

# ESSAY REVIEW

## RECENT WORKS ON THE ZIMBABWE LIBERATION MOVEMENT

In 1978 THERE was published *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe* by Wellington Nyangoni, a Zimbabwean scholar then in exile at Brandeis University.<sup>1</sup> In this work Nyangoni presents a descriptive analysis of the rise and development of the nationalist movement in Zimbabwe from colonial occupation in the late nineteenth century through to the armed struggle in the late 1960s and 1970s. He divides the liberation movement into three phases according to the approaches or methods employed to achieve majority rule.

The first phase Nyangoni calls 'micro and cultural nationalism' and covers the period from 1890 to 1961. He argues that during this period, 'African associations and political parties . . . invoked the historical traditions of the Mashona and Matabele glories in their attempts to mobilize the Africans to fight for majority rule'.<sup>2</sup> The second phase he terms 'Pan-Africanism' and covers the period from 1961 to 1971. During this period, 'Africans adopted Pan-Africanism as a means for national liberation'. This took the form of 'requesting financial support', as well as soliciting 'moral support' from independent African countries.<sup>3</sup> And finally, the third phase covering the period since 1971, falls under the rubric 'scientific socialism',<sup>4</sup> a concept which Nyangoni, together with many who have used and abused it, does not attempt to define.

Nyangoni should be commended for attempting to classify African nationalism in Zimbabwe into various specific periods, and, as he does, for suggesting a developmental process in the radicalization of the movement from a 'micro' parochial outlook to a 'scientific' secular ideological perspective. But this notwithstanding, such a neat categorization simplified the real and complex reality of the Zimbabwe nationalist movement. From the revolts of the late 1890s to the last bullet that presumably concluded the Chimurenga war in 1980, the invocation of cultural nationalism to 'mobilize the masses' never diminished. The recently published *Songs That Won the War*, by Alec Pongweni clearly speaks to this point.<sup>5</sup> The songs in vogue during Nyangoni's third phase of 'scientific socialism' do not, however, include a Shona translation of the *Internationale* nor did the comrades sing it in the original.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the phase of 'Pan-Africanism' is rather arbitrary. Why from 1961 to 1971, when we know all too well that the Pan-Africanist dimension of the Zimbabwe struggle was even stronger as Zimbabwe drew closer to majority rule in the mid and late 1970s? Yet, one of the major causes of the ZAPU-

<sup>1</sup> W. W. Nyangoni, *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe* (Washington, D.C., Univ. Press of America, 1978), 145 pp., £4.30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> A. C. Pongweni, *Songs That Won the War* (Harare, College Press, 1982), 167 pp., \$4.95.

<sup>6</sup> It is not likely that the author would omit the *Internationale* from a collection of revolutionary songs.

ZANU split of 1963 hinged on the choice of external help and self-reliance as a fundamental approach to liberation.<sup>7</sup>

The third phase, 'scientific socialism' is, in fact, a period in the history of the Zimbabwe liberation struggle that is muddled and mingled with parochial, 'micro', tendencies (tribalism) that appeared to overwhelm the 'scientific' and and 'socialist' outlook of the movement.<sup>8</sup> And, interestingly, Nyangoni projects the formation of Frolizi at the beginning of his 'scientific socialism' phase as a forward movement. He suggests that the formation of Frolizi in 1971, if not a clear manifestation of, certainly gave impetus to, ideological advance in the liberation movement.<sup>9</sup> Yet, far from being a grouping of 'scientific socialists', Frolizi was diagnosed by some to be a 'nepotistic grouping of cousins and relatives . . . determined to sabotage the liberation struggle'.<sup>10</sup> The general thrust of the liberation struggle combined (among other factors), cultural nationalism, Pan-Africanism and a dosage of what Nyangoni terms 'scientific socialism'. The armed struggle was born of a search for a viable solution to the problem of decolonization and not out of an ideological mental transformation involving the embracing of scientific socialism by the nationalist movement. One could support, or even lead, the armed struggle from a purely nationalist instinct, yet oppose or pay lip-service to socialism, 'scientific' or otherwise. This was more often the case during the liberation struggle. And post-colonial property 'accumulation' by most former leaders of the movement would suggest evidence in support of this observation.

