



Interview with Peter More

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Name of Interviewer:	Nonhlanhla Ngwenya
Name of Interviewee/s:	Peter More
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Nonhlanhla Ngwenya (NN): Okay, this is Nonhlanhla Ngwenya doing an interview on behalf of SAHA with Mr. Peter on the 29th May 2013. Mr. Peter if you can tell us who you are and where you were born.

Peter More (PM): You want to speak to me here?

NN: No, you are the one speaking, you tell us who you are, where you're from, where you were born

PM: My name is Peter Chief Moore from Mogopa and I was born here. Now there was a time where whites turned against us and took our land from us by force and it did hurt that white people take our land from us, the land that is ours and our future and our children.

NN: Before we get there, before they took your land, what kind of a place is Mogopa?

PM: There's no place anywhere in the world that is like Mogopa that is suitable for the Bakwena's who are called Bakwena (Crocodile in Sesotho).

NN: And how was life in those times?

PM: Life was excellent, we didn't lack anything. We ate and got full and there was great leadership at that time, you see. We lacked nothing

NN: And Mogopa, how did it come about to be called Mogopa?

PM: To be called Mogopa?

NN: Yes

PM: The community in Mogopa is initially from the Free State, now when they were from the Free State. In those times it happened that whites also came along, and they had to possess a land, that couldn't be done without *kgosi* [King in Sesotho]. Now they went to Mamogale our *kgosi* [King in Sesotho] in Bethal. And Mamogale asked them if they had cows and they said that we would sell cows so that the *kgosi* [King in Sesotho] can give us a land. Mamogale didn't buy it; our ancestors bought it because Mamogale was their umbrella. He is their umbrella, it's not like this land belongs to him. This land is for Bakwena's [Crocodile in Sesotho] that are here in Mogopa.

[TIMECODE: 35min:32sec]

NN: Then how did the name Mogopa come about? This place to be called Mogopa, how did it come about?

PM: I don't understand that question, however this land was called Mogopa for the Bakwena's [Crocodile in Sesotho], that's who we're called; Bakwena [Crocodile in Sesotho] who belong to Mogopa, not those from Bethal. There are those from Bethal, we are from Mogopa.

NN: And before when you were growing up, when you did stuff, how do it? Were you using culture or you were just doing them?

PM: Stuff how?

NN: Like whoever who was in charge of Mogopa, your *kgosi* [King in Sesotho], how did your system work?

PM: When we say Mogopa, when we called it like that, laws here are based on 6 villages; law drives them. The *kgosi* [King in Sesotho] uses the law from all the 6 villages combined you see. No one does as they like and that satisfied us

NN: If you can remember those *kgoro* [Clan in Sesotho], what were they called?

PM: I beg your pardon?

NN: The names of those *kgoro* [Clan in Sesotho]

PM: It was the head village Mogopa, when they say Mogopa they mean More. It's the one that was heading all of them. Then Batlounge [Elephant in Sesotho], Batlasi, Bakgafele, Barole. Where did I begin?

NN: They're 6; you've counted 5 of them

PM: Did I mention Batlounge?

NN: Yes

PM: Then there's Pooe, Bakgatitswe. There were 6 *kgoro* [Clan in Sesotho]

NN: And how was the leadership you were under?

PM: it was all right, even the *kgosi* [King in Sesotho], there was nothing we could complain about in how we used to live

NN: And then the Mogopa land, before they moved it, what was it used for?

PM: Mogopa land?

NN: Yes

PM: We were farming; we had many cattle's as we liked. We never starved.

NN: What leading structures did you have in Mogopa? You were under the *kgosi* [King in Sesotho] leadership right?

PM: Yes

NN: How did you live knowing that you have to report to the *kgosi* [King in Sesotho]?

PM: We were happy with our living because the *kgosi* [King in Sesotho] was the one who dealt with issues. When I say *kgosi* [King in Sesotho] I mean the king, he's the one who was ensuring that things run smoothly

[TIMECODE: 31min:33sec]

NN: How was the unity of this Mogopa community?

PM: The community was very well, we didn't have problems. There were strict rules and as the Bakwena [Crocodile in Sesotho], we respected the law

NN: Who laid the rules?

PM: I beg your pardon?

NN: Who laid those rules?

