

# Interview with George Mokgosi

Project name:	Land Act Project
Date of interview:	24 June 2013
Location of interview:	Braklaagte
Language/s of interview:	Setswana
Length of interview:	01h: 00m: 04s
Name of Interviewer:	Tshepo Moloji
Name of interviewee/s:	George Mokgosi
Name of translator (if any):	Lesego Ramafoko
Name of transcriber:	Lesego Ramafoko
Audio file name/s of interview:	LAP_BRA_GeorgeMokgosi_20130624

Tshepo Moloi [TM]: We are going to start it from the back, *Rre* [SeTswana name for 'sir'] Mokgosi. Whatever you don't remember, there is no problem.

George Mokgosi [GM]: Okay

TM: We will just move on.

GM: We are going to talk about where my people come from

TM: Let me start by saying today is the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2013. This is Tshepo Moloi. I am with *Rre* Mokgosi in Braklaagte. I am here with *Koko* how has been my helper. I'd like to take this time to thank you.

GM: *Rra?*

TM: I wanted to take this time to thank you. For letting us into your home. We are going to talk about the history of Braklaagte, the way you remember it. Perhaps before we begin you can start by telling us your full names.

GM: I am Mokgosi Mokgosi.

TM: And where were you born?

GM: I was born here in Braklaagte

TM: And when was that, *Rra* Mokgosi?

GM: *Rra?*

TM: When was that?

GM: I was born in '36 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January.

TM: If you think back as far as you can remember, where were your parents or even your grandparents from?

GM: My grandmother and grandfather were *bo-kgosi* [SeTswana for royalty] from Botswana. Their throne was being contested, so they left from *Ko Mokwena* and some went to Mafikeng and some went to Mogopong. Yes. We are not *Bakwena*, we are *Maletse*, we praise the cow. My grandfather went to the suburbs. *Daemane* [SeTswana slang for diamond]

TM: oh Kimberley

GM: I don't know if it was Kimberley or what. And then he saw some friends and thought to himself that these people had come for the holidays. And he liked my grandmother. So then he married here. Her sister married in a place called *Masebodole*. And then he left *Daemaneng* for Gauteng. Then he got a house here in Orlando. We were born in Orlando. We have come here now because they are old and they want to build *Ko Molekobong*. *Mme* [SeTswana word for mother or elderly woman] is from *Lekobong*.

[TIMECODE – 03m:15s]

GM: My grandparents bought this place. I didn't buy land in this place it was bought by *Ou'tata* my mother-in-law. Even now as you see that huge place, all built up. That was by *Ou'tata* my mother's mother-in-law. She used to work on this farm with *Rra Shilling*. There was a man called *Rra Shilling*. They would also work on these farms. They came from *Nokaneng* on bicycles working on the farm

TM: On bicycles

GM: *BoKgosi* bought a farm and they bought this farm and they stayed there.

TM: Oh, so who bought the farm?

GM: The farm was bought by *Morafe*[tribe]

TM: Oh, *Morafe*

GM: *Morafe* from - can we say from *Sebogodi*?

TM: Okay, let's say that it's a person from *Sebogodi*

GM: Yes, there was a person from *Sebogodi*. He is from *Ga Sebogodi*

TM: And *Ou'tata*? When they were working here, who were they working for?

GM: *Leburu* [white Afrikaans men in Setswana].

TM: Oh, they were working for *Leburu*. Do you remember who he was?

GM: Wow no, I don't remember who that is. I don't know which *leburu* it was.

TM: What was *Ou'tata*'s name?

GM: *Ou' tata*?

TM: Yes

GM: Oh that was *Sepako Malope*. *S'pako Malope*.

TM: Okay, so when you all came from Orlando, how old were you when you got here?

GM: Oh, they came from Gauteng in 1939.

TM: Oh no, you were still quite young

GM: Yes, I was still quite young

TM: As you were growing up, would you say that this place was crowded? Was it a crowded place or not? Were there a lot of people? Or were there only a few homes you could count?

Yes, he means how big was your home?

[TIMECODE – 05m:16s]

GM: Oh no, the house started at this... here on this side and ended on that side. It was still not very big. The small holding we had went up to *Ramogonwane's* father. Homes that would go all the way around that side were only 2.

TM: Really?

GM: I'm not sure if there were 2 or 3

TM: There were 2

GM: Were there 2!

TM: And how do people live now?

GM: Huh?

TM: How do people live?

GM: How would people live?

TM: Yes, how would you live?

GM: Oh, well we got by, by milling. We used to mill *mabele* [sorghum] and *morogo* [wild spinach]. That is how we used to get by. You see when I started working and got clever, I would accept 2 cents or 5 cents per week. I would work maybe 2 months and welcome 15 shilling [old currency]. You got also get about R1.50.

TM: Okay *Rra*.

GM: That's the kind of life that I lived. Then I returned when I was older. I returned to Gauteng.

