

COMRADE LEKAU MOYAHA: PART OF THE SPINE OF THE AZANIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (AZANLA)

By Vuyisa Qunta¹

The Central Role of AZAPO in Setting Up the BCM (A):

Comrades, Let me acknowledge the leadership of **AZAPO** from national, through Provincial and Regional levels. Without **AZAPO** there would have been no **AZANLA**. Fortunately **AZAPO**, in establishing a coherent external wing with the mandate to build **AZANLA**, avoided the common error often made by popular organisations, internationally, which are facing repression, of drawing the mass movement into the under-ground and the military activity. **AZAPO** and its formations, created the base from which the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania [**BCM (A)**] recruited.

The Foundation of AZANLA Cadres Built the Army:

Comrades, I had the opportunity of reviewing with **AZANLA**'s initial instructors, the commanders of the Eritrean national liberation Army, at the time they were waging their own liberation war. All of them were unanimous about how combative our first instructors, the Steve Biko Unit were when they arrived in the liberated zone, and how battle ready they were on their return. There had been other cadres trained by **BCM** exiles in different localities outside prior to the formation of the **BCM (A)** who later linked up with **AZANLA**. The Steve Biko Unit was, however, the nucleus of **AZANLA**, a tighter, more effective combat force. The Unit guided into the mountains of the Free State by Comrade Strike Thokoane around 1985 to set up the first bases near Bethlehem.

The Operational Mode and Structure of AZANLA:

It was an advantage to **AZANLA** and the **BCM** that we had no external bases where trained fighters would turn into vegetables when the real struggle was being waged here at home. The bulk of **AZANLA** combatants were trained in bases which often changed before they had been detected or where there was suspicion that they had been compromised. The basic unit of **AZANLA** was a 15 personnel squad with a Commander, a Political Commissar and a Logistics Officer.

This was deemed a suitable number to have three more fighters than the 12 man section of the South African Defense Force and its puppet armies in order to gain the advantage in fire power when such patrols met.

Discipline, discretion and secrecy were watch words. As a result, whether comrades had been externally trained such as Comrades Chris and the late Thami Mcerwa, or internally trained such as Themba Ncalo they operated in self-contained units such that sometimes even when they lived in the same area, they

did not know who the fighters were in other units. Three Squads made up a platoon. The platoon did not gather and operate as one even in bush settings. They were brought together at the behest of the Military Affairs Committee (MAC) under a three person command structure selected by the MAC, making up a unit of 48, for bigger specific operations. Three platoons made up a company, and again MAC would add a three person head Quarter (148).

Comrade Lekau Entry into AZANLA:

Comrade Lekau Moyaha played many crucial roles in **AZANLA**. Comrade Moyaha started off as a non military underground auxiliary. Many recruits heading for transit through or to Zimbabwe were harboured at his place in Polokwane. On their return for deployment either in their home areas or under assumed identities elsewhere they also transited there. It was on this basis that Comrade Lekau went up to Harare, together with our President, Comrade Jacob Kati Dikobo to get a better picture of what they were part of. Contrary to his outgoing personality Comrade Moyaha was highly composed in the military environment.

On his second visit he underwent infantry training in light weapons, political education and communications. This is where we interacted because the **BCM (A)**, **AZAPO** and **AZANLA** had to transmit the same message to the oppressed and their allies. At the time I headed the communication platform of the **BCM(A)** and was editor of its monthly news, comment and mobilisation flyer, **LETSETSE: The Flea**. Looking back at the complete collection of the four volumes of the publication, **AZAPO** Honourary President, Dr Mosibudi Mangena was amazed at the quality of the publication which was run without any formally trained journalists.

Operational Activities:

After his first training, Comrade Lekau together with Comrade Dikobo and Tlangalani Mashele set up training base in a base at Chuenes Poort in Limpopo. The loyalty of the recruits was such that the commanders were not compromised when some were arrested.

This comrade traversed the country, identifying and recruiting suitable cadres for **AZANLA**. As the people's army tore, first into the infra-structure of the State, such as the Northern Transvaal Road maintenance Unit and later into the security personnel it was important for other comrades to be informed and for the broader public to know that there was hope for the struggle. Comrade Moyaha was strategically placed to provide "the scholarship" for nationwide communication, and reproduced and circulated **LETSETSE**. The highest level of trust placed on this cadre is that he was in charge of mobilisation and security when the **AZANLA** Commander in Chief came into the country on an underground visit.

Defending the Movement:

It is good to see **AZAPO** starting to reclaim its former status as the premium people movement. The Movement lost many quality cadres and also lost participation and active support from being attacked by our compatriots who were and sometimes still are in the old east European One-party-State mode, and who wanted a monopoly of the struggle. **AZAPO** took a long time to fight back because it was never in our mode of thinking to use the combat skills we had, against a different party within the liberation struggle. That drove a lot of supporters away from active support and participation in the work of **AZAPO**. In addition, the strategic error of staying out of the 1994 elections removed the Movement from centre stage and also deprived us of access to the initial access to state resources. That is a topic for another platform. As attacks on **AZAPO** members and their families spread through the country after initial violence around the Ted Kennedy visit, Comrades in Dlamini, the Northern Free State, KwaZulu, Port Elizabeth and other areas drew the brunt of the violence. Besides fighting a battle of survival with the likes of Lusiba Ntloko in Johannesburg, Comrade Lekau and other combatants traveled to the hot spots, training, arming and assisting comrades in such centres, especially Port Elizabeth, where his armed and unarmed fighting ability made him a legend.

It is worth remembering that during the time operations commanded by the late Comrade Cobra Motlolisi, the shelter, intelligence and logistics were provided by these cadres.

Lastly, **AZANLA** learnt from our guerilla allies such as the national Democratic Front of the Philippines that a people's army does not replicate the brutality of the oppressive forces even against infiltrators. Comrade Lekau and others such as Comrade Thabo Montjane came across the possibility that one recent member of the Organisation was possibly double dealing with state agents, mainly from a lifestyle angle and the nature of the job this person occupied. Comrade Lekau cultivated and nurtured this person, and drew the best value from mobilisation skills employed by the suspect.

Later this person was even included in a visit to consult with the external leadership in Zimbabwe. It took a few years and in depth investigation the Movement to establish the innocence of that cadre. With a more reckless approach this cadre would not be with us today. A liberation fighter must, crucially have that patient and gentle side.

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ⁱ National Treasurer of **AZANLA** – MVA and Former Editor of **LETSETSE** and **Solidarity**.