Another book on the Zimbabwe Nationalist Movement published in 1978 was Bishop Abel Muzorewa's *Rise up and Walk*.<sup>11</sup> This is an historical political autobiography; it is a tale of the man's quasi-humble beginnings typical of Zimbabwe's first-generation nationalists, but more importantly it is about Muzorewa's rise to political eminence. Those who have wondered how and why Muzorewa entered nationalist politics and remained in it for as long as he has done while also keeping his position of leadership in his church should read this book. More importantly, it should be read by those searching for insights into how Muzorewa perceived the issues of the day such as unity, the frontline-statism, armed struggle, and, among other things, the more elusive business of negotiating with Ian Smith. Also, the book is quite revealing into the self-perception of leaders, a critically important factor in politics.

Muzorewa portrays himself in this book as someone whose decision-making style is inordinately influenced by religion. Before he could accept the leadership of the A.N.C. in 1971, he had 'three weeks of prayer and meditation'.<sup>12</sup> This theme of prayer recurs many times in Muzorewa's book. When thoughts of possible arrest visited him (as they have many other leaders) Muzorewa always found appropriate passages from the Bible.<sup>13</sup> And when

<sup>7</sup>Nyangoni, *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe*, 57. Ndabaningi Sithole, who led the 1963 split, gained fame for having coined the slogan, 'We are our own liberators' — a reaction to reliance on the external (Pan-Africanist) approach.

<sup>8</sup>E. Dumbutshena's *Zimbabwe Tragedy* (Nairobi, East Africa Publishing House, 1975) laments the rise of tribalism in Zimbabwe nationalist politics in the 1970s. See also M. Sithole, *Zimbabwe: Struggles Within the Struggle* (Salisbury, Rufeko Publishers, 1979).

<sup>9</sup>Nyangoni, *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe*, 4.

<sup>10</sup>ZANU, *Press Release* (Lusaka, 10 Oct. 1971). The statement was signed by Richard Hove, ZANU Publicity Secretary.

<sup>11</sup>A.T. Muzorewa, *Rise up and Walk* (London, Evans Brothers, 1978), 289 pp., £9.95.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>13</sup>He quotes from Matthew 20: 18-19; "The Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests, to be mocked and scourged and crucified", *ibid.*, 127.

confronted with pressures to quit politics (pp. 126–7), he encounters a convenient passage in a poem and says, 'I went home and prayed about it', and, 'clearly I heard God saying, "Abel, do not quit"'.<sup>14</sup> Obviously the question that arises from this style of leadership and decision-making is: Whom then does Muzorewa want us to give ultimate responsibility, God or himself?

Another feature of Muzorewa's autobiography is his apparent captivity by the crowd. This leads him to making the crowd his trump card and only bargaining point in his bid for leadership. Referring to a crowd that welcomed him on his return from exile on 3 October 1976, he says: 'Never before had I seen a crowd estimated at 500,000 . . . Later in Geneva I would be free to say I felt that day . . . that it is the masses of Zimbabwe and no-one else who are the primary factors in the so-called Rhodesian situation.'<sup>15</sup>

'Crowd politics' were prominent in Zimbabwe during the A.N.C. Muzorewa era from 1972 to his electoral defeat in 1980. This was the instrument with which political barometricians measured the likely political fortunes of political gladiators as each returned home from the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference for the final countdown.<sup>16</sup> Yet 'crowd politics' has its own limitations. After the A.N.C.'s 'No' to the Pearce Commission in 1972, Ian Smith was confident the A.N.C. would rusticate. Similarly, Muzorewa's 1979 electoral victory, opposed by ZANLA and ZIPRA, did not gain international support. This suggests that Muzorewa's hypothesis that the masses are a decisive factor in politics needs revision or modification. The masses are decisive only to the extent that elites, or the vanguard, both at the national and international level, want and allow them to be decisive.

