

Sizwe Mpopu-Walsh, *Democracy and Delusion: 10 myths in South African Politics*. Cape Town: Tafelberg 2017, pp. 184.

A book that analyses a perception that has continued to fuel much controversy, as to the place of governance and political office holders in restructuring and empowering communities cannot come at a better time. Mr Sizwe Mpopu-Walsh's book leaves one wondering if the much needed change is imminent within the shortest period of time. However, before this review is carried on, a few housekeeping issues must be disclosed. First is that Mr Mpopu-Walsh is the son of Dali Mpopu, one of the key figures in the opposition party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). In the musical rendezvous to this book, Mpopu-Walsh sampled a slogan from the EFF Commander in Chief (CIC), Julius Malema. It must also be noted that Mpopu-Walsh has been and still remains an activist. He was noted for the #RhodesMustFall campaign at Oxford University, Cambridge. For one who detests colonialism and is proud to be a black South African, the inclusion of the name Walsh (which is his white mother's surname) at a time when decolonisation entails a suggestion for the removal of Western names is confusing. So should one read this book with hyperbolic paradox? The posing of this question is not to limit the philosophy or knowledge generated and shared in this book, but to give the reader enough information for the purpose of making an informed and un-sentimental judgment on matters of governance and politics.

This review may be best understood from two stands, what the book did and what the book did not do.

The book postulates what it calls ten myths that dog the South African political scene as way of talking about political discourses in South Africa during a period of lots of changes in politics. Contextually, the author reaffirmed the long-standing arguments that poverty is on the rise and the living conditions in South Africa are getting worse (pp 1-13). In so doing, the author portrayed: the income inequality that exists, the rate of unemployment, and wealth inequality. While the middle class in South Africa seems to be on the rise, there is a total disconnect from wealth creation of the middle class, due to black tax and rising debt profiles. This is a situation that makes it difficult for the sustainability of the middle class, and in the long run threatens the prospects of the National Development Plan (pp 3-4). In chapter three of this book, the author laments the state of inept leadership and delivery of important variables for growth such as housing, sanitation, water, HIV/AIDS, electricity, and the inability of the government to implement free education.

Myth three, four and five tend to be the core for future development in South Africa. Myth three discusses land reforms and how the redistribution of land is the sole model for crippling poverty, inequality, and unemployment, while ensuring that

black families are uplifted from squalor and deprivation. The author argues that citing the Zimbabwean experience is not good enough, which is agreeable but remains a moot. Revisiting issues surrounding restitution, redistribution and tenure reforms for indigenes, however, one must also come to an understanding that the indigenes of South Africa are still left behind in the scheme of things. It is also imperative to note that the Boers, the Xhosas and Zulus were predominantly entangled in a complicated war for the sole purpose of establishing dominance and expanding their territories. This may be one of the reasons why at the adoption statement of the Freedom Charter it is noted that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

This point was neither a mistake nor an act of selling-out, but an understanding that fundamental concessions need to be made for South Africa's future to guarantee peace, growth and development. There must be a concerted effort by all parties within the polity to grow in strength and in brotherliness. Thus, reverse apartheid, in any way or form, will only create anger, resentment and disconnect for the youth. This is a consideration, which the author did not take into perception, that most of the Caucasians, the Boers, the Indians, and the Portuguese among other ethnic enclaves in South Africa, do not have any ties or contact whatsoever with the nationalities of their forebears other than South Africa.

However, on the legal woes of former South African President Jacob Zuma, it failed to acknowledge that certain big dons were also active participants of this myth. More so, why the author ignores the ineffectiveness of the government to fulfil its primary mundane functions. State interference in the financial sector and allied industries has resulted in more chaos than the opposite.

Another chapter (two) of this book dealt with the notion that "Free Education Is Unachievable". Its primary argument is that free education is compulsory and provided certain solutions, which tend to lean towards subsidising education for the poor than free education in itself. It does a comparison, which was unnecessary for the most of it, between South Africa and the likes of Australia, China, Britain, Brazil, United States of America (US), before taking a swing at the Scandinavian countries. The Scandinavian model among all these would have been a best suit, because, it would be erroneous to assume that Australians began paying fees only a decade ago. This is because fees had always been collected until Whitlam Labour Government abolished university fees on 1 January 1974, however, the payment of fees returned a decade later (Whitlam Institute 2018). And in the US, the budget of Harvard University for only Research and Development was estimated at 10 billion dollars (Comen 2017). How can one compare 65 billion Rands funding for undergraduates (this is because free education is silent about post-graduate studies) shared among 26 universities under the author's assumption? This tends to under-

mine the growth and development of higher education in the country, in that, research and development are the cathedral of the citadel of learning, because, that is where knowledge is produced (pp 14-23).

There are three major things that were ignored in this book. The role of the now CIC of the EFF and other members of his party in fronting Zuma, for which even the CIC has publicly apologised. The role of human capital development in nation building, and the place of the mindset development in achieving full decolonisation and self-reliance. And thirdly, while the apartheid government ruled they provided services effectively with a smaller civil service and population to white communities effectively. This observation leads the reviewer of this book to pose the question: Why is it then that after 24 years of democracy in South Africa, the notion of service delivery is more prevalent? An attempt to address this, questions in this book raises more questions than answers. More so, the author has failed in this book to give credence to certain province like Western Cape, which is governed by the Democratic Alliance (p 10). He also failed to state if those under the notion of communism or socialism (for example, EFF) are doing better or not or even if they exist? Instead, the author hibernates in problematisation. Thus, it will be best to refer to this book project as a collection of popular essays than anything else.

In as much as this book is interesting and exciting to read, one must not confuse it for a scholarly treatise. It is basically an opinion piece of the author, which is one of the reason why the word "I" was very prominent throughout all the chapters. The reference list was haphazardly written, making it difficult to confirm or discard statements made. Furthermore, a majority of the references consulted during the preparation of this book call for concern being mainly from less credible sources such as newspapers, blogs, and TV interviews among others without full description.

In final analysis, it is concluded by this reviewer that in order to avoid any form of confusion this book is a perfect cover for opposition campaign and populism. In all, it is a good read for further critique and investigation.

Bibliography

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Emeka Austin Ndaguba
University of Fort Hare