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TRANSCRIPTION

Speaker	Dialogue
MN	This is an interview with Callistus Ndlovu 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 in Bulawayo on the 6 th of July 2011
MN	Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. First of all I think maybe it's better if we ask you to tell us a bit about yourself, how you got involved with ZAPU and what general role you played there.
CN	I got involved in ZAPU quite early in the early sixties, when I was a student at the Pius XII University College in Lesotho where I was chairman of ZAPU branch of students and residents in Lesotho. After I completed my degree I ... I came to Bulawayo and I was a teacher at Mpopoma High School, and at that stage - which was 1966 - I was detained by the Rhodesian regime who felt that my influence among teachers - African teachers particularly - was ... was not good for the regime. So they detained me at Khami and I was released after ninety days. After that, you see, the coincidence is that when ...the day I was released I got a telegram from the Hastings Foundation which is a European scholarship foundation saying they had approved my application for a scholarship to do a PhD at Yale. So I immediately started preparing to leave, but I was afraid I might actually be prevented. Anyway, I did make all the applications so in '67 I left the country. I was supposed to go to Yale, but because Yale was only admitting people in September ... I had to leave in February ... and so I ended up going to New York University instead because New York University was willing to accept me in February. So I went to New York



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	<p>University where I did Masters, PhD. But during the course of my studies at New York University I also became very much involved again with ZAPU, became chairman of ZAPU in North America, and then in 1971 there was a bit of an upheaval caused by the FROLIZI formation. It was during that time that Edward Ndlovu appointed me to be the chief representative of ZAPU in North America, that is I moved now from being chairman to become the chief representative of ZAPU in North America, and then set up an office near the United Nations which was quite an important office for ZAPU because we co-ordinated most of its external relations outside Africa and including that office in London actually depended very much on information from that office.</p> <p>So that's how I got involved and then from there of course I became a member of the Revolutionary Council and so on. I must say that probably you personally might recall that a parcel was once sent to Edward care of your name, through express mail – I think you were working at the University [of Zambia] then – which was exposing the activities of Chikerema and how Chikerema had formed a secret fund called Tiyende Pamodzi Trust Fund which was diverting ZAPU funds. So I sent that to Edward through you and I think you handed him the envelope and then Edward saw that ...they were shocked, he took it to Jason Moyo. When they read it they discovered that some of the problems that were actually emerging were caused by this movement by Chikerema to set up a secret fund and divert ZAPU funds from the Soviet Union to this fund. So that's what actually triggered the split.</p>
MN	OK
CN	So at that point there then that's when Edward recommended that I should be made the representative.
MN	No, I didn't remember, I don't think I knew that much about it
CN	Yah, see .. it was ... he had given me an address it was just care of your name; it was addressed to Edward himself. That's how the whole thing started and I became very deeply involved from that point.
MN	So you were the representative for North America, for the U.S. for the UN for which ...
CN	Yes, I was actually representative at the United Nations and North America, which means Canada, the USA and Canada.
MN	OK, alright and ...Right, before we go into your role particularly as a representative perhaps you could give us a general picture of which nations supported the liberation struggle and ZAPU in particular and why, and which ones were trying to frustrate
CN	Yah, the nations which supported ZAPU were the ... the Soviet bloc generally, that's the USSR and its allies in the Warsaw Pact, including Cuba, they supported ZAPU very strongly and of course the OAU supported ZAPU also, although during the time of the FROLIZI phase there was an attempt to derecognize ZAPU, and again there, we did something to stop it. Edward sent me an emergency message to go and talk to the embassy of Iraq in New York, and I did that and they advised that I should tell him to go to Cairo, and from Cairo he would get a ticket to go to Baghdad. It was at that stage that



