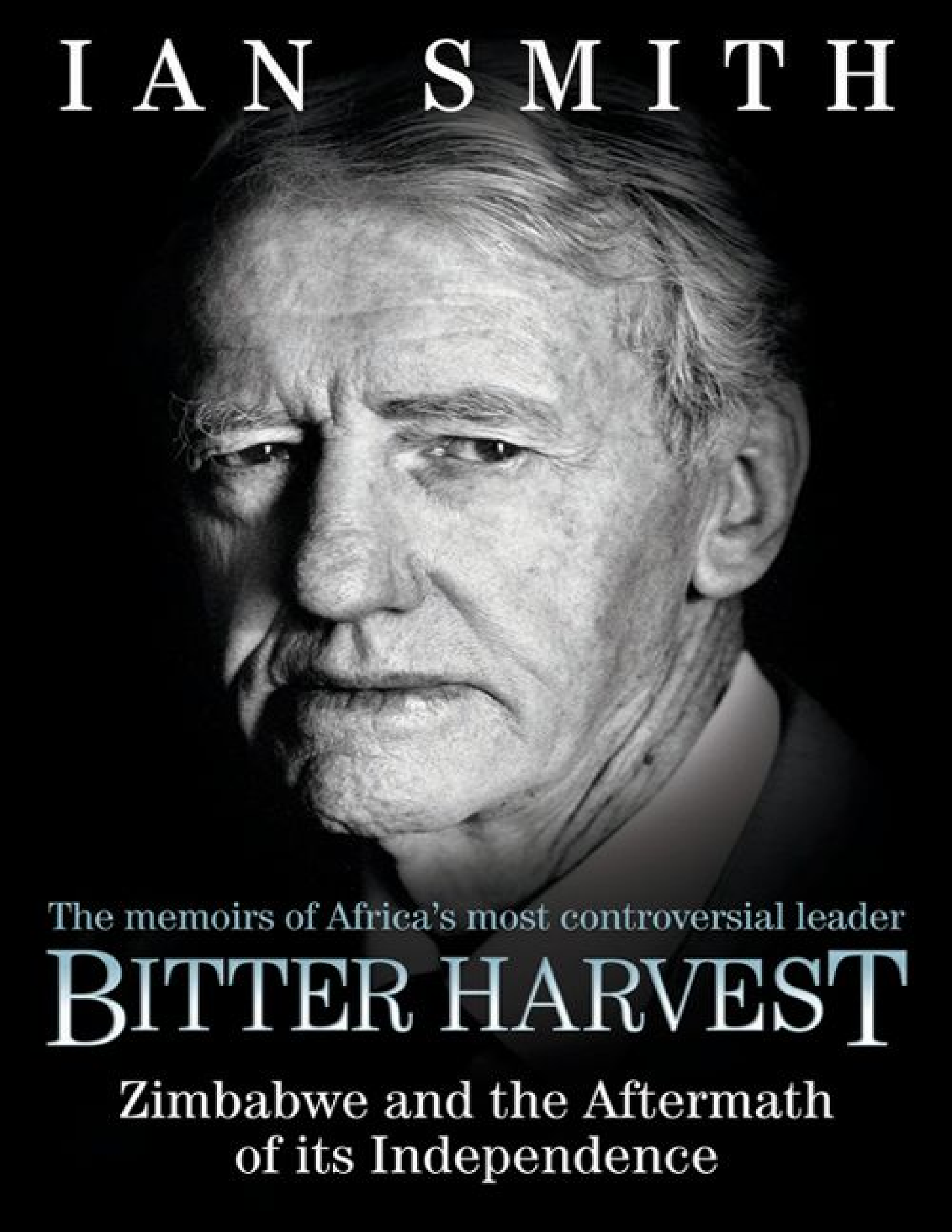
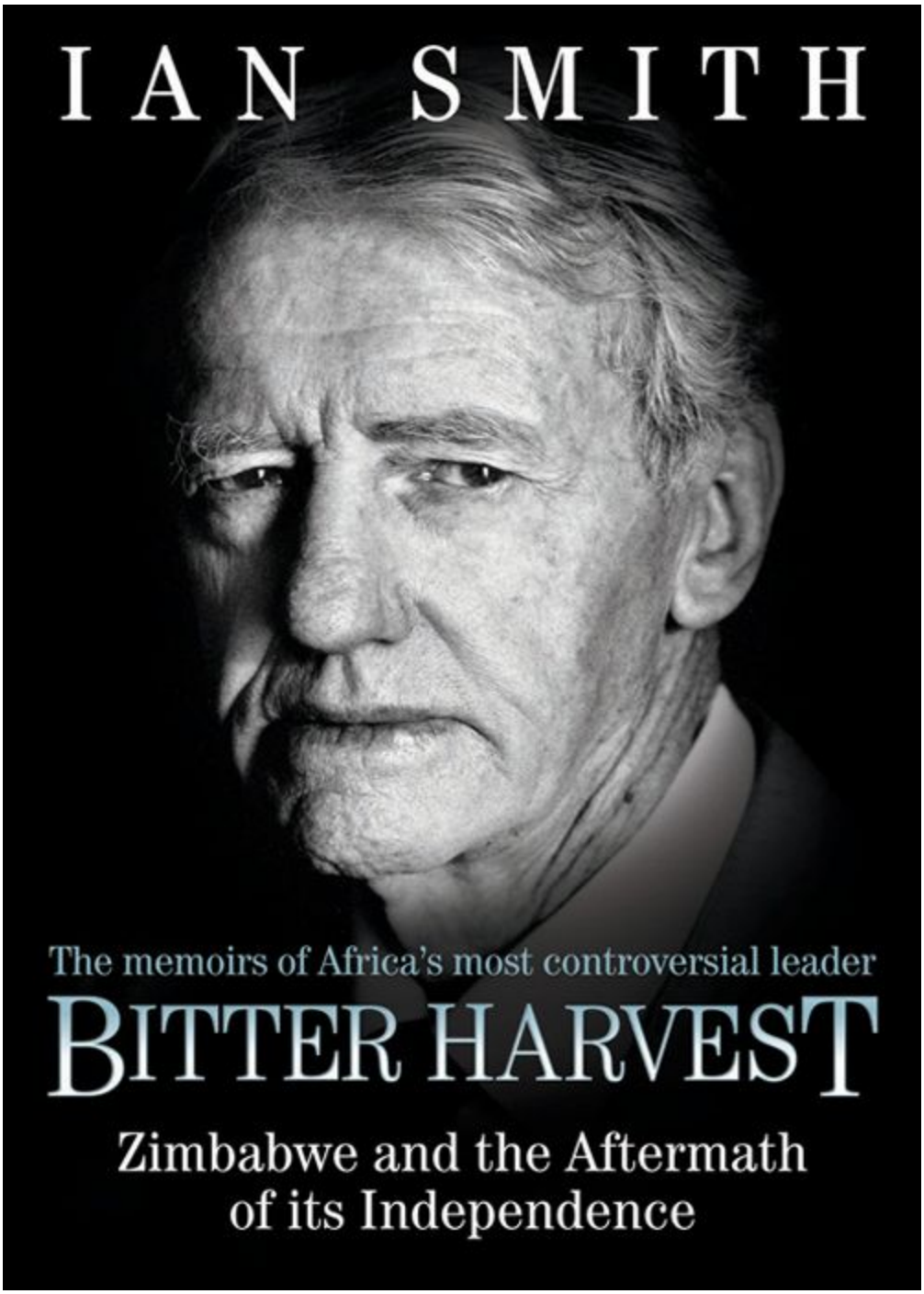
IAN SMITH



The memoirs of Africa's most controversial leader

BITTER HARVEST

Zimbabwe and the Aftermath of its Independence



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The memoirs of Africa's most controversial leader

BITTER HARVEST

Zimbabwe and the Aftermath of its Independence

IAN SMITH

With a foreword by Rupert Cornwell

JOHN BLAKE

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DEDICATION

To Janet, my loyal and constant and compassionate supporter and companion during the turbulent decades of my political life. She was tireless in her work of researching history and facts, and editing and bringing some order to my writings, which were often erratic and disjointed because of my numerous other commitments.

