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TRANSCRIPTION

Speaker	Dialogue
MN	This is an interview with Sibongile Khumalo who has agreed to be interviewed as part of the Zenzo Nkobi Photographic Archive Project. It's conducted by Mary Ndlovu on behalf of SAHA, and it's being conducted on July 5 th , 2011
MN	Right, Sibongile, let's just ask you first of all to tell us how you got involved with ZAPU and how you got to the struggle, and what role you were playing.
SK	OK, in 19 ... thank you Mary, it's a pleasure to meet you after a while. In 1977 when I was doing Form 2, it was in February, when I had just gone to collect my results to go back to school, and then when I got home, home being Guyu, in Sezhubane. I come from Gwanda, from Chief Nhlamba's area, where Edward [Ndlovu] came from, and it was in the evening, we heard that the freedom fighters were in the area and they were mobilising energetic young people to join the struggle, and we were mobilized and we were moved to Botswana that very evening via Halisupi, into Gobazhangwe, Gobazhangwe, Bobonong. And when I got to Bobonong, my relatives, most of them are in Bobonong. My grandmother, my father's mother, is a Mazibidi, she comes from Bobonong. So is my other mother's side, they are Masendame, she also comes from Bobonong

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Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>Realising that we had just left school, our relatives tried to negotiate with the freedom fighters if we could remain in Bobonong and continue with our education. Initially they had agreed but after a few days they came back for us and they promised us that when we joined the struggle, we would be trained, thereafter we would be sent to school. That sounded very exciting for us; you know as a young person when you are told you will go to Canada, you will go to America, you will go to all sorts of things, and we abandoned the Botswana offer and we moved on and we stayed at the refugee camp in Francistown. It was just after the Manama School group was also mobilized, so we joined the Manama group. When we got there some had just left and most parents had been brought in by the United Nations, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, to ... and UNICEF I believe, to try and convince us to go back home, but their campaign wasn't as strong as the ... the freedom fighters, so we were flown to Lusaka and our first port of call ... I was lucky, I can say I was lucky, I went straight to V.C. We were the first group to get to Victory Camp, whereas the other girls had been taken to Nampundwe, where it was very very rough. And I should say that the ZAPU leadership realized that it was also important to really take care of the girl child, so a separate camp was set up for us, which was the Victory Camp, where we stayed for quite some time, and I can say some of the pictures which you have just shown me from the ... from the archives remind me of the time when we spent at V.C. when we were given uniforms, and some instructors who were well trained to really take care of the girl child. We started our military drills there and then we were moved to Mkushi Camp.</p>
MN	<p>OK, just before you go to that point ... this photograph here, I believe was taken at Victory Camp.[3A-13-29] Was this during your initial stay there, when you got your initial training.</p>
SK	<p>It was, yes, this was taken at Victory Camp. You can see Ambrose Mutinhiri, our Chief of Staff, he was still young here, yes. And I can see a couple of my colleagues here. I can see Sunungirai, I can see Finch, I can see Belinda, I can see Khanya Noko, Khanya Noko is here, I can see Chiratidzo Mabuwa pseudonym Daughters, I can see Keabetsoe Dube, she's in England now. I can see Nompumulelo AbuBasuthu, nee Moyo, I can see my colleague here, Simo, and a couple of my friends. I can say that I was part of this section or company, although I'm not visible here. So this brings back a lot of good memories, Mary</p>
MN	<p>Are they good ones?</p>
SK	<p>Yes, they are good ones; you can see that we were well taken care of. Look at the uniform; look at the way we looked. I think we were between the ages of 15 and 17.</p>
MN	<p>Really, that young.</p>
SK	<p>Yes, that young. Yes. You can see it's a group of young girls.</p>
MN	<p>And so, you were taken to Victory Camp. And then were you given any choice of going to military training or going back to school, or were you just told, "Now you are going to have your military, we'll sort you out"</p>
SK	<p>It was the party policy that we should first receive military training so that we get the orientation why we have decided to join the struggle, yes, and then thereafter we would be taken to various</p>



Speaker	Dialogue
	institutions. Though already when we were here there were various scholarships which were made available to some of our ... our colleagues, especially those who were a bit mature.
MN	OK and maybe those who had already passed O level and could go ...
SK	Yes, and most of them actually they would come to the struggle already with some scholarships, like I remember this other group which came from Harare, they had scholarships already.
MN	OK. But then this group, would they most ... you said they were 15 to 17 ... had most of them finished primary school or in secondary school or were there some who really hadn't gone very far in school?
SK	It was ... it was a mixture; you know before Independence there wasn't free education so most of the girls were not .. they had not gone as far as secondary education. Because when the freedom fighters were mobilizing people they were not looking at education per se, they were looking at you, your willingness to join the struggle, yes.
MN	OK, so then at Victory Camp, how long were you there, and what exactly happened there?
SK	At Victory Camp, as I said, we we ... we arrived in February, 1977 and we left Victory Camp, if my memory serves me right, I think somewhere in October.
MN	OK, so it was quite a while.
SK	Yes, it was quite a while because I think there was a lot of preparation that was needed to be done to set up a proper camp, and also ZAPU had to negotiate with the Zambian government for a place which would be conducive for us as girls.
MN	As a military group. But when you were at Victory Camp there were also other girls there who were not within the military side, there were others who were going to school or doing other things?
SK	Yes, yes, there were
MN	Was the school already established by then, when you were there?
SK	No, the school was established after after the Mkushi group left. Victory Camp, yes, because that's when young people started coming, some as young as 9 years who wouldn't go for training. As I said the party had a policy of not training people because they had come to the struggle, no you had to be a bit mature.
MN	Right, OK so here during those months, then you got some basic military training;
SK	Oh yes, every day.
MN	What were you doing mostly, physical exercises?
SK	It was physical exercises, political science and also the ZAPU policies and why we joined the struggle, and we did also combat tactics.
MN	Oh, but you didn't do weapons training?



