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TRANSCRIPTION

MN	This is an interview with Abraham Nkiwane who has agreed to be interviewed as part of the Zenzo Nkobi Photographic Archive Project. It is conducted by Mary Ndlovu and Zephaniah Nkomo on behalf of SAHA and Mafela Trust. This interview is being conducted on the 24 th of November 2010 at Bulawayo.
MN	Maybe we can start by asking you just to tell us a little about yourself, how you got involved with the struggle and what role you played.
AN	In 1961 I was an official of UNIP. 1962 when ZAPU was banned we were summoned to UNIP headquarters by President Kaunda, and the guest that we didn't know about who was to meet us was Joshua Nkomo, and at that meeting Joshua Nkomo spotted me because I knew him, he knew me as well. When we met, I seemed to have answered his problems. At the end of the meeting I was summoned to Mr Kapwepwe's home where, I met Joshua Nkomo, Kenneth Kaunda and Simon Kapwepwe. At that meeting they asked me if I could spare some times in the following weeks and months in assisting ZAPU cadres who were to do some missions between Mbeya in Tanzania and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. It is from that time, it is where I got involved in ZAPU. The mission was all about moving arms of war from Tanzania into then Rhodesia and after I had done that on a number of occasions it became difficult for me to withdraw and rejoin UNIP and I remained in ZAPU up to today.



MN	O.K. So you were living in in Zambia
AN	I was living... I was originally working in Zambia until I was called up to do full time at UNIP headquarters. I was in the directorate of elections office and I was responsible for two provinces, the Southern province and Barotseland which is Western province.
MN	O.K. but you identified yourself as Zimbabwean
AN	They knew I was Zimbabwean and they knew I came from Zimbabwe as I didn't hide myself, because my papers, my everything, was all Zimbabwean.
MN	OK. So were you part of the military then or you were part of the civilian...
AN	In UNIP I was...
MN	...I mean when you started this transfer of weapons?
AN	When I did the transfer of weapons first I was not trained because Zambians did not train anybody for anything. They didn't go in for the armed struggle. But later on at the end of 196..? at the beginning of 196..? at the end of 1962, beginning of 63, I had to under... Nkomo had arranged that the Tanzanian camps take me for three months doing some training because the type of weapons that were being moved included detonators, grenades and other things which could not be handled by a person without any knowledge of that type of equipment.
MN	OK, so ...and then from then on you were involved with...
AN	From then on Nkomo left me solely in charge of this section. He went back into Dar Es Salaam and flew into Salisbury then, and he promised me that he was going to make it a point that James Chikerema would join me, and only when he joined me would I then transfer all the knowledge of all things that have been and that were still to be delivered, collected and moved to James Chikerema. So when James Chikerema came, we then started the initial stages of of of the war machine of ZAPU.
MN	O.K. We're going to jump a little bit because ... from your early days, because what we're interested most about with these photographs is the relationship with the Zambians and the relationship with the other .. not so much the Zambians but with the other liberation movements in the region. And with the other Zimbabwean liberation movement. So if we start with the regional alliances, can you describe who ... who ZAPU was working with, of the other regional liberation movements?
AN	Well at the time we operated in Lusaka, there was SWAPO, there was FRELIMO, there were people from South Africa, the ANC, there were people from Angola, there were ... there were people from Zimbabwe, and 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 this started the whole idea of thinking if the South Africans are making it impossible for us ever to cross the Zambezi into our country across, it would be impossible for the ANC ever to cross the Zambezi into South Africa. 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. Because the South African Defence Forces were on the Zambezi, the Zambezi was the area where we should start the fight. We then came together and started working together until late in 1963 we had a high command made up of cadres from the ANC and and and ZAPU.
MN	So was the initiative from ZAPU to form that alliance?
AN	It was from both
MN	It was both realizing ... and one of the early operations was a combined operation I believe.
AN	Then when we we started sneaking into Southern Rhodesia, we started sending small groups of people. We thought it was not enough because the the the Rhodesians had intensified their positions on the across... across the Zambezi. Then we thought we should send bigger units to match the Rhodesians and the South Africans whom we had already reconnoitred and seen how ... their strength, and we began sending bigger units like was the case with the Luthuli regiment that went across near Wankie ¹ and later another group of more than a hundred that went through in the eastern front towards Guruve. It was an exercise which was not easy, because we had to move in weapons into the areas following the route that we were supposed to take. We had to to to make stores of our arms, so that in the event of sustained fighting inside the country our chaps could fall back onto some known areas where they would rearm and continue the struggle.
MN	Now this photograph here, I believe it was taken quite a bit later so.. in the 70's ... so this alliance continued for quite a long time. [1C-2-13]
AN	It did. It did. As a matter of fact it never stopped
MN	Can you identify the people here?
AN	Yes
MN	This one is obscured, but this one is clear.
AN	I'm sure that is O.R ² .
MN	Yes, I think so. Yes. He's looking quite young actually, and this one?
AN	This one, this to me looks another ANC comrade.
MN	We thought this one was Nkobi, Thomas
AN	No, it's not. This was.. I'm sure another ANC comrade

