

The Zimbabwe African Peoples Union 1961-87 A Political History Of Insurgency In Southern Rhodesia By Eliakim M Sibanda 1 Jun 2005 Paperback

"As I look back, I am happy that I have lived for so long." It is a happiness shared by many: family members, friends and colleagues. Cephas Msipa's memoirs take us back to his birth in Zvishavane in 1931, and they reflect a life dedicated to the welfare of others and the development of his country. Following secondary education at Dadaya Mission, he worked as a teacher in Zvishavane and Kwekwe, where he was active in the Rhodesian African Teachers Association, before moving to Harare in 1958. It was a time of rising nationalism in the capital, and following the banning of the African National Congress and its successor, the National Democratic Party, Msipa was a founding member of ZAPU, the Zimbabwean African People's Union. Thus began an engagement with national politics that would last until he was in his late seventies, furthering his education as a political detainee and, after independence had been won, serving as a deputy minister, minister and provincial governor. The narrative of his life follows the arc of Zimbabwe's history, and embraces the people and events that have shaped it. Beyond that, it is the story of a gentle, humorous, committed man who enjoyed a long and loving marriage and continues to fill his retirement with philanthropy and wide-ranging friendships.

Robert Mugabe's ZANU(PF) party - the Zimbabwe African National Union and the Patriotic Front formed by the merger of ZANU and Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) - won a landslide victory in the independence elections of 1980. Mugabe came to power with an avowedly revolutionary and Marxist-Leninist programme, ethos and worldview. His dominance was buttressed by victory in the brutal civil war in Matabeleland and assured by the successful marginalisation of his arch rival, the legendary Nkomo, and by rigid control over the levers of state power. Yet Zimbabwe's position on the world stage and in Africa has been profoundly affected by practical considerations of international political realities. In common with many emergent countries sharing Zimbabwe's political, economic, social and historical experience, today her political and economic relations network only very partially reflects her pre-independence Marxist positions. The country has had to jettison much of its ideological radicalism in the face of the grim practicalities of international politics. Striking examples of divergence abound in Zimbabwe's worldwide relationships and none more so than with apartheid South Africa and in the failure to maintain friendship with powerful erstwhile supporters of ZANU in the independence struggle - China and Russia.

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Across Africa in the post-1956 era, the aspirations of African nationalists to secure power were boosted and quickly realized by the British, French and Belgian hasty retreat from empire. The Portuguese, Southern Rhodesian and South African governments, however, stood firm and would be challenged by their African nationalists. Influenced by the Communist bloc, these nationalists adopted the 'Armed Struggle'. In the case of Rhodesia, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), led by Joshua Nkomo, took this step in 1962 after their effort to foment rebellion in Rhodesia's urban areas in 1961-62 had been frustrated by police action and stiffened security legislation. Rhodesia's small, undermanned security forces, however, remained wary as Zambia and Tanganyika had given sanctuary to communist-supplied ZAPU and Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) guerrillas. The Rhodesians had foreseen that the northeastern frontier with Mozambique would be the most vulnerable to incursions because the African population living along it offered an immediate target for succour and subversion. The Portuguese were not seen as a bulwark as they were clearly making little progress in their counter-insurgency effort against their FRELIMO nationalist opponents. The Rhodesians were fortunate, however, that ZAPU and ZANU chose to probe across the Zambezi River from Zambia into the harsh, sparsely populated bush of the Zambezi Valley. The consequence was that the Rhodesian security forces conducted a number of successful operations in the period 1966-1972 which dented insurgent ambitions. This book describes and examines the first phase of the 'bush war' during which the Rhodesian forces honed their individual and joint skills, emerging as a formidable albeit lean fighting force.

An essential biographical record of General Solomon Mujuru, one of the most controversial figures within the history of African liberation politics.

This book is based on a participatory action research project carried out with a group of former Zimbabwe People's revolutionary Army (ZPRA) which was the armed wing of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) which was led by the late Joshua Nkomo. ZPRA was the primary target of Gukurahundi, a pogrom by the Mugabe government which left an estimated 20 000 civilians dead and countless others tortured in the early 1980s in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. It has been almost 30 years since the violence ended, but there has never been an official healing and reconciliation programme or truth commission into the atrocities. The government chose the path of amnesia by granting a blanket amnesty to all involved. The regime has enforced a culture of silence over the event through repression and intimidation. The book is a culmination of a two year journey, by the group and the author, of an exploration of group-based self-healing approaches to the pain caused by the violence of Gukurahundi.

This book is an exploration of the political history of insurgency in Southern Rhodesia. During the early years of its struggle, ZAPU employed non-violent means to try and achieve its goal for majority rule and a non-racial society. Because of the belligerency of the White settler regime, ZAPU added the armed resistance to its strategy and went on to build a formidable army. Problems escalated and alliances were built and dissolved until, tired of being hunted down and butchered, the ZAPU leadership decided to merge its party with the ruling party in December 1987.

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