

I'm saying it was a planned thing because as I mentioned it before that the Tanzanians were much on the ZANLA side. How it was planned that we should move from Zambia to Tanzania and that day was also planned, that when these people ... because it was during lunch hour and that day it was the ZANLA who were in the kitchen not ZPRAs so eventually some misunderstanding there broke up and they started to shoot at usAfter that episode, in which over 50 ZPRA men were killed, it was very difficult for ZAPU to trust ZANU or the Tanzanians at all, and they were moved to be trained separately.

Nevertheless, the Patriotic Front was formed, before the Geneva Conference of 1976, promoted according to Nkiwane, by President Nyerere. The photographs mentioned above were taken at the Zambian State House, where the agreement was cemented. And after that at least a façade of unity was retained even up to the Lancaster House Conference in 1979. At international conferences ZANU and ZAPU formed a joint PF delegation. It only unraveled after Lancaster house when ZANU suddenly announced that they would contest the 1980 election not as PF but separately as ZAPU. According to Dabengwa, ZAPU once again saw the hand of the British behind this:

And then in 1980 when they also realized the game - the South Africans were involved - when they realized that they could not allow a situation where after Zimbabwe has been independent the Zimbabweans are going to be able to assist the ANC MK comrades to use Zimbabweans to launch their attacks into South Africa which was the last bastion of white domination, and they decided they should frustrate that.

Finally the alliance with the ANC which had seemed so fruitful now appeared as a stumbling block for ZAPU, as the British feared that connection would assist the ANC to move towards victory in South Africa.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The neighbouring countries were necessary allies for facilitating bases and movement of logistics, but in their undeveloped state they did not have the resources to provide weapons and other materials. These had to come from further afield. Again, alliances were sought, and again minefields and pitfalls appeared as the ZAPU leadership attempted to negotiate the unpredictable field of international diplomacy. Not only were the early 1960s the height of the cold war, 1962 saw the rift between the Soviet Union and China which had previously been allies themselves against NATO.

Initially ZAPU sought assistance from Ghana and Egypt, Ghana being the first British colony in Africa to gain independence and Egypt under Nasser hosting the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO). Representatives were sent to these countries to seek support, and the first weapons smuggled into the country came via Egypt. Egypt at the time was closely allied to the Soviet Union, the one nation which was in a position to provide the type of training and material support needed. Thus the relationship with the Soviet Union was to become the centerpiece of international solidarity for ZAPU. A few cadres were sent to China before its open rift with the USSR, but once their relations deteriorated, ZAPU concentrated on the Soviet Union. There are virtually no photographs which can demonstrate this assistance, not surprisingly; this was something which had to be carried out in the greatest secrecy. Through the Soviet Union, ZAPU was able to establish contacts with all the Warsaw Pact nations. Military and intelligence assistance in the form of training as well as equipment was provided mainly by the Soviet Union itself as well as the German Democratic Republic (GDR commonly known as East Germany), but they also provided scholarships for training in a variety of civilian fields, as did other eastern European countries. Callistus Ndlovu was the representative in New York, and was able to describe a great deal about the solidarity from different countries:

.. the Soviets did quite a lot, in fact they produced ... they brought most of the big equipment that we had. But the GDR also did a lot, but these ... you see, African countries would not accept military equipment to be displayed openly, so they'd be brought in clandestinely and taken to camps somewhere



TOP LEFT: International solidarity – ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo with Cuban president Fidel Castro
 TOP RIGHT: Joshua Nkomo meeting Erich Honecker during his visit to the refugee camps in Zambia
 MIDDLE RIGHT: Yugoslavian delegation arriving at the airport to present donation of goods to ZAPU
 BOTTOM: ZAPU representatives and general staff in Zambia



The accounts of training given in the interviews frequently refer to Russian weapons, including heavy mortars, assault rifles and anti-aircraft guns and missiles. Other interviewees refer to courses they took, for example, Zenzo Nkobi himself was trained in Berlin in photography as was Caroline Mhlanga; Charles Madonko went to Hungary to study locomotive engineering.