¹ Wankie is the old spelling. Renamed Hwange after Independence

² O.R. Tambo



ZN	Alfred Nzo
MN	Oh it's Nzo
AN	Yes
MN	And this one. Do you know him? We weren't able to identify this one.
AN	That one... sure
MN	It's o.k. if we haven't known him, it's alright. But was... did the military alliance continue all this time or was it more of a diplomatic alliance?
AN	No, it continued, it never stopped. As a matter of fact, it continued even until after 1980, because we still came across and personally I had over 18 people from their intelligence unit keeping at my place. Akim Ndlovu had some. Sam Fakazi Moyo had some. They were all over. We kept a number. And some were at Trenance ³ until after the bombing of the Trenance house and some were at Emgawini ⁴ , Rangemore ⁵ , but other chaps, because I kept 19 ... these...
MN	This was after 1980?
AN	Yes. These 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
MN	So they were separated
AN	And these at at at my place were going in and out of South Africa via Botswana, via Beitbridge. Each time they had a mission.
MN	And this continued up until which year.. to 82?
AN	This went on up until to 87
MN	87?
AN	Yes, because in 1987 then I was working for for for the Ministry of Public Construction. I had one who was driving me to ... into Beitbridge and they were crossing to Messina and ... and back. He was my driver. He spoke Xhosa and I speak Xhosa as well.
MN	O.K. I didn't realise it went on that long. And now this ... this photograph here this was taken in Zambia [1F-11-25]
AN	This is the President ⁶ Nkomo and President O.R.
MN	Did they have a a personal relationship?
AN	This dating I don't know when. These ... these met in South Africa when the revolution was still new, brand new. Mind you it started in 1912 in South Africa and these were ..

³ Suburb of Bulawayo

⁴ Suburb of Bulawayo

⁵ Suburb of Bulawayo

⁶ President in this statement refers to Party leadership rather than national



MN	But they had known each other when Nkomo was in South Africa before he came back to Zimbabwe, to Rhodesia? ⁷
AN	Absolutely, absolutely. Tambo and Mandela, these two were always inseparable, and Nkomo was within their group
MN	I see o.k. so so then throughout the period of Nkomo's detention obviously they were not in touch but after Nkomo came out ...
AN	Out , then they were in touch
MN	They reengaged
AN	Yes, yes, yes.
MN	And they would be discussing political issues, military issues ...
AN	They.. naturally it is political and military. In this case the sticking point was more of military because even us ... we created, we went together with the ANC. We were travelling by trains from Lusaka to Livingstone nearly twice a month, creating dead boxes in the train
MN	Creating what?
AN	Dead boxes. The carpenter... they had a carpenter, a wonderful carpenter. He had a box with mail and they would stick it into the ..into the coach, inside the coach as if it was designed there. Then the other chap on the other side is given the .. the coach number, the wagon number and the place, and he knows.
MN	And what's in the box then... weapons?
AN	The letters...
MN	Letters?
AN	The letters. All instructions were going. .. And so once you do that you have to meet the trains every time. You start from Livingstone, and coming to Lusaka, looking whether any of the answers from there have come, if anything similar is stuck onto ...
MN	And these would be coming from South Africa and from within Rhodesia?
AN	Yes, it takes time. Sometimes it took four months before it comes back.
MN	So these would be instructions going to people operating inside South Africa
AN	Yes, yes
MN	Interesting. Now, this one, this... this is SWAPO in Lusaka. What was the relationship with SWAPO? [1C-35-25]
AN	Well SWAPO was one ... incidentally when we got there, there was ZAPU, then there was SWAPO, then there was FRELIMO, there was ANC, and then there was MPLA. These were considered not by ourselves, but they were known to be the authentic liberation movements because in SWAPO there was SWANU which was the other type, then there was ZANU for us here, which was also was another ... another type. Then there was something in Mozambique also different and so on so on so they... the other groupings

