



Project name:	Zenzo Nkobi Photographic Archive
Date of interview:	July 3, 2011
Location of interview:	Bulawayo
Language/s of interview:	English
Length of interview:	25:30
Name of Interviewer:	Mary Ndlovu (MN)
Name of interviewee/s:	Charles Madonko (CM)
Name of translator:	
Name of transcriber:	Mary Ndlovu
Notes on access and use:	
Audio file name/s of interview:	

TRANSCRIPTION

Speaker	Dialogue
MN	This is an interview with Charles Madonko who has agreed to be interviewed as part of the Zenzo Nkobi Photographic Archive Project. It's being conducted by Mary Ndlovu on behalf of SAHA and Mafela Trust and it's taking place on the third of July 2011, at Bulawayo.
MN	Charles, just to begin with can you tell us a little about how you got into ZAPU and how you ended up in Zambia as a ZAPU member
CM	After school at St Joseph's College in Botswana, I came to Bulawayo and joined Dumiso Dabengwa and ... what's his name ...Ndlovu , Akim Ndlovu and Nyathi, Roma Nyathi and Isaac Nyathi, and all the other guys, the youth, we were in the Youth then. Then finally I was employed by the Rhodesia Railways, which is the federal railways and I was ... because of the political pressure in Highfields where we were being chased around to be detained ... and then I left. I talked to my boss, Mr Wilson, who thought it wise for me to go to Zambia and transferred me to Kitwe, where I became secretary for the ZAPU party in Zambia, that's in Kitwe.
MN	This was before Zambian independence.
CM	Before Zambian independence and until Zambian independence. So I then ... I then ... the office there because I was working for the railways. I asked the office in Lusaka to provide me with some fellows, I had ... what's his name now... these people are all late ... there`s Attwell Bokwe ... Attwell Bokwe and this Kalanga fellow, Butshe, and then they remained in the office during the day, and when I knock off I go to the office and see what



Speaker	Dialogue
	they have done.
MN	They were in the office in Kitwe.
CM	In Kitwe
MN	So there was an office in Kitwe.
CM	Yes, I was running an office there. And therefore because I was busy with the railways so I asked the office to give me some guys who were not so busy in Lusaka. So they gave me Attwell and Butshe, and we worked together until I left Zambia for Hungary.
MN	OK. What were you doing in Hungary
CM	In Hungary I went to study.
MN	You were sent by ZAPU
CM	Yes, I was sent by ZAPU to study there. First I went to industrial schools and we were making tools, hand tools, like hammers and chisels and so forth. after we qualified in the language school, after twelve months, then I was told not to come back immediately, by George Nyandoro. and then I was co-opted into the University of biological sciences,
MN	In Zambia...or in Hungary
CM	In Hungary yes. Then finally I came back to Lusaka and at that time I was seconded to the University of Zambia.
MN	So you didn't finish in Hungary, you went part way.
CM	I didn't finish. I went part way I did, the hand tools thing, I finished - engineering sort of thing, and then the university one then I chose ... they said you can't go to Glaznovak, I couldn't go to the electrical shop because they were supplying Smith with spares, of diesel electric.
MN	Hungary was?
CM	It was, so I reported to Nyandoro, and then Nyandoro then said "Take what they give you". And then they told me to choose medicine or biological sciences, and I went for biological sciences.
MN	OK. And then you came back to Zambia.
CM	Then I came back to Zambia. I went back to the party. I was then seconded to Zambia University by Jason Moyo who was in charge. Then I went through there and then I was sent to Mt Makulu, from Mt Makulu then I was now in Mkushi and I started personifying as ZAPU but running the farms for ZAPU to feed the fighters.
MN	So, OK ... just to come back. What was the intention by sending you to study.
CM	I was going to study logistics to come back do production for the fighters
MN	I see. But then they switched you to the agricultural side.
CM	Yes
MN	And then you came back and when to Mkushi