TM: Where were you going in Gauteng? Where in Gauteng?

GM: Gauteng to my father's house

TM: Oh Orlando?

GM: Yes, Orlando. When I got there, my younger sister was there. So then I decided that living with my sister like this would be problem, so I went to find a house in Sophiatown.

TM: Sophiatown?

GM: Yes. I lived in Annadale number 54. And I lived in this house -

TM: Are you working at that point?

GM: Yes, I was working. I was a driver for the bakery at that time. From the bakery I went to Super Concrete. I worked there from application that didn't mean anything with just a little education. Right, so I began working with an inspector that inspected sand for the concrete, you know?

[TIMECODE - 07m:31s]

TM: Ja

GM: The ones that built the ITT

TM: Oh yes, I know them

GM: Yes, those ones that built the ITT. So I worked with him – Lester Ducks. He was an American. After that I decided on a job working in the Council. So I did a paper and sent it there [an application] and they called me. When I started working in industry I worked up to Wolmaranstad – at the BP plants. I helped show people how to serve customers, until I came home. I stayed there until I was about 29 years [old].

TM: Really?

GM: Yes. So then I got home and I'm not sure which *Lekgoa* [SeTswana for 'Caucasian person'] I met but I was there until 1960 when I quit my job until now.

TM: But the time you worked in Gauteng, could you come and check –

GM: I was able to come check my parents, bring them food; to come and greet and when they passed away, I buried them.

TM: Oh, okay. And when you came back, were they still milling at that time?

GM: When I was visiting, they were still milling. Not a lot to the point where it could maintain them. I was the one who was supporting them

TM: Hmm, okay. And then 1960 when you came back home, what was it like? What was life like here? How could you describe it?

GM: When I?

TM: When you came back to Braklaagte

GM: All I could say to you was that I don't like it on the farm and I don't like *legae* [ SeTswana for homeland]. To this day I am still not used to *legae*. You call it the farm. I am still not used to it. What helped me was those who had passed - *badimo* [SeTswana for ancestors]. They are the ones who left me this house. I was the kind of person, who – you can even ask this lady – I used to leave. I had 5 taxis in Gauteng. I was the person who *badimo* said no, come and look after the house because that is home. Well then I bought a house and went with it for 3 days and I would get hit. I didn't hit anyone. I was the one being hit. When you get to the bus stop and young men are going to hit you with a cane, I would go home. That home I built with materials. So then I thought about the business I could start and so I decided to drive taxis. I bought 2 taxis – a Kombi Volkswagen and a Hiace and then drove and I drove -

TM: Here from home?

TIMECODE – 10m:29s

GM: Yes, right here from home. Ay! Then they would say that they did not call me to do those things. And they said you should sit here and help people

TM: Oh ja

GM: And so the man I'm talking about, he said let's do a business. He's a go-getter. He likes to do things. So I went to Mafikeng to stock 52 cases of alcohol. And I then I was ready to sell. *Badimo* said that they don't want those things. So then I said load them up and take them to your house, you will bring the money.

TM: Wow

GM: He hasn't brought me a cent of the money. To now! I could have kept something and started shop. I would've been busy with that even now. The Rum would've given me a livelihood.

TM: And this shop? What kind of a shop was it?

GM: *Rra?*

TM: What did you sell at your shop?

GM: I used to sell groceries

TM: Oh!

GM: And so when we come from those arguments, the money isn't there anymore. As I wanted to get in and fix it up and stay a while there, and make some cents, there came *Lekula* [SeTswana word for an Indian person], Safi. He rented it and worked out of it. After a while he bought another shop and moved to give me some space to that I could also buy some pap.

TM: And this thing, in 1960, that's a time when they were taking parties like ANC and PAC and shutting them down. And there was Sharpeville.

GM: We were also tiding time here. We were catching onto it from outside. I joined in '58

TM: Ah! And where did you go?

GM: I went to join in Sophiatown

TM: Sophiatown?

GM: Yes. The reason for my joining was because of a friend of mine called Rantao, you see? He used to live in Dube. So he told me that there is a young man who wanted to join. Then he told me that if I go join the ANC, I am going to die. Ey! Then when I thought about joining the ANC and dying there and I was alone. And so I said, "Yes, *Rre*. Yes, I'll see". It was difficult for me to go there. But when the conflict faces you, we would go past people to go there

TM: What conflict?

[TIMECODE – 13m:49s]

GM: *Rra?*

TM: Which conflict?

GM: The past conflict

TM: Oh, from years ago.

GM: We joined. A lot of people. First, *ba Ramodise, Mogwere, Segakweng*. I trained them from in the house. We used to bring things and take them to the room where they were trained.

TM: So in 1960 when you came back home, did you have a connection with the ANC?

GM: Yes, I had a connection with the ANC but in '60 I had not yet come home permanently. I arrived in '73. In '73 was when I really came home. I build this house in '71. It was a challenge to get me to come home because honestly I don't want a *legae* but they were forcing me to get cattle, said that old man. I don't know what he wanted from me because I had a business. So then I bought cattle and looked after the place until now.