⁷ Reference is to his early life – in the 1940's



	<p>they also had.. whether they had a common gathering I don't know but 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 and us.</p>
MN	<p>You'd be together in one camp?</p>
AN	<p>We were together in one camp. Ours was commanded by 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. Otherwise he saluted me in his life; in his life he saluted me when I came, because I represented ZAPU and Ethan Dube who was coming from Dar Es Salaam. I was staying in Lusaka, Ethan was in Dar Es Salaam. Each time I went there we met at Morogoro and then visited the camp together.</p>
MN	<p>And ... but SWAPO also had a presence in Lusaka... they had something, I think these are students</p>
AN	<p>They had, they had. In Lusaka they had an institution, an Institute, what was called what was called south west ... Namibian Institute, where most of our chaps were lecturing. It was across the railway line. It was not very far from ... from town.</p>
MN	<p>And maybe just before we leave this topic – your assessment of the effectiveness of this alliance.</p>
AN	<p>It was ... it was very effective because it was... because it gave us encouragement; our purpose was... was similar, our resolve was made stiff the day we met, and once you meet a number of people with the same cause you find you have an extra mile to cover than if you met other people who disagreed with you, and so on, so on, so we were ... what FRELIMO did ZAPU wanted to achieve the same and what SWAPO wanted to do, what MPLA wanted, and it ... and it helped us a great deal... like for instance when we first started the operation, the bigger operations, nobody was able to give us weapons. The Frontline states, Nyerere of Tanzania - unfortunately he had made up his mind to favour a certain group as against another, as opposed to others. In our case he... for some reason he was for ZANU and not us, so they made it impossible for us to get weapons. They demanded all sorts of things for us to satisfy before we get weapons, but we managed to get weapons though; he was surprised that the Wankie battle was fully armed; they don't know where the arms came from... and the Guruve which is Sipolilo battles were fully armed, our chaps were ... they don't know where the weapons were from. We got weapons from Mondlane, we got weapons</p>



	<p>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 and myself we could walk there into a ship and select as much weapons as we could. Then we we had a big lorry - I suppose you might have seen our big lorry. That big lorry we used to move these weapons from Dar Es Salaam. We bought tanks, empty drums... empty drums, opened the bottom, we turned them round, we opened the bottom almost right round, we leave only a small portion holding ... we opened the snap, we disassembled the guns, wrapped them in paper, greased them, tied them together, all the parts, and reload them into the, into the drums; and once we've done that we we we seal the drums by bending the edges so that that cover doesn't flap and then we we seal them back, we seal them back as if nothing was wrong with them and then we drive through</p>
MN	So it looks like fuel
AN	<p>And then Ethan will get ... Ethan will get a permit for me. Here is UDI in Zimbabwe, they have declared UDI. Zambia is without petrol, and we get a permit from the Ministry of Trade in Tanzania for moving petrol into Zambia and here we carry about four gallons, four gallons of petrol in a jerry can. A mile away from the border we stop; we start pouring on every drum, you know there's that ring, then we go, and the driver which was Danger we gave him instructions "You drive, and you drive, pretend as if you are driving through the border post and we will say "Stop", and then when we say "stop" he jumps onto the brakes and then the petrol drips. Everybody from the office comes out. "Yeh what are you carrying chaps? Oh It's dangerous, dangerous don't go near don't go near, it's petrol". And then we park somewhere, they don't come near and the smell of the guns is gone by the smell of the fuel and we show them the papers, "Oh carrying petrol, oh oh oh you've lost a lot I'm sure". By the time we get to Lusaka... Meanwhile we were carrying guns.</p>
MN	Oh dear, so these are the ways that the alliances ...
AN	So we we we went on
ZN	What would the intervention of the OAU be like in such situations?
AN	They didn't.. they didn't. They only heard there were pitched battles in Wankie, there were pitched battles in Sipolilo, they didn't know we managed to fight that war they didn't know.
ZN	Was, was it very much helpful, was it helpful, the OAU?
AN	<p>No it wasn't, that's the one which kept on shifting the goal post from one ... Each time they wanted us to have so many trained persons ready, we have - weapons nothing. So Neto said "For goodness sake, don't worry" and Mondlane before he died he says "don't worry, but you chaps you will fit our fellows too." We we we opened the Tete province for for for Philip Magaya, for FRELIMO. We, at our expense, we carried the weapons, we took them</p>



