

Many young recruits died that day, some from napalm burning and others from other cluster bombs or from shooting. The dead were buried there on the spot in mass graves. There was also considerable property damage which appears in several of the photographs.

After training Moyo experienced further bombing attacks at the camp where he was taken before being deployed into battle:

Then before going home [into the front] then we were taken to Mulungushi, it's a ZPRA training camp. We stayed there for ... three weeks and there, daily there was bombardment, in the morning when we were about to drink tea, there the planes were coming; there's a dam somewhere nearer the camp. Then in the afternoon, but the time when you are going for the lunch, then the bombardment is coming. Around 5 somewhere the bombardment is coming and we were collecting fish, dead fish .. from the dam after ... after the bombardment. We were just collecting dead fish from around there and we used the ... we had those fish.

Ndebele, on the other hand, was too severely wounded ever to join the battle. He spent several months in hospital in Lusaka, and then was sent to Czechoslovakia to be fitted with an artificial limb. But they could not stay there indefinitely and eventually he was returned to Zambia into the care of ZAPU. It then became a problem for ZAPU of what to do with the now disabled, how to keep them profitably occupied, both to make some form of contribution and to avoid degeneration into depression:

So when I came home to Lusaka I... the first night I slept at Makeni<sup>15</sup>, and when I was at Makeni we were told that we were to open a school at Kafue, so that's the place where I stayed a bit longer. When we got to Kafue we opened a school for the disabled. So I was one of the teachers there, I was teaching other comrades, so we could even be driven to VC and to JZ Moyo Camp where we could meet some other teachers there and make some drafts, they helped us with our books so we could help our comrades ... even in their education. And one of the most pleasing things was that some of our comrades in their education ... that most of our comrades whom we were teaching, some of them they had left home without even seeing the door of a school, so they were very pleased to get the chance of reading.

## REGIONAL ALLIANCES

ZAPU could certainly not have developed its military capacity without support from other regional players, as well of course as those further afield. The first and most important ally was Zambia, as we have seen, even before it gained independence under UNIP. The political friendships dated to a much earlier period still, during the struggle against the Federation before it was formed. And many Zimbabweans, especially from the Matabeleland region had spent time in South Africa working (see for example, Amos Ngwenya) or obtaining education (for example Joshua Nkomo, T.G. Silundika and Edward Ndlovu from among the ZAPU leadership). There they had not only been politicized, they had made acquaintances which were to be continued and renewed in the years of struggle. The Zambians welcomed the ZAPU exiles as early as 1962, as we have seen, facilitating at the highest level the establishment of military operations. And they continued to provide that base throughout, up until Independence.

TOP: Joshua Nkomo, Kenneth Kaunda and J. Msika at Victory Camp BOTTOM: Oliver Tambo and Joshua Nkomo attending the UNIP conference at Mulungushi Rock in 1978

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<sup>15</sup> A ZAPU property on the outskirts of Lusaka







TOP: ANC delegates Oliver Tambo and Moses Mabida at the Non-Aligned Conference in Maputo  
BOTTOM: SWAPO youth protesting at a rally in Lusaka in 1979



Charles Madonko described how he went with the commander of the air force:

Yes, when I was asked to go and find that Mkushi Camp, for the ladies, we went to see the commander of the air force, Zuze, with Joshua and, and others, and where we made it out that I should go down and find out a place with water and far from the young guerrillas in Lusaka, because we were afraid of pregnancy. So I had to find Mkushi; the water was good, although Zuze said “ it’s a bad .. it’s a bad corridor, because if the enemy comes he might push the girls into a corner, they might end up going into the water”. And we saw that, but that was about the best we could do.

