

*This diarist, with his usual sources of written media outlets; although more tabloid than broad sheet, details the times before the Lancaster House Agreement was even thought about. The events noted here begin in 1979 as Ian Smith moves towards universal suffrage for all residents of the British colony of Rhodesia.*

## **SEPTEMBER 1976**

### **Fri 24**

Headline – ***Ian Smith has been on the brink before ... pulled back ... options fewer. Now he has non*** – The recent failure of the last peace initiative, led by the Douglas Home mission makes the coming televised broadcast by Ian Smith to the nation of crucial importance.

It would seem that his options are limited. Either work on the American proposals, set out by the secretary of state H Kissinger, or face the autumn onslaught of the terrorists/ freedom fighters that gather at the countries borders to begin their disruptive campaign during the 'fighting season.'

Even the top brass, in the Rhodesian Army , tell the prime minister that the foreces moral is at its lowest and will continue to ebb away as the fighting intensifies throughout the year.

Such a desperate situation has been made worse by South Africa 's president Vorster that there will be little help from the apartheid state; the future of the British colony is expendable in the light of the battle that will ensue as to preserve the status quo at the southern tip of the continent.

A white resident, Ian Walker British born school teacher, feels despair as to the future. A fair representative of the white minority population, he notes that there was more anger at the limited allowance of cash those that chose to leave could take out of the country that the failure of the Queens Commission that laid down an easing of discrimination in the country. He has decided to stay, but plenty of others will go even though the authorities in Salisbury will limit, to £800, the amount of cash those 'taking the gap' can take with them.

With a white population of 270, 000 the majority of which the prime minister hopes will stay the coming broadcast will be watched by all parties to gage the likelehood of the closing down of the Utopia that is the whites life in the country. - **J Davis Daily Express** -

### **Sat 25**

Headline - ***Smith: Total Surrender!*** - As the streets of the Rhodesian capita; emptied as the nation gathered around their televisions the fears of the whites were confirmed as the prime minister had accepted the findings of the American secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, that there must be a black majority government in place within 2 years. Thus it was confirmed that the South African president Vorster was prepared to sacrifice the country to his north to majority black rule in order to make a stand

against a similar outcome in his.

The Kissinger proposals – Majority rule within two years. The Salisbury government to meet with African nation leaders in the lead up to the formation of an interim administration. Formation of a Council of State which should have equal numbers of white and black members presided over by a white chairman with a 'special' vote. Its function would be legislative and supervisory with the aim of drawing up a new constitution. The colonial power, Britain, would see the London parliament set in motion the process to allow Rhodesia its independence. With the establishment of the interim government international sanctions would be lifted and the fighting would cease. International aid to the new administration would be guaranteed, which would ensure that all promised pensions, and investments in homes and land would be honoured.

Ian Smith was most specific about the international financial arrangement 's and the ending of the civil war conducted by the guerillas; the first time he has used the term as previously government speak has been of terrorists. If these two points were not adhered to there would be no end to the conflict. - **Daily Express page 1 C 1** -

Speaking from London N Khezwana a teacher and spokesman for Joshua Nkomo, indicated there would be no end to the fighting as the Kissinger plan was to heavily biased in favour of the minority whites as both the ministers of law and order will remain in the hands of the minority population. Unsurprisingly white Rhodesian leaders detailed the settlement as a 'sell out' and that the ethnic whites had been sold down the river.

Those that suffer, during diplomatic shuffle diplomacy, have noted the tiredness shown by the wife of Henry Kissinger, Nancy, who was spotted in London on a stop over to brief notables after his 11 day tour of the continent as he put his plan together after consulting national leaders. - **ditto C 3** -

Headline – ***Vorster 's Shock Took the Fight Out of Smith*** – of abandonment was revealed to the Rhodesian leader eleven days ago leaving him visibly shaken as he left the premiers Pretoria office. It would seem that the action was partly inspired by the fall in the price of gold, the free flow of oil and the widening trade gap, of the countries sales to black Africa, in favour of the USA. - **ditto page 2 C 1** -

Headline – ***The 13 Crucial Years*** -

**1963** Ian Smith elected as Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia and forms a government to disprove the prediction by 'soft whites' that majority rule would established within 15 years.

**1965 October** bi lateral talks in London between Harold Wilson and the renegade to agree an independence agreement which end in failure.

