

JANUARY 1996

Mon 15

Headline – *Zimbabwe Police see Film* – A police raid on the home of a film makers, Ingrid Sinclair and Robert Bright, results in the seizure of copies of the negatives of *Flame O* and is seen by opponents of the government as blatant censorship.

The reason given for the raid is to stop circulation of the film; about the liberation struggle because it portrays scenes of “subversive language and some scenes that are pornographic” according to C Hunzive; chairman of the 25, 000 strong National War Veterans Association. AP

FEBRUARY 1996

Tues 13

Headline – *Zimbabwe Election sees Cynicism Among Farmers* – Presidential elections, set for 16. 17/3, will see the incumbent re elected after the only real opposition candidate M Dongo (qv 26/11) was disqualified because of her age. Two other candidates, Bishop Able Muzorewa [71] and the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, stand little chance because of their links with the efforts of Ian Smith to stay in power during the liberation war. GDN page 12 C 4 -

Thurs 15

Headline – *Poll Boycott Urged* – Despite being ineligible to stand for the role of president M Diongo [36] has called for the challengers in the race for the Presidency to withdraw from the election scheduled in 3/96 as they give president Mugabe an air of respectability he does not deserve. - A Meldrum Harare; GDN page 14 C 7 -

Tues 27

Headline – *Hare Muzzles Weekly Voice* – In a run up to the Presidential election, now only three weeks away, the government has gone all out to muzzle the only independent media outlet in the country. The 'hard word' has gone out to the financial institutions not to continue supporting the Financial Gazette; editorial content has been toned down to avoid criticising the government. Assistant editor I Wetherell has resigned after the earlier suspension of editor Trevor Ncube over the row as to the information leak of the presidents wedding. - GDN page 10 C 1 -

Thurs 29

Headline – *New Gay Attack by Mugabe* – In a renewed attack on homosexuals the Zimbabwe president had the suspended support from world leaders lifted as they feared speaking out for fear of losing influence

He said gays should be treated as though they were drug addicts or alcoholics or prostitutes.
Reuters

MARCH 1996

Thurs 14

Headline – ***Mugabe Targets Poor Villagers*** - Virtually assured a third term as president Robert Mugabe concentrates his campaign in the rural areas of the country where the majority of his supporters reside. City dwellers are more likely to be dissatisfied with him as a head of state as they are more aware of the endemic corruption embedded deep in the ruling administration.

Claims of harassment and a government campaign to discredit him has led the Reverend Ndabaningi Sitholie to withdraw from the election on 12.3. - GDN page 13 C 7 -

Sat 16

Headline – ***No Contest: Election Gift for Mugabe*** – Certain to win the presidential election is the incumbent as his last challenger Bishop Able Muzorewa pull out of the race at the last minute. The decision was made after a Supreme Court ruling that the election rules were not unfair. - GDN page 13 C 1 -

Sun 17

Headline ***Mugabe Cash Buys Hollow Victory*** – With state aided funds of £2.2m, not available to other political parties; and still £420, 000 in debt, president Mugabe is assured of another six year term as president.

After the withdrawal of his two main rivals (qv 14. 16/3) this was assured after the Registrar General quickly overruled himself that the election must go ahead.

A Determined effort to smash those opposed to the de facto one party state has been set at needing 60% of cabinet ministers must support the policy. Those that oppose the policy have been told they will lose their jobs. Political commentators see this as the last term that Mugabe will serve because of his falling support in the cities. - J Raath OBS page 21 C 5 -

Tues 19

Headline – ***Withdrawals Tarnish Polls*** – Mugabe wins in excess of 90% of the votes that have been counted. A 50% turnout of voters 610, 646 counted ; Robert Mugabe 561, 124. Able Muzorewa ; 31, 667. Ndabaningi Sitholie 17, 855. - Reuters -

MAY 1996

Wed 27

Special Report – Opposition parties call for a Constitutional Conference. Up and coming legal challenge in the Supreme Court in 7/96 from Bishop Muzorewa who will question the legality of the election laws set out in the constitution which give the president too much power.

Seventy two year old Mugabe has just been elected for six more years; an eventual challenger could be Eddison Zvobgo, the Zanu PF leader in Masvingo province despite being removed as

the minister for mines . Other challengers for the position are seen as the justice minister Emmerson Mnangagwa or M Dongo (qv). - GDN page 20 to 22 -

JUNE 1996

Mon 24

Headline – *Aid for Land* – President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe has threatened to seize white farmland for land resettlement by blacks – without compensation – unless Britain gives his government money for a land acquisition programme. - *Reuters* -

Tues 25

Headline – *Mugabe Twists London 's Arm* – In response to president Mugabe 's demands (qv 24/6) the British high commissioner in Harare said such a conference had been offered. It would be attended by all interested parties – national and foreign donors. This had been stated as a possible delaying tactic by the Zimbabwe president. GDN page 12 C 7 -

JULY 1996

Tues 2

Headline – *A Platinum Pass to Prosperity* – Joint cooperation by two Australian companies, BHP and Delta Gold, will give a big boost to the flagging economy of the country. The two overseas companies have invested jointly £170m [BHP 67%] to extract platinum ore and other precious metals from the Hartley Platinum Mine 50 miles south east of the capital.

The mine will employ 2, 000 miners, only a small number of ex pats will be employed in a mine that is expected to be worked for at least one hundred years. The yearly output of the Hartley Platinum Mine is expected to reach 150, 000 ounces of platinum, 110, 000 of palladium and 11, 500 ounces of Rhodium. Prices are expected to rise as the metals are crucial in the production of catalytic converters for the exhaust systems of vehicles. - GDN page 18 C 1 -

Sun 8

Headline – *Vegetable Magic* – With accurate data from the electronic in the supermarket owners are able to provide 'out of season vegetables from hundreds of miles away.

One such supplier, Ian Gordon, who farms the 5, 700 acre Hilbun Farm in Norton; one hours drive west of Harare, produces flowers to land at Heathrow Airport London despite air freight charges of Z\$2m / £130, 000 a profit is still made. A British supplier, usually from the Vale of Evesham cannot compete with these prices.

Wages on the Hilbuun Farm; Z\$ 900 £58 per month. In addition al food is provided by the employer as well as fuel and housing. For retired farmworkers there is a pension and a retirement home near to the farm. - M Prest D Bowen IOS Business page 1 C 1 -

Wed 11

Headline – *Good Noose* – Zimbabwe says it has been 'inundated' with foreign applications, some from western Europe, to fill a vacancy as the country's hangman. *Justice minister* E Mnangagwe said that he was disappointed that only a few Zimbabweans had applied. - AP -

Mon 15

Headline – *Mugabe to Wed* – President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe plans a church wedding next month to his former secretary Grace Mafu the state controlled Sunday Mail reported. They are already married under African traditional law. - AP -

JULY 1996

Sat 27

Headline – *Zimbabwe 'Miracle Cure' Fails to Save the Poor* – Picture of life, its effects on the poor; the under five year olds. The Enhanced Structural Adjustment Programme [ESAP], inspired by the International Monetary Fund, is failing according to E Chido and her husband. He was sacked as a textile manufacturing job and earnings cut from Z\$ 70 /£4. 50 to less than Z\$1 per day. - K Watkins Oxfam advisor GDN page 11 C 6 -

words written in *italics* added by diarist