Speaker	Dialogue
CM	I went to Mt Makulu first.
MN	Can you explain what Mt Makulu was?
CM	Mt Makulu was for research, biological research. I was doing all sorts of types of crops like potatoes, sorghum and all other related things and the purpose was to diagnose the diseases of all these crops and how we can control them biologically without using artificial chemicals. That was the main thing. After almost four years, then I went to Mkushi. We wanted to get a farm for the fighters, so the only thing I could do, Jason said "Go and see the Minister of Agriculture". I was under the Ministry of Agriculture at Mt Makulu, so I went to see Mr Kamanga, the Minister Kamanga who was then the Minister of Agriculture and I explained to him. Then they found a farm in Mkushi for me. So that farm I had in Mkushi was organized by the Minister, Kamanga, the Minister of Agriculture and, Joshua Lumina, his Permanent Secretary. So then I continued to produce tobacco and other crops, but the real thing was pushing these to the camps, that's what was happening.
MN	OK, so what were you growing for the camps then?
CM	I was growing vegetables, I was growing huge acreage, like 10-12 hectares of vegetables, where from the camps the guys would come and pick up the vegetables
MN	And collect the ...
CM	Collect the vegetables, and beef. I had money from the party to buy beef on the commercial farms. So the money ... then the meat ... the cattle would stay on the farm, then they would come weekly and slaughter two three up to ten
MN	These went to the military camps or the refugee camps or both
CM	Both. Both. Mainly our regular army that was based in Kabwe was my full responsibility.
MN	The Mulungushi camp
CM	The Mulungushi camp I see
MN	I was responsible for that camp. I supplied everything that I had on the farm there and then the last time we dispatched was when the Rhodesian army then invaded
CM	The girls
MN	The girls. And then I had to go there with Sigoge and Bhebhe, the husband of Cecilia who was then our driver. We were three to go down and rescue these girls. So we rescued these girls. That's where Cecilia saw this man; the driver says, "This one comes from Gwanda, she speaks your language, Sotho", so he said "I want to marry this one", so that's where they met...
CM	That's where they met. That's interesting.
MN	I don't know whether she still remembers that, because they were wild, when we went to capture them ... some had gone wild, not dressed, naked ... it was serious. Like ... I was with Sigoge, you know where Sigoge is
MN	Yes, I know Sigoge



Speaker	Dialogue
CM	He's with John Nkomo now. So that's basically what I did until Independence.
MN	OK, then it sounds like from what you are saying, it sounds as if the ... there was quite good working relationship between ZAPU and the Zambian government
CM	Very good relations, very good relations but ...although we were not allowed to carry weapons publicly, but it was very good relations.
MN	And this photograph here of Kaunda ... seems to be quite close with Nkomo and Msika there [1C-24-02]
CM	Very close. I've had certain – but there's no pictures – I had certain meetings with them both ...
MN	Did you
CM	Yes, when I was asked to go and find that Mkushi camp, for the ladies, because they ... the commander, we went to see the commander of the airforce, 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 guerillas 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.
MN	And in fact it happened that way didn't it?
CM	It happened.
MN	So their [Zambian] military was supportive, the politicians were supportive, and even there like you say they were helping you to find the farm and so on ... and then there was also some
CM	Before we go there, while I was in Kitwe with Butshe and Attwell, I had the largest number of recruits from my province
MN	Ok so let's come then to the issue of your role as a member then. You were recruiting.
CM	I was recruiting, in Kitwe.
MN	I see
CM	... and in Kitwe I recruited thousands
MN	You were recruiting from the Zimbabweans who were living there.
CM	The Zimbabwean populace
MN	So there were a lot of Zimbabweans.
CM	There were a lot of Zimbabweans
MN	What were they mostly doing there?
CM	They were doing ...they were in the mines, like all these guys, Moyo, that late Moyo, Cephas Cele and all those guys, and uDongo, Dube they were all working for the mines. Mangena, and also was in the mines, then I recruited them and then the first contingent to



Speaker	Dialogue
	go to Algeria, they were from my ...
MN	They were from your group.
CM	From my group.
MN	These Mangenas and ...
CM	Mangena, and Mutinhiri
MN	He also was there, in the Copperbelt
CM	He also was there
MN	So that was one of your roles, to recruit.
CM	Yah, my role was to recruit, as the secretary. And then when the job was now too much, I had to ask for assistance, that's when I got Butshe and Atwell, and we worked together.
MN	Then now, this photograph is a photograph of a members' meeting I presume. [4A-17-13] This actually is a meeting in Lusaka. What would be the purpose of a meeting like this?
CM	The purpose of the meeting would be to enlighten the people how far we are with the struggle and also that we will need manpower from among themselves rather than get from Zimbabwe, where we could have got infiltrated people. We would then get from the ground and we did that
MN	So you actually preferred to get people from Zambia.
CM	From Zambia and the chairman ... when I was secretary, the chairman of ZAPU then was Jonah Wakatama; he was an engineer in charge of Cement Siding near Mt Makulu; he was our chairman of ZAPU when I was the secretary ¹ .
MN	This seems to be mostly women. Did they have separate meetings for the women?
CM	No I don't think .. I don't think they had, maybe they had in Lusaka, but we didn't have.
MN	And of course this was a bit later, this was in the late seventies, this. And then maybe while we are looking at the structures... this ... this old man[4A-66-04]
CM	The man who was in charge for taking people now to push them to Dar es Salaam was Nkiwane [Abraham]
MN	This one, yes..
CM	Nkiwane
MN	...and then here we've got one of the local party structures
CM	That's Khuphe, Khuphe was the chairman. ²
MN	What did he do as chairman?
CM	Oh, to sensitise people about the struggle. He worked very hard actually, this old man.

