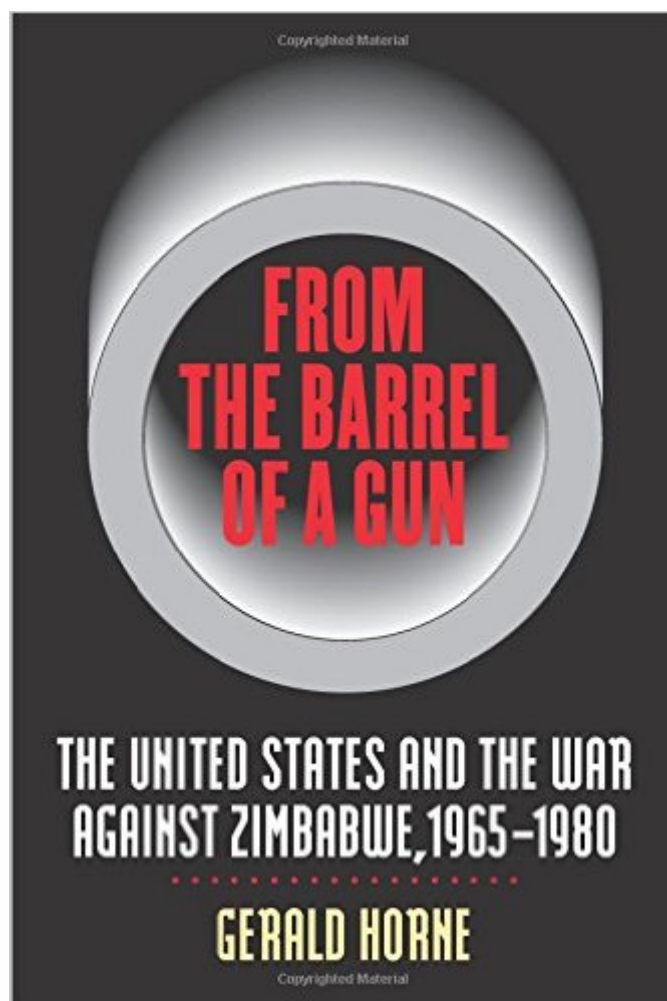


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From The Barrel Of A Gun: The United States And The War Against Zimbabwe, 1965-1980



Synopsis

In November 1965, Ian Smith's white minority government in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) made a unilateral declaration of independence, breaking with Great Britain. With a European population of a few hundred thousand dominating an African majority of several million, Rhodesia's racial structure echoed the apartheid of neighboring South Africa. Smith's declaration sparked an escalating guerrilla war that claimed thousands of lives. Across the Atlantic, President Lyndon B. Johnson nervously watched events in Rhodesia, fearing that racial conflict abroad could inflame racial discord at home. Although Washington officially voiced concerns over human rights violations, an attitude of tolerance generally marked U. S. relations with the Rhodesian government: sanctions were imposed but not strictly enforced, and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of American mercenaries joined white Rhodesia's side in battle with little to fear from U. S. laws. Despite such tacit U. S. support, Smith's regime fell in 1980, and the independent state of Zimbabwe was born. The first comprehensive account of American involvement in the war against Zimbabwe, this compelling work also explores how our relationship with Rhodesia helped define interracial dynamics in the United States, and vice versa.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book basically is a condemnation of the European (White) people, specifically the Rhodesian and the white minority government which was led by Ian Smith, Rhodesia's prime minister. The author's book looks in another direction when he describes the so-called "liberation" fighters of

Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, giving the reader the view that they were somehow anything but the murderous butchers that they were/are. The author leaves out the reality of just what has become of this once prosperous part of Africa (Rhodesia), once called the "breadbasket of Africa", now the disorganized, corrupt and starving black despot ruled nation of Zimbabwe, where sickness, starvation and death hangs over each and everyone of its black citizens. I lived in Rhodesia (1975) and saw for myself how the black Africans were treated. They were coming into Rhodesia, from all over southern Africa to work and live a rather good life under the white minority in charge of running the government. While in Rhodesia I met a number of black Rhodesians who were quite prosperous and who had made quite a large amount of money, of course Mr. Horne makes little or no reference to the burgeoning black middle class, which existed in Rhodesia, rather he harranges about mostly make believe "abuses" that needed to be addressed. by guerrilla warfare and terrorism. The author writes a very shallow and limited account about the thousands of foreign volunteers, mostly ex-military, who came to Rhodesia, to fight the communist terrorist insurgency.

This book detailing the liberation struggle has an unusual structure. It starts off with a chapter "Toward Zimbabwe," which raises three of Horne's themes in this book: racism, anti-communism, and the problem of "whiteness." It is often repetitive and padded and is the least interesting chapter in this book. The next chapter looks at the links between the Rhodesian government and its supporters in the United States. The third chapter looks at the ideological support of the white minority regime, concentrating on missionaries, anti-communist supporters and sexual violence. The fourth actually offers a summary of American diplomacy towards Rhodesia from the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 to Zimbabwe's independence. The fifth looks at business relations with the white minority regime. The sixth looks at the mercenary scum that came mostly from the United States to ravage Rhodesia and the indulgence they received from the American government. The seventh looks at links between African-Americans and the liberation struggle. The conclusion looks at modern Zimbabwe and the often pernicious effect Rhodesian mercenaries have had, mostly on South Africa. Horne, of course, is thoroughly in favour of the liberation struggle and is properly angry towards those who obstructed and delayed independence. Yet this is a mixed book. One point to start off with is that Horne is affiliated with the Communist Party of the United States of America. Even by the standards of world communist party leaderships, the American party is notorious for its dogmatic, simple-minded, philistine and uncritical attitude. Many intelligent and thoughtful people have joined the American Communist Party and the vast majority have left (or been expelled from) it in disgust at its dishonesty.

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