My gratitude to her is eternal and unwavering.

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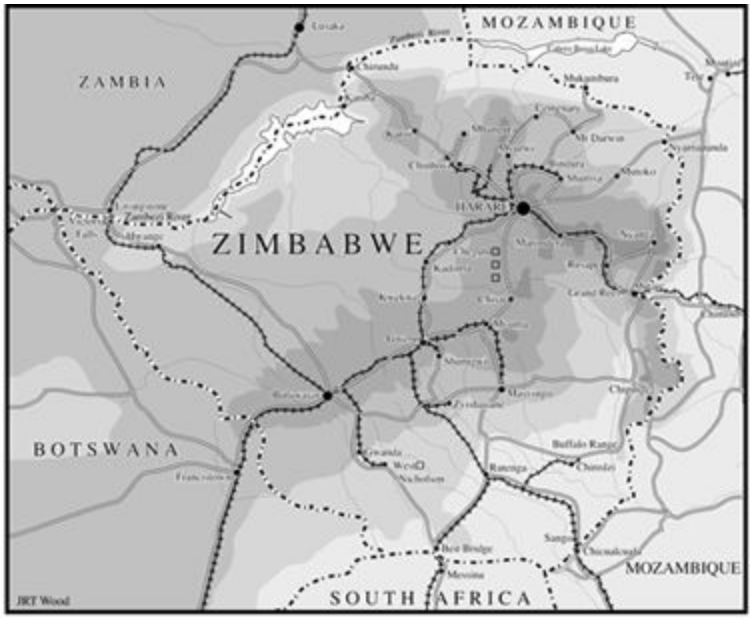

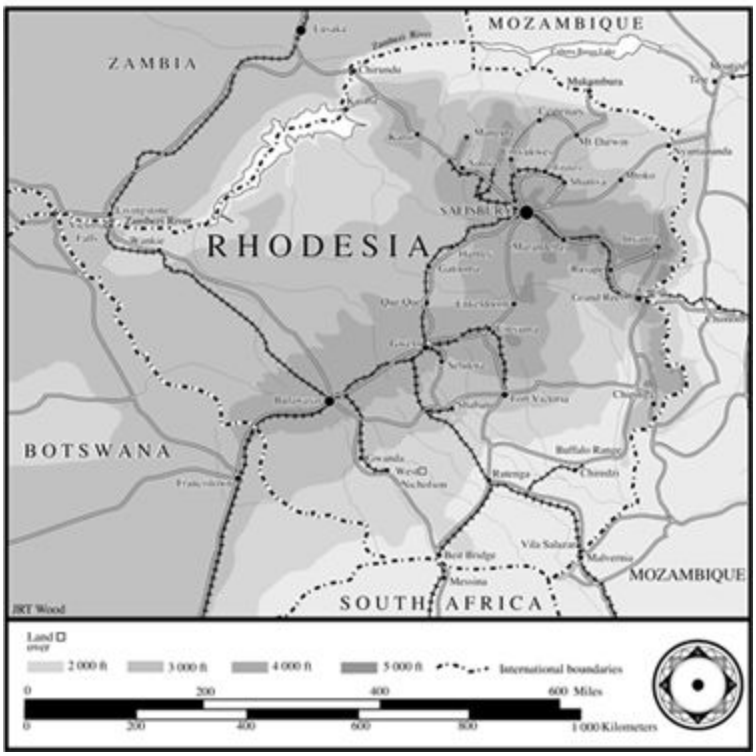

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Foreword

Ian Douglas Smith died on 20 November 2007, a few months short of his 89th birthday. For 15 years, between 1964 and 1979, he had been prime minister of Rhodesia, the last but one country in southern Africa to be governed by whites, once called Southern Rhodesia and today known as Zimbabwe.

In the great drama of the 20th century decolonisation of Africa, he will perhaps be seen in future as little more than a footnote, a Canute who declared unilateral independence in a futile attempt to resist the tide of black rule sweeping across the continent. Had he never existed, the history of his stunningly beautiful native land would probably have been much the same.

But for a decade and half, Smith held British and international diplomacy to ransom. Vilified by many, lionised by a few, he became a household name around the world. Then Rhodesia vanished. Had independent Zimbabwe flourished, or merely avoided the shambles of today, there would be little more to say. Instead it has experienced one of the most devastating collapses on a continent that has tasted more than its share of them. A country that set out life as a jewel of post-colonial Africa has become a basket case, a nightmarish kleptocracy sustained by violence, corruption and reverse racism, its every failing blamed by President Robert Mugabe on a plot

orchestrated by the country's remaining whites and by the old colonial power in London to overthrow his rule.

History rewrites reputations, and the plight of Zimbabwe after 28 years of Mugabe's rule is forcing a second look at the reputation of Ian Smith. The depth of the crisis has surpassed even his own bleakest warnings – and questions most of us would prefer not to ask must be asked. Was he right all along, with his prophesy that black rule would be a disaster? Which leads to an even more unmentionable thought: might it have been better for Zimbabwe and Africa to have remained under white rule?

Ian Smith's background was quintessentially colonial. His father Jock had emigrated from Scotland to Rhodesia in 1898, eight years after the first pioneer column despatched by Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company crossed the Limpopo river – modern Zimbabwe's border with South Africa – to explore and exploit the rich virgin lands that lay beyond.

The Smiths settled in Selukwe, 200 miles south of the capital Salisbury, now Harare. There Jock ran a farm and a mine, chaired the local cricket and rugby clubs and bred racehorses. Their son Ian, born in 1918, followed in his footsteps. He was an undistinguished student, but like his father (and most white Rhodesians for that matter) a passionate sportsman and lover of the outdoor life. A self-described 'African of British stock,' Smith symbolised a society that considered itself more British than the British, and behaved as such. He believed in the old country, in the British Empire, and in the Empire's civilizing mission.

When conflict loomed in Europe in 1939, the adventurous and patriotic young man trained as a pilot, before serving in the Rhodesian air force, and then in Spitfire Squadron 130 in the Royal Air Force. His war took him to Persia, the Middle East and finally Europe where he was shot down

over Italy in 1944 and spent five months with the partisans behind German lines.

This gallant war record vastly complicated British attitudes to Smith during the crisis over Rhodesian independence two decades later. Many of a certain generation could not understand why ‘Good Old Smithy’ and ‘Plucky Little Rhodesia’ were held in such official disapproval. Yes, he led a white minority government that in 1965 had the temerity to declare independence. But he might have come from the home counties – though he had done more to defeat Hitler than the majority of British citizens. Beyond argument moreover he was extremely brave.

It is thus hardly surprising he enjoyed unwavering support from elements of the British Conservative party and of the conservative press. He also knew exactly how to appeal to British nostalgia, an especially potent emotion during the 1960s and 1970s, as the country’s global influence declined, amid a succession of sterling crises and withdrawal from an empire that could no longer be afforded. ‘If Churchill were alive today,’ Smith said soon after UDI, ‘I believe he’d probably emigrate to Rhodesia – because I believe all those admirable qualities and characteristics of the British we believed in, loved and preached to our children no longer exist in Britain.’ In golf clubs and saloon bars across the old country, countless Britons undoubtedly agreed with him.

Had his father left Scotland and settled in Australia, Canada, or New Zealand, the world would have been no problem with a Prime Minister Ian Smith. Instead Jock chose Rhodesia, whose ambiguous initial status was largely responsible for the difficulties later on. Rhodesia was not a typical African colony, ruled directly from Whitehall. It was founded by Rhodes under a charter extended to his

company. From the start it was a sub-contracted or, to use the modern term, outsourced form of empire.

Unlike Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, and Nyasaland, now Malawi, Southern Rhodesia's two partners in the short lived Central African Federation, few if any British administrators lived there. From 1923, it enjoyed quasi-dominion status, for all practical purposes run by the local white minority which liked to think of itself as no less 'African' than the black majority it ruled. But unlike Australia, New Zealand and Canada, Southern Rhodesia's whites were outnumbered 20 to 1 by the native population. And when the crisis broke, Britain would find itself in the uncomfortable position of having responsibility without the power to go with it.