Besides the fact that Muzorewa's autobiography is full of factually accurate information, and notwithstanding the emotive interpretation of the events, the book unintentionally reveals political naivety at its worst. Moreover, it unsuspectingly reveals political vanity inherent in many politicians. For instance, close to the height of his political career, Muzorewa, who had earlier surfaced as the unambitious champion of unity, did not particularly cherish the thought of working with Sithole and Chirau in the so-called 'internal settlement' talks. He writes: 'Another horrid thought kept on nagging me. It was this mention of Rev. Sithole and Chief Chirau in conjunction with the A.N.C. The very idea was repugnant. Masses of the U.A.N.C. could not and would not stomach any collusion with those two leaders.'<sup>17</sup> At this time he also begins to separate or distance himself from his organization, the U.A.N.C., and starts to talk of '*The U.A.N.C. and I* were the odd man out' '*The U.A.N.C. and I* decided to express our reservations' (my emphasis).<sup>18</sup> Yet students of mass political movements must yet explain why it is that Muzorewa was once a force in Zimbabwe nationalist politics. He is one man who was adored by the masses. But Machiavelli once said: 'In politics it is better to be feared than loved.'

Maurice Nyagumbo's *With the People*<sup>19</sup> is in many ways a different political autobiography from Muzorewa's. While Muzorewa is divinely inspired, Nyagumbo finds inspiration in things worldly. The first half of the

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 128.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 212–13. There are many similar references throughout the book.

<sup>16</sup>As it happened, Mugabe received the largest welcoming crowd, Nkomo the second largest, and Muzorewa the third largest, and they polled in that order in the April elections that followed.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 226.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 236, 239.

<sup>19</sup>M. Nyagumbo, *With the People* (Salisbury, Graham Publishing, 1980), 248 pp., Z\$2.90.

book depicts a rather easy-going man not much concerned with educational and religious pursuits. His dream was to go to Johannesburg where he 'believed workers were better paid than in Rhodesia'.<sup>20</sup> He ran away to South Africa where he became a 'butler', a waiter or such-like in such diverse South African cities as Kimberley, Port Elizabeth, East London and Cape Town, disappointing Lucys, Constances, Elizabeths and Jeans as he went from one city to the other in pursuit of the good life. In Cape Town he joined the Communist Party not for political reasons, but for 'social entertainment' since he had become friends with Jean.<sup>21</sup> And, when an official of the Communist Party approached him with a scholarship to study in the Soviet Union, he prevaricated, because 'I just wanted to live an easy life and enjoy myself . . . And at that time Cape Town was the only city where life was full.'<sup>22</sup> He was deported from South Africa in 1955 after fifteen years as an activist in the African National Congress and the Communist Party there.

The latter half of *With the People* depicts a rather intransigent Nyagumbo. He emerges an uncompromising nationalist militant to the end. For that reason he paid a high price: between 1959 and 1979, Nyagumbo was a free man for only two and a half years. But *With the People* is not a book about the reasons or rationale for the nationalist struggle; it is not about the beliefs which the author held to rationalize his suffering. It is a straightforward account of a man's involvement in nationalist politics. It is an account of what he and others with whom he worked did; what happened to them; which prisons, detentions, and restriction camps they were kept in; the conditions under which they lived, the treatment they received; the 'actions' they took periodically to 'induce' insensitive officials to respond to their plight in detention; their political work from prison, and many such things. Yet one detects in Nyagumbo's account a perceptive mind: he observes a distinction in the behaviour of a White businessman and a White employee: 'One talked decently' while the other 'appeared arrogant and very aggressive'.<sup>23</sup> He observes that Whites with 'liberal views towards Africans [became] unpopular and suspect in the eyes of the settlers'.<sup>24</sup> Nyagumbo makes unflattering observations about Zimbabwe 'intellectuals' during the formative stages of the nationalist movement. Referring to some of his countrymen whom he met during his sojourn in Cape Town he says: 'It was a group of semi-intellectuals which elevated our status in the social structure of our time.'<sup>25</sup>

Back home, he is even less flattering. Commenting on African reaction to the 1956 shooting of Wankie strikers, Nyagumbo says: 'The educated Africans were most disappointing to me. The few I had spoken to were unconcerned . . . [They] feared the white man and did not want to lead their suffering people.'<sup>26</sup> He resented their criticism of the Youth League's actions and suggested that intellectuals did not support this organization because it was led by non-intellectuals, and, 'If an African graduate were to lead . . . all the African intellectuals would join and there would be no criticism from them.'<sup>27</sup>

