

TOPIC : THE ARMED STRUGGLE IN ZIMBABWE

SUBTOPIC : NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

OBJECTIVES

BY THE END OF THE SUBTOPIC LEARNERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- ✓ Identify factors that led to the rise of mass nationalism in Zimbabwe.
- ✓ Discuss political activities of various Nationalist movements.
- ✓ Outline the challenges faced by the nationalist movements.

Background



African nationalist movements

- Zimbabwe became a British colony because of its economic interest in the country.
- In 1953 the British government combined Rhodesia and Nyasaland so as to protect its economic interest.
- After the formation of the federation a strong group of nationalist emerged despite the suppression of the government.
- In 1950 there was an increased resistance towards the white settlers or the colonial rule and African nationalism became a powerful force.

- The rise of African nationalism became a mass nationalist movement.
- These national political movements were formed in response of white minority rule in Zimbabwe.
- Nationalism is having pride in one's country, racial discrimination made Africans second class citizens in their own country.
- Africans also wanted majority rule as opposed to the white minority rule these included nationalists like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.
- These political movements occurred because the earlier movements had failed to achieve any meaningful change in government.

The struggle for 'one man, one vote (1946-1965)

- In 1946, Africans were demanding 'one man one vote', people wanted a Government voted into power by the majority.
- These radical ideas resulted from African participation in the Second World War and at the war African and whites fought as equals.
- The second world war weakened many European countries, Africans had studied in Europe and America and they were influenced by movements like Pan Africanism and socialism
- The examples of western educated Africans were Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere.



Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana

- These Africans were joined with Mahatma Gandhi of India to fight for independence.
- The Russian Revolution spread ideas of workers solidarity, trade unions movements, freedom and independence.
- After the Second World War, trade unions leaders organised strikes, resistance against cattle destocking, forced resettlement, payment of tax and discrimination.

Political association and workers unions

- These were not welfare or religious in nature but anticolonial.
- The following association and unions led the anticolonial struggle during that period:
 - The Rhodesian Bantu voters association 1920 (RBVA).
 - Rhodesian African National Congress 1934 (RANC).
 - Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers Unions 1940 (IRCU).
 - Bantu African National Voice Association (1948).

Rhodesian Bantu Voters Association (RBVA)

- The Rhodesian Bantu Voters Association (RBVA) was formed in Gweru by Abraham Twala and it was a movement of educated Africans.
- Their aim was to get Africans who qualified for the vote on to voters roll.
- It was elitist and its members were fighting for their own privileges but not demanding on one man one vote.
- The Rhodesian Bantu Voters Association sought the right to own farms, build their own houses in towns and send their children to good schools.
- The effectiveness of the Rhodesian Bantu Voters was limited and it failed to influence the white parties to give them concessions.

Rhodesian African National Congress

- The Rhodesian African National congress was formed in 1934 under the leadership of Reverend Thompson Douglas Samkange and later on it was led by Aron Jacha.
- It was a pressure group which tried to persuade the government to adopt reforms.
- Its efforts were met with little response by the government and it became paralyzed.

The Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (RICU)

- Kadalie a Malawian fled to South Africa via Southern Rhodesia.
- He had good organising skills and he formed Industrial and commercial Workers Union in 1919.
- The ICU aimed to unite all Africans working in factories, shops and transport.
- The ICU fought for better wages and working conditions.
- In 1927 Kadalie sent Robert Sambo to start an ICU branch in Bulawayo.
- The ICU was popular in Rhodesia and South Africa.



Union march

The Bantu African National Voice Association (BANVA)

- It was militant proletarian movement spearheaded by Benjamin Burombo in 1948.
- Benjamin was the general secretary of this organisational movement.
- BANVA organised Rhodesian's first general strike on 15th April, 1948 in Bulawayo for higher wages for workers.
- A huge crowd was addressed by Burombo, leaders of the federation of Bulawayo, African workers Unions and ANC about their grievances.
- The BANVA also organised a protest against the land Husbandry Bill of 1951 which eroded the rights of African peasants.
- The organisation was also against the minority rule and to place into sharp relief the collective grievances of Zimbabweans.
- BANVA was banned in 1952 as it was regarded a subversive organisation.
- Josiah Tongogara and others were inspired by Burombo's militancy.

Formation of the City Youth League (CYL)



Edison Sithole

- In 1955 the African politics in Zimbabwe gathered a new thrust and formed the City Youth League on September 12.

- It was spearheaded by George Nyandoro, James Chikerema, Edison Sithole and Dunduza Chisiza.
- It was later called the African National youth league (ANYL).
- The organisation gave a fresh lease of life to African resistance against the land Husbandry Act of 1951 which the government was implementing.
- ANYL organised a successful boycott in Salisbury (Harare) against increased bus fares.
- On September 12 1957 the City Youth League and the old African Congress amalgamated into African National Congress (ANC) at an inaugural meeting in Salisbury.