The closeness to the Zambians is evident from the large number of photographs in Nkobi’s collection which were taken at Zambian events – Independence celebrations, medal ceremonies at State House, UNIP congresses, May Day parades and so on. Normally ZAPU would have been invited as guests. Students were accommodated in the University of Zambia, ZAPU officials developed cordial relationships with Zambian officials, which provided the co-operation necessary for the approval of transport of individuals and groups as well as materiel coming into or through the country. The Zambian support was, therefore critical. Nkomo is frequently shown with President Kaunda, as in a photograph of the two of them with Joseph Msika at Victory Camp. By all accounts, Kaunda and Nkomo were very close.

Next to the Zambians, the closest alliance was with the ANC of South Africa. As Nkiwane makes clear, a personal friendship between Nkomo and Oliver Tambo dated to Nkomo’s days in South Africa in the 1940s:

Tambo and Mandela, these two were always inseparable, and Nkomo was within their group.

It is popularly believed that the military alliance of Smith’s Rhodesia and Vorster’s South Africa began after the joint Wankie and Sipolilo incursions of 1967-68. However, Nkiwane states that the reverse was true:

... when we started operating we started infiltrating people through the Zambezi into Rhodesia then, and as we went exploring ways where we could cross people over to Zimbabwe, every time we were at the Zambezi River, it doesn’t matter at what point, big South African Buccaneers were overflying the area almost at water level. So we realised that the Zambezi was being... the surveillance was being done by the South African armed forces. ... Then we realised that the South African Defence Forces had transferred the defence line onto the Zambezi. Then we thought it was worthwhile that ZAPU and the ANC came into some form of alliance and tried to fight the enemy where he was found.

The military co-operation, the alliance, began having playing a significant role very early on. Nkiwane again:

...we then came together and started working together until late in 1963<sup>16</sup> we had a high command made up of cadres from the ANC and ... ZAPU.

The story of the 1967-68 campaigns does not appear in this collection, and has been told elsewhere, but it had a major impact on the development of the struggle, in spite of its ultimate failure, as it inspired many and taught many lessons. Its failure did of course produce some finger-pointing from both sides of the alliance, but in the end it strengthened rather than weakened it.

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<sup>16</sup> This date cannot be correct. Dabengwa and others put this as 1965

When Jack Mpofu completed his training in 1968 they were deployed together with ANC cadres, even though their training had been separate. The alliance became important during the time of the split in ZAPU and the formation of FROLIZI. The Zambians had confined all the leadership together to try to force them to sort out their differences. He relates the following incident:

Then it came a time that ... the group of Chikerema went and shot a buffalo somewhere, but we were staying together; then we also shot a kudu to prove that we were also having arms but we were not allowed to have any arms, but we had to show them that we have got arms. We took those arms from the ANC of course...

The military co-operation continued, in fact, up until after Independence. Christopher Moyo refers to being deployed into the Hwange area along with six ANC cadres in 1979. After Independence the situation changed, but ultimately ANC's needs were still the same – they needed to be helped to cross Zimbabwe with their weapons and enter South Africa. Nkiwane recalled that he was actually accommodating ANC intelligence personnel while others accommodated MK cadres:

These [at Nkiwane's residence] belonged to [Jacob] Zuma because only Zuma came to see them, came to give them instructions, and not [Joe] Modise. Modise went to Akim to see his group, because Modise was military, and Zuma was intelligence.

Even as late as 1987, Nkiwane was assisting ANC to get their personnel and weapons into South Africa through Beitbridge.

The alliance with other liberation movements was not restricted to ANC. In the 1960s, a loose alliance existed between six movements – ANC, ZAPU, FRELIMO, SWAPO, MPLA and PAIGC. They called themselves the “authentic” liberation movements, and supported each other diplomatically, trying to promote each other amongst the international community. Nkiwane elaborates:

we operated together. Even our camps in Tanzania, we were accommodated at a place away from Dar Es Salaam at a place called Dodoma, which was... which is now the capital of Tanzania and this was where we established our camps... ANC, FRELIMO, MPLA, SWAPO and us. ...We were together in one camp. Ours was commanded by Moyo and later Nxele took over. And FRELIMO was commanded by Machel who became President, after, and the commander of FRELIMO was Philip Magaya who died in an accident, a shooting accident across the Ruvuma River in northern Mozambique and Dr Mondlane who was killed by bombing in Dar Es Salaam, so Machel was brought from the... he was the next in that lot, he was brought from Dodoma.

