

**Military training and camps  
of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, 1961–1981**

***Gregory Houston, Thami ka Plaatjie and Thozama April\****

**Abstract**

This article focuses on two aspects of the exile history of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa (PAC) that have thus far been poorly researched, namely its military training and its military camps. The article seeks to demonstrate the impact of the leadership of the PAC on the type of training provided to recruits in South Africa and in other countries; and secondly, on life and conditions in its most significant military camps in exile. It is argued that the leadership of the PAC, and in particular the conflicts that characterised its history for most of the exile period, were largely responsible for the limited attention given to military training and operations, and for insufficient support from the international community for the PAC's armed struggle and military camps.

**Keywords:** Pan Africanist Congress (PAC); armed struggle; Poqo; Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA); ANC exiles; military training; military camps; Kinkuzu; Itumbi; Tanzania.

**Opsomming**

Hierdie artikel fokus op twee aspekte van die ballingskap geskiedenis van die Pan Africanist Congress van Suid-Afrika (PAC) wat tot nou toe swak nagevors is, naamlik sy militere opleiding en kampe. Die artikel poog om die impak van die leierskap van die PAC op die tipe opleiding wat gegee word aan rekrute in Suid-Afrika en in ander lande, en die lewe en omstandighede in sy belangrikste militere kampe in ballingskap te demonstreer. Daar word aangevoer dat die leierskap van die PAC, en in die besonder die konflikte wat sy geskiedenis gekenmerk het vir die meeste van die

---

\* Gregory Houston is a chief research specialist at the Human Sciences Research Council, former Executive Director of the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), and a Research Fellow of the Department of History, University of the Free State. He recently completed a study on the Liberation Struggle and Heritage Sites for the National Heritage Council. Thami ka Plaatjie is a former Secretary General of the Pan Africanist Congress. Currently he serves as the ANC's head of Research, and is finalising a manuscript on Robert Sobukwe. Thozama April is a lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Fort Hare.

**How to cite this article:**

G. Houston, T. ka Plaatjie and T. April, "Military training and camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, 1961-1981", *Historia* 60, 2, November 2015, pp 24-50.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2309-8392/2015/v60n2a2>

**Copyright:**

© 2015. The Author(s). Published under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

ballingskap tydperk, was grootliks verantwoordelik vir die beperkte aandag wat aan militêre opleiding en operasies gegee word, en vir onvoldoende ondersteuning van die internasionale gemeenskap vir die PAC se gewapende stryd en militêre kampe.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Pan Africanist Congress (PAC); gewapende stryd; Poqo; Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA); ballingskap; militêre opleiding; militêre kampe; Kinkuzu; Itumbi; Tanzanie.

## Introduction

After the banning of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and African National Congress (ANC) on 8 April 1960, the two nationalist movements were forced to operate underground. The bannings occurred in the aftermath of the PAC's anti-pass campaign and the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March, the countrywide strike that followed, and the declaration of a state of emergency by the apartheid government. The PAC took the first step in its turn to armed struggle in 1961 when it decided to revive the Africanist Task Force, a para-military structure formed just prior to the 1960 anti-pass campaign. This task force became the forerunner of the PAC's military wing, Poqo.<sup>1</sup> The PAC then began a process of training young recruits inside the country, as well as sending a select few abroad for military training. However, the marked increase of militant action during this period sparked a violent and repressive reaction on the part of the apartheid regime. Scores of young people were forced to leave the country. In response to the new conditions of exile, the PAC established military bases and camps to train and accommodate the increasing number of new recruits joining its military wing.

This article focuses on two aspects of the history of the PAC that have thus far been poorly researched. In the first, the focus is on the training provided to recruits by the PAC immediately after the turn to armed struggle in the early 1960s inside South Africa and in various African and other countries between 1960 and 1981. The second theme deals with conditions in the most significant military camps of the PAC in exile. The objective is to demonstrate the impact of the leadership of the PAC on the type of training provided to its cadres and the conditions in the movement's military camps.

## Literature review

There is a growing literature pertaining to the military training and camps of the southern African liberation movements. Included here are a number of studies that deal with training and conditions in the camps of the non-South African liberation

---

<sup>1</sup> T. ka Plaatjie, "The PAC's Internal Underground Activities, 1960-1980", in South African Democracy Education Trust (hereafter SADET) (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2, 1970-1980* (Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2006), pp 677-678.

movements.<sup>2</sup> Although there are also a number of studies of the PAC in exile,<sup>3</sup> very few publications deal with the military training and camps of this particular liberation movement. Studies on PAC training and its military camps can be found in

---

<sup>2</sup> H. West, "Girls with Guns: Narrating the Experience of War of FRELIMO's 'Female Detachment'", *Anthropological Quarterly*, Special Issue on Youth and Social Imagination, 73, 4, 2000, pp 180-194; J. Alexander and J. McGregor, "War Stories: Guerrilla Narratives of Zimbabwe's Liberation War", *History Workshop Journal*, 57, 2004, pp 79-100; I. Brinkman, *A War for People: Civilians, Legitimacy and Mobility in South-East Angola in MPLA's War for Independence* (Köln, Rildiger Koppe, 2005); W.M. James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola: 1974-1990* (Transaction Publishers, Piscataway: NJ, 2011); J. Alexander and G. Kynoch, "Introduction: Histories and Legacies of Punishment in Southern Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 3, 2011, pp 395-413; G. Mazarire, "Discipline and Punishment in ZANLA, 1964-1979", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 3, 2011, pp 571-591; C.A. Williams, "Ordering the Nation: SWAPO in Zambia, 1974-1976", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 4, 2011; "Introduction: Thinking Southern Africa from 'the Camp'", *Social Dynamics*, 39, 1, 2013, pp 1-4; M.G. Panzer, "Building a Revolutionary Constituency: Mozambican Refugees and the Development of the FRELIMO Proto-State, 1964-1968", *Social Dynamics*, 39, 1, 2013, pp 5-23; E. George, *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965-1991: From Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale* (Routledge, London, 2004); P. Trehwela, *Inside Quatro: Uncovering the Exile History of the ANC and SWAPO* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2009); C.A. Williams, "Exile History: An Ethnography of the SWAPO Camps and the Namibian Nation", PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2009; C.A. Williams, "Living in Exile: Daily Life and International Relations at SWAPO's Kongwa Camp", *Kronos: Southern African Histories*, 37, 2011, 60-86; and C.A. Williams, "'The Spy' and the Camp: SWAPO Camps in Lubango, Angola, 1980-1989", in W. Dooling, H. Sapire and C. Saunders (eds), *The Struggle for Southern Africa: New Local and International Perspectives* (UCT Press, Cape Town, 2012). I am grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers for drawing attention to this body of literature.

<sup>3</sup> S. Davis, *Apartheid's Rebels: Inside South Africa's Hidden War* (AD Donker, Cape Town, 1987); C.J Driver, *Patrick Duncan: South African and Pan-African* (James Currey, Oxford, 2000); H. Isaacs, "Full Circle: Reflections on Home and Exile", MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2002; A. Hlongwane, *We are Our Own Liberators: A Biography of John Nyati Pokela (1921-1985)*, Unpublished manuscript; T. ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2*; K. Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution: The Exile History of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania 1960-1990", PhD thesis, Rand Afrikaans University, 2003; B. Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania. Africanist Political Movements in Lesotho and Azania: The Origins and History of the Basotholand Congress Party and the Pan Africanist Congress* (University of Azania, London, 1985); A. Lissoni, "The PAC in Basutoland, c. 1962-1965", *South African Historical Journal*, 62, 1, 2010, Special Issue: Liberation History in Southern Africa, pp 54-77; T. Lodge, "The Pan Africanist Congress", in C. Hill and P. Warwick (eds), *Collected Papers, Volume 2* (Centre for Southern African Studies, York, c. 1977); T. Lodge, "The Pan-Africanist Congress, 1959-1990", in I. Liebenberg, F. Lortan, B. Nel, and G. van der Westhuizen (eds), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa* (HAUM, Pretoria, 1994); T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1987); D. Mahlangu, "From South Africa to Azania?: A Critical Analysis of the Pan Africanist Congress in Exile 1962-1990", unpublished BA Hons essay, University of Cape Town, 1990; Z. Majodina, *Exiles and Homecomings: the Untold Stories* (Heinemann, Johannesburg, 1995); J. Marcum, "The Exile Condition and Revolutionary Effectiveness: Southern African Liberation Movements", in C.P. Potholm and R. Dale (eds), *South African in Perspective: Essays in Regional Politics* (The Free Press, New York, 1972); M. Mgxashe, "Are You With Us?" *The Story of a PAC Activist* (NB Publishers, Cape Town, 2006); M. Nkoana, *Crises in the Revolution: A Special Report on the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa* (Mafube, London, 1969).

some books on the history of the liberation struggle and/or movements,<sup>4</sup> biographies of, and autobiographies written by veterans of the struggle,<sup>5</sup> theses,<sup>6</sup> and academic journal articles.<sup>7</sup>

Brief descriptions of the training provided to the newly-formed Poqo units and the bases they made use of inside the country in the period 1961-1963, drawn exclusively from interviews, can be found in a chapter in the first volume of South African Democratic Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Tom Lodge briefly discusses the training provided for Poqo recruits in the early 1960s using court records as primary sources.<sup>9</sup> Lodge also gives some attention to the PAC's first camp in the Congo.<sup>10</sup> Letlapa Mphahlele is the only former member of the armed wing of the PAC who has published an autobiography. This study includes a description of the lifestyle and conditions in two PAC camps elsewhere in Africa, and the military training Mphahlele received in various African countries during the 1970s.<sup>11</sup>

Kwandi Kondlo provides one of the significant studies of the PAC camps in exile. The most detailed analysis is the one he makes of the Ruvu camp in Tanzania.<sup>12</sup> The emphasis is on the various issues faced in the camp such as "health, culture, tribalism, corporal punishment as well as the general politics of the camp in order to expose the concrete basis of the internal conflicts within the PAC". His aim is to demonstrate how "the lack of policies, organisational procedures and inept leadership affected the lives of ordinary PAC members in the camps".<sup>13</sup> Kondlo also briefly discusses the PAC's other camps in Lesotho, Congo, Botswana and Tanzania. In this study, use is made largely of secondary literature, archival material and interviews with cadres who were based in the camps. Kondlo notes that there is

---

<sup>4</sup> SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Zebra Press, Cape Town, 2004) and the more recent second edition (Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2010); and SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2*. See also Liebenberg et al (eds), *The Long March*.