Smith's political career had begun in 1948 when he was persuaded to stand for Parliament for the Liberal Party. In the elections that September 16, the Liberals lost six of their previous 11 seats, but not Selukwe where Smith was standing. Thereafter events moved fast.

Self-governing on almost all domestic matters, white Rhodesians were already pressing for nationhood. Britain established the Federation in 1953 as a half-way house, but the unnatural entity was soon strained to breaking point by growing demands by the black majorities in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia for full independence. In the outside world too, circumstances were changing rapidly. Addressing the South African parliament in February 1960, Harold MacMillan evoked the 'wind of change' blowing through Africa, while the US, Britain's most important ally, was also pressing for de-colonisation.

In 1963 the Federation collapsed. Majority black rule however was not what Southern Rhodesia's whites had in mind. In Salisbury the Rhodesia front, a new white nationalist party of which Smith was deputy leader, won power. Within a year Winston Field the prime minister was voted out of office by his parliamentary colleagues who

deemed him too moderate. He was replaced by Smith, with a mandate to go for independence. Six months later Harold Wilson's Labour Party won the general election in Britain, and the stage was set for showdown, between the de facto colonial power committed to black majority rule and the white settlers who had taken over an African land.

Months of tortuous negotiation followed, but it was quickly obvious that the diametrically opposed positions could not be reconciled. Placing Rhodesia in the context of the Cold War, Smith accused Wilson's Government of being 'hell-bent on appeasing the cult of Marxist-Leninism'There would be no surrender, he vowed, to 'Communists' in Africa and beyond.

On the morning of November 11, 1965 and despite a last appeal by phone from Harold Wilson, Smith took the step that had long been inevitable. A Thomas Jefferson however he was not. The Unilateral Declaration of Independence read like a parody of the American version of 1776, full of 'whereases' and 'therefores,' but in practice a charter for white rule. Nonetheless, in a radio broadcast to the nation, Smith told his countrymen they had 'struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilisation and Christianity.'

Britain's initial response to this challenge consisted of economic sanctions. For all Wilson's initial bluster, and his prediction that UDI would fail in a matter of 'weeks not months,' it was clear he would never use force to topple the rebel regime. The sanctions, intended to choke Rhodesia's imports of oil and exports of its vital cashcrop tobacco, caused inconvenience. But Rhodesia's shared border with white-ruled South Africa, the economic giant of the continent, ensured that they were ultimately unenforceable.

Soon efforts to reach a compromise began. First came 'talks about talks,' followed by a meeting between Smith and Wilson aboard the destroyer HMS Tiger in the

Mediterranean, in October 1966. In 1968, the two leaders tried again on HMS Fearless, off Gilbraltar. But there was no bridging the basic disagreement over Rhodesia's refusal to abandon UDI and return to the British fold, pending a settlement acceptable to the black majority.

The next half dozen years were the apogee of the Rhodesia of 'Good Old Smithy'. In Britain, the leader writers of conservative newspapers sung his praises, and in 1970 the more congenial Tories returned to power. Sanctions by now were little more than a joke, guerilla activities were comfortably contained by the Rhodesian security forces, and what white opposition existed was mostly silenced by the house arrest of the former prime minister Garfield Todd in 1972, and the exile of his daughter Judith.

But there was one ominous setback – though it did not seem so at the time.

In 1971 Smith struck a deal with the Conservative Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas Home, that would have legalised UDI in return for a new constitution pushing black rule into the remotest of futures. The agreement however was massively rejected when the African population was consulted by the Pearce Commission. Smith dismissed Pearce's report as an 'absolute fraud,' but thereafter the 'Nibmar' formula – No Independence Before Majority Rule – was set in stone. The last hope of securing an independent, internationally recognised white Rhodesia had disappeared.

For a while life went on as before. But in the mid-1970s two events sealed the fate of the Smith regime. The first was America's new concern, after Cuba's forays into Angola, that southern Africa might fall into the Soviet sphere of influence. This brought Smith face-to-face with global geopolitics and the diplomatic might of the US, wielded by

Henry Kissinger and supported by the Labour Government returned to power in London in 1974.

Even more important was the collapse of Portugal's African empire in 1975.

Suddenly an independent black-ruled Mozambique was on Rhodesia's eastern frontier. The guerillas had a sanctuary, and the war was now unwinnable.

The last four years of white rule saw a series of increasingly desperate manoeuvres by Smith to delay the inevitable – even as South Africa, so long the vital ally, now embarked on its own drive for detente with its black neighbours, and began to distance itself from the pariah regime in Salisbury. Variously, Smith sought to involve Abel Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole, Rhodesia's 'internal' black leaders, and even Joshua Nkomo, the Matabele leader and most prestigious of the insurgent 'external'black politicians, in the search for a solution. After the failure of a conference promoted by Kissinger in 1976, Smith played his last card of an 'internal' settlement, all the while assailing Britain, the US and South Africa for this cynical abandonment of their 'kith and kin.'

Militarily, the situation worsened by the month as guerillas stepped up attacks from their bases in Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. At its height, Rhodesia's white tribe had never accounted for more than 6 per cent of the population (a peak attained in 1951) and never exceeded some 260,000 in absolute numbers, compared to 6m blacks. White immigrants arrived in the first decade after UDI, reassured by the apparent security on the ground and lured by the prospect of a new life in a land of opportunity.

But between January 1976 and Zimbabwean independence, the white population dropped by almost 50,000, almost a fifth. Contrary to the impression encouraged by the regime, only a minority of the white population was actually Rhodesian born. Alarmed by the military draft, to which all

whites up to the age of 60 were liable, and fearful of their security, many recent immigrants decided to return home. The precise death toll of the war is unknown, but the vast bulk of the casualties – some 80 per cent – were incurred in the three years of 1977, 1978 and 1979. An end to the fighting was finally agreed at the Lancaster House confererence of 1979, which provided for all-party elections the following March.

For several years after Zimbabwe's independence, Smith played an active part in politics. In retirement he became an ever fiercer critic of the Mugabe government, especially when it launched its violent campaign to take back white owned farms. His warning that this policy would dislocate the mainstay of the national economy, and thus depress living standards for the very black people whose interests Mugabe claimed to be fighting for, has sadly proved all too accurate. As disaster piled upon disaster, his refrain was simple – 'I Told You So.'

Ian Smith was a limited and by all accounts somewhat humorless man, of simple tastes and blinkered outlook. But though he knew how to appeal to British nostalgia, his love of the country of his ancestors was not feigned. He rebelled against the Crown, but was intensely patriotic – as attested by the final words of his 1965 declaration of independence: God Save the Queen.

Was he a racist? Not in the Ku Klux Klan sense of a white supremacism founded on violence and naked terror. Nor did his Rhodesia follow the South African model of an explicit, rigidly enforced apartheid, or 'apartness' of the races, written into the law of the land. If anything, he subscribed to the 'separate but equal' fantasy that prevailed in the US until it was struck down in the landmark 1954 Brown Vs. Board of Education ruling by the

Supreme Court that ordered the desegregation of schools and launched the American civil rights movement.

For Ian Smith, white rule was the natural order of things. White settlers had built the country, they paid the taxes, and they deserved to reap the fruit of their labours. Blacks, he maintained, were happy in their separate universe. When pressed, he might talk of a gradualism, of ‘evolution not revolution’ as if to suggest that one day blacks might take charge, by a route that avoided the ‘disasters’ that had occurred in many newly independent for colonies to the north. But Smith let slip the truth to an interviewer: ‘I don’t believe in black majority rule ever, not in a thousand years.’

In his Rhodesia, self righteous paternalism was the order of the day.

Whites would refer without a trace of self consciousness to ‘our black people’. Smith would contrast the turbulence of post independence Nigeria, the Congo and Uganda with his own placid, contented and white-ruled patch of southern Africa, home of ‘the happiest black faces you ever saw’.

The British writer David Caute, in his 1983 history of the period, Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia, described Smith’s attitude thus.