Speaker	Dialogue
SK	No, no, no, not at V.C no, we didn't even carry arms. The people who had arms were those who ...the security guys who were protecting us, and the instructors we had.
MN	Oh
SK	Yes, and I forgot to mention that when we got to Victory Camp, every day whenever a new group arrived, you would find the guys from the commissariat, and they would welcome you at the airport and ...
MN	When you say the commissariat, do you mean the political commissariat?
SK	Yes, the political commissars .. and they would say "Ah now we are taking you to a hotel, a beautiful hotel", and you would say "Yes". You wouldn't regret having left home. And then we ... and it so happened every time it would be like, in the evening. So when we left Lusaka airport, we got into these big trucks, GRZ from the government of Zambia, yes, and then you leave the town, you get into the bush ... it gets darker and darker and darker and darker and then you say "Ha"
MN	You're looking for the hotel.
SK	You're looking for the hotel and you say "But why?" and then when you get to the gate, you see these guys carrying guns and they will say "Out out out out, <i>dhake, yehla, yehla</i> [trans: new recruits, get down] Then the language automatically changes.
MN	Yes. Why did they do that?
SK	No, ...Psychologically, they were preparing you for a different situation, and then we'd get out and then you'd go to the ... to a certain point and then you are given new names. I remember I was given a name but I remembered the name started with an A and we were busy chit chatting with my other friends saying "What name were you given" and then they asked me "What name were you given?" and I said "I've forgotten. I can't remember whether it's Angeline or its Agnes", and then the other one was also Agnes .. this was Shumirai my cousin, Shumirai from Mbengo,, a cousin and she said "Ah cousin, <i>Ngamiphiliwe</i> [trans: I've been given] Agnes" and so I said "let me also be Agnes as well". But I didn't forget the surname; my surname was [Khumalo], and Mary it so happened that after the struggle I was married to a [Khumalo] so that's what my surname is now. So we were given all these beautiful names, some of course were more on the struggle meaning, like you find Sunungirai, Chadura Mabhunu... "kill the boers" and things like that.
MN	What is Sunungirai.
SK	Sunungirai, it's a Shona name; meaning 'liberate"
MN	OK
SK	It means liberate, yes. So then we left for Mkushi.
MN	Before we get there ... Now you say that these girls here, you are already organized into some kind of units
SK	Yes, units



Speaker	Dialogue
MN	Companies
SK	Yes, I was in the A company, section A
MN	So, were you in charge of this section .
SK	No, I wasn't, I wasn't because as I said, we came after the Manama girls.
MN	Oh so they had been put in charge.
SK	Yah, they had been put in charge already. As I said you can see here Khanya Noko, as I said she was Sithabile Masuka
MN	So this is why in this group there are so many from that Gwanda South, because they were the Manama girls
SK	They were the Manama girls, yes. But Sunungirai wasn't from Manama, she was from Plumtree, I think, or Bulawayo she was a bit mature. This one was a bit mature, although she was small build. Yes. And then some of them like Belinda came from Plumtree, you remember there was the Tegwani High School group which went before the Manama group ... so you would find that some of these girls were from Plumtree. If you look at Sikhanyezile Maphosa, she was at Manama, you look at Khanya, and you look at
MN	So a lot of these were secondary school girls.
SK	Yes, they were secondary school girls; you look at Chiratidzo Mabuwa, she was going to do Form 1, she was amongst a group that was going to do Form 1, you can see she really looks young; and there was another one, her name was Chaos, I can't see her here, she was shortish, and you see Kabetsoe there, and a couple of them and Nompumelelo, Mrs AbuBasuthu, she was also going to do Form 1; you can see she's slender ...
MN	So they would be a bit older than Form 1's today I suppose, 14 – 15, I can see one very young.
SK	Still very young yes, because it was really a calling more than anything, Mary, yes, but you can see even at this tender age we never thought about running away from the struggle, going back home; we were really taken good care of. You can see the plates here ... look at Belinda, because Belinda was ... she was the battalion commander.
MN	She looks tough
SK	Yah, she looks tough
MN	Is this hat ... Is that why she's got this different cap?
SK	Not at all
MN	It doesn't show anything
SK	No, it doesn't show anything. You can see, these three they were the battalion commanders [3A-14-02]



Speaker	Dialogue
MN	Oh, these were the three commanders ... So there were three battalions
SK	I can't remember, I think there were quite a bit
MN	How many would be in a battalion?
SK	I think about 150, if my memory's right...
MN	OK, alright, and then the battalion's divided into companies?
SK	No, there would be a section, a section, a platoon, a section would have seven people
MN	Oh, it's that small
SK	Yes, and then a platoon would have three sections, and then after a platoon you would have a company and then after a company you would have a battalion; a battalion will have three companies.
MN	Oh, I see, alright
SK	So these were the chosen lucky ones
MN	You think it was lucky to be a commander

Speaker	Dialogue
SK	It was exciting, you know you are givenall of a sudden at that tender age you are given that responsibility.
MN	How did they manage it? Were they good leaders?
SK	They were.
MN	They didn't abuse their positions?
SK	No, not at all, no they didn't, they didn't, and we responded to the command very positively, yes. And there is Mankazana there, there, behind there, there is Mankazana Moyo. She used to work for ZESA, she is retired now, she is running her own thing.
MN	But these, these commanders, they don't have any insignia, or regalia, or anything that shows their position?
SK	No this is a guerrilla warfare, you know, we never had any kind of like medals, like major ... you know
MN	And in terms of accommodation and food and so on they were just the same as everybody then.
SK	Everybody, yes. Like, let's say during the mealtime or lunch time, the commander will move with his battalion, or companies first ... first battalion, and then company A will move first and then second battalion, then the commanders will eat after, yes, after their men ... we were called men then



Speaker	Dialogue
MN	So they'd eat the same food
SK	Same food...in the struggle if you ever tried to have your own special diet, I tell you you'd be punished, yes, you'd be punished, because everybody was equal, except there were people of course who had health problems, they would be given a special diet and that would be prescribed by the doctor.
MN	So you were really trying to learn socialism by practicing it
SK	Yes, yes, yes, yah, that was true
MN	This is still at V.C. now. [3A-14-03]
SK	This is at still at V.C. This is Khanyile this is Khanyile Mazwi. Sikhanyile is now a senior registered Nurse at Ingutsheni. She comes from Sibozza, a very nice lady. This lady comes from Mapate, it's unfortunate I've forgotten her name. You see we, you see our plates. See we had these, we used to call...
MN	It would be sadza and what
SK	Sadza and beans, or cabbage sometimes, yes. We were really really well taken care of, we were well fed. And you can see we used to call these plates <i>amabara</i> ...like a wheelbarrow. You see how they are. [3A-14-03]
MN	Piled up.
SK	No, the shape of the plates, they were the military plates, called <i>amabara</i> but we also had normal plates as well, we had normal plates. You can see here, you can see those who were serving the meals had their headscarves, you can see that they had headscarves. Yes, they had headscarves.
MN	Who did the cooking then, the serving. They were not from your military group.
SK	It was, we rotated amongst the companies. Today, this week it's Company A cooking, so it would be like for the next two days it would be section A of Company A preparing the meals, but we had supervisors. You know the party would select those mature, mature people, you know, old people, we used to call them king killers, who couldn't do any training, and those were like caretakers, our caretakers, then they would supervise us how to cook, you know we never had the experience
MN	How much to serve and
SK	Exactly
MN	But did you cook and eat then with the non-military girls? You were all together?
SK	Yes, altogether, you can see the young ones ...
MN	They are there.
SK	Yes, you can see the young ones. And then we had those women also who ... You remember there were some women who joined the struggle with babies or were pregnant and then they