Formation of the African National Congress (ANC)

- The African National Congress was a mass political movement and not necessary a revolutionary organisation.
- It was formed in 1957 and Joshua Nkomo was elected as the president of the organisation at a meeting in Salisbury.
- The leaders of the ANC, included James Chikera, Joseph Rusaka, George Nyandoro and Edson Sithole.
- The organisation stated that it stood for national unity regardless of colour, race and religion and non- violence was the centre piece of the African National Congress.
- The central aim of the organisation was to address the major grievances that is the issue of land and wages.
- The ANC fought for Africans to:
 - Vote (franchise)
 - Own farms and houses in towns.
 - Get rid of pass laws, master and servant act and other oppressive labour laws.
- The Africans organised themselves on:
 - Avoiding dangerous mine and cruel employers.
 - Assisting each other in times of need.

- Fighting for better and living condition.
- The organisation of ANC was proscribed and 495 of its leaders were arrested.
- After the proscription of the ANC there was an introduction of six draconian laws which was designed to suppress the political activities of black Africans.
- The settler regime enacted laws which included Unlawful Organisation Act and Preventive Detention Act which aimed at suppression the liberation movements.

Formation of the National Democratic Party (NDP)

- The party was established because of the burning quest for majority rule and independence.
- The National Democratic Party (NDP) was formed in 1960 and was led by Michael Mawema and later on Joshua Nkomo who was elected at an inaugural congress in October 1960 in Salisbury.



Michael Mawema

- NDP adopted a militant approach and demanded a radical constitutional and political change for the realization of justice and democracy.

- NDP organised protests and demonstrations throughout the country such as the “march of 7000” in July 1960 against the arrest of the three NDP leaders.
- The demonstrations spread to other centres and acquired a national dimension and the NDP believed that through these methods, independence would also come to Zimbabwe.
- The settlers were determined to continue ruling over the black majority and in response to the NDP activities they used instruments of violence such as teargases and guns.
- People were injured and some lost their lives, the settler regime went then to enact the Law and Order Act that empowered the police to harass the NDP party.
- In 1961 the NDP leaders attended a constitutional conference in London to discuss a new constitution with the new British government.
- It was proposed that Africans would have 15 seats in a parliament of 65 seats and the remaining seats were for the whites.
- The whites made a voters whilst the blacks made up the B voters.
- This decision angered the NDP leaders who insisted on a one man one vote and equal number of seats in parliament and in 1961 half a million voted and rejected the constitution.
- In response to this the settler regime imposed the constitution on people and the NDP party was banned on December 1961 after a number of protests and its assets were confiscated.

[Zimbabwe African People's Union](#)



ZAPU logo

- The rise of nationalist parties to spearhead the national liberation lead to the formation of ZAPU and its military wing was ZIPRA.
- As soon as NDP was banned in 17 December 1961, the Nationalists formed a new party, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU).
- ZAPU implemented the political strategies of NDP but they organised violence and sabotage to bring about majority rule.
- Its leadership consisted of the people who had been on the National executive committee on NDP including Joshua Nkomo who was its leader.



Joshua Nkomo

- It was formed as a result of disagreements and suspicions that have been caused by the 1961 Constitutional agreements.
- There were further disagreements on those in support and those against the starting of the armed struggle.
- ZAPU party was more militant and vocal, it organised strikes and boycotts in urban areas against activities that promoted the settler government.
- It also organised rural people to settle on vacant white land and it was known as the Land Freedom Farmers.
- These strikes were characterised by fires that destroyed white farmer's plantations.
- The ZAPU youth went on to disrupt railway lines and electricity installations.
- In response of these activities settlers banned ZAPU leaders in 1962 except for Joshua Nkomo who was in Zambia and many leaders became suspicious of Nkomo's leadership.
- This led to splits between these leaders.
- ZAPU sent young men outside the country that is in Russia and Algeria to prepare for the armed struggle.

- ZAPU was immediately replaced by the People's Caretaker Council (PCC).

Formation of Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)

- The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) was formed on 8 Aug 1963 and its military wing was ZANLA.
- ZANU was formed as a split from ZANU due the dissatisfaction on Nkomo's military tactics.
- Rev Ndabaningi Sithole became the president of the new party.
- The formation of ZANU created street fights between ZANU and PCC/ZAPU youths and Ian Smith the Rhodesian Front leader used these acts to ban both ZANU and PCC national parties.
- In 1964 the white settlers banned and detained African political leaders except for James Chikerema, Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo, George Silundika and Herbert Chitepo who escaped to Zambia and organised the armed struggle.



Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo

- ZANU established bases and sent military cadres to go and receive military training abroad (China, Mozambique and Tanzania).