

**PHILIP KGOSANA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FALL OF OPPRESSION IN SOUTH  
AFRICA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE LANGA UPRISING OF 1960**

**by**

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

**MAGISTER HEREDITATIS CULTURAEQUE SCIENTIAE (HISTORY)**

**In the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

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**August 2017**

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **1. Introduction**

In this section, the questions and concerns which have informed the content of the dissertation are outlined. The major issues that I will attempt to address are the factors that turned Philip Kgosana into a politician; the role he played in the Langa uprising of March 1960; and the contributions he made to the liberation struggle while in exile and subsequently back at home. The research will use documentary and oral evidence as well as electronic sources in providing answers to these questions. In the process, the dissertation will show that Kgosana made a significant contribution towards the fall of apartheid in South Africa.

There were difficulties however, that emanated from the sources I used. Published works that have been used on Kgosana are all limited in that they only deal with isolated portions of the overall picture. Most of the literature focuses on the period when Kgosana was in Cape Town and on his role during the Langa uprisings in 1960. Much still remains either completely unknown about what happened during his early years in exile, and those years after his return home. This research study therefore is an attempt to contribute towards closing these gaps.

#### **1.1. Chapter Outline**

In this section, an outline of the sequence of chapters, indicating what each contains, is offered. A brief description of the chapters will clarify the major issues addressed in this work.

In this introductory chapter, the research problem is explained, followed by an outline of the procedures and methods used to identify and interrogate sources of information. There is also an explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of the sources. The introduction operates from the premise that historical objectivity is not constituted in reconstructing the past as it actually was, but is rather a product of the methods used in the collection and analysis of data. I will explain how this principle applies in my work.

Chapter II deals with the formative influences on Philip Kgosana, whose childhood associates provide the information on which this account is based. The chapter traces Kgosana's birth and upbringing, the influence on him of family and friends, and his education at Lady Selborne High School. The chapter also looks at Kgosana's subsequent political radicalisation and the role played in this process by poverty, crime and unemployment.

In Chapter III, the schism within the ANC in the 1950s and the politics of Pan-Africanism are examined. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania were leading proponents of the Pan-African ideology and accordingly a source of inspiration to many young Africanists like Kgosana who emerged within the resistance movement in South Africa during the decade.

The Congress Alliance met in Kliptown in 1955 and adopted the Freedom Charter, the preamble of which states that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white. The Africanists argued that the above statement was a betrayal of the African people. Kgosana as an advocate of Africanism argued that there was a land question that the Charter did not address. He felt the Black people were indigenous to South Africa and they were the ones who had to determine the direction in which the country would go. On that fundamental principle the PAC rejected the Freedom Charter.

In Chapter IV, the PAC's 'final and decisive' campaign against the pass laws will be discussed. This occurred in March 1960. Kgosana's role in the anti-pass rally on the 21st and the subsequent Langa uprising will be considered.

Kgosana's life in exile is considered in Chapter V. As a result of the march led by Kgosana to Caledon Police Station in Cape Town at the end of March, the government declared a state of emergency and banned the ANC and the PAC on 8 April 1960.<sup>1</sup> The leaders of the two organizations were arrested and imprisoned, with Robert Sobukwe being sent to Robben Island. Though arrested, Kgosana skipped bail and went into exile, finding his way to Ethiopia where he

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<sup>1</sup> K. M. Kondlo, 'In the twilight of the Azanian Revolution': The Exile History of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa): (1960-1990)' (DPhil, Rand Afrikaans University, 2003), p. 10.

was a refugee for nine years, then Uganda for another nine years, and the Democratic Republic of Congo for a further two. From 1970 Kgosana was employed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in which capacity his role was to help both the ANC and the PAC with food and clothing and deliver services to those organisations. He was with the United Nations for a total of 22 years.

Chapter VI is an epilogue; it focuses on Kgosana's role back home during the period 1996 - 2006. Apart from serving as councillor in the Tshwane Metro, since his retirement Kgosana has been engaged in a number of projects. These include working with old age pensioners in Winterveld and obtaining cooperation from the Home Affairs Department to secure identity documents for people.

Kgosana was meanwhile also the secretary of the Winterveld United Farmers Association; it had a membership of 174 who were engaged in citrus planting. Kgosana was in addition also an active member of the Methodist Church and a local preacher. He was in charge of the Methodist Church in Winterveld since 1998. On 3 March 2004 he was awarded the Order of the Disa medal by the Government of the Western Cape Province for his role in the struggle, and a street was named after him in Khayelitsha.<sup>2</sup>

The various issues discussed in the thesis are synthesised in the seventh, concluding chapter which will summarise the main points made in the dissertation regarding Kgosana's role in South African history.

## **1.2. Sources and Methodology**

In South Africa, as a by-product of the post 1994 political transformation, the Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) devised a code of conduct for oral history practitioners working in African contexts. This association proposed rigorous rules concerning protocol, copies

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<sup>2</sup> Author's interview with Reverend Dr M.S. Mogoba, Moreleta Park, Pretoria, 5 June 2006.

of release agreements and advice to both interviewers and interviewees, who might be confused by or ignorant of legal forms.<sup>3</sup>

OHASA described the responsibilities of the oral historian in terms of setting clear standards for research material selection, objectives, and ethical guidelines that could be used to justify the legitimacy of an oral interview. The guidelines set forth by the OHASA have become standard practice in the field for historians hoping to justify their oral history research.<sup>4</sup>

How these debates fed into the methodology that I followed in my study of Philip Kgosana, is that the ten interviews that I conducted for my dissertation were undertaken in accordance with the ethical guidelines and the code of conduct established by the International Oral History Association (IOHA) and OHASA, both of which recommend the completion of a contract or agreement form prior to the conduct of interviews. In the process, formal questionnaires were compiled and utilised as templates for all interviews.

Regarding the veracity of the accounts, while cross-checking facts provided in the interviews, I was simultaneously searching for internal consistency in the sources. If the pattern of evidence was consistent and drawn from more than one viewpoint, the historical account or interpretation was also considered more credible to that very degree. In the end, the information gained from the interview was also compared with other interviews on the same subject and with related documentary evidence to test its accuracy.

This dissertation essentially endorses oral history as a valid methodology and challenges some of the criticisms raised, specifically regarding memory and interview relationships. Critics are quick to highlight the limitations of oral histories and suggest that oral histories rely heavily on memory, which can be flawed and prone to exaggeration. I contest such assertions that memory is necessarily flawed. Kgosana's was an acute and extremely detailed recollection and the data generated was rich.

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<sup>3</sup> P. Denis and R. Ntsimane, *Oral history in a wounded country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Relationships between interviewers and interviewees have also been questioned by critics of oral history methodology, suggesting that the more intimate the relationship, the greater the danger of bias. In the light of my experience, there is no evidence to suggest that my intimate relationship with Kgosana influenced the research process in this way.

The research approach was purely qualitative in nature and underpinned by phenomenological assumptions. The predominant aim of this research was to enable Kgosana's emotions and experiences to be captured. In order to achieve this, rather than follow a set of predetermined questions in the interviews, I opted to follow the approach of conducting a series of conversations which by their very nature resulted in memories and events being recounted arbitrarily.

At the first interview, the aims of the research were explained to Kgosana, my chief interviewee. I told him that the study was for a dissertation and would explore aspects of his childhood up to the present. It was made clear that Kgosana would have free rein to talk about any subject matter he chose in relation to his childhood and his life in exile. Informed consent and agreement to record the interview sessions was first obtained, and at the start of each subsequent interview, the purpose of the study was reiterated and any questions and concerns that Kgosana raised were discussed. Subsequent interviews began with a reiteration of the aims, and a reflection of the last interview to recap and generate further discussion. The choice of interview venue was considered carefully to create a comfortable and safe environment.

The conversational approach worked well and generated a wealth of data. Although the interviews were difficult to begin with, once started the conversation flowed freely and without prompting. Very often, the interviews lasted up to two hours and in some instances, they were hard to end. It was essential to take this approach, as the main tenet of the research was to enable Kgosana to tell his story, in his own words, viewed from his own perspective. It was difficult to control interview length due to Kgosana's enthusiasm. The flexible nature of the research enabled Kgosana to express the things that he attached importance to. I anticipated a tense start to the interviews, given the intimate nature of the subject matter.



Another interviewee that I can mention in this connection was Mark Shinnars. On numerous occasions, Shinnars was able to critically reflect and make comparisons between current and past society. I anticipated some difficulties with the interview, mainly driven by my own anxieties about the personal and sensitive nature of the topic. I was also conscious about placing Shinnars in a compromised position by probing for information, perhaps intruding on sensitive issues he would prefer not to discuss. I was anxious as to how to begin the interviews and expected Shinnars would find talking about his experiences intrusive, perhaps leading him to be reserved in his responses. I had given little thought how to overcome those concerns and remain objective, except for using a topic guide for references as an ice breaker. But in fact, my worries were largely unfounded as the conversational approach worked well, and the homely surroundings created a relaxed atmosphere. There was no sense of awkwardness, no uncomfortable silences and Shinnars appeared willing to talk at length about his experiences.

In summary, due to the strengths of the methodology, there were no real difficulties while undertaking the interviews. An element of trust was already implicit between Kgosana and myself, and I would argue that this facilitated an open and honest series of interviews. Although such trust need not always be present in intimate interviewee interviewer relations, this example suggests that the trust generated by the intimate relationship facilitated the success of these interviews.

One can therefore conclude by saying that the quality of data obtained from oral histories depends on the chosen methodology. I concur with social historians, who suggest interview techniques, and more importantly, the strength and capabilities of the interviewer, can play an influential role in data collection. One can argue in this case, that chronological order and precise accounts of events were not as salient as discovering the key events within the social and cultural background of Kgosana's childhood. Social historians have argued that the ability to recall events that are most interesting to the participant provides valuable evidence and this was certainly the case in this instance. Coupled with this, key events featured prominently within Kgosana's role in the struggle against apartheid recollections.

### **1.3. Archival sources**

Primary sources on the early life of Kgosana, his life in exile, and his return to the country are either scarce or non-existent. The sources that do exist are often biased, which makes utilising them hazardous. The bias can be attributed to a variety of factors. During its exile years the PAC operated under extremely precarious circumstances, including frequent police operations against its personnel and property. As Thami ka Platje has written, the police raids on PAC offices in Maseru on 1 April 1963 contributed to the loss of a mass of material on the early period of the PAC's history in exile.<sup>5</sup> Discussions went undocumented and internal record keeping systems were only re-established in Tanzania from 1968 onwards.

Most primary documentary materials used in this dissertation were collected from the Unisa Archives which hosts a large collection of documents of the PAC. The most important documents were the Commission of Enquiry into Sharpeville<sup>6</sup> and the report of the Paarl Commission of Enquiry in 1962, which are located in the microfilm section of the Archive.<sup>7</sup>

Visual sources used for this dissertation included video cassettes. One video tape depicts the Cape Town great march of about 30 000 people led by Kgosana on Wednesday 30 March 1960. The video tape also shows Kgosana lecturing to history students at the University of Cape Town on 17 September 1993 about the pass laws.

Newspapers from the National Library of South Africa were also consulted, of which the most important were the *Rand Daily Mail*, *The World* and the *Pretoria News*. They shed light on the rampant poverty and crime that radicalised Kgosana in the 1950s. The above mentioned newspapers also reported extensively on the march of thirty thousand people into central Cape Town in 1960 in the direct aftermath of the Sharpeville Massacre.

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<sup>5</sup> T. Ka Platje, 'The PAC's Internal Underground Activities, 1960-1980', in the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) eds., *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, vol. 2, 1970 – 1980 (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2004), p. 682.

<sup>6</sup> UNISA Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, Accession No: RP38/1976 (FI 4053), Republic of South Africa, Commission of Enquiry into Sharpeville, 1960.

<sup>7</sup> UNISA Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, Accession No: 139 (FI 4053-4058), Paarl Commission of Enquiry.

The Historical Papers Research Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand contains a number of collections that were consulted during the development of this thesis. One is the Gail Gerhart Papers which has substantial material on the evolution of the PAC from its formation up to the time of its banning in 1960.<sup>8</sup>

A second is the Robert Sobukwe Papers, which contains correspondence between Sobukwe and Benjamin Pogrund, mainly during Sobukwe's detention on Robben Island.<sup>9</sup> Another useful collection was the Benjamin Pogrund Papers, which has material on the Sharpeville and the Langa uprisings, on political prisoners and on apartheid generally.<sup>10</sup> A collection with a similarly wide scope is that of the South African Institute of Race Relations.<sup>11</sup>

#### **1.4. Historiographical Overview**

Publications on the early life of Kgosana are scarce. Most of the literature focuses on his life when he was in Cape Town and especially on his role during the Langa uprisings. As a result, much still remains unknown about his early life, his life in exile, and his experiences after his return home. This dissertation is an attempt to contribute towards closing these gaps.

In his *Black politics in South Africa since 1945*, Tom Lodge provides invaluable information on the PAC following its banning and subsequent period in exile,<sup>12</sup> but he tended to rely heavily on newspaper accounts and police records, and nothing is said in the book about Kgosana's early life, his life in exile and his experiences after his return home.

Meanwhile, in his earlier doctoral dissertation, 'Insurrectionism in South Africa: The Pan Africanist Congress and the Poqo movement 1959-1965', Lodge discussed the PAC's origins and the Sharpeville and Langa crises, but, again, little is said in it about Kgosana's life.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> University of the Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive (UW-HP), Gail M. Gerhart Papers (A2422).

<sup>9</sup> University of the Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive (UW-HP), Robert Sobukwe Papers (A2618).

<sup>10</sup> UW-HP, Benjamin Pogrund Papers (A1888).

<sup>11</sup> UW-HP, South African Institute of Race Relations Papers (AD1646).

<sup>12</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983).

<sup>13</sup> T. Lodge, 'Insurrectionism in South Africa: The Pan-Africanist Congress and the Poqo Movement 1959-1965', (DPhil, University of York, 1984), p. 197.

In his later book, *Sharpeville: an apartheid massacre and its consequences*, Lodge dealt with the Sharpeville crisis in depth, but focused less on the PAC's period in exile, while nothing is said about Kgosana's life in exile and his experiences after his return home from exile.<sup>14</sup>

Philip Kgosana's own autobiography, *Lest we forget*, which explains Kgosana's early life, also focuses more on the role played by the author in the anti-pass campaign of 1960. What motivated Kgosana to write the book was his felt need to put together an accurate account of the campaign.<sup>15</sup> Kgosana believed that too many accounts have been written featuring all sorts of distortions, biases and half-truths. In the book he writes with a passion characteristic of a loyal supporter of the PAC. His book covers his experiences in parts of Africa where there was a PAC presence, namely Tanzania, Ghana, Ethiopia, Zaire and Uganda. The book shows that Kgosana has made a significant contribution towards the struggle against oppression in the country. However, Kgosana's autobiography did not say anything about his experience after his return home from exile.

In 1995, Elias Ntloedibe published *Here is a Tree: Political Biography of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe*. The book examines aspects of the PAC's history in exile. The overall picture it depicts is of a heroic liberation struggle led by the PAC before it was banned and exiled. It creates the impression that all was well with the PAC. However, the book does not focus much on Kgosana as a political personality. The book was nevertheless helpful as a source, especially with regard to its arguments regarding the politics of the PAC and Pan Africanism.<sup>16</sup>

Thomas Karis and Gail Gerhart's *From Protest to Challenge. A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa*, particularly the third volume, 'Challenge and Violence 1953-1964', focuses specifically on the split in the ANC which led to the formation of the PAC.<sup>17</sup> Again

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<sup>14</sup> T. Lodge, *Sharpeville and Apartheid Massacre and Its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.12, 171.

<sup>15</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget* (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1988), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> E. Ntloedibe, *Here is a Tree, Political Biography of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe* (Mogoditshane, Botswana: Century-Turn Publishers, 1995).

<sup>17</sup> T. Karis, and G.M. Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa*, Vol. 3 Challenge and Violence, 1953-1964(Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977), p. 84.

however, the life of Kgosana does not feature in this work. The book was also helpful as a source, especially with regard to the events that led to Sharpeville and Langa massacres.

Benjamin Pogrund's *How Can Man Die Better*,<sup>18</sup> and his later *Sobukwe and Apartheid*, are more about Sobukwe's friendship with the author than his involvement in the PAC or his relations with Kgosana. The latter book focuses specifically on the view that the personality of Sobukwe was crucial to the internal unity of the PAC and that his absence from the organisation during its exile years created a void that no one in the organisation could fill.<sup>19</sup> The book was nevertheless helpful as a source, especially with regard to its discussion of the significance of the Sharpeville and Langa massacres.

Kwandiwe Kondlo's *In the Twilight of the African Revolution: The Pan African Congress of Azania* (South Africa) focuses on the internal conflicts in the PAC and how they impacted on the functioning of the organisation during the exile period. It traces the events which led to the banning of the PAC and demonstrates how the organisation re-established itself in exile between 1960 and 1962. The book also examines organisational developments and internal conflict at the headquarters of the PAC in Tanzania from 1964 to 1990.