Speaker	Dialogue
	had their own kitchen, yes they had their own kitchen so that they could take care
MN	Where they cooked for their children.
SK	That's right, yes
MN	OK. And then, I think this one is also at V.C. [3A-15-15]
SK	Oh yes, this is Sylvester. He was our tough instructor, very tough. And he's still alive and very jovial. He works at the National Railways of Zimbabwe, yes, and this is our good sister J.B. ... very energetic woman, high morale every time. Whenever Father Zimbabwe [Joshua Nkomo] visited the camp, V.C., she would be the one dancing, she knew a lot of these struggle songs; she would be the lead
MN	She would take the lead ... Was she a commander or was she just a ..
SK	You know, this lady was amazing, she joined the struggle after us, but when she got there, she took over everything. She was like ... You know the Ndumiso Gumede's family, she's Ndumiso Gumede's young sister ... they are always full of morale, and you know they like dancing, so naturally we would push her and say "Ah, J.B. run with it". She was, she was so good.
MN	But she's holding a weapon here. You said you didn't learn weapons at V.C.
SK	J.B.I think here she was posing
MN	She was posing..
SK	I think here it was. ...
MN	This is the guy who really had the weapon
SK	Yes, this was a tough guy, this was a tough guy, Sylvester. She would even ask to hold it and thereafter actually she was trained in Cuba. This is the group that went to Cuba.
MN	Was that with Grace Noko then?
SK	Yes, yes, with Grace Noko
MN	They were training in what, intelligence ?
SK	In intelligence and military, but Grace had already received her military training. Grace was part of the first first group.
MN	In Mwembeshi
SK	Yes, that went ... No, Grace wasn't Mwembeshi, she was Morogoro, she was trained in Tanzania. So Sylvester, I think Sylvester was the group from Mwembeshi or Morogoro, yes
MN	No, let's leave that one for the moment, those are later. This one, what's going on here? [3A-12-02]
SK	As I said, we we we ..took turns in doing certain chores. Here, this particular section... this is a section. .. was responsible for hoisting ... is it hoisting?

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Speaker	Dialogue
MN	Raising?
SK	Raising the flag, and also taking it down. This was the ZAPU flag; this was our flag.
MN	So this was the flag for the whole of Victory Camp, or just for the military?
SK	No no no for Victory Camp ... for the whole camp, it was for the whole camp.
MN	And then did you have the others, are they somewhere out of the picture, the whole group of the children at the camp. Or was it just for your group that you put the flag, you wouldn't assemble everybody?
SK	No it wasn't just like us, it would be the ones wearing the uniform. ...As you can see they've taken off their... their hats. One is holding ...one is holding ... there would be three girls who would move forward, the others would remain at attention, the other members of the section, then two would stand at attention, this one takes off their hats, and then now they would pull the flag down.
MN	OK But other people here don't seem to be paying much attention. They were going about their business.
SK	It looks like it was during mealtime. There were still like .. I think these guys were still going to eat and I think it was getting dark as you can see, it was now getting dark.
MN	And that's when you would take the flag down anyway. Ok. Let's go to Mkushi now. There are no photographs here that we can trace to Mkushi. What was the whole idea of going to Mkushi and what happened there?
SK	The whole idea was for us to receive political orientation, military training, so that we are ready for any situation to defend the country. Yes. So we went to Mkushi and when we got to Mkushi ... I was in the first group, I can say in the lead truck, as I told you that I was in Company A, the lead truck that got to Mkushi and when we got there already, as organized as ZAPU was, we found a team already there, having pitched ... no they had not pitched up the tents for us ... and they had already sort of like laid out the area where we would be, the company, and also where the kitchen would be, and nothing was done. It was a complete bush. And we were told, "Company A, this is your block" ...and the block was just trees, and we were given tents, and we had to pitch up the tents ... in that tent it would be like a section, maybe two sections in one tent, depending on the size. Our friends from Cuba gave us some airbeds. We had airbeds, we also had beautiful uniforms, beautiful uniforms, and they were brand brand new
MN	So you had no uniforms when you got to Mkushi.
SK	We ... we had, but it was a mixture of everything, so when we got there it was the green ones, plain green, yes. I wish there were pictures, Mary, you would see. And I remember the trousers had belts, nice belts. You have seen those pictures whenever you see Fidel Castro, the green uniform, those were the uniforms we used.
MN	So these ones in the photographs here, these were khaki, they were not green.



Speaker	Dialogue
SK	They were uniforms, they were also from Cuba or Russia, some of them we had to call them the rights uniforms you were just given, you can see here
MN	What colour were they
SK	They were green, khaki like, yes, but they were not as beautiful as the ones we got when we got to the training. We had the same uniform when we got there, and then we set up the camp ourselves, and then we said "Now, where are the toilets?" because, at Victory Camp, there were toilets and there were structures. And we were shown another ... we were shown the map in fact the following day after everybody had arrived, we went to the parade and then we were shown the map of the camp "This is where the toilets will be. This is where your bathroom will be" ... We said "bathroom" ... and that was the stream; it was just a river; yes, it was just a river. And then we were shown where the kitchen will be, and then we were given the housekeeping issues, like "Don't wander as far as this area, because this ... I think the area was highly infested with wildlife and also there were ... a few kilometers away there were farmers, and that was the area where Charles Madonko was farming as well, yes. But there was a lot of excitement I tell you ... We would wake up ... the team that we found there, before I go any further, we found Billy Mzamu ... before Billy Mzamu there was Phindi ... no Phindi came after Billy, there was Billy Mzamu. He was a very tough guerrilla, very unfriendly, very scary I tell you ... yes a few days we were really intimidated. He would tell us that "Listen, if you think Mkushi is a suburb, you should have told your father before he brought you here (he was now referring to Joshua Nkomo). You should have told your father that you should have remained in Lusaka, where there are suburbs, not here". He would wake us up at 4 a.m. for physical training. So we'd go for physical training in the morning. He had a team which was trained in Somalia. They had cream uniforms. Yes. There were six of them, I remember Ishmael, he came from Tshanyaugwe; apparently he died during the FC bombardment after our training. Then we had Pilate, Pilate came from Gungwe, you know Gungwe, then we had this other guy we called him [inaudible] he came from Bulawayo, and then we had ... what's his name ... he also came from Bulawayo but he went to Manama for education, yes...and then we had Mhariapera who was Shona. He killed himself during our training. He shot himself ...
MN	Accidentally?
SK	I think it was just suicidal. Yes, we had Mariaphera And then we had KK. KK came from Beitbridge; he was a father to us; he was Minister Mohadi's brother, yes ... and then we had Kumbirai ah that one was a maverick, you know, Kumbirai remained behind after the training when everybody else was deployed elsewhere. And then we had Ndatshana, the old man. Ndatshana and Kumbirai remained with us after the training and then they were ... Ndatshana was ... was captured during the Mkushi bombardment by the Rhodesian forces.
MN	OK, now before we come to that incident ... the training ... what were you trained on ..what did it include?
SK	We were trained on various aspects of military training. It wasn't just ... we were not just taught



