

Mugabe: My trip to Zimbabwe

Robert Mugabe. Robert Mugabe. This is an account of my trip to Zimbabwe some 30 plus years ago and what did the people say and why Mugabe will remain a historical figure.

Unlike Idi Amin Dada, Mugabe will haunt Zimbabwe for decades to come. His great beginnings in the revolutionary circles did not foresee the dismal end of his political career.

Nevertheless, Mugabe will be remembered in Zimbabwe for who he was and what became of the country.

Whatever it is, Zimbabwe today is what Mugabe made of it. Only a strong and passionate government that will work for the people will be able to get rid of his blueprint.

By the time I reached the hotel in Harare where a computer show is scheduled, I heard a lot about Mugabe.

It was somewhere in 1987 or 1988. I lost count of the years after I misplaced my reporter's notebook some 25 years ago.

Don't blame me for that. I never really kept detailed notes of

my doings. I always thought the writings will be on the wall. But they are not. That is why I am penning down this piece.

The Revolutionary

The capitalist world is telling us a grim story. That of the failure of Mugabe to address all the problems he faced in Zimbabwe.

Without Mugabe, perhaps, Rhodesia would still exist and South Africa's apartheid regime would still thrive.

The future of apartheid in South Africa depended largely on the political conflict in Zimbabwe.

The country gained official **independence** as **Zimbabwe** on April 18, 1980. Apartheid collapsed in South Africa in 1994.

It was 14 years of hell for the White South Africa regime with Mugabe in power in Zimbabwe.

No African country will forget a hero of liberation against white minority rule. This is what Mugabe is in the first place. Ignoring his contribution to the destruction of Rhodesia will be futile and will be a mistake.

His biggest missteps are not the land reform that caused the West to impose sanctions on him and on Zimbabwe. The land

reform became a forced take-over of land owned by White farmers in Zimbabwe. It is still a problem.

Perhaps his biggest mistake is not following the footsteps of Idi Amin after all. The latter forced the removal of all non-African people from his country, Uganda.

He paid a heavy price for this, losing power and running to Saudi Arabia in exile where he died in anonymity.

These are all the stories I was told by White folks and Zimbabweans while I was in Harare.

But do not let the imagery of a failed dictatorship bog down your thinking. Under Mugabe, the country had foreign companies flying in to expose their computers.

They also exposed their computer chipsets, the computer parts and they participated in talks shows and conferences on the future of the computer industry in Zimbabwe.

By all means, Zimbabwe was heading into a bright future. It got disrupted by the sanctions and the hatred the west had for Mugabe.

But now that he is gone, the question is whether Zimbabwe will get a fresh start?

Aids epidemic

When I visited a graphic designer's studio in Harare, I saw how Zimbabwe women were coping with a great infliction. They all had 'aids' and were working on odd days because they could not work full time.

There were fear in the eyes of the locals when one asks about Mugabe and his entourage.

"Do not talk about him. He is beloved and feared," I was told.

I guess that was also the case in Malaysia when I set foot in the country in the early 1990s.

The Malays were in deeply in love with Dr Mahathir. They were so deeply in love that they would never criticise him. For fear of betraying their love for him.

I would love to think it was the same kind of fear that was in the eyes of the Zimbabweans I met.

Dr Mahathir and Robert Mugabe were pals, I am told. I am sure everyone knows of the story of [sawn timber](#) sent to Mugabe by Mahathir.

The curtain is drawn on Mugabe who leaves his legacy behind and the western media is having a fun day calling a spade, a

golden spoon.

**Grace Kelly and Hermes' sac a
depeches!**