<sup>5</sup> L. Mphahlele, *Child of This Soil: My Life as a Freedom Fighter* (Kwela Books, Johannesburg, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution"; L. von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle: The Soweto Generation and After", PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, June 2007.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Lissoni, "The PAC in Basutoland"; A.K. Hlongwane, "Reflections on the Pan Africanist Congress 'Underground' in the Era of the 1976 Youth Uprisings", *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3, 4, December 2009, pp 55-71.

<sup>8</sup> B. Maaba, "The PAC's War against the State, 1960-1963", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1*, pp 257-297.

<sup>9</sup> T.G. Lodge, "Insurrectionism in South Africa: The Pan-Africanist Congress and the Poqo Movement, 1959-1965", PhD thesis, University of York, Centre for Southern African Studies, April, 1984; Lodge, "The Pan Africanist Congress", p 112.

<sup>10</sup> Lodge, "The Pan Africanist Congress", p 117.

<sup>11</sup> Mphahlele, *Child of This Soil*.

<sup>12</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", p 257.

<sup>13</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", p 248.

limited evidence on the conditions in the PAC camps available in the form of archival material and interviews.<sup>14</sup>

These studies do not provide a detailed treatment of military training and conditions in the military camps of the PAC in exile. The only exception is Kondlo's study of the Ruvu settlement, which was not strictly-speaking a military camp.

Arguably the most comprehensive study of the PAC's military training and camps in Tanzania is found in Lynda von den Steinen's doctoral thesis.<sup>15</sup> This study is full of detail, and draws on secondary literature and key primary sources found in the PAC archives that are housed at the University of Fort Hare. She also includes information gleaned from conducting interviews with veterans of the struggle. However, the focus in this work is on the post-1976 experience. The study also fails to provide a detailed description of life in all three military camps of the PAC in Tanzania at the time. The significance of this work is found in the description of the training provided to cadres and general conditions in the camps in Tanzania. In addition, Von den Steinen also draws attention to the impact of the leadership crisis arising from conflict between the commander of the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), Templeton Ntantala, and the acting president of the PAC, Potlako Leballo. The immediate consequences of this conflict for PAC cadres arose from the resulting disorganisation in the movement as well as a marked lack of resources.<sup>16</sup>

In marked contrast, the historiography on military training camps of the ANC in exile is much more substantial. Such studies draw upon a wide range of secondary and primary sources. Included here are the large number of volumes on the history of the ANC; biographies of, and autobiographies written by ANC members; and a significant range of archival sources and interviews conducted with members of the ANC's military wing.<sup>17</sup> Studies of the ANC's military training and camps thus draw on a substantially larger range of sources than do existing studies of the PAC.

---

<sup>14</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", pp 247-248, 252.

<sup>15</sup> Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle".

<sup>16</sup> Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle", p 176.

<sup>17</sup> M. Armstrong, "Healthcare in Exile: ANC Health Policy and Health Care Provision in MK Camps, 1964 to 1989", *South African Historical Journal*, 66, 2, 2014; H. Barrell, *The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Penguin Books, London, 1990); L. Callinicos, "Oliver Tambo and the Dilemma of the Camp Mutinies in Angola in the Eighties", *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 3, 2012, pp 587-621; J. Cherry, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 2011); S. Davis, "Cosmopolitans in Close Quarters: Everyday Life in the Ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe (1961-present)", PhD thesis, University of Florida, 2010; S. Davis, "Training and Deployment at Novo Catengue and the Diaries of Jack Simons", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 6, 2014, pp 1325-1342; G. Gerhart and C. Glaser, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, Volume 6, Challenge and Victory, 1980-1990* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2010); G. Houston and B. Magubane, "The ANC's Armed Struggle in the 1970s", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2*, pp 453-516; R. Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: From Undercover Struggle to Freedom* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg and Cape Town, 2004); B. Ketelo, A. Maxongo, Z. Tshona, R. Massango and

What is absent from the studies of the PAC mentioned above is a detailed analysis of the factors which accounted for the type of training provided to PAC cadres and the conditions in the movement's military camps. It is argued here that the leadership of the PAC, and in particular the conflicts that characterised its history for most of the exile period, were largely responsible for the limited attention the leadership gave to military training and operations, and for insufficient support from the international community for its armed struggle and military camps. By contrast, the ANC was able to develop strategic international partners that provided critical support for its armed struggle, thereby enabling it to engage in a significant number of military operations during the 29 years it engaged in the armed struggle.<sup>18</sup>

---

L. Mbengo, "A Miscarriage of Democracy: the ANC Security Department in the 1984 Mutiny in Umkhonto we Sizwe", *Searchlight South Africa*, 5, July 1990; C.J.B. le Roux, "Umkhonto we Sizwe: Its Role in the ANC's Onslaught against White Domination, 1961-1988", unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, 1992; T. Lodge, "State of Exile: The African National Congress of South Africa, 1976-1986", *Third World Quarterly*, 9, 1, 1987; H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963-1994* (Jacana Media, Auckland Park, 2013); B. Magubane, P. Bonner, J. Sithole, P. Delius, J. Cherry, P. Gibbs and T. April, "The Turn to Armed struggle", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1*; M. Morris, *Armed Conflict in Southern Africa* (Jeremy Spence, Cape Town, 1974); T. Motumi, "Umkhonto we Sizwe: Structure, Training and Force Levels (1984 to 1994)", *African Defence Review*, 18, 1994; B. Mtolo, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The Road to the Left* (Drakensberg Press, Durban, 1966); S. Ndlovu, "The ANC in Exile", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2*; J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve: Recollections of an Umkhonto soldier* (David Phillip, Claremont, 2009); J. Ngculu, "The Honour to Serve: Memories of the June 16 MK detachment", *Umrabulo*, 13, 2001; R. Pilcher, "Occupational Hazards: Observations of Conditions in Umkhonto we Sizwe's Angolan Camps", BA Hons essay, University of Cape Town, 1998; M. Saeboe, "A State of Exile: The ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe in Angola, 1976-1989", MA dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 2002; T. Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II, Solidarity and Assistance 1970-1994* (Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, 2002); M. Senzangakhona, E. Mabitse, U. Abrahamse and G. Molebatsi, "Umkhonto Remembered, Part Two, Umkhonto we Sizwe: Within Living Memory", *Umrabulo*, 14, 2002; V. Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow* (Jacana Media, Auckland Park, 2008); V. Shubin, "There is No Threat from the Eastern Bloc", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 3, International Solidarity* (Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2010), pp 985-1067; T. Simpson, "Military Combat Work: the Reconstitution of the ANC's Armed Underground, 1971-1976", *African Studies*, 70, 1, April 2011; M. Twala and E. Bernard, *Mbokodo: Inside MK, MweziTwala: A Soldier's Story* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, Johannesburg, 1994); Davis, "Training and Deployment at Novo Catengue and the Diaries of Jack Simons"; and Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle".

<sup>18</sup> For more detail on the military operations of the ANC conducted from abroad, refer to Houston and Magubane, "The ANC's Armed Struggle in the 1970s", pp 453-516; G. Houston, "The ANC's Armed Struggle in the 1980s", in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 4, 1980-1990* (Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2006), pp 1037-1168; J. Sithole, "The ANC Underground and Armed Actions in Northern Natal", in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 4*, pp 279-311; and J. Sithole, "The ANC Underground and Armed Actions in Southern Natal", in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 4*, pp 313-358.

This article makes use of some of the sources discussed above, as well as archival sources and interviews with cadres who were based in the various camps, to describe the training provided to cadres and life and conditions in some of the main PAC bases and military camps. This is linked to an analysis of the PAC leadership in exile to demonstrate how leadership style and conflicts affected training and conditions in the camps as well as international support for the PAC.