Nyagumbo's book is an invaluable primary source on a number of other issues in the Zimbabwe nationalist movement, not least of which are: the 1961 constitutional talks debacle; the ZAPU-ZANU split and faction fights of 1963-4; Ndabaningi Sithole's alleged plot to assassinate Ian Smith, in which Nyagumbo himself says he was involved; Special Branch intrigues; contacts

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 105.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 106.

with presidents of frontline states and the ZANU leadership crisis of late 1974. *With the People* is simply written and is full of dramatic action and cold logic. It is written with very little passion. Suffering is depicted as a matter of course. There is plenty of information in this book. Similar work from Nyagumbo's colleagues in prison and detention would be most welcome. The only aspect I find irritating is the editorial comments by T.O. Ranger which are scattered all over the book. Most of these comments do not explain much that is not covered somewhere in Nyagumbo's book. Moreover, these comments could have been included in a more comprehensive introductory chapter by the same editor.

A major work, *Zimbabwe Independence Movements: Select Documents*,<sup>28</sup> appeared in 1979. It is a collection of 'select' documents co-edited by two young Zimbabweans, Christopher Nyangoni and Gideon Nyandoro. The documents in this book are policy statements, programmes, memoranda, speeches, resolutions, proposals and submissions made over the years by many Zimbabwe nationalists, and political parties. Included also in the collection are materials from international organizations, speeches and writings of some leaders of frontline states concerned with political developments in Rhodesia. The book covered documents produced during the period 1957-1976, and so ZAPU(PF) and ZANU(PF) as well as joint PF documents are not included in the collection. Thus a more comprehensive selection of documents on Zimbabwe independence movements could cover the period 1957-1979, and among the additional documents one would include are N. Sithole's *The Reason for Our Action* (1963) where reasons for the original ZAPU-ZANU split are outlined; the Mugagawa document (1976) which marked the turning point in the struggle among nationalist politicians to gain favour and control of ZANLA — a struggle which Mugabe won; and the 1976 document announcing the formation of the Patriotic Front. To be included also should be the actual *Tiger* (1966), *Fearless* (1968), Smith-Home (1971) settlement proposals and the Pearce Commission Report, not just nationalist reactions to these. Further, the so-called Kissinger Plan (1976), and the Anglo-American proposals (1977) form important documents in the Rhodesian saga. Finally, the Internal Settlement Agreement (1978), the Lancaster House Constitution (1979), as well as various position papers tabled by various parties at the Geneva Conference (1976) and at the Lancaster House Conference (1979) should be part of this documentation.

Nyangoni and Nyandoro's book is nevertheless invaluable and scholars interested in 'what people actually said rather than what they themselves say that they said' will delight in this book. It should also be of great value to those interested in comparative and developmental analysis of liberation movements. And indeed, the gladiators themselves should find occasion with shame or satisfaction, to ask themselves: 'Was that really me?' One failing of the co-editors, however, must be noted — their neglect to supply editorial comment on each major document to provide appropriate and more apt background information or settings for the document; as it is, each document is expected to explain itself, and most of them do not.

Another invaluable source of information is Diana Mitchell's *African Nationalist Leaders in Zimbabwe: Who's Who 1980*.<sup>29</sup> The book gives a

<sup>28</sup>C. Nyangoni and G. Nyandoro (eds), *Zimbabwe Independence Movements: Selected Documents* (London, Rex Collings, 1979), 456 pp., £15.00.

<sup>29</sup>D. Mitchell, *African Nationalist Leaders in Zimbabwe: Who's Who 1980* (Salisbury, privately, Independence Souvenir Edition, 1980), 106 pp., Z\$3.90.

brief biographical sketch of leading personalities in the Zimbabwe nationalist movement; useful background information is provided, though more comprehensive in some cases than others; for example, names of the three top commanders of the ZANLA and ZIPRA forces are given without any further information on the grounds that 'their stories . . . will be told many times as the new Zimbabwe remembers its heroes'.<sup>30</sup> Also, the book tends to emphasize nationalists and politicians who succeeded in the 1980 elections, and many of those who appear in the earlier version of the book<sup>31</sup> are excluded in the 1980 edition. *Who's Who 1980* is poorly organized, and cheaply produced, obviously done in a hurry, a point its author acknowledges in the preface. The 1977 edition is by far a better work. Because of the importance of *Who's Who* in Zimbabwe politics, a third edition must be attempted more soberly and with interest more in posterity than in the here and now.

