

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.

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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

'exactly is'. It responds to the lack of biographies on Mugabe who is the oldest and the longest serving post-independence African statesman, the man whose life has been dominated by secrecy, rumours and gossip. The book consists of several essays written by scholars from different disciplines, trying to make sense of Mugabe by exploring the various, contested meanings of the Mugabe phenomenon, his thinking, his feeling and his *modus operandi*. With convincing arguments, the book shows how the life of Mugabe is intrinsically linked to the history of Zimbabwe and ZANU-PF. The book reveals the great secret of how Mugabe has survived internal and external challenges and pressures.

Making use of oral and written sources and through meticulous and well balanced research, the book breaks the one-dimensional presentation of Mugabe, dominated by Pan-Africanists and Western Imperialism, which portrays Mugabe as admired *versus* demonised statesman, patriot *versus* traitor, liberation hero *versus* post-colonial tyrant, man of racial justice *versus* Black Hitler and revolutionary *versus* human rights violator. The book argues that "Mugabe cannot be unproblematically praised or simplistically dismissed".

The authors, particularly the Zimbabweans, are commended for a courageous and neutral discussion of controversial and sensitive issues of power dynamics, some of which still affect Zimbabwe today, like the genocide in Matabeleland and Midlands, the power dynamics between Shona and Ndebele and the various financial scandals.

With a few exceptions, the book develops a balanced narrative of the strained relations between the West and Mugabe, making it approachable for both sides. More importantly, the book uncovers how Mugabe, who once charmed the West, turned into one of its most wicked enemies.

Well structured, each chapter examines a 'piece' of Zimbabwe, written in a clear language and rich in events, making it very captivating reading. To support their arguments, the authors resort to classics such as Plato, Aristotle, Gramsci and Nietzsche. Pan-Africanist intellectuals such as Garvey, Du Bois, Fanon and Cesaire look at Mugabe in comparison with other African leaders such as Nyerere, Machel, Mandela, Nujoma and Nkrumah.

The book, furthermore, helps to understand other Zimbabwean history-makers like Muzorewa, Tekere, Mujuru, Sithole, Nkomo, Mavhaire, Mnangagwa, Tongogara, Tsvangirai, amongst others; it also allows for a better understanding of the role of neighbouring countries in shaping the history of Zimbabwe. It covers important historic moments in the liberation struggle and the emergence of Mugabe in leadership, the formation of

ZANU-PF, the power dynamics within ZANU-PF (alliances, fears, crises, etc.), Mugabe's redistributive policies (land reform, nativism, Black empowerment, radical nationalism), power strategies (use of state resources, military alliances, corruption, political violence) and, finally, the economic crisis and the anti-Western sentiment.

It certainly is a book that could serve as a source of information for textbooks, should the need for a review of the curriculum, from primary to tertiary education, arise.

The book begins with a powerful introduction, setting the context and guiding the reader towards a better understanding of the phenomenon of Mugabeism. It also provides a well elaborated summary of the different chapters, grouped into four themes.

The first theme is on "Mugabeism, Economic Nationalism and Pan-Africanism"; it starts with a historical and political analysis of Mugabe's political skills. This is followed by an economic analysis of Mugabeism, with a focus on land reform and indigenisation, two manifestations of African nationalism. The theme closes with a chapter portraying Mugabe, not as a Pan-Africanist, but as a Neo-Sultanist: violation of human rights, violence against political opponents, coercion and persuasion, control of state media, electoral fraud and a perpetuation of the liberation struggle to hold on to power.

The second theme is "Diplomacy, Solidarity, and Power". It starts by exposing Mugabe's combination of diplomatic strategy, intransigence and vulnerability. It also unveils Mugabe's strong political influence in Southern African Development Community (SADC). This theme, furthermore, shows how Robert Mugabe and Sam Nujoma both focus on issues such as land reform, homophobia and anti-Western sentiments to obscure the lack of service delivery and wealth distribution. The section closes with a chapter discussing the issues of power and the paradigm of war and violence that characterises Mugabeism as a regime's mechanism to secure power.

The third theme focuses on "Masculinity, Gender, and Corruption". It opens with a discussion on how Mugabe uses the 'Boy Code' narrative of manhood, masculinity and patriarchy to clamp down on his opponents. The author affirms that the refusal to step down following the defeat in the 2008 polls is associated with Mugabe's perception of Tsvangirai as a 'tea boy', not man enough to take care of this beautiful 'woman' called Zimbabwe. Using the gender perspective, one chapter in this section shows how Mugabe's political decision-making emulates the masculinisation of the state and the perpetuation of the patriarchal model of the liberation struggle. The removal of Joyce Mujuru from the vice-presidency illustrates

the lack of power of women in Zimbabwe.

Theme three discusses and gives clear evidence of corruption in key economic sectors throughout the country, ignored by Mugabe and ZANU-PF, despite the President's commitment to ZANU-PF's Leadership Code. It analyses how Mugabe as a strongman allows corruption, in the military and in politics, as a strategy to retain power. According to the authors of the chapter on corruption "the fundamental problem... in Zimbabwe is the lack of moral authority and political will of the president to profoundly change a system that has worked so well to achieve his singular objective of being a president for life".

The last theme in the book addresses the issues of "Global Coloniality, Racism, and Militarism" as part of Mugabeism. The section opens with an interesting discussion on Mugabe's inconsistency and ambivalence between opposing the West and his wish to be accommodated by it, which compromises his decolonisation project. From the perspective of Fanon, one of the chapters places Mugabe in the colonial logic, giving Zimbabwe only 'Flag Independence', to conclude that "Mugabe is all things gone badly".

Still under this theme, the second last chapter illustrates the colonial constraints under which African leaders have been working but stops short to hold them, as beneficiaries of such a system, responsible for failure to address them. Mugabe especially is considered to have been particularly brutal against his own people by using violence, divisive language, ethnic cleansing and crackdowns on opponents. In the authors' words, Mugabe became a "white man in a black man's skin" who even used colonial legislation to oppress Zimbabweans.

The book closes with a parallel drawn with Mubarak in Egypt to show how Mugabe has relied on the military for his survival and long reign, preventing Zimbabwe from attaining a consolidated democracy.

The editor, a respectable scholar, is commended for his efforts to synchronise the different contributions, a daunting task, given the multi-faceted phenomenon which is Mugabeism. The book is recommended to all, including pro-Westerners and Pan-Africanists, but could have benefited from a concluding chapter to wrap up the different presentations.

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