INTRODUCTION

One of the most important themes in Zimbabwean (Rhodesian) history has been the struggle against both alien domination and racial and economic oppression. Dating back to the sixteenth century repulsion of Portuguese forces, the people of Zimbabwe have fought to be free. As imperialist pressures increased in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Zimbabweans of Ndebele and Shona descent attempted to resist the wave of well-armed European settlers who sought to deprive them of their homelands and reduce them to a cheap labor force. Although defeated, the Zimbabweans were hardly "pacified." Witness the Ndebele-Shona rebellion of 1896, the guerrilla activities of Mapondera at the turn of the century, the revolutionary proclamation of Nyamanda twenty years later, and the recurring opposition of mineworkers and peasants. The formation of ZAPU (Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union) in 1961 and ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) in 1963 were important expressions both of the resiliency of the Zimbabwean people and their commitment to freedom at all costs.

These anti-colonial manifestations did not go unchallenged. Political repression, physical intimidation, and imprisonment were the standard responses of the minority regime which illegally declared itself independent in 1965. Directly or indirectly aided by a number of Western countries, including the United States, the government of Ian Smith circumvented the United Nations-imposed embargo and, in the short run, reinforced its authoritarian rule. During the subsequent decade both the armed efforts of ZANU and ZAPU and the attempts at negotiations by the ANC (African National Congress), formed in 1971, proved unsuccessful.

Growing militancy among oppressed Zimbabweans and the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Angola and Mozambique dramatically altered the balance of power in Southern Africa. Of special significance was the independence of Mozambique
which not only represented a symbol of hope but offered a friendly border from which Zimbabwe liberation forces could operate. In an effort to take advantage of these favorable conditions and heal the divisions which undercut earlier efforts, ZIPA (Zimbabwean Peoples' Army) was organized in the spring of 1976. Its goal was explicit. "To overthrow national oppression in Zimbabwe, to put an end to the system of exploitation of man by man within Zimbabwe, and to create a system that will serve the people of Zimbabwe."

During the past six months, ZIPA has scored a number of military gains. Its forces penetrated into the heart of the authoritarian Rhodesian state, periodically disrupting vital sections of the transportation system and attacking Rhodesian army posts, all of which has dramatically intensified the level of anxiety within the minority community. Increased emigration of European settlers, an outflow of foreign capital, and the brutal retaliation and massacre in August of 650 Zimbabweans living inside Mozambique are indications of the desperate position of the Smith regime. Perhaps the best testimony of ZIPA's success has been Mr. Kissinger's efforts at shuttle diplomacy and Smith's reluctant willingness to participate in the Geneva Conference scheduled to start on October 28, 1976.

Yet despite the central role which ZIPA now plays in the liberation struggle, most segments of the press have either ignored its existence or grossly distorted its positions by portraying it in highly superficial terms. Rather than seeking information about ZIPA's programs and long-term objectives, the media has uncritically accepted and reproduced statements from the White House and State Department which depict ZIPA as perpetrators of a "race war" and imperial agents of either China or the Soviet Union, a charge which ZIPA officials have repeatedly denied. (It is interesting to note that the same unsubstantiated charges are repeatedly made in the American press against
In an effort to confront these distortions and provide badly needed information, the Minnesota Coalition on Southern Africa is reprinting an unedited version of the first public interview which ZIPA has given, thereby asserting the views that those who fight for independence must be their own spokesmen and be solely responsible for their views. The interview with Dzinashe Machingura, a prominent ZIPA official, conducted by the Mozambican Information Agency, took place in Maputo on September 22, 1976. Among the fundamental issues discussed were ZIPA political and military objectives, its relations with ZANU and ZAPU, its vision of a new Zimbabwe, and its anti-racialists policies. The interview also stresses ZIPA basic distrust of Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy and a belief that his efforts are designed to frustrate the legitimate interests of the Zimbabwean people, that is, political and economic independence.

To facilitate additional reading on the critical question of Zimbabwe as well as past U.S. policy toward that country, we are including a select bibliography at the end of the text. Because the Minnesota Coalition on Southern Africa believes that current U.S. policy is neither in the interest of the American people nor Africans living under the minority regimes, we plan to periodically publish material and hold public forums in an effort to disseminate information about the growing crises in Southern Africa and to critically examine U.S. foreign policy.

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