Speaker	Dialogue
	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 leader. And I remember I wrote a letter to the office of the President in which I was trying to explain to him how risky it was to support that thing, and I
MN	The American president?
CN	No the ... President Kaunda
MN	Oh Kaunda
CN	Kaunda, and I copied to Edward and all that. But the point I was making, you see was at that stage you see there was supposed to be an OAU meeting in Algeria and Edward had told me that they had no money to go to Algeria. So what we did there we ... we said OK, what we are going to do now we'll use our credit cards to get one-way ticket for two people. I don't know with whom Edward went to Algeria.
MN	This was what ..'70
CN	It was '71, yes. That's when ZAPU and ZANU formed the Joint Military Command, to counter FROLIZI. So the JMC was to counter FROLIZI actually. So at that stage the OAU did not recognize FROLIZI, but then recognized both ZAPU and ZANU as the legitimate liberation movements. So ZAPU at this stage 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 they... and they...
MN	Who was the government in Iraq then
CN	Saddam had just overthrown ..
MN	He had come into power
CN	Yes, he had just come into power through a coup or something and he's the one who tried to push for the support of ZAPU, yes, and .. that's why you see some of us had mixed feelings about what happened to him, when he was removed and all that, but he actually saved ZAPU from complete collapse, because Edward went to Iraq and then after that Mr ... what is his name the chap who died ... who was now made full representative
MN	Mhambi
CN	Mhambi yes, so Mhambi was made representative - Edward appointed him representative - and from that point up to Independence Iraq played a major role in financing ZAPU, yes.
MN	Interesting. Ok, so the eastern bloc was supportive and maybe it's not really eastern bloc but there's a lovely picture here of Nkomo and Castro [1E-42-09] Maybe you could just say something about the relationship with Cuba.
CN	Yah. Cuba, usually of course worked - in terms of assessing liberation movements - closely with the Soviet bloc. And Cuba supported ZAPU just as it supported what they called the authentic six. These authentic six movements included African National



Speaker	Dialogue
	Congress, FRELIMO of Mozambique, PAIGC of Guinea-Bissau, the Angolan .. what is it ...
MN	MPLA
CN	MPLA and then Namibia's SWAPO and ZAPU. So these were ... in each of these liberation movement areas these were called the authentic six. So Cuba supported these, you see ZAPU had a very strong alliance with the MPLA in Angola and was close to all other liberation movements including FRELIMO, although later things turned in Mozambique but otherwise Castro was very much in support of ZAPU.
MN	What type of support was the eastern bloc giving? I think we have ... there's this photograph here of President Honnecker ..[2A-06-33]
CN	Now you see the ...
MN	Obviously arriving in Lusaka. What would be the point of somebody of that stature actually visiting and coming to ... to Zambia?
CN	You see, the GDR or East Germany was one of the biggest supporters of ZAPU from the eastern bloc. And what you see there is Honnecker 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.
MN	OK, like this other one which ... that's a different one like this one [2A-29-11]
CN	Yes, this would be, this would be material from Yugoslavia. This would be involving also certain critical material which might involve ... non-combatant ... non-combat materials like equipment to be used in the camps and so on.
MN	This would be food, clothing
CN	Clothing
MN	Educational
CN	Education materials, yes
MN	And then this type of thing they would make a public display of their support.
CN	Yes, solidarity, yes.
MN	And then on the military side which is not photographed of course, what was going on there?
CN	On the military side it was always brought quietly
MN	Was that mostly GDR or also the Soviets.
CN	No, 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.
MN	When you talk about the big equipment, what do you mean there?



Speaker	Dialogue
CN	Well, what we mean, you realize that some of these ... quite advanced weaponry was delivered to ZAPU towards the end.
MN	Yes, the Turning Point
CN	The Turning Point thing where weaponry was brought almost turned ... they went to conventional confrontation and they ... the eastern European countries supplied that. Cuba mostly did the training. Cuba trained our... our ... our personnel and even seconded some of its own people to work with our guerrillas.
MN	OK, so the Cuban training, where did it take place?
CN	It took place in Zambia, it took place in Angola and it took, yah, these two particularly
MN	And some, some have said they went to Cuba for some time
CN	Yah, they went
MN	Presumably that was only a few
CN	They went to Cuba, a few went to Cuba, yes
MN	What type of training would they be going for there
CN	No they 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
MN	OK, so it was both sides. So the Cubans would come in as instructors in Angola and ..
CN	In Zambia
MN	But that would be in the ZPRA camps in Zambia.
CN	The ZPRA camps, yes, they would live there with the cadres.
MN	So these were ... these would be people dealing with specialized training, would they?
CN	Yes, yes
MN	And ...OK so from the eastern side there was military and non-military support.
CN	Non-military support, yes
MN	And that went right through, from the 60's?
CN	It actually, yes from the 60's, on a smaller scale, but increased after the 70's up to 80.
MN	Those early contacts in the 60's ... like the Wankie battles and the other infiltrations which took place in the 60's ... who was supplying weapons for those?
CN	Yah, the Russians they gave
MN	The Russians
CN	Yah, the Russians, in fact the reason why I was detained myself it was because of the Wankie operation.