Speaker	Dialogue
	how to handle weapons, no, it was more than that. A few weeks ...a few days ago I was talking to this other colleague, Chiratidzo Mabuwa and we were saying “ You know, that training was equivalent to a degree”. It was more, ... it’s pointless calling it subjects it goes with modules and we never had pen and paper to write. But you had to keep it in your head, remember everything. We were trained ...
MN	What was this like ... tactics or
SK	We were trained on combat and tactics and we were trained on political science. This is where we were taught about things like socialism, imperialism, capitalism, we had to understand all those ... all those issues and how they..they related to our struggle, yes and what the party policy was and the focus, what it was.
MN	And was it easy for you to grasp those things?
SK	We were young, we were young and from school, and we enjoyed it, we really really enjoyed it. And we were taught topography and map-reading. You would have to know and say “If this shadow ... the shadow of a tree is here, what time could it be?”
MN	Oh OK, yes
SK	Things like that those came under topography- How the sound, the echo of a bird ... why is such a bird making noise? How ... is it because the bird is seeing a lion or seeing a human being ... and those were various signals we would get from natural things and we were taught all those things.
MN	So you were actually being prepared to go and fight
SK	Yes we were, we were prepared
MN	And were you expecting when you finished there then to go to the front

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Speaker	Dialogue
SK	Yes, we were looking forward to that, Mary, we were looking forward to that yes. And we were also taught things like medicine and first aid. We were taught all those things.
MN	Ok so ...
SK	All in all I can say there were ten modules that we were trained in, maybe that’s why the guys I was telling you about, they had gone to train both guerrilla warfare and conventional warfare who were training us, because ...
MN	They were all men, your instructors, you didn’t have any females?
SK	We had females, I was coming to that. We had our pioneer lady freedom fighter, Jane. You remember we had two Jane Ngwenya’s. There was the military one ...

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Speaker	Dialogue
MN	Oh this one was also Ngwenya, I knew she was Jane, but I didn't know she was Ngwenya.
SK	Yes, she was Jane Ngwenya ...that was her pseudonym after Aunty Jane Ngwenya. So Jane Ngwenya, and then Audrey .. Audrey is Grace Noko's cousin. And then we had Elizabeth Malaba, she is now in Scotland. And we had Belinda as well, that's Grace's cousin as well, and then we had Constance ... I think Constance came from Plumtree or she also came from Beitbridge, Then those were the lady instructors, very tough women.
MN	They had been trained in that Morogoro training, so they had survived that..
SK	Yes they survived the Morogoro uprising or whatever it was called, I don't know, yes. So those, we really had a very strong ...
MN	Which weapons did you ... did you learn to use
SK	OK. I learned to use the Smirnov, which was a semi-automatic rifle, and then the AK 47, a bazooka and I can tell you, and my friends will tell you, that during our pass-out parade when we were doing demonstrations, I was hit by bazooka flings from the bazooka ...
MN	The cartridge, what do they have .. I don't know the bazooka, I mean I have an idea but I don't know the parts. But there was a piece that came off the shell
SK	Off the shell, yes. So this...
MN	You were injured.
SK	Yes, I was injured during that training, yes. So we were taught how to handle mines as well, and then grenades as well, and the anti-air rifles ...
MN	You used them as well
SK	Oh yes we used them, the automatic rifles, like the machine guns, we used that, because in a military formation you, you, you need to have both the small weapons and [inaudible] that's right So we were taught all that.
MN	And that training then lasted how long?
SK	The training we can say it lasted six to eight months
MN	OK so it was to the middle of 78, somewhere there
SK	Yes
MN	OK and then let's come to the incident of the attack on Mkushi. What happened? Had you finished your training by then?
SK	Yes. After we finished our training I remember when ... the party now started taking people for various commercial trainings from our group, and I remember there was a group which was being taken to Yugoslavia for training in police, so we said "You know, when they choose the police they want the tall ones" .. I remember I had to sort of ...



Speaker	Dialogue
MN	You didn't want to go for the police?
SK	No, I didn't want
MN	What did you want to do?
SK	I don't know, but I didn't want to go to the police and then I missed that one. And then I remember Cele, you'll remember Cele was our chief of ...
MN	Personnel
SK	He was personnel and then commissariat like, operations, so he came one day. Now he was looking for people to be trained as commandos for various military underground activities, like ladies would be brought into the country and then you go back to Gwanda and pretend you are not a military person you do .. whether it's called insurgency. So they were taking people to Vietnam now. Now they were choosing... I remember I was chosen ... I can't remember who saved my life, whether it was ...
MN	You didn't want to go to Vietnam?
SK	No, I didn't want to go to Vietnam because we were shown pictures and I said "No, not Vietnam". I remember, I can't remember who it was said "No no no, don't waste good personnel, don't waste good personnel, leave these ones". So they chose the other ones that eventually ...
MN	They didn't get there.
SK	I doubt if Joshua Nkomo really wanted ...
MN	He didn't really want the women in the front, did he?
SK	No he didn't. You know he had a good policy. His thinking was that "Why waste a seed? These women are the ones who will replace those soldiers who would have died in the front, so why waste a seed. All we have to do is to prepare these girls for administrative work, yes". So then after a few months, after the training, now we had to prepare for the second group. They were now mobilizing the girls, the other girls, who were at V.C. So they came, and then they had to select from our group people who trained those girls. They selected 50 of us. I was one of the girls.
MN	Fifty?
SK	Yes fifty, and I was selected, so then we had to train the new group. .And then I was one of those instructors. I remember it was myself, Chiratidzo, I showed you, and Apollo and Thalitha, Crecensia ah .. there were many. Those were the ones, Nompumelelo, Soneni, the one I showed you, yes, Belinda. Sorry I'm only remembering the ones who were a bit outgoing. Some of them, yes
MN	Those were the people that get remembered.
SK	And then our task was now to train the new recruits. We had set up the systems and .. It so happened that in October, the 18th October 1978 ... in fact before the bombardment, I remember