**November 11<sup>th</sup>** Ian Smith announces a Unilateral Declaration of Independence

**1966** the two politicians talk on HMS Tiger without any solution. However Britain's prime minister foresees a solution “in weeks rather than months.”

**1968 March** Smith disregards a pardon issued by the Queen for two blacks who were reprieved by the monarch and went to the gallows.

**October** second set of talks on board HMS Fearless which also fail.

**1972** Failure of the Pearce Commission as it tries to work out a basis for a settlement and by year end the present guerilla war had begun.

**1975 August** Zambia 's K Kaunda, Vorster and Smith meet on a white railway carriage on the bridge over the River Zambesi. The dissent shown by Bishop Muzorewa was used as an excuse for Ian Smith to pull out of the talks.

**1976** leaders of the United States, Africa and Britain hold secret talks in Bavaria. The sessions begin and end with Kissinger/Vorster talks in Zurich which heralds the beginning of the American diplomats shuttle diplomacy. - **ditto page 2 C 4** -

## **NOVEMBER 1976**

### **Thurs 6**

Headline – *Smith Regrets* – the wording on the agreement that will bring Black African rule to Britain 's last colony. The wording; Black majority rule is open to his interpretation. For the make up of the new administration to be allowed the black persons to be chosen for these leadership roles will be ones that are deemed, by himself, to be moderates. One such is the cleric Bishop Able Muzorewa. For the British of the Americans to try and push for any other will see him walk away from the talks. - **D E page 4 C 1** -

### **Mon 8**

Headline – *Rhodesia Talks Fail to End Deadlock* – as British government minister Ivor Richards had separate private meetings with Salisbury 's foreign minister P van der Byl and the leaders of the four black African nations invited to the Geneva talks. Meeting the government minister brought forth the fears of the whites that a 12 month period before a black led government was too short a time. A more flexible time table would be a two year period otherwise the mass exodus of whites would continue while those that remained would panic.

Inside the country faction fighting continues. Clashes between the military and freedom fighters, over the last forty eight hours, has seen the deaths of two members of the military and eight guerillas.

Even the rumours of conflict between the two sides has consequences; the South African Professional Golfers Association has cancelled its tournament, with £16, 000 worth of prize money, at the Victoria Falls Golf Course. - **D E page 2 C 1** -

### **Wed 10**

Headline – *Dr K To the Rescue* – reporting back to officials in Washington the

American secretary of state is optimistic that there will be a settlement between the whites in Rhodesia and the aspiring black majority before the year ends. Issues are complicated however as the USA faces up to a presidential election in 11/76. However Kissinger has received assurances from the Ford challenger, Jimmy Carter, that he is fully behind his moves.

The urge for a settlement is heightened as it becomes known that the recently independent government of Angola has made moves towards a closer association with the communist Soviet Union.

The British government minister, Ivor Richards, having returned from the talks in Geneva, to brief foreign secretary Anthony Crossland, returns to the Swiss capital to continue negotiations. - **Daily Express** -

### **Tues 16**

Headline – ***Black Chefs Split on Rhodesia Date*** – as talks resumed in Geneva. After only twenty minutes of all party talks the joint leaders of the Patriotic Front, Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo differed on the timetable for an independent government.

Chairman Richards proposed either 12 or 15 months of further white rule before elections took place. Even after advice, from the delegation from Tanzania that talks could continue during this interim period the Zanu leader was unwilling to agree unless the Zapu leader also agreed, which he did not. However the formula was accepted by two other black leaders Bishop Able Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sitholi.

Observers note that this apparent split in advice from the leaders of the Front Line States, to their respective acolytes, heightens the belief that the Mugabe/ Nkomo alliance is not as strong as the Patriotic Front would have the international community believe. **Daily Express page 7 C 6**

### **Wed 17**

Headline – ***Britain Accuses as Talks Break Down*** – after just twelve minutes after the growing signs of deadlock (qv 16/11). Not only that a statement from the joint leaders of the Patriotic Front attacked the talks chairman Ivor Richards.

“It has become obvious to us that the British government has no intention to transfer power to the true representatives of the people of Zimbabwe.” In reply the chairman said that the two leaders of the PF were being unreasonable in expecting London “to fix an immutable day on which independence must take place.”