### **PAC internal training and bases, 1960-1963**

At a conference held in Maseru in 1961, a decision was taken that PAC members should receive basic military training. The PAC also decided to prepare for a countrywide insurrection, planned for 8 April 1963. The idea was that Poqo units in different parts of the country would stage their own uprising, thus forcing the government to deploy its forces over a wide area. Poqo cadres were instructed to stockpile whatever arms they could get hold of, and to prepare for the final revolt that they were confident would bring an end to apartheid.<sup>19</sup>

Training of Poqo units was organised at the level of groups of units. Units in Duncan Village in East London, led by Washington Zixesha, conducted training in the bush at nearby Ezipunzana from early 1962. Another group, led by a man named Mayedwa, held its training sessions at Emasokeni. In Port Elizabeth, in the bush next to the Fort Stadium, Poqo cadres were provided with "crash courses" in elementary combat.<sup>20</sup>

Poqo cells in Mamelodi camped at night at a nearby mountain where they underwent rudimentary training and developed their plans. The Mamelodi units rejected the suggestion that they use pangas to attack whites. Instead their objective was to gain "instruction on bombs to get at their targets".<sup>21</sup> Cells in Atteridgeville were told that they were to attack central Pretoria from the west, while cells from Vlakkfontein would attack from the east. Lady Selborne cells would attack from the north, and Eastwood cells would attack from the south. On one occasion, Isaac Mafatshe provided training on the manufacture of Molotov cocktails to a group of about 25 cell members at a golf club. The Atteridgeville cells also collected unexploded mortar bombs at the Skurweberg shooting range adjacent to the township, a site which was used on a regular basis by the army.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> University of Fort Hare (hereafter UFH), National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (hereafter NAHCS), PAC London Mission, Box 30, *PAC News and Views*, 21 March 1968, Issue No. 13, p 1. See also Maaba, "The PAC's War against the State", pp 286-287; Lodge, "The Pan Africanist Congress", p 114.

<sup>20</sup> Maaba, "The PAC's War against the State", pp 291-294.

<sup>21</sup> SADET Oral History Project (hereafter SOHP), Interview with Herman Nico Kekana conducted by Sello Mathabatha, Mamelodi, 18 June 2003..

<sup>22</sup> Testimony of accomplice state witnesses Kenneth Molatedi, Nicholas Moloape and Walter Mashiloane in *State versus Jeff Masemula and 15 others*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Transvaal Provincial Division. See also University of the Witwatersrand (hereafter Wits), Historical Papers, South African Institute of Race Relations (hereafter SAIRR), Collection AD1901, Security Trials Court Records, 1958-1978.

In the Western Cape, training provided to recruits from the bachelor hostels at Mbekweni in Paarl included military drill and parades at a nearby plantation. Some of the weapons used were rudimentary, including old car springs that were sharpened into pangas.<sup>23</sup> Leballo said in an interview conducted a few years later that:

I again constituted [a] task force, and got it to work out a method where they could form up groups of fighters with pangas [machetes] and revolvers and explosives and other things. And [I told them that] that they must rely on their own efforts. They can steal weapons, they can get people who can sharpen these pangas, or themselves - or buy from backdoors, from people who can sell these things, and then we would be able to raid the stations and places for arsenals where there are weapons, and so on. And Poqo - its course would be to kill or be killed.<sup>24</sup>

In general, according to Tom Lodge, the weapons furnished by most Poqo units "were very crude. Bombs were improvised from petrol-filled bottles and tennis balls filled with ball-bearings, permanganate of potash, glycerine and match heads. Swords were fashioned from filed-down pieces of scrap metal."<sup>25</sup> A perception was also created by the leadership that weapons would be provided by, among others, Russia and the independent African states, while military assistance would be provided by soldiers from other African countries.<sup>26</sup>

### **PAC military training abroad, 1961-1970**

During the early 1960s, Poqo members travelled in groups to Lesotho for military training. For instance, Zifosonke Tshikila led a group from East London, while a group from Soweto was led by Ezrom Mokgakala and another from Daveyton by Johnson Mlambo. The training of PAC cadres in Lesotho throughout the 1960s was the responsibility of Mfanasekhaya Gqobose, assisted initially by Templeton Ntantala.<sup>27</sup> Training was provided in the mountainous areas of Lesotho, and took place without the permission and knowledge of the Lesotho government. The Poqo recruits were given training in surprise attacks, camouflage and the use of old weapons.<sup>28</sup> Johnson

---

<sup>23</sup> Lodge, "The Pan Africanist Congress", p 112.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Potlako Kitchener Leballo conducted by Gail Gerhart, Nairobi, 11 September 1968, DISA Collection, available at [http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com\\_displaydc&recordID=ora19680911.000.009.000](http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_displaydc&recordID=ora19680911.000.009.000). Accessed 17 June 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Lodge, "Insurrectionism in South Africa", p 120.

<sup>26</sup> Lodge, "Insurrectionism in South Africa", pp 120-121. Refer also to the testimony of state witnesses Keseth Skolane Mchnuli and Johannes Ratau in *State versus Jeff Masemula and 15 others*.

<sup>27</sup> Maaba, "The PAC's War against the State", p 286.

<sup>28</sup> UFH, NHCS, Non Serial, Box 9, Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, *The Commissar's Field Manual*, undated, p 94.



Mlambo recalled that they were taught to manufacture Molotov cocktails,<sup>29</sup> while Leballo instructed PAC members to "collect pangas, revolvers, explosives, and all sorts of weapons that could be used to kill people".<sup>30</sup>

However, the PAC found that the authorities in Lesotho, at the time a British Protectorate, were closely allied with the South African government. There were occasions when the Lesotho authorities handed PAC refugees over to the South Africans. What made a bad situation worse was Potlako Leballo, who was leading the PAC from Lesotho. Although Robert Sobukwe was elected as the president of the PAC at its founding conference in December 1959, he was arrested soon thereafter because of his role in events in early 1960.<sup>31</sup> A few days before he was to be released at the end of his three-year sentence, the apartheid government passed a law allowing for the continued imprisonment of a person convicted for furthering the objectives of communism. Sobukwe was imprisoned under this law for an indefinite period,<sup>32</sup> and this left a leadership vacuum in the PAC - and marked the beginning of decades of acrimonious leadership squabbles.

As acting president, Leballo's role in Lesotho affected the military wing of the organisation. He made a careless press statement on 24 March 1963 that the PAC and Poqo were synonymous, and that they were poised to launch an attack with about 150 000 cadres in April 1963.<sup>33</sup> Leballo had also recruited a suspected police spy, Hans Lombard, to raise funds for the PAC. It appears that Lombard pressurised Leballo in several messages to demonstrate that the PAC was going to take action, resulting in the press statement.<sup>34</sup>

On 29 March, Leballo sent out two women couriers to post letters in Ladybrand. Inside these letters were instructions for Poqo cadres on the planned insurrection.<sup>35</sup> The women were captured by the South African police before they could post the letters, and in this way the identities of many Poqo leaders were revealed. More than 3 000 Poqo members were arrested just prior to, and on 8 April 1963, as well as and in the following weeks.<sup>36</sup> It is widely held that Leballo's recklessness, over-zealousness, and unpredictable behaviour were key factors behind

---

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Johnson Mlambo conducted by Brown Maaba, 30 September 2001, Daveyton, SOHP. Refer also to the testimony of state witness Keseth Skolane Mchnuli in *State versus Jeff Masemula and 15 others*.

<sup>30</sup> Testimony of state witness Johannes Ratau in *State versus Jeff Masemula and 15 others*.

<sup>31</sup> See UFH, NHCS, Pan Africanist Congress of Azania Records, 1958-1995, "History of the Pan Africanist Congress", undated.

<sup>32</sup> UFH, NHCS, PAC London Mission, Box 30, *News and Views*, February 1969, p 8.

<sup>33</sup> See T. Lodge, *Resistance and Ideology in Settler Societies* (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1986), p 186.

<sup>34</sup> Nkoana, *Crises in the Revolution*, p 8.

<sup>35</sup> B. Pogrund, *How can Man Die Better: The Life of Robert Sobukwe* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, Johannesburg, 1990), p 182.

<sup>36</sup> Lodge, "Insurrectionism in South Africa", p 218.

the disaster.<sup>37</sup> The leadership's lack of preparation for the insurrection, in particular its failure to acquire the necessary weapons, indicated its incompetence.

In the course of the uprising, large groups of untrained men were to set out armed mainly with pangas to attack white people in various city centres throughout the country. Small acts of sabotage were also planned. It appears that sites such as the central prison, police stations, Voortrekkerhoogte, and the homes of the prime minister and other government officials were identified for sabotage. Certain words were assigned as codes for communicating actions, such as "nightclub" for the headquarters of the PAC in Maseru; "picnic" for training sites; "flutes" for pangas; and "guitars" for revolvers.<sup>38</sup>

However, several Poqo cadres who received their basic training in Lesotho in the early 1960s were arrested immediately on their return to South Africa. Included here are a number of the 17 people who appeared in a trial together with Jeff Masemula in 1963. In another trial, Zolile Samuel Pityane, Ernest Tshazibane, Jabulani Mkizo and Salu Soyizwapi were charged with leaving South Africa without valid documents and unlawfully undergoing training in a secret base of the PAC on the mountains of Lesotho. The four men were sentenced to five years imprisonment.<sup>39</sup>

In the period from the launch of the armed struggle by the PAC in 1961 and the mass arrests in April 1963, very few military actions were conducted by Poqo. Besides a number of attacks carried out on individual victims that resulted in deaths,<sup>40</sup> Poqo's key actions in the early 1960s were: the Paarl insurrection on 21 November 1962, when over 200 men armed with axes, pangas, sticks and sabres marched into the town to attack the prison and police station;<sup>41</sup> the armed confrontation at Queenstown station in December 1962, when police attempted to arrest a group of Poqo members who were on their way to assassinate Chief Kaiser Matanzima;<sup>42</sup> the confrontation with police at Ntlonze Mountain in the Transkei which led to the death of six Poqo members in the same month;<sup>43</sup> and the Poqo attack on a group of whites near the Mbashe River bridge in the Transkei on 4 February 1963.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Refer to Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC's Internal Underground Activities, 1960-1980", pp 682-685 for various views of Leballo's actions at the time.