Speaker	Dialogue
MN	Really?
CN	Yah, because Professor Arrighi ... I don't know whether you have heard
MN	Arrighi, Giovanni?
CN	Yes Giovanni Arrighi he had just been ... that week he was deported. He was deported because he had held a meeting at his house where there were ... they talked about how to receive these guerrillas and assist them
MN	Oh
CN	And my name appeared in the minutes, but I was not at that meeting myself.
MN	OK, you weren't at the meeting but ..
CN	So my name appeared in the minutes, the police ..
MN	But were you involved in any way with that operation
CN	Well, indirectly we were, but not along the lines Arrighi was proposing. I think they ... the Arrighi proposal was going to raise the involvement if it had been allowed to continue, because he had not even contacted me personally, but when the police confronted me with the minutes, and asked me why my name was there, so I said, I don't know, I mean, I haven't even met Arrighi
MN	You only went on to study him then. So the western countries ... did they provide also some kinds of material support for refugees and so on. Like here, we haven't identified what country this person is from, but they're handing over keys to some buildings here at Victory Camp.[1E-07-01]
CN	Well, you see the Canadian NGOs, the NGOs did support ZAPU quite a lot. You know more probably than I do how they supported the camps and even food supplies and training and ... so there was quite some support from non-governmental organizations from the west, yes.
MN	OK, but they were only NGOs, not from government?
CN	No, not from government.
MN	And the Americans? Was there anything
CN	No. American NGOs yes but ...
MN	NGOs, but not governments. So this actually might have been eastern European. And then international organizations like this one here [2A-24-05]. There was support was there from this ... this is obviously Red Cross
CN	Yes, the Red Cross supported us because we had become a refugee situation.
MN	Ah, OK
CN	And they had to come in to see that these people were treated according to international law, so ... and they also provided material support.
MN	OK so they actually came to the camps to sort of inspect or see what was going on.



Speaker	Dialogue
CN	Yes, they did.
MN	I see, but military camps of course they ...
CN	No, you see Chinamano isn't it..
MN	Yes, this is Chinamano and Jane [Ngwenya] and Madzimbamuto, and Nkomo What about the UN? What kind of assistance ... were they not giving some assistance?
CN	What the UN did ... it was ... ZAPU had an observer status at the United Nations. When I was representative there I had an observer status, which means we ... we had some status which was recognized, not to the level of a state, but it was given all the privileges like addressing certain committees and so on. So that was indirect support which they gave
MN	But they didn't ..
CN	And they also gave scholarships, they gave scholarships, just like the Commonwealth scholarship was available to Zimbabweans from our camps to go. There was the UN scholarship also which was available for ... for Zimbabweans.
MN	OK, but would they not ...
CN	That was UNEPSA I think United Nations Educational Programme for Southern Africa, UNEPSA
MN	Oh, and then they would send people to western Europe?
CN	Yes, these people would be sent, yes. We used to co-ordinate this at the ZAPU office.
MN	But, UNHCR ... did they not get involved with the ...
CN	UNHCR was involved at refugee level
MN	Oh OK
CN	Yes, in Lusaka then, they would be, and Angola
MN	OK, and then the other ... we haven't talked about western Europe, the Scandinavian countries
CN	Scandinavian countries gave a lot of support in educational materials, to refugee camps and ... and self-help programmes in Lusaka
MN	And then this, I'm sure you ... this is Ramphal I believe [2A-10-14]
CN	Yah, Commonwealth Secretary
MN	Yes, what role did the Commonwealth play then?
CN	The Commonwealth played a role in scholarships like the Commonwealth scholarship, which I mentioned before was given to Zimbabweans and a lot of people went to school through that Commonwealth scholarship.
MN	OK, but material support there was nothing then, but diplomatic, what was their position diplomatically?
CN	Diplomatically they tried to facilitate, like each time there was a meeting they would always



