

THE SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE

21 MARCH 1960

INTERVIEW

- MFANA : How are you Sir?
- MOSES : No, I'm good. Although old age is getting the Better of me.
- MFANA : Baba Moss, what can you tell me about the Event of the 21st of March 1960, in Sharpeville?
- MOSES : On that day many residents of the Sharpeville Township were brutally murdered by the Apartheid police.
- MFANA : Why were these people killed?
- MOSES : I was among them, and they were protesting Against the apartheid governments pass laws, Which compelled them to carry passes.
- MFANA : Did the police begin shooting on arrival? Or was Something said between you as demonstrators and Them?
- MOSES : No the police arrived and demanded that we Disperse. We refuse and some of us started pelting The police vans with stones, and then the police Opened fire on us.
- MFANA : Was it necessary that some of you respond by Pelting the police vans with stones? Or was it part Of your plan from the start?
- MOSES : No, it was never part of the plan to use violence. It's Just that some of us hated the apartheid police in Such a way that our fear and anger towards them Was uncontrollable, thus some of us responded by Throwing stones at them.
- MFANA : What is the approximate number of people who Were killed and those who were injured?
- MOSES : No, I don't really know, But the number of injured People might have been higher than the one of Those who were killed.
- MFANA : Can you describe the manner in which your Companions were killed?
- MOSES : Your questions are digging these old wounds. After Some of us began pelting the police vans with

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- Stones, the police reacted by withdrawing these heavy machine guns and firing at everything within their sight! That was terrifying.
- MFANA : What was it about the event that you found most terrifying?
- MOSES : Everything happened rather too quickly, we were just marching and singing. Suddenly there was this loud thunderous noise accompanied by the screaming and cries of people, in less than five minutes people were scatted everywhere whereas bloody bodies lay lifeless on the street. I have never been that scared, never, not even at this age.
- MFANA : Was the shooting done mainly by the white police officers? Or other wise.
- MOSES : Believe it or not! But some of these police officers were somehow black police working for this apartheid government! Some of them may have been choice less, but there were these who were actually proud of being engaged in the mass killing of their own population.
- MFANA : Do you think it was necessary that black police officers also engage in the shooting?
- MOSES : No, I believe it was unacceptable that they joined in the assassination of their own people!
- MFANA : What do you think black police officers should have done to assist in your attempt for freedom?
- MOSES : I don't really know, but it's inhuman to kill somebody who's also fighting for your freedom aswell. It's very stupid!
- MFANA : As you were demonstrating, what exactly was intended destination?
- MOSES : That I cannot tell you. There were quite many of us, with the leaders in front. So some of us were just following the mob, but we all had similar objectives, to get rid of the Pass Laws. But some of us knew nothing about the intended destination.
- MFANA : Were both men and women engaged hand in hand on this march?
- MOSES : Yes they were, but I don't really know if this was a rumour or truth. But it was said that the whole idea was formulated by women.
- MFANA : How did life in Sharpeville change after this event?

MOSES : Almost everything came to a standstill during the days following this event. The township was very quiet, as if it was mourning. Most people remained home and occasionally forgot about school, work and anything else except the ordeal. We all had one question in mind, where to from here?

MFANA : How long did it take you to fully recover from the whole thing?

MOSES : Different people had different levels of recovery. Some people did recover quicker than others, other found it hard to just move on. Especially those who had lost members of their families and friends. I also found it hard to recover as I had lost a friend and a sister, so I decided to make a new start somewhere else and move away from the surroundings that would have been a bad memory to me. There are many other people who decided to move on to other places too.

MFANA : Do you think the whole march was worth it? And what was it that was achieved through this march?

MOSES : Yes I believe that it was worth it as it sparked global debates. It became a controversial issue among world renown leaders and houses of parliaments. The ANC, gained maximum exposure as a liberation movement, it gained exposure to foreign countries and leader. It was in this manner the ANC's foreign support and assistance was acquired.

MFANA : What difference did it make in the country as a whole?

MOSES : I believe that it did make a difference, life was never the same afterwards. I even believe that this event is the one that sparked the march that followed 16 years later, the youth demonstration on the 16th of JUNE 1976. I also believe that the Sharpeville Massacre inspired and motivated some of the renown struggle heroes to just keep fighting. It showed them that they were not at all alone