Kondlo also examines conditions inside PAC camps and the evolution of the PAC's military strategy during the course of the conflict. He stresses that the history of the PAC in exile is an example of how poor organisational structures can immobilize the progress of a liberation movement.<sup>20</sup> However, the book does not focus much on Kgosana as a political personality. The book was helpful as a source, especially with regard to the PAC leadership in exile. During its exile years, the PAC leadership failed to develop and portray a positive political image of the organisation. This caused great discontent among the PAC exile community especially the likes of Kgosana.

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<sup>18</sup> B. Pogrund, *How Can Man Die Better, The Life of Robert Sobukwe* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> B. Pogrund, *Sobukwe and Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1990).

<sup>20</sup> K. M. Kondlo, "'In the twilight of the Azanian revolution' The Exile History of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. (South Africa): (1960-1990)", (DPhil, Rand Afrikaans University, 2003).

Mxolisi Mgxashe's memoirs takes the reader through the life of 'Bra Ace' (as he was affectionately known), who was 16 years old when he participated in the Langa uprising, before he escaped to Botswana where he got involved with the PAC in exile. Again however, the life of Kgosana does not feature in this work. The book provides important information on the defiance of the pass laws campaign which resulted in the Sharpeville and Langa massacres.<sup>21</sup>

In the second volume of *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* series published by the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), Thami ka Platjje writes about PAC leadership conflicts which plunged the organisation in exile into crisis.<sup>22</sup> This again caused great discontent within the PAC exile community. Again however, nothing is said about the early life of Kgosana, his life in exile and his experiences after his return home from exile.

Philip Frankel's work on the Sharpeville massacre also attempts to offer a balanced perspective of that event. But the book also fails to discuss Kgosana's early life and the life of the PAC in exile. The book was however helpful in facilitating an understanding of the PAC's plan with regard to the defiance of the pass laws which resulted in the Sharpeville massacre.<sup>23</sup>

I have chosen to write about Kgosana because I believe that Kgosana has made a significant contribution towards the struggle against oppression in the country. Kgosana spent a number of years fighting against discrimination during his life, and he is still engaged in activities that contributed towards the social and economic transformation of the country.

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<sup>21</sup> M. Mgxashe, *Are you with us?: The Story of a PAC Activist* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2006).

<sup>22</sup>T. Ka Platjje, 'The PAC's Internal Underground Activities, 1960-1980', p. 670.

<sup>23</sup> P. Frankel, *An Ordinary Atrocity: Sharpeville and Its Massacre* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2000).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **FORMATIVE INFLUENCES ON PHILIP KGOSANA'S LIFE**

#### **2.1. Kgosana's Family**

Philip Ata Kgosana was born on 12 October 1936 at Makapanstad (Bakgatla Ba Mosetlha is the town's Tswana name; Makapanstad got its name from a chief called Makapan). Kgosana grew up in a family of five consisting of his mother Letta, his father Simon, his brother Sam and his sister Louisa (she was named after their grandmother). His family had a great impact on his life. According to his sister, their mother Letta was ever conciliatory, ever understanding, never questioning or resisting any act or utterance by her husband, no matter what it was. She only knew that her husband had to be respected.

The person who really loved Kgosana while he was very young was his grandmother (also called Louisa), the mother of his father. Kgosana used to think that she was his mother and when she died in 1957, Kgosana said at the funeral that his mother had died. That offended his actual mother. Kgosana's sister recalls that their grandmother had a strong influence on their life. Philip Kgosana was taught by his grandmother at an early age to respect everybody, especially the elders. She taught him that there was a tendency on the part of the young to believe they knew more or were wiser than their elders. The fact that a young person had been to school, and could therefore read, write, calculate and converse in languages other than his own, did not mean that he was entitled to despise the old people.<sup>24</sup>

His grandmother was very strict though; she used to pour a bucket of cold water on any of her grandchildren who overslept when they should have been up doing the daily chores (which were supposed to begin at 6 a.m.). Despite the economic and social deprivation that most African people

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<sup>24</sup> Author's interview with Makgopela Kekulu Louisa, Winterveldt, 8 August 2005.

faced in those days, they could still be proud of having very solid communal values and social discipline. Kgosana would have discussions with his grandmother about the factors that generally hindered the progress of the African people.

Kgosana's grandmother told him in their discussions that a lack of unity and selfishness hindered African progress. She said that the African would tell you that 'unity is strength', but his actions implied he did not know what that meant. Africans expected other people to carry them on their shoulders, and to spoon-feed them. Unless Africans were prepared to do things for themselves, other people were not going to help them forever. She cited yet another impediment to African progress as being tribalism: the *Mosotho* did not consider the *Nguni* group to be people, and vice versa. What was required, his grandmother said, was to propagate the gospel of unity among Africans.

Kgosana's grandmother also said there was much jealousy and selfishness among the Africans. This contributed its share towards hindering their progress. When the African has knowledge of something useful, he guards it jealously, keeping it to himself. His fellows should not know about it, it was his own secret. That is why today, many things pertinent to science and nature have accompanied Africans to the grave, she said. Africans withheld information and would not disseminate what knowledge they had. It was a secret to be guarded jealously.

Kgosana was told that the graveyards are the wealthiest place on earth. Most of the people died having not made the most of their talent. The reasons for this being those facts listed above, namely jealousy, selfishness and low esteem.

His grandmother also said to Kgosana that a man who respects others without regard for their social standing was a man who was well mannered and cultured. The man who does not care a straw for the feelings of others deserved to be thrown into a cage. Bad manners show a man to be neither civilized nor cultured, no matter what position he might hold in his life. There was the bullying sort of person who imagines that he can boss others to demonstrate his strength and fearlessness. He thinks that to try to understand another man's opinion is to be a weakling. But such persons fail to realize that one does not need to be aggressive to be a human being and that



the better man tries to understand the other's point of view, to meet him halfway, and not to have one's own way always.

Kgosana had to be a gentleman, civilized and polite. He was also taught to refrain from abusive language and to always use the phrase 'thank you' in every sphere of life. Kgosana was told in these discussions with his grandmother that gentleness was the mark of a perfect gentleman and the cornerstone of a civilized person. Gentleness, firmness of purpose and politeness were not opposites. They were the qualities that should be present in anyone who is in charge of other people or who has to deal with them in any way. The use of abusive language was another kind of bad manners that was quickly poisoning race relations. A man who abuses another was not showing that he was a man; on the contrary, he lowers himself. These were the values instilled in Kgosana during his youth.

Kgosana was also taught at an early age of his life to use the phrase 'thank you'. He was told not to withhold those words. His grandmother told him that there is nothing that contributes more to social goodwill than this phrase, which should be kept on everybody's lips. He was also advised to trust in God. His sister, Louisa, maintained that Kgosana had a place where he used to pray whenever he encountered a problem.

Kgosana sister Louisa also recalls that her brother spent a lot of time with his real mother, and as a child, his mother could tell that he was a very shy child. He would not like to be touched by a person who was not a member of his family.

There was one incident his sister recalls at the end of Kgosana's first year in which his mother carried him on her back, and someone told her that the child had dropped his head badly. She removed Kgosana from her back and found that he was actually not breathing, he was gone, dead.

The father was far away in the field and they sent somebody to go and call him. The old man came and found that Kgosana was covered with a blanket. The old man looked at him and being a very religious man, started praying very hard for him to return back to this life. After one hour of prayer, Kgosana revived. The whole body of Kgosana had turned black, as his mother recalled it: the entire

skin had been replaced, and the original one had peeled off. They did not know what happened and what the cause of that was.<sup>25</sup> This event can be interpreted as her speaking symbolically and saying that Kgosana did not die because he was destined to reach greater heights. That was a sign that showed that Kgosana would be a great man and would fight oppression in South Africa.

## 2.2. His Community

Kgosana's family originated in what was Potgietersrus, and is now Mokgopong. As mentioned above, the family later moved to Makapanstad, the home of the *Bakgatla* nation. Makapanstad was a sprawling village some twenty kilometres northwest of Hammanskraal. It was large and was divided into sections such as Majakaneng, Maropeng, Berea, Mapulaneng, Mosate and Mmaudu. Kgosana's home was in Berea.

Kgosana grew up in Makapanstad, where the day-to-day life of the mammoth village was centred on the chief, Makapan, who held a traditional assembly (*kgotla*) every Monday at his home, the Great Palace. All able-bodied men were forced to attend the meetings, with exceptions only being made for those who were working. Far-reaching decisions were taken at these *kgotlas*, including the settlement of disputes and the punishment of wrongdoers. Absence from the assemblies was a serious offence. When a crime was committed, corporal punishment was administered by whipping the victim. Philip Kgosana wrote in his autobiography that he felt that the decisions of the *kgotla* were prone to be abused at times.<sup>26</sup>

During times of drought, a day would be fixed by the chief for the nation to go out and pray for rain. All the men would go out into the forest across the Apies River to look for 'evil objects or symbols', which were believed to be responsible for the drought. Long lines of men would move forward in formation, picking items such as bones, scraps of metal, rags, empty tins, and pieces of wood. All these items would be piled up into a heap. After the performance of some rituals, the

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget* (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1988), pp. 1, 3.

heap would be set on fire. It was believed that at the end of the ceremony; rain would fall and indeed it fell, according to Kgosana's sister.<sup>27</sup>

Communal activities were also a part of life in Makapanstad at that time. Women used to work together to plaster a neighbour's house or assist each other to thrash corn after harvest. All the host did was to prepare enough food and drink for the activity, which was called *letsima* in the seSotho language. During the ploughing season, men with their spans of oxen had to work the chief's fields first. Absence was an offence. Weeding and harvesting of the chief's field was also communally carried out. The death of any person within the community was a matter of great concern for the whole village. All men in the village were expected to attend the funeral ceremony. On such occasions, mourners helped to organize burials, with volunteers digging the grave of the deceased. Again, absence from the funeral of a community member was regarded seriously and viewed as an offence. It was the obligation of the whole village to be present at such occasions. Mourners usually brought with them food provisions in the form of corn or maize meal for the bereaved family.<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, Kgosana's father was a lay preacher in the church of Christ, and a man of multiple gifts and seemingly inexhaustible capabilities. To Kgosana, his father seemed to know everything. Kgosana wrote in his autobiography that he looked up to his father as a role model. Besides being a carpenter, his father was also a welder and a motor mechanic. Kgosana's father also knew something about indigenous medicines and herbs. He was also an orator, especially at the National Council meetings (*kgotlas*). He was a very industrious businessman and wanted his children to be like him. He always wanted his children to be close to him.<sup>29</sup>

Kgosana furthermore recalled in my interview with him that his father used to be a building contractor, and he used to build a lot of houses in Makapanstad. Kgosana used to go around with him to many villages. So when the *Bakgatla* wanted to build a secondary school they asked Kgosana's father to build the school.<sup>30</sup> Kgosana's sister recalls that her brother was there helping

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<sup>27</sup> Author's interview with Makgopela Kekulu Louisa.

<sup>28</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Author's interview with Kgosana, 21 September 2005.

his father, but his father had asthma. As soon as he finished building the school, the chief ordered Kgosana's father to paint the school. He replied to the chief's emissaries that he would not paint because the paint would affect his chest. The *lekgotla* told him that the king had said he should paint the school. He had no business to refuse. His father, being a very tough type of guy, said that he would not do it. They pressed him. In anger, he said in Afrikaans 'Ek sal nie' ('I won't do it'). The *Lekgotla* thought that he had insulted the king. He was fined a whole cow and he was very angry. He decided that he was not going to stay in Makapanstad any longer as the *lekgotla* evidently did not care for his health. He decided to walk out. Fortunately at that time, there was a plot that was being sold in the Winterveldt and he bought it.<sup>31</sup>

For Philip Kgosana's brother, Sam, the year 1948 was the worst of his academic life. Kgosana's father told Sam at the end of that year that his school career had come to an end. Sam had just completed his primary school and had turned sixteen. Kgosana's father was determined to terminate Sam's studies. He would brook no argument to the contrary. Pressure was exerted by Kgosana's grandmother to keep Sam at school, but Sam only spent a few months in the first year of secondary school, as his father would have no more of it. His father's view was that school education served no purpose and that in any case, his brother Sam knew everything he needed to know to go through life. And so Kgosana's brother left school, bitter and disgruntled. Sam spent the next few years driving the family pick up van or working as a shop assistant in the family grocery shop. Sam was only able to return to school two years later in 1951, after severe protests from his grandmother and uncle.<sup>32</sup>

### 2.3. Schooling

At the age of seven in 1944, Philip Kgosana started schooling under a tree with an untrained lady teacher known to the students only as 'Mmantee'. She was the first person to introduce the letters of the alphabet and numbers to Kgosana. Another lady teacher, Mistress Mmone, was the wife of the headmaster, Mr. Mmusi, who taught Kgosana in pre-primary class. In 1948, when he was in Standard Two, misfortune struck Kgosana, as his father abruptly terminated his schooling (as he

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<sup>31</sup> Author's interview with Makgopela Kekulu Louisa.

<sup>32</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 3.

had his brother's), saying he had to attend to the family's cattle fulltime. His father had attached so much value to farming that he thought it was not so necessary to acquire book learning. All that they needed to do was to work on that farm. As a result Kgosana's early days at school were interrupted by looking after cattle. Some weeks he had to attend school three days. In other weeks he attended two days because he had to exchange with one boy with whom he grew up. Kgosana became annoyed by these developments.

However, by June 1948, Kgosana was back in class after all the cattle had died of disease. He had lost three months of schooling, and though he thought he had performed fairly well despite the obstacles encountered over the course of the year, he was asked to repeat the class in 1949. That was bad news. Kgosana watched his classmates proceed to the next class. But he persevered, and at the beginning of 1950, he was promoted to Standard Three. He was among the best students in his class, and the next four years saw him topping the class in the half-year and end-year examinations. He passed Standard Six with first class honours at the Nchaupe II Memorial Secondary School in Makapanstad in 1953.<sup>33</sup>

Dr Verwoerd, in a Senate address, once asked, 'What is the use of teaching a Bantu mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life'. More institutions for advanced education in urban areas were not desired by the state. The Africans were to be guided to serve their own community. There was no place for African in the European community above certain forms of labour. Within his own community, however, all doors were open. 'The Bantu teacher serves the Bantu community and his salary must be fixed accordingly', Verwoerd said.<sup>34</sup> For that reason, it was of no avail for an African to receive training that had as its aim absorption in the European community. Apartheid education was extended to university level in the late 1950s. Kgosana regarded all that as a serious encroachment on academic freedom and thought it should be stopped immediately.

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> *The Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story* (Cape Town: Readers Digest Association of South Africa, 1988), p. 379.

The Eiselen Commission of Enquiry of 1949, whose main function was to inquire into and to report on all aspects of native education, emphasized the point that ‘we should not give the Natives an academic education as some people are too prone to do. If we do this we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labour in the country?’ He was saying that blacks should receive a technical education. The entire orientation of Kgosana’s political outlook started here with the beginning of Bantu education in 1953.<sup>35</sup> This racially discriminatory education policy would soon lead talented African youths such as Kgosana to become critical of the apartheid system.

Mr P.A. Moore, chairman of the Johannesburg Teacher Training College and a former inspector of schools, was shocked by the incredibly narrow approach of Bantu education. This was reflected in an examination paper that he once saw. One question asked pupils to draw a neat outline map of South Africa and show clearly the parts occupied by each of the following races: Vendas, Sothos, Zulus, Xhosas, Tsongas and Bushmen. Mr Moore felt that the motive was obviously to instil in Native children the belief that segregation in strict ethnic groups was the natural pattern in South Africa. Kgosana shared Mr. Moore’s sentiments and in that regard Kgosana also did not like the apartheid trend in education for non-European children, and this led him to become impatient with Bantu education.<sup>36</sup>

Another creative quality that the young Kgosana displayed quite early in his life was a love for debate. School debates during those days were organized around topical issues, usually of a political nature. The first step of Dr Hendrik Verwoerd as the newly appointed Minister of Native Affairs in 1950 was to remove control of African education from the provinces and to centralize them in the Bantu Education Department, which he controlled. Then, by reducing government aid to the mission schools, his Department also assumed responsibility for the employment and training of African teachers.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Author’s interview with Philip Kgosana.

<sup>37</sup> Author’s interview with Makgopela Kekulu Louisa.

