

## MARCH

### Wed 25

Headline – *Mugabe crushes peaceful protest* – A demonstration by about 400 Chimba widows – female supporters of the president's 1980's liberation struggle – who are calling for the same pension rights as men who went into battle against the whites.

These women fighters can now join a long list of enemies of the president – white farmers, students and the International Monetary Fund et al. Meanwhile the Minister of State enterprise, C Msipa, has unveiled plans to put economic power in the hands of the majority.

As all this was happening the president went off on a three day visit to Germany, leaving behind a growing number of his own cabinet [of 46], wary of the role of Mr Mugabe and the relief of Zimbabwe. – **GDN page 14, C 6 -**

### Fri 27

Zimbabwe's Supreme Court ruled yesterday that former president, C Bananna, must stand trial on sodomy charges, rejecting his appeal that pre trial publicity has prejudiced his rights for a fair hearing. – *Reuters* –

## MAY

### Sun 3

Headline – *lone voice of opposition braves death threats for democracy* – an interview with the Independent MP Margaret Dongo. – **IOS page 19, C1 –**

### Wed 6

Insert *The Special Report* – land of misrule feel the heat of protest as the head of the Zimbabwe Trade Union Congress, M Tsvengirat aged 46, turns up the heat.

A nation sold down the river, a currency crisis precipitated by the collapse of the United Merchant Bank, just about causes the economy to go into terminal decline. – **GDN page 20/1 –**

### Sun 10

Headline – *now its time to save the humans* – 'Operation Noah' saving the animals from the soon to be flooded Zambizi Valley in 1961 to create Lake Kariba, a plea from displaced persons on both sides of the Zimbabwe and Zambian border, 100,000 people

stranded on barren land – [authors note, see pictures from 1996 visit to the area] – **IOS page 9, C1** –

## JUNE

### Tues 23

Former president C Bananna told the High Court that sodomy charges laid against him were “nonsense” after his lawyer had failed to get the charges dismissed. – **Reuters** –

### Sat 27

President Robert Mugabe vowed he would not back down over the seizure of white owned land despite international pressure to modify his land reform procedure.

This announcement to party leaders came at a time when four white owned farms were invaded by hundreds of landless black peasants. “what are we afraid of”, “do we fear the British the IMF or the World Bank and not our own people.” – **AP** –

## JULY

### Mon 6

Headline – ***Mugabe responds to land squats with revised resettlement plan*** – in a move, linked to comments made by the president to party leaders on the land issue (qv 27/6) the government has announced a plan to acquire 12.5m acres for the resettlement of 100,000 peasant farmers over a 5 year period. To finance this move there would be an international conference in 1998/99. The aim of the meeting would be to raise the 1.3bn pounds necessary.

By the end of 5 years it is expected that 800,000 people would have been resettled at the expense of the international community. There would be little financial involvement of the Zimbabwean government. However the administration would pay for improvements to buildings in need of repair. – **GDN page 11, C1** –

## AUGUST

### Tues 4

Headline – ***Threat to feed Rhodes to the crocodiles*** – L W Chakaredza and Chief Muhhutapa the Third – now heads of Sangono Minhutapa, an organisation that promotes ‘traditional African rights and culture’ have called on the British government to remove the bones of Cecil Rhodes, the founder of the colonial Rhodesia, from their grave in the

Matapos National Park. Failure to act would see the people find the grave and remove the bones and feed them to the crocodiles. – **GDN page 12 C** -

## **NOVEMBER**

### **Thurs 12**

Headline – *Strikes turn violent* – Ongoing protests, about the costs involved in sending troops – to fight on the government side in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – 13,000 fighting men costs 1.2m pounds per day, has resulted in price rises at home. Fuel prices have gone up 67% followed by a crackdown on company use.

The Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions has called a series of ‘stay aways’. The Union threatens to call a weekly cycle of these protests, if no action is made to reduce the tax on fuel. There is also a call for a pay rise of 20%.

The most recent clash with the authorities was in the eastern city of Mutare, where in excess of 25,000 strikers clashed with police and the military. During the clashes a ‘stray bullet’ killed one demonstrator. Other protestors were injured in similar incidents. The country’s news agency – *Ziana* – also reported that the cities of Marandara, Burundi and Harare were also the scene of ZCTU sponsored strikes.

**Inflation rate** – 35 – 40%. **Z\$** has been devalued 65% - **GDN page 20, C 7** –

### **Sat 14**

Headline – *Troops desert in protest at Congo war* – military opposition to the war in the Congo will be the catalyst for the birth of a new political party, to be led by M Dongo (qv) a long time opponent of Mr Mugabe and Zanu. Despite offers of 180 pounds a day for officers as many as 50 members of the military have defected.

They feel justified in doing this by saying that their actions are unconstitutional and therefore an invalidation of their service contracts In referring to the conflict the Independent member of parliament likens Zimbabwe to the USA and its involvement in Vietnam. Many of those opposed to the rule of Mugabe, and his government, say this is the beginning of the end for his administration. – **GDN page 21, C 1** –

### **Sat 21**

Headline – *Seeds of disaster as mob rule threatens Zimbabwe farmland* – the defiance of the president (qv 27/5) over the land issue has finally come to a head, as 841 white owned farms were seized by the government for settlement by the majority of the population. Many of the farms fell under the control of the ‘settlers’ are already home to black squatter camps, whose occupants harass the white farmer with ‘noise pollution.’

The land seizure by the government – a policy that Zanu – PF assured the international donors, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund would not happen – is likely to end any hope of the release of \$53m that is needed to support the falling value of the Zimbabwean dollar.

What with this and the concern with the involvement in the civil war in the DRC (qv 14/11) and hyper inflation, calls are being made by the chairman of the ZCTU for an early General Election – **GDN page 20, C 6 –**

### **Sun 22**

Headline - ***Mugabe faces revolt as strikes hit*** – fuel price rise of 67% confirmed and a daily cost of 650,000 pounds spent in supporting troops in the DRC (qv 14/11\_ - **IOS page 22, C 7 –**

### **Fri 27**

Headline – ***Zimbabwe president flees sodomy trial*** – following the ruling of the Supreme Court (qv 23/5) on whether the former president of Zimbabwe must stand trial – the court has delivered its guilty verdict.

Before the court could pass sentence Mr Bananna fled the country. It is known that he has crossed the border into Botswana, where the police have issued an arrest warrant – **GDN**

### **Mon 30**

Headline – ***Zimbabwe smoulders while Mugabe shops*** – the president has arrived in London on his annual Christmas shopping spree. During his stay he can expect criticism from foreign office officials for preventing the executive of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions from calling further strikes. These strikes are seen as a challenge to his presidency. – **GDN page 13, C 5 –**

## **DECEMBER**

### **Thurs 17**

Headline – ***Bananna tempted out of hiding after Mugabe offer*** – on the run, the former president (qv 27/11), who had been convicted of sodomy charges, has returned to the country from hiding in South Africa. This was agreed between after a meeting between Mr Mandela and Mr Mugabe. The agreement between the two southern African leaders ensured that the disgraced leader would never have to serve a jail sentence on any of the 11 charges he was convicted on. It was also agreed that he would never be pardoned.

The High Court, in Harare, ruled that Mr Bananna should be placed under house arrest until 23/12 when the court would consider its sentence. – **GDN page 17, C 6 -**