This assistance fitted with the communist ideology of popular revolution and a heavy dose of political education was included with all training, whether military or civilian. But of course this support also fitted with the cold war interest in extending influence in order to combat capitalist imperialism on the world stage. One could say that interests of ZAPU and of the Soviets coalesced. Through the Soviets ZAPU contacted the Cubans, and Edward Ndlovu represented ZAPU at the famous Tri-continental conference in Havana in 1965 where Castro assumed the role of benefactor of third world liberation. This association became very significant ten years later, when Cubans began providing training in Angola for ZPRA after assisting MPLA to drive out the South African invaders. [described in Mzila-Ndlovu's interview]. Nkomo also visited Cuba and established close relations with Castro, as reported by Callistus Ndlovu:

they [Cubans] trained in all sorts, commandos, trained even ... some people trained as policemen. Even in eastern Europe, you know, we had people who were trained as policemen, in other words, ZAPU actually tried to train a civil service of its own, both military and civilian.

Assistance came not only from the socialist bloc, but also from elsewhere. Callistus Ndlovu continues the story:

So ZAPU at this stage [1971-2] was now getting support not just from the eastern bloc countries, but also from North African countries like Algeria, Egypt and the Middle East – Iraq.

And the OAU had a liberation committee which channeled funds and other assistance to the movements:

... the OAU Liberation Committee ... was dominated by Colonel Mbita [of] Tanzania; it did quite a bit because it co-ordinated all support towards liberation movements from the OAU. People who supported the liberation movement either did it directly through ... I mean bilaterally going to the movement itself, like the Soviets used to do with ZAPU, or they paid through the OAU ... so the OAU actually controlled quite a lot.

But the relationships were often shifting and had to be continuously reinforced, especially when changes occurred within the Zimbabwean political context. Ndlovu relates a critical period:

during the time of the FROLIZI phase there was an attempt to derecognize ZAPU, and again there, we did something to stop it. Edward [Ndlovu] sent me an emergency message to go and talk to the embassy of Iraq in New York. ... It was at that stage that actually ZAPU was saved from collapse because the Baghdad regime gave ZAPU about a million ... three million dollars to counter what Chikerema was trying to do, and that grant turned the Soviets around who were doubting now, they were beginning to move towards Chikerema. And it must be noted that actually even the Zambian government was inclined to thinking that even Chikerema might be the right leader¹⁸.

¹⁸ This would not necessarily have betrayed Kaunda's close relations with Nkomo, who was still in detention

ZAPU had established a network of representatives in offices throughout Europe, Africa, the Middle East and even North America to nurture the relationships formed and extend them wherever possible. The role of these representatives was primarily diplomatic but they might also have responsibility for looking after the welfare of ZAPU students in the country or others there for medical treatment. Several photographs show Nkomo assembled with some of these representatives when they were recalled for periodic briefings.

Later, when refugee camps placed heavy pressure on ZAPU to look after thousands of non-combatants, mainly women and children, other support was required. The eastern bloc again came to assist. One series of photos shows Erich Honecker of the GDR arriving at Lusaka airport. Ndlovu elaborates:

... what you see there is Honecker coming to deliver materials for refugee camps and also food, clothing, and other things like that. And normally, see, when they came like that they wouldn't ... the military things would not be brought in this fashion, but mostly it was really things to support refugees.

The Yugoslavs, too, are pictured bringing material for refugees.

When there was need for support for civilians, especially children, westerners who had sympathized with the struggle but were reluctant to support military efforts, now came on board as well. Governments were still unwilling, having bought Smith's descriptions of freedom fighters as "terrorists", but non-governmental organizations as well as churches were willing to assist. Some from the Scandinavian countries, from Germany, Britain, Canada were prominent in providing support in the form of food, clothing, funds for building, medical equipment. Victory Camp was constructed almost entirely from such assistance. David Beer worked at the time for a Canadian organization known as CUSO¹⁹ and described their assistance:

we would raise funds in Canada through telling the stories of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe and because of Edward Ndlovu's connection with ... Canada through family ... he could be hosted by the NGOs, trade unions, churches, on trips across the country and he would be telling the story of ... Zimbabwe's independence struggle. So we raised funds, CUSO did, also in collaboration with the churches like the United Church of Canada we were able to put together funds that came to Lusaka and went into the ... projects. Now we had proper project proposals out of the Director of Projects in Lusaka for ZAPU, those were the documents that we used in Canada to fund-raise.