In Lusaka, they sometimes assisted each other with the use of properties and shared celebration days. But it was not only ANC which gave military assistance. According to Nkiwane, both MPLA and FRELIMO helped out as well:

We got weapons from Mondlane, we got weapons from Augustino Neto with Shipenda who was their representative in Dar Es Salaam. He gave him authority to give us any amount of weapons because the two Portuguese countries had more weapons stored in the harbor, in the port in Dar Es Salaam than anybody else. Ethan [Dube] and myself we could walk there into a ship and select as much weapons as we could.

TOP: R.G. Mugabe and T.G. Silundika at the Non-Aligned Conference in Maputo

BOTTOM: Joshua Nkomo, Kenneth Kaunda and R.G Mugabe at the formation of the Patriotic Front





STUARDT AVE

ARCADIA CO



Supporters outside Arcadia Hall during a campaign rally





Here Nkiwane is describing how ZAPU managed to obtain sufficient weapons for the Hwange campaign in 1967, at a time when Nyerere was trying to frustrate ZAPU. Later, MPLA assisted by providing the facilities for training in Angola, after they had taken power in 1976. But ZAPU also were able to assist others as well, particularly with transport, giving crucial help to FRELIMO to open the Tete province:

We ... opened the Tete province for ... Philip Magaya, for FRELIMO. We, at our expense, we carried the weapons, we took them there; we carried their personnel into... Zambia and then into the Tete province, we did the same. We were carrying that lorry of ours - it was a ten ton truck - it was on the road every time carrying fuel for FRELIMO, for MPLA for ZAPU, for ANC.

FRELIMO shared close working relationships with ZAPU in the earlier days, until they were disrupted by the confusion which prevailed in ZAPU from 1970-72 during the formation of FROLIZI, and the Tanzanian President Nyerere took the opportunity to promote ZANU to work with FRELIMO in Tete province.

The political and diplomatic situation in the region was complicated for ZAPU, as various newly independent African states sought to flex their muscles and attempt to extend their influence beyond their borders. The OAU (precursor of the AU) had embraced the cause of liberation in the southern African states, and purported to provide assistance through its liberation committee. However, behind them stood imperial powers still trying to keep some influence in the region. And the fact that for each of the countries in southern Africa not yet free there was more than one liberation movement enabled rivalries to blossom. In the eyes of most ZAPU people - and this is reflected in the interviews as well as elsewhere - President Nyerere was the *eminence grise*, being used by the British to promote ZANU in place of ZAPU, hence his attempts to obstruct ZAPU activities. Nkiwane puts it this way:

Nyerere .. here he knew the game plan .... to advance ZANU, at all cost. This was a British plan. It's only now that we.. we know it was.

The photographs being discussed here were taken at the formation of the Patriotic Front in 1976. The Patriotic Front was, of course, formed at the instigation of African states, insisting that the two Zimbabwean liberation movements must work together instead of separately.

Relations with ZANU had been far from cordial ever since it had been formed through a break-away from ZAPU in 1963. Even that was blamed by some in ZAPU on the British:

ZANU was formed in 1963, and that it was formed at the instigation of a British intelligence agent who told ZANU - Sithole - lies about what he thought Nkomo was trying to do after his visit to Egypt and after his visit to Tanzania – i.e. that he was trying to form a government in exile. And it was that that we understand infuriated Sithole and Sithole as a result of that decided to break away from ZAPU and led people like Robert Mugabe and Enos Nkala out of ZAPU because of that instigation that had been ... that had been made by the British, so it was formed by the British when they realized ZAPU was very strong and that it had united the people of Zimbabwe together under ZAPU and it had become very powerful, and they decided to split it by proposing to Sithole that he breaks off from them, from ZAPU.