¹ Reference is to the late 60's

² This refers to the 1970's



Speaker	Dialogue
	He was one of our great confidantes, and he played a big role. Now Nkiwane, and Tshinga Dube ... all these guys played a big role. They were now taking the recruits from Kitwe to Tanzania, for training.
MN	This was in the earlier days before they trained them in ... in Zambia
CM	Yes, yes. In fact our first fighters really, were trained, most of them were trained in Algeria, and it was ... it was the early early starting of the recruitment.
MN	And here there is another meeting; this seems to be in a rural setting. [4A-52-02] Were there also Zimbabweans in some of the rural areas in Zambia?
CM	Yes, Mumbwa ... Mumbwa, Chisamba, and ... not on the Chipata side, not so much but Mumbwa and Chisamba. And Kitwe in the mines, the Zimbabweans were plenty in the mines.
MN	So these ... even these rural villages ... they would be a target for recruitment
CM	Recruitment. And also we'd then get ... we used to ask for support in terms of cash, which people paid.
MN	So their membership dues or something like that.
CM	Yes. My Kitwe branch was always top, we'd get up to 19– 20,000 ³ , that time, for Lusaka.
MN	Really.
CM	We recruited there and sent the money to Lusaka
MN	OK, so that was also substantial ...
CM	That was the purpose of the office, why I had those two guys, because they ... they would look after the finance and I would ... either Chikerema and Nyandoro would come there. So that's what we did and therefore because the volume of the supporters in Kitwe, so I had to ask for assistance, and then I got these two boys. Especially Atwell Bokwe who was a hard worker ... you know Attwell. He was a hard worker, so we worked very hard there.... And what else
MN	This is another more urban setting of a meeting of members.
CM	Who is that one?
MN	It's Munodawafa
CM	Munodawafa, yes. He was a busy old man.
MN	So this is obviously after 76 or so. They.... in the early 70's, 70-71 there was that split with FROLIZI, there was those rebellions or mutinies from the camps ... Were there any clashes amongst the members supporting one side or the other, the way there were with ZANU in 75
CM	No we didn't have that much

³ At first this would have been the old Federal pounds, replaced in 1968 by the kwacha at a rate of 2 to 1 pound. It's not clear whether this would be pounds or kwacha, probably pounds.



Speaker	Dialogue
MN	You didn`t
CM	No, this was the recruits that had mutinied. Now, my cousin who was in that camp, then when these fellows were planning to come to Lusaka to arrest the leaders, he then left, clandestinely, and came to inform me to tell Edward [Ndlovu] that there is such a thing like that is happening. But I then pre-warned Dabengwa now, but they didn`t listen to me. Dabengwa ... that`s when he was beaten, nearly killed there in Zimbabwe House.
MN	But that ... the members didn`t sort of split. Even ...what about with Nyandoro and Chikerema, the FROLIZI ... Did they carry some of the members with them.
CM	Yes, they carried, but very minimal.
MN	But there were never any open fights.
CM	No, no, there were not open fights
MN	It was just from the fighters.
CM	From the fighters
MN	OK, and then with the ... there is one here of the ... some students, Zimbabwean students at the University. You also were at UNZA for a while. [1E-20-06]
CM	For a while, yes.
MN	How were Zimbabweans students, the Zimbabwean students being accommodated there. Were there special scholarships, did they keep places for Zimbabweans, or how did they go there
CM	No, we had a quota
MN	There was a quota.
CM	There was a quota for Zimbabweans, South Africans, Namibians, and I think some Yemen and Ethiopia. Yes. We had a quota there at the university.
MN	OK, and who paid then
CM	The United Nations.
MN	I see, they were UN scholarships.
CM	And ... we were under IUEF, under Phinias Makhurane, Thabo Mbeki`s wife was
MN	Zanele
CM	Yes, Zanele was administering that ... what you call it
MN	OK so there were quite a few Zimbabweans there then at the university
CM	Yes, there was quite a number, we were accommodated in the same hostels with Zambians.
MN	And I suppose there were both ZANU and ZAPU.
CM	Yes, we were split



