

“Division to Save the Country Is Wisdom”: The Short Life of the Zimbabwe National Party and Its Lasting Impact on Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle, 1961–1963*

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Abstract: *The Zimbabwe National Party (ZNP), an anti-colonial nationalist movement in Southern Rhodesia, was a prominent force on the colony’s political scene for only a matter of months in 1961 before collapsing entirely two years later. However, this brief existence belied the Party’s lasting institutional contributions to Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle and Rhodesia’s broader political culture. First, the ZNP’s emergence pushed the main wing of the nationalist movement away from a policy of limited co-operation with the white settler regime which had made limited concessions to black political participation in a constitutional dialogue earlier that year. Second, the ZNP exerted significant efforts to woo external African leadership, inaugurating an era of competitive pan-African diplomacy within Zimbabwe’s protracted and divided liberation struggle. Finally, the relentless and often violent attempts to derail the ZNP solidified a culture of anti-colonial nationalism that rejected political pluralism.*

Keywords: *decolonization, Rhodesia, Joshua Nkomo, pan-Africanism, Kwame Nkrumah, Hastings Kamuzu Banda*

Introduction

On June 10, 1961, Southern Rhodesia’s anti-colonial nationalist movement experienced its first significant internal split with the abortive launch of the Zimbabwe National Party (ZNP). Partisans of the National Democratic Party (NDP), the main wing of the liberation movement, violently assaulted ZNP President Patrick Matimba and Secretary-General Michael Mawema outside Joza Restaurant in Harare, a black township just south of the central business district in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia’s capital.¹ The dissident nationalists “were manhandled, assaulted and kicked” and prevented from entering the restaurant to formally launch their party.²

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¹ “Matimba and Mawema Beaten by a Group of NDP Followers,” *Central African Daily News* [hereafter *ADN*], Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, 11 June 1961.

² *Ibid.*

Matimba and Mawema were only rescued from the trauma by the serendipitous passing of a police patrol car, which whisked them away to safety.³

Throughout its brief existence, the ZNP struggled to campaign openly in the face of violent NDP intimidation.⁴ It represented a viable threat (generously interpreted) to the main wing of the nationalist movement only until around October 1961 when it began to publicly consider a merger with the NDP.⁵ However, it officially limped on until 1963 when it aligned with another breakaway nationalist party, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which subsequently became the ruling party of post-independence Zimbabwe as ZANU-PF (Patriotic Front).⁶

Despite its stillborn inception and brief existence, the ZNP played a significant role in shaping the trajectory of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle in three critical areas. First, it pushed the NDP's leadership away from a desired policy of limited co-operation with the white settler regime's reformist endeavors. Second, the ZNP exerted significant efforts to woo external African leaders, illuminating the importance of pan-African diplomacy in the liberation struggle. Finally, the violent and contentious reception that the NDP accorded the ZNP solidified a politics of exclusion and intolerance among Zimbabwean nationalist movements. A better understanding of the ZNP's travails provides essential context for several subsequent splits and breakaways in Zimbabwe's nationalist movement, including the seminal formation of ZANU. More broadly, it provides a detailed case that supports the claims of scholars of pan-Africanism like Ali Mazrui and Michael West who perceived a rapid "slippage" in African solidarity and liberal norms in the early 1960s.⁷

Background, Literature, and Sources on Factionalism in the Liberation Struggle

Although a glimmer of these bequests can be found in existing scholarship, the historiography of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle pays scant regard to the ZNP, despite extensive coverage of the Party in the colony's black press. Bhebe and Mazarire correctly diagnose a paucity of interest in the ZNP as "one of the key omissions" in studies of Zimbabwe's anti-colonial struggle.⁸ Masipula Sithole's *Struggles within the Struggle*, the preeminent work on intra-nationalist political

³ Ibid.

⁴ John Day, "The Creation of Political Myths: African Nationalism in Southern Rhodesia," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 2, 1 (1975), 60.

⁵ "ZNP Offers Plan for Coming to Terms with NDP," *ADN*, 20 October 1961.

⁶ "ZNP Lines Up," *ADN*, 11 July 1963; "ZANU Officers Elected," *ADN*, 21 August 1963.

⁷ Ali A. Mazrui, "Pan-Africanism and the Intellectuals: Rise, Decline and Revival," in Thandika Mkandawire, ed., *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development* (London: Zed Books, 2005), 58; Michael O. West, "Global Africa: The Emergence and Evolution of an Idea," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 28, 1 (2005), 101–102.

⁸ Ngwabi Bhebe and Gerald Mazarire, "Zimbabwe's War of Liberation," in Arnold J. Temu and Joel das N. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 1960–1994, Vol. 5* (Dar-es-Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2014), 18.

competition makes no reference at all to the party. Sithole even proclaims that the “ZANU-ZAPU split [was] the first of its kind,” a view more recently echoed by Blessing-Miles Tendi.⁹ Additionally, with the notable exception of Maurice Nyagumbo’s reflections on the reverberations of the NDP-ZNP split among political restrictees, the ZNP interlude is routinely ignored in firsthand accounts from the era’s nationalist leaders, including those of an academic bent.¹⁰ Robert Mugabe, who both received invective from the ZNP and delivered attacks on the party as the NDP’s Publicity Secretary, wrote the ZNP out of the history of the independence struggle when he claimed that from 1957 to 1963 the nationalist movement was completely united.¹¹

Despite this diminution, the ZNP attracted the backing of those who had, or subsequently acquired, notable political clout. Mawema had been the founding President of the NDP in January 1960. The ZNP Vice-President, Paul Mushonga, was the Secretary of the City Youth League (CYL), a predecessor of the NDP. He maintained a prominent role in the CYL’s successor, serving as the Deputy Treasurer of the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC), the NDP’s immediate forerunner. In that capacity he attended the 1958 All-African People’s Congress in Accra, Ghana alongside Joshua Nkomo, the SRANC President who held the same position in the NDP at the time of the ZNP’s formation.¹² Matimba was not a prominent political figure, but had gained renown throughout the colony when he married a white woman and was effectively exiled following his arrest during the 1959 declaration of a state of emergency by Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister Edgar Whitehead.¹³ The U.S. Consulate in Salisbury reported that his initial impression was “most unimpressive,” but masked an “excellent vocabulary” and strong speaking skills.¹⁴ Thomson Goneshe, another member of the CYL executive, was the ZNP Treasurer.¹⁵

Arguably, the strongest show of support came from members of the banned SRANC who remained under government restriction following the emergency

⁹ Masipula Sithole, *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle* (1979; reprint, Harare: Rujeko, 2nd edition, 1999), 39; Blessing-Miles Tendi, *The Army and Politics in Zimbabwe: Mujuru, the Liberation Fighter and Kingmaker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 20.

¹⁰ Maurice Nyagumbo, *With the People: An Autobiography from the Zimbabwe Struggle* (London: Allison and Busby, 1980), 151–53; Eshmael Mlambo, *Rhodesia: The Struggle for a Birthright* (London: Hurst, 1972), 194.

¹¹ Robert G. Mugabe, “The Unity Accord: Its Promise for the Future,” in C.S. Banana, ed., *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe, 1890–1990* (Harare: College Press, 1989), 337.

¹² John Day, *International Nationalism: The Extra-Territorial Relations of Southern Rhodesian Nationalists* (New York: Humanities Press, 1967), 55.

¹³ John Reed, “Portrait of an Agitator: Patrick Matimba,” *Africa South* 4, 2 (Jan–Mar 1960), 73–78.

¹⁴ AmConsul, Salisbury to Department of State, 30 June 1961, 745c.00/5-161, Box 1692, Record Group [hereafter RG] 59, National Archives and Records Administration II [hereafter NARA].

¹⁵ “ZNP Treasurer Searched,” *ADN*, 11 September 1961.

declaration, which saw the banning of SRANC and the arrest of hundreds of its supporters. Eight of those 14 restrictees, including leading nationalists like Edson Sithole and Daniel Madzimbamuto, backed the ZNP.¹⁶ Others who became prominent in the politics of independent Zimbabwe experienced their first taste of political leadership in the ZNP. Nelson Samkange, the ZNP Publicity Secretary, served as governor of the Mashonaland West Province after independence.¹⁷ The ZNP Director of External Affairs, Wiseman Zengeni, was an opposition MP at the time of his death in a car accident in 1995.¹⁸ Zengeni's personal secretary in the ZNP's London office, John Cyril Shoniwa, was one of the colony's first black lawyers and became a Senator following independence.¹⁹

This article primarily draws on the rich print culture of Southern Rhodesia to recover the abbreviated life of the ZNP. Following the demise of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland at the end of 1963, censorship and press repression became rife.²⁰ While similar issues flared during the period under consideration here, Southern Rhodesian print media during the Federal era was considerably more open. Articles from the *Central African Daily News* (hereafter "*Daily News*") comprise the bulk of the published primary material on the ZNP. While the *Daily News* was subject to manipulation by the white political establishment and marked by contradictory coverage, it covered nationalist politics in-depth and generally retained the confidence of nationalist leaders at the time of the ZNP's formation.²¹ Two subscription-based newsletters also devoted significant space to the ZNP, the eponymous *Samkange Newsletter*, produced by Stanlake Samkange and *Confidential News Report* (hereafter "*CNR*"), compiled by A.J. Levin.²²

Scholarship that invokes the ZNP usually does so tangentially. Enocent Msindo briefly identifies the creation of the party as an early sign of ethnic Shona resentment of Ndebele leadership in a work on ethnicity in Zimbabwe.²³ In a study of class

¹⁶ "Sack NDP Plea by Gokwe Men," *ADN*, 27 June 1961. The remaining six were M.D. Matimba, J.T. Maluleke, K.S. Mhizha, M.T. Musarurwa, P.P.A. Foya, and T.A. Chihota.