	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 and its story now ... I'm saying it now. Perhaps others have spoken about it to their friends but this was never never known.
MN	O.K. it's very interesting. Shall we go on to the issue of the relations with ZANU, because these photographs here.. that one .. no it's this one - here. This photograph was taken we believe at the formation of the Patriotic Front. So maybe you could tell us something about how that came about. [1E-02-05]
AN	Yes, as you can see, you can read a lot from .. from the faces of both Nkomo and Kaunda. What was happening here was a little strange for them, but since they had wanted this to happen, because after all ... after all it was Nkomo who set free the the the ZANLA leadership; they were all jailed for for killing one another
MN	This was '75
AN	<p>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, and although the the the the ... that international commission that had been appointed had discovered that it was all internal, the killings had been done by ZANU... there was no outside force whatsoever and then the ... oh the killing of Chitepo.. 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. I was surprised in 1983- 84⁸ when the Gukurahundi started messing up people in Matabeleland. I was surprised. If there was anything that shocked me it was that. After all our... that messy that we we helped them.</p> <p>I'll tell you that at one stage I was crossing, I was expecting people from Tanzania crossing into Zambia. I met them. Now I met... usually you leave your car somewhere, you walk through the bush, and Ethan on the other side would walk them onto the known bush as well from the other side, and we would meet somewhere in no man's land and then he surrenders them to me, he goes back and I take them to Lusaka. One such evening as I was waiting for my group ... I don't know how coincidence can always .. here was Noel</p>

⁸ The reference is to the massacre of civilians, members of ZAPU alleged to be "dissidents" or supporters of dissidents, in Matabeleland by the Zimbabwean Fifth Brigade



	<p>Mukono and Hamadziripi and some other chaps, ZANU; they were also waiting for their men. These chaps had been with ZAPU; they had known our routes⁹. I knew the routes because I operated with with UNIP. I knew the border and at the border they knew me as UNIP. They didn't know me as ZAPU. So when I passed through they say "Morning morning morning" and then I waved until later they realised "Ah this man is now ZAPU". So at at the border there are villages there. If ever I ran into problems I went into the village and now started UNIP and then, and then the old man came and then I told them the story and they said "Ok Ok Ok" then they started "Nkomo, this one". When we we left Lusaka the policeman in Lusaka had surrounded the house where he was sleeping.¹⁰ We drove through the night. In the morning I realised there was Kaunda's friend at Chinsali, Sir Stewart Gore-Brown. I thought one minute, I turned into into his farm into the hill, drove into the hill in a UNIP car, stopped there, knocked at the door. Here comes the old chap, Sir Stewart Gore-Brown and I gave him [inaudible] "This is the President's friend, he will tell you all about himself", then they walk in; then later on ... we remained in the car ... we were called in; there was tea there was.. there was everything. Nkomo was much at home. And then Sir Stewart enquired Isoka, Chinsali, Mpika, whether the road was clear and they told us "The road, no so far nothing", the intelligence in Lusaka quickly checked. They said "No it's clear, you may proceed". Then they came out ... Nkomo had had a bath and we proceeded up to the border.</p>
MN	What year was this?
AN	That was nineteen sixty ... 1962.
MN	So the early years.
AN	So, so
MN	What was Mugabe's role at this time, when these other guys were imprisoned. ¹¹ Mugabe was not imprisoned, was he – by the Zambians
AN	No, he was in here, he was in here, in Zimbabwe in prison here. Nkomo was not there as Nkomo came in later, because these chaps remained in prison until after '75.
MN	O.K. so now here, when they... can you explain why they're together there. [1E-02-05]
AN	This must have been, this was about 75, 76 I'm sure, because it is.. Nkomo was not in Lusaka before then, and Mugabe, so they are here I think at the formation of of of ZIPA. I don't know what .. of the Patriotic Front yes, it was the Patriotic Front. 1976 all of them were set free to to ... then there was a big meeting in Lusaka where they wanted to unite ZANU and ZAPU under the