Dr Verwoerd said that the Bantu teacher's role was to serve the Bantu community and his salary must be fixed accordingly. Teachers were atrociously paid: a black teacher in 1953 for instance, earned just over £2 a week and a university graduate just over £4, rising to £7 after 13 years.<sup>38</sup> Their white counterparts earned three times more. Those are the first things that stirred Kgosana's thoughts, even though he was still very young.<sup>39</sup>

Christian organizations also urged the repeal of the Bantu Education Act. The Christian organizations described the Act as contrary to the will of God, since it was based on apartheid. They argued the legislation was an attack on the natural rights and dignity of men and the idea of them as being made in the image of God. It was designed to ensure the perpetual domination of one racial group by another. The church believed the act would indoctrinate the African child with the idea that he was and always would be inferior. And if the African child was taught this from youth, the White child would get the idea that he was innately superior.<sup>40</sup>

Additionally, like many other South African cities, Pretoria was encircled by a wreath of African settlements. On the eastern side there was Eastwood, Riverside and Vlakfontein, to the west Lady Selborne, Atteridgeville, Marabastad and Newclare-Banthule. North of the city were the settlements of Winterveldt, Ga-Rankuwa, Hebron, Hammanskraal and Wallmansthal. In each of these townships, people from all over southern Africa had made their homes, and those closest to the city centre were multiracial in composition. Lady Selborne, established in 1905, was one of the two Pretoria townships in which Africans could buy land. Most occupied rooms in six-roomed houses of which the back yards were crammed with loan sharks and shanties. The majority of the population were tenants, and paid a monthly rental of £2-10d to the landlords and landladies (Bommasetene) who were heavily indebted and dependent on this income for their livelihood.<sup>41</sup>

## 2.4. Lady Selborne

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<sup>38</sup> *The Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa*, p. 379.

<sup>39</sup> Author's interview with Makgopela Kekulu Louisa.

<sup>40</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana.

<sup>41</sup> S. Mathabatha, 'The PAC and POQO in Pretoria, 1958-1964', in the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) eds., *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, vol.1, 1960 – 1970 (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), p.301.

In 1954, at the age of seventeen, Philip Kgosana was admitted as a standard seven student to the Lady Selborne High School.<sup>42</sup> Kgosana and his brother Sam rented a room, part of a large four-bedroom house which accommodated two other families. One of his neighbours, known only as Papa Setia, also lived with his family of five in a single room exactly the same size as theirs. The other two rooms were occupied by a single lady, Auntie Martha. Residents of Lady Selborne had been living under the threat of removal from 1954. On 12 June 1959, the area was officially declared a 'black spot' in terms of the Group Areas Act.<sup>43</sup> The Act's intention was to restrict each group to its own residential and trading sections of cities and towns by controlling the purchase or occupation of land or dwellings in specified areas under the Act.<sup>44</sup>

Giving evidence before the Native Riots Commission in Johannesburg, Father Trevor Huddleston stated that there was lack of recreational facilities in the African Townships. Related to this, there was also a sense of frustration among the youth. Much of the dissatisfaction was brought about by the Native Urban Areas Act. Father Huddleston stressed that the majority of Africans were peace loving and law-abiding, but were living under the most trying conditions. In the majority of South African townships including Lady Selborne, some of the houses were indescribably filthy, with no privacy. Many of the families slept on the floor and the whole atmosphere was compared by the newspaper *The World* to 'a disorganized public lavatory'.<sup>45</sup> These conditions heightened Kgosana's opposition to apartheid.

There were women who turned to prostitution to earn money for the family. There were also the young men who had been refused jobs, who turned to crime to make ends meet. There was another element, which was a particular cause of concern for Kgosana, and this was the general lawlessness and hooliganism that was taking place in almost every township, and Lady Selborne was not an exception. According to police statistics published by *The World* in 1957, roughly one African was injured every day in a knife attack in South Africa.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Mathabatha, 'The PAC and POQO in Pretoria, 1958-1964', p. 302.

<sup>44</sup> *The Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa*, p. 376.

<sup>45</sup> *The World*, 4 March 1950.

<sup>46</sup> *The World*, 29 June 1957.



To cite one example of this crime and hooliganism in the townships, one of the most feared gangsters in Potchefstroom died in a knife duel. The gangster was known as Pirate Dikube, age 21, and he had spent the day terrorizing passers-by with a butcher knife when he came across a group of youths playing dice in the street outside a cinema. He grabbed the stake money and the players objected to this. Pirate drew his knife and threatened to stab them. He then took aim at a 16 year old boy, wounding him in the shoulder. The boy took out his own knife. They circled each other, knives flashing in the sun. A big crowd watched, breathless. The confident Pirate smiled, it was alleged. He sprang at the boy, but the boy stepped aside and as Pirate flew past the boy drove his knife into Pirate's neck. Pirate tried to smother the gushing blood with one hand. In his right he still clutched his knife. He fell down and he died. People where Pirate lived are said to have rejoiced at the news of his death.<sup>47</sup>

Philip Kgosana was also unsympathetic towards the fate of the likes of Dikube. He felt that a class of thieves, robbers, burglars and murderers cannot and should not be allowed by the civilized to enjoy the rights of freedom. According to Kgosana, a fight against this evil must be fought by all Africans who love their race. The law of killing one another by knife must be uprooted and be superseded by the law of human dignity.

Kgosana realized early in his life that the Africans played a major part in the South African way of life. Despite this, the average European knew little about the African, and even less of what he was thinking.<sup>48</sup> These were also the views of Mr. E.H. Haveman, former manager of the Durban Municipal Native Administration Department. Mr. Haveman said that the number of Europeans who could claim to know the Native was restricted to some officials in Native Administration departments, along with those missionaries, social workers and left-wingers who made it their business to find out the way the Native was thinking. The rest of the White community was in the dark because there was so little contact between them and Africans – their major point of contact with the black community was through hierarchical relationships such as those with their domestic

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<sup>47</sup> *The World*, 12 January 1957.

<sup>48</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana, 16 September 2005.

servants. Kgosana did not like that and he cherished the idea that all people in South Africa should live together, black and white.<sup>49</sup>

In Lady Selborne there were a number of famous men; one of them was Philemon Tefu, who used to go to gaol every Friday. He had decided to refuse to carry his pass book as required by the law, so the government used to set on him. He used to go to gaol almost every week in defiance of the apartheid system and he thereby became an inspiration to the youth, especially the likes of Kgosana. Another hero of his was Dr W.F. Nkomo, one of the leading individuals of the early history of the ANC Youth League - he was also a Lady Selborne resident. Dr Nkomo was a leader of a moral rearmament movement in the settlement. His example inspired Kgosana.<sup>50</sup>

Lady Selborne High School was a fairly big school on the outskirts of the freehold Lady Selborne African Township which was about seven kilometres from the centre of Pretoria. Since it was the only secondary school in the township, students from most of the primary schools in and around the settlement sought places in the high school. Those students who had passed their Standard Six with first class honours were all put in Form 1(a), and there Kgosana found himself in a group of about fifty or so really bright boys and girls from around Pretoria.<sup>51</sup>

Kgosana's earliest awareness of apartheid as a system was obtained through the *Bantu World*, a weekly newspaper in which he read about political raids, township violence, crime as well as the plight of the people all over the country.

He was also introduced to South African politics at his school. For most of the 1950s, Pretoria, like other urban centres, suffered under the segregationist laws of the apartheid regime. Nevertheless, unlike locations in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and the Vaal, African locations in Pretoria were relatively peaceful at the time. This was almost certainly due to the absence of labour organizations such as the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU),

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<sup>49</sup> *Sunday Times*, 24 October 1954.

<sup>50</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana.

<sup>51</sup> Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 4.

which were extremely active in more industrialized areas. Political activism at grassroots level in Pretoria was limited to a few individuals, most of them teachers.<sup>52</sup>

Teachers played a leading role in the promotion of political activism in Lady Selborne. This happened despite the government's policy that teachers were not supposed to engage in political activities. Almost all these teachers believed in the axiom 'spare the rod and spoil the child'. Even though Kgosana felt at the time that corporal punishment was painful and humiliating – especially when pupils had to take off their pants – he conceded that such treatment usually put the students straight.

As a young and ambitious student, he was in the able hands of teachers like N. Masemula, Bob Leshoai and Prince Vilakazi, respectively his History, English and Biology teachers. The principal at the time was Mr. S.P. Kwakwa. Kgosana found Masemula the most inspiring. Kgosana credits Masemula with having planted the seeds of political rebellion in his mind.<sup>53</sup> Masemula strongly refuted the claims of the white colonial historians that the 'Kaffir Wars' had come about because the Africans had stolen cattle from the whites. He maintained that Jan van Riebeeck and the British settlers who came to South Africa did not bring any cattle with them. Kgosana recalled how Masemula also taught them about the inequalities in the country, of how African people were suffering under apartheid and of how, as young people, they should prepare themselves to rule a free South Africa.<sup>54</sup>

Kgosana also recounted how their teachers informed them about anti-colonial struggles taking place elsewhere in Africa, especially in Ghana and Kenya. These examples, he recalled, galvanized pupils to participate in the struggle against apartheid. Teachers at Lady Selborne encouraged pupils to challenge the apartheid system in any form. As young people, they were highly inspired by this type of thing and they felt that they had to fight apartheid.

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<sup>52</sup> R. Kayser and M. Adhikari, 'Land and Liberty! The African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa during the 1960s', in the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) eds., *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, vol.1, 1960 – 1970 (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), p. 306.

<sup>53</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

It was during this time that Philip Kgosana started expressing his own political ideas in writing. His school used to have a magazine, called the Lady Selborne High School Journal, and Kgosana was a regular contributor of articles in which he spoke about his political ideas, his feelings about the direction of the country, and his views regarding the need to resist apartheid.

## **2.5. Young Adulthood**

Music to Kgosana went far beyond being the ‘food of love’ as Shakespeare called it. It was also a great political inspiration. Whilst some of the songs he loved were praises of birds, rivers, mountains and nature in general, Kgosana was most inspired by the musicians who sung about ‘freedom’. Hamilton Masiza’s ‘Hay’ usizi lomnt’omnyama eAfrika’, which lamented the misfortunes of Africans, moved Kgosana to think seriously about the predicament of the black man in South Africa. This music described the humiliation, degradation and dehumanization that Africans were subjected to at the hands of others. But, like Kgosana’s grandmother, Masiza put the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Africans themselves for behaving as if they are still in ‘darkness’ and for not trusting each other and uniting to overcome their woes. By listening to this music Kgosana become more and more impatient with the political status quo. He also listened to the music of Mariam Makeba, Caphais Seminya, Letta Mbuli and Dorothy Masuku (all these musicians went to exile, as a result of the apartheid policy in South Africa).<sup>55</sup>

Life was not easy for Kgosana in Lady Selborne. In the first place, he had very little money to live on as his father used to give him five shillings, or, if he was lucky, 10 shillings a week. Classmates in Form 1(a) included Thomas Madumo, who later became principal of a teacher training college in Mbabane, Swaziland; Stephen Serudu, later a lecturer in African Languages at the University of South Africa (UNISA); and Abraham Nkomo, later a Medical doctor in Mamelodi; while Robinson Matseke became a journalist. Others such as Joe Motsogi, and Lockey Make also went on to have had distinguished careers.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

Serudu came from Zebediela in the northern Transvaal. What they had in common was that they had both had passed the standard six examinations of 1953 with flying colours. Together with other students from the township and other townships in the Pretoria area, they were placed in form 1A in 1954. They were expected to do well at the end of the year. The competition was tough, Serudu recalled. However, it would seem that each and every one of them was prepared to work hard. And their hard work paid off. At the end of the year they had done so well that the school felt it would waste their time if they were promoted to form II. They were instead promoted to form III. Kgosana and Serudu were among the few who were given an opportunity to do their Junior Certificate course in two years. At the end of 1955, they completed the Junior Certificate Examinations, receiving first class marks.

The friendship between the two grew closer when they were in matric from 1956 to 1957. They were gradually becoming brothers and no longer just friends. They ate, slept, and studied together for the two years that they were reading for Matriculation. Their roads parted after Serudu completed matriculation in 1957.<sup>56</sup>

Kgosana was only able to complete matric in March 1958, because ill health forced him to put off his schooling for a large part of 1957. Early in 1959 he got a clerical post at a Coca Cola factory in Pretoria. Within two weeks he was fired because, the supervisor alleged, he was lazy. He managed to get another job with the Department of Bantu Education near the Pretoria railway station as a messenger boy. Again the job lasted for only two weeks. He resigned because he secured a loan scholarship from the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) to go and Study Economics and Commerce at the University of Cape Town.<sup>57</sup>

## **2.6. The Pan Africanist Congress**

1959 found Serudu studying for a Teachers' Diploma at the then Bantu Normal College in Pretoria, while Kgosana had enrolled for a degree in economics at the University of Cape Town. However,

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<sup>56</sup> Author's interview with Stephen Serudu, 13 April 2006.

<sup>57</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 6.

this was not the end of their friendship. No length of distance could break it. They remained in contact through letter writing. They made the best use of this medium to keep their friendship alive.<sup>58</sup>

In one of Kgosana's letters to Serudu, he wrote: 'My dear pal, have you ever sat down to ponder over our historical, controversial, memorable past, our uncertain, volatile present and our unknown, hazy and gloomy future? Indeed there is a divinity that shapes our lives. There is some power that is controlling and directing our destinies.' Kgosana concluded: 'What is the future holding in store for us?'<sup>59</sup>

According to Serudu, in 1959 when the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) was formed, they were among the first to join it, Kgosana while in Cape Town, and Serudu at the Pretoria Normal College. Although they both joined the organization, Kgosana was the one who was more active, becoming its regional secretary in the Western Cape. As student teachers, they had agreed to work underground for the movement while at the same time educating the next generation for the future takeover of South Africa, or so they hoped. Their activities were more academic than political at this time.

According to Serudu, Kgosana confirmed his commitment to politics in a letter written on 31 May 1959. 'Steph, I am a politician and the study of politics will do me good. Figures don't appeal to me. Odd things like commerce do not fascinate me. You know me very well. One thing true is that I am capable of speech and I am more or less interested in discussing the difficulties that envelope our little lives.'<sup>60</sup>

Although Kgosana stated that commerce did not interest him, he ended up with a Bachelor of Commerce Degree from UNISA. Serudu also mentions that, even while at the high school, Kgosana was an eloquent speaker and took part in school debates. The oratorical skills he developed in the process would come in useful for him later, as we will see.

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<sup>58</sup> Author's interview with Stephen Serudu.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

Kgosana never deviated from his objectives. He was brave, eloquent, fearless and ever ready to face whatever obstacle or problem came before him. He had always believed that freedom would come during his lifetime. Even when Kgosana was in exile in Lesotho in 1961, he never lost contact with his old friend. Serudu alluded to the fact that no amount of censorship could discourage them from continuing their old practice of using letters to share their views and to brief each other about the situation in the country. Very often Serudu was asked by the police about Kgosana's whereabouts. He never divulged this information.

In addition, since the passing of Kgosana's brother, Sam in 1963 (he was killed by hooligans in Johannesburg) Serudu had become a surrogate son at the Kgosana family home and a link between them and Philip in the Western Cape. Now and again Serudu had to update the sister about Philip's well-being and safety. It was a great moment for Serudu when he took Kgosana's mother, sister and daughter to Swaziland to meet him and his family. At the time Kgosana had a daughter and a son and so did Serudu. Be that as it may they were hopeful that one day Kgosana would be able to return to his country of birth – 'Azania' as they now called it.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **THE NEW NATIONALISM**

For much of the first half of the 20th century, black politics beyond South Africa's borders was marked by the rise of 'Africanist' ideas. It is crucial at this point to look at these ideas because Philip Kgosana was a close follower of them.

Leading early proponents of pan-Africanism included, among others, W.E.B. du Bois, George Padmore and Marcus Garvey. A series of pan-Africanist congresses were convened in the first half of the twentieth century. The first of these was held in London in 1900, organized by the Trinidadian lawyer H. Sylvester Williams, and attended by Du Bois. The aim and objective was to register protest against European occupation of African lands.<sup>62</sup>

From 1937 onwards, a notable feature of Pan-Africanist conferences was the participation in them of African leaders like Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria. In 1945, a particularly large conference was held in Manchester, England, and a number of delegates from Africa attended. One of the resolutions of the conference affirmed the right of all colonial peoples to self-determination. It proclaimed that all colonies must be free from foreign imperialist control, whether political or economic.

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<sup>62</sup> K. M. Kondlo, 'In the twilight of the Azanian Revolution': The Exile History of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa): (1960-1990)' (DPhil, Rand Afrikaans University, 2003), p. 100.



Events in Africa in the 1950s made possible the realization of important aspects of this Africanist programme. Independence for Morocco and Tunisia in 1956, for Ghana the following year, and the promise of similar developments in other colonies within the foreseeable future, all generated a mood of optimism within the African continent. The ideas articulated in Manchester regarding colonial freedom were echoed at the first Conference of Independent African States, held in Accra, Ghana, in April 1958.<sup>63</sup>

With the progression towards independence of a number of African states, the leaders of the independence struggles in those territories, such as Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Julius Nyerere in Tanganyika, become inspirations for pan-Africanists across the continent.<sup>64</sup> South Africa was no exception to this rule. The rise of the PAC in South Africa cannot be viewed in isolation from these events, for, as we will see, Africanists within South Africa appropriated ideas of African self-determination and the advancement of the African personality.

But sight must not be lost of the fact that there were other factors at play, including the broader political context created by apartheid and the bitter internal politics of the African National Congress.<sup>65</sup> The confluence of all these factors will be discussed in this chapter.