Speaker	Dialogue
	one day there was now a new camp which was set up.
MN	And you had ... the new lot were already there.
SK	<p>Yes, before the new lot came in, then a new camp, which was like a feeder camp for the trained staff who would be taken for various trainings elsewhere, was about 4 to 5 kilometres away from the training centre. So all the trained girls were taken to that camp, yes. And then, after that, before the new lot came in, some of the girls, because we were always in touch we would go there and they would come to the old camp, they told us that they had spotted when they were patrolling ... because we would do the patrols ourselves ... they spotted some guys along the Mkushi River and these guys spoke Ndebele and they were asking them “ <i>ngubani lapha, ngubani lapha</i> [who is there?] And they came back to the camp and reported that “We have spotted some guys”. And I remember one day when we were ... it was after supper, we .. myself, Apollo, Thalitha ... I can’t remember who else.. every day after supper, it would be around past six ... there was a spot where we would go to because we were Lutheran. We would go there and pray, we would just take a walk and go to that tree, it was like our prayer spot, go there and pray. Then after a few minutes as we were walking back to the camp, I remember it was dark that day, and it was a bit windy and we could hear male voices say “<i>Lina Li Ngobani?</i>” [who are you?] We suspected it was one of the guys, or some of the guys who were part of the security team. We ignored that, and then we told our camp commander. By then it was after Billy Mzamu ... Billy Mzamu was now moved to Lusaka and for other assignments, and then our new commander was now Phinda, Moses Phinda, yes ... he’s still alive, I believe he’s in retirement, a very tough young man. So we told Phinda, and then he said “Ah, but who could it be, maybe it’s the guys from our security team”</p> <p>A few weeks later as we were now preparing these girls for ... for drills we would go for ... for them now to go into the bush for drills and various physical training... Jane Ngwenya had just come back from Russia. She had gone to, to Russia for further training. As I mentioned that we had various modules ... our trainings included even communications and military signals, so she had this radio which was very powerful and she managed to ... the radio managed to intercept a signal ... so Jane managed to ... her radio managed to intercept a signal. I can say the night before the bombardment we had an ambulance which was stationed at the camp which was supposed to take sick combatants to Kabwe hospital. Apparently the following morning when it was ... there was a technical fault, a mechanical fault. Apparently we were told later on that they had removed the piston so the car wouldn’t move and ...</p>
MN	Who had, the person who was trying to repair it?
SK	No, the Rhodesian forces, so it means they had been in a way coming in to ...
MN	Yah, they had been getting in somehow
SK	Yah, so then we were suspicious, so the commander then said “No, we need to be alert”, we were put on high alert and we were now telling the new recruits about our retreat, in case of an attack, how we should retreat from the camp. So each instructor would be giving instructions to



Speaker	Dialogue
	the recruits how we should retreat. So since we were on high alert, the way we would be moving to the kitchen ... because the enemy would target you where he would ...a concentration pointso naturally the kitchen would be ... the kitchen and the parade, so we avoided groupings and we would move in small groups and whenever we went to the kitchen we would maybe move people in small groups. So Jane intercepted a signal that was coming from a command centre saying “ We are attacking Chikumbi, Chikumbi” .. that was around 8 in the morning. So we had already changed our lunchtime, it was earlier now so we rushed to say people must eat earlier ... so after she got that signal she ... she called all of us and informed us that they were now bombing FC. It was
MN	Was it the same day?
SK	It was the same day.
MN	Oh, I didn't realize that.
SK	They they they ... I think it was the same day, if not a day after but it was happening in the morning because she told us... that was in the morning, early in the morning and luckily I was still training the Company A. I was part of the instructors that were taking care of company A. It so happened that our company was the first company to go to the kitchen, and they were ... I will remember the instructors who were part of my team – it was Thalitha Dlodlo she's now in Botswana, she's married in Botswana, she's got a good job, I met her recently, and Mrs Abu Basuthu, Nompumelelo, you know she's doing well, and there was Apollo, she's a Malemane, she is a senior nursing sister at UBH, Crescensia, she's a retired major, there was Mavis Nyathi - she also comes from Gwanda - and she is still serving in the army - I think she's a major or a colonel in the signals directorate, yes, and there was Nhamo, that was her pseudonym, Sithabile Ncube, she comes from Kezi, she's a nursing sister as well. So luckily our company finished having lunch and then we ... we retreated to the points where we were assigned to be by the camp commander.
MN	This was outside the camp.
SK	It was outside ...it was not outside the camp, it was along the periphery of the camp. We had what we called safety pits. If you look at some of the clips on TV like during the Heroes you have seen some girls inside the pits ...
MN	There are some photographs of the pits
SK	Yes, those are the Mkushi girls, those are the Mkushi girls. So us we refused, because we were trained, so those girls went .. were inside those pits. Those pits will save you during a ...the ground force attack, not from the aerial attack, so we positioned our ... our ladies and then we sat underneath ... you know how the Zambian vegetation is... we sat underneath a big tree; we had our ... you know the water containers ... we had water and we had asked ...we were carrying some water also for the recruits. So I think it was around 11 or 12, between 10 and 12, we heard heavy sounds. It was like, you know like tractors, being October we thought it was maybe the farmers in the Mkushi area, then I remember Apollo asked ... Apollo was kind of like the mature one, we looked up to her as a sister. She asked one of the girls to say “Please can you stand up” .She just



Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>said “Please stand up and look” you know.. from nowhere “Can you stand up and look. What is this sound?”. It was like zhzhzh. And it was wet, I think we had some rains a few days ago. The sound kept on coming, coming and then this girl said “Ah, <i>mina angifuni</i>” [I don’t want to] <i>Ngubani ozasukuma</i> [trans: who will stand up?] Then Apollo said “<i>Agnes yemelela muratu</i>” like ‘Stand up my young sister and check”. And I stood up Mary, and when I stood up there was... after the camp, that is eastwards, there was a river which was kind of like a Mkushi tributary, Mkushi River tributary, and then after that river, there was a big gorge ... Zambia has got gorges. And at the cliff of the gorge as I looked up it was like I was seeing like a flock of birds and I said “Amajets” We stood up ... even if you look at some of those clips you will see us running, you’ll see people running from a big tree. It’s us. And we just stood up Mary, and we were running towards the river. Why so we didn’t run towards the camp, towards the river, because during our training I remember this guy I was telling you about, Ishmael, one day he was teaching us river crossing, and he ...some of our colleagues were not willing to take up that exercise. They thought it was dangerous ... I remember I was one of those who really did it .. we were crossing the river using a rope and how to hold your colleague if they were actually drowning and he said... After the exercise, I remember, he sat down and said “Don’t fool yourselves. You are in the struggle. And when you are in the struggle this is war. The enemy is not going to say you are women, the enemy will attack you as one. Whenever an aerial attack ...and this camp ... because this camp is far away, the only way the enemy will attack you is through aerial attack ... so it’s up to you” and I remembered they trained us, there was an old man I forgot ... I forgot to mention his name, he was Makanyanga, he taught us combat tactics and there was ... this Shona guy, this short guy , there was Motsi, there was also ... Motsi ... they taught us that ... in case of any aerial attack, how we should retreat ... so that’s why we had to run eastwards, the enemy was coming from the east going the opposite side and I remembered Makanyanga, he ...and then the jet, when they saw us coming out of there where we were taking cover, and you know what they did, they realized there were people underneath the trees, they just started increasing speed it was too late for them to dive, and so they just released the bombs. Mary they were like silver and underneath they were dark, and you could just hear the whistle, and I remember the old man Makanyanga and that was the river where he was teaching us. He said “<i>ungezwa ukhwelo lala pans, dakhe</i>” [trans: He came, I tell you it was vivid and it ... from nowhere I said “Ground” and we all went down. A few metres away from us, where we were hiding, where those big trees were, those where the bombs were dropped .. then there were two of us ... some of us, two.. ..Nhamo, she didn’t take cover, she continued running, and then she was hit by splinters, but she didn’t die.</p>
MN	When you say you took cover, what did you do, you ...
SK	We just went to the ground
MN	OK to the ground ...just lying on the ground
SK	Lying on the ground, because if I just say “ground” I’m commanding everybody to ...
MN	To lie down