<sup>38</sup> Testimony of state witnesses Keseth Skolane Mchnuli and Johannes Ratau in *State versus Jeff Masemula and 15 others*.

<sup>39</sup> UFH, NHCS, PAC London Mission, Box 30, vol. 1, no. 9, "PAC Guerillas get Five Years Each", in *Media News and Views*, 21 October 1966, p 5.

<sup>40</sup> Refer to Maaba, 'The PAC's War against the State', pp 26-29.

<sup>41</sup> T. Lodge, "The Paarl Insurrection: A South African Uprising", *African Studies Review*, 25, 4, December 1982, p 95.

<sup>42</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission (hereafter TRC), *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, (TRC, Pretoria, October 1998), p 414.

<sup>43</sup> TRC, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, p 52.

<sup>44</sup> For details on this, the most publicised Poqo attack, in which five whites were hacked to death, see B.B. Maaba, "The PAC's War against the State, 1960-1963", in SADET (eds) *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1*, p 256.

These PAC actions were in sharp contrast with the preparations made by the other liberation organisations that had turned to armed struggle at the time, as well as the extent of operations carried out by their cadres. The National Committee of Liberation (NCL), consisting largely of radical whites, provided training to its cadres in the use of explosives, detonators and timers; stockpiled dynamite; developed a manual with detailed procedures for carrying out sabotage; and planned routes out of the country in the event of imminent arrest, before embarking on a sabotage campaign.<sup>45</sup> The NCL also carried out 25 sabotage operations (only 4 were successful).<sup>46</sup> Although preparations by the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), were not as advanced as that of the NCL, MK did train its cadres in the use of explosives and guns, and detailed plans, including acquiring maps of targets, were prepared for sabotage attacks.<sup>47</sup> During the same period, MK carried out at least 189 acts of sabotage.<sup>48</sup> Leballo later acknowledged that the mistake the PAC had made was that it had not "studied guerrilla methods, of constituting a guerrilla unit, an armed force, how to operate and so on".<sup>49</sup>

After the arrests in 1963, the PAC continued training its cadres in Lesotho. Military training was provided to PAC recruits at two stores owned by Patrick Duncan in the Quthing area. A police search of the stores in November 1964 uncovered ingredients for the manufacture of explosives and some metal containers.<sup>50</sup> PAC veteran Gasson Ndlovu recalled, however, that he had to open up training camps near Maseru without the permission of the PAC National Executive.<sup>51</sup> Evidence of military training emerged when a group of ten PAC members were detained in Maseru in January 1965. They were stopped by the police in the Mapoteng area dressed in blue boiler suits, *velskoene*, matching greatcoats and blankets. They had been undergoing some sort of physical training under the leadership of Gasson Ndlovu.<sup>52</sup> After the 1970 coup in Lesotho, the cadres in the training camps set up by Ndlovu "had to leave Maseru to be in the mountains". They retreated to the compound of his wife's family, which they used as a training camp. The camp was relatively secure, and the main weapons in use were pangas, a few revolvers and other guns.<sup>53</sup>

The PAC also sent its cadres for training in other African countries. In the early 1960s the PAC enjoyed the widespread support of leaders in most of the newly-independent African countries largely because of the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. A PAC anti-pass campaign on 21 March of that year resulted in the police shooting to

---

<sup>45</sup> M. Gunther, "The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/African Resistance Movement (ARM)", in SADET (eds) *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1*, pp 233-236.

<sup>46</sup> Gunther, "The National Committee of Liberation", p 249.

<sup>47</sup> G. Houston, "The Post-Rivonia ANC/SACP Underground", in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1*, p 620.

<sup>48</sup> Gunther, "The National Committee of Liberation", p 250.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Potlako Kitchener Leballo.

<sup>50</sup> Lissoni, "The PAC in Basutoland", p 72.

<sup>51</sup> "Gasson Ndlovu", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy: South Africans Telling their Stories, Volume 1, 1950-1970* (Mutloatse Arts Heritage Trust, Houghton, 2008), p 380.

<sup>52</sup> Lissoni, "The PAC in Basutoland", p 73.

<sup>53</sup> SADET (eds), "Gasson Ndlovu", p 381.

death 69 unarmed protesters and many more were injured. The PAC's anti-white ideology and Pan-Africanist ideals also endeared it to many of the radical African leaders.

Philip Kgosana was part of a group of four that included Ndibongo, Mampe, and Bam Sibotho; the group slipped out of the country early in 1961.<sup>54</sup> At the end of 1961, Kgosana was offered a chance to do military training in Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie gave him permission to enter the military academy in Harar. He was then commissioned as a lieutenant in the Ethiopian Army in December 1966. In 1967 he completed the parachute and commando basic training at the Debre Zeit Airbase near Addis Ababa.<sup>55</sup>

Gasson Ndlovu was in the second group of PAC cadres after Kgosana's to undertake military training abroad. This group was deployed for military training in Egypt in 1962.<sup>56</sup> When Ndlovu and his men arrived they found Ndibongo, Sibotho and Mampe in Cairo. The PAC members in Egypt now comprised eight cadres, and just as they were finishing their military training another ten PAC members, including Enoch Zulu, arrived from Durban.<sup>57</sup> After completing their military training, the men in Ndlovu's group returned to Tanzania and were then deployed to the PAC camp in the Congo.<sup>58</sup>

The PAC cadres from Durban were followed by another group of 19 cadres, which included Zebulon Mokoena.<sup>59</sup> Mokoena's group was given a commando course that lasted from July 1965 to the end of November of the same year. It was a very tough course which tested their physical endurance.<sup>60</sup> A number of MK cadres also underwent training in Egypt. MK's Simon Senna, who went to Egypt in 1964, stated that the training provided included a survival course, which was one of the toughest courses MK cadres went through at the time. The men were trained to eat anything, including snakes, just to survive. Some people died during the course of the training.<sup>61</sup>

Templeton Ntantala was among a number of PAC cadres who underwent training in Algeria in 1964. Patrick Duncan was the PAC representative in Algeria, and he appears to have been instrumental in arranging the training.<sup>62</sup> Alfred Willie, a member of the military wing of the ANC who also received training in Algeria at the

---

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Phillip Kgosana conducted by Brown Maaba, Pretoria, 28 December 2001, SOHP.

<sup>55</sup> "Phillip Kgosana", in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy: South Africans Telling their Stories, Volume 1*, pp 157-158.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu conducted by Brown Maaba, Cape Town, 26 January 2002, SOHP.

<sup>57</sup> SADET (eds.), "Gasson Ndlovu", pp 374-375.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Zebulon Mokoena conducted by Thami ka Plaatjie, Groblersdal, 7 May 2005, SOHP.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Zebulon Mokoena.

<sup>61</sup> "Simon Senna", in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy: South Africans Telling their Stories, Volume 1*, pp 428-429.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

time, recalled that the Algerians "were so good in training us and we thought when we came back that: 'Ja, now we are going to face these guys' [the apartheid regime]". Gerald Khondlo, who was later to lead a group of cadres into Mozambique in the PAC's Villa Piri campaign, was also part of a group that was trained in Algeria.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, according to evidence provided in an interview, Peter Molotsi arranged for military training in Kumasi, a town in Ghana, with arms donated by the Algerian government.<sup>64</sup>

It also appears that a seven-member PAC "study delegation" (presumably a euphemism for military training) visited China in October 1964. This was followed by another visit to China by the group under Ntantala in April 1967.<sup>65</sup> Very little is known about the type of training provided to the PAC cadres on these visits. However, the training in China had a significant impact on the PAC in general, and its military wing in particular, in that it is clear that the structure of the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) was based closely on that of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). In addition, the ideological training imparted to members of the PLA was also given to APLA members trained in China. Evidence of this grounding in Mao's version of Marxist-Leninism was found, for instance, in APLA's training *Field Manual*.<sup>66</sup> In China, emphasis was placed on the ideological orientation of the cadres. In consequence, the PAC experienced a major shift in strategy, arguing that APLA cadres, armed with revolutionary propaganda, would carry out mobilisation work amongst the people along with attacks on enemy forces. Unlike the Poqo military phase that was by nature a localised insurrection, based on the Chinese model, APLA elevated its training and ideology and these became critical components of its warfare.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, APLA military tactics were based on the principles of the Chinese revolutionary struggle towards the "schematic acceleration of operations". The first stage of operations involved raids on individual soldiers on patrol and those who were manning guard-posts. This would enable APLA guerrillas to gain a supply of arms and ammunition and at the same time, enhance their self confidence. The second stage of operations included surprise raids, attacks and ambushes, resulting in the acquisition of heavy weapons that would in turn be used in the third stage of operations, namely to attack enemy armies and create "liberated zones".<sup>68</sup>

It was thus only at the end of the decade that the PAC developed a set of military tactics to guide its training. This was a significant improvement on the tactics that guided preparations for the 1963 insurrection. However, the military tactics

---

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Zebulon Mokoena.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with P. Molotsi conducted by Thami ka Plaatjie, Kroonstad, 13 November 1999.