### **3.1. Schism within the ANC**

On 26 June 1955, the Congress of the People gathered in Kliptown, Soweto. At this meeting, the following organizations, namely the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Coloured People's Congress (CPC), and the Congress of Democrats (COD) were represented. These organizations were all components of an umbrella body, the 'Congress Alliance'. At the Congress of the People, the Alliance discussed demands such as 'Land to be given to all landless people', 'Living wages and shorter hours of work' and

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<sup>63</sup> N. Muedane, *Confrontation with Apartheid Colonialism The Role of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Influence of Sobukwe and Africanism in the Azanian Struggle* (London: Jacobin Books, 1988), p. 41.

<sup>64</sup> Author's interview with Isaac Mthimunya, 21 September 2006.

<sup>65</sup> N. Muedane, *Confrontation with Apartheid Colonialism*, p. 7.

‘Free and compulsory education, irrespective of colour, race or nationality’, but the key item on the meeting’s agenda was the so-called ‘Freedom Charter’.<sup>66</sup>

In its preamble the Charter stated that ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White’, and that ‘no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people.’ The Charter then went on to list ten points. They were, respectively, that the people shall govern; all national groups shall have equal rights; the people shall share in the country's wealth; the land shall be shared among those who work it; all shall be equal before the law; all shall enjoy equal human rights; there shall be work and security; the doors of learning and of culture shall be opened; there shall be houses, security and comfort; and there shall be peace and friendship. Following discussions, the Charter was affirmed by the delegates, and was later ratified by the ANC.<sup>67</sup>

The ANC’s adoption of this policy was, however, received negatively by the Africanists within its ranks. Africanists viewed the Freedom Charter as being actually a ‘Charter of Slavery’. For them, the document failed to correctly define the South African struggle as one of the dispossessed against their dispossessors. It was one thing, they argued, for African intellectuals to feel at home in the racially mixed circles of the Alliance leadership, and to assure themselves that in such circles no one was “dominating” anyone else. But, they asked, what of the ordinary African? Leaders knew that the ordinary man in the street regarded whites with fear and mistrust. Furthermore, and more importantly, the ordinary African also regarded them with deference, because every aspect of the South African system worked to instil in Africans a belief in their inferiority to whites.<sup>68</sup>

According to Africanists, a slave and his master could not be brothers, equals, or countrymen, and anybody arguing otherwise was being dishonest. The Africanists’ standpoint was that the land belonged to the African people.<sup>69</sup> Those Africans who renounced their claims over Africa should

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<sup>66</sup> B. Pogrud, *Sobukwe and Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1990), p. 60.

<sup>67</sup> B. Magubane, ‘Introduction: The political context’, in the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) eds., *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, vol.1, 1960 – 1970 (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), p.25.

<sup>68</sup> G. M. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p.158.

<sup>69</sup> E. L. Ntloedibe, *Here is a tree; Political Biography of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe* (Mogoditshane, Botswana: Century-Turn Publishers, 1995), p.83.

not stand in the way of those fighting against the system. Nor could whites claim any rights based on the argument that they had first settled in ‘empty’ parts of South Africa.<sup>70</sup>

The African people, according to the Africanists, had an inalienable claim to every inch of the African soil. Their historical migrations across different parts of their fatherland did not annul their claim to the uninhabited parts of Africa: ‘No sane man can come to your house and claim as his the chamber or room you are not occupying. The non-Africans are guests of the Africans (and) have to adjust themselves to the interests of Africa, their new home’ they argued<sup>71</sup> Whites, the PAC argued, ‘had failed to make any adjustment which took into account the interests or rights of Africa’s indigenous peoples, and thus the only course open to Africans was to fight back until the tables had been turned, the conquerors defeated, and Africa restored to the control of its owners.’<sup>72</sup>

The immediate objective of the African liberation struggle, therefore, was clear and unequivocal. It was to uncompromisingly fight for the reversal of this unhealthy state of affairs. This struggle for national emancipation, and the regaining of all things that were lost as a result of the White conquest of Africa, was the cornerstone of Africa’s struggle for liberation.<sup>73</sup>

The PAC later inherited these policy positions. Africans would rule, they declared, because they were the majority and because freedom by definition would mean the return of power to the indigenous ‘sons of the soil.’ But, as Sobukwe and Kgosana hastened to clarify on every possible occasion, freedom would not mean that whites and Indians would be driven into the sea or excluded from political rights. Rather, once discrimination and pigmentocracy had been destroyed

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<sup>70</sup> During the second and third decades on the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a crisis referred by the Nguni speaking peoples as Mfecane, meaning crushing in a sense of total war. The Sotho speaking people called it the Difaqane, meaning forced migration or hammering. The chain of attack, counter-attack, devastation and dispersal that constituted the Mfecane had its origins in Dingiswayo’s time. In part the Mfecane can be said to have stimulated the Great Trek and facilitated white advance into the interior. There were large tracts of uninhabited land ideally suited to the needs of white pastoralists. The dislocated populations of the ‘empty’ lands could offer little serious resistance to the advance of the white pastoralists. The combined effect of white migration into the interior and the emergence of African states created a new set of frontier zones which were to become important areas of black-white conflict. See, P.A Maylam. *A History of the African People of South Africa: From the Early Iron Age to the 1970s* (Claremont: David Philip, 1986). p. 52.

<sup>71</sup> G. M. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa*, p. 147.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p. 147.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 146.

in South Africa, people of all colours would be equal citizens and an individual's colour would become irrelevant.

South Africa would become an 'African' country because it was part of Africa geographically and culturally. Immigrant minorities would be welcome to stay and become 'Africans' on condition that their only loyalty was to Africa and they dropped all arrogant attitudes of superiority. There was no reason, for Sobukwe and Kgosana, 'why, in a free, democratic Africa, a predominantly black electorate should not return a white man to parliament, for colour will count for nothing in a free Africa.' Once exploitative relations between man and man were eliminated, South Africans would recognize only one race: the human race.<sup>74</sup>

### **3.2. The PAC and Sharpeville**

The showdown between the Africanists and the Charterists within the ANC came to a head on 1 November 1958, the first day of the Transvaal Provincial Conference of ANC, held in Orlando, Soweto. The proceedings began with an address by ANC President Albert Luthuli, who denounced the National Party government. In the fierce debate which followed the address, Africanist spokesmen advanced their belief that Africans would have to fight alone if they were to achieve maximum strength in the struggle. A group of Africanist camp followers who were clustered at the back of the hall heckled the speakers who rose to support Luthuli, and expressed their support for Africanist speakers by stamping their feet and shouting 'Afrika!' As tensions rose the Africanists refused to recognize the credentials committee on the grounds that it was biased. The next day it became clear that the loyalists were prepared to back up their delegates-only ruling with force if necessary.

A group of ANC volunteers gathered behind the conference hall, armed with sticks and lengths of iron, and a crowd of Africanist supporters, some similarly armed, gathered in front. Each group numbered at least a hundred men. Police and security branch detectives watched from a distance, anticipating an explosion if the Africanists tried to enter the conference. But no explosion came.

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<sup>74</sup> R. M. Sobukwe, *Speeches of Mangaliso Sobukwe, 1949-1958* (New York: Pan-Africanist Congress, 1989), p. 30.

Realizing that they had been outmanoeuvred, the Africanists held a quick caucus outside the hall. Some argued in favour of an attempt to enter the conference by force, but a majority felt that the time had come instead for a parting of the ways.<sup>75</sup>

The first national conference held by the Africanists who had broken away from the ANC took place between 4 and 6 April the following year, in the Orlando Communal Hall in Soweto. This was the same venue where the ANC conference had occurred five months before. Philip Kgosana was in attendance at this 1959 conference. A sense of purposefulness was evident right from the start. It was no accident that the conference opened three minutes ahead of the scheduled 3 p.m. beginning. Sobukwe had said beforehand that he regarded timekeeping as an important element in creating a disciplined and orderly movement, and he was strongly critical of the ANC's habitual one- to three-hour late starts at meetings. The singing of the national anthem, 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika', was at a faster pace than usual, with the chairman, Zephaniah Mothopeng beating time with his hands.<sup>76</sup> The Pan-African theme was marked. It was seen in the slogans that were on placards on the walls and stage, such as 'Africa for Africans. Cape to Cairo, Morocco to Madagascar', 'Forward to the United States of Africa' and 'Free Banda, Kaunda, Kenyatta', all of whom, at that time, were languishing in British colonial jails.

The continental theme was furthered during the reading of messages of goodwill received, which also gave the Africanists a notable propaganda coup, for there were cables extending well wishes from Sekou Toure, the Guinean political leader, and Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah wished the meeting 'every success in uniting Africans in non-violent constitutional struggle against colonialism and racialism for human rights and self-determination'. Hastings Banda of Nyasaland and Kenneth Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia had been invited to open the conference. However, as mentioned, both were in prison so neither was available to come, and even if they had been, they would never have been given visas to enter South Africa.

The formal opening was by Sobukwe, who began by surveying the international scene. He maintained that the world was split into two large hostile blocs, represented by the United States

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<sup>75</sup> G. M. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa*, p. 178.

<sup>76</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better: The Life of Robert Sobukwe* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2003), p. 90.

of America and the Soviet Union. Each was armed with terrible weapons of destruction and they behaved as though they did not believe that co-existence was possible. There was a struggle between them for Africa, with both blocs trying to woo the continent at a time when the entire continent was undergoing a re-birth. By contrast, in South Africa, ‘naked forces of savage *Herrenvolkism* are running riot’. Sobukwe spoke of a determined effort being made ‘to annihilate the African people through systematic starvation’; of attempts to ‘retard, dwarf and stunt the mental development of a whole people through organized mis-education’; and of the people being told ‘by the foreign ruler to go back to a “home” which he had assigned him whether that means the breakup of his family or not’, and of the ‘distinctive badge of slavery and humiliation’, namely the pass, which had been extended ‘from the African male dog to the African female bitch’.<sup>77</sup>

The existence of ‘national groups’ was recognized by Sobukwe, but they were identified as being the result of shared geographical origins within a certain area, as well as common historical experiences. The Europeans were a ‘foreign minority group’, which had exclusive control, and were the dominant and exploiting group responsible for ‘the pernicious doctrine of white supremacy which has resulted in the humiliation and degradation of the indigenous African people’. Regarding Asians, Sobukwe described them as a foreign minority group which was oppressed, but some of them, and the merchant class in particular, had become ‘tainted with the virus of cultural supremacy and national arrogance’ and identified themselves with the oppressors. The downtrodden Asians who alone could identify themselves with the indigenous black majority had not yet produced their leadership: ‘We hope they will do so soon’ Sobukwe said.<sup>78</sup>

Sobukwe listed three major aims of the PAC: firstly, ‘the government of the Africans, for the Africans and by the Africans.’<sup>79</sup> Secondly, ‘the rapid extension of industrial development in order to alleviate pressure on the land which is what progress means in terms of modern society. We stand committed to a policy guaranteeing the most equitable distribution of wealth.’<sup>80</sup> Thirdly,

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<sup>77</sup> Pan Africanist Congress, *The Basic Documents of The Pan Africanist Congress* (Lusaka: Zambia: Secretary, Publicity and Information, Pan Africanist Congress of S.A, 1965), p. 11.

<sup>78</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better*, p. 92.

<sup>79</sup> E. L. Ntloedibe, *Here Is a Tree*, p.100.

<sup>80</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better*, p. 93.

‘socially we aim at the full development of the human personality and the ruthless outlawing of all forms of manifestations of the racial myth’.<sup>81</sup>

At the PAC’s inaugural conference, one of the most important decisions reached was to launch a recruitment campaign targeting people with at least a Standard Six qualification. Philip Kgosana qualified because he had a Matric certificate. Sobukwe was particularly insistent that new recruits should have some formal education. This emphasis on recruiting the educated reflects the fact that the PAC leadership included a number of educators. Both Sobukwe and Leballo were teachers, and they wanted to recruit intellectuals who would better understand the political situation in South Africa.

Membership of the PAC was open to any African over the age of sixteen who accepted the principles, programme, and discipline of the PAC. A member was not allowed to be a member of any other political organization that had a policy inconsistent with that of the PAC.<sup>82</sup>

Despite this stress on recruiting students and intellectuals, the PAC did in practice also recruit tsotsis. They were the most bitterly anti-white element in black society. By contrast, most Africans in Johannesburg were quite bourgeois and materialistic. Kgosana alleged in my interview with him that the PAC recruited entire gangs by getting together with their leaders and persuading them to work for the PAC instead of fighting each other; these tsotsis became some of the PAC’s strongest supporters in the Transvaal. Anyone in the PAC leadership could walk through the townships after dark, and no tsotsi would lift a finger against him. Selby T. Ngendane, a member of the Executive Committee of the Pan Africanist Congress, once nearly got himself in trouble however, because he was a sharp dresser and one night some tsotsis stopped him and roughed him up a little. They didn’t injure him. They just warned him that Sobukwe had said that the high were going to be made low and vice versa. They didn’t say this in words, they gestured with their hands, showing that high was going to be low.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> UNISA Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, Accession No: 139 (Fl 4053-4058), Paarl Commission of Enquiry.

<sup>83</sup> Author’s interview with Philip Kgosana, 16 September 2005.

At the inaugural conference an oath of allegiance was sworn by the new members of the organization.<sup>84</sup> Then the conference moved quickly through its agenda. It adopted a series of founding documents: a manifesto, a constitution, and a statement of policy. The proposal in the draft constitution that the organization be called the Africanist Liberation Congress was dropped in favour of the name of the Pan Africanist Congress. The official colours were to be green, black and gold - the same as the ANC, and with similar symbolism: green was to represent the youth and vitality of the continent, black the colour of its people; and gold its wealth and human potential. The PAC issued what it called a 'Disciplinary Code' in conjunction with its constitution. According to this code the slogan of the PAC was 'Service, Sacrifice and Suffering,' represented by the sign 'SSS'.<sup>85</sup>

The PAC met again in December 1959 for a meeting at the Communal Hall. At this conference, for the first time a specific plan for action against the pass laws emerged. This came with the passing of a resolution instructing the PAC National Executive to call on the nation to take decisive and final positive action against the pass laws and to adhere strictly to a slogan of 'no bail, no defence, no fine' during the campaign.

During the same month however, in fact a week before the PAC's gathering, the ANC used its own annual conference to announce an anti-pass campaign. The ANC designated 31 March as 'Anti-Pass Day'. It said that on that day deputations would call upon local authorities and government officials in charge of black affairs throughout the country to urge the abolition of the pass laws.<sup>86</sup>

When asked later about the concurrence of the two protest actions, Sobukwe would firmly insist that he was not competing with the ANC. Sobukwe further revealed early in 1960 that he had written to Chief Albert Luthuli inviting the ANC to join the PAC's campaign. The ANC wrote in reply: 'We must avoid sensational actions which might not succeed, because we realize that it is

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<sup>84</sup> UNISA Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, Accession No:AAS.184, (FI 4066) 1970 -1971, p. 3239.

<sup>85</sup> UNISA Archives, Commissions: Reports of the Paarl Commission of Inquiry 1962.

<sup>86</sup> Author's interview with Isaac Mthimunye.



treacherous to the liberation movement to embark on a campaign which had not been properly prepared for and which has no reasonable prospect of success'.<sup>87</sup>

During February 1960, as part of the PAC's preparations for its campaign, Sobukwe went by car to parts of the Cape Province on a recruiting drive as well as in order to check on the organization's state of readiness. In Cape Town, several thousand come to listen to him. There were local people who were largely migrants who suffered especially cruelly from the influx control laws. Sobukwe gave them a public message: get ready for the call to leave your passes at home.<sup>88</sup>

Mxolisi 'Ace' Mgxashe, then aged sixteen and in the second year of high school in the Langa Township outside Cape Town, later recalled the visit: 'We had been hearing rumours about this new organization, and how outspoken its leaders were ... So I went with friends to a meeting. I was convinced on that very day. I had not been involved in any politics but Sobukwe opened me up to the kind of situation in which we were living as an oppressed people. I was also impressed by his command of the language: he spoke a pure Xhosa, untouched by township lingo, as one normally got from the peasants. Even the migrant labourers were very impressed, because at that time, leaders were considered as being from the elite and usually spoke in English, or as the saying went, "they spoke English through their noses". But in Sobukwe, people felt they could identify with him.' Mgxashe promptly joined the PAC.<sup>89</sup>

The PAC issued their protest call by means of circulating four pamphlets, numbered 5, 6, 47 and 49.<sup>90</sup> Pamphlet number 5 was issued early in March, and was headed 'the Dawn has come, the great awakening has started'. In it, the 'nation' was asked: 'are you playing your role in the positive and final act against the pass laws?' The document offered particulars of the suffering, oppression, and exploitation that the blacks suffered under the pass system.

Then followed the next pamphlet, number 6, issued a week or so later. Headed 'Passes must go now' and addressed to the 'sons and daughters of Africa', it reminded people of the imminence of

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<sup>87</sup> B. Pogrand, *Sobukwe and Apartheid*, p. 122.

<sup>88</sup> Author's interview with Isaac Mthimunye.

<sup>89</sup> Author's interview with Mxolisi Mgxashe, 11 April 2006.

