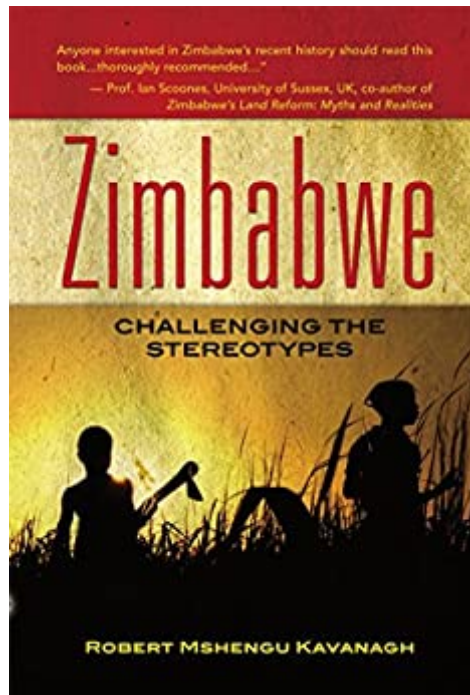


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Zimbabwe: Challenging The Stereotypes



Synopsis

"Zimbabwe: Challenging the Stereotypes" brings the story of Zimbabwe up-to-date (2014) in a dramatic, readable, firsthand description of thirty four years of Zimbabwe's history by a South African academic, writer and arts educationist who went through it all from Independence to the present. While it confirms some of the West's criticisms, it offers a unique alternative viewpoint and questions a number of long-held and seldom challenged beliefs, including the almost universal cliché that at Independence Zimbabwe had everything going for it and threw it all away through bad government. It offers a fresh assessment of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's military involvement in the Congo, the Gukurahundi massacres in Matebeleland, sanctions, human rights, the rule of law, the media and culture in Zimbabwe and builds on recent research which demonstrates that the reality of the Land Reform and other aspects of the country's recent history belie the unquestioned and widely-propagated myths. Extracts from pre-publication previews:

“Anyone interested in Zimbabwe's recent history should read this book...thoroughly recommended”

• Prof. Ian Scoones, University of Sussex, UK, co-author of Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities

“Refreshingly daring, original, inventive and captivating,...highly controversial and likely to stir heated debate”

• Prof. Micere Githae Mugo, Syracuse University, US, Kenyan poet, playwright and essayist, author of Writing and Speaking from the Heart of My Mind

“Told with brutal honesty. A book all South Africans and indeed all who wish to learn must read”

• Maishe Maponya, South African playwright and poet, author of The Hungry Earth and Gangsters.

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Customer Reviews

As a South African whose lived through the major democratic changes of my country and will be here to see through the next 3-4 decades, this is a scary book to read. What Zimbabwe has experienced over the last 4 decades, South Africa has seen the same over two. What is scary is we are heading straight into the next two decades without realizing that we are reliving Zimbabwe's history. This is a timely book, told with passion and sometimes frustrated anger at the misinformation perpetrated by the western media, their allies within Zimbabwe and all other African countries recently liberated from colonialism. For any South African with an opinion on Zimbabwe, but either has never been there or bothered to interrogate the details of its challenges, this is a "must read"! I felt embarrassed at times at what I took at face values to be the problems in Zimbabwe; I read without enquiry what the media (international and South African) were dishing out as facts. I noticed though that whenever I spoke personally to Zimbabweans, I never got the same sense as I got from the media. I met people who were very comfortable in who they were and very happy to return to the hell pit that the media was continuously painting. I never sat back to question the contradiction! Unless we heed the call that Kavanagh is making, South Africa should brace itself for a decade of strife and brutal hardship. The Lancaster Agreements of Zimbabwe remind me of the CODESA Agreements of South Africa - back then the "dragon's teeth" were sown in South African politics, we are now slowly reaching reaping stage as frustrations and decent start to mount. The false unity that we once relied on for growth is being taken apart by those with vested interest as pertinent questions of land ownership, resource control and direction our new found independence should take are discussed. Things definitely couldn't and shouldn't continue as they are/were - we haven't learned from Zimbabwe! What a pity - we should have by now devised strategy for a system that seeks to uplift the downtrodden and to empower them with the abilities to direct their own futures. Instead we have been experimenting with a similar system that has failed Zimbabwe, whose results are not a far away phenomenon, but a daily specter that we see and deal with daily! Why aren't we asking these questions, why has our media let us down so badly when they purport to

inform us???This a challenge to those journalists in The Mail & Guardian (SA), Sunday Times, 702 Radio, CNN, BBC, SKY and all those establishments who claim true journalism and some independent reporting, to read this book with an open mind and internally ask themselves to what degree they've been complicit in propagating the stereotypes of Zimbabwe and more so in what way they are assisting those with vested interests in the destruction of South Africa? They owe it to themselves and to everything they claim to stand for to educate the population better. A really worthy output, I hope it receives its place in African and World political literature as a masterpiece which interrogated Post-liberation politics and difficulties that these new institutions find themselves better than any before it. Nathi Mdladla

So many books on Zimbabwe are very biased one way or another. This book is the rare exception! It is exactly what I was looking for! I wanted a book that took the issues of Zimbabwe - a place where I visit and have close friends - and lets the reader form opinions of complex issues. The author looks at the issues from all angles.

An ebook that gives us a new look at Zimbabwe.. Zimbabwe is a country that has many things going for it, if it had good government things would be much better for the people of Zimbabwe.

A fantastic book especially for someone living amongst the diaspora. It tells me about my country from the eyes of foreigner who is invariably present and has lived amongst it. He deconstructs everything I love about the place while providing an intellectual diary of its socio-political historical events so we can understand the country at its core. For this the author is superbly positioned. It is very well balanced, not supporting any one party or group and its anecdotal expression provides a deeper context of the challenges faced by those living in Zimbabwe. I feel as though the writer is speaking to the side of my mind that has for years challenged the western perspectives on Zimbabwe, that perhaps the foreign press failed to articulate the complexities of Zimbabwe's evolving circumstances during the 80s 90s and 2000s. In my view the best book on the Zimbabwe situation past and present. It is relevant to every person that has an idea of Zimbabwe, those on the ground and those abroad, and whatever your idea on this beautiful country this book will for challenge any notions that one might maintain.

A thoughtful, well written and constructive dialog. Seemingly unbiased, this book provides an uncommon perspective on the Zimbabwe I know and lived in. The writing paints a lucid picture of

the country's evolution, serving to demystify and unravel an understanding of this land and its people since the days of ancestors far removed. I find particular interest in the analysis of the years from independence up to the time of publishing. Delivering a practical review of her triumphs and a sobering look at her faults, this writing is largely dispassionate about events, draws out the popular emotional sentiment of "the people" in various theater of life, strikes at the facts as they are known, and provides a critical analysis of the history often argued over. This might be one of the most important writings on Zimbabwe in recent years, and I would particularly recommend this book to anyone seeking to comprehend beyond media headlines and popular rhetoric on Zimbabwe. Most importantly, this book strikes at the core of what it means to be a new nation, and its people, on the verge of achieving the ideals upon which that nation was founded, while at the same time attempting to address the layers of political, economic, social and other constraints that define its evolution. If you read clearly between the lines, this book conveys a theme and a perspective on the way forward for any new nation, and for what I believe could be Zimbabwe's more prosperous future.

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