Speaker	Dialogue
SK	To lie down. That's what we did
MN	They can't see you if you're lying flat as easily as if you are standing.
SK	No no no you cannot be hit by splinters.
MN	Oh I see, ok if they drop it right on you then...
SK	Then if it is not on you because we could tell it was not because it was straight coming on us and then we realised it was not going to drop on us because it would continue moving. So there was so much I mean ... the ... how can I call it, the bomb, smoke and everything that came from that, it was so dark. After a few seconds we moved on, we ran into the river now, and when we looked back at those big trees that we sat under, there was nothing. Luckily all of us had managed to get up except for that one who only had ...was hit by splinters. We went straight into the river ... as I said, the Zambian vegetation ... the trees are so big and you find the rivers are small, but deep. And when we got in there it was pandemonium, and now we were trying to run along the river. As we were trying to run along the river... paratroopers .. there were about three helicopter troop carriers, dropping the paratroopers, and it was like... and we said "Paratroopers, what should we do? Go inside the water" and when we looked at the other side of the camp where the other girls were, there was another gorge by that ... you know we can see it when those pictures are shown on TV, we can tell where that point is. We realized that ...
MN	Who took those pictures?
SK	I think they are from the Rhodesians
MN	The Rhodesians took them.
SK	They've got them in their archives. We could see that already there was fire that side. They knew that the trained personnel were that side... the new camp. Mary, the whole camp was on fire. Now we tried to cross the river now. As we were trying to cross the river they had dropped napalm. It was the whole place was burning. Now we couldn't go that way, they wanted all of us to run that way, where the paratroopers were. As we were still trying to really move ... move on, we could ... the paratroopers running [inaudible] and one of them said "There's some in the river, there's some in the river"
MN	They were speaking English. They were white guys.
SK	They were white guys "There's some in the river" and we kept quiet, we were still. We told each other that ... we were holding the semi-automatic rifles ... we had ammunition, we said "If anything happens, we just take our lives". That's what we were prepared to do, but that would be the last resort, yes. If we see them coming for us, we'd rather kill ourselves, not them kill us. And then one of them said, "No no no, maybe it's fish, let's move on move on, move on". Now they were moving towards the helpless girls who had not received military training. After the bombs ... they dropped bombs everywhere ... now the girls were confused, and they couldn't move out of those pits. Mary, we watched as they shot them straight on the heads pah pah pah



Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>pah ... and one of the girls who was part of our group - I won't mention her name for professional reasons. She came from Plumtree; I think she was overwhelmed, she couldn't move after the bombs were dropped. Then she crawled – she was trained in Mwembeshi – she crawled to where these other girls now were trying to run out of the pit and they were ... they were just holding each other. There were about three or four and they were already dead from the bombs. So she saw now, it was between that open area, the river, the paratroopers who were coming at hip level ... she didn't want to be hit by snipers, because across the river there were snipers. So she ... her only protection were dead bodies, she says she went underneath, and when those guys came, the soldiers, the Rhodesian forces, they said "Ah these are dead" ... she was now telling us ...she said one of them kicked "No this one is alive", he kicked her and she said "I remained still", and they went, they didn't shoot her, and she said "I crawled to the river" and that this was maybe after some fifteen minutes, she crawled to the river. And you know what that girl did when after the struggle she went back to St James, and then she went to Eveline, she went to UZ, she studied medicine and she said "My, why I did that, I want to save lives". She's an anesthetist, yes, and I met her in Harare ... she had I think by then three children. In 2002 she was here in Bulawayo, I won't mention the hospital. And when I was taking my sick mother, she waved at me, she said "Agnes". You know I was like dreaming. Then I saw her ... I was so happy. She says - you know later on we linked up...she said "Whenever I am in the theatre and I see a white man, I always pray for them, and I say maybe he's the one who saved my life. He might be the one who said 'no they are all dead'. So she said "I did medicine to save lives, even if it was dead bodies that saved my life". So I was going to forget about that; I thought I should mention it.</p> <p>And then we spent the whole day inside the water; by the river banks there were reeds that were inside the water, so we sat inside the water, those reeds balanced us, and we watched everything that was taking place, because it was towards the parade area, it was clear ground; the helicopters now were actually landing.</p>
MN	They landed
SK	They landed there and we could see them taking the the .. our armoury, loading and then they captured .. then they captured Ndatshana and there was a girl we always suspected she was a spy. She was now ... because she was part of our team, the group of fifty, the instructors - I'm not going to mention her name – we could see her running around helping them, yes, and after the struggle we saw her and I think she's still alive.
MN	She's still alive ...So what happened to her then.. she went with them.
SK	She went with them; they took off with her. Then it was around 8 p.m., now the fire had subsided and they were drinking now, drinking ... but we could watch the ... the movement of the helicopters, the directions they were ... it was actually eastwards, they were going eastwards, and they wouldn't take time, it would be ... you could hear the sound brr, brr, brr then you can hear it as if it's going down. It means they had set up a camp somewhere. I suspect, and people suspect it was a farm which was owned by former Rhodesians. That's where they were camping and that's



Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>where they were doing all the operations for them. So we said “These people are drunk now”. Slowly we moved out. I remember a cousin of mine, I had forgotten about her, Matrina, she comes from Chief Nhlamba as well - she’s a Gogothi. Now we were crossing the river, now she kept on saying “Cuzzy, ungangitshiyi, cuzzy, ungangitshiyi” [cousin, don’t leave me] and I then said “Wait”. I remember helping about three of them to cross, then I would go back for more, and then I went back for her, and now she was panicking that maybe I would leave her inside the water. I said “No, wait”. Then she made a noise .. they heard us, they started shooting again “There’s some still in the water” Then they went zii .. lucky there was no light.</p> <p>After a while then we went. Then there was ... as we were getting out - there were quite a number of us who were inside the reeds – and then there was a girl from Nhwali - I kept on saying “I want to go and look for her because I believe she is still alive” - she was part of the recruits. She was badly hit by a bomb shrapnel on the leg ... the foot actually. It was now swollen, she couldn’t even walk. As we moved out one guy joined us from the security – his name was [inaudible] he removed his shirt sleeve and tied this girl. We said “No we are not going to leave you”. We were now walking, and amongst the lot that were together there was Thalitha Dlodlo from Mapate. Now me and Thalitha were saying “Should we go to Charles’ place?” Charles Madonko. “Ai, no, they must have laid an ambush there” because Charles was supplying us with meat, and beans, and a lot of foodstuff, particularly the training centre, so we said “No let’s not go there, but if we move, northwards, there is a pontoon which crosses” ... I can’t remember the name of the river which goes just before Kabwe ..it’s not Luwangwa,</p>
MN	I don’t know.
SK	It’s not Luwangwa
MN	No, no it’s not Luangwa
SK	<p>Yes, we’ll have to look it up in the map. It has been a long time. So we say we can use that pontoon, because initially we were told that any similar attack took place we should move to that gathering point. So we walked and walked, Mary, we walked we walked ... I think it was 2 a.m. now we crossed the Kabwe River. As we were crossing the Kabwe River we heard a big bang. It was the land mine hitting ...there was a Zambian colonel who was going to his home area in Mkushi. Where the Mkushi camp road turned, they had put landmines, so that if ever there is any support from the ZPRA forces it was going to hit there. Apparently an innocent soul died there, yes. His car was hit.</p>
MN	But you know what surprises me .. how come there wasn’t anti-aircraft defense at your camp?
SK	No, you remember that wasn’t our country. Why should we have anti .. you mean anti-aircraft defense...
MN	Yes, I mean it seems like you were sitting ducks
SK	Those were the first attacks, those were the first ... I think we didn’t anticipate, or the party didn’t



Speaker	Dialogue
	anticipate the enemy coming that far
MN	You expected the Zambians would get their planes before they got that far
SK	Yes. But you remember the Zambians were grounded by Green Leader to say no aircraft leaves the airforce base or else we'll so we travelled I think at 2 a.m., in the middle of nowhere Mary, we hit an ambush, and they threw ... I think they were fast asleep as well ... they threw a flare and then they were not sure if it was maybe poachers or Zambians or whatever since it was a.m. because the poachers do their poaching in moonlight time. And then, it was so clear, but we managed to move on ... we moved ... day after a day, day after a day - it was now the second day walking and then we never never met any wildlife, that's how great God is. We walked and then we hit that river. Then when we got to that river now, we changed the route, now we went southwards, said "This river will get us to Kabwe, somehow, we'll get where people are". I think we walked maybe that whole day – nothing. Then the third day...
MN	You were following the river now.
SK	Following the river. We were very hungry, and when we got somewhere where we could see ... we were taught the survival tactics that first you check the water, if there are any other insects or anything it means there is no poison, so when we got there we found this fig tree - it was full of figs. We sat down, we ate the figs, we ate the figs, we drank water, we moved on... That's why I've planted that fig tree that we sat underneath, because it saved my life. Third day - it was around fourish - we saw a dog, then we knew that we were getting closer to masses, and we found somebody was drying fish. Then we walked and walked, then we saw this old man, he had an axe. Then he spoke to us in Nyanja. Luckily there was one girl who understood Nyanja - she came from Livingstone, she was training with us - and then we relied on her. Then we said "No no no we don't want to go there". Then she said "No, .the chief has actually instructed people to get into the bush to look for children". That's how Zambians were. "So, don't worry". Then we went to his homestead. When we got there the wife was crying and she started cooking for us. We couldn't even eat sadza because we were so ... anxiety – we couldn't eat that sadza. And then he said "Don't worry, come with me", he led the way.. we still had that girl

TRANSCRIPTION

Speaker	Dialogue
MN	Who was injured
SK	Yes
MN	How many were you all together?
SK	We were about fifteen, we were about fifteen, and, apparently we already close to the Kabwe club, the social club. And he said "I need two of you, to come with me". Ah, we said "No, go and

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Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>get the people". Then when he went we followed him, walked behind him.. and then when ... then we heard motor cars and we said "Now, <i>sesifikile</i>". [we have arrived] And then as we got to the club, we were already getting in there and he said "I have brought children" and when we got there the excitement when we saw our colleagues. I saw Keabetsoe, and she said...</p>
MN	<p>Some of them had already got there before you.</p>
SK	<p>Yes, before us actually those who were from the camp, the trained personnel camp. Then we found our colleagues there, and then the support staff came from Lusaka and then we were moved to... slowly slowly we were moved to Kabwe hospital for check ups and everything. The Zambians are such a people. They are human beings, I tell you ... they sacrificed everything that they had for us ... medicine, you name it, it was all given to us ... care.. then after a few days ... whilst we were still at the the centre, then the team came from Lusaka and I met my late husband, Joel [Khumalo]. Apparently we had met in Botswana as refugees, so we were young girls who were seated there and then he came to me and said "When we get back home you'll be my wife" and then I was so embarrassed. I said "The girls will think I have got loose morals, why is he saying this to me?", I cried. And then he asked me what my name was; I didn't tell him the truth, I said my name was Sithembile. Then he remembered, when they came to the rescue he came to me and said "Hello Sithembile": I said "No, I'm not Sithembile". And he said "But I met you in Francistown". Then I remembered, then that's how it started.</p> <p>So then we went to Lusaka. In Lusaka there was a new camp which was set up for us which was called K2, Kafue 2. And there we had guys from our men's wing who were ... who provided the security and you know one of the guys who was doing this - the anti-air - now that's where there was anti-air ... the reason why I'm mentioning this, because you mentioned the anti-air. There we found that there were anti-air personnel who were guarding us, and one of the guys who was taking care of the strela ... there was that ... the heat seeking missile was Mzila Ndlovu. We used to call him .. we'd tease them and ask "How come you've been brought to a women's camp?" We used to call him Pretty Moses. We used to call him Pretty Moses, and yes, that's history, you can't avoid this.</p>
MN	<p>So what were they going to do with you then in Kafue? Was this down in the gorges or was it close to Kafue town somewhere?</p>
SK	<p>It was close to Kafue town, yes. I think the strategy was now to say, slowly slowly we'd be moved for various trainings. And then there was a camp which was set up in Solwezi. Then I was one of the lucky ones. We never had any dresses, we only had those combats we walked out of the camp with. That's all we had .and one day ... it was a few weeks after the bombardment, the commanders came, they called a parade and I remember they were looking for people to work at Zimbabwe House. There was Lookout Masuku, Gervan Maseko, Ambrose Mutinhiri and others. Then they were just ... you know the way they were doing it. .. they would just look at you "You..you.." Then Lookout Masuku said to me ... said "Where is that brave girl who gave us the bazooka demonstration?" Then everybody said "Agnes, Agnes". I said, "No I don't want to go, I</p>



