

excellent exposition of the Fallist movement, the intricacies of the powers and violence entwined in their struggle and of a recognition of the fact that for as "long as these statutes are allowed to stand, we as a society can never begin the process of recognising the violence of our past" (p 171). Nyamnjoh has captured the relevance and essence of the movement through a thorough examination of the different discourses that have emerged since the statue of Rhodes was smeared with faeces, and his critical interrogation of the contexts and the subtexts make this book a must for all who are interested in understanding the dynamic vision and just demands of (in my opinion) the best of South Africans. More specifically, it is a critical investment for academics and university management who struggle to understand the nature and intensity of the pain and the recollection of memory for the students. This lapse in understanding has resulted in the militarisation of our campuses, the victimisation of the black bodies of students and the belittling of the call for a free, quality, decolonial education. If South Africans are to move beyond the belief that "the welfare of a country can be permanently based on fear" (p 33), those who are invested in education have to lead with greater integrity and compassion.

**Quraysha Ismail Sooliman**  
**Department of Political Sciences**  
**University of Pretoria**

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**Msipa, Cephass G, *In Pursuit of Freedom and Justice: A Memoir*. Harare: Weaver Press 2015, xiv & 185 pp.**

*In Pursuit of Freedom and Justice: A Memoir* by veteran nationalist Cephass Msipa joins the list of memoirs and biographies of women and men who fought for majority rule in Zimbabwe. Born on 7 July 1931 in the Shabani District in the Midlands province (p 1), "a teacher by profession and a politician by circumstances" (p ix), Msipa was a key member of the nationalist movement and a prominent politician in the post-colonial era. Born of poor peasants, Msipa's childhood was typical of many of his generation until he became politicised at a young age, especially during encounters with Benjamin Burombo, a proto-nationalist and a friend of his father, whom he describes as his political mentor (p 4).

Msipa is a product of the Dadaya Mission, where the liberal Gar-

field Todd's work was significant in paving a new path for racial relations in an environment where a semi-*apartheid* policy was the order of the day. Trained as a teacher, one of the few professions available to educated Africans at the time, his first post was at Msipani Primary in Shabani (p 9). He was transferred in 1955 to Que Que, a town in the Midlands province. The urban experience opened a new political world for Msipa. In Que Que, Msipa was "reminded that (he) was a Black person and that (he) could not do so many of the ordinary things that are part of people's everyday life" (p 29). Not only were the living conditions for many Africans in Que Que terrible, they also experienced blatant racism which was typical of Rhodesian society at the time. It was, however, in the boiling pot of Que Que's main African Township, Amaveni, that Msipa's leadership and negotiating skills were forged and sharpened. It was also within this environment that his life took a definite political turn, namely the fight for Africans' rights. Reminiscent of his time as a member of the African Advisory Board he wrote: "I used to advise a white councillor who would take our grievances to the council. When I looked at him and talked to him, I could see that he was where he was because he was White. That put me in a fighting mood, and I felt that we as Africans had to fight for our rights. From then on, my approach to every organization I joined was that I had to fight in order to gain some dignity" (pp 19-20).

Another major turning point in his political career took place in 1958 when he relocated to Salisbury. The townships of Highfield and Harare were a "political melting pot" (p 24). Within this explosive environment, African nationalist parties were usually banned. The banning of the Southern African National Congress saw the formation of the National Democratic Party. This party was also banned and from its ashes emerged the Zimbabwe African National Party (ZAPU). In 1963, a splinter group formed the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Msipa identifies three key factors that caused this split: Joshua Nkomo's leadership, personal clashes between Nkomo and Enos Nkala as well as Ndabaningi Sithole's so-called hunger for power (pp 33-34). The split led to more violence in Salisbury's townships. Unfortunately, Msipa does not analyse the genesis of sell-out politics that have become standard practice in Zimbabwean politics today. Still, the violence compelled the government to declare a state of emergency. In addition, it rounded up nationalists and the end result was confinement at Gonakudzingwa, Sikombela and WhaWha. Msipa is very clear about the frustrations experienced in detention and the tensions amongst detainees. Significant to note is that Msipa is one of the few who managed to escape from detention, an illustration of how nationalists were

willing to use the courts to challenge the system. He was, however, detained a second time, at Gwelo Prison, till his release in December 1970.

Msipa did not join the liberation forces. Nonetheless, he played a significant role in the struggle against white minority rule, including being the Patriotic Front's spokesperson during the 1979 Lancaster House talks which eventually ushered in a negotiated settlement and paved the way for independence (pp 75-96). His role as spokesperson of the Patriotic Front was complicated by the fact that he also represented his own party, ZAPU. The rancour within the liberation movements after the split of 1963 continued into the post-colonial era. ZAPU's failure to capture power during the 1980 elections meant that Msipa and his colleagues became junior partners in government (p 96). Unfortunately, they were later, in the 1980s, dismissed amid one of Zimbabwe's worst political crises, the *Gukurahundi*. Msipa is very clear about the devastation brought about by this crisis in Matabeleland and the Midlands province, not only the loss of life but also the political destabilisation. Important to note is that his account brings to the fore some of the behind-the-scenes negotiations towards the 1987 Unity Accord. Amongst these were Matabeleland leaders' efforts at bringing to Mugabe's attention the effects of the security situation in their areas (pp 114-115). Though Msipa does not question the position of ZAPU in the Unity Accord, he does show how bumpy the road to unity was for Zimbabweans.

