not successful. He was not able to move away from this village. It was not possible. Then, soon after he died, the kids who were fighting also fought for Mangope.

[TIMECODE – 42m: 47s]

DN: One of the others looked at his father's place and said he would not go there. He said that down there he would not go.

TM: So they were fighting amongst themselves, then?

DN: Well with Morafe as well. If it were possible...remember they said that we would not be able to pass. There were some members of Morafe that were not attracting those who were with *Kgosi*. They were not part of this side

TM: They fell under the other *Kgosi*'s jurisdiction

DN: They fell under the jurisdiction of the one at the bottom there.

TM: Yes

DN: That other *Kgosi*. [Edwin Moilwa] That one also meant to want this land. The old man's child had died. He wanted that it should be them that bring back that land. They reclaim the land in a place call Mosoeu [Mosweu is alternative spelling for this place – also called Welverdiend – cattle post of Braklaagte tribe]. The truth was that Mosoeu was not even theirs. It belonged to this *Kgosi*. So he said that they were his and he made them go back there. There were others as well in that village. There were others where we were too that liked the other *Kgosi*. There was a lot of them, but they didn't like to be in conflict. They really struggled. Only the brave ones would stay. So as you look out, there is no place on that side, and there is that side, so you must make a plan to get out once the sun has set. You look out for those who are trying to escape, just like you.

TM: So the men of the *Kgosi* were also looking for you?

DN: The men of the *Kgosi* were gone. There was no-one there.

TM: What? Really?

DN: There was no one here. The *Kgosi* was not here. They were coming back here without any help. As he was going to stay here they broke his window and they took him.

TM: What about the discussion that you have to leave here and go to Phe-Phe? Where does that message come from?

DN: It comes from Mangope. Their *Kgosi* was Mangope on that side. He was the one moving us. They wanted us to leave

TM: And you refused?

DN: We refused. They said those who are going must go but we refused

TM: And why were you refusing, Ramogolo?

DN: He was not our *Kgosi*! We didn't want Bophuthatswana. Honestly we didn't want Bophuthatswana. We refused. They were killing people over something called donkey. They didn't want that. We refused and refused. Then we accepted the money from the Commissioner. If you ask this woman, we were with her when they said that we didn't want their money and then the money stopped coming in. Remember that at that point the Commissioner was also trying to run away. He wanted to welcome the people of Bophuthatswana. There was nothing for us [reference to stopping of pensions and disability grants for community from SA]

TM: And so it stopped?

[TIMECODE – 47m: 55s]

DN: It stopped, yes.

TM: Really? And how did you survive?

DN: Those who were still here tried to get us some of the money

TM: And so how did you live after the money stopped?

DN: Well we were going into the towns. That was the law. You see this law –

TM: So when it stopped –

DN: You see like a bit of pap, or...

TM: So when it stopped, what did you do? What did you say to the Commissioner?

DN: We didn't go

TM: He left you?

DN: Remember that he was trying to escape. So we just let it go and they would see our names that we didn't get anything. Even for us to come back there was a challenge coming back

TM: And what did they say? What did they say was the problem?

DN: Well they tried to get together. But this didn't just happen now

TM: Was it a long time ago?

DN: It was a long time ago, yes. Those old ladies had already passed away

TM: They had passed away. And when you got back home, were your homes still okay?

DN: We got back to find that they had already moved

TM: Oh they had moved

DN: Yes you see this child had run away. I don't know where they said he had gone.

TM: Which one?

DN: Huh?

TM: Which one of the *Kgosi*'s people?

DN: He came back there with conflicting issues. There was someone who had reprimanded them, saying that the law that side was not going to bring us back this side. Well the people who worked that side had gone to Gauteng and decided to build there.

TM: Really?

DN: That was how bad the conditions were there.

TM: It was not pleasant?

DN: No, it wasn't pleasant at all

[TIMECODE – 49m: 53s]

TM: When you tried to return home, were Morafe still with their *Kgosi*?

DN: They were already there

TM: They hadn't moved?

DN: No, they had not moved. There were still a few.

TM: And today? Are you still not going across to the villages?

DN: Huh/

TM: Are you still not crossing to the other villages?