The inception of the Zimbabwe armed struggle was not easy and it did not happen overnight. The initial stages (1966–1972) were disastrous. The cadres were new in the conduct of guerrilla warfare. They had varied orientation and diverse experiences because many had trained in different countries. The leaders, too, were new to the whole exercise. They were all bound to make mistakes. Until recently not much had been written analysing the early stages of the guerrilla war. Michael Raeburn's *Black Fire*<sup>32</sup> is essentially a critique of the initial stages of the guerrilla war in Zimbabwe, beginning from the 1964 Crocodile Gang to the opening of the north-east guerrilla front in 1972. Raeburn analyses the initial problems in the Chimurenga War with penetrating insight. He conducts separate conversations with guerrilla critics from the major liberation organizations, ZANU and ZAPU, who had lost favour with the party leadership — a source both of the strength and weakness of the book.

A ZANLA deserter who had trained in China, but now in London tells this to Raeburn at 'The Marlborough Arms' in London:

The main thing that worried us about all this was the terrible waste of men. It was quite clear that not enough groundwork had been done inside the country. The places in which the guerrillas operated hadn't been sufficiently reconnoitred. There hadn't been enough support among the people . . . to make a sort of wide safety net giving a guerrilla unit scope to move about in when retreating from the enemy. There were many other things lacking — most important, a solid objective towards which the various guerrilla cells could work . . . The methods and objectives of the leaders themselves were questionable. And that was exactly what we intended to do — to question them. We wanted a lot of things cleared up before we risked out necks in Rhodesia. We wanted some fundamental changes and a lot of assurance.<sup>33</sup>

Similar incipient tension and mistrust between cadres and leaders occurs in ZAPU. Raeburn reports a long conversation with a Joseph Mpofu<sup>34</sup> where he is told of ZAPU guerrillas trained in 'different countries' returning to Zambia and waiting to be sent to fight in Rhodesia. Some of them had come back with 'a

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>31</sup>R. Cary and D. Mitchell, *African Nationalist Leaders in Zimbabwe: Who's Who 1977* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1977).

<sup>32</sup>M. Raeburn, *Black Fire: Accounts of the Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe* (Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1981), 182 pp., Z\$2.90 [originally published: London, J. Friedman, 1978, 243 pp., with Introduction and Conclusion by A.R. Wilkinson].

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>34</sup>Joseph Mpofu is a fictitious name: see *ibid.*, 87.

powerful vision of how the struggle should be waged', and in the eyes of the leaders they were 'troublemakers'. And, 'as the leaders were themselves searching for the right way to carry on the war, they were particularly vulnerable'.<sup>35</sup>

Revolutionaries learn from their own mistakes. Having learnt from past mistakes ZANU launched 'a new and well-prepared campaign' in the north-east in December 1972. Raeburn quotes Chitepo as having stated that ZANU had abandoned the policy of military confrontation which he described as a 'tragic error'. ZANU developed new tactics which concentrated on 'politicizing and mobilizing the people before mounting any attacks against the enemy'. Now, 'it became easier for them [the people] to co-operate with us and to identify with our programme and objectives'.<sup>36</sup> This was the beginning of the end of settler rule. In the last chapter, Raeburn ably describes how the hearts and minds of the peasants in the north-east were won.

*Black Fire* is a rather rare book. Rare in that it discusses issues in ZANU and ZAPU without fear or favour, and its style is refreshingly different. It is like fiction, yet its facts are precise and accurate. Those who were intimate with the liberation movement will not find it difficult to put real faces to fictitious names. And, patriots will be annoyed by how much was said by so many for so long to 'strangers' at 'The Marlborough Arms'. This will embarrass as well as amuse those who were there.

