

THE STORY OF

Here's a DRUM scoop! While police and Special Branch were seeking traces of Philip Kgosana, the 20-year-old former P.A.C. leader who headed the famous march from Langa and Nyanga to Cape Town, and who was believed to have fled the country, we are printing his own story — WRITTEN BY HIMSELF specially for DRUM.

MY full name is Philip Ata Kgosana. I was born on October 12, 1936 at Makapanstad, near Hammanskraal, which is between Pretoria and Warmbaths. My father is Rev. Simon Kgosana and my mother Mrs. Lettie Kgosana. My second Christian name — Ata — means increase.

I was a herdboyc as a youngster, and attended school when and where I could, which was only two or three days weekly. I failed standard two, but after I managed to go to school regularly (in 1949) I did fairly well. I passed standard six with a first-class pass, and then went to secondary school at Makapanstad. I

did my Junior Certificate at the Lady Selborne High School in Pretoria in 1955, topping my class, and went on to take my Matric in 1957.

School was never easy for me. There was always cattle to herd after lessons, and never enough money for books. No time for football or romping around like other boys. Sometimes I was bitter . . . And now that I had passed Matric, I was determined to go to university, despite poverty and ill-health.

I want to be a scientist. I saw a high official of the South African Pharmaceutical Society, who told me frankly



**HE TELLS DRUM
HIS LIFE STORY**

Philip Kgosana, the dramatic young African nationalist leader who has rocketed to fame, tells his story exclusively for DRUM readers.

MY EXCITING LIFE

PART 1

by PHILIP KGOSANA



WHEN THE WHOLE CAPE HEARD HIS VOICE

He burst like a bombshell onto the political scene when he led 30,000 people in the famous march on Cape Town. After a powerful demonstration he led the marchers away again without a brick thrown or a shot fired in anger.

that I would never overcome racial discrimination in this field in South Africa. So I wrote to London University and that body accepted me . . . but I had no money to go.

The Institute of Race Relations tried to help by getting me accepted by a South African university . . . but they failed. Then I decided to try for a B.A. degree at Fort Hare — but the Arts faculty was full until 1959. However, they did offer me a vacancy in the Faculty of Commerce.

But this was the time of the government attacks on "open" universities — and I wanted nothing second best. I found I could get in at the Cape Town university — but again money was the problem.

I turned once more to the Institute of Race Relations. They told me that, though they had money to help people resident in Johannesburg, their constitution prevented loans to people from other areas. "As long as the money is available," I said, "I'm sure you can alter your constitution or find some loophole for me," and I pleaded and cajoled and argued to such effect that finally I was granted a loan of £303 for three years of study at Cape Town University, on condition that I passed every year.

University at last

After I had paid for a third-class rail ticket to Cape Town, my personal fortune was exactly £11. I felt very ill. I found a room at the Stakesby-Lewis hostel, but the rent was high — £2 a week. I decided to pay over £4 for two weeks, to enable me to look around.

Next morning I went to the university to register. My previous mental image of what it would look like was wrong; the beauty of

the buildings and their setting caught me by the throat. I felt great as I leaned against the wall near "Freedom Square" — a bit of lawn where Coloured students usually gathered to discuss politics. Then I thought of my financial and accommodation worries, and the world didn't seem such a good place any more.

One of my room mates suggested I see the Roman Catholic Bishop in Hope Street. An attendant listened to my story, gave me ten shillings, and regretted they had no place for me to stay. Then I met up with Rev. Chidi, whom I had met before at Kilnerton, and he too gave me ten shillings. It was a precious pound that I had collected, but the main difficulties were still there.

Harrowing money worries

I wrote home of my money worries. Three days later my cousin Caroline — a child still at school! — sent me half-a-crown, and apologised because she had no more.

Meanwhile, I had started attending lectures — and I was helped by a room-mate, Archie Mafeje, who paid my train fare daily. I bought a writing pad and, in this one "notebook" I recorded all my notes from lectures on Economics, English, Statistical Method, Preliminary Commerce and Accounting. Later, I had to buy another two pads.

Another student, Nana Mahomo, whom I found thought very much as I did about politics, sent me to interview Professor H. M. Robertson, who told me to come and see him later on. Meanwhile Mr. Mahomo had collected £1 6s. 3d. for me from amongst his friends.

When I had only three more days to run at the Stakesby-Lewis Hostel, Mr. Mabitsetla of

the Department of Psychology advised me to seek accommodation at Langa. I went to the pass office, where my pass was endorsed, allowing me to live in the Cape until the end of the year, and I was given room 3 in Block C of the New Flats at Langa.

Langa is about nine miles east of Cape Town. The New Flats are blocks of buildings, each containing 81 bedrooms on three floors and there are eight blocks in all, built in two rows of four, facing each other. Two men slept in each bedroom. My room-mate was David Roto of Lady Frere.

Between the flats and the location are the "zones." These are hundreds of houses built by the City Council to house labourers from the Eastern Province. Grouping is by tribal clan. The Gcalekas, the Tembus, the Centanes and the Pundos all have their own zones.

