

From Caprivi to Omugulu-gOmbashe

Extracts from “Where Others Wavered,” Founding President Dr Sam Nujoma’s autobiography, in commemoration of Heroes Day, to give a perspective on why August 26 has been declared Heroes Day after independence. Enjoy your reading.



Dr Sam Nujoma, Commander-in-Chief of the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia, PLAN, addressing combatants at the Caprivi front in 1973.

Our experience of the Windhoek uprising on 10 December 1959 taught us a lesson: that to be an effective force against brutal apartheid South Africa, we must not only be able to de-fend ourselves against these barbaric attacks, but we should also be in position to retaliate against the enemy. It was against this background that the SWAPO Central Committee decided to pursue simultaneously its three-pronged strategy, namely:

1. to carry out an effective mass political mobilisation inside the country,
2. to carry out an effective international political and diplomatic campaign, including petitioning the UN, aimed at isolating apartheid South Africa, and,
3. to carry out military training of SWAPO cadres to effectively engage the enemy on all fronts, while simultaneously sending some of the cadres for further education.

The decision to complement the political mass mobilisation and diplomatic campaign with armed liberation struggle was, as I have related already, inevitable. It was supported internationally, and also strongly supported by

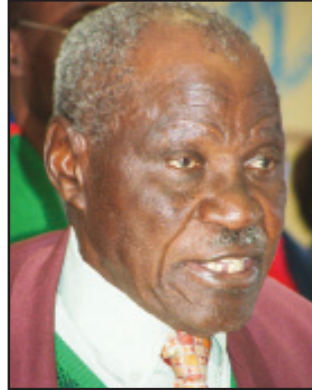
our people back home. Our SWAPO leaders — such as Comrades Elia-ser Tuhadeleni (Kaxumba Kandola), Reverend Hendrik Witbooi, David Merero, Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, John Ya Otto, Nathaniel Maxuilili, Dr Thomas Iihuhua, Simon Kau-kungua, Aaron Mushimba, Jerry Ekandjo, Aaron Hamu-tenya, and Gabriel Mbidi, to mention but a few — played a vital role, particularly in politically mobilizing the people inside the country to join the armed liberation struggle.

In this regard, they were also assisted and encouraged by the return of Comrades Lukas Hifikepunye Pohamba and Eliader Muatale to South West Africa in 1962, who carried out an effective mass politic campaign until they returned to exile in 1963 and 1964 respectively, taking many cadres with them. At this stage, there was no chance of working underground at home, like Lukas Hifikepunye Pohamba or, in 1964 Eliader Muatale, who later sacrificed his life in the battle.

The South African plan which had been laid out in the



Cde. Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo



Cde. John Ya Otto Nankudhu



Cde. Ben Amathila



Cde. Jerry Ekandjo

the manufacture of military combat armoured vehicles to be deployed against SWAPO. This trend was further demonstrated by the Australian Judge Spencer at the International Court of Justice who also voted in favour of South Africa. On the other hand, as I have related, we were encouraged by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, President of the United Republic of Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika), who provided SWAPO and other liberation movements with logistics and a military training camp at Kongwa, near Dodoma, about 300 miles inland from Dar-es-Salaam.

In January 1963, Comrades Tobias Hainjeko and Titus Muaipepeni were joined by four cadres including Eliader Muatale, while some of them proceeded to the Nanking Military Academy in the People’s Republic of China where they were trained until April 1964. On 27 May 1963, we opened our military camp at Kongwa in Tanzania, with those Comrades who had received military training from Egypt, Algeria, Ghana, China, the Soviet Union and North Korea. Comrade Tobias Hainjeko thus became the first Commander of the South West Africa Liberation Army (SWALA), with Comrade Petrus Hambija as Military Secretary and Titus Mwailepeni as Deputy Military Secretary of SWALA. Two weeks later, in June 1963, a group led by Comrade Dimo Hamaambo, (first) Chief of Defence Force in the Namibia Defence Force, arrived from Algeria. Comrade Hamaambo was, incidentally, one of the very few Namibians who had been to Europe at that time. He had been a stowaway on a merchant ship in the early 1950s, and had served a short sentence in Brixton prison in London before he was sent back by plane to South West Africa. As time went by, we were joined at Kongwa by more SWAPO members from inside the country via British Bechuanaland. We trained them, together with recruits from Mozambique, led by the late Eduardo Mondlane, the first President of the FRELIMO Party of Mozambique, and the MPLA led by the late Dr. Antonio Augustino Neto, first President of the People’s Republic of Angola, and by ZANU and ZAPU of Zimbabwe, as well as the ANC and PAC of South Africa I was in constant contact with Commander Tobias Hainjeko and the Military Council, and I regularly visited the training camp at Kongwa, but the day-to-day decisions regarding training and tactics were carried out by the Military Council of which I was the Chairman. The decision had been taken, even before the International Court of Justice fiasco, to send the first group of

Correction

In our last edition, there were two serious errors which appeared in the advertisement wishing President Hifikepunye Pohamba Happy Birthday on his 75th Birthday by the Chairman, Vice Chairperson, Members and the entire staff of the National Council. In the advertisement, 25th appeared instead of 75th and the word “strength” was misspelled “sfrength.” The errors were caused by scanning and we take full responsibility for that. We apologize to the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and the entire staff of the National Council for the inconveniences these errors might have caused. We also apologize to President Hifikepunye Pohamba for such errors. We re-run the advertisement with corrections



HAPPY 75TH BIRTHDAY

The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Members and the entire staff of the National Council congratulate Your Excellency Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia and of the SWAPO Party, on your 75th Birthday.

Comrade President, you have inspired this nation to work hard in order to develop Namibia for the benefit of all Namibians. You have equally paved the way for Namibia’s future generations to live in peace and harmony. You attract our admiration because of your humbleness, patriotism, equal treatment for all Namibians and good governance.

For all that, we pray to the Almighty God to grant you and your family renewed strength and many healthy years to continue leading our nation to greater prosperity.



HAPPY 75TH BIRTHDAY
COMRADE PRESIDENT

Odendaal Commission’s Report — the implementation of which would have fragmented the country into tribal homelands to be run by hand-picked puppet chiefs — was supposed to be shelved, or so the South Africans claimed, until the verdict of the International Court of Justice at The Hague was announced in 1966. The ICJ verdict, which was effectively in favour of Pretoria, turned even more people to SWAPC and to joining the armed liberation struggle.

On the one hand, it would have been unwise not to prepare our people for waging the armed liberation struggle against apartheid South Africa, because we knew that the Western powers — particularly Britain and West Germany — had vast investments in both South Africa and South West Africa. Due to that unholy alliance, they would unashamedly side with the minority white oppressors against the African majority. West Germany had also supplied apartheid South Africa with blueprints for

Cont on page 8