¹⁷ "Matimba is President of ZNP," *ADN*, 11 June 1961; "Nelson Samkange Dies," *The Herald*, 29 October 2013, <https://www.herald.co.zw/nelson-samkange-dies/> (accessed 18 December 2019).

¹⁸ "ZNP Has a Four-Point Constitutional Plan," *ADN* 17 June 1961; Vesta Sithole, *My Life with an Unsung Hero* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2006), 145.

¹⁹ Lawrence Vambe, interviewed by I.J. Johnstone, 1–13 June 1983, ORAL/233, National Archives of Zimbabwe [hereafter NAZ], 4; George Karekwaivanane, *The Struggle Over State Power in Zimbabwe: Law and Politics Since 1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 145.

²⁰ Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were the other members of this body.

²¹ Sylvester Dombo, *Private Print Media, the State and Politics in Colonial and Post-Colonial Zimbabwe* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 92–93.

²² While both Levin and Samkange had solid reputations as unbiased journalists, each was perceived as aligning with ZANU during or following the 1963 nationalist split.

²³ Enocent Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860–1990* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012), 192.

formation, Michael West perceived class and ethnic chauvinism as key drivers behind the ZNP's formation; he more tentatively attributed the changing pan-African scene as a secondary factor.²⁴

Both West and Henry Slater's exploration of ZANU's 1963 breakaway fleetingly ascribe some significance to the ZNP example as a critical forerunner of deeper subsequent intra-nationalist division.²⁵ Slater offers a brief nod to the NDP's initial acceptance of constitutional proposals in early 1961 as the driving impetus behind the ZNP's emergence.²⁶ However, Slater generally fails to explicate the divisionary tensions of the early 1960s beyond a vaguely conceptualized "frustration" with the prosecution of the nationalist struggle.²⁷ Timothy Scarnecchia adds more depth to considerations of these "frustrations" in a study on the rise of violent tendencies in the liberation struggle. However, Scarnecchia's sketch of the ZNP's efforts to outflank the NDP by adopting a more militant posture and attacking a politics of multiculturalism in the liberation struggle is somewhat cursory.²⁸ Similarly, Shutt and Pritchard have succinctly noted the ZNP's role in exacerbating race-baiting in Southern Rhodesian politics.²⁹ Stuart Doran also fleetingly grounded the NDP's violent intimidation of the ZNP as a formative moment in the making of nationalist intolerance.³⁰

The marginalization of the ZNP is aligned with a general tendency in the scholarship on dissidence in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle to fixate on tensions between or within ZANU and ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union, successor to the NDP). Short-lived internal conflicts in those two parties, such as the March 11 Movement (ZAPU), Nhari Rebellion (ZANU), and the Zimbabwean People's Army (ZIPA, an ostensible ZANU-ZAPU coalition) have received more attention than the second-tier liberation movements, which in addition to the ZNP include the Pan-African Socialist Union, FROLIZI, and ZANU-Ndonga.³¹ This study contributes to the

²⁴ Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898–1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 225.

²⁵ West, *Middle Class*, 35; Henry Slater, "The Politics of Frustration: The ZAPU-ZANU Split in Historical Perspective," *Kenya Historical Review* 3, 2 (1975), 277–78.

²⁶ Slater, "Politics of Frustration," 269.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 278.

²⁸ Timothy Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940–1964* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 120–21.

²⁹ Allison K. Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation: Racial Etiquette in Southern Rhodesia, 1910–1963* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2015), 161; Joshua Pritchard, "Race, Identity, and Belonging in Early Zimbabwean Nationalism(s), 1957–1965," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2018), 122.

³⁰ Stuart Doran, *Kingdom, Power, Glory: Mugabe, ZANU and the Quest for Supremacy, 1960–1987* (Midrand, South Africa: Sithatha, 2017), 10–11.

³¹ On March 11, see Owen Tshabangu, *The March 11 Movement in ZAPU: Revolution within the Revolution for Zimbabwe* (Heslington, UK: Tiger Papers, 1979); for Nhari, see Blessing-Miles Tendi, "Transnationalism, Contingency and Loyalty in African Liberation Armies: The Case of ZANU's 1974–

growing body of scholarship that problematizes the dominant narrative of “Patriotic History” that privileged ZANU-PF’s role in the liberation struggle until Zimbabwe descended into economic and political turmoil in the late 1990s.³²

Looking across southern Africa more broadly, the treatment of failed breakaway liberation movements is mixed, but generally meager. Within the Federation, alternatives to the dominant Malawi Congress Party (MCP) in Nyasaland, such as the Congress Liberation Party (CLP), led by a former leader of the MCP’s predecessor, have warranted almost no significant attention. In the literature on anti-colonial nationalism in Northern Rhodesia, Giacomo Macola has often been a lone voice against the “facile caricature” of Harry Nkumbula and the Northern Rhodesia African National Congress’ (NRANC) opposition to Kenneth Kaunda’s United National Independence Party (UNIP).³³ To the south, in South West Africa (colonial Namibia) the most significant party to break away from the South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO), SWAPO Democrats, has received limited attention beyond the autobiography of the Party’s founder, Andreas Shipanga.³⁴ In South Africa, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), which broke away from the African National Congress, has garnered considerably more interest, including explorations of the regional factors that drove its existence.³⁵ However, scholarship of South Africa’s liberation struggle is by far the most vibrant in the region and the PAC endured longer and more substantially than the ZNP, CLP, NRANC, or SWAPO Democrats.

Similarly, the long running ZAPU-ZANU dispute eroded memories of the more transient anti-colonial nationalist alternatives in Southern Rhodesia. This should not necessarily be, as scholars of African decolonization and lesser nationalist movements in east and west Africa have argued. Writing on Kenyan decolonization, David Anderson demonstrated that a short-lived political party can continue to exert an influence on the national stage long after its formal dissolution.³⁶ Similarly, in a

1975 Nhari Mutiny,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, 1 (2017), 143–59; on ZIPA, David Moore, “The Zimbabwean People’s Army Moment in Zimbabwean History, 1975–1977: Mugabe’s Rise and Democracy’s Demise,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 32, 3 (2014), 302–18. I am unaware of any studies focused solely on these second-tier groups.

³² Among various explorations of Patriotic History, see Norma Kriger, “From Patriotic Memories to ‘Patriotic History’ in Zimbabwe, 1990–2005,” *Third World Quarterly* 27, 6 (2006), 1151–169.

³³ Giacomo Macola, “Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula and the Formation of ZANC/UNIP: A Reinterpretation,” in Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar, and Giacomo Macola, eds., *Living the End of Empire: Politics and Society in Late Colonial Zambia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 30.

³⁴ Andreas Shipanga, *In Search of Freedom: The Andreas Shipanga Story* (Gibraltar: Ashanti Publishing, 1989).

³⁵ See for example, Arianna Lissoni, “The PAC in Basutoland, c. 1962–1965,” *South African Historical Journal* 62, 1 (2010), 54–77; Lazlo Passemiers, “The Pan Africanist Congress and the Congo Alliance, 1963–1964,” *South African Historical Journal* 70, 1 (2018), 82–107.

³⁶ David Anderson, “‘Yours in Struggle for Majimbo’: Nationalism and the Party Politics of Decolonization in Kenya, 1955–64,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, 3 (2005), 548.

work centered on the exile politics of a Cameroonian political party that spanned the colonial and post-colonial era, Meredith Terretta encouraged researchers to examine the regional dynamics of opposition parties to better fulfill scholarly admonitions that encourage considerations of “political alternatives.”³⁷ This article seeks to follow both exhortations and positions the ZNP’s brief moment as a formative one that shaped both domestic and pan-African considerations in Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle.

1961 Constitutional Conference: Retreat from Compromise

The overt *raison d’être* behind the formation of the ZNP was the NDP’s bungled handling of constitutional deliberations in early 1961 and its ambiguous position on constitutional reform for the better part of the remainder of the year. During this time, the main wing of Zimbabwe’s nationalist movement came closer to compromising on its “one man one vote” slogan and embracing participation in mainstream Southern Rhodesian politics on the basis of a qualified franchise than the scholarship has generally acknowledged.

Retreat from Constitutional Compromise

In December 1960, Zimbabwe’s nationalists acquired their first experience with constitutional deliberations at the Federal Review conference in London. The occasion also laid the groundwork for the formation of the ZNP just over a half year later. Future ZNP Vice-President Paul Mushonga was then based in London and closely followed the talks. Future ZNP President Patrick Matimba, exiled in the Netherlands, travelled to London to contribute his input during the Review, bringing him into contact with the NDP leadership and Mushonga.³⁸

Alongside the MCP of Nyasaland and UNIP of Northern Rhodesia, the NDP pursued an uncompromising position at this conference. All three parties jointly walked out of the Federal Review (it never resumed). Nkomo was then subsequently excluded from follow-on talks in London on Southern Rhodesia’s Constitution as a reprimand for his behavior. The NDP leader initially adopted a militant posture, accusing Whitehead of “wicked political blackmail” and informing the press that he would immediately leave London to organize the NDP in Southern Rhodesia and obtain “the vote within two years.”³⁹

Nkomo’s militancy rapidly dissipated, however. He wrote a contrite letter to Whitehead in which he expressed “regret” that his abrupt departure from the Review was interpreted as a sign of disrespect.⁴⁰ Robert Mugabe, the new NDP Publicity

³⁷ Meredith Terretta, “Cameroonian Nationalists Go Global: From Forest ‘Maquis’ to a Pan-African Accra,” *Journal of African History* 51, 2 (2010), 211.