> His attitude towards Africans was empty of hatred. He bullied them, but politely. He hectored and lectured them, but not at the level of personal abuse. Because he he could always ban them, detain them and lock them up – which he often did – he felt unthreatened by them at a personal level. They were opponents but within the wider contours of history and geography.

That judgement rings true. Smith’s real enemies were whites, above all the hypocritical ruling establishment of the mother country, emblem of all that had gone wrong with post-war Britain. The worst offender perhaps was

David Owen, Labour's youthful Foreign Secretary between 1977 and 1979, 'a petty arrogant little man, trying to fill a job that was too big for him.'

But the gallery of traitors included not just left wing politicians, indeed Smith took them for granted. He was especially shocked by the perceived duplicity of Tory grandees like Harold MacMillan and Rab Butler, foreign secretary when the Central African Federation broke up in 1963, described by Smith in his memoirs as 'flabby, overweight … a sad specimen of humanity.'

Then there was Lord Carrington, the Conservative foreign secretary who presided over the Lancaster House talks, 'the most adept at double talk of them all'. Carrington's greatest sin was to have adroitly convinced the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, whom Smith regarded as a potential ally, that Mugabe and Nkomo had to be part of a final settlement, even though she instinctively shared Smith's view that the two external leaders were not freedom fighters but terrorists.

The final agreement, though it ended the war, appalled Smith. In vain did he warn that the winner, whether by fair means or foul, was certain to be Mugabe, backed by China and about whom the British as well had the gravest misgivings. In the end he was so disgusted by proceedings that he skipped the closing ceremony, preferring to attend a re-union dinner with his old chums from 130 Squadron. 'It would have been a nauseous occasion for me, and to pretend otherwise would have been hypocritical,' he writes in these memoirs. 'Even if I had attended in mourning garb it would not have rung true, because funerals are occasions when one pays one's respects. My only feeling would have been contempt.'

In the light of subsequent events, it is hard not to have some sympathy for Smith. Whatever one's views of colonialism and white minority rule, every one in

Zimbabwe, apart from a tiny ruling elite and their cronies, is worse off under Mugabe's despotic regime. At independence, Rhodesia had everything going for it: a decent industry and infrastructure, a solid currency, a government bureaucracy and social services that were the envy of Africa, and the good will of the world. Everyone wanted it to succeed, none more than Britain.

Today the country is on the brink of total collapse. In November 2007, the month in which Smith died, inflation was running at an official rate of 25,000 per cent. Some unofficial estimates put the figure six times higher, meaning that prices would have multiplied 1,500 times in a single year – if there was anything in the shops to buy.

But what has happened since cannot justify what went before. A wise leader must distinguish between the temporary vicissitudes of history and its irresistible flows. The former test his mettle. But to the latter, he must adapt. Barely a decade after blacks took power in Rhodesia, South Africa – the last bastion of white rule on the continent, whose white population was proportionately four times as large as that of Rhodesia – had no choice but to embrace majority rule as well.

An exchange with Harold Wilson, as recounted here by Smith, offers a telling snapshot. Always the pragmatist, the Labour premier pointed out that it would be easy enough for the two of them to reach an agreement. The problem was that it would have to be acceptable to the Organisation of African Unity. Smith dismissed 'that bunch of communist dictators,' but Wilson replied simply that 'You cannot divorce yourself from the world we live in.' To which Smith responded, 'Perhaps it's the politicians we have to deal with, rather than the world we live in.' To the last Smith believed he was the victim not of irresistible pressures, but of the spinelessness of his supposed friends.

Nor could he understand the underlying harshness of white rule, epitomised during the bush war by the

uprooting of an estimated 750,000 Africans, herded into ‘protected villages’ that were little more than guarded camps, in a vain bid to thwart the guerrillas, or ‘terrs’ to the minority regime.

Nor did he grasp the fundamental, all-pervasive unfairness of land ownership in the old Rhodesia, whereby a few thousand white farmers held more than half of the country’s arable land. Mugabe’s depredations were self defeating. But no-one could dispute the underlying injustice of the situation he inherited in 1980.

The descent of Zimbabwe in these last few years is an unalloyed tragedy. Some say that had Smith been less obdurate and readier to compromise at the outset, his country might have been spared the misery that followed.

Perhaps – but then again, perhaps not. When Mugabe did take power, after the 1980 election, his victory was comprehensive and indisputable. After all, he belonged to the majority Shona people. Even if there had been no war of independence, he might well have come to power, sooner or later. The argument of course is moot. The old Rhodesia is gone for ever, and modern Zimbabwe is home to twice as many elephants as whites. Ian Smith might be the symbol of an untenable past. But as his country endures its agony, his shadow looms larger than ever over its equally untenable present.

Rupert Cornwell, Washington DC, March 19 2008.

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Introduction

Since the Second World War, and particularly from the 1960s onwards, we have been prone to arrive quickly at firm — often unshakeable — opinions of leading personalities of our time. This is because, for the first time in history, all our senses are saturated not only by what we read in newspapers, but by what we hear on the radio and see on the television. As people under scrutiny are ‘live’ on a screen before us, we feel that we know them personally and can judge them — forgetting our own ignorance of them and that what we see, hear and read about them is edited by unseen hands. We are fascinated by their foibles and mannerisms quite as much as by their achievements and qualities. We judge them with confidence — finding them guilty or not guilty. Then later, sure of our opinion, we are often disappointed, even outraged, when the biographies and historical analyses emerge to show us a very different picture. They uncover what was hidden from us, what we could not know and, particularly, how complex everything was.

Ian Douglas Smith is a man about whom much of the world had (and probably still has) firm opinions. Depicted mostly as an obstinate, dour leader of a right-wing white minority government in an obscure land-locked African colony, this essentially private, reticent but patriotic man was brought to public attention by the drama which led to his declaring his country unilaterally independent on 11

November 1965. He would probably have been forgotten if his rebellion (UDI) against Britain had not endured for another fifteen years. Time has served, perhaps, to soften the image of this quintessential Rhodesian but, as misconceptions abound about the man and his country, his autobiography is timely.

Ian Smith has had an almost universally hostile press — even at home in Rhodesia — and that hostility has persisted because there has been nothing of substance written to ameliorate it. There are dozens of books on Rhodesia, but none explains how he struck a chord with the public both at home and abroad even at the height of the confrontation with Britain and the world. This always puzzled his political opponents, who saw him only as they wanted to see him. A major sin of course, was that he offended the establishment by not accepting the fate of Rhodesia as decreed by Whitehall. His rebellion against the Crown forfeited the support of many who otherwise would have been his allies within the British and other bodies politic. Nevertheless, he secured the admiration of many ordinary people, who admired his unwavering stand for his principles.

There is academic concern about ‘Rhodesianness’ and attempts to deny it. But anyone who lived his or her life there knows its reality. Whatever the origin of the white Rhodesians, they were simply not South Africans, nor were they the British abroad, talking of ‘home’. Ian Smith shows this in this book.

Southern Rhodesia was not the typical British colony because it was neither founded by nor ruled directly from Whitehall. The uniqueness of its founding in many ways prescribed its later crises and some of what still haunts Zimbabwe today. The colony was neither the outcome of British imperialism at the height of the ‘Scramble for Africa’, nor part of a vision generated in London. Instead, it was the product of sub-imperialism by Britain’s Cape Colony, where Cecil John Rhodes the mining magnate and

politician, dreamed of expansion into Central Africa to find another Rand and to annex great portions of Africa to the existing possessions of the Crown. Because the British Government acquiesced and in 1889 granted the British South Africa Company of Rhodes a royal charter to exploit land north of the Limpopo, it abdicated the power to control what happened thereafter.

The influence of Cape society, rather than that of Britain, had profound effects. Like the Cape and Natal, but few other African colonies, Southern Rhodesia was a colony of settlement. The company's corps of pioneers was recruited in the Cape, as were the civil servants who were to serve the company and governments thereafter. Roman-Dutch law, not English law, was adopted along with many legislative ideas — including the non-racial franchise. The Court of Appeal was later in Bloemfontein, not London. Young Rhodesians — including Ian Smith — were educated at South African universities. Even the flat accent of the white Rhodesian has its origin in the Cape.