This theme of internal contradictions and self-criticism in the liberation movement is dealt with very specifically and pointedly in Owen Tshabangu's mimeograph-style book, *The March 11 Movement in ZAPU*.<sup>37</sup> Tshabangu's book is about in-fighting in ZAPU, and he calls for ideological transformation in that party in particular, and in the whole liberation movement in general. The thesis in *The March 11 Movement in ZAPU* is that while the ZAPU leadership in exile was busy jockeying for positions a 'revolution within ZAPU' was in the making. ZAPU was undergoing ideological transformation from within. This internal revolution was being brought about by cadres who had been schooled in both guerrilla warfare and Marxist-Leninist analysis of society and revolution movements.<sup>38</sup> These cadres sought the 'politicization' and 'democratization' of the ZAPU military establishment which, hitherto had been conventional and 'militaristic', or as Maoists would say, 'commandist'.<sup>39</sup>

Tshabangu makes a definite and clear preference for a vanguard party and calls for the structural and ideological transformation of present 'bourgeois nationalist mass parties'. He declares: 'The parties have to transform and equip themselves to play a truly vanguard role, guiding all the exploited masses'.<sup>40</sup> Although Tshabangu observes strong manifestations of 'tribalism' in the upheavals in ZAPU, he suggests that this was only the 'veil'. 'The real root-cause of the impasse . . . was a naked unprincipled power struggle . . . between the petty-bourgeoisies' who composed the leadership.<sup>41</sup> While he advocates unity, Tshabangu welcomes it on a class basis.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 99.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>37</sup>O.M. Tshabangu, *The March 11 Movement in ZAPU: Revolution within the Revolution for Zimbabwe* (York, Tiger Paper Publications, 1979), 82 pp., £1.00.

<sup>38</sup>Tshabangu himself was a trained ZAPU militant. He went to train after graduating from the University of Dar es Salaam. He fell out of favour with the ZAPU leadership in exile upon his return in 1970.

<sup>39</sup>Tshabangu, *The March 11 Movement*, 6-15.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 26.

Tshabangu's *March 11 Movement* is, as far as I am aware, the first work to attempt a Marxist or neo-Marxist interpretation of the Zimbabwe nationalist movement by a Zimbabwean.<sup>42</sup> This is a refreshing departure from the usual reliance on 'tribalism' and 'imperialism' as explanations, although the argument is not entirely convincing. As a matter of fact, the 'tribe' will haunt the reader throughout Tshabangu's booklet. Unfortunately, Tshabangu, as do many neo-Marxists on this particular subject, refers to Zimbabwe nationalist leaders simply as 'petty-bourgeois'. In other words, there are no criteria used to classify them as such. As it is, we are left with the impression that the leaders in question are petty-bourgeois because they engage in power struggles and factionalism. This is unsatisfactory.

Apart from its ideological content, Tshabangu's booklet is valuable in that it provides a lot of rare information on the goings-on within liberation movements. Certainly the dangers facing the guerrilla were many and varied, not the least of which were fellow comrades in arms and with arms. *The March 11 Movement in ZAPU* is an eye-opener to those who either romanticized the struggle or were not in it. It is a worthwhile book that should be published in a better format and not in its present mimeograph form.

The only work approximating to a comprehensive *post mortem* of the Zimbabwe struggle for liberation so far is *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, co-authored by two journalists, David Martin and Phyllis Johnson.<sup>43</sup> Although the authors concentrate mainly on the struggle from December 1972, when the north-east guerrilla front was opened, to April 1980, when ZANU (PF) established the first internationally recognized Black government in Zimbabwe, the book in fact covers ninety years of the struggle for Zimbabwe; from the inception of colonialism in 1890 to independence in 1980.

The authors suggest that ZANU's rise to pre-eminence over ZAPU in the 1970s was the result of sheer luck: Frelimo had a long-standing alliance with ZAPU as part of the Soviet-backed groups of liberation movements known by the euphemism 'the authentics' and ZANU belonged to the 'non-authentics'.<sup>44</sup> ZANU approached Frelimo with a view to starting guerrilla operations in the north-east. Frelimo refused; instead Frelimo leaders approached ZAPU leaders to persuade them to start operations in that area. ZAPU could not meet the challenge because of the intra-party feuds of 1969-71, which Tshabangu