TM: Oh, okay. And so this conflict, how did it begin? Do you remember?

GM: This conflict of Mangope's?

TM: Yes

GM: This conflict –

TM: How did you hear about it?

GM: *Rra?*

TM: How did you get to know about it? How did the news get to you?

GM: Honestly, I did not hear it. I saw it. I saw it. It began here where I was. They wanted us to move home our homes and move to become people of *Boputhatswana* [former homeland]. Then one day as we sitting, we saw soldiers just piling out all the way around to the *Kgosi*. And then they camped just there, right? He will show you. As we were sitting there, some of them come down. We got into the house of the *Kgosi*

TM: Which *Kgosi*?

GM: Pupsey – yes, Pupsey. But his father was still alive

Koko: Yes, his father was still alive at that time.

GM: So when they got there, they said they are from the Magistrate. They say we have to move to – it was Pipi, right? So that we fall under *Bophutatswana*. That first was 57, yes. So we must fall under *Bophuthatswana*. So then we disagreed that we should fall under *Bophutatswana*. They took people and put them in the Magistrates car. I then took a van and take chase. That evening, some tried to jump through the window – it was the same day, remember?

[TIMECODE – 16m:57s]

One other thought they would get in at Pupsey's just like that –

TM: No, just tell it from where you remember it because here and there our stories are not the same.

GM: Yes...with yours, yes. Okay

Koko: At Pupsey's, someone tried to get in through the window. The next thing I knew he ran away and that was fine. I would stay with Morafe. Then the soldier came back through the kitchen. When his wife came through to the bedroom she saw boots under the curtain, then she shouted out that there was someone in the bedroom. And then the soldier went back out the window and ran back to the road block - where you turn around to that sign that says "Braklaagte". That's where they were doing a road block.

TM: Oh!

Koko: Yes

GM: And then it turned out that no, it became a mix-up *Rra*, that was not very good. Then there was a meeting at *Nkgoleng* because they had gathered. When we were at that meeting, we saw Hippos. [armoured cars]

TM: Who was at *Nkgoleng*?

GM: There had not yet been a meeting with the *Kgosi* in all honesty. There was no *Kgosi*. When you move, you could feel lost and so he was the one holding people together.

TM: Ha, okay. So was it the *Kgosi* who called the meeting at *Nkgoleng*?

GM: Huh?

TM: Was he the one who called the meeting, *Kgosi*?

GM: No, that meeting was called by the young men. Maybe I could call them Comrades

TM: Oh ja, uh-huh

GM: They wanted to say that we were not going back to *Bophuthatswana*. Then it was that the Hippos came. When the Hippos came, things went bad. It was a bad time. There was a lot of fighting. The police were there, the soldiers were also there. It really wasn't nice. There was also a helicopter that was dispatched. They said that they should shoot us with that, on the farms of *maburu*, as people were trying to climb the fences. It was then, this lady, the bullet hit next to her on the rock – almost! Do you understand?

TM: Oh! Yes!

GM: Almost!

[TIMECODE – 19m32s]



GM: Ey! We ran and ran and then finally we made it back home

TM: Who were these comrades who called the meeting?

GM: They were from *Nkgoleng*

TM: Oh so they weren't from here? And what was the purpose?

GM: Oh no the purpose was to gather. Remember that we had to meet to call on another village

TM: Oh! And which of these comrades do you still remember?

GM: Hey! I don't remember

Koko: And when I –

GM: It was Selovolo

Koko: He was in exile

GM: Yes, he was even in exile.

TM: Selovolo?

GM: Yes, Selovolo

TM: Selobolo?

Koko: Selovolo

GM: Yes, Lehlogonolo. No, it was Selovolo and it was that young man who passed away from the pole. And there was also Comrade Mothusi.

TM: So when you got the meeting, did they say something before the police arrived?

GM: Yes. We talked to say "People, we are not going to *Bophuthatswana*. We are not going to fall under them. So as we were having this discussion, then came the Hippos. They didn't wait long until they had the teargas as well. But we were also very determined. It became a case of *wafa-wafa* [colloquial term for everyone for himself]. So then we were running away because there were police helicopters coming to shoot us. So then we came home. Ey! We stayed for 2 days, right? 2 days?

Koko: Yes!

GM: 2 days and then they said they were coming. We ducked through those farms. I travelled like... – I passed Zeerust travelling on foot!

TM: By foot!

GM: Yes! I got to Zeerust on foot from Gauteng. I tried to get any lift but I didn't want to be caught here in Zeerust because they would patrol with the cars in Zeerust

[TIMECODE – 21m:45s]

TM: Did they already know you?

GM: Yes, they already knew us. At this stage they were travelling with kids from here that were also policemen.

TM: Oh! So they were vigilantes?