PM: The *kgotla* [Clans in Sesotho] when they meet

NN: They're the ones who laid the rules?

PM: Yes

NN: And when you follow tradition, what are the things that you did that was traditional?

PM: When we?

NN: When you follow your culture

PM: Culture?

NN: Yes

PM: I'm now getting lost

NN: The things you did that represented culture, following your tradition

PM: We were farmers and we were farming. We had cattle, as much as we wanted, we're farmers.

NN: As far as you're concerned, what are the things that happened to Mogopa that led leadership to make you leave here?

PM: What made us depart is corruption; the new leader's corruption. When he started to rule here, he then had a way to sell the land to whites and white criminals to take our land. Now, we started fighting there because the land is ours and we're left with nothing, they moved people to Pachsdraai and we said we still want our land. At Pachsdraai, the guns they were threatening us with are nothing.

NN: Is that the reason why they removed you from there?

PM: Whites wanted the land, they wanted our land and so we refused and felt they will take the land after they kill us and there's no one left, then they can have the land.

NN: As far as you're concerned, what made the whites want to possess Mogopa?

PM: It's the apartheid whites that didn't believe in a black person owning land, they were taking it by force, and we can't have the land

NN: And the government here in Mogopa, who did it speak to?

PM: Mma? Mogopa?

NN: Yes

[TIMECODE: 27min:31sec]

PM: This place we don't know who owns it, these whites here, they're the government; they had people that will control us

NN: And which ways did they use to remove you from here?

PM: Ways?

NN: Ways that they used to remove here, when they started to move you from here

VM: The method that they used to remove you from here, which way did they use? When they whites removed you from this place, what method did they use?

PM: It was by force, they came here with guns and told us that Mogopa is finished; we're taking you to your land that we don't know about and didn't discuss about.

NN: And did they take you all at once from Mogopa?

PM: They removed all of us here, there were those who left to Bethal and those that were left behind were removed by force from Mogopa

NN: And what role did the youth play during you being removed from Mogopa?

PM: What?

NN: Youth, what role did it play when they were removing you from the village?

VM: She means the youth

PM: Youth, they were young then and elderly people were the ones fighting for the land to come back to us. At that time we didn't have separate roles.

NN: And what about women?

PM: Women?

NN: Yes

PM: Women were equally hurt as men and didn't want to leave this land

NN: And what did they do to show that they didn't want to move from here?

PM: There was no choice in whether you want to leave or not. It was by force used by whites then during the apartheid

NN: And how did they move you from Mogopa?

PM: They came here at night and said that they're here to help us here in Mogopa; they're here to protect us and removing us to where they will be taking us to. They took us to Pachedraai and we didn't like Pachedraai, we were removed by force and it wasn't by choice. We moved because of the gun threats.

NN: When they moved you, what did they use?

PM: Their trucks

NN: And where they took you to, how did the place look like?

PM: Where they took us wasn't a place to live, we lost a lot because even our farms and cattle were taken over by these whites. We lost a lot during that time.

NN: And when you arrived where they took you, how was the community's relationship when you arrived there?

[TIMECODE: 23min:05sec]

PM: Where they took us?

NN: Yes

PM: Where they took us, we actually didn't go because we didn't like the land. It didn't belong to anyone and we knew that tomorrow they would get rid of us already because it doesn't belong to anyone. But most of us we felt it better to move to Mamogale in Bethal and fight for our land until we get it

NN: When you arrived in Bethal, how did your lives change compared to Mogopa?

PM: In Bethal?

NN: Yes

PM: It was okay, it was better because Mamogale was our umbrella and he also told us that Mogopa wasn't sold at all, and we were prepared to fight

NN: And when you located to Mamogale, who then occupied Mogopa?

PM: Who did what?

NN: Who stayed behind at Mogopa?

PM: These thieves that ganged up against us and took money from the whites, they're the ones who stayed behind because they knew they'd be working for whites

NN: So they're the ones who came to stay in Mogopa after you've left?

PM: They've never gone there; there was still war then. They were waiting for us to give in and that we'll give up

NN: And you said that when you lived in Mogopa you were united as a community

PM: I beg your pardon?

NN: You were united as a community

PM: Oh yes

NN: When they now moved you to Bethal, how was the unity then?