<sup>90</sup> UNISA Archives, Commission of Enquiry into Sharpeville, 1960, p. 25.

the campaign and said ‘[i]n 1960 we take our first step, in 1963, our last, towards freedom and independence.’<sup>91</sup>

The third pamphlet, number 47, was headed ‘Alerting the Nation’. As had been the case with the previous circular, in this document readers were encouraged to save food and money, keep the circular safe, and await further instructions from their leaders.

And then, a few days later, came the final circular number 49, issued on or about Friday 18 March 1960. It stated that in three days’ time ‘[w]e launch our positive, decisive campaign against the pass laws in this country’. It listed the demands of the protest as being that the pass laws should be totally abolished; that a minimum wage of R35 a month be established; that a guarantee be provided that leaders would not be punished, and that no workers would be dismissed.<sup>92</sup>

At the press conference accompanying the release of the circular, Sobukwe issued his final instructions prior to the protest. These were that on Monday all men must leave their passes at home; that under the leadership of PAC members, protesters would proceed to police stations and surrender themselves, whilst the leaders would tell the officers on duty that ‘we all have no passes, we will not carry passes again. Millions of our people are arrested under the pass laws, so you had better arrest us all’. Finally, if intercepted by police on route to the stations and asked to produce their passes, they must demand to be arrested there and then.

All these pamphlets were issued in English, and in one or other of the Bantu languages. On the whole the translations by the draughtsman were substantially correct.

There is ample evidence suggesting that the pamphlets were widely distributed in Sharpeville Township. Mr Labuschagne, the superintendent in Sharpeville, later testified that many copies of the pamphlets were found in the streets and post boxes in the location on the evening of 20 March 1960. He himself picked some of them up. Sergeant Grobler meanwhile saw pamphlets which he

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> M. Benson, *South Africa: The Struggle for a Birthright*, (London: Penguin, 1966), p. 221.

handed over to Detective Sergeant Wessels, who himself noted that the circulars had been displayed in prominent places like bus stops and telephone booths.<sup>93</sup>

Kgosana and other members of the PAC were being instructed to conduct the campaign in a spirit of non-violence. They were to gather in small groups so as to avoid giving the police the chance to baton charge them. Sobukwe wrote to the Commissioner of Police, Major-General C.I. Rademeyer. In the letter he said that the Pan-Africanist Congress would be starting a sustained, disciplined, non-violent campaign against the pass laws on Monday 21 March. Sobukwe also said that he had given strict instructions, not only to members of his organization but also to the African people in general, that they should not allow themselves to be provoked into violent action by anyone. He also made an appeal to Rademeyer to instruct the Police to refrain from actions that may lead to violence.<sup>94</sup>

Sobukwe finally appealed to Rademeyer to instruct the police not to give impossible demands to the demonstrators that would lead to clashes: 'Hoping you will co-operate to try and make this a most peaceful and disciplined campaign'.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> UNISA Archives, Commission of Enquiry into Sharpeville, 1960, p. 28.

<sup>94</sup> Author's interview with Isaac Mthimunya.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **4. LANGA.**

#### **4.1. Social Life in Langa before the Uprising**

The chapter will analyse Philip Kgosana's political career from the time he arrived in the Cape in 1959 until the events in March 1960 when he played a leading role in the so-called Langa uprising. First an analysis will be made of the conditions under which the inhabitants of Langa and other Africans in Cape Town lived in at the time. Then the focus will turn to the politicization of the black people of Langa and surrounding townships. Thirdly Kgosana's entry into a leadership position in the PAC in the Cape peninsula will be discussed. The main focus will be on the anti-pass campaign in the Cape Town area, which will be discussed in detail with reference to Kgosana's role in it.

When Langa was officially established in 1927, it had approximately 25 000 inhabitants. Just over a quarter of them were 'townspeople', meaning they had been born in Cape Town or some other urban area.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), p. 212.

But the majority of the township's inhabitants were migrant labourers and a large number of them were male. These men were not allowed to bring their wives or children with them from the far-off Transkei or Ciskei, and they inhabited single workers' blocks known as 'flats' because they were divided up into double rooms. Other accommodation included barracks-like hostels with large dormitories, communal cooking and washing facilities, little privacy, no ceilings or doors. They were invariably tiny, depressing, and set in bleak surroundings.<sup>97</sup>

Other Africans were accommodated in so-called new 'hostels' or 'old barracks'. The former were simple brick cottages, accommodating about sixteen men each, two or three to a room, in six inter-leading bedrooms without separating doors. These rooms were furnished with beds, under each of which was a locker. There was a common living room with cement tables, fixed benches and two stoves. The floors of these hostels were made of cement. The men were supplied with running water, waterborne sanitation and electric lighting. In the old barracks, twenty or thirty men occupied a large dormitory fitted with bunks.<sup>98</sup>

Despite its rapid growth over the years, Langa became too small to accommodate the immigrants, and squatter camps mushroomed around the city, the largest being at Windermere, Kensington and Elsies River.<sup>99</sup> The Divisional Council of the Cape began developing Nyanga East as an alternative settlement in 1946.

In 1956 many thousands of 'squatters' were moved to an 'emergency camp'. No houses were provided – they were required to put up their own shelters in a specified area where water and latrines were provided, while their claims to live in town were examined. Those accepted as having a legitimate right to be in greater Cape Town were gradually provided with houses to rent; those not recognized as deserving such a right were compelled to leave the area. But the removal from former slums and squatters' camps was in no sense complete: individuals and families tended to drift back to their old quarters, and shacks that had been forcibly destroyed, appeared again. The

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<sup>97</sup> T. Heard, *The Cape of Storms: A Personal History of the Crisis in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1990), p. 11.

<sup>98</sup> S. van der Horst, *African Workers in Town: A Study of Labour in Cape Town* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> H. Micheal, *African Poverty in Cape Town, 1960-1970* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations), p. 5.

dwellers in old squatters' camps who had established some sort of community with their neighbours had the greatest objection to moving to a bleak site, miles from the city.<sup>100</sup>

#### **4.2. Philip Kgosana and the Anti-Pass Campaign in the Western Cape**

The ANC had never been a powerful force in the Western Cape. In the 1950s the movement was bedevilled by squabbles between those who favoured the Congress Alliance and those who felt, along with the Youth Leaguers of Orlando, that multiracialism weakened African control of their political destiny.<sup>101</sup>

When the PAC emerged in the late 1950s, there were a number of factors that propelled Kgosana into a leadership position despite his youth and origins elsewhere in the country. When Kgosana arrived in Cape Town, he realized that the dominant language spoken was Xhosa and that in order to be effective and listened to he had to learn the Xhosa language quickly, which he did.<sup>102</sup> But the most important reason that advanced his career was the first annual conference of the PAC in Orlando, Soweto, from 19-20 December 1959. Kgosana was there as a Western Cape representative. During the conference he was elected to serve in the Resolutions Committee dealing with Pass Laws, together with a young man called John Nyati.

When Kgosana returned to the Western Cape following the conference, he found that the regional executive had adjourned until 20 January 1960. Kgosana's dissatisfaction with this lack of initiative was shared by others, and on 24 January the regional executive was dismissed and a more energetic group took their place. Kgosana was part of this group.<sup>103</sup>

Towards the end of January, this group held a Regional Conference, at which Kgosana was elected Regional Secretary. Other prominent individuals voted into key positions in the regional structures were Sitembiso Mlokoti (Regional Chairman), Kedron Noboza (Treasurer), and Gasson Ndlovu (Regional Vice-Chairman). The Regional Conference accepted the conference's challenge to

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<sup>100</sup> S. van der Horst, *African Workers in Town*, p. 51.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>102</sup> Author's interview with Gasson Ndlovu, 27 September 2005.

<sup>103</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*, p. 215.

mobilize the masses for the Anti-Pass Campaign. The first step they took was to try to mobilize funds for the campaign. During this campaign, some of the younger members of the Regional Executive Committee, such as Alfred Mampe and Bam Siboto, surrendered their personal post office bankbooks as their contribution to the drive to raise funds.<sup>104</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, on 18 March 1960, Robert Sobukwe announced that the Anti-Pass Campaign would begin on 21 March. On the same day, Kgosana made an announcement in the Cape that the demonstrations in that province would begin on the 21<sup>st</sup> at exactly 7 am. Like Sobukwe he was emphatic that the campaign should eschew violence: ‘We are not leading corpses to a new Africa’ he said, adding that if blacks responded to violence with violence, after a few days, when they had buried their dead and made moving graveside speeches and their emotions had settled again, the police would round up a few people and the rest would go back to the passes, having forgotten what the goal had initially been.<sup>105</sup>

Kgosana made another speech at a 10,000 strong rally in Langa on Sunday 20 March, launching the campaign. He mentioned that if, on the day of the protest, anyone in the crowd was found throwing a stone or any type of missile at passing cars or buildings, they would be regarded as enemies of the oppressed. He added that if the leaders did not show up before 7 am the following day, the people should regard the campaign as a failure and should rush to their places of employment.<sup>106</sup>

The speech was well received and before the end of the day, Kgosana had addressed similar rallies in Nyanga West and Nyanga East. That night typical Cape rain drizzled lightly over the Cape Flats. This was something which Kgosana and the people traditionally interpreted as a sign of God’s blessings.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Author’s interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>105</sup> *The Reader’s Digest Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story*(Cape Town: Readers Digest Association South Africa, 1988), p. 405.

<sup>106</sup> Author’s interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>107</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget* (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1988), p. 19.

The church bells awakened the whole township of Langa at midnight. PAC militants rallied that night. By 4 am, they were assembling at Freedom Square in Langa. Party songs resounded until the break of dawn. Kgosana joined the chanting crowd of about 10,000 men at around 5 am under drizzling rain.<sup>108</sup> Alongside him was Clarence Makwetu. A similar crowd gathered at 5.30 am at the Anglican Church under the leadership of Elliot Magwentshu and Gasson Ndlovu.<sup>109</sup>

Kgosana and Makwetu arranged for a message to be sent to the assembly at the Anglican Church, instructing them to come to Freedom Square. At 7.30 am however, ten police Landrovers arrived, filled with African policemen under the command of Captain Van Der Westhuizen of the Special Branch. He was accompanied by Major Rheeder of Phillipi Police Station and Detective Sergeant Sauermann. The African policemen, armed with batons, were immediately ordered to form a line facing the crowd.<sup>110</sup> Kgosana, with Gasson Ndlovu and a third person whose identity could not be established, came forward: the crowd surged forward too, but Kgosana lifted his hand, and they were brought to a standstill, remaining where they were while Kgosana and Major Rheeder had a discussion.<sup>111</sup>

After Kgosana informed Major Rheeder of the intent of the march, Rheeder warned him that a march on the police station would be interpreted as an attack.<sup>112</sup> Kgosana then agreed to disperse the meeting, but also informed the police that no one would be going to work that day. Kgosana went back to the people and reported what had transpired. He asked everybody not to go to work, but to attend another meeting scheduled for 5 pm that same day.<sup>113</sup>

Kgosana then left the township and went into Cape Town, with his destination being the offices of 'Contact', a liberal newspaper founded by Patrick Duncan. Kgosana was on his way to visit some of the PAC men who had been arrested at Phillipi Police Station and taken to Caledon Square, the headquarters of the Cape Town police.<sup>114</sup> During that morning, 21 March, tension continued to

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<sup>108</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*, p. 216.

<sup>109</sup> *A Précis of the Reports of the Commissions Appointed to Enquire into the Events Occurring on March 21 1960 at Sharpeville and Langa* (Johannesburg: The South African Institute of Race Relations, 1961), p. 13.

<sup>110</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana.

<sup>111</sup> S. A. I. R. R. *A Précis of the Reports of the Commissions*, p. 14.

<sup>112</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*, p. 216.

<sup>113</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better: The Life of Robert Sobukwe* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2003), p. 138.

<sup>114</sup> C. J. Driver, *Patrick Duncan: South African and Pan-African* (London: Heinemann, 1980), p. 175.



mount in the township; groups gathered at various places and there was much shouting. The police meanwhile patrolled the streets in a Landover and informed the public through loudspeakers that anyone wishing to go to work would be protected, and that anyone who received assaults or threats should report to the police station.<sup>115</sup>

By 5 pm that evening, not only residents of Langa, but also thousands of people from Nyanga East and West, and other townships, had begun to assemble at Freedom Square in Langa. Though the order was given by Kgosana that sticks and knives must be left at home, individuals in the crowd were seen carrying stones, and some sticks. The proceedings started with singing, as was customary. Gasson Ndlovu then mounted a small platform and opened the meeting by calling on a minister to say a prayer. A Baptist lay preacher offered a prayer up in the absence of a minister. Very shortly afterwards at 5.44 pm a police convoy arrived. It was met with a mighty roar of ‘Izwe lethu Afrika’ and other shouts in Xhosa from the crowd.<sup>116</sup>

Captain Louw, the commander of the police convoy, did not appreciate the procedural significance of the shouting. A *Cape Times* reporter, Terry McComb Herbst, who was sitting on a low roof opposite the platform, observed that ‘soon after 5 pm about 3 000 Africans, mainly men, packed the square which was bordered by men’s hostels. The crowd was orderly. It swelled until there were about 6 000 men and women in the square. At 5.45 pm the African national anthem [‘Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika’] was sung and prayers were said. A few minutes later a Saracen and police vans were seen approaching the crowd. About 60 armed policemen, carrying Sten guns, riot sticks and revolvers left the vehicles and faced the crowd’.

Captain Louw, sitting on the turret of a police Saracen, watched the crowd swell to 10,000. He gave instructions that the order to disperse should be given through the loud speaker. The sergeant who was in the Saracen accordingly read out the following order three times in the Xhosa language: ‘Gentlemen, this meeting is prohibited by law. I gave you three minutes to disperse or else force will be used to disperse you.’ Captain Louw looked at his watch. He allowed four minutes to pass.

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<sup>115</sup> S. A. I. R. R. *A Précis of the Reports of the Commissions*, p. 17.

<sup>116</sup> UNISA Archives, Documentation Centre for African studies: Carter and Karis collection (Micro Film) Item no 2A, p. 61.

No one moved. Nobody gave any sign of obeying his order. He decided that the time had come to use force and dismounted from the Saracen. He gave brief instructions to his men to disembark and line up on the road, and approximately one minute later they advanced on the crowd.<sup>117</sup>

The vast majority of the people present were apparently misled into believing that the police were coming to the meeting to make an important announcement on their grievances. All day their excitement had been growing. Finally the police had arrived, but instead of bringing an answer from the 'high authority' the police bluntly threatened them with force unless they departed. The police warning conveyed over loudspeaker was inaudible to most people present. The only people who did hear the order were those on the outskirts of the crowd, within 20 to 30 yards of the police vehicles.

Philip Kgosana was not present at this time. He was still in Cape Town. At the Contact office an excited Patrick Duncan told Kgosana that he had poked the bees and must be careful.<sup>118</sup>

Back at Freedom Square, two photographers, Terry Herbst and Cloete Breytenbach were crouching on a roof when they noted a change of mood. The crowd that had been friendly to them earlier now turned on them, and began to attack them with stones and bottles. Herbst jumped to the ground, and was hit by a bottle before being struck with stones and bricks. Breytenbach signalled with his camera that he was a pressman but this did not help him. He too was struck with a broken bottle and the position of both became desperate.<sup>119</sup>

Their plight being seen by the police, a few men were ordered to go to their assistance. As Captain Matthee ran forward, somebody from inside a hostel opened fire with a revolver. Captain Matthee fired back, and the man retreated. In the meantime other police had succeeded in driving the more aggressive stone throwers off, and the two newspapermen were brought to the police vehicles, and subsequently taken to the police station for medical attention. When Kgosana arrived from Cape Town at the scene of the meeting, there was pandemonium. People were running in all directions

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<sup>117</sup> S. A. I. R. R. *A Précis of the Reports of the Commissions*, p. 19-20.

<sup>118</sup> T. Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and Its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 113.

<sup>119</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*, p. 216.

and youth were battling the police.<sup>120</sup> That night, as Kgosana had feared, rioting broke out in Langa. An attack was made on public transport when two vehicles belonging to the Golden Arrow Bus Services Company were stoned and damaged as they passed.

### 4.3. The March on Cape Town

The following day, Tuesday, 22 March, at 8 am the hostels in Langa were raided and policemen burst into rooms and beat up anyone they found in them. Later that day, the PAC ‘Task Force’ (young PAC volunteers) put up roadblocks in Nyanga to prevent the police coming in.<sup>121</sup> Kgosana spent the morning in hiding but visited Patrick Duncan in the afternoon. The PAC issued a defiant statement, which was given a few inches of space in newspapers, reading: ‘Our plans are to be arrested in great numbers until industry is affected by a labour shortage. We shall not stop until passes have been abolished. We call on the government to halt forthwith the continued display of military strength by the police against an unarmed people. Ours is a non-violent struggle.’<sup>122</sup>

By the day after this, Wednesday, 23 March 1960, the strike called for in the statement was beginning to hit Cape Town hard. There was a breakdown in public services. Workers working for the city council were on strike along with refuse collectors. Refuse had not been collected from the city and suburbs for three days. The students of the University of Cape Town volunteered to keep the city clean by clearing rubbish. However, the work was too much for them.<sup>123</sup> At petrol stations, the managers had to service the customers themselves. Almost all key industries in the city were at a standstill. Fish, ready for canning, was thrown back into the sea at the major canning factory in Cape Town. All this was because of lack of manpower. At one dairy farm, milk was oozing out of about 200 cows. At one chicken farm, more than 5 000 chicks died because of lack of attention. Hundreds of eggs were scattered all over the fowl run because nobody was there to collect them.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 22.