DN: Well what can we say? We would talk to one another. Or maybe we would feel that we could not talk to one another. We would talk, but I would still be looking at you like. Then I would see it standing just here. And we want to talk about the problem. They used to get us and take us to a place called Kopaneng. They would pour cold water on us in the cold

TM: The police?

DN: Yes.

TM: What did they say? Why were they arresting you?

DN: Well they said that we were the problem. They said that we were the ones who are harassing the other women. In all honesty they know that if they say "come one, let's go", you are going to go. There was no way of saying that you were not going there, but in all honesty, it was better than if you were caught, you were caught knowing...even women were taken. There was a jail, a big jail just around here. We had surrendered. Honestly it was them who were there. Then they brought us back. Mangope said that we must go back. He even removed *Maburu* who had taken our land. Then we came to live here.

TM: And then these *Maburu*?

DN: They had taken all this land. Then he fired them and we came here to live.

TM: Whose land was here?

DN: The land was *Kgosi*'s. It was then taken by force.

TM: Oh yes

DN: Remember when I said to you that this old lady and I were still debating if we owed her money. We had run away and left all of this. So you see these older people, once you are an older person, you are not sure if this old person has come to refuse...but actually they have not come to fight about it. She would have wasted time. Then maybe she would ask if there was anyone who could help her.

TM: And the land that was taken by *Maburu*? Has all that and come back?

DN: Yes, the land has come back to where it belongs.

TM: Has it all come back to Morafe?

[TIMECODE - 53m: 20s]

DN: Yes. *Kgosi* here got back all the farms that had actually belonged to his forefathers. This land had belonged to the black people. *Maburu* only came here by accident. Now they must come back, we are getting them back.

TM: So these days, Ramogolo, you showed me that on this land you used to mill. What do you do these days? What is happening?

DN: Those days we were really holding things together. We were milling the sorghum. We milled. There was no big village here. You see this big plot going there, and there and there and there. Those were fields. We tended the land there. We were milling to the point where you would notice that everything: sorghum, maize...you would find that your land was well kept. It was only if it hadn't gone well for you.

TM: And what about the people? How are they getting on when you are here?

DN: Well there was pap! There was porridge that a person could make. Maybe there was a shop run by these people here and they would keep a tab for you for pap and sugar and milk so that you could eat, which was important. When you went to the Commissioner, you get there already spent [in other words, your money was already owed for the debts at the shops]. We came back empty handed but at least the children had food.

TM: They could eat. How would you pay back that debt?

DN: You would pay it with that same money from the Commissioner.

Koko: So the money from –

DN: With that money! Remember that at the Commissioner you got about 300 or 400. [Reference to pension or disability grant] The food would be more than that. When you add it up, it would be 4- or 800 that would go back. So now there would be problems. The problem would be that if the owner says you must pay for the food. As I am talking this now, this morning when I came from there, I got a call saying that a relative had passed away in a place called Hartbees.

Koko: Which Hartbees was it, *Ntate* Dipale?

DN: Hmm?

Koko: Which Hartbees?

DN: As you are going to ...

Koko: As you are going to Pretoria?

DN: Yes

Koko: Yes, I see it. That Hartbees. There was another village that was also in crisis in our time. We were there with some people from TRAC. There was a village there called Matjakaneng. Machakaneng Yes, we –

DN: As I was coming there, a phone call came that there was a death in the family in Hartbees. As I noticed, there was no pain. There was no pain. I almost wanted to go back and the children – they don't work either

TM: They don't work

Koko: Eish!

[TIMECODE – 57m: 17s]

DN: So I must think there I must borrow and take the child. The other one is the child of the person who has passed away. My child married the sister of the person who has passed away.

Koko: Was it Kgosi's brother-in-law?

DN: Yes, the brother-in-law

Koko: Okay

DN: So it was better than they just pack and go away.

TM: They must go there

DN: They must go there. There is no one who would take them. Yesterday, the money wasn't there. This week – which week is this? This is the fourth week. My sister's child passed away.

TM: Oh no!