Speaker	Dialogue
	don't want to leave my friends". And then we went we it was around threeish we were put inside a truck, came to Lusaka. When we got to Lusaka we were interviewed by Vuma, you remember Vuma?
MN	Stephen?
SK	Yes, Stephen, interviewed and then I said "No, God" ... I came tops. I was the party book keeper, cashier, I was taught by Stephen Vuma. All the monies that were donated from everywhere in the world came to these little hands. I would count the money, bank ... I was given a company car, a Fiat 124 a small one. I had two bodyguards, and every time I would go and do the banking at the Zambia national banking ...something something, yes
MN	The Zambia National Commercial Bank.
SK	Yes, the Zambia National Commercial Bank, yes. When I got there, there was a little office like the bulk banking side, then I would get there... but you know I felt so authoritative and when I went to Lusaka I borrowed a dress from one girl, and when I got there I was intimidated by all these girls, the likes of Sithabile, Akim's wife, and Sizi, Sizi Madonko, you know they were ladies like ..and Margaret Mhambi, and Grace Noko, they were already there, and I was the miserable one and I was so scared I tell you. And ... I had not recovered from the bombardment
MN	And they ...those days there was no special psychological assistance to recover from these experiences.
SK	Nothing, nothing and there was so much trauma in me. I remember our office was close to the ... that road
MN	You were at Zimbabwe House then
SK	Yes, and then you remember we had the VW's, those which were ambulances, and then the sound would sound like the helicopters... Oh no ... my system would just collapse. I cried, I cried. And I remember Sizi Lucy ... I had severe headaches ... she took me - Lucy and Bango took me to UTH for a scan, yes for a scan, and then there was one old man who lived at Works ... you remember the Works Camp ... he gave me a reed to smoke just to ... for the headache and the trauma. Yes, then after that I felt better, yes
MN	Where were you staying at this time?
SK	At Makeni
MN	At Makeni
SK	Yes, from Makeni we went to Emmasdale, yes, we went to Emmasdale, and I watched everybody being moved, going to school, getting scholarships every day. Then one good day, you know Edward [Ndlovu], he called Makoni, he stood by the centre of ... you remember how those offices were it was kind of like ...
MN	A courtyard, sort of ...



Speaker	Dialogue
SK	<p>A courtyard...by the courtyard there He called Makoni ... we were just walking past, it was myself and Lydia. He said “Phibion, come here; what are your plans?” He said “What plans?” “For these girls; people are coming ... these kids have suffered, they have made history and they have suffered, and you’ve got no plans but people who have contributed nothing, every day we see them being flown out of the country, some even going for seconds”. He said “By January I want these kids out of this place. The ones who have been trained must come and work here and then they go for training as well. What will they be after Independence?”. Then he looked for a programme which wasn’t sophisticated like the ones where he was sending all these other girls. So he took us to Evelyn Hone College¹, and there we went in and we wrote the aptitude tests and we passed, and we pursued a programme in business studies; it was a diploma in accountancy and it was sponsored by International University Exchange Fund which was managed by Zanele Mbeki, so we got to interact with Zanele Mbeki because that fund was given to ... the scholarships were given to both the ANC people, the SWAPO people, the Mozambiquans, ourselves, even ZANU they had ... we had a group, and it was a good fund. We got a lot of counselling from Zanele Mbeki, even after we lost the elections she called us and she gave us good counselling, and she told us that when you go back home you’ll all be by yourself. The camaradeship ends here, so don’t expect anything from anyone. So work hard, yes... and those were wise words that ...</p>
MN	<p>She had a lot of ...that foresight to see what was going to happen...</p>
SK	<p>Yes, she had, yes she had that foresight and she said “If this scholarship is withdrawn”,... because we were there when Independence came, we had not finished the programme... She said “Don’t stop pursuing your studies, carry on” And I say I owe it to my mother’s cousin Edward and... you see where we come from there are three key surnames, the Ndlovus - and those are the descendants from, I think from ... what do they call...Amajahunda</p>
MN	<p>Exactly, that’s correct.</p>
SK	<p>Those are Amajahunda. It’s either they are Ndlovus, they are Ncube, or they are Dube, but us we are Sotho, but my grandmother comes from the Ndlovu clan, the Madzibanyika clan. So he had the vision to empower everybody. So Edward you know he wasn’t the kind of man who would say “<i>Ngizakutshela kusasa</i>” [I’ll tell you tomorrow] He called a spade a spade, there and then. He didn’t have enemies because he was very open in whatever he believed in, yes. So I’m where I am because of people like Edward and Lookout Masuku. They didn’t even know that I came from Gwanda. They didn’t. Only Edward got to know about it when I got to Zimbabwe House and he said “Where in Gwanda, where do you come from?” Then I knew Jabulani and Palmer – they were my brothers ages so I knew those and I only got to hear that there is Mbahwa - Edward was part of the struggle initiators, so when we got there we said “Where is Edward Ndlovu to save us ... to us he was our father, he was, he would tell you the truth, and he would tell you. “When you are there you must watch out for these men. They mustn’t abuse you, yes. You’re still young, you’ve got a future. When you fall in love, fall in love with boys of your own age”. Yes, he would tell us,</p>

¹ A commercial college in Lusaka



Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>yes. So the responsibility that I had at Zimbabwe House, maybe that's why even after Independence, even after losing my husband - he was a major in the army, he died in Mozambique, during the Mozambiquan ... when the government decided to assist Mozambique. So when others were enjoying, celebrating Independence – he died in 1989 – I had a very short time with him, but I had three children already and I'm very proud of that and when, as I said when others were enjoying celebrating Independence, I sat down and said I had to work hard to educate my kids.</p>
MN	<p>And , just to look back on this whole experience of being in the struggle... was it something that prepared you for life? Was it something that pulled you back? You don't regret?</p>
SK	<p>Personally it prepared me for life. I don't look back</p>
MN	<p>So you don't regret that you left home to join the struggle.</p>
SK	<p>No not at all, I've got no regrets. And I look up to Joshua Nkomo having contributed, as a father who contributed so much to my life. And I can tell you Mary that those girls who didn't have the opportunity to go to school... it's either they had small children or they couldn't read and write. Joshua Nkomo always said that as long as you can read and write you can do something. He trained ... people were trained even to the extent of being school teachers ... how much prepared would you ask from any political party. If somebody has got a plan to train people from the nursery school up to ministerial level, yes. Personally I've got no regrets and I don't think had I not gone to the struggle I don't think I would have achieved what I have achieved and I'm not scared of any situation. I was lucky to interact at that level. That's why even now I don't find it difficult to be part of any situation. I've had my good time, I've had good opportunities, I've worked for good companies and I've sat on leading boards. I've got no regrets whatsoever and when people learn that I was in the struggle they respect me for that and I don't even hide it Mary, and given a chance, given a chance I would want to continue pursuing the beliefs of what people like Edward subscribed to. He died a poor man. He never enjoyed the Independence, not at all, but you go back home, our own people, they will say "We only last had development when Edward Ndlovu was alive". And I was told this two weeks ago.</p>
	<p>[the last few minutes of the interview were more personal and the interviewee requested that they not be transcribed]</p>