In 2000, with the beginning of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLR), Msipa became the Governor of Midlands. In his narrative of the unfolding land redistribution process, Msipa presents a picture of an orderly and procedural programme. In addition, one gets an inside but cleaned-up view of the land transfers. Even though he presents a rosy picture, Msipa regrets the calibre of some of the beneficiaries of the FTLR. He makes it very clear that "The problem was in the choice of beneficiaries... I think we are to blame by failing to make the right choices of the people to be resettled..." (p 185). This comment applies, however, to the entire FTLR.

*In Pursuit of Freedom and Justice* is largely uncritical of the post-colonial government. This is understandable considering that Msipa has been part of the same governing structures since 1980. Still, one gets glimpses of his frustrations with some of government's failures and, of course, with the succession in ZANU-PF (p 183). He writes that "the people of Zimbabwe deserve better institutional arrangements than are currently on offer" (p 85).

While he explores national politics, Msipa's book also pays atten-

tion to everyday family life, an analysis of the material condition of many Africans during the colonial period, namely a makeshift existence and the absence of facilities in rural as well as in urban areas. In addition, he points at the dangers of political involvement to families. In the 1960s, for example, nationalists were targeted, including Msipa whose house was stoned and "on one occasion a big rock landed on the pillow of my two-and-a-half-year-old son ... missing his head by an inch" (p 34). Furthermore, bringing the family into the picture enables Msipa to illustrate due to political involvement (p 59) placed a strain on marriage. And of course, focusing on the family allows him to bring to the fore the significant role played by wives to sustain households when husbands were away. More, however, could have been said about women and politics in Zimbabwe.

As a teacher in colonial Zimbabwe, Msipa was part of the African middle class — that class of Africans who straddled between the poor majority and the white minority. In the memoir, Msipa positions himself as a middle figure in Zimbabwean politics. This is portrayed in various ways. During his time in Amaveni, Msipa was an important member of the African Advisory Board. The centrality of the Board should not be missed here. It was an intermediary organisation that forwarded Africans' grievances to the City Council on the management of townships. His role as a middle figure is, however, best illustrated in the narrative of his political life. During the 1960s, especially after a faction of ZAPU broke away to form ZANU, Msipa portrays himself as the bridge between ZAPU and ZANU even though he was a member of ZAPU. During the Pearce Commission, Msipa situates himself again as the liaison person between nationalists and other influential Africans when he negotiated the entrance of Abel Muzorewa into national politics. During the negotiations at the Lancaster House Conference, Msipa again straddled between two nationalist organisations — PF ZAPU and ZANU PF — as the spokesperson of the Patriotic Front. This intermediary role did not end with independence. While during the colonial period, Msipa presents this role as part of his contribution towards majority rule, in the post-colonial period, it centred on nation building. To be specific, Msipa explains how he played a significant part in bringing the post-colonial warring parties into an agreement in 1987, commonly known as the Unity Accord. Msipa praises the Unity Accord for its nation building even though, at the same time, through the stroke of the pen, the agreement introduced the one-party state into post-colonial Zimbabwe. During the post-2000 period, Msipa projects an image of mediator between white farmers and the veterans of the liberation war who were in part the engineers of the Third Chimurenga. In others words,

by privileging his mediating capabilities over the *longue durée*, Msipa presents himself as someone with a pre-ordained role of reconciling warring parties in Zimbabwe.

This *Memoir* is an interesting read even though it would have benefited from a more critical look at key figures of the liberation movement. While Sithole is portrayed as power-hungry, Msipa presents historical figures like Mugabe within the framework of a triumphant narrative — politicians who took the right decisions at the right moment. Mugabe's entrance into politics is treated as a major turning point. According to Msipa, "The appointment of Mugabe heralded a new revolutionary approach to our politics" (p 29). However, it is not clear how revolutionary or how more radical than his peers Mugabe really was when one reads Msipa's account of that entry into nationalist politics as a key turning-point in the history of the liberation struggle. The *Memoir* shows, however, how Msipa always wanted to endear himself to Mugabe. Indeed, this is different from other recent biographies by key nationalists such as Edgar Tekere in *A lifetime of struggle* which is more critical of Mugabe. And, finally, another criticism that could be levelled against this book is how he treats his life history as teleological, a linear progression of a political career to liberate Zimbabwe and to unify the new nation.

Irrespective of these criticisms, one must be attentive to the fact that this is a one-man account of his life and of his contribution to the liberation struggle. It brings to light the behind-the-scenes of some of the key events in the history of the nation. An easy read, the *Memoir* is recommended to all who are interested in African elites and in nationalist politics in Zimbabwe and who want to understand better the torturous journey Zimbabwe has been through.

**Clement Masakure**  
**Centre for Africa Studies**  
**University of the Free State**

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**Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo J. (ed), *Mugabeism? History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 319pp.**

This is an 'all in one' kind of book about the history, politics, and economy of Zimbabwe from the liberation struggle on. The book is about Robert Mugabe and his Mugabeism, or what Mugabe 'says' he is and what he