Speaker	Dialogue
	try to bring in ... through pressures from African countries they would try to bring in this question to be discussed. They did ... they did give some aid. People like Ramphal were quite active in that.
MN	I'm assuming that this is probably taken during the Commonwealth Conference in 1979.
CN	Yes it's possible
MN	...because those structures are already up there
CN	In Lusaka?
MN	Yes, yes because these buildings were not there earlier. OK so there it was mainly diplomatic, working through the other Commonwealth members. And then we have this type of conference. What was the purpose of this type of international solidarity conference? [1E-17-12]
CN	Which one is this
MN	Well it says it's International Conference in Support of the Liberation Movements in Southern Africa in Solidarity with the Frontline states. This was 1979. What would be the point of gathering all these people?
CN	I think this would be ... this is Kaunda, is it?
MN	That's Kaunda ... this is I believe in Mulungushi Hall and I presume these are from different African countries ... they look like they're mostly from African countries
CN	And usually conferences like this were organized by the Afro-Asian Solidarity committee ... you know about the African ...
MN	This one from Egypt?
CN	From Egypt, but also supported by eastern Europe mostly
MN	Oh OK ...so they would fund it then
CN	They would fund. I know these conferences usually used to be held at Mulungushi. One such conference I saw .. I attended ... was Afro-Asian solidarity committee to support liberation movements.
MN	OK And it would be just a diplomatic thing really, to get people to talk to each other, get to know each other
CN	Talk to each other and also to leave, to spread the word and to seek some aid wherever they came from.
MN	OK I think this photograph might ... we're not sure if this is in the Liberation Centre in Lusaka, or it's somewhere else maybe[1C-04-07]
CN	It's in Mozambique
MN	It's in Mozambique OK. I'm assuming that it's also one of these type of solidarity conferences where they're ... they're displaying things
CN	Yah, this is Maputo.



Speaker	Dialogue
MN	So the aim here would be what ... what would they be trying to get across
CN	The aim here is to just show what ... most of what is here is literature ... literature from the liberation movement, some pictures, and ...
MN	Just to show what is being done.
CN	What is being done, yes. And Mr Mugabe there was representing ZANU. And then of course you had the representatives ... Mphoko and that would probably be a ZANU PF chap, behind there.
MN	Yah, so they are just going around looking there. And this one here, I think it's probably the same [1C-03-25]
CN	Yes
MN	The same venue, the same occasion. I don't know what Samora is looking at
CN	A gun, isn't it an AK 47
MN	It looks like it, yes
CN	The other one is Oliver Tambo, isn't it.
MN	Yes, I think so, I think so. OK so I think that's ... the pictures we have we've covered mostly everything. But maybe you could talk about your role. You said you were a representative, you were also in the Revolutionary Council.
CN	Yes
MN	How did you get ... I mean how did representatives based in New York participate in the Revolutionary Council then?
CN	You see what happens, practically all representatives of the party were members of the Revolutionary Council, and whenever the Revolutionary Council met they were recalled. They all came to Lusaka.
MN	So it didn't meet that often then, I mean it wasn't a weekly thing that they met
CN	No, usually the Revolutionary Council met about three times a year
MN	Oh, I see.
CN	Yah, you see, and ... and some of the things could be done through just correspondence or talking and seeking information ... what do you think about this? Yah, that was the ... that was the role of the Revolutionary Council.
MN	OK and then ...
CN	It was like the Central Committee actually.
MN	OK. And it brought together the military and .. the political
CN	The military and the political, yes. It used to meet more often before Nkomo came from ... out of prison, but after Nkomo had come it met rarely
MN	He, he ...



Speaker	Dialogue
CN	Sort of controlled
MN	Yah, he didn't consult as much as JZ
CN	Yah
MN	And then as a representative, what ... it was diplomatic primarily
CN	It was diplomatic, yes, it was diplomatic. What they did, I ... you see at the office in New York we had a fully furnished office with telexes financed by Libya. You see, Libya ... we went to see Libya and ... we were seeking some assistance towards rent. So these people sent an officer, they had to come and look at our office, and then later they told us that they would put up a telex facility. So actually most of the time the office in New York was more ... was more informed than the Lusaka office. We used to send things there ... the things coming from South Africa, Press Association and ... what has happened everywhere, like that. So even people in ZANU PF became very interested in the ZAPU office.
MN	And that ... that was Gaddafi's early days.
CN	That was Gaddafi's early days, yes ... yes, he was very supportive. We had gone to ask them to help us with \$150 but it turned out to be something else and they paid the whole rent and from then until 1980 they were doing that.
MN	They were doing that and ... but they didn't give military support, the Libyans?
CN	The Libyans, they did, they trained a number of our cadres.
MN	Oh it was training.
CN	Yah, they trained our chaps and financially also they did, they did give money to Lusaka directly.
MN	We didn't actually talk about ... very much about the OAU and the Liberation Committee of the OAU, how that worked.
CN	No, the OAU Liberation Committee which was dominated by Colonel Mbita [inaudible] 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. Yah, so the OAU actually controlled quite a lot.
MN	So it was money.
CN	The money, yes. And that helped smaller organizations like ZANU. ZANU would have had problems without this co-ordination because some of the aid from eastern Europe would have gone straight to ZAPU
MN	I see, through the OAU ZANU could come to
CN	So that's why some would give money direct to ZAPU without ..
MN	... without going through the OAU. OK, anything else we've left out. You think we've covered?.
	I think so, yes.