But ZANU had not developed militarily as far as ZAPU by the late 1960s. It was only when the second split in ZAPU occurred, with Chikerema and Nyandoro forming FROLIZI, leading to mutinies among the armed cadres, that some of the senior ZAPU trained personnel left ZAPU to join ZANU, forming a solid core for their military development from 1972. But they too underwent internal problems surrounding the assassination of Herbert Chitepo, their effective leader in exile in Zambia, in 1975. Nkiwane has this to say about their internal problems:

'75 when the massacres started, ZAPU sympathised with ... what was happening in ZANU, and we didn't delight in them butchering one another. It was no gains to us at all ... This is

the argument that we always don't understand, the thinking behind ZANU. Here we are.. Here they send Chitepo into Lusaka where ZAPU is dominating the whole countryside, town, Lusaka, camps teeming with ZAPU... we don't even touch them with a finger, but they themselves kill one another... so people were horrible people. First, Nkomo could not have persuaded Kaunda to release the jailed ZANLA chaps, two, if we were malicious sufficiently enough we could have killed some of them ourselves, but we did not.

After Chitepo's assassination the Zambians had arrested several ZANU officials, including Josiah Tongogara, and constituted an international commission of enquiry, which laid the blame on ZANU itself. Said Nkiwane:

... after all it was Nkomo who set free the ... ZANLA leadership; they were all jailed for killing one another ...yes as was alleged. And Nkomo thought it was going to cripple our effort and... Nkomo and Kaunda, who understood one another so well that Kaunda could never ever betray Nkomo... so Kaunda listened.

However, Nkomo's efforts did not bring any comfortable co-operation between the two movements. The OAU, prompted by Nyerere made several attempts to bring together not only ZANU and ZAPU, but also later Muzorewa's ANC and that part of ZANU which remained loyal to Sithole after Mugabe took over the leadership.

Of those interviewed, three described the experience in 1976 when the OAU insisted that ZPRA recruits be sent to Tanzania to train jointly with ZANLA. Parks Ndlovu relates:

...in Mgagao camp we found the Chinese, the Tanzanians, the ZANLA instructors, plus our instructors, I think ours were about 60, then, over 50. They said "There's no integration, these are very few; they must get into the sections". That is a military way of talking if you want to integrate. No, we refused. We said "No, we will remain as a unit". Days, days passed; they starved us like anything. ... The sad part of it, that was my experience I experienced...at one stage for three days I was given two seeds of beans plus a piece of old [hair?] and a lot of soup; no food for three days but giving ... two seeds of beans. Ha, after some days the war started. When I left Jo'burg I had three, we were three ... two brothers. When the situation became tense and the [fighting] broke off the first brother whom I came with to Zambia was chopped by .. they used a panga; he was chopped like anything. The third one whom I went with was shot by the Chinese. Out of the three, I am the only survivor from the Brunapeg area. We were three....one was killed by the ZANLA, using chops, one was shot...

Eight ZPRA women were included in the group, and they also relate their experiences of this massacre, as described below first by Noko, then by Parks Ndlovu:

We were moved from Mwembeshi Camp when this ZIPA was formed; then the two parties ZANU and ZAPU agreed to have what they called a ZIPA whereby they could have the Zimbabwean soldiers trained together. But eventually there was a misunderstanding in that camp because you would find that Tanzania had given more support to the ZANU side, so it's like the ZANLA were having an upper hand on us. Then there were some Koreans .. Koreans or Chinese<sup>17</sup> who used to be in that camp. Whether they were the ones who had been initially training the ZANLA or not, that one I cannot say much but we had found that there were some Koreans there or Chinese there, who were also giving much support to the ZANLA side. As I said that, when we clashed they were the people who were now firing guns against the ZPRA or killing the ZPRA cadres who had ... who were not armed by then.

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<sup>17</sup> Evidently they were Chinese

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 us ....After 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