⁹ The interviewee never completed this story as he got side-tracked by the next story of Nkomo

¹⁰ This must refer to the early meeting with Nkomo in 1962 when he was asked to transfer weapons; it is clearly before Zambian independence

¹¹ This refers to the period immediately after Chitepo's death in 1975



	Muzorewa group ... what was it called?
ZN	FROLIZI
MN	No, ANC
AN	ANC, Yes, under the ANC. This was after the meetings with Muzorewa at at State House in Lusaka.
MN	Now, when you said "they", this other photograph is actually... this one it's the same occasion, it's just going along the table a little bit so Nkomo and Mugabe are there and Kaunda and then all these others [1C-27-15]
AN	Yes, you see they must have been looking at this man, this man [Nyerere] because you can see the ...his Foreign Minister [Salim Salim] there and he must have been speaking, because they don't seem to agree with him, and you can see this one doesn't seem to agree as well.
MN	Machel
AN	Yes. You see Kaunda doesn't seem to be taking what is being said and so does Machel, you can see he's calculating. That is Silundika there.
MN	Right here, OK. So what do you think Nyerere was saying there?
AN	Nyerere .. here he knew the game plan
MN	Which was what? What was his game plan?
AN	To advance ZANU, at all cost. This was a British plan. It's only now that we.. we know it was
MN	A British plan?
AN	Yes, to have ZANU, it was.
MN	Why?
AN	I don't know, I don't know. They they they really... at the end, after after the elections in 1980, Nyerere... see now in many books written by CIO's who I suppose wanted to be paid but they were not paid, but now they are paying themselves by revealing all that was hidden. Yes, he says Nyerere was given the figures of the 1980 elections, he says "Oh Christ, this is too much I think, don't you think we have over-exaggerated here?"
MN	But o.k. now ... you say Machel is not happy.
AN	No he doesn't seem.
MN	I thought he was being supported by Nyerere
AN	Well you can... I can support you but when you overdo it I get a little worried why why... because once you exaggerate too much it becomes obvious that the whole thing is is ...
MN	O.K. so he's feeling uncomfortable ... Nyerere ..
AN	He has another... in his face he has another "Why didn't he say this, why all that?" but Nyerere as it is, you can see ... he is the only one who is at ease.
MN	And you say this is the Foreign Minister of Tanzania? Salim?
AN	Yes. Ahmed Salim
MN	O.k. this was before he went to the OAU?
AN	Yes



MN	O.K. and then Kaunda, let's look at Kaunda
AN	You can see Kaunda and Nkomo.. "Oh goodness, what are they saying?"
MN	But then if we look at this other photograph... this one. Now it seems this Patriotic Front has been formed. [1C-03-30]
AN	It has been formed, and Mugabe... this is Mugabe ...and he's trying to to to impress on T.G.[Silundika] Oh I think they are arguing... they.. "No but this..." and Mugabe's trying to explain "No, it doesn't matter T.G. actually you can see what he..."
MN	And this is obviously a joint delegation. Was this common then, that after that they ... they went to international conferences as a joint delegation?
AN	Yes, this was common, I mean... well, they are saving a face here. The same situation, they come in today, they're different, they go in tomorrow in another meeting, they come out and so on... it it it .. this business of them changing minds, today they agree more or less, only to disagree the following day.
MN	But would you say that this Patriotic Front was forced on them by...
AN	Because that is... that to me is Willie Musarurwa; he is not happy, you can see he's fed up. He is not happy at all. Even T.G. is is not happy. Mugabe seems to ... it is going his way; he is able to explain "No no no T.G. The whole thing <i>tichagadzira isusu</i> [trans:we'll fix it ourselves] We'll fix it later". You can see...
MN	But, would you say this Patriotic Front then was imposed?
AN	No initially it... naturally people drive you into into a corner, then you say to yourselves, "After all we come from the same country, we live together, it is you and me who will live in that country" .. what they are saying... "why do you allow them to tell us... why don't we we we do it ourselves?", because this Patriotic Front had been started much earlier than this, much earlier than this, this was only a follow up of a thing that... of an attempted thing that JZ Moyo and others had attempted to to do before Nkomos came out of Gonakudzingwa
MN	And what was that? What they had attempted to do?
AN	To unite the the the ZANLA forces and ZAPU. This had been done many times before. In '74, an attempt was made to get them together, '75 when the massacres started, ZAPU sympathised with with what was happening in ZANU, and we didn't delight in them butchering one another. It was no gains to us at all. So they ... they were able to know this and that was ZAPU's language. After all ZAPU had caused no split; it is them that had decided to break away. For whatever reason - it was personal to them - but to me I see no reason, because fundamentally, after the break what did ZANU do different? Nothing. They went for the gun, which gun we had already started piling into the country in '62. What other ... what what new thing did they have which they thought we were doing it differently? Nothing. They they say we were too slow, we were not quick to fight. How, how quick? ZAPU is banned