GM: Yes. They were also like policemen. So I got a car at a station called "Oubaai". There was a station called "Oubaai" in Gauteng. So he gave me a lift and dropped me off in Krugersdorp. When I get to Krugersdorp, I find the woman who was nearly shot by a bullet, my sister. She had left me and we had split up when everyone separated and now we were coming together in Krugersdorp.

TM: And so when was this?

GM: It was '89, right? Yes, '89. I remember that I said to her don't you worry we're going home. But you know they were just cowards from home. And so it was that we stayed with my sister for a while and the one day she said tomorrow we're going to *Netlana*. Before we went to TRAC, we were there

Koko: The TRAC offices were in Braamfontein.

GM: In Braamfontein, yes

Other: By the magistrate. You see just when you pass that bridge just before Braamfontein. Yes, when you reach -

GM: Yes, Wanderers.

Koko: The offices were just there

GM: Wanderers. So we went there. And when we got there, we found people there that we didn't know. They were able to talk to us

TM: So who goes to TRAC

GM: *Rra?*

TM: Who goes to TRAC? Who went to TRAC?

GM: I went with Motsusi

TM: Motsusi. How did you know about TRAC?

GM: *Rra?*

TM: How did you know about TRAC?

GM: No we knew because of my friend. We were there because of him

[TIMECODE - 23m:55s]

TM: Oh, okay

GM: That's a comrade from long ago who was also in exile

TM: Really? What was his name?

GM: Vos Rantale

Koko: His brother is the one I signed up and I said he died in exile.

GM: There were some other people who took us to Chikane

Koko: Oh, Frank

TM: Heh?

Koko: Frank Chikane

GM: And then he said the men were going. I don't know what comfort that was! [laughter]. I just looked and said you know this person doesn't know I am a priest. I mean that this is the life that we lived. And so it was that we got away with lawyers and ey! You know, this woman [Tsegofatso] in all honesty, if it wasn't that *BaTswana* are jealousy – if it wasn't that they have a jealousy, it would've been that she would've gone far. She fought for this land more than anyone else. This woman fought harder than anyone else. She went around with lawyers night and day. The *Kgosi*, that young man remembers when I took him to Meadowlands and he kept saying that we didn't belong here and so after a while I said let's go home. Ey! You know I've had a really rough time!

Koko: In the rain?

GM: It was raining!

TM: In the rain!

GM: I was there in Braamfontein where there was someone with a big fire attracting just anyone. We struggled, man! So we went back there and you see a lot of people had gone back to Zeerust. There wasn't anyone left here at home! So then we thought if everyone has run away there, who is going to catch us? So we came back from there and we sat here for a while. We used people for food. Even this woman. We also asked for blankets. They didn't know where we came from. And then it turned out that when it was Mandela's time that we called him here to Zeerust. In all honesty it was he who did some good. That freed us up to back home to *Lekubung*. The conflict began and ended that way

TM: And so what about your arrest?

GM: My arrest? You know, man they removed all my church robes! In church. And they rolled all around

TM: And so the church – where do you attend church?

[TIMECODE – 27m:09s]

GM: We go to church this side around by the house

TM: Oh it's just around home. It's an Apostle's church?

GM: Yes, just around home, yes it's an Apostle's church.

TM: So when they get there you are at the altar?

GM: When they arrived I was at the altar and they said they were hungry and they don't know if we can wait...we're taking you. Go remove those robes.

TM: Are there are a lot of them?

GM: Huh?

TM: Are there a lot of them?

GM: Wow! They can get into the house - all 10 of them going after one person. So I removed the robes and I threw them aside. I also took the collar and I threw it aside. So we went away and we went to the tents and only after that they took us again and poured water on us and beat us!

TM: Were there a lot of you?

GM: Huh?

TM: Were there a lot of you?

GM: How many were we at that stage? 20-something, right?

Koko: Ja

GM: There were a lot of us and when we got there we found some of them there at that point.

TM: Oh, some people came in as you were there?

GM: Yes

TM: Oh!

Koko: The people who had been caught, if I can estimate it, were approximately 78.

TM: Really?

GM: We were a lot of us

Koko: They follow it to the parties, they follow it

GM: And they go around saying "tell the truth! Is *Kgosi's* name Muele? I knew if I said Pupsey people were going to kill me

[TIMECODE - 28m:47s]

TM: So they know that it's your friend?

GM: Yes, that's my friend. I'm sitting there, ashen faced and they tell him that you are going to take him to the hospital with the lawyer, right? Clive, right?

Koko: Yes, I was with Clive

GM: She told them that they are taking me to the hospital. They tried to get around it, but hey! It was then that I saw this woman stick out her eyes. They said they would close her up and she said that she didn't care. Don't come here and say "you will". Leave me alone and I will...and so they took me and took me there. I spent a week - I spent 7 days in hospital

TM: Really?