Speaker	Dialogue
MN	Did you have any ... did you have good relations with the ZANU students?
CM	I didn't have any problem with the students, no
MN	OK. Then I think the last thing I wanted to ask was about the Zambian population. We talked about the government giving support, but what about the general population. Were they supportive or were they resentful?
CM	The population was very supportive, very supportive, but when the war then Smith's intensified, then you could hear in Kitwe and those areas, in Bulawayo ⁴ Zambians were becoming anti, but it never really came out to some big issue like the xenophobia taking place in South Africa
MN	Yes, but of course when there was bombing on their ... on their installations
CM	Then they got fed up, yes, they got fed up.
MN	Do you think that maybe also pushed the frontline state governments towards a settlement ... the fact that they were being hurt and that their populations might start
CM	Yes, but then also the Zambians changed and they allowed us to carry guns. Were you there ... you were not there when they invaded me in Chalimbana when I was doing vegetables for the guerrillas.
MN	No
CM	No, you were not in yet, Lindiwe ⁵ came and stayed when she was going to Matero with Jo ⁶ . We were invaded one night there because the biggest problem we had in Zambia was ZANU followers had infiltrated into the army and police in Zambia, they had changed their names. So they were pinpointing ZAPU people with weapons. You understand. So I had a big cache of weapons on that Chalimbana property.
MN	You were caching them for the ZPRA guerrillas.
CM	Keeping them for ZPRA. At any one time I had about fifty guys staying in the bush there, just manning that, to look after that property, looking after that
MN	It's Leopard's Hill...This is Leopard`s Hill?
CM	Leopard`s Hill, yes.
MN	Okay. Leopard's Hill.
CM	Yes, where I then surrendered my weapon, my official weapon from the party... there were two actually, a revolver and a 303, and I gave it to ... to the policeman, who then took it to his camp. But that policeman was actually Shona. He was ZANU, because Chinkuli then demanded him to come to the secretariat, the defence secretariat, where then I was supposed to have been then incarcerated, but because I gave them my passport and the weapons, when it got to Chikuli, then it misfired for the policeman. He was told in my face,

⁴ He doubtless meant to say Lusaka

⁵ A cousin

⁶ The interviewee's wife



Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>“Get back those weapons and give them to Madonko and you were not supposed to go there”. And then he had a case ... within a month that man was sacked from the police ... he was very high. So you can see the collaboration was very good between Chinkuli and Zuze who was the airforce commander. Chinkuli was the commander of the army but Zuze was the airforce, so they worked ... in the meeting we were all there. You know Mnyanyi – he recently died – Mnyanyi then came with me for that meeting where I was supposed to be disciplined because I surrendered my weapon and my passport, because I didn’t want them to search in those houses</p>
MN	<p>Then they were going to find a lot more.</p>
CM	<p>It was going to be very bad. So they took those and then the thing ended there.</p>
MN	<p>So it wasn’t always just straightforward with the Zambians you had to be a bit delicate</p>
CM	<p>Yes, there was some infiltration in their security by the Rhodesian forces. That was very clear, because that man had no reason to come to that place at Leopard’s Hill. But the quick thinking that I gave him my weapons to save that one. When he got back to the office they then ... the young man they had arrested with a bullet said “You didn’t go to the right place. You take me there now I’ll show you where the weapons are”. But by that time I’d removed all of them.</p>
MN	<p>You had got rid of them. OK. So it’s... it’s interesting. There were a lot of different roles that members could play, even though you weren’t actually within the administration or within ZPRA there were a lot of important supportive functions</p>
CM	<p>Yes, a lot of ... that’s where we came very handy. I worked very close with Report Mphoko – he’s now in Pretoria – we worked very close, in fact, he was in charge of the logistics to pick up all the produce and push them to the front. He used to come himself, 1 o’clock, 2 o’clock in the morning and load ... we will have reaped everything, and load. You’ll remember at Leopard’s Hill we had a lot of vegetables. So he would come in the night and load everything and go to the front.</p>
MN	<p>OK so that’s how it worked. OK anything else that I’ve omitted</p>
CM	<p>What have we omitted, I don’t think anything. But the role of the supporters was very very large, either to hide weapons, two, to provide the small pennies that they had, and also to make sure that we keep the [inaudible] influencing the guys, the young guys, to go into the army. That’s what we did.</p>
MN	<p>OK thank you very much.</p>



Speaker	Dialogue