	<p>in '62 and in '63 we were fighting. How? Did we get any deserters from the Rhodesian army into us, into ZAPU? Who was going to fight, who had fought, who had the experience, who had? Who was trained? We started... I, not anybody, all the way from UNIP... I first trained the first man, the second, the third, the fourth, and the whole lot of them later. So how how fast could you do it? I was given a crack period of of of three months in Tanzania in the mountains there. Could I bring that thing and then walk into Harare and say I'm fighting Smith with that type of experience? What what what speed were they talking about? So you you then know, there was another motive, and the motive is the same motive that is keeping them stuck even at this point. They are stuck, they are stuck at indecision, they are stuck at ... Tsvangirai or what what will never get these people straight.</p>
MN	But now, coming back to the Patriotic Front, did it work in any way?
AN	It did
MN	How?
AN	<p>It neutralised the the the South African forces;¹² for them to lose men on the Zambezi was a greater.. was a serious mistake, because their army was a competent army where movements and operations are analysed by generals; when they put on the maps and say "we lost men", o.k. ... long sticks "where about is it that these men were lost.. what place is that? That's Chirundu. Oh and where are we.." Whether they were in Musina or whatever, Louis Trichardt or wherever, operations were being done from Louis Trichardt. "Well we are here, oh goodness how come we lost men so far away from home? What happened? What were they doing there?" You rather lose men at Kazungula, on the South African borders than lose them...</p>
MN	But the Patriotic Front... did it have a military aspect to it?
AN	Yes, it did, it was the the the unity between... not the political side, it was the fighting group that came together; the political side ... the Patriotic Front was more uniting the fighters than the politicians.
MN	O.K. Are you talking about ZIPA?
AN	No. Patriotic Front was a movement, mind you anything that starts from outside was not much political, because politics was here inside the country. Outside there it was the <i>dare we chimurengas</i> and whatever.
MN	O.K. So they were operating together, the ZANLA and the ZPRA at the time of the Patriotic Front?
AN	No, they only operate together at the time of ZIPA. ZIPA was now, after the Patriotic Front, ZIPA was now trying to unite the forces under one name from ZPRA, ZANLA to something between the ... the two.
MN	But it didn't last very long.

¹² It appears here that he has for the moment reverted to talking about the ANC alliance. But then goes on to confuse the Patriotic Front and other attempts at unity.



AN	It didn't it didn't, they started killing our chaps.
MN	But the Patriotic Front as a... as a political thing continued?
AN	It continued, because that was a name in abstract, but ZIPA involved men...
MN	But right up until the Lancaster House conference this Patriotic Front was still functioning in some way?
AN	Yes it was, it was. They they they kept it on.. it was on until ... until the first batches of our returning cadres had flown into Zimbabwe. Only after the elections that we parted ways.
MN	Why?
AN	This man can answer.
MN	Nyerere.
AN	The British then. Lord Soames came with one instruction. "Please, this thing this thing must, must... whatever happens any elections without ZANU, rather postpone if ZANU's not along with that, rather postpone". There's so much literature about that now... some people, people, like, like like this, who is this chap who was who was that Stanangrad what is that CIO chap ... Stannard is aware, he's picked Robert Mugabe's crossing. ¹³ Right here. At this time he got ... he got information precisely and he [inaudible] his men into making a big catch. Towards the hour, a signal comes. We are aware you are aware that somebody's going through there; turn a blind eye, let him cross. So Tekere and Mugabe crossed. Stannard is watching this thing. So all those things are leading to...
MN	OK So your view was that the British are behind, projecting ZANU through Nyerere. Can you explain why?
AN	They didn't care less; they never bothered to find out exactly what was happening. Funny enough in Zimbabwe people don't bother to find out what is happening. Even now, even the 20,000 that were people who were killed in Matabeleland. ¹⁴ Nobody knows whether this happened, whether we are just projecting a figure out of ... out of our heads; they.. the people don't bother much about this. The British didn't even bother to find out what was happening.
ZN	Do you think this is historical?
AN	ZANU, ZANU from word go they had seven thousand commissars, trained commissars who were being infiltrated into the country. Even towards the elections seven thousand were outside and doing the party work. There the pungwes the mountain ... on the hills and the mountain tops throughout the nights were being done by the trained commissars. To be honest with every truth ...do you think a fighting group of people would collect ... would collect hundreds and hundreds of villagers and take them onto a mountain top,