<sup>65</sup> Zhong Weiyun and Xu Sujiang, "China's Support for and Solidarity with South Africa's Liberation Struggle", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 3*, p 1241.

<sup>66</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", p 719.

<sup>67</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", pp 719-720.

<sup>68</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", p 719.

developed by the PAC were in sharp contrast to the way in which the ANC linked training provided to cadres during the course of the decade, to military tactics. ANC strategy at the time envisaged that guerrilla warfare in the rural areas would spark off a general uprising. The plan was for trained cadres to be infiltrated into the rural areas where they would recruit locals and establish guerrilla units, set up guerrilla bases with the requisite political and military support of the local population, and then carry out guerrilla campaigns.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, training provided to MK cadres in the Soviet Union focused mainly on "basic guerrilla warfare, concentrating on the specialised clandestine, urban guerrilla warfare, sabotage, explosives, weapons, politics, [and] organising military and guerrilla units."<sup>70</sup>

### **PAC military camps in exile, 1963–1970**

The PAC camps in the early 1960s were rudimentary training camps in Maseru, (Lesotho) and the Kinkuzu camp at Leopoldville in the Congo.<sup>71</sup> The increasing exodus of people from South Africa in the aftermath of Sharpeville and the return of trained cadres from Egypt, prompted the PAC to establish camps in Zambia and Tanzania, which were the two most popular destinations for most young South Africans who were going into exile. In the second half of the 1960s, PAC guerrillas were located mainly in two camps: the one in Zenkobo, Zambia;<sup>72</sup> and the other at Chunya, in Tanzania. However, the first PAC military camp outside South Africa was the Kinkuzu camp in the Congo, which was opened in 1963. At the time, all the countries neighbouring South Africa were still under colonial or white minority rule, and Tanzania and the Congo were the nearest independent countries to South Africa.

The PAC's Kinkuzu military camp was established after Cyrille Adoula, the then prime minister of Congo, stated at the inaugural meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) that his country would provide military camps for PAC members. Until that time, the only African country that offered a training facility to the PAC was Egypt. The PAC was thus grateful for this new offer. However, when the first group of 13 PAC members went to Kinkuzu in November 1963, they found that no camp had been established for them. Instead, the PAC was expected to be housed in the existing military camp set up for the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA).<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Refer to [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za).

<sup>70</sup> "Isaac Makopo", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy: South Africans Telling their Stories, Volume 1*, p 209.

<sup>71</sup> These were not formal camps in the sense of having a camp structure with a commander, platoons, etc., nor was any training in the use of sophisticated weapons provided to cadres based there.

<sup>72</sup> At the time, Zambia had just become independent, and the Zambian authorities did not give permission to any liberation movements to establish military camps. The camp at Zenkobo was therefore a "holding" camp, where trained cadres were housed temporarily. However, it appears that the PAC used it as a camp where cadres clandestinely underwent military training and stored arms, as did members of MK in various other centres in Zambia. Refer to S. Ellis, *The External Mission: The ANC in Exile* (Jonathan Ball, Cape Town, 2012), pp 289-290; Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years*, p 21.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

The camp at Kinkuzu was poorly organised. The food was inadequate and the FNLAs were "pathetically emaciated from hunger".<sup>74</sup> Although Nana Mohomo was supposed to be in charge of the PAC trainees, he basically left them to their own devices.<sup>75</sup> There were too few guns for training, and the only machine gun in the camp was an old British one. A short while after the PAC group had arrived at Kinkuzu, 200 PAC members were brought in by plane from Francistown, Botswana. According to Gasson Ndlovu:

When we came there with those recruits, there was not even room to accommodate them, let alone food – So, to this group of 30 men we add a huge group of two hundred men. We could hardly feed them, or give them medications – so the situation deteriorated. A lot of them started leaving; leaving as individuals, [they] just disappeared into the forest. They were escaping this damn malaria. And, of course, there was very little food and so on. And there was no prospect that the situation would be improved in the near future.<sup>76</sup>

Kwandi Kondlo was equally unenthusiastic. He notes that conditions "in this camp were typical of conditions in all PAC camps in Tanzania since then".<sup>77</sup> Lodge maintains that this camp was characterised by "ramshackle logistical systems, inadequate food, poor training facilities, and inhabitability, which led to poor health of inmates, death and disease".<sup>78</sup> The cadres at Kinkuzu complained about poor training facilities and the absence of PAC leaders to assist and motivate them.<sup>79</sup> Ndlovu describes the fiasco that attended training in the Congo as follows: "When the internal leadership squabbles occurred in the mid-1960s the young cadres were complaining that they were lost and – they did not know what was happening to the leadership".<sup>80</sup>

Dissatisfaction with Leballo's leadership style emerged in 1963. In Maseru, several PAC members called for a branch meeting where they could express a vote of no confidence in Leballo. Instead, Leballo expelled nine of these PAC members.<sup>81</sup> The acting president often invoked the "emergency powers" provided for in the constitution, and seemingly ran the organisation in a permanent state of "emergency".<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, in February 1964, an internal leadership conflict arose following the suspension of two members of the PAC's National Executive, namely Peter Molotsi and Nana Mahomo. These two senior PAC members were unable to account for certain funds allotted to the PAC by the OAU Liberation Committee and

---

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>75</sup> Lodge, "The Pan Africanist Congress", p 117.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>77</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", p 250.

<sup>78</sup> Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*, p 308, cited in Kondlo, 'In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution', pp 250-251.

<sup>79</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", p 707.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>81</sup> Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*, p 309.

<sup>82</sup> C.O.C Amate, *Inside the OAU: Pan Africanism in Practice* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1986), p 279.

other financial assistance granted to the PAC.<sup>83</sup> Many of the internal leadership conflicts in were caused by competition for control over, and access to resources, exacerbated by ill-defined organisational and administrative guidelines.

In May 1964, the PAC's Kinkuzu trainees were transferred to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, where the PAC had established its new headquarters in exile after its leadership had relocated from Lesotho. This influx of over 200 PAC cadres added to what was increasingly becoming a major concern for the Tanzanian government. A number of southern African liberation movements had established their headquarters in Dar es Salaam. Included here were the ANC, PAC, South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO), Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), and the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO). All these organisations had trained cadres who were roaming freely around the city. The Tanzanian government was feeling insecure about the situation and by way of a solution it opted to open military camps situated some distance away from the capital.<sup>84</sup>

By this time the liberation movements had been divided into two camps: those linked to the Congo Alliance established between 1963 and 1964 on the one hand; and those who later became known as the "authentic" liberation movements, on the other. This was a consequence of the Sino-Soviet split, which was brought into the open in 1962.<sup>85</sup> The two socialist countries subsequently supported different liberation movements coming from the same country. Because of this distinction, the Tanzanian government had to deal with the formation of the camps in a delicate manner. The "authentic" liberation movements constituted a loose alliance of six movements, and included the ANC, ZAPU, FRELIMO, SWAPO and the MPLA. The "authentic" group was given camps in Kongwa. In contrast, in 1964, the Congo Alliance liberation movements, including ZANU and the PAC, were given camps at Chunya in Mbeya, near the border of Zambia.<sup>86</sup> Kondlo writes as follows about the PAC camp at Chunya, which appears to have been the first PAC camp in Tanzania:

---

<sup>83</sup> Driver, *Patrick Duncan*, p 234. See also Lodge, "Insurrectionism in South Africa", p 399.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Zebulon Mokoena.

<sup>85</sup> Several cracks in the relationship between China and the Soviet Union emerged in the late 1950s. These include the refusal of the Soviet Union to support China in its conflict with India after the first armed conflict on the Sino-Indian border in August 1959, and the increasing ambitions of China to assert its influence in liberation struggles around the world following the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959. In the early 1960s, the Soviet Union signed a nuclear non-proliferation treaty, which the Chinese saw as an attempt to restrict Chinese nuclear ambitions. The Sino-Soviet split eventually erupted during the second Sino-Indian border confrontation and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Refer to M.Y. Prozumenschikov, "The Sino-Indian Conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Sino-Soviet Split, October 1962: New Evidence from the Russian Archives", *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 1996, pp 251-269. Available at [http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded\\_pics/Cuba\\_and\\_SinoIndian\\_conflict.pdf](http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/Cuba_and_SinoIndian_conflict.pdf) Accessed 7 June 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Zebulon Mokoena.