<sup>121</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*, p. 217.

<sup>122</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better*, p. 138.

<sup>123</sup> Author’s interview with Philip Kgosana.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

On Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> Kgosana was again in Cape Town, both at the Contact and the New Age newspaper offices. Patrick Duncan was displeased when he heard that Kgosana had been in touch with Brian Bunting (Bunting was a well-known South African communist, and editor of the New Age). Duncan told Kgosana that the PAC campaign was his campaign, and he must run it the way he wanted, but that if he were to work closely with Bunting he would have to count him (Duncan) out. Duncan reminded Kgosana that Sobukwe had split with the ANC over the question of communist domination, and told him that the Liberal Party was firmly anti-communist. Kgosana welcomed the advice.

While Kgosana was in Cape Town, about a hundred PAC volunteers left Langa and presented themselves at Caledon Square for arrest. Police raids were also carried out on the offices and private homes of most of the prominent leaders of the black resistance. By the end of the week half the African labour force in the Cape Peninsula was said to be away from work, making it the most successful strike in South African history.<sup>125</sup>

On the 25<sup>th</sup> PAC leaders Makwetu, Kgosana, Nxelwa and Ndlovu led a demonstration of PAC supporters to Caledon Square police headquarters. The crowd was between 2 000 and 5 000 strong, and most came by train. At 9.30 a.m. Kgosana telephoned Duncan from the Grand Parade in central Cape Town to warn him that the demonstrators were on their way to hand themselves over to the police. Kgosana himself approached the police station from the Grand Parade and the crowd gathered in front of it. Patrick Duncan arrived to find a good humoured and relaxed crowd marshalled by a PAC 'Task Force' that was preventing demonstrators from blocking the pavements or disturbing the traffic.<sup>126</sup>

Kgosana moved into the police station to demand the release of those PAC men. Two African detectives accompanied him into a lift, and he was taken to the fourth floor on the building. There, he was pushed into one small room with one of the detectives and arrested.

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<sup>125</sup> C. J. Driver, *Patrick Duncan: South African and Pan-African*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>126</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*, p. 218.

Outside the station, Duncan persuaded the police chief I. B. S. Terblanche, who was facing the crowd, to talk with those PAC leaders still at liberty. This he agreed to do. At 11.40, five PAC men accompanied Terblanche and Duncan into the building where Makwetu, who was one of the PAC men, told Terblanche that the people outside were ready to surrender themselves for being without passes.<sup>127</sup>

Terblanche replied that he had no intention of arresting anybody who was breaking the laws at that moment. He went on the promise that for the next month no one would have to show a pass in the Cape Town area. The PAC leaders then demanded the release of Kgosana and Ndlovu, and with Duncan's assistance they managed to persuade Terblanche to release them without bail. Kgosana and Ndlovu were released at 12.10 pm went out to the crowd and were told by Makwetu that they should return to their homes. The crowd shouted, and then marched off chanting, singing and carrying Kgosana shoulder high. Police armed with Sten guns escorted the men to the location, where they were greeted by women and children doing what the white press called 'screaming' but was in fact ululating.<sup>128</sup>

That evening Terblanche's temporary suspension of the pass laws dramatically extended to cover the whole country by order of General Rademeyer, the police chief, and J.M. Erasmus, Minister of Justice. For nearly two weeks no one was to be arrested under the pass laws. It was first time that a Nationalist government in South Africa had to give way in the face of African political initiative and the action reflected the uncertainty of government's handling of the crisis.<sup>129</sup>

Kgosana recalls that on Saturday, 26 March 1960, he was invited by his friend Duncan to his house to meet some prominent personalities who showed interest in the campaign. In the house Kgosana met the well-known industrialist, who was also a National Party supporter, Anton Rupert. Rupert warned Kgosana about the futility of the actions he was engaged in. Rupert said that Kgosana was very young and inexperienced and was indeed being misled. Kgosana told Rupert that nothing could stop the wind of change that was already blowing across South Africa (he was referring to

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, p. 219.

<sup>128</sup> C. J. Driver, *Patrick Duncan: South African and Pan-African*, p. 177.

<sup>129</sup> T. R. H. Davenport and C. Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 414.

the famous ‘Wind of Change’ speech made in the South African parliament by the visiting British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, in February 1960).<sup>130</sup>

With rain falling for much of the day, the Nyanga and Langa townships were quiet. Kgosana said that he and his followers intended tracking down rowdy elements in the townships and handing them over to the police. Kgosana had previously assured the people there should be no violence, but said that there was a *tsotsi* element that took advantage of a situation to indulge in violence, threats and intimidation. Kgosana spoke strongly against attacks on people and damage to property.<sup>131</sup> Food in the locations was running desperately short as traders were no longer willing to replenish stores and men were not bringing home pay packets. Relief supply was taken in on lorries driven by women in the Black Sash organization, escorted by PAC Task Force men and Kgosana himself.<sup>132</sup>

On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup>, the seventh day of the campaign, Kgosana and the Langa and Nyanga PAC Committees, visited Patrick Duncan at Keyser House. They discussed the possibility of the party being banned, and agreed that a ban would be ignored. Meanwhile, Coloured and European staff, including managers, accountants and clerks, were brought in to help work machinery in the dairies and deliver milk to suburban depots. Many of newspaper delivery boys stayed away on this day. European and Coloured staff sold the morning newspaper in the street and used their own cars to deliver papers to subscribers. The manager of a bakery in Cape Town said that eighty African workmen all walked out at 3 pm the previous day and he had not seen or heard from them since.<sup>133</sup>

From Pretoria where he was giving evidence in the Treason Trial, Chief Albert Luthuli had called on his supporters to stay at home on Monday 28 March. This was done to mourn those shot on the previous Monday.<sup>134</sup> Luthuli, after having burnt his pass book a few days earlier, urged the nation

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<sup>130</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 30.

<sup>131</sup> UNISA, United Party Archives, Cape Argus, Rioters (Press cuttings), 26 March 1960.

<sup>132</sup> Davenport and Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, p. 414.

<sup>133</sup> UNISA, United Party Archives, Cape Argus, Rioters, (Press cuttings), 26 March 1960.

<sup>134</sup> J. Grobler, *A Decisive Clash? A Short History of Black Protest Politics in South Africa 1875-1976* (Pretoria: National Book Printers, 1988), p. 124.

to observe a National Day of Mourning on the 28<sup>th</sup> for those who had died at Sharpeville and Langa.<sup>135</sup>

On the 28<sup>th</sup> in Cape Town, there were about fifty thousand people who attended the ‘funeral’ for those who died seven days previously. The event was held in the open air; it included ANC supporters. Individual members of the ANC and PAC seem to have forgotten their differences, though the leadership of the movement in the province remained in the hands of the PAC, particularly Kgosana. The funeral was mainly peaceful; non-violence was still the order of the day, as PAC speakers at the funeral reminded their followers. In his speech Kgosana warned the people that in the coming week they were likely to see vicious action on the part of the government in an attempt to regain control of the situation. Kgosana asked the crowd for determination to carry the fight through to the bitter end. On the same day, legislation to ban both the PAC and the ANC was introduced into Parliament: the government was beginning at last to react.<sup>136</sup>

On Tuesday, 29 March 1960, black workers in and around Cape Town were still on strike. The parliament was meanwhile in session in Cape Town, and one member, H.G. Lawrence of the Progressive Party, said that he wondered why parliament sat and debated, while the walls of Jericho were on fire. All over South Africa arrests of leaders and prominent personalities, some of whom had left politics more than 10 years before, were continuing. In Cape Town more police reinforcements were brought into the African townships. Police had broken into houses in Nyanga on the 28<sup>th</sup> and had shot at those who attempted to escape.<sup>137</sup>

The 30 March 1960, a declaration of a state of emergency in 86 of the 300 magisterial districts of South Africa was announced. The police assumed broad powers to act against all forms of alleged subversion, including the power to arrest and detain indefinitely any person suspected of anti-government activity.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 31.

<sup>136</sup> C. J. Driver, *Patrick Duncan: South African and Pan-African*, p. 179.

<sup>137</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 321.

<sup>138</sup> E. Riley, *Major Political Events in South Africa. 1948-1990* (New York: Facts on File, 1991), p. 68.

Early in the morning of Wednesday 30 March, the police raided Langa with immense brutality, breaking down doors, pulling people out of bed, beating them up, throwing them into the streets. As word of the arrests and beatings spread, people began to congregate, and by mid-morning a broad column of Africans began to move out of Langa along the ten-mile route towards the city centre.<sup>139</sup> By noon 30 000 were on their way from Langa and Nyanga, marching in a column more than a mile long that proceeded quietly through white suburban streets, their ranks opening to let cars, buses and police vans pass through without hindrance.<sup>140</sup>

When the police heard that numbers of Africans were moving toward the city, they thought at first that this was a sign that, hungry and penniless, the workers were returning to their jobs.<sup>141</sup>

Philip Kgosana in his blue running short pants and a frayed brown jacket, no socks, and no hat, was a penniless twenty-three-year-old heading a column of generally older men. But he was in total command. On more than one occasion he stopped the marchers and lectured them on non-violence. As they move forward again, they broke into song: ‘Our burden is heavy, and it needs strong men to make our boat, a boat like Noah’s boat, let us make this boat an ark made out of Africa’.<sup>142</sup>

There was, however, trouble on the horizon. A South African Air Force helicopter buzzed overhead. White Cape Town was in a state of severe shock. Word of the march had spread with amazing speed. Telephone switchboards were jammed because of the resulting panic. Schools, businesses, and shops were closed or closing. Some unsuspecting motorists drove along De Waal Drive to be confronted by a living sea filling the highway. Some did an instant U-turn and took their chances driving away on the wrong side of the road, hooting loudly. Some who did not were graciously let through the throng. There was no hostility, the march was peaceful.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better*, p.142.

<sup>140</sup> G. M. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: the Evolution of an Ideology*, p. 243.

<sup>141</sup> T. Heard, *The Cape of Storms*, p. 90.

<sup>142</sup> C. J. Driver, *Patrick Duncan: South African and Pan-African*, p. 165.

<sup>143</sup> T. Heard, *The Cape of Storms*, p. 92.



Nonetheless, Kgosana halted the march under some trees near the top of Roeland Street and discussed matters with his lieutenants. After taking advice from people around him, he decided to steer the march clear of Parliament. His original plan had been to go to Parliament, but he decided against it after hearing that troops had been drawn up in front of Parliament.<sup>144</sup> Kgosana's judgment was correct here, because Prime Minister Verwoerd, his cabinet, and the full assembly of MPs and senior civil servants were present in the Parliament complex. Any approach by massed blacks would have led to a dreadful loss of life.<sup>145</sup>

Instead, Kgosana decided to take a small group to Caledon Square. He told his massed followers sitting in the shade under the trees to wait for him and he walked down the street to Caledon Square Police Station.<sup>146</sup> That was the critical point. Colonel Ignatius Terblanche, the policeman in charge of the district, was staggered when he saw the size of the crowd. He emerged from the besieged Caledon Square Police Station and spoke for six minutes, urging European and Coloured spectators to move away, whilst he ordered all businesses in the vicinity to close down.<sup>147</sup>

Kgosana, when he arrived at Caledon Square, told Terblanche that he did not want to talk to the Police because they had let the black people down. They had just killed people in Sharpeville and Langa, and also arrested their leaders. That is why they wanted to talk directly to Frans Erasmus, the Minister of Police.

Colonel Terblanche then conferred with the then Commissioner of Police, General Rademeyer, and told him about the PAC delegation's demand to see Mr. Erasmus. Terblanche came back and told Kgosana that he had fixed up an appointment with Erasmus. He said that Kgosana must tell the people to disperse and then return for the meeting with Erasmus.<sup>148</sup>

Kgosana fulfilled his part of the bargain, but when he later came back to meet Erasmus, he was locked up and spent the next nine months behind bars without trial.

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, p. 95.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, p. 93.

<sup>146</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better*, p. 143.

<sup>147</sup> P. N. Charles, *The tragedy of apartheid: A Journalist's Experiences in the South African Riots* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961), p. 165.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, p. 165.

Colonel Terblanche was actually responding to orders from the minister of justice, who told him that as soon as the leaders appeared on the scene and were identified, they should be shot and killed. As it happened Terblanche ignored the latter part of the order. Negotiation coupled with the restraint shown by Kgosana, resulted in the peaceful return of the marches to their homes.

Kgosana responded years later to the question of why he dispersed the crowd voluntarily, by stating that had they resorted to violence the City of Cape Town would, no doubt, have been burnt out and some whites killed. This would have been a gross violation of Sobukwe's instructions that the campaign should be 'absolutely non-violent'. Kgosana explained that the whole might of the military would have descended on Cape Town, and made Sharpeville look like a picnic: 'And we would have done exactly what Sobukwe had warned us against, used our people as cannon fodder'.<sup>149</sup>

That night the army placed a ring of steel around the townships and police and soldiers began methodically going from house to house, kicking down doors and forcing people to return to work. Kgosana was later charged with holding an illegal procession.<sup>150</sup>

#### **4.4. The Repression**

After a few days, two members of the Special Branch police came to interrogate Kgosana. Kgosana learned that the other officer's name was Detective Sergeant Wessels. Wessels tried to justify Kgosana's imprisonment, saying he regretted his arrest and the abrupt termination of his studies, and that he thought Kgosana had been misled by some people for their own ends. He had been impressed by Kgosana's intelligence during the past three days, and thought that he was a very reasonable man. He said if Kgosana agreed in writing to denounce the Anti- Pass Campaign and its leaders, the government would release him and give him a scholarship to pursue his studies at the University College of the North (Turfloop) in the Northern Transvaal. He said he thought Turf loop was better than the University of Cape Town since the latter had exposed him to association

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<sup>149</sup> T. Heard, *The Cape of Storms*, p. 101.

<sup>150</sup> *The Mail and Guardian*, 27 March 1997.

with bad whites. Kgosana told Wessels that he had never been misled by anyone, and rejected his offer. He added that if he were to be released, he would launch another campaign in a week. His interrogators stood up and left.<sup>151</sup>

After one more day in the isolation cell, Kgosana was allowed to re-unite with his colleagues in the big cell. Kgosana found that none of his colleagues had been subjected to the ordeal he undergone in the 23 days he spent in isolation. Among the detainees who were with them were some of the best known leaders of the Congress Alliance.<sup>152</sup>

A one-man commission of enquiry into March 21 Langa shootings opened in Cape Town's Supreme Court, with Justice Marius Diemont on the bench. Lawyer Donald Molteno visited Kgosana in prison and told him that he was to give evidence at the enquiry. He was to be driven to the Supreme Court in handcuffs and under armed police escort.

At the enquiry, Kgosana was asked to relate the sequence of events leading to the shootings at Langa on 21 March. Molteno asked him to read his 20 March launching speech, which was a strong appeal to the people by Sobukwe and Kgosana to shun violence at all costs. The prosecutor accused Kgosana of having instigated the people to break into acts of violence. Kgosana told him that if at any stage he had called on the people to resort to violence, the entire picture of the campaign would have been different. After giving evidence, Kgosana was taken back to prison, where he heard ugly stories of police brutality from newly arriving detainees.<sup>153</sup>

One of the stories, which were later confirmed by press reports, said that two parents taking their baby to hospital were shot at, and the baby killed.<sup>154</sup> He also heard that on the 4 May, Sobukwe had been sentenced to three years in prison with hard labour, while Potlako Leballo, the PAC's National Secretary, and other National Executive members were each sentenced to two years imprisonment, while Josias Madzunya and others got 18 months each.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 43.

<sup>154</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better*, p. 144.

<sup>155</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana.