### **Sat 20**

Headline – ***Nkomo Base Bombed*** – in Francistown Botswana. After the attack four men, one white and three black, were seen running towards the country's border with Rhodesia; a distance of 25 miles away. A number of people were injured, cuts from broken glass, and homes destroyed in the blast. The authorities in Pretoria denied responsibility for the attack.

Headline – *Smith 's On His Own, U S warns* – despite the Rhodesian leader believing otherwise. Speaking in the country's capital his thoughts turned to a world where the black nationalists continue their armed struggle and were on the verge of a military victory. The white leader is of the opinion that the Americans would not only 'offer a sympathetic ear' to requests but actually offer the resources to stop implementation of a black majority rule government.

Words from the American secretary of state dismissed this claim as Dr Kissinger warned the Rhodesian government was on its own as the aim of the Washington administration "is to bring about majority rule in Rhodesia .... not prop up with promises ... certainly not with military supplies of any kind the illegal government of Ian Smith."

Still in Geneva the British delegation are disappointed at the stance of the Patriotic Front leaders as they continue to talk at the £120/day hotel room occupied by Robert Mugabe.

A date offered for majority rule; 1.3. 1978 and independence by 1. 12 1977 on the understanding that arrangements were made in time or there was no unfortunate delays. All of which has been agreed by the three other delegations gathered in Geneva. **D E**

### **Mon 22**

Headline – *Does Smith Have One Last Ace?* - as the Geneva grind on the prime minister considers his next move, opening negotiations with the 'moderate black led political parties' led by the black clerics; Sitholi and Muzorewa. There is also the possibility that the number two in the Zanu political party, Josiah Chinamanano, may become key figures in any settlement.

A newspaper in South Africa reports that the support for Mozambique rebels, fighting for independence, may receive military aid from the Soviet Union through the sending of Cuban forces to do battle with the colonial government in Luanda. - **D E C 6** -

### **Wed 25**

Headline – *Shutters Go up On Guerillas* – as retail outlets, on the Rhodesian side of the border with Botswana, are ordered to close. This is an attempt by the government in Salisbury to stop shop owners selling goods to alleged terrorists.

The move comes as white farmers along the border are seen as legitimate targets by those fighting the current regime. It is also seen as a move to assist the 400 strong Botswana police force who spend their time seeking out dissident fighters in refugee camps and then send them back to Zambia.

Military forces have bombed guerilla bases inside the Mozambique border after heavy machine gun fire on Rhodesian positions. The two leaders of the Patriotic Front, holed up in a Geneva hotel room, failed after 25 minutes of talks to resolve their date differences over independence and black majority rule. They will meet again in 24 hours with the knowledge that chairman Richards will call for an adjournment of the

talks if no agreement is reached. - D E -

### **Fri 26**

Headline – *Mugabe Goes it Alone* – one Patriotic Front partner; Joshua Nkomo goes it alone and sides with those political leaders who see 3/ '78 as the date for independence and black majority rule.

Even inside the Zapu administration there are those who support the British timetable for a black government and others sticking to their 12/ '77 demands. The conflict, between the two leaders is the timing of the election. If a vote was taken before independence Robert Mugabe would, as he himself agrees, loose out according to an official in Zanu.

The future of the Patriotic Front now hangs in the balance. Talks between the 'principals' have been delayed on many occasions. Opinion is that Mugabe' s influence is ebbing away as he loses influence to his military commanders based in Mozambique.

It would seem that it is the outcome of the battle of ideas/words of the two leaders of the Patriotic Front that will decide the future of this British colont and not the month long talks in Geneva.

### **Tues 30**

Headline – *No Puppets Storm By Africans* – as both the leaders of the Patriotic Front round on the British government and the chairman of the Geneva talks Ivor Richardson.

After an eighty minuet meeting with the man designated to bring about a settlement in the Rhodesian conflict both Mugabe and Nkomo rail against the London government and accuse it of not negotiating seriously. In the eyes of Black Africa a deal done, by the present administration in Salisbury, with moderate blacks would suit the international community.

However both leaders agreed that these early talks were a “useful preliminary discussion on the structure of an interim government. Both leaders still expect that within 12 months of these talks ending, scheduled for 29/12, there will be a black led government installed in Salisbury by the end of 1977.