"The area needed to be cleared of bush in order to make it habitable. The camp settlement was offered by the government of Tanzania. In Chunya, PAC members erected rudimentary structures and shacks for accommodation."<sup>87</sup>

Chunya has been described as a cold mountainous region of south-western Tanzania. The dreadful conditions in Kinkuzu also prevailed in Chunya, which had no more than 100 cadres living there at any stage.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, the PAC leadership, because of "leadership battles and internal conflicts", did not commit to developing a full-scale military camp there.<sup>89</sup> At the time, a number of PAC leaders were either suspended from the organisation for particular offences, or were being investigated for possible misappropriation of funds.<sup>90</sup> In July 1965, J.D. Nyaose, the PAC's Secretary of Labour, received funds from the Chinese government for use by the Federation of Free African Trade Unions of South Africa, a trade union led by Nyaose in South Africa and associated with the PAC.<sup>91</sup> Nyaose refused to hand over the money to the PAC and instead opened an office of the union in Tanzania.<sup>92</sup> Leballo managed to convince the Tanzanian police to arrest the Nyaose group, and a host of its members were suspended from the PAC.<sup>93</sup> The issues around leadership conflicts at the time suggest that there was an ongoing struggle between leaders to gain control over the meagre resources of the organisation.

In 1966, Leballo initiated discussions with the Zambian president, Kenneth Kaunda, for permission to establish a camp in Zambia. The PAC was given permission to do so at Zenkobo, near Livingstone. Siphon Ximba from Natal was appointed camp commander, and the initial training provided was routine physical exercise. In time, Ntantala and Leballo organised the movement of arms from Mbeya to Zenkobo. Some cadres were still going abroad for training.<sup>94</sup> There is no available description of this camp, which is where the first trained guerrillas were based.<sup>95</sup> However, it was from here that cadres were taken to mount the PAC's most significant operation from exile in the 1960s: Operation Villa Piri in Mozambique in 1968.<sup>96</sup>

This particular operation was launched as a result of pressure exerted by the OAU on the PAC to engage in military action against South Africa; if it failed to do so, it would lose its OAU support. The leadership conflicts were seen as a major factor

---

<sup>87</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", p 250.

<sup>88</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", p 251.

<sup>89</sup> A full-scale settlement or military camp would be characterised by permanent physical structures with military structures such as camp commander, platoons, etc. and extensive military training schedules.

<sup>90</sup> Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, p 8.

<sup>91</sup> Poggrund, *How Can Man Die Better*, p 96.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Lakaje, Unpublished autobiographical notes, Nairobi, Kenya, February 1970, p 68. Lakaje was a member of the ANC Youth League, the Africanist Movement and the PAC,

<sup>93</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in exile", p 711.

<sup>94</sup> K. Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution: The Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) 1960-1994* (Basler Afrika Bibliographien, Basle, 2009), p 251.

<sup>95</sup> Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution*, p 297.

<sup>96</sup> For a description of this campaign refer to Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", pp 720-728.

behind the organisation's failure to mount any operations thus far inside South Africa. By contrast, the ANC had already infiltrated a number of cadres into South Africa in the second half of the 1960s,<sup>97</sup> while two major campaigns, the Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns, were mounted in August 1967 and January 1968 respectively.<sup>98</sup>

The Villa Piri Operation was preceded by a major conflict between Leballo on the one hand, and Peter Raboroko and A.B. Ngcobo on the other. Leballo censured Raboroko and Ngcobo for taking a contradictory view to the accepted PAC ideological position in a paper they presented at a conference in Brazil in late 1966. In their presentation the two "dissident" members had argued that the United Nations and the international community should play a central role in pressuring the South African government to bring about change, while Leballo claimed that the PAC was aiming to be more self-reliant in the achievement of liberation. In July 1967, Raboroko's group attempted to seize the PAC offices in Dar es Salaam. The Tanzanian army sealed off the premises on 15 August, and temporarily closed the offices.<sup>99</sup>

The two key challenges the PAC faced during the 1960s were: persistent leadership conflicts which drew in the cadres in the camps; and the failure to infiltrate its cadres back to South Africa. In 1968 a group of PAC leaders used the Villa Piri Operation to attack Leballo's leadership of the movement. Drawing attention to the growing discontent in the military camps arising from the failure of the operation, T.T. Letlaka attacked Leballo, who subsequently dismissed Letlaka from his position in the Revolutionary Command and from the executive positions he had previously held. Letlaka responded by calling a meeting in Dar es Salaam, where he announced the expulsion of Leballo and his supporters from the PAC. Letlaka, together with Abednego Ngcobo, J. Nyaose, Peter Raboroko and Z.B. Molote, went to the Zenkobo camp to enlist the support of the APLA cadres based there. Instead the cadres arrested them.<sup>100</sup>

The Zambian leader, Kenneth Kaunda, intervened directly when he heard that there was an attempt to kill some of the leaders in detention in the camp. Zambian troops were deployed, and all cadres were disarmed and expelled to Tanzania. The Zenkobo camp was thus closed in August 1968.<sup>101</sup> The leadership conflicts that erupted in June 1968 were reported to the OAU Liberation Committee and all aid, including financial assistance, was withdrawn from the PAC by the OAU and its member states.<sup>102</sup> This affected the disbursement of funds to military cadres and as a result the conditions in the camps deteriorated even further and the prosecution of the PAC's armed struggle was disrupted.

---

<sup>97</sup> Refer to Houston, 'The Post-Rivonia ANC/SACP Underground', pp 612-614, 641-643.

<sup>98</sup> Refer to R.M. Ralinala, J. Sithole, G. Houston and B. Magubane, "The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1*, pp 479-540.

<sup>99</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", p 713.

<sup>100</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", p 728.

<sup>101</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", pp 729-730.

<sup>102</sup> Amate, *Inside the OAU*, p 279.

Meanwhile, in Tanzania the discovery of an attempted coup in 1969 was to affect the South African liberation movements in particular. Leballo appeared as a witness in the case against the coup plotters, and testified that he had been approached to provide them with assistance but had instead informed the government of the plot. The Tanzanian government responded by expelling the ANC from the country.<sup>103</sup> However, other African countries became very sceptical of the PAC because they now suspected that it might become involved in the internal affairs and conflicts within their own countries.

### **APLA training abroad, 1970-1981**

During the 1970s and early 1980s, APLA cadres underwent training in Libya, Ghana, Guinea, Uganda, Nigeria, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Yugoslavia, China and Kampuchea (present day Cambodia).<sup>104</sup> These various countries provided specific types of training to APLA cadres: Libya specialised in providing basic training in infantry, while Guinea provided basic infantry training as well as specialisations in anti-aircraft measures and counter-intelligence. Uganda provided basic infantry training, mines training and a commander's course, while Nigeria provided an officer's course and air force training. The remaining countries in the list above provided courses in infantry, guerrilla warfare, commando training, intelligence and security, and other specialities.<sup>105</sup>

In 1970, the Libyans offered the PAC training facilities. There were only 70 APLA cadres at the time, and the PAC was able to get 25 cadres to volunteer for training in Libya.<sup>106</sup> The PAC also offered the Libyan training facilities to the Basotho Congress Party (BCP) and from then onwards, members of APLA and the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA, the armed wing of the BCP) were trained together in Libya. In mid-1975, a group of 26 members of the South African Students Organisation (SASO) joined a group of APLA and LLA cadres in Libya.<sup>107</sup> The guerrillas were provided with military training in "automatic weapons, rockets, grenades, mortar bombs and map

---

<sup>103</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", p 732.

<sup>104</sup> Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle", p 147.

<sup>105</sup> Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle", pp 147-149.

<sup>106</sup> Lodge, "The Pan Africanist Congress", p 119.

<sup>107</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile", pp 733-734. The SASO group initially requested the ANC to provide it with military training. When the ANC pointed out that training could only be provided to individuals who joined the movement, the group turned to the PAC. Upon arrival in Libya, the group found itself caught up in the internal power struggle between Leballo and Ntantala. Defending their independence, tensions soon developed between the BCM members and PAC. Eventually, the Libyan government expelled the group. Before the expulsion, some of the BCM activists went for training in Syria under the auspices of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Returning to Botswana, further problems arose when the PAC informed the government of the purpose for which the BCM members had left the country. Most of them subsequently approached the ANC. See N.B. Pityana, M. Ramphela, M. Mpumlwana and L. Wilson (eds), *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness* (David Philip, Cape Town, 1991), pp 139-140.) Cited in Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II*, p 551 (note).

reading".<sup>108</sup> Timothy Williams, who was part of the SASO group, recalled that the members of the PAC who were training with them were very aware of the conflict within the PAC leadership. "Even in the camps", he stated, "there was an Ntantala group and a Leballo group, and people who - trained with us at that time were more Leballo inclined".<sup>109</sup>

At the PAC's Moshi Consultative Conference in September 1967, a Revolutionary Command had been established under Leballo's leadership, while Templeton Ntantala was appointed head of the APLA High Command. By the mid-1970s, a rift had developed between these two key leaders in the PAC which was exacerbated by the influx of new recruits during the first half of the 1970s. Leballo felt threatened by the growth of APLA, and feared that the High Command would become more powerful than he was. He therefore did his best to win over some of the new recruits, who were apparently used later to carry out physical attacks on Leballo's opponents.

Bobo Moerane joined the PAC in December 1975, and was part of a group of 20 new APLA recruits that was sent to Libya. They were provided with training in infantry tactics, espionage and the handling of weapons. After completing the nine-month course, nine of the cadres were sent to Syria for commander training, while the rest returned to Tanzania.