<sup>42</sup>My own *Zimbabwe: Struggles-within-the-Struggle* is in the mould of Tshabangu's concerns in the general sense of 'self-criticism' in the liberation struggle. It does not, however, prescribe and advocate a specific ideology. If anything, it suggests (p. vii) that, given the pluralistic nature of contemporary Zimbabwe society, a monolithic attitude in politics would be ill-advised, and that a 'winner-takes-all' approach in power struggles militates against the idea of unity in the nationalist movement and nation-building in the future. Concerning ideological matters, I warned (p. 156) against the importation of ideologies: 'The struggles-within-the-struggle are worsened and become even more irreconcilable when Zimbabwe liberation organizations pursue, religiously, the ideologies of the Americans, the Chinese, the Russians, or anybody else. An ideological consensus will have to emerge from among Zimbabweans as a result of their aggregate experience in socio-psychological terms. Anything else will be alien and false, and if that happens, indigestions of all sorts develop.' For this reason, *Zimbabwe: Struggles-within-the-Struggle* lacks clear ideological content and analysis. But I do not believe that, at the moment and for the purpose of understanding why, for instance, Chikerema would quarrel with J.Z. Moyo, can be adequately explained by their membership in the 'petty-bourgeois' class as if members of the working class do not engage in power struggles. Assume it can be established that both Chikerema and Moyo, though leaders, had a working-class background, what next?

<sup>43</sup>D. Martin and P. Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War* (Salisbury, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1981), 378 pp., Z\$5.25 [originally published: London, Faber, 1981].

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 14-15.



described. T.G. Silundika of ZAPU admits that 'paralysis was starting within ZAPU at the time when our friends were making these proposals and therefore the question of our responding to them immediately was just not practical'.<sup>45</sup> Thus, Martin and Johnson conclude that had ZAPU positively responded to the opportunity that Frelimo not only offered but implored them to take, then ZIPRA and not ZANLA would have had Mozambique as its initial base and the nature and outcome of the struggle for Zimbabwe 'might have been very different'.<sup>46</sup> They are correct; but only in the context of ZAPU before the formation of Frolizi in 1971. The split in ZAPU in 1970-1 eventually reduced that party to the regional organization that it has now become, temporarily or permanently. This has to do with the politicization of ethnicity in the nationalist movement — a factor which the authors of *The Struggle for Zimbabwe* seem keen to underplay: 'While the supporters of these two men [Chikerema and J.Z. Moyo] tended to line up on tribal lines the root cause of the ZAPU crisis was not tribal or regional'.<sup>47</sup>

With compelling style, the authors describe the politicization, mobilization and recruitment activities of ZANLA guerrillas at the start of the decisive phase of the war (1972). White farmers in the north-east were put in the invidious position of having domestic workers and farm labourers sympathetic to the *vakomana* (boys) — a euphemism for guerrillas. The authors report a Centenary farmer with experience of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya as saying, with rather deliberate humour: 'The atmosphere is very similar, except that we know these chaps are using highly sophisticated modern weapons. I would call it Mao Mao rather than Mau Mau'.<sup>48</sup> The two authors also provide useful family background and political history of most leading guerrilla commanders and politicians as they appear on the scene throughout the book. The following is typical:

Nhongo was born Solomon Tapfumaneyi Mutuswa in May 1943 in the Charter Tribal Trust Land . . . He was the last of ten children by his father's two wives. Nhongo had his primary education at mission schools before going to Zimuto Secondary School where he became involved in ZAPU youth politics. A clandestine ZAPU branch was formed . . . and Nhongo became organizing secretary. After he was expelled in 1962 he went to Zambia . . . He got a job as a secretary to the District Commissioner at Mumbwa but returned to Rhodesia in 1963 after hearing of the illness of his father, who died three days after his arrival. Later . . . got a job in Bulawayo as a salesman for Dunlop . . . He helped organize demonstrations . . . and was arrested several times. On 25th December, 1967 he was forced to flee to Botswana . . . Nhongo had decided to join the guerrillas . . . he flew to Zambia, in March 1968. In August that year, with nine others, he went to Moscow for an eighteen-month course . . . They returned to Dar es Salaam in May 1970 and found that all was not well in ZAPU. Tribalism had become apparent . . . In March Nhongo crossed to ZANLA and was sent to Itumbi camp, where he adopted his *chimurunga* name meaning 'male goat' . . . Nhongo joined the group of sixty guerrillas who entered Rhodesia in the last months of 1972 to begin the decisive phase of the war.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 90.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 86-8.