PM: They didn't take us to Bethal; we took ourselves there because we knew that because he's our umbrella and if we ask to stay he'll allow us. However, your land was Mogopa, don't relax. If I say go, you must because your land isn't sold, fight and get your land back. The chief was on our side, Mamogale, Bethal

NN: And people from Mogopa, how did you settle in Bethal? Because the way you speak is like others liked it, does it mean there are those who didn't like it or you all liked it?

PM: Most didn't like it but they didn't have a choice. Some like us refused and fought and said Mogopa is our land

NN: And after they took the Mogopa land, how did you take it back?

PM: At that time we were most working in Johannesburg. We held meetings every now and then, every week to know what the progress was and for them to help us to go back and fight for Mogopa until we get it.

[TIMECODE: 18min:31sec]

NN: And in those 4 groups, who was doing what?

PM: In the 4 groups?

NN: Yes, the 4 groups, who was in charge of them? Or who started them?

PM: Oh, it was Mokwena [Crocodile in Sesotho], others and myself in Gauteng.

NN: How did you start it?

PM: We met and agreed that we won't allow anyone to steal Mogopa whilst we're watching, let's fight for it until we get it back. Now if we didn't meet we wouldn't have gotten Mogopa back still. But we fought until our plea was heard to get help and we went back to Mogopa.

NN: And what method did you use to get Mogopa back?

PM: To get it back?

NN: Yes

PM: It's through the assistance of Black Sash. What do you call it now?

Victor Mogomotsi (VM): Black Sash and TRAC

NN: TRAC.

PM: TRAC is the one that got us houses whilst we were fighting for this

NN: And then before what did you do as a community?

PM: silence

NN: As a community?

PM: As a community?

NN: Yes

PM: As a community Black Sash helped us a lot that we really appreciate their assistance because things changed where corrupted people lived. As far as I'm concerned, we should have a big function and call everyone who's been helping us from America whatever, so we should have this function and slaughter cows and have celebrate. Those people must be there so that we can thank them.

NN: Before they got into this issue of moving you to Mogopa, as a community, what did you do to show that you want to go back to Mogopa? How did you find your way back to Mogopa?

PM: How we found our way back to Mogopa?

NN: Yes

PM: From where we were?

NN: Yes

PM: We were moved by force right, so we were united and told ourselves that we won't stay in a land that we don't know.

NN: And there's nothing that you did as the groups you have formed?

PM: We had boys that we positioned as spy's that when we come back home, one will stand here, the other there and there so that the cruel whites.

[TIMECODE: 14min:12sec]

And police don't block our way. We found this man called Mapote somewhere; he's the one who found big trucks for us

NN: Herbs?

PM: Herbs, he's the one who used to lift us. That's how we went back, this man used to tell us that the whites nor the police on the road won't stop his cars, and we traveled nicely. He took us, Herbs

NN: And when you got back to Mogopa, how did the government take it that it was by force?

PM: No

NN: What did the government do?

PM: The government?

NN: Yes

PM: It came but Pieter Marius said that we didn't succeed, the land is ours and don't fool yourselves, don't tell your people to come here and don't bring people that are not Bagopa to come here, it should only be Bagopa's.

NN: And when you came back here, was it all of you or some were left behind?

PM: Some were left behind and only came here later. When we came back only a certain group came back. So some stayed behind because they were satisfied with the place they lived and then later on realized that they were not, and they returned back with their own transports.

NN: Why do you think they stayed behind?

PM: I would say that it's foolishness that you don't trust your own land and then you decide to go and trust someone's land, what can you do for yourself in someone's land? There's nothing you can do for yourself. We didn't sell our land and I don't know whom they bought it from, we want nothing with our land. We didn't want anything at the Bakwena's [Crocodile in Sesotho].

NN: And when you came back, how is the leadership now in this community?

PM: It was messed up, I thought we were going to stay united again as the Bakgopa's, but now there's no rules, everyone is a *morena* [Chief in Sesotho]. I don't know what rules they're using.

NN: But I mean when you came back here from Bethal, whose leadership is Mogopa under? Is it the *kgosi* [King in Sesotho] or?

PM: It was under the *kgosi* [King in Sesotho] leadership. It's still under the chief's care, the very same one who chased everyone away. When we come back from Bethal?

