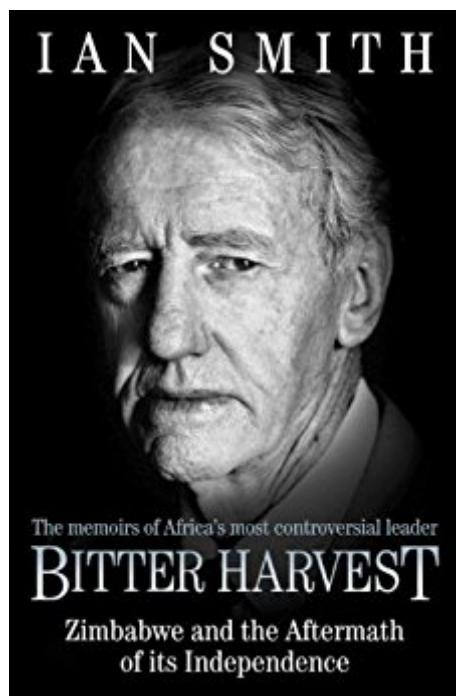


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Bitter Harvest: Zimbabwe And The Aftermath Of Its Independence



Synopsis

In July 2007, Zimbabwe's worsening economy saw inflation skyrocket to 7,634 per cent, deepening the already chronic food shortages in a country where only one in five of the adult population is in employment. Months later, on 20 November 2007, Ian Smith, the former Prime Minister of Rhodesia died, leaving behind him a lifetime of resistance to black majority rule and the dangers that he believed it would bring to his country. Ian Smith was a man with the ability to excite powerful emotions in all who heard his name. To those who still revere his memory he was a hero, a mighty leader, a man whose formidable integrity led him into head-to-head confrontation with the Labour Government of Britain in the 1960s. To others, he was, and remains, a demon, a reactionary whose intransigence long delayed majority rule in an important corner of Africa. The last decades of the twentieth century and the first years of the new millennium have seen Zimbabwe spiral into a chaos of violence and towards the brink of economic collapse, prompting many to reappraise Smith's role and the prescience of his actions. In this revealing and important historical document, Ian Smith charts the rise and fall of a once-great nation. He tells the remarkable story behind the signing of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, as well as the excesses of power that Mugabe has used to create the virtual dictatorship which exists in Zimbabwe today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A Fascinating insight in what happened behind the scenes during this turbulent period in the history of Rhodesia / Zimbabwe.

A great book by a great man! If you are interested in the history of Rhodesia you must read this book.

This particular book (softcover) was published after Ian Smith's death. What an enigma he was and such a lost opportunity...

Very interesting and worth reading

It was ok but he repeated himself too often.

I found this to be a very self serving book to Ian Smith, but I also found it to be correct in so many ways. Historians should take note that he gives a full on and wonderful explanation as to why the UDI happened (if you don't know what a UDI is read the book). He proves how the English government betrayed a nation that helped them in two world wars. And why the Rhodesians had a very selective mind set as to how they wished to live and why. It is a must read ..while a bit slow in some places the book gives you an account of history not normally published.

Ian Smith was a hero of mine in younger days (mine and his). Bleeding hearts had their way in Rhodesia and see what has become of this beautiful country! Unfortunately no oil there to make us interested....just left the farmers to perish by the machete!

Mr. Smith's compelling story of the (re)volution of his country is an engaging and worthwhile historical read. Smith brings the reader to the conclusion that had Smith's transitional government been given the opportunity earned? Smith's lifelong proud loyalty to his country as well as his "kith and kin" is admirable. It's difficult to find fault in Smith's consistency as a political leader, adherence to societal norms based on civility and an authentic political process. Bitter harvest, it's been an undeniable paltry harvest for citizens of Zimbabwe. Smith's understandable bitterness as a

political leader stands is contrasted honestly to the supportive and friendly disposition of his countrymen. Bitter Harvest reads like the Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy era in which it took place. Regrettably, I wish Smith would have taken a more historical perspective. For example, how he felt about the concurrent civil rights movement in the US and his views on how they related to events. He understood one man, one vote-once. He understood education. And it's great he enjoyed his visit to the United States, but he could have said more of his UDI visit besides being given the cold shoulder in political circles and shown affection privately. Smith understood Africa, Smith understood the parliamentary process. Did he "champion" the exercising the franchise to vote movement in southern states in the US as an example for his own people? Certainly enough of today's 24/7 media cycle had evolved at the time of writing for him to elaborate, even if were only in his postscript comments. As a result critical remarks now paint Smith as a simplistic man championing Victorian era values....a product of a diaspora not keeping pace with an evolving motherland and world views. Smith clearly scoffs at this notion in his book. Smith knew right from wrong, which end was up and which leader would walk out of the ghetto alive in 2008. Why Smith didn't take an even harsher view in his book towards Vorster's belief detente would lead to the acceptance of the old republic is a mystery. It's hard to imagine Smith couldn't sift through the complexities of the relationship between the two nations. Smith recounts South Africa's withholding financial, material and, unbelievably, moral support. Why Smith didn't make more of this hypocrisy and the absurdity of the South African government's position? If Smith declared the potential for success of the UDI's constitutional evolutionary approach would have hastened the demise of the old republic in South Africa, it wasn't mentioned as often as his rebuke of the OAU. Smith knew his dilemma and that the deck was stacked against him. Mr. Smith aptly saw Nelson Mandela as Africa's first statesman, but when?. Bitter Harvest chronicles the biggest sellout of a population within a democratic nation state. Would that region of the world have changed for the better sooner using the UDI model? Would Zimbabwe have continued to prosper without loss of life and liberty? Indeed, would the suffering, pillaging and tens of millions of deaths in the surrounding regional wars have been prevented.....?

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