Zebulon Mokoena underwent another training session in 1976 when he led a group of PAC cadres that were sent to China at the beginning of 1976 "for military training".<sup>110</sup> During the first month of the three-month course the cadres were provided with cultural and political training, including visits to all the relevant historical sites, where they were given lectures on the Chinese revolution and the work of the Communist Party of China. The group was then transferred to Guangzhou, where they were trained on how to establish an underground guerrilla army; to use light weapons manufactured in the East and light to medium weapons manufactured in the West; to manufacture home-made explosives using readily available material; and regimental drill.<sup>111</sup> Mokoena later went to Libya with the SASO group that stayed in Libya for nine months; they were given a course in infantry.<sup>112</sup>

A group of new recruits that arrived in early 1977 were sent for military training in China, followed by another group that went to Kampuchea. In June 1977 there were 21 cadres who left Tanzania for Khmer Rouge-ruled Kampuchea under the leadership of Ezrom Mokgakala. The group spent a few weeks in China, before proceeding to Kampuchea. Their initial challenge was to learn the Cambodian

---

<sup>108</sup> Hlongwane, "Reflections on the Pan Africanist Congress 'Underground'", p 64.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Timothy Williams conducted by Ben Magubane and Gregory Houston, Pretoria, 20 January 2004, SOHP.

<sup>110</sup> Mphahlele, "*Child of This Soil*", p 76-77.

<sup>111</sup> Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle", pp 150-151.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Zebulon Mokoena.

language before commencing with training.<sup>113</sup> One member of the group, Sgubu Dube, recalled that:

We were a group of 23 – and spent six weeks in China on orientation on what to expect from Kampuchea because the country had just received independence in 1975. When we were about to start with the heavy machinery like tanks, airplanes and helicopters, the Vietnamese invaded Kampuchea and we had to move from the city to the countryside. That was a very good experience because all that we had been taught we had to put into practice: how to evacuate people – We marched for eight months from Kampuchea going down to Thailand.<sup>114</sup>

Mphahlele was part of a group of 50 cadres that underwent military training in Guinea in 1981. Their training began after their arrival at the Centre National Kwame Nkrumah (CNKN) on 6 July 1981. The training centre was located about 36 km north of Conakry, in the Dubreka Prefecture. One of the problems the cadres experienced was the poor quality of food they were given. They were housed in dormitories with bunk beds, toilets, showers, taps and concrete washing basins. The training consisted of six months of infantry training and three months of special training. However, Mphahlele adds, the attendance of the instructors and the two PAC members who had been left behind by the previous group to act as interpreters, was very erratic. In consequence, the cadres "spent days and sometimes weeks, loitering around".<sup>115</sup>

The training in Guinea was considered extremely tough, similar to the training provided for PAC cadres in Egypt in the 1960s. It included 35 kilometre marches with full kit - i.e. military bag with a capacity of 25 kg, a hammock and assault rifle - during which the cadres had to engage in manoeuvres and mock attacks while jumping over obstacles in mountainous and bushy terrain. Another key component of the course in Guinea was survival, with cadres being dumped in the bush for two weeks without any food. They were required to forage for food in the wild.<sup>116</sup>

Sudan offered APLA cadres a six-month course at a training facility about 50 to 70 kilometres north of Khartoum. The APLA cadres were provided with basic training, mainly involving tactics, platoon-level organisation, and the establishment of companies. They were also trained in the use of pistols, light machine guns, heavy machine guns, and mortars. This was followed by training with the commandos, where they faced tough endurance exercises. The training in the commando course also included hand-to-hand combat, strength building, and specific techniques such as how to jump out of a moving vehicle in case of an ambush.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Mphahlele, *'Child of This Soil'*, pp 76-77.

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Sgubu Dube conducted by Thami ka PLaatjie, Pretoria, 26 August 2004, SOHP.

<sup>115</sup> Mphahlele, *'Child of This Soil'*, pp 83-87.

<sup>116</sup> Command Report, written by M. Koli, Commander, marked as received by headquarters in Tanzania on 16 May 1987; and Von den Steinen, Interview with Blacks Joyi, cited in Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle", p 155.

<sup>117</sup> Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle", pp 156-157.

It is quite apparent that there was no strategic direction behind the training provided to APLA cadres.<sup>118</sup> The PAC simply took advantage of any offer of training, irrespective of whether it was relevant for strategic reasons. By contrast, by the mid-1970s the ANC had decided that the bulk of its cadres would be trained in military combat work (MCW), which aimed at instructing the cadres in the creation of an effective revolutionary underground. Cadres were provided with training in politics; tactics (which covered the various modes of fighting used in struggles against imperialism); and the military techniques available to a guerrilla army in executing such tactics, including demolition, reconnaissance, topography, training in the use of weapons, and conspiracy techniques.<sup>119</sup> The primary objective of this training was to infiltrate cadres into South Africa so that they could build revolutionary cells.

The PAC leadership, on the other hand, reluctantly agreed to only one mission to infiltrate cadres throughout the 1970s, namely Operation Curtain Raiser. Eight APLA cadres - Kenny Mkhwanazi, Justice Nkonyeni, Eddie Phiri, Mfundo Njikelane, Bobo Moerane, Sabelo Phama, Nki and Prince - survived inside South Africa from late 1977 to mid-1979, before they were arrested. The operation arose after criticisms were raised that the leadership was not committed to the launching of the armed struggle inside South Africa. Cadres were under the impression that the military leadership was distracted by the relatively luxurious lifestyle they were enjoying in exile. This apparent reluctance to engage with the enemy is further evidence of the absence of any proper strategy designed to guide the military training given to APLA cadres.

### **APLA camps in exile, 1970–1981**

Mfanasekhaya Gqobose was deployed to Tanzania in 1971, and states that the PAC camps in Tanzania all experienced problems such as "indiscipline; disobeying orders; running away from the camps; and involvement in a range of general disagreements". In addition, the camps were not immune from the "tensions which concealed the power struggle between a number of leaders". There was also evidence of tribalism in the camps. Later in the decade, tribalism was used by the two competing camps (those supporting Leballo and those who favoured Ntantala) to mobilise support in the PAC military camps. In the camps, Ntantala had the support of the Xhosas and members of other Nguni groups, while Leballo mobilised support from the Basotho and members of the LLA.<sup>120</sup> When interviewed, Gqobose stated: "Several classes would be conducted trying to hammer out this question of discouraging cadres [from practising tribalism]".<sup>121</sup> However, Kondlo observes that the PAC leadership was largely dismissive of this phenomenon in the camps.<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>118</sup> I am grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers for this point.

<sup>119</sup> Simpson, "Military Combat Work: The Reconstitution of the ANC's Armed Underground".

<sup>120</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", pp 272-273.

<sup>121</sup> Interview with Mfanasekhaya Gqobose.

<sup>122</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", pp 273-274.

APLA was able to use ZANU's Itumbi camp at Mbeya from 1971 when the Zimbabwean guerrillas were moved to a new training camp at Magagoa in Tanzania.<sup>123</sup> In the mid-1970s, the camp was run by members of the LLA. Many APLA cadres lived there with their families; these cadres were unarmed. Similar conditions prevailed in the other PAC camps, and was to affect the PAC at a time when large numbers of young people were fleeing South Africa to join the liberation movements during the 1976 Soweto uprising and in its immediate aftermath. PAC cadres responsible for transporting youths out of the country were frustrated in their efforts by the leadership conflicts. John Ganya, for instance, recalled that some of the new PAC recruits he had taken into exile joined the ANC because of the acrimony and instability within the PAC leadership.<sup>124</sup>

In the second half of the 1970s a number of trained APLA cadres were deployed to the camp, and leadership shifted from the LLA to APLA. There was virtually no activity in the camp when these trained cadres arrived. They tried to initiate some poultry projects, but because of conditions in the camp the poultry did not survive. An attempt to establish a piggery also failed. The cadres whiled away the time by doing fitness training. Each time members of the APLA High Command visited the camp the cadres would put pressure on them; the cadres wanted to be deployed inside South Africa. They wanted to be involved in action. The response was always that the cadres had to be patient because preparations were being made for deployment. At one stage a programme was introduced to train cadres as pilots in Nigeria. However, most of the cadres in Itumbi felt that they needed to start implementing the training they had already received; they wanted deployment into South Africa, so they refused to participate in the programme.<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, there were 22 APLA cadres who went to Nigeria for the training that was being offered.<sup>126</sup>

The Itumbi camp was a small-scale military settlement along the lines of the camp at Chunya. It consisted of a red-brick, double-storey building in the middle of a forest; the cadres nicknamed the building "Carlton Centre" after the skyscraper in Johannesburg. On the ground floor were a small camp press, store-room and a dispensary. Cadres were accommodated on the first floor, as well as in a few tents pitched near the building. A kitchen was separated from the building by a water tap. The parade ground used for drills and for sporting activities was in front of the building. The headquarters, named Shanghai, was located about 200 metres from the "Carlton Centre" at the edge of the forest. It was used as quarters by the camp commander and his juniors in the camp administration, and by visiting leaders. Nearby was a fowl-run and was what was known as the "historic tree", where

---

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Peter Hlaole Molotsi conducted by Brown Maaba, Kroonstad, 7 January 2001, SOHP; P.L. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War: A Military History* (Sygma Collins, Glasgow, 1982), p 69.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with John Ganya conducted by conducted by Thami ka Plaatjie, Soweto, 1 September 1999.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Bobo Moerane.