Speaker	Dialogue
	Thank you very much.
CN	<p>Zenzo, his father was Thomas Nkobi and he ... his father left the country shortly after Zenzo had been born and they sort of ... he was going to college actually to high school, but he ended up living with his father, that is the grandfather of Zenzo - his name was called Nhandu - forever, in fact he never came back here. So we can say that Zenzo was brought up by his mother. The father of Zenzo was the young brother of my mother, so Zenzo was my first cousin. When Zenzo grew up - he was brought up in this place called Dombodema which is in Plumtree - and later became a school teacher in the rural areas. That's when he got tied up in politics because he was accused of teaching small kids anti-Smith songs like ... he would compose some songs in Kalanga or Sindebele which were talking about the regime and so one policeman observed this and so they wanted to arrest him so he escaped and went to Botswana and ran away, actually left and went to Botswana. He was teaching at the border somewhere towards Botswana there. He went to Botswana then afterwards found his way to Lusaka.</p>
	What year would that have been then?
	In 1966, yah, then he met his father there.
	In Lusaka?
	<p>Yah, he met his father in Lusaka because he had not seen him, see his father had spent all the time in South Africa, but was now in exile with the ANC, so then he met his father there and then George Silundika introduced the two and so Zenzo .. but he never became part of the ANC, he was always ZAPU, although he was very close to his father from that point. So after that, after say two years, Zenzo was sent to East Germany, where he.. he did some degree, or some diploma specializing in photography and became very much involved, so when returning to Lusaka he was actively involved travelling around with Nkomo and so on.</p> <p>That's briefly how Zenzo became involved and he also had some running battles with the old man, Nkomo, because you see Zenzo was not the kind of person who would be ordered around, so he always wanted to maintain some independence. I remember one time I took them to the airport, actually from New York to Washington and Zenzo – on the way he was told to go and look for a camera which was required for the military, and he could not find anyone to clear the purchase of that, and as a result he was delayed. So when he got there Madzimbamuto who was the sort of a man who always liked to please the old man started accusing Zenzo of this.. this and why did you delay? Zenzo without replying just slapped Madzimbamuto and he fell to the ground. And Nkomo was very upset by this. So Nkomo looked at me and says “You see what this boy has done?” So when Nkomo got to Lusaka he told Zenzo's father that you see he's fed up, fed up with your boys, and he included me in this ... that you see Zenzo in fact had been expelled from the delegation because of ... he dismissed Zenzo from the delegation and Zenzo had to find his way to East Germany you see, instead of going to Lusaka. By the time they got to Lusaka Zenzo was not there, he had been dismissed. Nkomo didn't want to see him</p>



Speaker	Dialogue
	because of what he had done, you see
MN	That... that... through the late 70's did Zenzo move back and forth between Germany and Lusaka.
	Yes, he moved both... yah, he was always back, and each time he went back he had always problems, he would be detained at the airport, one time he was put in prison.
	Oh... in Lusaka?
	Yah, because they always wondered what status he had, you see, and what ... and he was not getting proper clearance, and... I know one time Zenzo spent some days in prison in Lusaka.
	So it wasn't always that clear being in Zambia, there were sometimes problems.
	Yah yah, there was problems, but towards the end he was in Lusaka permanently, he was OK
	But it seems he made a very big contribution to our knowledge because of these photographs.
	He made tremendous contribution, yah. He made .. I didn't know that they had ... I was always wondering where these photographs went ... so he did a big job.
	OK, I think that that helps us. [understand Zenzo better]



Speaker	Dialogue

