

Zimbabwe under Mugabe

1980

Rhodesia gains independence from Britain after armed struggle by rival militant factions ZANU and ZAPU

ZANU leader Robert Mugabe becomes prime minister

Grace Mugabe 2014

2008

Re-elected Mugabe forms unity govt. to rein in increasingly popular opposition MDC

2014

Mugabe makes wife Grace head of the influential ZANU-PF Women's League and sacks vice-president Joice Mujuru

2002

Mugabe is re-elected in fraud-tainted vote. EU imposes sanctions

Robert Mugabe 1980

1982-87

Mugabe crushes revolt by ZAPU supporters. Around 20,000 killed

2000

Hundreds of white-owned farms seized. Collapse of farm sector begins

1987

ZANU and ZAPU merge as ZANU-PF. Mugabe consolidates power as head of state, government, and armed forces

2013

Mugabe is re-elected

2006

Economic crisis. Inflation hits 1,000%. Protests crushed

2016

Protests in Harare. War veterans withdraw support for Mugabe

The fall of Mugabe

Nov 2017

Mon 6

Vice-president Emmerson Mnangagwa is sacked, placing Grace Mugabe in line to succeed as president

Tues 21

Mugabe resigns

Fri 24

Mnangagwa is sworn in as president

Weds 15

Army takes control, places Mugabe under house arrest

Sat 18

Mass anti-Mugabe protests backed by war veterans, ruling party and army



COURTESY: AFP

ROBERT MUGABE'S LEGACY

Revolution, Amity, and Decline

BINOY KAMPMARK

Robert Mugabe is the sort of figure that always caused discomfort. He was a permanent revolutionary, becoming, in time, the despotic ruler who frittered away revolutionary gain. He played multiple roles in international political consciousness. As Zimbabwe's strongman, he was demonised and lionised in equal measure for a good deal of his time in power.

His role from the 1990s—Mugabe, the West's all-too-convenient bogeyman and hobgoblin—tended to outweigh other considerations. In the end, even his supporters had to concede that he had overstayed his welcome, another African leader gone to seed.

In 2008, Mahmood Mamdani noted the generally held view in publications ranging from *The Economist* to *The Guardian* that Mugabe the Thug reigned. Yes, he had helped in laying waste to the economy, refusing to share power with a more vocal and present opposition, and created an internal crisis with his land distribution policy. But this did little to explain his longevity, his recipe of partial coercion and consent, the teacher-visionary and the bribing mob leader. "In any case, the preoccupation with his character does little to illuminate the socio-historical issues involved."

The obsession with character—one of Mephistophelian bargain and decay—is found in both the literature and the popular culture depicting Mugabe. The stock story is this: he taught in Ghana in 1963, a key figure in the nationalist movement split in what was then Rhodesia, becoming secretary general of

the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). The Shona dominated ZANU was formed from the original Ndebele ethnic minority dominated Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU).

Prison followed in 1964; Mugabe fled to Mozambique in 1974 though not before a spell of imprisonment at the hands of Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda (his escape was probably engineered by Zambians); by 1977, he had assumed control of the organisation, though Mozambique's President Samora Machel never quite trusted him, taking a leaf out of Kaunda's book in detailing the mischief maker, albeit briefly. Military victory was sought against the Smith regime in what was then white-controlled Rhodesia, and it was with some reluctance that Mugabe found himself a signatory to the British-sponsored settlement in 1979, one assisted by Lord Carrington, Kaunda, the Commonwealth Secretary General, Shridath Ramphal, and, ironically enough, white apartheid South Africa.

On becoming leader, he was deliciously accommodating in his rhetoric, despite having entertained the prospect of confiscating land owned by whites à la Marx-Lenin and wishing to

hold white leaders to account in war crimes trials. In his national address in 1980, he spoke of the bonds of amity; he wished for bygones to be bygones. "If you were my enemy, you are now my friend. If you hated me, you cannot avoid the love that binds me to you and you to me."

Initially, Mugabe the progressive shone through: healthcare and education programs were expanded; literacy rates and living standards rose; white farmers were reassured that mobs would not be knocking on their doors. Whites were included in a mixed cabinet; heads reappointed in the army, the police and the Central Intelligence Organisation. But he had his eye on dealing with rivals.

In 1983, former members of ZAPU's military outfit attacked targets in Matabeleland. The result was uncompromisingly bloody: anywhere upwards of 20,000 civilians killed; many more tortured, maimed, tormented. In four years, ZAPU had been defeated, absorbed into the ZANU-PF structure. The extinguishment of such rivalry paved the way for a Mugabe presidency and near-absolute rule.

Continued to page 13