³⁸ Patrick Matimba, “Why the Zimbabwe National Party Was Formed and Its Future Role in African Nationalism” *ADN*, 26 September 1961.

³⁹ “Mr. Nkomo Excluded from Conference,” *The Guardian* (Manchester, UK), 16 December 1960.

⁴⁰ Nkomo to Whitehead, 19 December 1960, Box 500, Folder 1, Roy Welensky Papers (MSS.Welensky), University of Oxford.

Secretary, labored to spin this communication as a non-apology.⁴¹ In January, discussions on constitutional reform in Southern Rhodesia resumed in Salisbury. Whitehead had not initially wanted the NDP to have any role in Southern Rhodesia's constitutional dialogue and the presence of a four-person delegation from the NDP likely caused him and his United Federal Party (UFP) much embarrassment.⁴²

However, Nkomo's conciliatory gesture foreshadowed further NDP backpedaling. Whitehead chaired the initial stage of the Conference. The NDP dropped their opposition to Whitehead's privileged role in exchange for minimal security guarantees.⁴³ The party ultimately gained no windfall from participation at the Conference when it agreed to limited constitutional reform far short of its avowed goal of one person, one vote.⁴⁴ The agreed reforms guaranteed the first black representation in Parliament, but 50 of 65 seats elected by a predominantly white electorate left power securely in minority hands. This outcome was incongruent with the trend in Africa, even in the settler dominated Federation. At the conclusion of Nyasaland's constitutional review conference in August 1960 it was clear that 20 of the 28 seats in the legislative council would likely be held by the Malawi Congress Party after the next election.⁴⁵

The NDP's initial acceptance of the constitutional proposals stoked an immediate uproar. The most vehement opposition came from the NDP's London office. Leopold Takawira, a former interim NDP President, then the party's Director of External Affairs, sent a scathing telegram to Nkomo, co-signed by Enoch Dumbutshena and Paul Mushonga.⁴⁶ Mushonga became a driving force behind the formation of the ZNP, while rumors circulated that Takawira would join the ZNP on the eve of its launch.⁴⁷ Indicative of the intolerance of dissent that would soon permeate Zimbabwe's nationalist struggle, Nkomo promptly indicated that the trio would be suspended from the NDP.⁴⁸ While Dumbutshena's and Takawira's positions with the NDP were eventually retrieved, Nkomo appears to have privately taken a particularly hard line against Mushonga, whose assignment as Second Secretary in

⁴¹ "Nkomo Did Not Apologise—Mugabe," *ADN*, 20 December 1960.

⁴² John Day, "Southern Rhodesian African Nationalists and the 1961 Constitution," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 7, 2 (1969), 223.

⁴³ "No title," *Samkange Newsletter*, Salisbury, 27 January 1961. Issues of this publication contain material that occurred well after the stated date of publication.

⁴⁴ *Report of the Southern Rhodesia Constitutional Conference, February, 1961*, by Duncan Sandys (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961).

⁴⁵ Lucy Mair, *The Nyasaland Elections of 1961* (London: Athlone, 1962), 10–11.

⁴⁶ David Martin and Phyllis Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War* (London: Faber, 1981), 68.

⁴⁷ "No title," *Confidential News Report* [hereafter *CNR*], Salisbury, 17 May 1961.

⁴⁸ "Second Thoughts on Southern Rhodesian Constitution?" *The Guardian*, 16 February 1961.

the NDP's London Office was a significant loss of stature from his executive roles during the CYL and SRANC days.⁴⁹

Nkomo may have seen Mushonga's burgeoning international connections as a threat to his leadership. If so, his response made his fears a reality. In Salisbury, Mawema, who remained on the NDP's National Council after resigning the presidency, spoke against the Party's handling of the constitutional discussions and was suspended.⁵⁰ Nkomo's heavy-handedness paved the way for Mawema and Mushonga to unite against him. The press almost immediately began to speculate that a formal split in the NDP might materialize.⁵¹ The NDP leadership swiftly repudiated any acceptance of the Constitutional proposals; Nkomo dashed to London and declared that Takawira would not be dismissed, but much damage was already done.⁵²

More than two years later when ZANU was launched with Takawira and Mawema as leading members, Nkomo's handling of the constitutional deliberations continued to be cited as a rationale for the latest breakaway.⁵³ Although he escaped the ZNP debacle with his position intact, the constitutional saga mortally wounded Nkomo and revealed a significant gulf in the NDP executive, even among those who initially remained with the NDP.

The instability wrought by confusion over the constitutional proposals was immediately clear. Young turks of the NDP published op-eds that condemned Nkomo's concessions as "a great betrayal of the African people."⁵⁴ A special NDP Congress was held on 18 and 19 March 1961 to iron out the rising differences in the NDP. Approximately 350 delegates gathered in Bulawayo, the colony's second city, to discuss the Party's stance on the impending referendum on the Constitution and the elections that would be held if it were passed.⁵⁵

Retreat from Electoral Compromise

The inconclusive outcome of this congress provided further impetus for the ZNP's formation. There was no significant challenge to Nkomo's leadership and the Party conditionally agreed to back the constitution if the Federal and Southern Rhodesian governments undertook a number of reforms demanded by the NDP.⁵⁶ As the journalist and public relations consultant Stanlake Samkange put it, the NDP's policy

⁴⁹ Madzimbamuto to Jaffey, 9 July 1961, S07/1/5/22/2/33, NAZ; "Mushonga's New Job," *ADN*, 4 May 1961.

⁵⁰ "Mawema to Wait for Congress," *ADN*, 13 February 1961.

⁵¹ "Suspended NDP Men," *ADN*, 14 February 1961.

⁵² "Takawira Not to be Dismissed," *ADN*, 15 February 1961.

⁵³ T.C. Mutizwa, "Compromises and Concessions Have Built Up Nkomo," *ADN*, 30 July 1963.

⁵⁴ T.G. Makombe, "Democracy Was Defeated at the SR Conference," *ADN*, 18 March 1961.

⁵⁵ "Be Calm and Realistic About Outcome of Talks, Nkomo Urges Congress," *ADN*, 18 March 1961.

⁵⁶ "Congress Ends in Triumph for Nkomo and His Executive," *ADN*, 20 March 1961.

was one “of rejecting the proposals and yet not standing in their way.”⁵⁷ The ZNP’s Edson Sithole later wrote that the NDP’s requested reforms were but “childish demands ... [which] put grave doubts in our minds.”⁵⁸ ZNP President Patrick Matimba also highlighted the special congress in Bulawayo as having given urgency to the formation of the new party as it “meant that the whole African population had gone on record as having accepted the principles of the proposed Constitution.”⁵⁹ Matimba added that he was prompted to break away from the NDP as “reforming from within would take a long time to achieve.”⁶⁰

Stanlake Samkange reported that a secret meeting of the NDP Executive on the eve of the Bulawayo special congress resolved to participate in the first elections to be held under the new constitution. He added that the NDP even went as far as devising a plan to select its candidates for the election.⁶¹ However, when the Congress formally opened, the Executive found that popular sentiment was widely against electoral participation, so these plans were not ultimately disclosed.⁶² In Africa in 1961, the compromise and political ambiguity that characterized the NDP’s special congress was not viable. Zimbabwean nationalists had vigorously protested the death of Patrice Lumumba earlier in the year. Anti-colonial war in Angola had just ignited and the continent was awash with condemnation of neocolonialism in the secessionist Republic of Katanga.

The ZNP sought to exploit the NDP’s conciliatory tendencies. Mawema’s publicly disseminated resignation letter from the NDP, issued just before the ZNP’s “launch,” cited the NDP’s handling of the constitutional conference as the reason for his departure.⁶³ A second letter explaining his defection to the ZNP accused the NDP delegation at the constitutional conference as having “betrayed the souls of the dead, the living and the[ir] yet unborn children.”⁶⁴ This ideological dispute profoundly shaped ZNP tactics. As Matimba wrote, the “ZNP has rejected outright participation in the forthcoming general election. To us that is a principle that cannot be sacrificed at the expense of expedience.”⁶⁵ The new Party’s constitution pointedly noted the pursuit of “a universal adult franchise ... without any qualitative standards” as one of

⁵⁷ “Dissatisfaction in NDP with Conference Results,” *Samkange Newsletter*, 27 February 1961.

⁵⁸ Edson Sithole, “Nkomo was Tricked by Britain but We Cannot Accept Clumsy Explanations to the People,” *ADN*, 26 July 1961.

⁵⁹ Matimba, “Why the Zimbabwe National Party Was Formed.”

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ “No Title.” *Samkange Newsletter*, 27 March 1961.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ “Mawema Resigns from NDP: To Join New Group?” *ADN*, 8 June 1961.

⁶⁴ “Mawema Replies to Critics: Point-By-Point Arguments Against Attacks on Him,” *ADN*, 28 June 1961.