The British government soon had second thoughts about the unbridled BSA Company after the embarrassment of the Jameson Raid of 1896, followed by the company's harsh handling of the reaction of the Shona and Ndebele to the loss of their land and sovereignty in the first uprising against white rule in 1896–7. The company was brought under stricter surveillance and was not allowed, for example, to govern Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia). From 1900, the settlers were given representation in the Southern Rhodesian legislative council. Company rule ended in 1923 when, after being given the opportunity, in a referendum, of joining South Africa, the Southern Rhodesians were granted limited self-government. Under this they could elect a legislative assembly, on a non-racial franchise, from which a prime minister and a cabinet would be chosen, The new Southern Rhodesian government had wide powers, including the right of defence. The British

retained a veto on matters affecting local Africans and they controlled foreign relations. The quasi-dominion status of Southern Rhodesia was reinforced in 1924 by its affairs being placed under the new Dominions Office — and not the Colonial Office — in London, and by the country's being invited, after 1931, to participate in all the meetings of the Dominion — and later the Commonwealth — prime ministers. This privilege, and the fact that the British never saw fit to exercise their veto, contributed to the impression in Rhodesia that, in due course, limited self-government would be translated into full dominion status as it had in New Zealand, for example.

By 1948, having governed Southern Rhodesia successfully for twenty-five years, the Southern Rhodesian Parliament concluded that dominion status should be sought. The objective of the Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins (later Lord Malvern), however, was a larger British dominion in Central Africa. Moves had already begun to rationalise services common to Southern Rhodesia and its nearest British colonies to the north, namely Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (later Malawi). Amalgamation with Northern Rhodesia was sought by Huggins to create a large enough entity with the resources — the copper of the north, for example — to justify a new dominion. The British did not wish to allow Southern Rhodesians control over the Africans of the area, so settled for a federation of the three territories which allowed the two northern territories to continue under direct rule from London. This was the fatal flaw of the subsequent Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1953–63. Independent of the interests of the Federation, Britain was able to move the two northern colonies rapidly towards independence once Harold Macmillan had decided to abandon the Empire in 1958–9. Yet Southern Rhodesia saw itself as the senior partner because it had been self-governing since 1923 and, unlike Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, it possessed a

sophisticated economy based on agriculture, mining and industry through local enterprise. Rhodesia had a stock exchange, merchant banks and other aspects of a developed society. If such assets were the criteria of independence the Southern Rhodesians felt that their territory should be the automatic choice to be independent first.

The Federation was doomed by the decisions in 1962–3 to give Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia independence. In any case, the new African governments of Kenneth Kaunda and Hastings Banda had nothing in common with their Southern Rhodesian federal partner. Winston Field, the new Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, could secure nothing more than a verbal promise of independence for his territory from Lord Butler, the presiding British Minister. Immediately after sealing the Federal dissolution at the Victoria Falls conference in mid-1963, the British reneged. In the era of self-determination and under pressure from the Afro-Asian bloc, they would not allow Rhodesia to be independent while the whites remained in a dominating political position. The British wanted rapid advancement to full enfranchisement of all. African nationalist opinion (voiced by Joshua Nkomo, the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and later Robert Mugabe) was more impatient and demanded instant majority rule. By contrast, the white Rhodesians brought up on a qualified franchise and possessed of practical experience of Africa, sought an evolutionary and gradual path to full democracy. There were African moderates who fell in between, but by 1963 the militant African nationalists, sponsored by the Eastern bloc, embarked on the armed insurgency which would result in Mugabe’s coming to power in 1980.

Ian Smith replaced Field in April 1964, but he was not the first prime minister, Southern Rhodesian or Federal, to have earned British censure for attempting to impede the British rush of all colonies to independence whether they

were ready or not. Sir Roy Welensky, as Federal Prime Minister (1956–63), had already offended the British establishment by his obdurate resistance to expediency. Welensky had compounded the offence by contemplating UDI on three occasions but, with two British-administered territories within his Federation, such action was impossible. There was, however, no British presence in Southern Rhodesia, so UDI was possible for Smith.

As with other Rhodesians, the British officials also underestimated Smith, and their ignorance contributed greatly to the impasse over independence. They knew nothing of Smith when they first encountered him in 1963 in Field's cabinet, describing him simply as 'a tough, somewhat difficult personality'. Set on their path, they were determined to give the Rhodesians nothing. When Smith was due in London in September 1964 to negotiate the terms of independence to match that being given to Zambia, Sir Saville Garner, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Commonwealth Relations Office, advised his minister, the Duke of Devonshire: 'Short of a miracle, there is no possibility of the granting of independence during Mr Smith's visit. Our best hope lies in not provoking a crisis at this stage with the aim of finding later on an administration with whom we can hope to make progress.'

The advised inaction produced the crisis of UDI and the British had to wait until 1978–9 before they had someone else (Bishop Muzorewa) with whom to deal.

The depth of the British ignorance of Smith is to be found in a biographical note supplied in September 1964 to the British Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas Home. Having outlined Smith's career, it concluded:

> He is a simple-minded, politically naïve, and uncomprehending character. His political approach has been described as 'schoolboy'. He possesses a strong vein of schoolboy obstinacy and there is a mixture of

> schoolboy stubbornness, cunning and imperception about his speeches. Likewise there is a *Boy's Own Paper* ring about his patriotic utterances. Nevertheless his pedestrian and humourless manner often conceals a shrewder assessment of a particular situation than at first appears on the surface and he should not be underrated.

Because they acted on such advice without heeding the final sentence, it is not surprising that the British found themselves faced with UDI a year later.

Professor J.R.T. Wood, Durban, South Africa 1997

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Growth of a Nation

I: IN THE BEGINNING

‘You Rhodesians are more British than the British.’ So often I heard that during the war years 1939–45. It was a comment which pleased Rhodesians. To think that we were not British would be ridiculous. After all, what is our history? Rhodes’s dream of a British route from Cape to Cairo.

In 1889 Cecil John Rhodes, the founder of a mining empire and inspirational leader of the British in South Africa, secured a Royal Charter from Queen Victoria to form the British South Africa Company to explore and exploit the land north of the Limpopo River. Blessed with the sanction of the Matabele chief, Lobengula, to assess the mineral wealth of the lands to the north and east of Matabeleland, Rhodes sent Major Frank Johnson and 250 young pioneers in a column of wagons on a daring adventure into the unknown.

The formation of the British South Africa Police (BSAP) in 1889 in Kimberley, 500 men in all, was to provide protection for the pioneer column of 1890. Their task was to raise the Union Jack, first at Fort Tuli, then Fort Victoria and finally at Fort Salisbury. They were going into uncharted country, the domain of the lion, the elephant, the buffalo, the rhinoceros — all deadly killers — the black mamba, the most deadly of all snakes, and the Matabele, with Lobengula’s Impis, the most deadly of all black

warriors, guarding their frontiers against any intruders. But if the mission was to raise the flag for queen and country, no questions were asked. Moreover, their consciences were clear: to the west the Matabeles had recently moved in. They were a tribe of the Zulus in Natal, who had broken away after a difference of opinion with their King Shaka and migrated north, first to the Transvaal and thence crossing the Limpopo and settling in this new country, which was uninhabited apart from wandering Bushmen, and became known as Matabeleland. The eastern parts of the country were settled by a number of different tribes, nomadic people who had immigrated from the north and east, constantly moving to and fro in order to accommodate their needs and wants. To the south were scattered settlements of Shangaans from Mozambique and Northern Transvaal. Clearly it was no-man's land, as Cecil Rhodes and the politicians back in London had confirmed, so no one could accuse them of trespassing or taking part in an invasion.