GM: It was then that there were journalists. They took pictures of me and after that showed me the newspaper. If you look at it, you will see that things were not good; at all. So you see Rre the conflict started this way and ended this way

TM: And were you with other men who were also involved or was it just you alone?

GM: It was just me! They just ran away. They just kept on disappearing! Ey! I just left the poor congregation. And then I thought "oh Lord help me"! During these times that's why we were afraid of the police. We were criminals!

[laughter]

GM: And that is how we ended up and that is how the conflict happened

TM: And so until when were the soldiers there?

Koko: When they left here, it was because...it was '94

GM: it was '94, right?

Other: Yes, it was '94

GM: From the prison they only left when it was closed down

Koko: That one here

GM: Yes, that one there. I don't know if it was '90-what but it was somewhere there. The situation was though that we didn't want them in our home. So I mean that's how it is.

TM: And there were elections, right? '94 was the year for elections, right?

GM: Yes

TM: We get a new government.

GM: Yes

[TIMECODE - 31m:16s]

TM: Was there any change that you noticed here in your homes?

GM: Huh?

TM: Was there any change that you noticed in your home?

GM: There wasn't a change. I don't see any change. There is no change. Here in the village? No, no. Not in the village. I don't see -

Koko: What do you mean? You know after '90 that was when *Tata* [Nguni word for father or headman] Mandela came in. he came out of Robben Island and he also came out of jail. Then after '90 things were a little better. It felt like now *Tata* Mandela is out of jail

GM: Yes, the way it was different was that we saw that apartheid was coming to its conclusion. That is the way we can truly say things changed. Apartheid was no longer there

TM: And what about the ideals you fought for?

GM: I haven't seen much fulfilment or help to have happened.

Koko: Not nothing, *Ntate* Mokgosi. To tell the fact -

GM: It's like - sorry - it's like this *kgosi*. I don't know if he truly recognised that we were fighting for him with this woman. There is no record that he took people from the farms and put them ahead of us. I mean those who led us. Honestly, let me not throw honesty in the wind, let me be truthful because I'm a priest. I would not have gone as I heard *Mme* mention him and said that *Kgosi* asked why I'm not going. To be honest -

Koko: *Rre Ramotsusi*

GM: Huh?

Koko: The person who was there before was *RreRaMotsusi*

GM: Oh you're talking about Ramotsusi? I thought we were talking about *Rre Sebatane*

Koko: Uh-uh. *Sebatane* wasn't there

GM: *Sebatane*. Was back and I said -

Koko: We wasn't just back. He had come back from jail.

GM: I know, I know! So I could go and say this is what the matter is and I see the problem this way and that, here in Braklaagte

TM: And then TRAC? What about when you went to the offices of TRAC? Did they help you?

GM: *Rra?*

TM: Did they help you at TRAC?

[TIMECODE - 33m:46s]

GM: They started by helping us. When we were there?

TM: Yes

GM: They started helping us with a bit of money to eat and also accommodation and then it turned out that –

Koko: It was over

GM: It turned out that it was over. We were on our own. And so we got on by ourselves.

TM: You were explaining earlier, before we started the interview, about the conflict of '57 of the passes. You said you realised it home. When?

GM: Yes, I was only passing. I had come from Marabastad

TM: Ja

GM: I was alone there and when I got there I heard a “hoop hoop. Hoop hoop”. When I tried to see where the noise was coming from, I noticed that there was *Cumber* – do you know what that is? *Cumber*. And I wondered what was going on. When I looked over I saw them walking over the other side. These were the conflicts they had been talking about. They left and went the other way and I heard a lady say let's help *Rre* from the *Cumber* because he had no leg!

[laughter]

Koko: That man without a leg, that was the uncle's child.

GM: Yes! He was our uncle's child. And then they said to me that they would never take me out! Well then I got into the car and went back to where I was coming from.

TM: Had *Mme* ever told you about the issue with the passes? Had she ever told you? They only said that they didn't read them?

GM: No, they only asked when people would go out and buy clothes, or if someone was going to Pep. But you know this is not a story that I remember to ask: about how it started and how it happened?

Koko: if you weren't from Gauteng, you hadn't seen the really crazy people. The really crazy people and they burnt houses here at home

TM: Burnt houses here at home. And this thief, who it is?

Koko: It was just a person

TM: Just a person?

GM: Even some other old man –

[TIMECODE – 36m:14s]

Koko: No, there was a group of men who liked Gauteng. So when they heard that there were some women here at home we were still carrying passes, or that their husbands had allowed them to go and get passes. *Morafe* and *Kgosi* didn't want to get the passes. So these men gathered in Gauteng. They found a car and they came here with it

GM: Those are the thieves, then

TM: Did they start here, to burn things?

Koko: Yes

TM: I mean burning houses?

Koko: Yes

GM: They rounded us up and burnt them.

TM: Really?

Koko: Yes! They say it was really bad here

TM: Really?