¹³ Now he has jumped back in time again to 1976 when Mugabe and Tekere left Zimbabwe to join ZANLA in Mozambique

¹⁴ Reference is to Gukurahundi, 1983-85



	worse still on a mountain top and sing there the whole night and they are fighters they are fighting and people hear them ... “what noise is that oh ZANLA ZANU people”
MN	But why, what would what would your explanation be for ... why would the British prefer ZANU over ZAPU?
AN	They ...one, they wanted the war to end Two, they were intimidated by ZANU that they would carry on unless things went their way.
MN	But this was in 1980, but in 1976 why would they want ZANU?
AN	Which one?
MN	The British.
AN	In 1976 ...Ah, it starts a long way.
MN	But why, what’s behind it?
AN	That’s one thing I also would like to know. Naturally, naturally .. It’s not the first time. Naturally they always thought the Shonas were were ... even the Pioneer Column avoided coming straight here. They went the other way round, that side of Tuli, that side of Gwanda, straight to Ft Victoria, by-passing Matabeleland for some reasons. They probably think we are ... we were not good people. Some people can... you know a perception can carry you a long way. They they ... what they perceive about us... it will take them... it has taken them to the biggest folly that they have done. They have made their innocent farmers crushed by the fellow that they trusted so much, crushed to... rich men have been crushed to poverty. They have been impoverished, people are suffering ¹⁵ .
MN	But do you think that the British were worried about the alliance between ZAPU and ANC?
AN	Yes.
MN	Was that one issue...?
AN	Yes they were. One: the British at that time- you may not think it is because they hated us - we were ... we were getting our arms from ... from the Soviet Union and the ANC was getting theirs from the Soviet Union. And at that time the Soviet Union was a communist country. And South Africa had sounded that sufficient enough... America, anything that had anything to do with the Soviet Union to them was unthinkable, so the British like everyone else probably could have been led into thinking this grouping is .. is a wrong group. That cold war situation was one other reason that left us in in ... and this chap pretended not to be in that group, but he’s worse so and and and the unfortunate part ...
MN	Which chap, you mean ...
AN	Mugabe and the unfortunate part ... laid further was the the downing of these Viscounts. There was a reason, military reason, clear. Nobody will

¹⁵ Reference is to the “land reform” from 2000 on when land was confiscated from white farmers



	entertain the military reason any more ... that Peter Walls was in that plane and had left in the morning, Harare, in that plane, and had gone to Wankie, and come back and stopped at Kariba, and took another plane. The target there was no other but a military commander. So here it is as if Joshua aimed at killing innocent people. That was not the truth; it happened, it's unfortunate but it happened. But then, Peter Walls had used civilians as as as a cover, which is wrong, so all that people didn't... now it is that one again, the cold war concept comes in, and then then then the 1896 rebellion was another issue when they thought the Matabeles were completely destroyed. Three years later they pitched a battle; they had confiscated guns from Ft Tuli, from the wagons that were going to Ft Victoria, took all the guns, opened the crates and took all the guns and took them to Shangani, and they used them to fight the white man and and they think then we are untrustworthy and so on so on and yet the truth is you can .. you could trust this man and you could ever....
MN	Nkomo
AN	Personally, personally, I would go anywhere with that man in my life because he's one man would never ever ever even say stupid to anyone. He would say "No no no come here my son that's wrong"; he would never say "stupid stupid fellows", never, never, so that was the story.
MN	O.K. thank you very much.
AN	Thanks Mum