The mission was accomplished sooner than expected and, apart from a few skirmishes with the Matabele on their western flank, the problems were much as would reasonably be expected on such a pioneering expedition. Such problems led to the short, sharp war of 1893, in which the Matabele were conquered. The people the pioneers met in the eastern part of the country, collectively known as Shonas, because there was a common thread through the various dialects used which came to be known as the Shona language, were friendly and gave a cautious welcome to the newcomers. Lingering dissatisfaction among the conquered Matabele led to an uprising in Matabeleland that coincided with Dr Jameson's ill-fated raid into the Transvaal in 1896, in an attempt to topple the government of Paul Kruger. The unrest spread to some of the Shona. The Matabeles were quickly subdued and pacified by intervention from Rhodes. The Shona took

longer to defeat. Once the uprising was over in 1897, peace reigned. Indeed the police would not have recourse to arms until 1962, when African nationalists began to use violence in their campaign for power.

Gradually the pioneers started spreading out, looking for gold, which was the main attraction, and land to start producing food. Among them were my uncle, George, who trekked up from the Cape in 1894, and my father, Jock Smith, who joined him in 1898. There was no friction, because the local black people knew nothing about mining, and were interested and fascinated at the white man's digging. In fact, they were happy to have the opportunity to work and, for the first time in their lives, earn money which enabled them to join in the excitement of this new adventure of purchasing and selling — something they had not previously known. Land was plentiful, so there was no problem over crop growing, which again provided an opportunity to earn money. Moreover, because of the primitive agricultural implements used by the black people, which were wooden as opposed to the iron used by the white man, they were concentrated on the light sandy or loam soils, which they found easier to work. The white man, on the other hand, preferred the heavier soils.

Wherever the new settlers went, the first thing they did was to raise the Union Jack. This was part of pioneering a new country — something in which the people back in Britain had never participated. Nor did they know anything about the spirit of nationalism associated with the opening up of new lands in the name of monarch and country. These were the things that motivated pride and a belief in nationalism. There was feeling of duty to believe in a cause, to make a stand to support and defend it. Again, for the people back in Britain this was a stimulation which they had never experienced.

Certainly, pioneers by nature were the kind of people who sought a challenge in preference to the humdrum sheltered

life, with its security based in the knowledge that one lived in a society that provided protection and insulation from external forces. So our foundations were built by people with strong, individual character, with that important quality of having the courage of their convictions — British people who were playing their part in building the British Empire, the greatest force for good the world had ever known. Britain, a small island off the coast of Europe, this mighty atom which had spread its Western Christian civilisation over half the globe, introducing proper standards of freedom, of justice, and the basics of education, health and hygiene. And right now, here in the centre of southern Africa, the dark continent, men of British stock were once more carrying the torch on one of the few frontiers yet to be civilised.

Clearly, this was no place for faint-hearted men, those who were not dedicated, or were not inspired by the cause they were serving. They had to be convinced that if they were not God-sent, then at least it was the next best thing, sent by their queen and country to spread British civilisation.

So it was not surprising that the sons of these pioneers were more British than the British. That was how we were all brought up and taught to live. When you walked past the Union Jack — and it was in the forefront of most buildings of any consequence — you looked at it, and admired it. All formal occasions commenced with the national anthem ‘God Save the King’, with everyone standing to attention, and if you moved there would be a restraining hand on your shoulder.

Law and order in your society, discipline at your school, play the game by your fellow man, you cannot let your team down, and in the final analysis it may even be necessary to die for your cause. Those were the conditions under which you lived, under which, as a member of the British Empire, you were privileged to live.

However, there was associated with us an unusual and interesting anomaly, for we were never governed directly from Whitehall, and therefore never came within the category of being a colony. We were governed by the Charter Company, the company formed by Rhodes, with the concurrence, indeed encouragement, of the British government, to establish a settlement in the country lying north of the Limpopo, east of Bechuanaland, and south of the Zambezi.

At the end of the First World War in 1918, Rhodesia was prospering and developing in all spheres of life and the settlers were beginning to talk about managing their own affairs, governing themselves. The performance of Rhodesians all round had been exemplary. The economy was well managed, development was planned and there was steady progress. There was a history of harmonious race relations and, in the recent war, Rhodesians had made a contribution second to none. With a record such as this, declared the British government, a move for self-government could only be supported. As a result of negotiations with the British government and the Charter Company, it was decided that Rhodesians should be given the option of either joining the Union of South Africa as a fifth province, or being granted ‘responsible government’. The latter was a unique offer of what the British termed quasi-dominion status. Rhodesians were advised that such a constitution would give them the benefits of dominion status, but relieve them of the economic burden of foreign affairs and diplomatic missions throughout the world, which would prove intolerable to their small economy. The British would do this job for them, and no problems were envisaged. It was worth a trial.

In 1922 the choice was put to the Rhodesian people through a referendum. In spite of personal intervention by General Jan Smuts, then Prime Minister of South Africa, who visited the country and addressed meetings, using his

great wisdom and personal charm in an effort to convince Rhodesians to opt for joining the Union, Rhodesians voted by a majority of 2:1 for ‘responsible government’. They voted with their hearts, not their heads. There were too many non-Britishers in South Africa, the Afrikaners, and Rhodesians were not prepared to accept such a change of national character. Smuts and some of his associates were all right, but what about the others? It would be better to maintain them as friends, as always in the past, but retain our British identity — Rhodesian loyalty was not negotiable.

It is easy to be wise through hindsight, but clearly Rhodesians made the wrong decision. The practical and economic benefits of joining the Union, obvious at that time, would have materialised and even exceeded predictions. With the advantages of being part of a larger and more diversified economy, access to transport and harbour facilities, elimination of customs and trade barriers, retaining our Commonwealth preferences — because South Africa at that time was part of the British Empire — things could only have improved.

II: THE FATAL TURNING POINT: 1948

Given the nature of the Rhodesian electorate, and its antipathy towards Afrikaner nationalism, the incorporation of Rhodesia into the Union of South Africa in 1923 could have significantly influenced the outcome of the crucial first post-Second World War election in South Africa. In 1948, Smuts’s United Party government was ousted by Daniel Malan’s Afrikaner National Party by a narrow margin of three seats. This unexpected victory for Afrikaner nationalism had a profound effect on the history of southern Africa in a variety of ways.

The election result was a shock, not only to South African opinion but world opinion. It was a surprise even to the victorious Afrikaner National Party, which was not really prepared for the event. There was, however, a precedent: the British had rejected their great war hero, Churchill. South Africans followed suit. Such is the ingratitude, the unpredictability, the illogicality of human beings. The defeat of the Smuts government was one of the most profound events affecting the history of Africa. Had Rhodesia been the 'fifth province', Smuts would have won that election. There can be no doubt that Rhodesians would have voted solidly for the United Party, and their representation of twelve to fifteen seats would have made the crucial difference.

It is interesting to prognosticate on how such an event would have changed history. At the end of the war, in 1945, the Smuts government had chartered Union Castle liners to bring immigrants to South Africa. Many people in Britain and Europe were disenchanted with the post-war life, overcrowding, shortages, rationing. Many had done war service in Africa, with its pleasant climate and open spaces. So this presented a wonderful opportunity for developing countries to gain a high calibre of immigrant. Rhodesia doubled its white population in a space of nine years. Sadly, we then got caught up in the dissolution of our Federation (which had been formed after 1948 with Northern Rhodesia — now Zambia — and Nyasaland — now Malawi). Our subsequent Declaration of Independence in 1965 brought our immigration to a standstill. Australia exploited the situation, and, although they did not match the Rhodesian immigration figures, their population doubled in approximately twenty years.

However, when the National Party came to power in South Africa, they immediately halted Smuts's immigration plan. Their reasoning was that the immigrants would be United Party supporters, so this had to be prevented. Many

prominent members of the National Party conceded to me subsequently that this was their greatest mistake. It was a decision made in haste, by people who lacked the wisdom and foresight which comes with experience. Had they allowed continued immigration, South Africa's white population today would have been around 15 million, instead of 6 million. With all of its wonderful rich natural resources, coupled with the professionalism, expertise and skills of immigrants from western Europe, South Africa could have been one of the great industrial nations of the world. And of vital importance, with the population ratio of white to black being 1:2, as opposed to the present 1:5, the political problem would have been significantly reduced. Moreover, under the United Party philosophy South Africa would never have fallen into the apartheid trap — with leaders such as Smuts and de Villiers Graaf they would have steered their traditional policy of allowing the various races to preserve their history, culture and traditions, without provoking hostility or offending human dignity and feelings, and the Coloured and Asian communities would not have been ejected from the white camp.