Koko: Yes! When you realise that the houses were burnt down, you wake up in the morning and hear that so-an-so's house was burnt down. People ask who it was burnt down by. Then you know it was those thieves. You see these people didn't have names, so we just called them *Tsotsi nye-nye* [name given to the group of thieves].

TM: The other thing you talked about *Rre Mokgosi*, was that you and the lady would help people get to exile. Where did you start that?

GM: Helping people?

TM: Yes, or maybe when?

GM: To help people?

TM: To skip the country

GM: Hai! You know I don't know how it started. I just joined to help her and I helped *Kgosi's* son. His father, *Kgosi*, once the conflicts had started also wanted to go and so we took him to Winterveld, right?

Koko: Yes

GM: So we went to Winterveld with *Kgosi* and some men from the *Lekgotla* [SeTswana meaning people who make up the leadership in a village].

TM: Were you helping him run away?

[TIMECODE – 38m:06s]



GM: No, we were looking for spiritual doctors! We were looking for -

Koko: We were looking for medicine! He said there was an evil spirit.

GM: He was looking for something in Lusikisiki

TM: Huh? In Eastern Cape?

GM: Huh?

TM: Eastern Cape

GM: Yes, in Lusikisiki there. The other thing we helped with was when we were in Zeerust. We are asking for food from the companies around. And blankets, yes.

TM: And so what about helping people like Snowball?

GM: Oh Snowball? Okay. We started helping people. We started asking them and helping them right from the house.

TM: Oh, from your house?

GM: Yes, from my house. We were this side. There was also this other man - he had made himself to be a church member. He wore the attire and even kept a bible but he was a Comrade! Even when they met him, they didn't know but we were holding the meetings just there

TM: Who was he?

GM: Huh?

TM: Who was he?

GM: I don't know, he was just a man. He didn't speak SeTswana. He only spoke English. Yes, he wasn't Tswana.

Koko: You know I also forgot his name

GM: I also forgot the name of this guy

TM: How did you meet?

GM: Ah! Well you know these haphazard things! I wouldn't know. I met him with the other man I was telling you about Rra Ntaule

TM: Ntaule

GM: Yes. I was over there, hiding and I saw men coming. One had a bible and they were wearing an overcoat but they were both wearing copper hats. And I thought to myself "wow, the police have changed". So then I went in after them but I kept low so that they wouldn't see me. Then they said that this man is from the Shebeen in Brakallo.

[TIMECODE - 40m: 17s]

GM: They needed me to find a taxi that would take them from here to Brakallo. Then I spoke to another man called Tuello Mpedi. He was the one who transported us, even when they were doing that scare – when they were taking the women from the stations. He was the one who transported us. Even when they wanted to look at how they could attack the soldiers, he was the one who drove us around. Then we got to the people who were going to put us in the wilderness and teach us. So they trained us there and hey trained and trained us. At another time there were 5, they came from the other side.

TM: Were they from Mkhonto We Sizwe?

GM: *Rra?*

TM: Mkhonto We Sizwe?

GM: Yes. So they came and got us to show them. They asked how to shoot, and how to handle the guns, ja. Because in honesty it was them who trained us.

TM: And so what about the men you got out of here?

GM: The men who we helped get out. When they got out of here they go to Gauteng straight, you know. They are going to look for someone to help them get over. Some of them we only helped get over to Botswana. So then they decided that they wanted into the exile in Botswana. They were given a can of beans and told that they must eat them amongst the 10 of them. Then they met with a man who was over there. He told them that here was only exile. They were going to struggle here. So then they said they were going to Lusaka and he said that it would be okay and that he would get them there. So they went there.

TM: Are they still here? Are they alive?

GM: How many died? It was Marang and Aubrey

Koko: Yes, it was them. The other one had a mental illness

GM: Yes, he had a mental illness so he will never know when he changed. Some of them are soldiers in South Africa. They came back over here as Mkhonto and then became soldiers

TM: Oh!

Koko: These people, when we talk about the arrests of 1 July 1989, after there was a lot of burning. They wanted to catch people here at home and take them to *Rooigrond*. There was a jail around Lichtenberg that side

GM: It was Motlante and –

Koko: No! There were a lot of them

TM: So they were arrested a lot at once?

GM: They said they burnt things down and they were policemen.

[TIMECODE – 43m:52s]

Koko: And they would hit you until you say it was you. When they got in there and they were hitting the men, I think there were 3 of them, you would hear them say that they killed the soldiers. They were told that if they said that, they would be let go. It was Sehawkeng. It was Rantaule. There was also Mipasi.

GM: The 3 of them

Koko: Yes, 3 men. As the lawyers were getting people out on bail at Rooigrond, they refuse. Other people bail. So the lawyers fight and say that even if someone killed another person, bail...

GM: Should be granted

Koko: Yes, should be granted. Their case was in the middle of the night

GM: The night!