DN: A woman. On one side they were dancing on the other side. They were getting on. And then we buried her. In the second week, then my child, a boy, passed away. He was also not working. Then we laid him to rest and the month ended. Then the next one to pass away was

TM: The other one's brother-in-law

DN: A brother-in-law.

TM: And this is all money.

DN: It costs money to go

Koko: Then you are on your way to Pretoria. It is close to Brits

DN: Yes, it is close to Brits.

TM: There are no jobs!

Koko: There are no jobs!

TM: Young people are not working!

Koko: Young people are no working!

DN: Young people are not working. The son of mine who passed away was not working. He was one of those people who would just enjoy a beer.

TM: And what about the land? Is there no way for them to farm it again or to mill again, Ramogolo?

DN: Well they've already put down houses

TM: They've already put down houses?

DN: Remember that all these houses, even there at the top there were no houses before now

[TIMECODE – 59m: 19s]

TM: Oh yes!

DN: It was vacant. Even here, when you got off here and were going into town, there were no houses here was just open land. There houses were all around there, and there.

TM: Oh Ja, and where do those houses come from?

DN: Huh?

TM: Where do those houses come from?

DN: Well, you could come and ask for some space and they would listen to you from Lekubung. That you would want to come and build here in Lekubung. So you would agree with that person because remember, he is going to give you money.

TM: Yes

DN: Then they build. Then you talk to him and you get a share. Even as you are getting your share, then they are listening that so-and-so gave some land to someone. The day would even end and still they would not have finished talking. Then suddenly they would come in and say that they wanted a place. They could even come there when you weren't there. Essentially, they were coming to have a look.

TM: Had they ever come to you when you were a committee with the *Kgosi*?

DN: No. They would not be able to leave here. Remember that they want something from you. Remember that if you give him some of the plot. There was no such thing that you could not sell to a person. That land was yours. Once it was decided, then we would go to the office to register that person. Then you would take out something called *Sehuba* [tribute or portion due to the chief] for *Kgosi*.

TM: And this *Kgosi's* *sehuba*. How much would it cost? Or what would it be?

DN: It would be R 100

TM: Oh okay. Per month?

DN: No

Koko: At that time. Just like you would see *sehuba* that is R 100?

TM: Yes

Koko: That is the R 100

TM: Oh! So that's the R 100

Koko: For proof of residence to say that actually that person has now been welcomed into this village as a builder

TM: So the land is finished?

DN: Yes, it's finished! This home of ours is all finished. So maybe the *Kgosi* wants to mill, so he would go but it would not work because even that rain doesn't come

TM: There isn't any

[TIMECODE - 01h: 02m: 00s]

DN: He would also come back calling –

Koko: He would also just let it go

DN: He would also come back and say “hey”!

Koko: He would say we should sell

DN: Then 1-2-3 it would be full

TM: And then it would be full

DN: There are many people who are looking for a place. It’s not just 1 or 2, there are many of them

TM: And where do they come from? From the farms?

DN: From the farms, or wherever. Some people are coming back and they don’t want to stay where they are. They want to come here. And some people say “we want to come where you are”.

TM: Oh yes

DN: So then they come back and come here.

TM: What do they like here so much, Ramogolo, if you think about it?

DN: They say the land is good here

[Laughter]

DN: They say that when they still used to hit us it wasn’t so nice.

Koko: Remember that now –

TM: They say that it’s very nice!

Koko: Lekubu is very nice because there is no longer any conflict and the place people like the most is the first village. The one that is close to town.

TM: Oh, yes

Koko: To be close to town. If I could compare to people near the border. There is a village of Bafurusi, (Bafurutse), of our people, Soepingstaat. Soepingstaat is when you are there at the border of Gaborone, Soepingstaat is those houses over here, the border being on that side.

TM: It’s far from town

Koko: It is far from town, yes. Just like the houses near Moshana, close to Botswana, where I said we would go to church in Botswana, if I remember correctly. Those people when they came to Zeerust were a problem. You would have to have money. They know that this is a place close to town.

TM: Ey! Well, Ramogolo, thank you. I would like to thank you very much for telling me about the stories about Braklaagte and who the issues came about and how you remember it. I think that it would really help. They will know – grandsons and granddaughters that there were people who lived here.

[END]