There was one other significant fact. Early in my political career I remember listening to Sir Godfrey Huggins talking to a group of MPs, philosophising over the National Party's victory at the polls in 1948. Clearly, he was sad at the defeat of his old colleague Smuts, and at the new trend which was developing in South Africa, which would not be conducive to bringing our countries closer. But most interesting was his comment on South West Africa. Because of South Africa's contribution during the war just ended, its loyalty and dedication to the cause of freedom, going back as far as the First World War, and because of the very high standing of General Smuts, regarded as one of the great statesmen of the world — an undertaking was given that South West Africa would be handed over for incorporation into the Union as a fifth province. It was logical: South

Africa had controlled the territory since the First World War, when it took it over from the Germans on behalf of the Allies, and South West African MPs were elected and sat in the Parliament in Cape Town, as the other South African MPs did. To all intents and purposes it had been part of South Africa for the past thirty years, although technically it was a mandated territory. Huggins believed that this plan would now end. In view of the new government's announced reactionary policy, and their record of opposition to Smuts's war effort, neither Britain nor any of the other allies would now support the plan. Moreover, added Huggins, certain Rhodesians were airing the possibility of resurrecting the idea of 1923, to take Rhodesia into the Union. 'Any such idea has now been dashed,' he added sombrely.

This presents another interesting facet to the drama of southern Africa, one which significantly changed history. The Central African Federation would never have come about. Rhodesia's independence would have been consolidated with that of South Africa. The terrorist war waged by the African nationalists and their communist allies against Rhodesia, and then South West Africa, and the use of them both as an entrée to South Africa, would not have started. The Organisation of African Union (OAU), aided and abetted by the communists, used the so-called illegality of Rhodesia and South West Africa as a means of gaining sympathy, support and financial assistance for their terrorist attacks. These gained legitimacy and respect through the communist propaganda machine, which brainwashed governments and people alike. Even the free world was bluffed into believing that the terrorists — who were, in fact, a group of Marxist-Leninist gangsters — had justice and the ideals of freedom as their objective. Accordingly, Portugal's position in Mozambique and Angola would have been more secure. Instead of a panic flight and surrender to the communists, the Portuguese government

would have succeeded in their policy of evolution, bringing in the local people as they qualified to accept responsibility. Thus the dreadful disasters of Angola and Mozambique would have been prevented.

That emotional vote in 1948, in which many of the South Africans who had supported Smuts during the war — even fought alongside him — turned against him in the first post-war election, remains an unfathomed enigma to this day.

In fact, although the National Party won a tiny majority of seats, the United Party won quite a considerable majority of votes nationwide. But because of the loading of votes in favour of rural constituencies, they lost the election.

It is fascinating to philosophise on how the history of southern Africa would have been significantly different if the United Party had gained just two more seats in that momentous election. 1948 was certainly a turning point in the history of Africa, one that was to have significant ramifications for many other parts of the world.

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From Innocence to Experience

I: MY YOUNGER YEARS: SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY AND RUGBY OR ROWING?

Such was the political and historical backdrop to my life in Rhodesia. My younger years there were pretty average, in keeping with the kind of background I have outlined. My elder sisters, Phyllis and Joan, and I grew up in the small rural town of Selukwe where my father, Jock, had eventually settled after coming out from Scotland to Rhodesia to join my uncle, George, in 1898. It was in Selukwe that my father met my mother, Agnes, the daughter of a local miner, Tom Hodgson. They travelled to the Hodgson family home, in Cumberland in England, to marry in 1911. My parents strove to instil principles and moral virtues, the sense of right and wrong, of integrity, in their children. They set wonderful examples to live up to and both of them would be awarded MBEs for service to their community and their country.

Blessed with drive, energy and ability, my father ran butcheries and bakeries at four mines in the district. He owned a farm, a mine and the town's garage. He kept and bred race horses and was a rider of some repute. For example, as a gentleman rider, he beat the local jockeys to win the Coronation Derby in Salisbury that celebrated the accession to the throne of George V in 1911. His love of

horses and cattle was not surprising, as he had the reputation as being one of the best judges of livestock in Rhodesia. He judged cattle for forty years at the annual Bulawayo and Salisbury shows. As if this were not enough, he was a captain in the local defence volunteers and the chairman of the rugby and cricket clubs. He served on the town management board. His efforts to raise money for war funds after 1939, as chairman of the National War Fund, earned him his MBE.

My mother was not to be outdone because, among other things, she founded the Selukwe Branch of the Women's Institute, which provided many voluntary services, including staffing and equipping the local lending library which supplied reading matter to the whole district. Life, however, was not exclusively composed of service and duty; as with all small communities, there were weekly dances, sport, picnics and the like.

At Chaplin School in Gwelo the subjects which appealed to me most were maths and science, as opposed to the arts and classics. My real strength, however, was in sport, and I did reasonably well in many disciplines. I think it can fairly be said that because of my dedication to sport, my academic career suffered. Right from the beginning I had a facility for running, and of course this is an asset in most sports. There was also some ball-sense, and I could hit a cricket, tennis, or golf ball. So I was quite well equipped for Rhodesia's two national sports: rugby in winter and cricket in summer. In all our secondary schools those two sports were part of the curriculum, and one could evade them only by producing a medical certificate. Other sports were optional. This is clearly the reason why so many Rhodesians excelled in these two sports, a number becoming great rugby and cricket Springboks.

It was the custom each year for one of the top South African schools to send its rugby team on a tour, playing against Rhodesian schools. During my final year, Chaplin

beat the visiting team — I think the only Rhodesian team to do so — and, as the captain of the school XV, I was the recipient of an honours award. It was indeed a very special occasion.

In my first term at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, in South Africa, in 1938 athletics predominated, and I performed relatively well in the championships. I had done 100 yards in ten seconds as a schoolboy in Rhodesia the previous year, so if I could knock off a tenth of a second each year there was hope, so I thought! At that time the world record was 9.4 seconds.

The next term was rugby and I had made a good start when my knee was damaged and I was off for the rest of the season. A great friend of mine who played for the first XV in his first year — no mean achievement — was also keen on rowing and advised me that this sport would benefit my knee. He was right; it did seem to strengthen the ligaments and ease the stiffness. I enjoyed rowing, the team spirit and synchronisation with every member of the crew trying to work as one unit. One of my claims to fame was that in 1946, after the war, I went back to Rhodes to do the final year for my degree and I was stroke in the Rhodes crew which won the Inter-Varsity Boat Race on the Vaal Dam near Johannesburg. A few months previously the Wits University crew had won the Transvaal Grand Challenge Cup, and the local media had suggested that they should represent South Africa at the coming Empire Games. So it is fair comment to say that we pulled off a significant victory, especially when one considers that we were from one of the small universities, with inadequate facilities and a small patch of water which did not allow a crew to get into its stride.

Far from knocking a tenth of a second off my 100 yards time each year, however, I was *adding* a tenth of a second, and there seemed to be no doubt that the reason for this was rowing. The opinion of specialists substantiates this.

The message seems clear: rowing does not go well together with sports where speed is an advantage, such as athletics, rugby, hockey, soccer and many others. These sports will not adversely affect one's rowing ability, but one should give serious consideration to the disadvantages in the opposite direction.

I have no regrets over my incursion into rowing, since it is so different from other sports and I therefore found it a completely new experience. Rowing is a sport which promotes philosophical thinking and reasoning. It has the peace and tranquility of water as a background, there is no body contact, no face-to-face confrontation, and the noise element is almost non-existent — apart from the ripple of the bow through the water. Clearly, it has therapeutic qualities, encouraging participants to resolve differences through peaceful communication and rationalisation. Perhaps all politicians should be encouraged to do a little rowing occasionally! Given that I was brought up under a system where sport was part of one's training, discipline, character formation, and the idea that one should partake of as many kinds as possible, I think my life has been enriched by participating in such a range of activities, enabling me to make friends among people from a wide variety of human types. There have been no regrets in my life for the course I followed.