⁶⁵ Patrick Matimba, “Future Role of the ZNP in the Nationalist Movement,” *ADN*, 27 September 1961.

its main objectives.⁶⁶ An accompanying founding manifesto critiqued the NDP's and Nkomo's handling of the constitutional deliberations at length. It stated that "treacherous mistakes" had been committed and "that action must be taken to remedy the position."⁶⁷ The Manifesto rebuked Nkomo's abrupt acceptance of Whitehead's Chairmanship of the preliminary stage of the Salisbury conference:

"After a good cup of tea with the Prime Minister, Mr. Nkomo came out with the following statement, that "he was satisfied that Sir Edgar should chair the preliminary conference." All their fears were proved unfounded after a meeting of two and half hours. Of course Mr. Nkomo realised where his bread was buttered from. As in all occasions no explanation was given why he so suddenly changed his mind."⁶⁸

The manifesto was equally scathing of Nkomo's actual conduct at the conference. Nkomo, who had contested the 1953 Federal Parliamentary election, was derided as "an old UFP member [who] found it extremely embarrassing ... to demand one man one vote."⁶⁹ The result, the ZNP proclaimed, was "a betrayal of the wishes and demands of the NDP membership."⁷⁰

Attacks against Nkomo's leadership continued from Edson Sithole, the leading ZNP intellectual. Sithole was one of the eight restrictees that supported the ZNP and likely played a significant role in drafting the Party's founding manifesto and constitution.⁷¹ In a two-part opinion piece in the black press, written after the ZNP's creation, Sithole derided Nkomo's compromises with the UFP and Whitehead. In his first salvo, Sithole ridiculed Nkomo's "clumsy" explanations for the NDP's supposed acceptance of the constitutional proposals. Sithole related a visit that Nkomo made to Sithole and other restricted comrades then housed at Marandellas Prison shortly after the conclusion of the Salisbury constitutional conference:

"When he arrived, he was in no mood to talk to us and asked JZ Moyo [a NDP Executive member] to tell us about the results of the Conference. We refused to have Moyo report to us. Mr. Nkomo later agreed to speak. His report and that of the newspapers were identical and so his allegation of misrepresentation by the Press is unfounded. When asked why he signed such a document, his reply was that he did not know that signature meant acceptance of all things contained in the document, including those to which he had agreed. The English tricked him, he stated. We could not accept this

⁶⁶ "Zimbabwe National Party Manifesto," *ADN*, 11 June 1961.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Sithole claimed to have drafted the NDP constitution while in detention.

clumsy apologetic explanation. There was a second clumsy explanation of a letter of apology sent to Sir Edgar Whitehead."⁷²

A second op-ed by Sithole attacked Nkomo's "docile leadership" and argued that nationalist unity could only be pursued outside of Nkomo's auspices.⁷³ He claimed that the 14 remaining restrictees owed their continued confinement to "Mr. Nkomo's political stand ... for Government prefers to deal with Nkomo whom they know is moderate. Had we been released in the last Review, the country (African) would have taken an uncompromising stand on the issues at stake." Sithole excoriated Nkomo's penchant for compromise:

"Our three years detention would be meaningless and sheer wasted time if we detainees were to subscribe to the Nkomo-Edgar Whitehead-Sandys constitution. Have we lost our freedom for only 15 seats? We say no. The struggle for which the NDP was formed is now in the hands of the ZNP. Those who feel they are experts in working from within must continue to work in the NDP, but they are doomed to failure."⁷⁴

For a brief moment, the ZNP had the NDP positioned between a rock and a hard place. In the Southern Rhodesian context, the introduction of 15 seats for blacks in Parliament was a significant concession that signaled a major achievement resulting from the NDP's political pressure. Amidst the larger context of African decolonization however, it was a token gesture. Stanlake Samkange summarized the quandary shortly after the ZNP's founding:

"If the NDP decides not to fight the elections this means that they will go on doing very much what they are presently doing. But many of their present supporters are not happy that the present policy will lead them anywhere. This will satisfy external powers who are supporting the NDP financially now and the NDP can look forward to continued financial support from the Pan-African Movement."⁷⁵

He continued, interjecting a note of caution:

"If the National Democratic Party decides, however, to fight the elections, it will lose this financial support and will ultimately be displaced as the leading African political party in the country by another party to the left. This is the dilemma of the NDP. If it does not take part in the elections, the enemies of the party will gain the 15 seats which the NDP has, no doubt brought into being. If it takes part in the elections, then it will be ousted from its present position with respect to the external powers as well as the majority of the African people in the country."

⁷² Sithole, "Nkomo was Tricked."

⁷³ Edson Sithole, "Unity to Perish Fooly [sic] and Division to Spare Race from Political Death is Wisdom," *ADN*, 27 July 1961.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ "No Title," *Samkange Newsletter*, 27 July 1961.

Days ahead of the official referendum that put the new constitution before an overwhelmingly white electorate, the NDP held its own unofficial referendum in late July where it urged a “No” vote against the constitution. The exercise was a boon for the NDP, as turnout reached nearly 400,000, of which fewer than 500 ballots supported the “Yes” motion.⁷⁶ A ZNP press release endeavored, rather unconvincingly, to portray a “No” vote at the NDP’s own referendum as a direct repudiation of Nkomo’s constitutional appeasement.⁷⁷

On July 26, 1961 the referendum was decisively approved by the overwhelmingly white electorate, with almost twice as many votes in favor as opposed.⁷⁸ Initial political analysis continued to surmise that the NDP favored engagement with the settler political apparatus. A month after the referendum, the U.S. Consulate in Salisbury reported that it still expected NDP participation at the next general election.⁷⁹ However, this assessment was revised several weeks later following talks between the Consulate and Robert Mugabe.

Mugabe informed the Consulate that the NDP was under strong pressure from external African leadership to boycott the elections.⁸⁰ The Federation’s mission in Lagos reported that Nkrumah was strongly advocating an electoral boycott.⁸¹ A.J. Levin’s *CNR* believed that the NDP’s parallel referendum campaign was itself conceived “to convince the African states that the SR Africans are solidly behind Nkomo.”⁸² Pan-African diplomatic considerations were the second major sphere in which the NDP and ZNP clashed, influencing future intra-nationalist competition. Combined pressure from the ZNP and wider African leadership, coupled with internal opposition, ultimately forced the NDP to come out against participation in the new constitutional dispensation in Southern Rhodesia at a party congress in October 1961.⁸³ That decision spelled the end of the ZNP’s short-lived viability as a legitimate alternative to the NDP. Notably, the decision to eschew participation in establishment, white-dominated politics made it easier to blanketly condemn any nationalists or black political groups open to dialogue with the governing authorities.

⁷⁶ Chengetai J.M. Zvobgo, “Southern Rhodesia Under Edgar Whitehead: 1958–1962,” *Journal of Southern African Affairs* 2, 4 (1977), 486.

⁷⁷ “NDP Poll as Seen by ZNP,” 21 July 1961.

⁷⁸ J.D.C. Drew, “The Four Southern Rhodesian Referendums,” in *Occasional Papers of the National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Vol. 1*, (Salisbury: Government Printer, 1963), 57.

⁷⁹ Consul General, Salisbury to Secretary of State, 1 September 1961, 745c.00/9-161, Box 1692, RG 59, NARA.

⁸⁰ “Memorandum of Conversation,” 26 September 1961, 745c.00/9-161, Box 1692, RG 59, NARA.

⁸¹ “Reports from External Missions: Lagos: 17/63,” 21 June 1961, F236/CX100/29/3, NAZ.

⁸² “No title.” *CNR*, 5 July 1961.

⁸³ “Disappointing! Mr Nkomo,” *ADN*, 23 October 1961; Day, “Southern Rhodesian African Nationalists,” 234.

However, despite the emergence of an armed liberation struggle after UDI, both ZAPU and ZANU grappled with the idea of a negotiated settlement until one was realized in late 1979. ZANU officials pushed for a new constitutional dispensation immediately after the party's founding, building on the ZNP's own lobbying for a second constitutional conference two years earlier.⁸⁴ Alongside the quest for a constitutional settlement, competition for pan-African diplomatic backing would exert a defining force on Zimbabwean nationalism in the intervening years and its importance came to the fore during the ZNP's brief existence.

Pan-African Diplomacy and the ZNP Threat

Historians of Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean nationalists alike have noted the influence of African independence struggles on Zimbabwe's anti-colonial movement.⁸⁵ Seventeen African states became independent in 1960. By the time the ZNP was formed the following year, colonies that remained under imperial control like Nyasaland and Tanganyika, had attained, or were on the verge of attaining, internal self-government or an approximation of it. This political transformation greatly widened the political tactics available to Zimbabwe's nationalist movements, while simultaneously engendering internal competition. As Claude Ake wrote:

"As the prospects for political independence improved, the solidarity of the [nationalist] movement grew weaker and competition between its component units became more intense ... so while agitating to overthrow the colonial regime, the constituent elements of the coalition were also trying to block one another from appropriating it."⁸⁶

ZANU's 1963 breakaway was intrinsically connected to Africa's political re-alignment. The primary stated impetus for the breakaway, disagreement over Nkomo's desire to establish a government in exile in Tanganyika, would not have been conceivable in the colonial era.⁸⁷ Although less obvious, the ZNP's attempted takeover was similarly grounded in a milieu of decolonization and pan-African fervor.

The ardent pan-African orientation of the ZNP was articulated in both its constitution and founding manifesto. A core constitutional objective was "to work with other nationalist democratic and socialist movements in African and other

⁸⁴ Dar-es-Salaam to Department of State, 20 December 1963, Pol Rhod and Nyas, Box 4023, RG 59, NARA; Dar-es-Salaam to Secretary of State, 21 June 1963, Pol Rhod and Nyas, Box 4023, RG 59, NARA; "ZNP is Approaching British Government," *ADN*, 13 July 1961.