Koko: As the clock struck 22:30, we were in Rooigrond with the lawyers. I was trying to get bail for these men because they weren't going to stay in the jail alone. Eventually they agreed to grant them bail. As the bail hearing was going on, we argued and argued and then the case was thrown out. So then the others were finished and only those 3 remained. Their case was pushed aside and they said that they would see to it later. As it was pushed aside and they told us we would see to it later, that time we were fleeing, that's when their case was ready to be heard. It started on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. On Thursday when they came out – even the lawyers said to me that they had fought hard but they had come up short. The men said to me “we're losing”. They had lost their case by saying yes, they killed them. So there was no place for us as lawyers. The judge said to us tomorrow is the verdict. They are going to be hanged. You know my head was light. There was a ringing. I asked again if they meant tomorrow and they said yes, tomorrow. They said “men, you will find underwear where you're going”. Let's go. I got out of there and phoned the man who worked for TRAC. He was a man called Ken Margo. I called Ken Margo – remember it was closed there at the office. So I called him and said I am on the way to him, I am in a taxi. I was with this man called Sedge. He was the man who used collect children there from the townships and he got us to Gauteng. So we went to sleep at Ken's place in Yeoville. In the morning Ken took us to Shell House. It was still Shell House at the time. These days they call it Luthuli House. When we got to Shell House, I got in front of Mandela and I said, “Please! It is a good thing you are seeing me”. He asked what the problem was and I said these children- what are they saying in Bophutatswana? Rather than them dying, let them go to Lusaka. You know they went there directly? They didn't have to jump fences.

TM: Oh! They went directly!

Koko: *Ntate* Mandela said you must go to Home Affairs. Take their ID's and go to Home Affairs and tell them at Home Affairs that they need to do this and this and this. When Ramaphosa come back from there, he was holding their passports. And then *Ntate* Mandela found a car and we drove to Zambia. It was quite fast. When it got that side, I came back here. Those men were going to be killed if it wasn't for that.

[TIMECODE – 48m: 24s]

TM: Oh yes! By the way, Bophutatswana had the death penalty

Koko: Yes!

TM: Oh! It had the death penalty, yes! So you helped them

Koko: Yes, I really helped those kids

TM: And so when they said they killed soldiers, who said that they killed soldiers?

GM: Hey! It was Morafe. They said it was Morafe because you see, it was a fight. I wasn't able to say what sparked that tip to get out. It was just Morafe truly and then it was a conflict

TM: And how did it start? Was it Morafe fighting the soldiers, or was it the soldiers first?

GM: The soldiers

Koko: You know the soldiers just come out from nowhere. The soldiers had come to attack and Morafe said they weren't going to come

GM: and kill us in our own home.

TM: Wow! And so there was a fight?

GM: Yes, there was a fight. We didn't know if it was a fire.. They were helped by the helicopters because they were shooting from above

Koko: Yes, they were shooting from above

GM: They were shooting at us from above

TM: Really?

GM: Yes

Koko\*: I even saw him and I thought oh this devil, this one! \*[Translated from Afrikaans]. He was flying the helicopter at that time. He was the spy for Mangope. I once bumped into him and said to him "do you know that you're the devil"?

TM: How many soldiers were killed? Do you still remember?

GM: Yes. 10

Koko: 10. 9 on the other side

GM: Yes, 9 on the other side

TM: Wow!

GM: On this side? I am sure you could have counted about 30 or 40.

TM: So what was Morafe fighting with?

[TIMECODE:50m:13s]

GM: Axes! And canes!

Koko: Stones!

GM: Stones. Everything. Stones, canes. Everything. Remember, too that stones must come from the ground. So you must understand their might. It wasn't that after they were hit with stones or a cane that they took out the gun and shot at them. No, they hit back and walked over them

TM: Walked by them

GM: If it was like things would have been very bad

Koko: Yes, things would have been all over the place. You know I still have a hat?

GM: Huh?

Koko: A hat. From Mangope's police force. I slapped this other police officer and it just fell off her head

TM: Where is it? At the house?

Other: Yes, it's at the house.

[All laughing]

Koko: I have it there in the house! Sometimes when my hair is a mess before relaxing it, then I comb it and comb it and put it under that hat.

TM: Oh so it's a beret?

Koko: Well, it's a hat of sorts. It's quite smart. It's got the same shape as a dops, that hat has.

TM: So when you got out the hospital, did the police ever come after you to come catch you?

GM: No, after the hospital I went home and they said they would come and check on me. Sometimes they would check on me but they wouldn't always come straight here. Sometimes they would go around the home first. Then they would come drive past me and check that was okay.

TM: So I'm not sure how it worked here but I know in Alexandra – I grew up in Alexandra – there were churches all around the home.

GM: In Savannah?

TM: No, in Alexandra

Koko: He's saying that he grew up in Alexandra

GM: Heh?

[TIMECODE – 52m:14s]

Koko: He is saying that he grew up in Alexandra.

GM: Oh you grew up in Alexandra?