Kgosana's trial was adjourned for two months on 6 November 1960, because the prosecutor was getting married. Kgosana objected to the lengthy adjournment and told the magistrate that he did not have sufficient money for bail. He informed the magistrate that he wished to spend the long recess with parents in Pretoria. After some half-hearted objections, the prosecutor, Mr Cuff, agreed that he could go home under police escort. Kgosana did not know who paid the bail that night; they were all released and left for Langa Township with Manelisi Ndibongo. There after, at a meeting in the house of Zacharius Molete, the head of Publicity and Information in the PAC, Kgosana announced his intention to leave South Africa in accordance with Sobukwe's instructions. Sobukwe told them that 10 000 youths should go abroad for military training in preparation for the next phase of the struggle.<sup>156</sup>

The brutal massacres at Sharpeville, Langa and other places marked a significant turning point in the struggle for national liberation. Soon after the declaration of a State of Emergency, the ANC and the PAC were banned (on 8 April) and the South Africa government decided to embark on a path of total repression. Defiance and rioting slowly came to an end and the confidence of white business returned. For most of the black leaders, Sharpeville and Langa marked the end of the road regarding peaceful protest.<sup>157</sup>

The Special Branch of the police was organized as a secret political police force, trained by the French in the ruthless methods which they had used in Algeria. The Police Gun Squad was strengthened to ensure that fire arms did not cross the borders to reach blacks in rural or urban areas. All policemen were given extensive powers to arrest and detain suspects under the state of emergency and later under the new security law.<sup>158</sup>

At first detention without trial was limited to 12 days, then to 90 and then 180. In exceptional cases, like that of Robert Sobukwe, the PAC leader, it was extended indefinitely by a decision of the Minister of Justice. People suspected of terrorism could be held for up to 30 days in the first

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<sup>156</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, p. 57.

<sup>157</sup> R. Martin, *History Studies in Depth: A History of South Africa* (London: Longman, 1995), p. 88.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, p.304.

instance and for longer if the Minister of Justice gave his approval. Detention could mean not just the loss of freedom, but also torture and death. At least sixty nine people died in detention in South Africa between 1963 and 1985.<sup>159</sup>

Meanwhile, the military budget was greatly increased and legislation was passed to enable the government to procure and conserve essential military supplies.<sup>160</sup> Between 1969 and 1972 the government brought into being a Bureau of State Security (BOSS), attached to the Prime Minister's office. Its members were accorded an unusual measure of protection from public discussion. A security service special account was set up to enable the government to invest funds secretly for the defence of the Republic.<sup>161</sup>

By 1965 all revolutionary movements in South Africa had been suppressed by the security police which was headed by Hendrik van den Bergh. His former colleague in the Ossewa Brandwag, B.J. Vorster, had become Minister of Justice and Police in 1961.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> N. Muedane, *Confrontation with Apartheid Colonialism: The Role of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Influence of Sobukwe and Africanism in the Azanian Struggle* (London: Jacobin Books, 1988), p. 19.

<sup>160</sup> T. Davenport, *South Africa, A Modern History*, p. 389.

<sup>161</sup> T. Lodge, *Sharpeville*, p. 179.

<sup>162</sup> N. Parsons, *A new History of Southern Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 305.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **LIFE IN EXILE**

#### **5.1. Kgosana's path into exile.**

Philip Kgosana's trial was adjourned for two months on 6 November 1960, because the prosecutor Mr Cuff was getting married. Kgosana informed the magistrate that he wished to spend the long recess with his parents in Pretoria. Mr Cuff agreed that Kgosana could go home under police escort. Kgosana was released on bail of £25. He did not know who paid the bail but he was released.<sup>163</sup>

Robert Sobukwe had in the meantime issued orders for the immediate dispatch of 10,000 youths to go abroad for military training in preparation for the next phase of the struggle. After his release from prison in December 1960, Kgosana was welcomed everywhere in Langa and Nyanga as a hero. He left for Pretoria the following weekend, because the prosecutor had decided that Kgosana could go unescorted. In Pretoria, he was met by his brother Sam in Johannesburg. At a meeting in

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<sup>163</sup> P. A. Kgosana, *Lest we forget*, (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1988), p. 57.

the house of Zacharius Molete, the head of Publicity and Information in the PAC, Kgosana announced his intention to leave South Africa in accordance with Sobukwe's instructions. Molete opposed the decision because he saw the move as cowardly.<sup>164</sup>

Kgosana also went to Lady Selborne to see his relatives. When in Pretoria, he reported to police headquarters in Pretoria as instructed by the prosecutor Mr Cuff. As soon as he identified himself, Kgosana was taken to a senior police officer who demanded to know why he was so late, because according to him Kgosana was supposed to report there immediately on arrival in Pretoria. He ordered Kgosana to report daily to the Hercules Police Station, about five miles away from Lady Selborne.

The following weekend Kgosana went to Winterveldt to see his parents, who were happy to see him. Kgosana did not tell his parents that he was planning to leave South Africa. He thought they would find it very difficult to accept that.<sup>165</sup>

It was on 24 December, very early in the morning, when Kgosana found a Volkswagen Beetle waiting for him, with 'Mr Mahlangu' (this man was only known to Kgosana as Mr Mahlangu) at the wheel. Mahlangu, who was together with his friend Chicks Nkosi, helped Kgosana to cross the Swaziland border. In those days the Swaziland border was unguarded. For Kgosana, life in exile had begun. He wanted to go to Dar es Salaam but after a few days stranded in the kingdom without transport, he had to settle for flying to Maseru.

The PAC leadership, as though in anticipation of subsequent events, had on 20 March 1960 instructed Nana Mahomo and Peter Molotsi to leave South Africa in order to make the PAC's case known to the international community and the rest of Africa, and also establish contacts and to implement the PAC's 'Master Plan', which involved taking young men and women out of South Africa and finding training facilities for them. The recruits were to receive both military and non-

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<sup>164</sup> Author's interview with Mark Shinnars, 27 June 2006.

<sup>165</sup> N, Muedane, *Confrontation with Apartheid Colonialism: The Role of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Influence of Sobukwe and Africanism in the Azanian Struggle* (Jacobin Books: London, 1988), p. 21.

military training so that black South Africans could obtain their freedom, and subsequently govern the country.

These two PAC National Executive Committee members left South Africa through Nyasaland (now Malawi). They laid the foundations for the establishment of new PAC bases outside South Africa and raised funds for the creation of a rudimentary PAC infrastructure in Maseru, Lesotho, as well as for PAC missions in Accra, London, Cairo, Francistown, Dar es Salaam and Leopoldville. Later the PAC also sent men to Algiers and Lagos.<sup>166</sup>

In 1961 Kgosana finally managed to fly to Dar es Salaam, where he made his way to a camp called Buguruni, which accommodated other PAC freedom fighters. From Tanganyika, he proceeded to London, where he met Nana Mahomo, who was a part of the South African United Front (SAUF), which had been established in 1960. Oliver Tambo and Yusuf Dadoo respectively represented the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) on the SAUF, while Jarientundu Kozonguizi was the South West African National Union's (SWANU) delegate, with Mahomo and Peter Molotsi being the PAC's men on the structure.<sup>167</sup>

Mahomo demanded that Kgosana take a fresh oath of allegiance before him. Kgosana declined on grounds that it was unnecessary to do so. Kgosana spent three weeks there before leaving to tour other African states.

In Accra, Ghana, Kgosana met Lucas Molomo, who he had earlier encountered in Dar es Salaam. They together met the PAC's cadres in Ghana.<sup>168</sup> What they saw dismayed them. The recruits were given conventional military drill by Ghanaian army officers, but were badly clothed and fed. There had been periodic, minor revolts over food and conditions, as well as occasional full-scale mutinies. However, what most characterized the camps was the boredom and sense of futility felt by the training camp inmates when going about their daily lives. Because of their refugee status it

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<sup>166</sup> K. M. Kondlo, 'In the twilight of the Azanian Revolution': The Exile History of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa): (1960-1990)' (DPhil, Rand Afrikaans University, 2003), p. 122.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana, 21 September 2005.



was difficult for them to take up any form of local employment. There were no attempts to make the camps self-sufficient in terms of their food supplies.<sup>169</sup>

The conditions under which the refugees lived in Ghana were generally unbearable. Cadres were cramped in a building consisting of six rooms. Hygiene was criminally neglected. There were no toilets and they had to relieve themselves in the open veld, a stone's throw from their building. Additionally, only one bathroom was available for all 50 of them.

Hunger was also taking its toll. They existed on mealie meal, porridge, and beans. They were given meat once a week. Fresh fruit and vegetables were commodities they came to regard as luxuries. Many of them had developed sores on their skins as a result of scurvy.<sup>170</sup>

Apart from Kgosana, there was also Peter Raboroko, Secretary for Education for PAC, who was the most senior member in the group in Ghana. All of them including Kgosana felt that Nana Mahomo and Peter Molotsi were not effectively performing the task for which they had been sent outside South Africa, namely establishing the PAC's External Mission.<sup>171</sup>

Kgosana expressed the view that while various world organisations were sending sums of money to the SAUF for the upkeep of refugees, the refugees were receiving allowances insufficient to buy basic necessities such as soap, toothpaste, writing materials, cigarettes and shoe polish.<sup>172</sup>

Kgosana along with others who had deserted the PAC's camps, including Lawrence Mgweba, Alfred Mampe, Bam Siboto, Manelisi Ndibongo and Lucas Molomo (among others), charged that the thousands of pounds being donated by sympathetic organisations to the SAUF were being used by the front's leadership as bait to procure money. They also made reference to what they alleged was the luxurious manner of living of the SAUF officials.

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<sup>169</sup> T. Lodge, 'Insurrectionism in South Africa: The Pan-Africanist Congress and the Poqo Movement 1961-1965' (DPhil, York University, 1984), p. 416.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana.

<sup>172</sup> Author's interview with Isaac Mthimunye, 21 September 2006.

They claimed that the gap in the standard of living between the refugees and SAUF officials was as wide as that between black and white South Africans. One example Kgosana liked to cite was of a married couple that was unceremoniously dumped in the camp. This was a shocking violation of family privacy he said, while SAUF officials were staying in luxurious apartments in town.<sup>173</sup> To add insult to their injury, the refugees lived under draconian regulations which they had to obey or face penalties such as expulsion from the camp. Kgosana mentioned Mr Happy Mariri, a member of the National Democratic Party of Southern Rhodesia, who had been expelled from the camp without explanation, as a result of which all were living in perpetual fear of expulsion.<sup>174</sup>

## 5.2. The 1963 Uprising

Another event that caused discontent among the rebellious group was a press conference held in Maseru on 27 March 1963, at which Potlako Kitchener Leballo, who was a founder member of the PAC, and had been arrested with Robert Sobukwe on 21 March 1960, revealed to the world that on 8 April 1963 he would command an army of 155,000 trained men who would invade South Africa from Basutoland. He declared that the people of South Africa were ready for such an uprising.<sup>175</sup>

Leballo said that Poqo and the PAC were one and the same thing and he reaffirmed the movement's pledge to free the African people in 1963. This would be achieved by revolution. Leballo continued to say that he was absolutely confident that they would succeed. He added that the killing of whites would be an inevitable part of the revolution.

The actual plan devised by Leballo and his colleagues was to have Poqo members rise up and indiscriminately kill white men, women and children on the 8 April 1963, and also to attack police

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana.

<sup>175</sup> Author's interview with Gasson Ndlovu, 27 September 2006.

stations, confiscate arms, blow up power stations and police stations and set petrol tanks alight. Domestic servants were to poison the food of their white employers.<sup>176</sup>

The aim was for each town to stage its own revolt, forcing the government to deploy its forces over a wide area instead of focusing on one town or city. The idea was that once the action started, the reaction from the white police and army would force everybody to join the uprising and the white rulers would not be able to contain a country-wide uprising.<sup>177</sup>

The plan never materialised. On 29 March, two women, namely Cynthia Lichaba aged 18, and Patricia Thabisa Lethala aged 19, who were sent by Leballo to post letters to Poqo branches giving them instructions concerning the revolt, were arrested by the South African Security Police in the town of Ladybrand in the Orange Free State. In total, seventy letters were confiscated.

On 1 April the Basutoland police visited the PAC office in Maseru. They questioned those they found there and confiscated a quantity of documents, including membership lists (Leballo had already escaped into the mountains). Shortly afterwards the South African police began arresting several thousand suspected PAC men, using the lists supplied to them by the British colonial authorities. For several months the PAC headquarters in Maseru were closed down, only to re-open when Leballo resurfaced from hiding in September 1963.<sup>178</sup> Despite this ignominious outcome, Leballo remained the acting President of the PAC in exile and was based in Tanzania's capital Dar es Salaam until he was deposed in 1979 (he died in 1986).<sup>179</sup>

In the trial resulting from these arrests, the exhibits included documents which police said were found in a suitcase in the possession of one of the accused. One of the documents outlined a plan for guerrilla warfare and said that an insurrection or even minor skirmishes were sufficient to set in motion a full scale revolution in South Africa. Saying that 'South African situation is extremely ripe for a violent revolution', the document dealt with the political; and military aspects of the rising. Another document, entitled "Operation Ransom", outlined a plan for the kidnapping of

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<sup>176</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better: The Life of Robert Sobukwe* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2003), p. 182.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> T. Lodge, 'Insurrectionism in South Africa', p. 396.

<sup>179</sup> B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better*, p. 183.

white children in South Africa who were to be held as hostages for the freeing of Sobukwe from Robben Island. The accused were E. Mfaha, who was a teacher, and T. T. Letlaka, an attorney. Mfaha and Letlaka were both members of the PAC's Presidential Council. Gasson Ndlovu, Kwensi Vincent Hlabisa, John Thwayingana, Wigram Sobuza, George Faku, Lekoatokoato Letsoha and Rufus Zonyana were their co-accused.<sup>180</sup>

There had been an external dimension to these events. Peter Molotsi and Nana Mahomo had been invited by the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs to collect the weapons needed for the project from one of the country's armouries. The problem was of how to transport the weapons to South Africa. Gasson Ndlovu, Nana Mahomo and Kgosana were given funds to ship the weapons to South Africa via Port St Johns in the Transkei. According to Ndlovu and Kgosana, Mahomo spent the money on his personal use and the PAC never got the arms it needed for the 1963 uprising.<sup>181</sup>

What aggravated the situation further was that in Maseru, Leballo made strange friends who consequently became involved in PAC affairs. Hans Lombard, for example, was a white South African who had been given a letter of credence by Leballo as a PAC roving representative. Leballo copied him into many PAC secret documents. The ANC dubbed Lombard as an apartheid agent and informer. These incidents not only tarnished the political image of the PAC, they also shattered the morale of many in the PAC exile community, including Philip Kgosana.<sup>182</sup>

In August 1964 another incident occurred involving Leballo which caused yet more damage to the credibility of the PAC. During that particular year, Leballo was granted passage through South Africa in a chartered aircraft. He made a stopover in Johannesburg for about 30 minutes. But whilst there his aircraft was heavily guarded by the South African regime. The question was asked by the rebellious group that included Kgosana was of how it was possible that a man who was so 'dangerous' and 'highly wanted' by the South African government, could at the same time be

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<sup>180</sup> Author's interview with Isaac Mthimunye.

<sup>181</sup> B. B. Maaba, 'The PAC's war against the state, 1960-1963', in the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) eds., *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, vol.1, 1960 – 1970 (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), p. 287.

<sup>182</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana.

allowed by that very government to not only pass through South Africa but also stopover in Johannesburg?<sup>183</sup>

Such events caused a lot of tension among the PAC membership, especially Kgosana's rebellious group. There was a shortage of money and a no less severe deficit of leaders with organisational abilities. If that was not enough, within the PAC itself, there were a lot of purges, expulsions and assassinations.

For example, in exile the PAC received money from various sources including international solidarity groups, trade unions, the Liberation Committee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and sympathetic governments and church organisations. Nana Mahomo and Peter Molotsi received an amount of £100 from the KF and Metalworkers Union of Sweden to help the PAC meet the needs of refugees. These funds never reached the PAC and hence Mahomo was suspended in August 1964 and charged with the misappropriation of funds.

In addition, the Treasurer-General of the PAC, A.B. Ngcobo pointed out that in October 1964 the United Arab Republic released a sum of £5000 to the organisation. This money was never handed to the Treasurer-General nor deposited into the party account. The list of instances in which funds donated by various countries in support of the struggle against apartheid were mismanaged and misappropriated within the PAC, was long and depressing.

But mismanagement, recklessness and corruption were not limited only to funds; they also involved moveable property acquired by the organization. In December 1965, for instance, David Sibeko drove a party vehicle while unlicensed and smashed it beyond repair. No inquiry was ever held. In August 1966, Sibeko drove another party vehicle while unlicensed and knocked down a pedestrian. The victim was hospitalized but Sibeko continued to drive PAC vehicles without a licence and the leadership knew about it but failed to act. The amount of money donated to the PAC and for which the organization could not account was staggering and destroyed the sympathies of whoever may have wanted to plead on the party's behalf. These incidents not only

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<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*

tarnished the political image of the PAC, but they also depressed the morale of the PAC exile community and the rebellious group in particular.<sup>184</sup>

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **6. EPILOGUE**

#### **6.1. Kgosana's later years in exile**

At the beginning of January 1962, Philip Kgosana was expelled from the PAC in Dar es Salaam by Nana Mahomo, Peter Raboroko, and Peter Molotsi. He was accused of having been disloyal to the exile leadership of the PAC. They claimed that Kgosana left South Africa and went into exile without permission from the leadership of the party. After his expulsion, Kgosana left and moved to Ethiopia. From that date, Kgosana ceased to be politically active and lived the life of an independent refugee.