⁸⁵ A.S. Mlambo, "From the Second World War to UDI, 1940–1965," in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds., *Becoming Zimbabwe—A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2009), 109; Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1984), 75.

⁸⁶ Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1996), 4.

⁸⁷ Ignatius Takaidza Chigwendere, interviewed by Brian Willan, 24 May 1974, ORAL/228, NAZ, 59.

continents with a view to promoting Pan-Africanism.”⁸⁸ An accompanying policy statement proclaimed that a ZNP government would, “encourage, promote and manage a society based on the doctrines of Pan-African socialism.”⁸⁹ Beyond attacks on Nkomo’s acceptance of the constitutional proposals, the main theme of the manifesto was pan-Africanism and political unity. It pronounced, “Pan-Africanism does not thrive on fears and uncalled compromises, neither does it thrive on dishonesty and political wavering. It is a principle which cannot be sacrificed.”⁹⁰

A key dilemma for the ZNP was how to position itself as a pan-Africanist body when its very existence threatened the unity of Zimbabwe’s nationalist movement. The manifesto sought to pre-empt such criticism. A sub-section under the headline “Is Division Good [?]” answered “yes” and made the case for the affirmative: “division to save the country is wisdom. Unity to destroy the country is folly. Division to preserve political principles is godly while unity to suppress those principles is diabolic.”⁹¹

The manifesto also pointed to Kaunda’s UNIP and Kwame Nkrumah’s Convention People’s Party (CPP) in Ghana as fellow breakaway parties that emerged following constitutional discussions, an invocation assuredly intended to court their support.⁹² The ZNP appealed directly to Kaunda for UNIP’s backing and expressed optimism to the U.S. Consulate in Salisbury that it might be forthcoming.⁹³ Writing days after the ZNP’s launch, Levin of *CNR*, who later worked closely with Kaunda in Zambia, noted that he had talked with UNIP officials who were “expressing sympathy for the ZNP.”⁹⁴

While the NDP’s public posture dismissed the ZNP as a non-entity, it was concerned by the prospect of being outflanked on the external scene. A.S. Chigwada, a member of the NDP’s National Council, informed *CNR* that if the ZNP secured external African support, “we are finished.”⁹⁵ The Party endured several nerve-wracking weeks before a reticent Kaunda publicly came out in support of Nkomo.⁹⁶

The NDP moved vigorously to blunt the ZNP’s pan-African outreach. Robert Mugabe immediately dismissed the manifesto, derided the party’s efforts to appeal to Nkrumah and Kaunda, and condemned the ZNP as a “toy party” espousing the

⁸⁸ Consul-General, Salisbury to Department of State, 29 June 1961, 745c.00/5-161, Box 1692, RG 59, NARA.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ “Zimbabwe National Party Manifesto,” *ADN*, 11 June 1961.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ AmConsul, Salisbury to Department of State, 30 June 1961, 745c.00/5-161, Box 1692, RG 59, NARA.

⁹⁴ “No title,” *CNR*, 14 June 1961.

⁹⁵ “No title,” *CNR*, 5 July 1961.

⁹⁶ “We Are Behind You, Nkomo—Kaunda,” *ADN*, 21 July 1961.

hypocritical view that “DIVISION is UNITY.”⁹⁷ Tranos Makombe, who later became ZANU’s Director of Pan-African Affairs, piled on the criticism. His opinion piece noted that the comparison to UNIP and the CPP was “ridiculous and is meant to convince only the least informed.”⁹⁸ He contemptuously added that “the ZNP’s best counterpart in the field of external relations would be the Z. Mtemvu’s Tanganyika National Congress, which has recently charged the victorious Julius Nyerere with being ‘an imperialist stooge.’”⁹⁹ The NDP repeatedly dismissed the ZNP’s attempted outreach to east Africa. Proclaiming that the ZNP motto was “DIVIDE THE PEOPLE,” the NDP’s broadsheet, *Democratic Voice*, rubbished ZNP attempts to court Jomo Kenyatta’s Kenya African National Union.¹⁰⁰

The ZNP’s Edson Sithole hit back in a *Daily News* op-ed that jointly denounced Roy Welensky (the Federal Prime Minister) and Nkomo. Accusing Nkomo and most of his executive as lacking militancy, he urged the NDP to revise its policies “to fit into the Pan – African spirit.”¹⁰¹ The public sparring over pan-African legitimacy represented a significant new development in the tenor of the struggle and revealed the newfound importance of continental support. Tensions deteriorated to the extent that the 14 restrictees had to be segregated according to which party they supported.¹⁰²

The dispute carried over to the international sphere as well. The ZNP attracted varying degrees of support from two African leaders known for their authoritarianism and narcissism. In Nyasaland, Hastings Kamuzu Banda was proclaimed life President of the Malawi Congress Party in 1960.¹⁰³ Meanwhile, C.L.R. James also identified 1960 as the beginning of Kwame Nkrumah’s rigid domination of Ghanaian public life.¹⁰⁴

Kwame Nkrumah and Zimbabwean Nationalist Disunity

Kwame Nkrumah’s attempts to expand his influence across Africa resulted in links with the ZNP. This relationship calls into question several claims in the literature on the relationship between Zimbabwean nationalists and Ghana. It undermines Sibanda’s declaration that Ghana sought to stabilize the NDP and complicates

⁹⁷ “NDP Chief Replies to ZNP Manifesto,” *ADN*, 12 June 1961. Original emphasis.

⁹⁸ Tranos Makombe, “NDP Represents High Stage in Nationalist Organisation: ZNP Cannot Succeed Them,” *ADN*, 3 August 1961.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ “Zimbabwe Cables KANU Men,” *ADN*, 15 August 1961; “Do You Know?” *Democratic Voice*, Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, 9 September 1961. Original emphasis.

¹⁰¹ Edson Sithole, “Hear Sir Roy and Mr. Joshua Nkomo as Two Examples of ‘Masters of Contradiction.’” *ADN*, 10 October 1961.

¹⁰² “Clash of Political Views at Gokwe,” *ADN*, 22 June 1961.

¹⁰³ John McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1859–1966* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2012), 374.

¹⁰⁴ C.L.R. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (London: Allison & Busby, 1977), 13.

Mazarire's assertion that Nkrumah supported ZANU in 1963 because ZANU's representatives had stronger personal relationships with Ghanaian officials.¹⁰⁵ Rather, ties between the ZNP and CPP support claims of scholars like Thompson who emphasize Nkrumah's authoritarianism and desire for personal control of African political movements.¹⁰⁶

The ZNP leadership would have been a known quantity in Ghana. Mushonga had travelled to the country in 1958. Mawema, as a former NDP president, would have been on Nkrumah's radar. Crucially, the ZNP had strong backing from the MCP; Banda had lived in Ghana for much of the 1950s and his party forged strong ties with the CPP.¹⁰⁷ In a notable diplomatic coup, the ZNP secured an invitation to one of Nkrumah's numerous pan-African convocations, the Conference of Leaders of Nationalist Organisations of Dependent African States, held from June 28 to July 4 at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute. The Conference "was meant to bring together all the major African nationalist and labour organisations, for the most part from Southern Africa, to discuss measures for dealing with 'constitutional problems,' 'neo-colonialism,' and other 'general problems'..."¹⁰⁸ The ZNP was represented by Matimba and a political unknown, Walter Chaweta, the Party's Deputy Secretary-General who abandoned the ZNP almost immediately after the NDP came out against electoral participation in October 1961.¹⁰⁹ Before the ZNP's Matimba and the NDP's Mugabe left for Accra on the same plane, a testy Mugabe told the press, "either the ZNP delegation [is in] and we are out, or we are in and they are out. There is no question of the two groups being in at the same time."¹¹⁰

However, both groups did participate. An argument over the terms of the ZNP's acceptance at the conference created a small furor in Southern Rhodesia. Mugabe, in Bulawayo shortly after the conclusion of the conference, announced at a mass meeting that the ZNP had been ignored. He relayed that the Conference had agreed that "there must be [only] one nationalist organisation in each dependent country in Africa."¹¹¹ Ndabaningi Sithole, another NDP delegate, said the ZNP only

¹⁰⁵ Eliakim M. Sibanda, "The Contributions of Joshua Nkomo to the Liberation of Zimbabwe," in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, ed., *Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo of Zimbabwe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 55; Gerald Mazarire, "ZANU's External Networks, 1963-1979: An Appraisal," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, 1 (2017), 87.

¹⁰⁶ W. Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology and The New State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 58.

¹⁰⁷ Colin Cameron, interview by author, Ayr, Scotland, 2 May 2017; AmConsul, Salisbury to Department of State, 30 November 1962, 745c.00/11-162, Box 1695, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁰⁸ Matteo Grilli, "Nkrumah's Ghana and the Armed Struggle in Southern Africa (1961-1966)," *South African Historical Journal* 70, 1 (2018), 65.

¹⁰⁹ "Top ZNP Man Resigns: 'Party Has Served Purpose.'" *ADN*, 27 October 1961.

¹¹⁰ "Untitled Photo Caption," *ADN*, 29 June 1961.

