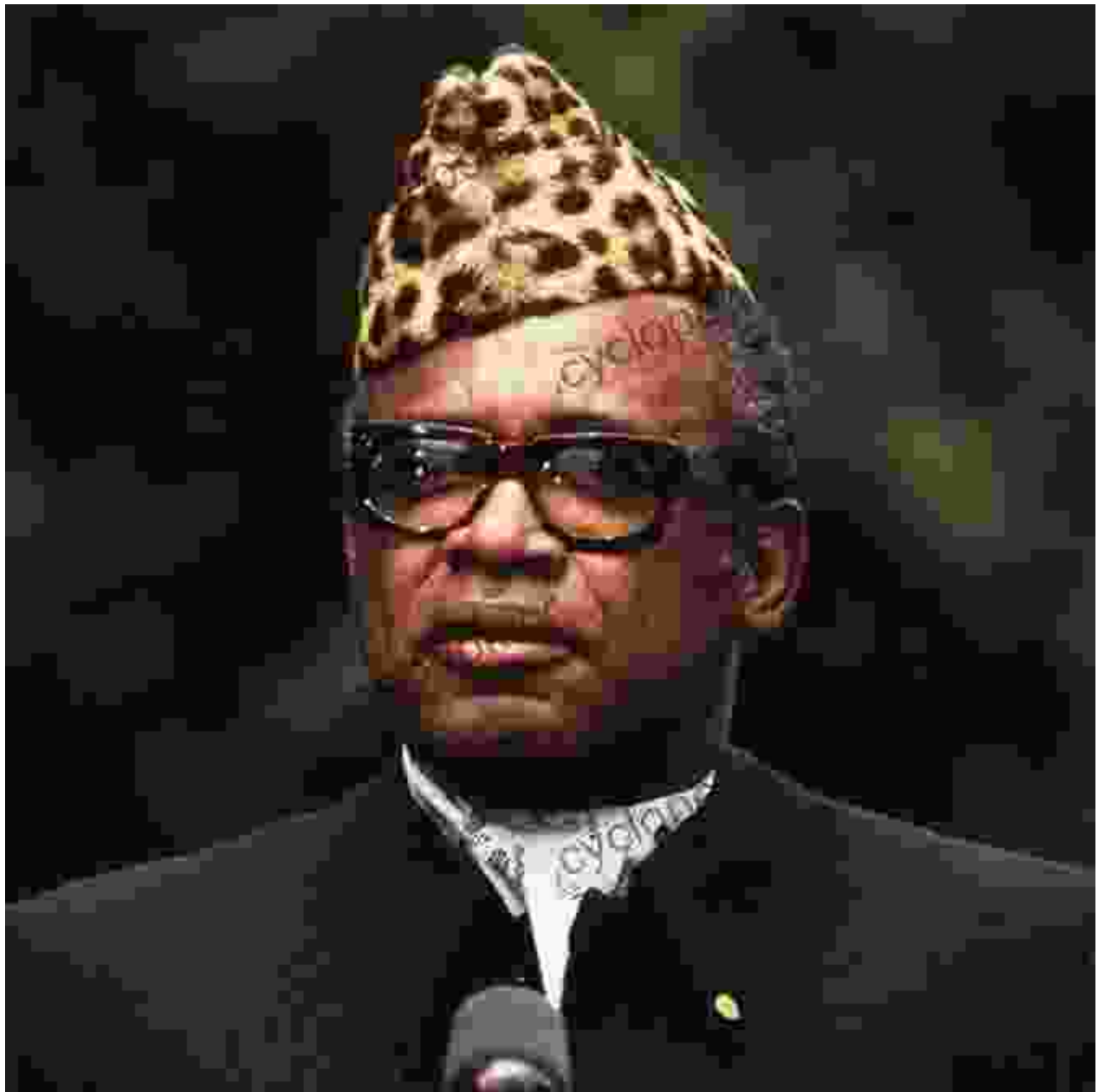


# The Politics of Dance Music in Mobutu Zaire



The Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly known as Zaire, has a rich musical heritage, and dance music has played a significant role in the country's political and social history. During the dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko, dance music was used as a tool of control and oppression, but it also served as a form of resistance and expression for the Congolese people.

## The Rise of Mobutu

Mobutu Sese Seko came to power in a military coup in 1965. He quickly established a dictatorship, and Zaire became a one-party state. Mobutu's regime was characterized by corruption, repression, and economic mismanagement. However, Mobutu was also a shrewd politician, and he understood the importance of popular support. He used dance music to create a sense of national unity and to legitimize his regime.



### Rumba Rules: The Politics of Dance Music in Mobutu's Zaire by Bob W. White

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 409 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported



## The Role of Dance Music in Mobutu's Zaire

Dance music was ubiquitous in Mobutu's Zaire. It was played at political rallies, state functions, and even in churches. Mobutu himself was a talented musician, and he often played the guitar and sang at public events. The most popular genre of dance music in Zaire was soukous, a lively and upbeat style that originated in the Congo Basin. Soukous was popular with both urban and rural Congolese, and it helped to create a sense of national identity.

Mobutu also used dance music to control the Congolese people. He banned certain types of music that he deemed to be subversive, and he used music to promote his own political ideology. For example, the song "Mobutu akonongo" ("Mobutu is the leader") was played at every political rally and state function.

## **Dance Music as Resistance**

Despite Mobutu's attempts to control dance music, it also served as a form of resistance for the Congolese people. Soukous lyrics often contained coded messages that criticized Mobutu's regime. For example, the song "Masanga" ("The thief") by Kanda Bongo Man was a thinly veiled attack on Mobutu's corruption.

Dance music also provided a space for Congolese people to express their frustrations and hopes. At dance parties and nightclubs, Congolese people could forget about their troubles and dance the night away. Dance music was a way for them to connect with each other and to feel a sense of community.

## **The Legacy of Dance Music in Mobutu Zaire**

Mobutu's dictatorship ended in 1997, but the legacy of dance music in Zaire continues to this day. Soukous remains a popular genre of music in the Congo, and it is still used to express political and social messages. Dance music has also played a role in the country's post-conflict reconstruction. In 2006, the Congolese government launched a national dance competition called "Dansons pour la paix" ("Let's dance for peace"). The competition was designed to bring Congolese people together and to promote reconciliation.

Dance music is a powerful force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has been used to control and oppress the Congolese people, but it has also served as a form of resistance and expression. Dance music is an important part of Congolese culture, and it will continue to play a role in the country's future.

The politics of dance music in Mobutu Zaire is a complex and fascinating topic. Dance music was used as a tool of control and oppression, but it also served as a form of resistance and expression for the Congolese people. Dance music is an important part of Congolese culture, and it will continue to play a role in the country's future.



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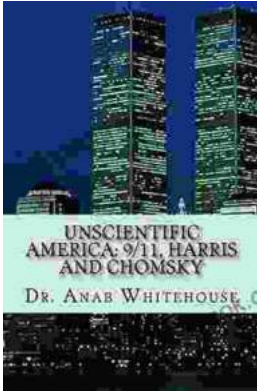
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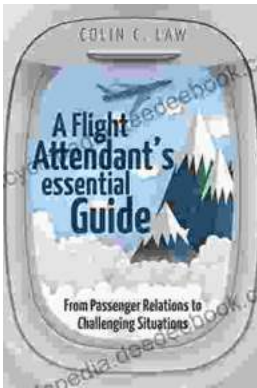
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