The people in the locations call these tribesmen amagoduku (migrants) or amaqaba (illiterates) or amasoka (the unmarried), the latter because no women are allowed in the zones. It was among these thousands of away-from-home people that I had to settle down and try to study.

But how could I live amongst these people if I couldn't speak Xhosa? Who was there who could teach me? . . . One Sunday morning, walking, I came across a meeting in an open place. One speaker shouted "Phula! Phula!" and the crowd immediately quietened. I guessed the words meant either "silence" or "listen." I had begun to learn Xhosa. I listened to the meeting, and picked up many more words.

Because I was so poor I decided to walk the five miles each way between Langa and the University, and I also looked round for

PLEASE TURN OVER

I WAS HUNGRY, ILL ... I COULDN'T STUDY



THE COPS HELPED

White policeman holds speaker as Kgosana urges a Cape crowd to go home peacefully.

something to augment my income. My main problem was my rent of £1 3s. I wrote to Mr. Patrick Duncan, and then met him by arrangement. He saved a dangerous situation by giving me £2 for my rent, and suggested that I should sell "Contact" on commission. I told him that it would be difficult for me then to sell "Contact" to the Xhosas, but I would do so later on.

I was not studying at all. My stomach was forever empty, and my health was deteriorating. Way back in June 1958 I had contracted an infectious disease, but I did not have sufficient money, and the treatment was never completed. Once the disease made me feel its effects I couldn't study. It was like a pain in my soul, and I felt great depression. With no books, it was impossible to study accounting. I gave up the course.

One day I caught a bus. Inside, some young men were arguing about the date of the women's demonstration against passes in Pretoria. I told them that the correct date was Thursday, August 8, 1956. "I was there," I said. "I was a schoolboy, and I left my classroom to watch the demonstration."

Asked about my politics

My new friends asked me about my politics. I said that I admired the Pan-Africanists and their leader, Mr. Sobukwe. My friends were also Africanists and were delighted. They took me to the home of one of them, Mr. Nxelewa. This man behaved to me like a father. When I went home, he asked me to visit his room early the next morning. I did so, and he gave me ten shillings. Then, later, he insisted on my having meals with him. Even if he was not there, he said, I should cook food for myself and eat. By October, Mr. Nxelewa was closer to me than a relative. When I needed money, I just told him like a child, and he gave it to me.

The half-yearly examinations were bad — I failed

PLEASE TURN OVER

A WHITE WOMAN GAVE ME SECURITY . . .

in every subject — and I began to worry about my bursary. But my notes were jumbled, I had no books, what could I do? I spent my June holidays at home, working.

One day during the holidays I received a letter from a certain white lady in Arcadia Street, Pretoria. She asked me to give her details of my life in Cape Town. I did so, and she sent me two suits and two shirts. She then told me she would send me money every month to pay for my rent. Now at last I could feel secure. What is more, my Xhosa was improving rapidly.

I was gaining a large circle of friends, and I was beginning to enjoy myself. I attended private and public meetings. I went to conferences at Kensington and Langa Flats. I was beginning to know many members of the Pan-Africanist Congress. Politics began to dominate my life.

Terror of examinations

The year was drawing to a close, and I had to study hard. After the examinations, I was confident that at least I would pass Economics, but when the results came out, I found I had failed all subjects. I only obtained supplementaries in Economics and Preliminary Commerce.

I was disappointed, and panicky about my loan. Then I told myself that things would work out, that I must keep cool. The P.A.C. had branch elections, and I was appointed vice-secretary. The branch nominated me to be a delegate to the first national conference of the P.A.C. to be held in Orlando, Johannesburg. I felt that at all costs I had to go.

I travelled by car with Mr. Matsibela, and I had to pay him £5 and help him with the driving. It was a long but pleasant journey. We travelled via Bloemfontein, and stayed there overnight. We reached Johannesburg on the second day, and we parted in Mofolo.

There was a wait of four days before the start of the conference . . . for me, it was a long wait. I went to Mr. Molotri's home the day before the conference, and spent the night in his house.

"The Prof." speaks....

Conference started on Saturday, December 19 early in the afternoon. Mr. J. T. Nyaose was in the chair. Highlight of the afternoon was the presidential speech by Mr. Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, the former Wits lecturer, whom we referred to affectionately as "The Prof."

After his speech, speaker after speaker pressed for a campaign against the Pass Laws, resolutions were adopted, and the national working committee asked to draw up plans.

As the conference closed next day, Mr. Sobukwe told us to carry this message to the people: "Save food, save money — and be ready for positive action!"

We were about to launch a campaign under the slogan "no bail, no fine, no defence!"

I was filled with a sense of history. I believed the campaign would be the beginning of the end of racial discrimination in South Africa. I hoped as I had never hoped before.

NEXT MONTH:

Philip Kgosana tells of the stirring incidents in Langa and Nyanga that culminated in a march of 30,000 workers, with himself at the head, from the townships to Cape Town — and the events that followed.

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