¹¹¹ "Man is Arrested as 15,000 Hear Mugabe Speak," *ADN*, 11 July 1961.

participated because “we had mercy on them and allowed them to attend.”¹¹² Meanwhile, the ZNP boasted that its delegation met Nkrumah, had its expenses paid for, and that George Silundika, the NDP Secretary-General who had denounced the ZNP, was made to apologize for his criticism.¹¹³

The ZNP’s position was bolstered by a telegram sent to the conference by the eight restrictees, urging Nkomo’s expulsion from the All-African People’s Conference and recognition of the ZNP as the true representative of black political opinion.¹¹⁴ Following the conclusion of the conference, Matimba toured a number of west African capitals to build momentum.¹¹⁵ In turn, the NDP dispatched Moton Malianga to counter the ZNP leader.¹¹⁶ However, Malianga’s rebuttal was far from decisive. Over the next two years, both Mushonga and Matimba made additional tours of West Africa to canvass for political support, well after the ZNP was a spent force within Southern Rhodesia.¹¹⁷ Matimba even represented the ZNP at the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963, apparently at the behest of Nkrumah.¹¹⁸

Hastings Kamuzu Banda and Zimbabwean Nationalist Disunity

Whereas Nkrumah’s support for the ZNP remained opaque, the backing of the MCP and Hastings Kamuzu Banda was considerably more overt. On 20 May 1961, a letter to the editor appeared in the *Daily News*. Invoking pan-African considerations, it urged Paul Mushonga to create a new party. The writer stated, “Nkomo’s weakness has been condemned by leaders outside our borders; Mr. Tom Mboya and Dr. Banda have both criticised his leadership.”¹¹⁹ The most immediate cause of Banda’s displeasure with Nkomo was his acceptance of the constitutional proposals. He initially conveyed his displeasure to Nkomo discreetly, and then went on record, calling the NDP leader “spineless.”¹²⁰

Banda’s narcissism rivaled Nkrumah’s and in addition to the constitutional debacle likely played a role in the MCP’s support for the ZNP. In May, *CNR* reported an unattributed discussion with “one of [the] top five figures in the NDP about the

¹¹² “Those Accra Talks,” *ADN*, 13 July 1961.

¹¹³ “ZNP is Approaching British Government,” *ADN*, 13 July 1961.

¹¹⁴ “Sack NDP Plea by Gokwe Men,” *ADN*, 27 June 1961.

¹¹⁵ “NDP Men Fast at PM’s Home in London,” *ADN*, 16 September 1961.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ “Matimba for West Africa,” *Rhodesia Herald*, Salisbury Southern Rhodesia, 5 December 1962; Dold to Ranger, 27 December 1961, SO7/1/5/22/2/84, NAZ.

¹¹⁸ “Reports from External Missions: Lagos 17/63,” 21 June 1963 and “Reports from External Missions, Lagos 11/63,” 30 April 1963, both at F236/CX100/29/3, NAZ; “Matimba Asks Nkomo,” *ADN*, 25 June 1963.

¹¹⁹ “Form Another Political Party,” *ADN*, 20 May 1961.

¹²⁰ “Dr. Banda and the National Democratic Party,” *Samkange Newsletter*, 27 April 1961; As quoted in Scarnecchia, *Urban Roots*, 104.

'Banda Plan.'" According to this official, the enigmatic Plan called for the continuation of the Federation under majority rule, with Banda at its helm. At the end of the month, *CNR* quoted Mugabe criticizing Banda's egotism, in one of the few cases of a direct attack on the MCP leader by a Zimbabwean nationalist at this time.¹²¹ These reports came shortly after Yatuta Chisiza, the MCP Secretary-General, reprimanded the NDP during a visit to Salisbury and just before a Southern Rhodesian branch of the MCP curiously adopted a resolution urging Nyasaland to remain in the Federation.¹²²

Although Banda vehemently denied rumors of the Plan as "UFP lies," increased MCP control of the Zimbabwean nationalist movement, via the ZNP, would have advanced a "Banda Plan."¹²³ That Plan, in turn, would have aligned with Nkrumah's reputed ambition to bring Malawi and the Congo (Leopoldville) into the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Federation.¹²⁴ While there is an acute need for additional source material to unravel the mysterious Plan, Banda's ardent public rejection of the allegation indicates that the rumors had credibility. While Frederick Cooper's scholarship on political imaginaries and federations in the era of decolonization is primarily confined to Francophone west Africa, future researchers may also wish to seriously assess discussions among nationalists within the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland on the viability (and desirability) of a continued association following majority rule.¹²⁵

Following their joint participation at the AAPC in Accra, Banda appears to have nurtured a close relationship with Mushonga. Banda provided the ZNP Vice-President with significant funding in 1960 when he relocated to London for medical care.¹²⁶ Mushonga's youngest brother, Zacharias, briefly sought refuge in Malawi several years later and recalled that his family connections earned him preferential treatment.¹²⁷ The MCP leader was also close to Mawema, who attended celebrations marking the second anniversary of Banda's return to Nyasaland after decades abroad.¹²⁸

A front-page article in *Malawi News*, the MCP party paper, welcomed the formation of the ZNP while attacking the "weak and cowardly leadership of the National Democratic Party," which "has grown very unpopular with the Africans in

¹²¹ "No title," *CNR*, 31 May 1961.

¹²² "No title," *CNR*, 17 May 1961; "No title," *CNR*, 7 June 1961.

¹²³ "Banda Denies He Ever Wished to Succeed Sir Roy," *ADN*, 2 June 1961; "'We Will Not Change'—Kamuzu," *Malawi News* (Blantyre, Nyasaland), 1 June 1961.

¹²⁴ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, 204; Nkomo, *Story of My Life*, 76.

¹²⁵ Frederick Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective," *Journal of African History* 49, 2 (2008), 167–96.

¹²⁶ "Fat Cheque for the Mushongas from Dr. Banda," *ADN*, 30 May 1960.

¹²⁷ Zacharias Mushonga, interview by author, Harare, Zimbabwe, 18 May 2018.

¹²⁸ "Mawema Back From Nyasaland Trip," *ADN*, 12 July 1960.

Southern Rhodesia because of the mild leadership of Joshua Nkomo.”¹²⁹ The endorsement received major attention in Southern Rhodesia. In the weeks that followed, letters to the *African Daily News* were marked by a number of attacks on Banda as well as thinly veiled xenophobic attacks on Nyasas.¹³⁰ However, this hostility soon diminished in the euphoria following the MCP’s massive victory over the UFP in the August 1961 elections for Nyasaland’s Legislative Council. By the end of the month, *CNR* reported that Banda, was unhappy with Matimba’s leadership of the ZNP and preferred Mawema.¹³¹ A visit to Nyasaland by Matimba in September did little to reverse the ZNP’s decline with the MCP.¹³²

This shift was probably due to signs of the impending commitment from Nkomo and the NDP to not participate in Southern Rhodesian elections on the basis of a qualified franchise. Days before the October NDP Congress resolved to boycott Southern Rhodesian elections, Nkomo and Banda declared an end to their feud at a summit in Tanganyika. The reconciliation was overseen by a bevy of prominent pan-African leaders, including Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, and Kenneth Kaunda.¹³³ Nkomo proclaimed, “Dr. Banda and I found that there were no differences whatsoever between us and agreed that from now on we would keep each other informed and work hand in hand.”¹³⁴

Tellingly, shortly after this reconciliation Mawema was demoted in the ZNP hierarchy, an act that heralded his departure from the Party.¹³⁵ The withdrawal of Banda’s and Mawema’s backing effectively spelled the end of the line for the ZNP as a significant player in Zimbabwe’s nationalist struggle. Days after the Banda-Nkomo reconciliation, the ZNP offered a four-point plan to resolve its differences with the NDP. One point stipulated that the NDP must become more militant and more pan-Africanist.¹³⁶ A formal reintegration did not materialize, but by 1962, Mushonga believed that the ZNP’s primary *raison d’être* was to serve as a pressure group that ensured ZAPU militancy.¹³⁷

¹²⁹ “New Party is Formed,” *Malawi News*, 15 June 1961.

¹³⁰ Representative letters to the editor, all in *ADN* include: “Surprised at Malawi Attitude,” 21 June 1961; “What if We Kick the Nyasas Out?” 27 June 1961; “Dr. Banda Is Not So Brave,” 30 June 1961; “Banda Has Been Misled by ZNP,” 18 October 1961.

¹³¹ “No title,” *CNR*, 23 August 1961.

¹³² “Matimba is Off to Meet Dr. Banda,” *ADN*, 11 September 1961.

¹³³ W.O. Maloba, *Kenyatta and Britain: An Account of Political Transformation, 1929–1963* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 192.

¹³⁴ “Nkomo-Banda Breach Healed,” *ADN*, 16 October 1961.

¹³⁵ “ZNP Has Demoted Mawema,” *ADN*, 25 October 1961.

¹³⁶ “ZNP Offers Plan for Coming to Terms with NDP,” *ADN*, 20 October 1961.

¹³⁷ “ZNP to Work with ZAPU,” *ADN*, 19 June 1962. ZAPU succeeded the NDP following a ban on the latter in December 1961.

Ghana Reprised: The ZNP's Denouement

When the ZNP was launched, the NDP leadership and its supporters vaguely suggested that its creation was encouraged or facilitated by the UFP Government.¹³⁸ The public attacks aligned with a private assessment from the U.S. Consulate in early 1961 which speculated that Mawema was a paid informant for the Southern Rhodesian government.¹³⁹ The unsubstantiated criticisms failed to gain significant traction, but were reignited the following year following a ZNP dalliance with two disgraced regional leaders, Harry Nkumbula of Northern Rhodesia and Moise Tshombe of the self-proclaimed Republic of Katanga.