NN: Yes

PM: Those ones were in Bethal and we came back in trucks, so now when we're here, it was, the man who was in charge here was my father

NN: Your father?

PM: Yes

[TIMECODE: 10min:5sec]

NN: And how was the leadership when he was in charge?

PM: People were satisfied and there was no problem. There were no queries at all.

NN: And did things remain the same or did they change?

PM: After my father passed on, everything was messed up.

NN: What messed things up?

PM: I beg your pardon?

NN: After he passed on, what got messed up?

PM: What?

VM: When your father passed on, what made things to get messed up

PM: Oh, the thing is, there were other people who wanted to sell the land and we as Bakwena's [Crocodile in Sesotho] we leave. They were after money

NN: And since you're back, what about women, how are they in the community?

PM: Women were concentrating more on us as men

NN: And when you came back here in Mogopa, did you find things the same way you found them or did they change?

PM: The land wasn't the same again because when we came back, these whites had built boundaries all around, and the land is no longer the same.

NN: And how was the relationship within the community?

PM: When we came back?

NN: Yes

PM: Community was still united under the old man. It's only after he passed on that things got messed up because of the one who took over.

NN: And as far as you're concerned, how would you say Mogopa has changed from last time to now?

PM: Now it's worse, there's no life at all and everyone is a *kgosi* [King in Sesotho]. There are no rules, there's no discipline here in Mogopa

NN: As far as you see, how's Mogopa's future? When you look at it

PM: These days?

NN: Yes

PM: I don't see any future because we don't know what Mogopa is doing, what it does for me. There are laws that we don't know where they're coming from, that binds us from being free.

NN: And when you look at the youth during your times and now, what's the difference?

PM: When I look at?

[TIMECODE: 6min:20sec]

VM: She's asking about the youth in your times when you were in charge, how were you ruling the youth compared to now?

PM: Then they were disciplined and listening and respecting elderly people. But today I don't know what got into them, they chant for nothing. They're useless.

NN: What do you think causes that?

PM: What causes this is because of positions, they like positions that are not theirs. They think they can get rid of the right people, they know who our leaders are and that if we want leaders, where can we find them. Now the hyenas are trying so hard to destroy these leaders.

NN: Where do you see Mogopa in future?

PM: It doesn't have future because I don't see where it's going. This land is useless, now if this land was in the right hands, Mogopa was supposed to be more visible than this.

NN: What is it that you think if it's done, Mogopa will be where you want it to be?

PM: What will make people to go back to where they used to be, they should give them a farm to farm the way, have cattle, have farms and farm and stop depending on shops and whites.

NN: And do you think if that happens Mogopa will be where it's supposed to be?

PM: If this happens, Mogopa will rise again indeed because it's rich in farming and in everything. There's nothing that Mogopa lacks.

NN: What is it that youth should do?

PM: I beg your pardon?

NN: What is it that the youth should do for them to take Mogopa to another level?

PM: I think our youth here; I don't see their role here. They're just playing around; I don't see what they're doing

NN: What is it that you think if they do, things will be okay?

PM: The thing is, they're focusing on positions. They don't know that when you're a leader of the community, they shouldn't starve, rise your community to farm, have cattle's and live, not only you. So if we're many, this one fights for a position, the other one this side also wants to be *kgosi* [King in Sesotho], there's nothing that can be all right. The "you're born a chief, it's not for everyone", if something is not yours, it will kill you one day.

NN: Don't you have anything that you would like to add regarding Mogopa?

PM: What I can say is, I don't know how I can say it because I can desire that but others don't see it anymore or don't see it like I do. If we go back to our leadership style that we used to lead by, Mogopa will go back to where it used to be. Everything will rise if there are laws, and we will live happy as a community. *Dikgosi* [Kings in Sesotho] must work, not everyone doing whatever they like or think that law is when you take someone to the police. We never used to call the police, they would only come when called by *kgosi* [King in Sesotho] because issues are getting tougher, and there was discipline. The police were not just called

[TIMECODE: 0min:40sec]

For nothing.

NN: And now they do?

PM: They come as they please and even when you report they look at who you are that reported. We don't have the police force anymore, there's nothing. They're all corrupted.

NN: Okay, thank you so much. If we need more information we will come back to you.

PM: All right, thank you

[00min:00sec]

[END]