<sup>126</sup> Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle", p 149.

meetings were held.<sup>127</sup> Many of the recruits who joined the PAC just prior to, during, and in the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto uprising, were deployed to Chunya.<sup>128</sup>

Zolile Hamilton Keke recalled that at Itumbi there was some physical training,<sup>129</sup> which began at 5 in the morning, and was generally a 30 kilometre run. The routine thereafter was for cadres to engage in various tasks for the rest of the day between meals, such as working on the road, collecting firewood, or working in the kitchen.<sup>130</sup> However, conditions were so bad in the area that very few animals were able to survive, and healthy dogs and domestic pigs often died within weeks after arrival in the camp.<sup>131</sup>

Gasson Ndlovu recalled that: "There was no training there. It was a waiting camp. The camps in Tanzania were waiting camps to hold trained personnel of the liberation organisations of southern Africa".<sup>132</sup> The emphasis was on physical exercises and karate. The Chinese trainers provided training in the martial arts, as well as theoretical training. The camp was a joint camp with ZANU, and was in a game reserve which had wild animals such as lions, elephants and leopards.<sup>133</sup> Food was provided by the Tanzanian Commissioned Defence Unit (CDU), which unit was also responsible for guarding the APLA camps. APLA cadres were not allowed to carry arms, and would illegally trap animals to supplement their meagre diets.<sup>134</sup>

The other camp established in Tanzania in the early 1970s, Mggao camp in Iringa, was slightly better than Chunya and Itumbi in terms of infrastructure and facilities. The camp consisted of six spacious dormitories; a large administration complex; a big kitchen; a shelter for firewood, flush toilets and showers. However, because of prior incidents in the area, when neighbouring villagers were allegedly murdered by MPLA and ZANU cadres, inmates of Mggao camp were forbidden to move about freely in the surrounding villages. This strict control of movement was the cause of much discontent in the camp. Nevertheless, the situation in the camp was better than any of the other PAC camps at the time because it was possible to grow vegetables such as cabbages, beetroot, onions and carrots, while a large field was green with maize. The camp also had a piggery which was a major source of meat for the cadres.<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", p 252.

<sup>128</sup> Lodge, "The Pan Africanist Congress", p 119.

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Zolile Hamilton Keke conducted by Sean Morrow, New Brighton, 21 October 2001, SOHP.

<sup>130</sup> Von den Steinen, "Experiencing the Armed Struggle", p 167.

<sup>131</sup> Mphahlele, "*Child of This Soil*", pp 91-92.

<sup>132</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>133</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Gasson Ndlovu.

<sup>135</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution, pp 253-254.



However, Vuyani Mgaza recalls that Mgagao camp "was right in the tropical veld forest", and was infested with tsetse flies.<sup>136</sup> The camp was located in an area which was very cold for parts of the year, and there was also an abundance of mosquitoes. One of the more serious problems was what Mphahlele calls the jigger flea, which deposited worms under the skin of those it bit.<sup>137</sup>

Mgagao was a transit camp, and mainly housed members of the PAC who were not soldiers. It was generally used to vet new recruits, who would be deployed elsewhere after they had been screened. Some would be selected for military training, while others would be sent out for further education.<sup>138</sup> The cadres in the three camps - that averaged in total between sixty and one hundred - "changed constantly as recruits came and went for military training".<sup>139</sup>

Towards the end of the 1970s it had become clear that the PAC's alliances with a select group of other southern African liberation movements were negatively affecting its conduct of the armed struggle. While the ANC was able to use Mozambique as a springboard for military operations and to establish a number of military camps in Angola when its allies assumed power in these countries, the PAC did not enjoy the same privileges. Furthermore, when the PAC's ally came to power in Zimbabwe in 1980, ZANU decided that it would not allow the South African liberation movements to use its territory as a springboard for operations, nor did it give permission for the establishment of military camps in Zimbabwe.

International support for the PAC - in particular, giving its cadres access to military training, providing arms and ammunition, and extending material support for its military camps - was insignificant compared to the support the Soviet Union and its allies provided for the ANC. MK cadres were able to go for military training in the use of advanced weaponry in several countries in the Eastern Bloc. Countries in the Soviet sphere of influence also provided material support for the ANC's military camps. In addition, from the early 1970s, the ANC established a close relationship with Sweden that strengthened in the 1980s, leading to significant material and other support for the ANC's military camps.<sup>140</sup> The ANC was thus able to establish highly developed camps in Angola, such as Caculama, which housed several hundred cadres in barracks. There was virtually no similar support for the PAC. Whatever support was forthcoming was negatively affected by leadership conflicts and charges of corruption; for instance, when the Norwegian government provided support to the PAC for the establishment of a rehabilitation and transit centre in Tanzania in 1977.

---

<sup>136</sup> Interview with Vuyani Mgaza conducted by Brown Maaba, East London, 31 November 2001, SOHP.

<sup>137</sup> Mphahlele, *Child of This Soil*, pp 100-102.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Johnson Mlambo, undated, SOHP.

<sup>139</sup> Kondlo, "In the Twilight of the Azanian Revolution", p 251.

<sup>140</sup> Refer to Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II*, for an analysis of Swedish support to the ANC.

Leadership conflicts and dissatisfaction with the pace of the PAC's infiltration missions continued to enflame discontent in the military camps in the late 1970s. The conflict escalated between the supporters of Leballo and those who backed Ntantala. The divide had been sharpened by the influx of youths after the Soweto uprising and the ideological divide. Ntantala and his cohorts in APLA were Marxist and strongly influenced by the Chinese, while Leballo seems to have been rabidly Africanist in his rejection of Marxism as a foreign ideology. Several meetings were held in the camps from November 1977, and with the leadership of the Revolutionary Command and the High Command, in attempts to mend the relationship between their supporters. These were largely unsuccessful, and Leballo suspended several members of the High Command. In response to the increasing conflict, the OAU pressurised the PAC to hold a consultative conference. At the Arusha Conference in September 1978, seven members of the PAC, including Ntantala, were suspended from the organisation. Nine months later, Leballo resigned from the PAC. A three-man Presidential Council made up of David Sibeko, Vusi Make and Elias Ntloedibe took over leadership of the organisation. Less than a month later, on 14 June 1979, a group of young members of APLA attacked Sibeko and Make, resulting in the death of Sibeko. The Itumbi camp erupted into mutiny, and was forcefully put down by the Tanzanian Defence Force. Hundreds of PAC members were detained.<sup>141</sup>

As a result of this internal conflict, as well as allegations that there had been misuse of funds donated to the PAC, the Norwegians decided that they would no longer disburse funds directly to the movement. Instead, suppliers of services to the PAC were to be paid directly. This led to a decrease in financial support from this quarter. The PAC was also told that future support from Norway depended on whether or not it sorted out its leadership problems.<sup>142</sup> This is a clear indication of how leadership conflicts impacted on the ability of the movement to obtain resources to maintain its camps. By 1981 the PAC was relying solely on limited funds provided by the OAU Liberation Committee.<sup>143</sup> The latter was notoriously underfunded, and pledges of support by OAU member countries often fell far short of money actually allocated to the liberation movements. For instance, in 1967-68 the Liberation Committee promised the PAC \$40 000, but gave only \$4 600.<sup>144</sup> There were also a number of instances in which leaders of the PAC were unable to account for money donated by, among others, the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) and European and Australian donors.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup> Ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in exile", pp 740-746.

<sup>142</sup> E.H. Ostbye, "The South African Liberation Struggle", in T. Linne Eriksen (ed.), *Norway and National Liberation in Southern Africa* (Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, pp 157-159.

<sup>143</sup> Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution: The Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) 1960-1994* (Basler Afrika Bibliographien, Basle, 2009), p 176.

<sup>144</sup> S. Ndlovu, "The ANC and the World", in SADET (eds), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1*, p 561.

<sup>145</sup> Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution*, p 176.

## **Conclusion**

South Africa's liberation struggle forced thousands of its youth and older members to leave the country during the course of the armed struggle. There was a wide variety of experiences that exiled South Africans faced during this period. However, among the most demanding were those experienced by members of the armed wings of the country's liberation movements. In this article an attempt has been made to draw attention to some aspects of this experience, with the objective of adding to the existing knowledge about training provided to cadres of the PAC's military wing and the movement's military camps abroad.

From humble beginnings characterised by rudimentary training in the early 1960s, the armed wing of the Pan Africanist Congress in exile grew into a force of cadres with training in sophisticated military techniques and weapons. PAC cadres were provided with military training in a wide variety of countries in Africa and beyond the continent. In addition, from the adverse conditions of the Kinkuzu camp in the Congo in the early 1960s, the PAC was able, by the early 1980s, to provide more suitable living conditions for its cadres in military camps. However, it has been demonstrated that from the very onset of the armed struggle the training provided to the PAC's military cadres lacked strategic direction. It has also been demonstrated that the PAC's military camps did not reach the level of development of some of the main camps used by the ANC. One of the primary reasons for this was the leadership of the PAC, and in particular the conflicts that characterised its history for most of the exile period. It was the leadership of the PAC that was responsible for the limited attention given to military training and operations, and for insufficient support from the international community for the PAC's armed struggle.