The ZNP's attendance at a conference in Ghana in 1961 marked the peak of its potential; the country was also host to a more palpable end for the ZNP almost exactly a year later. In June 1962, Kwame Nkrumah convened the Conference of African Freedom Fighters with ZNP participation, apparently still supporting the party although it had been on the wane since the previous October. Days before the conference, Matimba was expelled from the ZNP in absentia. The action resulted from a visit he made to secessionist Katanga as a guest of Tshombe (whose very name was associated with "sell-out" politics across the continent) and a meeting with Nkumbula of the now largely discredited NRANC.¹⁴⁰ Nkumbula was also tarnished by his association with Tshombe and attacked Nkrumah during the Conference (from afar).¹⁴¹ Matimba's outreach to more reactionary forces marked a drastic reversal of the ZNP policy of militant pan-Africanism. In September 1961, during the height of Operation Morthor, a UN offensive against Katangese secessionists, Matimba wrote the UK High Commissioner in Salisbury, urging the harshest treatment for Tshombe, who briefly sought refuge in the Federation.¹⁴²

A year later, the U.S. Consulate reported that moves appeared to be under foot to establish a reactionary pan-African axis of second-tier nationalist parties linking Katanga, Nkumbula, Matimba, and the Central African National Union of Nyasaland.¹⁴³ The Mushonga faction of the ZNP cabled to Accra that Matimba should not be allowed to attend the conference due to his suspension, but the reports of links to Katanga caused such an uproar that Mushonga and Wiseman Zengeni, who both

¹³⁸ "Did You Know?" *Democratic Voice*, 18 June 1961; Benjamin Mavimbela, "ZNP-UFP Independence Pact?" *ADN*, 7 July 1961.

¹³⁹ AmConsul, Salisbury to Department of State, 20 February 1961, 745c.00/1-361, Box 1691, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁴⁰ "ZNP Furore After Sacking of Matimba," *ADN*, 28 May 1962.

¹⁴¹ Giacomo Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A Biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 84–86; "Mr Nkumbula Attacks 'Nkrumah Puppets,'" *The Guardian*, 6 June 1962.

¹⁴² "ZNP Protest Over Tshombe," *ADN*, 18 September 1961.

¹⁴³ AmConsul, Salisbury to Department of State, 5 September 1962, 745c.00/9-462, Box 1694, RG 59, NARA.

supported Matimba's ouster, were also expelled from the conference.¹⁴⁴ The remnants of the ZNP's aspirations of pan-African leadership lay in tatters following the disclosure of Matimba's exploits. Kaunda condemned the ZNP's contacts while Madzimbamuto left the party and soon joined ZAPU.¹⁴⁵ After failing to dislodge Matimba internally, the Mushonga faction of the ZNP rebranded that September as a new party, the Pan-African Socialist Union (PASU), and claimed that the ZNP had been dissolved.¹⁴⁶ However, Matimba's ZNP lingered on for another year, becoming overtly critical of supposedly fraternal bodies like UNIP.¹⁴⁷

The lessons of the ZNP's failure remained vivid during the ZAPU-ZANU struggle as the scramble for pan-African support played out again with many similarities. ZAPU, as the NDP before it, accused ZANU of forming an alliance with Nkumbula and Tshombe.¹⁴⁸ Meanwhile, ZANU mimicked the ZNP's tactics, noting that the nationalist movements in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia only accelerated after Banda and Kaunda replaced less dynamic leaders.¹⁴⁹ ZANU rushed, successfully, to garner Banda's blessing.¹⁵⁰ Most egregiously, a pamphlet was circulated that called regional leaders like Kaunda and Julius Nyerere, "stupid people."¹⁵¹ The pamphlet was issued in ZAPU's name, but ZANU felt compelled to deny that it had forged it.¹⁵² Starting with the ZNP, inspiration from the success of African independence struggles deteriorated into an ignoble free-for-all for the luster of pan-African backing in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle.

The Turn Toward Violence and Rejection of Pluralism

Although he repudiated aspects of his earlier work that glorified nationalist resistance, Terence Ranger, the doyen of Zimbabwe's historical scholarship, maintained that the nationalist politics he was part of in the early 1960s "had been

¹⁴⁴ "ZNP Men Kicked out of Ghana—Kaunda," *ADN*, 11 June 1962; "Gonese Replies to Kaunda," *ADN*, 14 June 1962.

¹⁴⁵ "ZNP Men Kicked out of Ghana—Kaunda," *ADN*, 11 June 1962; "Madzimbamuto Quits ZNP," *ADN*, 13 June 1962.

¹⁴⁶ "Mushonga Now President of ZNP," *ADN*, 30 May 1962; "New Party is Formed—to Oppose ZAPU," *ADN*, 18 September 1962.

¹⁴⁷ "SR UNIP Men Attacked by Sambo," *ADN*, 18 July 1963.

¹⁴⁸ "Defunct ZANU, Lingering ANC (NR) and Dejected Tshombe Linking Up," *Zimbabwe Review* (Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia), 1 June 1964.

¹⁴⁹ "Nkomo has Failed—Sithole," *ADN*, 5 August 1963.

¹⁵⁰ "Nkala Dashes to See Banda for Funds," *ADN*, 12 July 1963; "Sithole Can Lead," *Malawi News*, 16 August 1963.

¹⁵¹ "Nkomo Repudiates Pamphlet," *ADN*, 2 September 1963.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

positive schools of democracy.”¹⁵³ Although the remnants of the ZNP attempted to organize a protest against Ranger’s impending deportation from Southern Rhodesia in early 1963, the former University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland lecturer and NDP member disregarded the beleaguered existence of Matimba’s party when he rendered this optimistic assessment.¹⁵⁴ Shortly after the ZNP’s founding, Stanlake Samkange more realistically took stock of the NDP’s “beating up of Messrs Matimba and Mawema” and concluded, “the ZNP will survive if it organises its own thugs to stand up to the NDP thugs and fight it out whenever it has a meeting.”¹⁵⁵

Violence

The ZNP’s failure to garner more international support left it in a catch-22. It lacked the resources to mobilize “thugs” and without this muscle could not hold the mass meetings that were necessary to swing international support away from the NDP. Owing partly to NDP intimidation, but also a government ban on political activity following the referendum campaign, the ZNP did not hold a public meeting until early October.¹⁵⁶ However, a contentious relationship with the NDP flourished in the interregnum.

Mawema vigorously condemned his suspension from the NDP on the eve of the ZNP launch, accusing the NDP of “intimidating those who do not agree with them” and seeking to “eliminate opposition.”¹⁵⁷ The feud quickly devolved from a juvenile argument, with Mawema and Silundika arguing about whether the new ZNP Secretary-General had resigned from the NDP or been suspended from it, to a grave dispute.¹⁵⁸ Silundika suggested in a written statement that Mawema’s mere accusation of NDP harassment was proof that the ZNP was a “sell-out” party as “complaints of intimidation are complaints of imperialists and their stooges.”¹⁵⁹ Days later, Silundika continued to assault the ZNP at a public meeting attended by some 2,000 in Harare. As supporters waved anti-ZNP banners proclaiming, “this is the burial ceremony of the new party,” Silundika urged them “to crush the new party.” Declaring that “unity is sacred,” he proclaimed that the NDP “will be harshly intolerant to any divisive tendencies.”¹⁶⁰ Robert Mugabe piled on the anti-ZNP criticism. A press release in his name stated, “the NDP is a PEOPLE’s movement ...

¹⁵³ Terence Ranger, “Introduction,” in Terence Ranger and Ngwabi Bhebe, eds., *The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe, Volume One: Pre-Colonial and Colonial Legacies* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2001), 65.

¹⁵⁴ “ZNP Protest Walk in Aid of Ranger,” *ADN*, 17 January 1963.

¹⁵⁵ “No Title,” *Samkange Newsletter*, 27 May 1961.

¹⁵⁶ “Rivalry Among African Leaders Grows: Civic Bodies Also Affected,” *ADN*, 7 October 1961; “Political Meetings Are Back,” *ADN*, 9 October 1961.

¹⁵⁷ “And Mawema Hits Back,” *ADN*, 7 June 1961.

¹⁵⁸ “Silundika: Mawema Was Expelled,” *ADN*, 8 June 1961.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ “NDP Congress to Discuss New Party and Threat to Leadership,” *ADN*, 13 June 1961.

whoever opposes it opposes the WILL of the people.”¹⁶¹ Similar sentiments were expressed by Transo Makombe, who wrote that the NDP represented “99%” of blacks in the colony and as such would “not tolerate any interference.”¹⁶²

NDP followers seized upon these exhortations. Hecklers plagued ZNP meetings to the extent that the speakers were not audible.¹⁶³ Attendees at the meetings were physically assaulted.¹⁶⁴ The ZNP sought, albeit ineffectively, to respond in kind. Matimba escalated tensions, issuing a strongly worded statement to the NDP, warning that “ZNP members shall use all possible means at their disposal to protect themselves and their property ...”¹⁶⁵ He also held authoritarian views, believing that an independent Zimbabwe should be a one-party state.¹⁶⁶ Nationalist leaders faced violent retribution from their competition in the opposition. In October, in a last gasp of internecine strife before the ZNP’s practical demise, Robert Mugabe’s house was stoned. A death note, targeting him and the NDP leadership was left behind, ostensibly from the ZNP.¹⁶⁷ Gunshots were fired outside Silundika’s house and shortly before his withdrawal from the ZNP, Mawema’s residence was stoned in an apparent retaliation.¹⁶⁸

From the ZNP’s inception, its fundamental existence was challenged by the NDP. The NDP spoke openly about the need to repress any opposition and rejected any critique of the tactics it used to do so. It found fraternal nationalist opposition fundamentally illegitimate. The consolidation of this attitude in 1961 foreshadowed the intense repression that future nationalist parties would face upon their formation. Furthermore, it augured the difficulty of a series of future OAU initiatives to reconstitute Zimbabwean nationalist unity.¹⁶⁹ The NDP offensive against the ZNP and the ZNP’s response established a template of intolerance and authoritarianism that came to flourish over the course of the liberation struggle and which continued in independent Zimbabwe.