Kgosana left with a group of approximately ten people, including Lawrence Mgweba, Alfred Mampe, Bam Siboto, Manelisi Ndibongo, and Lucas Molomo. The group went to Nigeria because a conference of African heads of states was scheduled to begin there in January 1963. Many famous heads of state such as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Sekou Toure and Ahmed Ben Bella attended. The group took advantage of the meeting to inform the

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

heads of states about their quarrel with Molotsi. Kgosana was well known, as everybody had read about his activities in Cape Town. The group stayed in Nigeria until the conference came to an end.<sup>185</sup>

Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie was one of the conference attendees and he offered to take the whole group on his aeroplane to Addis Ababa. The offer reflected the high regard in which Selassie held Kgosana.<sup>186</sup>

Kgosana accepted, and in August 1963 he embarked on a training course with the Ethiopian Military. He received three years of training there, graduating at the end of 1966. Having completed his military training, he undertook a BA degree at the University of Addis Ababa from 1967 to 1970, after which he completed his MA at Makerere University in Uganda.

From 1974 to 1996, Kgosana was employed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in which capacity his role was to help both the ANC and the PAC with food and clothing and deliver services to those organisations. During his time with UNICEF, Kgosana travelled to Uganda, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, China (People's Republic), the Maldives, the USA, Tanzania and Botswana. In 1992, UNICEF transferred him to Botswana in what was to be his last stationing before his retirement.<sup>187</sup>

Kgosana believed that he was first a South African and only secondly a PAC member. He felt that the needs of the ANC were the same as those of the PAC, and he treated both the organisations equally.

Over time, he was also gradually brought back into the fold of active PAC politics. Within the PAC's ranks, factionalism continued to exist well into the 1980s, though on a lesser scale than during the reigns of Potlako Leballo (1962 to 1979) and Vusumzi Make (1979 to 1981).<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Author's interview with Gasson Ndlovu, 27 September 2005.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Author's interview with Ezekiel Motupi, 25 May 2006

<sup>188</sup> Author's interview with Rev. Dr. Mmutlanyane Stanley Mogoba, 5 June 2006.

Nyathi Pokela, who served as PAC leader from 1981 to 1985, succeeded in establishing rules and procedures for running the affairs of the organisation. He however failed to bring about a complete return to peace and stability. What was noteworthy about his leadership, however, is that he was able to manage the turmoil much better than his predecessors. The most important factor in enabling him to do so was that during this period, systems and processes necessary to run the organisation were put in place and for the first time the PAC developed a programme of action for each year.

Unfortunately, mutual mistrust within the PAC survived well into the reign of Pokela's successor, Johnson Mlambo, who was in charge from 1985 to 1990. Consequently, when the PAC was unbanned in 1990, its internal power struggles and divisions had not been resolved. The reasons lay in the organisation's failure to follow democratic norms in its internal procedures. This resulted in leadership squabbles, disunity, and financial mismanagement, which were trends none of the PAC's leaders could root out.<sup>189</sup>

The dispute between the leaders and the led over the issue of internal governance was longstanding and rooted in traditions and practices dating to the era of Vusumzi Make, when the cadres and general membership first raised a clamour to be consulted on the appointment of a new leadership. This never happened, even during the time of Mlambo. This insistence on democratic participation served to create an ever widening rift within the ranks of the PAC's general membership; hence Mlambo's attempt to speed up the summoning of a Consultative Conference after the organisation's unbanning on 2 February 1990. An ad-hoc committee, including Kgosana, was established to prepare for this meeting.

The conference was finally held in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 2-4 March 1990. The agenda focused on the prospects for a negotiated settlement in South Africa. The question divided the PAC between moderates and revolutionaries. The latter won majority support, and as a consequence, the organisation never participated in the 'talks about talks' between the ANC and the government in 1990.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Author's interview with Lucas Molomo, 8 August 2005.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*



Clarence Makwetu was elected President at the conference, thereby succeeding Zephaniah Mothopeng who eventually died on 23 October 1990.<sup>191</sup> As a consequence of the conference being dominated by hardliners, the party argued that any settlement that did not tackle the land question was flawed. This stance was maintained throughout the negotiating process and it led to the party being divided over whether to participate in the 1994 elections. The PAC believed that negotiations should be held outside the country under the stewardship of a neutral party, such as the United Nations or the Organisation of African Unity.

Ultimately, the imminence of the 1994 elections, and the fact that the PAC did not want to lose ground to the ANC, led the moderates in the PAC (including Makwetu) to push for a change of policy. Makwetu argued for participation and ordered the party's military wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), to end its armed struggle. They prevailed, and the PAC eventually decided to participate in the 1994 general elections. The party was, however, not fully behind the decision.

The hardliners advocated a return to the basic doctrines of Pan Africanism as stated by Robert Sobukwe, who, they argued, rejected working with anyone other than fellow Africans. They claimed he spoke of the need for black South Africans to liberate themselves without the help of non-Africans, and that he defined as a non-African anyone who lived in Africa but did not pay his allegiance to Africa and was not prepared to subject himself to African leadership. Any leader that deviated from that model was not fit to lead the PAC.<sup>192</sup>

In the end, the PAC's performance in the 1994 elections was disappointing. It received 243,478 votes, amounting to 1.25 percent of the total, and won only five seats in the National Assembly, whereas the ANC won a sweeping victory, taking 12,237,655 votes (62.65 percent), enabling them to occupy 252 seats.

## **6.2. Back Home**

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<sup>191</sup> Author's interview with Philip Kgosana, 14 September 2005.

<sup>192</sup> Author's interview with Lucas Molomo.

As mentioned above, in 1992 UNICEF transferred Kgosana to Botswana in what was to be his last stationing with the UN. On 31 October 1996, he returned to South Africa on a permanent basis, settling in his home town in Winterveldt near Pretoria.<sup>193</sup>

When the PAC held a Party Congress at the University of Venda in Thohoyandou in 1996, Kgosana had agreed not to stand for the organisation's presidency. Dr Motsoko Pheko had been invited to come home from the USA where he had been serving as the PAC's representative to the United Nations. The invitation was for him to contest the presidency of the party. Pheko had been a member of the PAC since 1960 and had been imprisoned in South Africa due to his anti-apartheid activities. After his release he left the country and went into exile where he remained for 30 years.<sup>194</sup>

Clarence Makwetu initially refused to stand down as President at this congress, but when the nominations were already in progress, he relented (because he had already served his term of five years as President). Makwetu allowed Bishop Stanley Mogoba to stand unopposed, for the sake of unity. Mogoba then became the President of the PAC (1996-2003), with Pheko serving as his Vice President.

During the six years of Mogoba's Presidency, Kgosana served as a member of the PAC's National Executive Council. His loyalty to the party and its leadership were unquestionable. Kgosana is a good singer and during party meetings and rallies, he would be a presenter and sing party songs, choruses and anthems, calling for unity and dedication to the continuing liberation struggle.<sup>195</sup>

Regarding his political views today, Kgosana insists that there needs to be a well-established set of moral values that will guide the behaviour and conduct of all South Africans. These include, among others, love for one another, recognition and respect for each other's rights and property,

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> Author's interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>195</sup> Author's interview with Rev. Dr. Mmutlanyane Stanley Mogoba.

and above all, respect for human life. Social justice, peace and security can only be built on a basis of good morality.

He maintains that the people of this land must learn to live together, to live for one another and to live for South Africa, the continent of Africa and the world. The basis for unity, Kgosana said, must be 'Africanness'. Africans should rise above considerations of their skin tone and regard themselves only as Africans. Kgosana told me repeatedly that by so doing, they shall be well on their way to achieving unity. Those who resent the idea, or are ashamed of being Africans, or simply do not feel they are Africans, cannot be part of this unifying concept of Africanness. Kgosana had always emphasized the unity of the African people, defining an African as 'any one who felt he belonged to Africa and nowhere else'. On the problem of landlessness, Kgosana always said that without access to land for everyone, South Africans will not go far in their effort to redress their economic problems. He pointed out that land was a major resource and that access to it should be guaranteed to all South Africans as soon as possible.<sup>196</sup>

Furthermore, Kgosana said that social justice, peace and security would only be achieved when every individual South African has access to land. This, Kgosana stated, is a fundamental right for every South African, irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed. Small scale farmers, medium scale farmers, large scale farmers and individuals who need land for residential, industrial or business purposes must have access to land. The problems of squatter camps and overcrowding, with their destructive effects on the environment are a direct result of landlessness.

Kgosana reminded fellow South Africans that land is everything. He who owns land owns everything: the soil, the rivers and mountains; the trees and grass, the animals that are found on it; the minerals, water and gas that lie beneath; the air, the clouds and rainfall; and the birds and insects that fly above it. Inversely, he who has no land has nothing, owns nothing. South Africans should, therefore, realize that landlessness is a direct source of social conflict.

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<sup>196</sup> Author's interview with Kgosana.

Apart from the problems of landlessness, Kgosana has on many occasions drawn attention to the fact that practically all extractive, commercial and manufacturing industries in South Africa are concentrated in the hands of a small section of the population. Kgosana has emphasised that Africanness and 'Ubuntu' are inextricably intertwined with the spirit of sharing. There is no need to wait for the State to rectify these anomalies. In a spirit of 'Ubuntu' South Africans can and should get together and agree on how best to redistribute the resources of this country. It is not necessary to wait for state intervention.<sup>197</sup>

If it is agreed, Kgosana argued, that apartheid was an evil, that it was legitimately declared a crime against humanity, then those who took up arms and fought against it did so with moral justification. Accordingly, the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) could fairly be said to be a travesty of justice. The reconciliation that Kgosana conceived of and preached was that the perpetrators of apartheid should come forward and say: 'We have wronged you, we are sorry about it, please forgive us'. Those who suffered under apartheid would respond by saying: 'We understand, we accept your apology, we forgive you'. Then the two sides would shake hands, embrace and reconcile and together march towards a united country.

Kgosana has found it hard to understand why the oppressed should be made to apologize for rebelling against apartheid. Consequently, Kgosana dismissed the TRC as a farce. It is evident from the level at which Kgosana has addressed issues that he is still an impatient radical.

Isaac Mthimunye served with Kgosana in the PAC's National Executive Committee. According to him, Kgosana was the one national organizer who travelled the length and breadth of South Africa, establishing and coming into contact with PAC structures. Mthimunye described Kgosana as a very humble, passionate person, dedicated to his work. He added that although Kgosana is very honest, he also shies away from controversy. Mthimunye maintained that his relationship with Kgosana was very fruitful.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> Author's interview with Isaac Mthimunye, 21 September 2006.

One particular task that Kgosana undertook with great distinction was representing the party in the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). On many other missions and delegations, he represented the president and the party, for example, at the Moral Regeneration Committee. Kgosana is also a Christian, a member of the Methodist Church, a preacher and a leader (steward) in the Church, and he has served as a member of the Synod of the Church.

Kgosana has also distinguished himself as a local leader in the rural community of Winterveldt. He formed a project to help the senior citizens on pension pay-out days. He also contributed to improving certain deplorable conditions amongst pensioners waiting for their grants: under his aegis toilets were built and soup and bread served to old people who had to wait up to eight hours for their pensions. Reverend Doctor M.S. Mogoba once visited this project and it was clear from the faces of these people that they were indebted to Kgosana and held him in high esteem.

Kgosana also worked persistently in bringing unity to the PAC's African members in Cape Town. It is interesting to note that after five decades, different generations of members still hold him in high esteem. Recently, he was also involved with a committee that worked to establish a memorial stone to commemorate the 1960 event.

In terms of personal honours, he was granted the award of Officer of the Order of the Disa by the Premier of the Western Cape, Ebrahim Rasool. Kgosana has also been invited to Cape Town to celebrate the naming of a street in Khayelitsha after him.

When HIV and AIDS started decimating South African communities, particularly the youth, Kgosana got involved in a practical way and trained a group of youth in AIDS care. He successfully sought funding from the British Council and quite a substantial group of young people were trained and deployed in Winterveldt.

He has organised local farmers and a very ambitious project was started through his initiative whereby large plots in Winterveldt which for years had not been used, now saw hundreds of orange trees planted on them. It is hoped that the fruits of these trees will help the community. Kgosana is presently secretary of the Winterveldt United Farmers Association. He is also a member of the

Bojanala Board of Directors, and a member of the Bojanala District Agricultural Cooperatives Hub (Bojanala district is one of four in the North West Province, and Winterveldt is an area within it).

Kgosana was a Councillor in the Tshwane Metro Council from 2000 until 2006 and a party whip of the Council. With such rich and varied experience, one can say that if his political career had not been spent in the service of the PAC, Kgosana would have long qualified for a diplomatic posting or a cabinet position.<sup>199</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

The dissertation has tried to show that Philip Kgosana made a significant contribution towards the fall of oppression in South Africa. The study focused on the issues of the formative influences on his life, his entry into politics as a Pan Africanist Congress member, his role as a PAC leader in the crucial years of the early 1960s, and his subsequent life from the late 1960s, following his marginalisation within the PAC leadership.

In relation to the first issue, this study demonstrated that Kgosana grew up in Makapanstad where communal activities were a part of his life. It shows that he was greatly influenced by his grandmother who taught him to respect elderly people and about the disunity and selfishness that she said were the factors hindering the progress of the African people. He was taught to be gentle, polite, firm in purpose, and to refrain from using abusive words.

The article shows that in terms of raising his political awareness, it was his time at Lady Selborne High School that played a key role. It was Mr Masemula, his History teacher, who inspired

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<sup>199</sup> Author's interview with Rev. Dr. Mmutlanyane Stanley Mogoba.

Kgosana the most and was the one who planted the seed in his mind which would grow into rebellion in later years.

Regarding his life as a political activist, the dissertation detailed the schism within the ANC in the 1950s that led to the formation of the PAC. It showed that Kgosana opted to join the PAC primarily because it had a leadership that was totally committed to the struggle of the African people for national emancipation, no matter what the hardships or obstacles might be.

Soon after his arrival in Cape Town in 1959, Kgosana was drawn into a leadership role in the organisation. At the time the policy of the government was that Africans must be removed from the Western Cape. Poverty in Langa was bad and the real wages of Africans were not increasing.

In March 1960, in his capacity as a leader in the region, Kgosana announced that the anti-pass campaign would begin in the Western Cape on Monday 21 March 1960. The thesis described Kgosana's role in the demonstrations on that day which led to the death of demonstrators and how, following the protests, Cape Town experienced a widely observed stay-at-home from its black workforce.

On 30 March 1960, thirty thousand people led by Kgosana walked quietly through white suburban streets. The original plan had been to go to parliament, but he abandoned this because troops were drawn up in front of parliament. Kgosana's judgment was surely correct because Prime Minister Verwoerd, his cabinet, a full assembly of MPs and senior civil servants were in the parliamentary complex. Any approach by massed blacks would have led to dreadful loss of life and possibly the burning the city of Cape Town.

Following negotiations with Colonel Ignatius Terblanche, the Deputy Commissioner of Police in Cape Town, Kgosana made the fateful decision to tell the protestors that they had achieved their objectives and that they should disperse. Following this he was arrested. After a few months in prison Kgosana was released on bail. Thereafter he left South Africa in accordance with Sobukwe's instructions that 10,000 youths should go abroad for military training in preparation for the next phase of the struggle.

The immediate consequence of the shootings at Sharpeville and Langa was the declaration of a state of emergency and the publication of emergency regulations. At the same time that the emergency regulations were promulgated, both the ANC and the PAC were banned. The result of this ban was that the Africans were deprived of any political outlets through which they could express their opposition to government policy.

Kgosana's life in exile began on 24 December 1960 when he left for Swaziland and eventually made his way to Dar-es-Salaam where he met his colleagues from Cape Town, Lawrence Mgweba, Alfred Mampe, Bam Siboto and Manelisi Ndibongo. The group thereafter left for London, where they had a cool reception from Nana Mahomo, who accused them of not obeying the leadership and of taking unilateral decisions. Mahomo demanded that they take a fresh oath of allegiance before him. Kgosana and Mgweba declined on the grounds that it was unnecessary to do so. This relationship with Mahomo would never repair and this would eventually lead to Kgosana's marginalisation from the movement.

The rest of the dissertation dealt with Kgosana's years in the political wilderness. From the late 1960s he disengaged to a large extent from politics and instead pursued higher education, eventually receiving employment with UNICEF.

Over time, however, he was gradually reintegrated back into the PAC. The process was completed after the fall of apartheid in the early 1990s. In 1996, the PAC invited him to return home from Botswana to contest the presidency of the party. When the Party Congress met at the University of Venda, Thohoyandou in 1996, Kgosana was elected to the National Executive Committee. Kgosana's loyalty to the party and its leadership were beyond question during these years. On many missions and delegations, Kgosana represented the president and the party.

Today Kgosana is a member of the Methodist Church and has served as a member of the Synod of the Church. He has been a Councillor in the Tshwane Metro Council and Party Whip of Council. He also received special recognition and was awarded an Officer of the Order of the Disa by the Premier of the Western Cape, Ebrahim Rasool. Kgosana has also had a street in Khayelitsha named after him. He is also a prominent farmer and he was responsible for a very ambitious project in



which large plots in Winterveldt which for years had not been used, saw hundreds of orange trees planted.

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