TM: Ja. In the 1980's at the time of Moruso. There was a church and the priests would help people who held up the children or whatever. What happened here? Were the churches helpful?

Koko: The churches helped a lot

GM: They helped a lot. They were afraid of the police!

Koko: They helped a lot. Trichta was even caught. There was that man who I said I went with him to town the day people were fleeing here. They helped us like that

TM: How were they helping you?

Koko: They helped by protecting people. They would also pretend that there is a church service so that the police wouldn't attack people during church. So they would also take children and put them in their houses. Remember that children were also being harassed, so they would take children and put them in their houses and give them food so that they could stay there and eat. Further, the Anglican Church didn't have a priest. The priest would come from there. There was Bishop Nkwetla.

TM: What about Tutu?

Koko: I'm still getting to the story about Tutu. So they would come even Bishop Desmond Tutu and they came to the Anglican Church. By the time Tutu left here, he had been given a beating by a police officer from Bophutatswana, right here at the Anglican Church. They were being chased away as they were holding a church service as they were praying for peace, as they were praying for Kagiso. The police came into the church and said "voetsek" [Afrikaans swear word].

TM: As a priest, did you have an organisation for priests?

GM: Yes. Bomifra

TM: They were called?

GM: Bomifra

Koko: It was still under Bophutatswana

TM: It was?

Koko: Under Bophutatswana

TM: So what is the full name? When it is all complete, what is the name?

[TIMECODE - 54m:38s]

TM: What was the full name? What did Bomifra stand for?

GM: Bomifra...where is the card? Ey! I don't know where the card is

Koko: I don't really know it because I was affiliated with the South African Council of churches.

TM: Okay, you can look for it later. But what were its functions?

GM: It was really just the meetings. For the priests to gather and so that the congregation could be prayed for. Also so that the priests who don't come from the schools could be trained to preach and what to do in the church.

TM: And the congregation that you are praying for? Which one is it?

GM: This one here in Bophutatswana.

TM: Bophuthatswana only?

GM: Yes!

TM: Why?

GM: You know we priests were also criminals

TM: And so what did it meant to you when Braklaagte and Bophutatswana had to combine to become one? What was your position on that?

GM: I had no position. Or let me say I had no position. You see, for priests to interact with other priests from Bophutatswana, they picked a chairman for all priests

TM: And they picked you?

GM: Huh? Yes! [Laughs] And so I became the chairman of the priests. So then the priests here in Braklaagte decided that they should follow me around. Priest Ratau was the secretary

Koko: Secretary, yes

TM: When was this? Before '90?

GM: Before '90. It was before '90, right?

Koko: Before '90

GM: Yes, it was before '90.

TM: And so at that time you were still fighting

GM: We were still refusing to stay in Bophutatswana

TM: And you were part of Bomifra?

[TIMECODE - 56m: 35s]

GM: Yes

TM: So didn't that create a conflict?

GM: No. if there was a Morafe meeting and they were talking about the fact that we are not going there, I would also say that, that I didn't want to be in Bophutatswana.

TM: Ja, and when you were on Bomifra's side?

GM: I would just talk about God. Those other things I wouldn't talk about

Koko: These things are the kinds of things that cause the problem, as I was saying. I asked *Ntate Kgosi* if we say our home is South Africa, these languages are all South Africa and the schools are all under the word of the people, how is it so?

GM: Why?

Koko: I am saying why was that so?

GM: It may have been that –

Koko: Yes, that is what I was fighting. The reason they wanted us under Bophutatswana is that the schools were also under Bophutatswana. I wanted to know who it was, in charge of education that wanted our schools to fall under Bophutatswana? There was nobody who could help me.

TM: *Rra Mokgosi*, if you remember; when you were taking up the position to fight when *Braklaagte* was being put under Bophutatswana, what was the reason?

GM: That it shouldn't be part of Bophutatswana?

TM: Yes

GM: We saw that the people were not in favour. The man who was the president enforced his power. We didn't want that sort of enforcement in *Braklaagte*. We didn't like the laws. He even said that he would remove the rightful *Kgosi* and he would appoint one of his choosing. That was the major reason why we did not want to fall under Bophutatswana. This Mangope man wanted to remove the older people and replace them with younger men and make them *Makgosi*. So we said ,no, then let him bring someone else because we know this *Kgosi* to be *Sebegodi*. That was really what created conflict here at home.

TM: Oh! Wow. Well *Mokgosi* I am very grateful for the information. I am really very glad. I am sure that it will help us write the book we want to write so that at least even the schoolchildren will know this history and the role that you played because these days history is lost to us. We shouldn't forget too quickly.

GM: Thank you

TM: I am the thankful one

[TIMECODE – 59m:41s]



Koko: They should get the right history

TM: Pardon me?

Koko: They should get the correct history. We were taught about the history of Jan Van Riebeeck

TM: Yes, that is true. And that history is not our history

Koko: No ways!

[END]