¹⁶¹ “NDP Chief Replies to ZNP Manifesto,” *ADN*, 12 June 1961. Original emphasis.

¹⁶² Makombe, “NDP Represents High Stage.”

¹⁶³ “ZNP Supporters Beaten Up After Meeting Where No One Could be Heard.” *ADN*, 16 October 1961.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ “ZNP Men Will Protect Themselves—Matimba,” *ADN*, 17 October 1961.

¹⁶⁶ AmConsul, Salisbury to Department of State, 30 June 1961, 745c.00/5-161, Box 1692, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁶⁷ “NDP Leader’s House Stoned: Threats Issued,” *ADN*, 6 October 1961.

¹⁶⁸ “Gun was Fired Outside My House—NDP Man,” *ADN*, 9 October 1961.

¹⁶⁹ William J. Foltz and Jennifer Widner, “The OAU and Southern African Liberation,” in Yassin El-Ayouty and I. William Zartman, eds., *The OAU after Twenty Years* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 254–58.

Racial Exclusion

Another legacy of the ZNP's formation was increased calls to exclude white allies from direct participation in the nationalist struggle. However, Pritchard's claim that the issue of non-black participation in the nationalist struggle was a catalyst for the ZNP's formation is an exaggeration.¹⁷⁰ Patrick Matimba categorically denied claims that whites were excluded from ZNP membership.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, the role of whites in nationalist politics attained new resonance with the ZNP's emergence and the party sought to manipulate race to its political advantage. Edson Sithole declared that he "loath[ed] European membership in a pure African nationalist organisation."¹⁷² Just over a month after the formation of the ZNP, the New Africa Party, a fringe white party led by Ahrn Palley, a MP, and Garfield Todd, a former Prime Minister emerged, endorsing majority rule.¹⁷³ The ZNP resoundingly condemned the NDP leadership for appearing at a public address by Palley, who the ZNP saw as trying to maintain political relevance by courting black support.¹⁷⁴ However, anti-white sentiment in the ZNP seems to have reached its zenith in late 1962 when the much weakened party, facing irrelevance following the PASU breakaway, began to refer to Europeans as "visitors."¹⁷⁵

The NDP responded with its own racially motivated attacks. Foreshadowing the charged rhetoric that garnered international attention amidst Zimbabwe's post-2000 land reform crisis, Mugabe went on a vitriolic offensive against Matimba's marriage to a white Dutch woman and his prior residence in Holland. In one campaign address he announced, "marrying white women is not our concern, though it might interest the ZNP."¹⁷⁶ In a written statement, Mugabe defiantly exclaimed, "the Africans of this country will never tolerate a situation in which the affairs of their country will be directed by some obscure and remote figure stationed in Amsterdam. We shall not allow this country to be a little province of Holland."¹⁷⁷ Nkomo invoked the specter of whites having to leave independent Zimbabwe, a scenario that had gripped white Rhodesian consciousness after whites fled the Congo en masse following its independence in 1960.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁰ Pritchard, "Race, Identity, and Belonging," 122.

¹⁷¹ "Matimba to Probe Own Party," *ADN*, 6 September 1962.

¹⁷² "Sithole Denies He Is to Quit ZNP," *ADN*, 5 September 1962.

¹⁷³ Brooks Marmon, "From Dreams of Dominion to Aspirations for a New Africa: Ahrn Palley's Political Re-Invention in Southern Rhodesia, 1959–1961," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 45, 3 (2019), 497.

¹⁷⁴ "NDP Accused of Flirting with NAP," *ADN*, 23 November 1961.

¹⁷⁵ "ZNP Launches Fund for the Restricttees," *ADN*, 5 November 1962.

¹⁷⁶ "Political Colour-Bar Must Go Now," *Democratic Voice*, 11 October 1961.

¹⁷⁷ "NDP Attacks ZNP," *ADN*, 11 September 1961.

¹⁷⁸ Nyagumbo, *With the People*, 164; Frank Clements, *Rhodesia: A Study of the Deterioration of a White Society* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 175–76.

White Rhodesia took notice of this new militant discourse. An article in the *Rhodesian Monthly Review*, a bastion of far-right political opinion, crassly condemned a ZNP meeting where it was allegedly stated that whites would have to leave after independence.¹⁷⁹ These belligerent claims likely fed into the white electorate's turn to the right in December 1962 when the explicitly segregationist Rhodesian Front scored a victory over the UFP, the party (ostensibly) of multi-racial "Partnership." The ZNP's formation, in a milieu of pan-African militancy that coalesced following the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, provided an impetus for the expression of anti-white views in nationalist politics.¹⁸⁰ Although this rhetoric was primarily a superficial political tactic, it combined with a violent intolerance of intra-nationalist dissent to further polarize the colony's political life. Although the ZNP faded away after a matter of months, it left behind an environment in which the emancipatory aspects of nationalism became subsumed to its authoritarian ones. It was no coincidence that white Rhodesia's political thought concurrently became more truculent.

Conclusion

Soon after the PASU defection, the ZNP was further weakened at the end of 1962 when a number of officials resigned amidst claims that Matimba was misrepresenting nationalist opinion to west African leaders.¹⁸¹ Following the PASU breakaway, Edison Sambo, the ZNP's new Secretary-General, emerged as the de facto leader of the Party as Matimba was frequently abroad.¹⁸² The vestiges of the beleaguered ZNP limped on until 1963 when the party proclaimed its alignment with the movement that eventually formed ZANU. That July, Sambo announced the ZNP's desire to join ZAPU when the dissidents led by Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole initially moved to depose Nkomo internally.¹⁸³ After that move failed and Sambo quietly joined ZANU the following month, the effective end of the ZNP was a mere footnote in the newspapers.¹⁸⁴

Had Banda and Nkomo not reconciled, or had the ZNP's efforts to woo key members of the NDP executive met with greater success, the party would likely have assumed greater prominence and longevity, as Stanlake Samkange predicted upon its

¹⁷⁹ "The Impudence of African Leaders," *Rhodesian Monthly Review* (Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia), December 1961/January 1962.

¹⁸⁰ Timothy Scarnecchia, "The Congo Crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean Nationalism, 1960–1963," *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 11, 1 (2011), 72–73.

¹⁸¹ "ZNP Too: 24 Field Men Quit," *ADN*, 17 December 1962.

¹⁸² "Sambo Hits Back at Gonese," *ADN*, 31 May 1962.

¹⁸³ "ZNP Lines Up," *ADN*, 11 July 1963.

¹⁸⁴ "ZANU Officers Elected," *ADN*, 21 August 1963.

formation.¹⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the ZNP was briefly seen as a legitimate threat by both contemporary political analysts and its opponents in the NDP. The Party initially scored some major success on the pan-African diplomatic stage. In the NDP's indecisive positioning on electoral participation, the ZNP found a viable policy difference to highlight. The NDP was diverted from its attacks on the Southern Rhodesian Government and felt compelled to focus on the ZNP's intra-nationalist competition, a distraction repeated in future fracturing of the nationalist movement. With George Silundika and Robert Mugabe serving as key attack dogs, the NDP spared no efforts to eviscerate the ZNP. These attacks mirrored wider political developments across the continent, where newly empowered liberation movements were becoming more interested in consolidating power than upholding the democratic ideals they had espoused during their independence struggles.

The ZNP's rapid crumbling in the face of the NDP onslaught held important implications for the fracturing of ZAPU in 1963. In 1961, Nkomo and his allies learned the importance of nipping dissent in the bud. Conversely, the emergent ZANU team saw the importance of securing regional allies and meeting force with force. Prior to the formation of the ZNP in June 1961, nationalist criticism of black politicians in Southern Rhodesia generally targeted only those openly participating in Federation or espousing support for the UFP's integrationist efforts. By 1963, when the ZNP effectively disbanded, the scope of nationalist recriminations had significantly widened. Violence was rife in Salisbury's townships and criticism of Nkomo's leadership persisted. Increasingly assertive anti-colonial nationalist politics also engendered a backlash in the white political establishment, which abandoned pretensions of Partnership.

Although the ZNP's efforts to gain a notable political following were fruitless, its consequential contributions to the culture of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle were threefold. First, the ZNP's attempt to outflank the NDP on the left ended prospects of nationalist participation in settler political structures. Second, its efforts to woo Africa's emergent leadership interjected pan-African diplomatic tussles into the liberation struggle in a debilitating manner. Third, the violent struggle between the ZNP and the NDP heralded a brand of authoritarian politics that rejected pluralism, a development that continues to afflict Zimbabwe.

¹⁸⁵ AmConsul, Salisbury to Department of State, 30 June 1961, 745c.00/5-161, Box 1692, RG 59, NARA; "Malianga and Nkala Urged to Join ZNP," *ADN*, 15 June 1961; "No title," *Samkange Newsletter*, 27 May 1961.

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