

Joshua Nkomo: Father Zimbabwe – The Life and Times of an African Legend



Joshua Nkomo was a Zimbabwean revolutionary and politician who played a key role in the country's struggle for independence from British colonial rule. Known as the "Father Zimbabwe," Nkomo was a charismatic leader who commanded the respect and admiration of both his followers and his opponents. He was a tireless advocate for social justice and equality, and his legacy continues to inspire people around the world.

Early Life and Education

Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo was born on June 19, 1917, in the village of Semokwe in southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). His father, Thomas Nyongolo Nkomo, was a chief of the Ndebele tribe. His mother, Manyange Nxumalo, was a devout Christian.



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Nkomo attended the local mission school and later studied at the Adams College in Natal, South Africa. He excelled in his studies and became fluent in several languages, including English, Ndebele, Zulu, and Sotho.

Political Career

In 1945, Nkomo joined the African National Congress (ANC), the leading black nationalist organization in South Africa. He quickly rose through the ranks of the ANC and became one of its most prominent leaders.

In 1957, Nkomo was elected president of the ANC. He led the ANC in its struggle against apartheid, the system of racial segregation and discrimination implemented by the South African government.

In 1960, Nkomo was arrested and imprisoned by the South African government. He was released from prison in 1963 and returned to Rhodesia, where he continued to lead the ANC.

In 1964, Nkomo founded the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), a breakaway faction of the ANC. ZAPU became the leading nationalist organization in Rhodesia and led the armed struggle against the white-minority government.

Rhodesian Bush War

In 1965, Rhodesia declared independence from Britain unilaterally. The Rhodesian government was led by Ian Smith, a white supremacist who refused to grant black majority rule.

The Rhodesian Bush War began in 1966 and lasted for 15 years. ZAPU and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), the military wing of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), fought against the Rhodesian government.

Nkomo was the commander-in-chief of ZIPRA, the military wing of ZAPU. He led ZIPRA in numerous battles against the Rhodesian security forces.

Lancaster House Agreement

In 1979, Nkomo participated in the Lancaster House Agreement, which led to the independence of Zimbabwe. The agreement was signed by the Rhodesian government, ZAPU, ZANU, and the British government.

The agreement provided for a ceasefire, the release of political prisoners, and the establishment of a new constitution that would guarantee black

majority rule.

Independence and Post-Independence Politics

Zimbabwe became independent on April 18, 1980. Nkomo was elected as one of the vice presidents of the new government. He served as vice president until 1987.

In 1982, Nkomo and ZAPU merged with ZANU and ZANLA to form the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). Nkomo became the leader of the PF faction of ZANU-PF.

In 1987, Nkomo was dismissed from the government by President Robert Mugabe. The dismissal of Nkomo and other PF leaders led to the Matabeleland massacres, in which thousands of Ndebele people were killed by the Zimbabwean security forces.

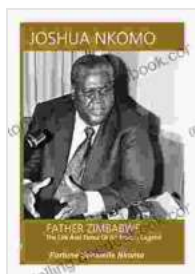
Later Life and Legacy

In 1999, Nkomo retired from active politics. He died on July 1, 1999, at the age of 82.

Nkomo was a towering figure in African history. He was a tireless advocate for social justice and equality, and his legacy continues to inspire people around the world. He is remembered as the "Father Zimbabwe" and as one of the greatest leaders of the African liberation movement.

Joshua Nkomo was a complex and controversial figure, but there is no doubt that he was a giant of African history. He was a charismatic leader, a brilliant strategist, and a tireless advocate for social justice. His legacy continues to inspire people around the world, and he will always be

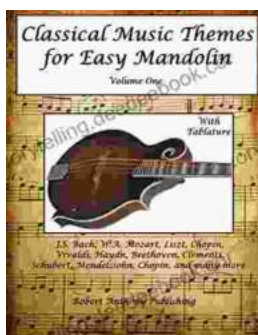
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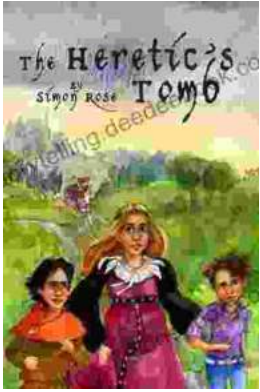
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