*The Struggle for Zimbabwe* discusses many contentious issues that developed in the course of the liberation struggle, particularly in ZANU: ZANU-Frolizi split (1971), Nhare rebellion (1974), the Sithole-Mugabe leadership crisis (1974), the assassination of Chitepo (1975), ZIPA (1976) and the plot to seize power and join ZAPU (1977). One will differ from the authors' interpretation of some events, and perhaps for over-emphasizing the heroism or villainy of this or that gladiator, but they must be commended for the courage to state the unpalatable. They tell of intimate goings-on between this and that outside actor's activities, quite hidden from many Zimbabwe actors actually waging the armed struggle. For instance, Zambia's Mark Chona is quoted as telling South Africa's Vorster: 'President Kaunda said that "a white victory in Rhodesia was impossible. A black [military] victory was not only possible but he thought undesirable"' <sup>50</sup> This attitude resulted in the detente exercise. There are a number of other 'secret diplomacy' incidents which, had they succeeded, would have affected the outcome in Zimbabwe in quite an interesting way. Take, for instance, the 'Vivo Affair'.

Raul Valdy Vivo was one of the top men in the Cuban Communist Party in charge of foreign affairs. In May 1979, Vivo flew to see Machel in Maputo. He argued that once the newly elected Muzorewa government was sworn in there was real danger that a number of Western powers would recognize it, and it was, therefore, necessary to pre-empt this. Thus, Vivo proposed the following plan: Nkomo and Mugabe would be taken into one of the guerrilla-controlled areas of Zimbabwe from Mozambique and before Muzorewa was sworn in they would pronounce the formation of a government of independent Zimbabwe headed by Nkomo with Mugabe as the number-two man in charge of defence. Journalists would be taken into the country to record the ceremony and a substantial number of socialist bloc, African and Caribbean countries would recognize the Patriotic Front Government within days, thereby confronting Western countries with the dilemma that if they recognized Muzorewa they would be declaring their opposition to the Patriotic Front and its supporters. The plan misfired and Vivo lost his post in the Cuban Communist Party, perhaps a scapegoat. <sup>51</sup>

The authors of *The Struggle for Zimbabwe* are biased; they have taken sides with the party and with heroes in that party whose story they want to tell and they do not hide the fact. The preface to the book states clearly that 'The book is mainly about ZANU, who won a clear-cut victory in the 1980 independence elections, and ZANLA, who did over 80 per cent of the fighting during the final decisive years.' <sup>52</sup> The book is dedicated specifically to the now legendary Josiah Tongogara, the late ZANLA commander. Having defined their subject matter so clearly and in this manner the question of bias, therefore, becomes redundant. It is like discovering that the *Communist Manifesto* has a bias towards the proletariat and does not glorify other classes. But, if we understood the very idea of the *Manifesto* from the outset, that it is a call to celebrate the era of the proletariat as a class, it would be redundant to express the opinion that Marx and Engels were partial to the proletariat.

With this caveat, therefore, those who are neither ZANU or ZANLA nor their sympathizers should equally find this book extremely useful. It is full of information, some of which only journalists could have access to (since political gladiators and journalists have affinity for one another). The book deserves the serious attention of all those who will want to know about the

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 305-6, 308.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., xvii.

struggle for Zimbabwe, its ups and downs, where things went right and where they went wrong. There is much in this book about ZAPU, and other parties, so much so that it is inappropriate to denigrate it, as some do, as being 'The ZANU (PF) Struggle for Zimbabwe'. Finally, Zimbabwe's Prime Minister, R.G.Mugabe's words on this book are instructive. His foreword to the book concludes:

Obviously the story being told is that by an onlooker and onlookers have the limitation that they are not the actors themselves. When the actors themselves finally publish the drama of their struggle, as they planned and presented it, they will no doubt find this work a most useful supplement.<sup>53</sup>.

The hope is that the day is not too far away when the actors themselves tell the story of struggle for Zimbabwe and onlookers can remain looking on.

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., vi.