He also explained how CUSO acted as a kind of agent for other NGO's who did not have offices in Lusaka:

There was a CUSO field officer for Zambia but we also had a separate liberation support officer, and that person was dealing with other NGOs including European NGOs who saw that office as a conduit for funds that would go to liberation support projects in the frontline states. Because our staff were able to visit the very projects that the Belgian Red Cross or Oxfam UK etc were providing money [for], ... the CUSO office acted as an arbiter for those projects and of course our people were visiting the camps and visiting the projects and writing the reports.

¹⁹ In its early days this organisation sent young Canadians to work in developing countries and was known as Canadian University Service Overseas. Later when it began funding projects the name was abandoned and the acronym alone retained.



TOP: The Red Cross delivering food supplies to Joshua Nkomo's house

BOTTOM: Joshua Nkomo and delegates visiting Victory Camp





TOP LEFT: Samora Machel inspecting military arms at the Non-aligned conference in Maputo with Oliver Tambo and others
Top right: ZAPU delegates at the International Conference in support of Liberation Movements in Southern Africa, held in Lusaka
BOTTOM: R.G. Mugabe and Samora Machel viewing a display of photographs at the Non-aligned Conference in Maputo



But it was later that western governments came on board:

At that time there was no transfer of funds from government. We did have a relationship with CIDA²⁰ – CUSO did - as Oxfam and the churches were - we could get matching grants for so much money that was raised from the Canadian people. In the case of Zimbabwe, the government did not match grants... It was much, much later under the Trudeau government with Mitchell Sharp that as foreign minister he announced - and it must have been in the late 70's of course - that Canada would match monies for NGOs for Zimbabwean projects for refugees or exiles

Besides raising funds and providing support for activities in the refugee camps, the effort also involved education of the Canadian people and political pressure on government to change their stance:

...we were trying to convince the Canadian government to do more in support of the people's liberation and also to raise money for our projects and so it was a concerted effort with the other NGOs and churches of Canada.

This Canadian effort was typical of NGO's in countries of Western Europe and the U.S.

In addition to the eastern bloc and NGOs in the west, there were international organisations which provided support for ZAPU – primarily on the diplomatic side or the provision of humanitarian assistance. The International Committee of the Red Cross was one of these which provided food, in particular, for the refugee camps. The United Nations was also a player. ZAPU had observer status at the UN as a recognised liberation movement, and leaders did travel to address the General Assembly and to lobby member states not to recognise Ian Smith's government or the government formed with Muzorewa after the internal settlement of 1978. But it was the agencies which had the biggest impact on the ground – the UNHCR and UNESCO as well as UNICEF which provided assistance to the refugee camps.

The Commonwealth Secretariat was active diplomatically, and of course it was the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Lusaka in 1979 which broke the political logjam and led to the Lancaster House talks in 1979. The photographs of the Commonwealth Secretary General Sridath Ramphal touring Victory Camp and JZ Moyo Camp were probably taken during that meeting. David Beer describes how that meeting provided an opportunity for publicity about the refugees and ZAPU in general with Canadian journalists and political leaders:

...we saw the Commonwealth Conference right in our lap in Lusaka as an opportunity to inform and educate primarily the large Canadian press delegation. There were fifty journalists, and it was a new Prime Minister Joe Clark and Flora McDonald his foreign minister. So we had arranged with ZAPU to get journalists to come to Victory Camp.... So we also were involved in trying to get the Minister of External Affairs Flora McDonald to go to the Camp and she did do that. It wasn't because of CUSO but she was very keen to visit the camp, Victory Camp, see all the women and the girls and they were absolutely thrilled to see her. (Beer)

Finally there were solidarity meetings, generally organised by third world countries, often sponsored by the Soviet Union. This gave encouragement to ZAPU but also gave them an opportunity to display to a wider audience their problems, strategies and achievements

Certainly, ZAPU depended for its successes on the support it received from the international community. They had to work long and hard to develop and maintain these contacts and ensure they bore fruit to help them towards their goals.

²⁰ Canadian International Development Agency – a government department