If one's intention is to achieve championship status, however, it would appear that specialisation is a *sine qua non*, and sadly, this places one in the class of quasi-professionalism, and this has a tendency to detract from the quality of sportsmanship.

II: THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

When war was declared in September 1939, among most people there was a sombre air of anxiety. But for a large number of the younger generation, excitement predominated. For those of us at university, end-of-year examinations were approaching, so there was general acceptance, albeit reluctant in some quarters, that these should be taken normally, and that then there would be ample time during the long vacation to assess the position.

At my home town of Selukwe, one of the biggest mining areas in the country, some of the young-bloods, having celebrated the occasion, boarded the night train to Salisbury, and on arrival next morning presented themselves for service at the nearest appropriate government office. Their absence from work, however, caused immediate consternation at the mines concerned and the message was swiftly conveyed to Salisbury: the production of gold and chrome, the principal products at Selukwe, was an essential part of the war effort. So those young bucks, hoping for immediate enlistment, were summarily arrested and sent back to their jobs on the mines. Other similar cases presented themselves, and government assessment of the situation indicated a need for conscription, not to conscript people into the services, but to keep people in their jobs until plans were produced to ensure that when young people were accepted for service, there were older people ready to fill their positions. A unique situation: people were conscripted to keep them *out* of the security forces, as opposed to getting them *in*! Such was the character of these people who were more British than the British.

Part of the government's plan was also that university students should complete their courses before enlisting. It was difficult to argue against the logic and sense of such a plan, no matter how frustrating for some. I received some hope from an announcement that Rhodesia had been

chosen as one of the countries to pioneer the Empire Air Training Scheme; not surprising, as we had one of the most perfect climates in the world. My dream was to fly a Spitfire, so I consoled myself with the need for patience — but it did not come easily, and it was difficult to concentrate on such mundane things as academic studies.

During the long Christmas vacation of 1940 I made a trip to Salisbury on the pretext of visiting some of my friends. I had been given a name to contact at Air Force Administration and the whole exercise went surprisingly well. The question of my attendance at university was evaded, a medical examination produced no problem, and one of my local friends undertook to receive and pass on correspondence. So I returned to university with hope in my heart. Every day I scanned the post, exercising great patience. Then they arrived: my call-up papers for a pilot's course. I read and re-read every word, half a dozen times.

Next morning I went straight along and was shown in for an interview with the registrar, Major Walker MC. He was an impressive, no-nonsense man, highly respected by all. I was a member of the students' committee responsible for running our hall of residence and enjoyed good relations with the Major; we were both lovers of sport, believers in law and order and a bit of discipline. He listened to my case and inspected the call-up papers. 'There must be some mistake,' he said very deliberately. 'Your government has made it clear that it does not wish students' courses to be interrupted in this way.' I assured him that there was no mistake, that this was in keeping with my wishes, and I would not be put off. He paused for only a few moments, and then said: 'The decision is really your own; even if I wished to prevent you I have no power to do so. Knowing your character I am not surprised at your stand, and I can tell you that I approve.' After dealing with a few formalities he stood up, shook my hand very warmly and said that he hoped we would meet again one day.

Fortunately we did. After the war, when I returned to Rhodes in 1946 to do the final year for my degree, he was still very much in control, and as I was chairman of the students' representative council for that year, there was much to be done requiring our co-operation. He was, moreover, the President of the Rhodes Rowing Club, so after that memorable victory of ours on the Vaal Dam I wired him: 'Rhodes wins Inter Varsity Boat Race. Ian Smith.' When he subsequently congratulated me, his comment was: 'That telegram of yours made my day.' Members of his staff informed me that wherever he went he had it in his hand, showing all and sundry.

We had a few rousing parties before my departure, and at one of them my friends presented me with a fine leather wallet with their good-luck wishes. Although it is a bit tattered and worn, it is something I shall never part with. Normally it is sad to leave behind friends and memories, but above all I was stimulated by what lay before me. I was going to fight for Britain and all that it represented. This was uppermost in my mind, and everything else faded into the background.

III: PILOT TRAINING AND 237 (RHODESIA) SQUADRON

One's entry into the security forces is a pretty boring, depressing affair: waiting, filling forms, answering questions which, on the surface at any rate, appear irrelevant. If you try to resist, or improve the system, you will only set your cause back, so, you just have to grin and bear it.

Eventually I received my first posting, to Initial Training Wing (ITW), Bulawayo. It sounded exciting, especially that last word, 'Wing', which hinted at the real thing: an

aeroplane. In reality, though, it was a dismal anti-climax. From Bulawayo railway station the motor transport took us to the Bulawayo show grounds — this was ITW. I knew the place well, as my father, as one of the top cattle judges in the country, had taken me there on many occasions to attend the Bulawayo show. We were taken to our quarters — the pig pens — and there were lines of palliasses on the floor: our beds.

The Australian and British contingents had their uniforms but we Rhodesians had not yet been issued kit, so we were dressed, typically, in khaki shirts and shorts. I was strolling about with a hand in my pocket when somebody barked at me: 'Take your hand out of your pocket. Who do you think you are?'

I looked at him, first at his shoulder to see if he was an officer, then at his sleeves to see any NCO stripes, and as there was none, I asked who he was. It was the first time I had seen a warrant officer, his insignia worn on his wrist like a watch. This was an introduction which I will not forget: Station Warrant Officer Hampton was a man who, while not unnecessarily aggressive, was one who certainly commanded respect.

A good part of our time was spent square bashing. We had in our contingent a couple of Rhodesians who had been in the army for six months before coming on our pilots' course, and not unnaturally they felt they had done more than their share of parade-ground drill. One afternoon we were doing our stint on the square when SWO Hampton suddenly appeared over the horizon, stopped the drill, and with obvious fire in his eyes, surveyed us for a good few seconds. Then it came out: 'I have just come from a walk through the pig pens, and you know what I saw there?' He paused for a few dramatic moments, and then said with great deliberation: 'Two fat pigs lying there snoring!' And then the final shot, with a tinge of emotion in his voice: 'I never thought I would find Rhodesians doing that!' There

was an obvious insinuation of neglect of duty. Needless to say, Hampton administered punishment to fit the crime, and there was no repetition of any such incident.

I did not see Hampton again until I walked into Parliament for the first time as a new MP in 1948. He was the Chief Messenger of Parliament, a very important post which he held for many years with great distinction. When we came face to face he greeted me with a ‘Good morning, sir’ — he had a twinkle in his eye, and I said in reply: ‘Shadow of ITW and the pig pens.’ We had a good laugh, as we often did subsequently when reminiscing about those days.

After what seemed an interminable wait — in fact about six weeks — our posting came to Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS), at Guinea Fowl, just outside Gwelo. This was more like it: aeroplanes and interesting people! Some of the instructors had been on operational flights, so the whole tempo quickened. More than half our course members were Australians, about a dozen were Rhodesians, and the rest were from Britain, so there was a wide variety of differing interests. I struck up many strong friendships with some of the Aussies, and have maintained contact to this day. Fortunately I had no problems with flying, and seemed to have a natural facility for handling and landing. I loved every minute of it, but always at the back of my mind was the wish that the process could be speeded up, as an operational squadron still seemed so far away.

I was hoping for a posting to the United Kingdom, believing there would be more action there, but through the luck of the draw I landed in Egypt. I was then posted to an operational training unit course at Baalbek, in Lebanon, situated in a beautiful valley between Damascus and Beirut. I had a good look at Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa en route, and on a number of occasions had the intriguing

experience of flying an aircraft 1,500 feet below sea level, over the Dead Sea which separates Israel from Jordan.

The beauty of Lebanon, with its cedar-clad mountains, warm coastline and rich history, makes the recent suffering of its friendly people all the more grotesque. The great failing of our civilisation is that, despite its advances in science and other fields, it is impotent when faced with such tragedy.

From Baalbek my next posting was to 237 (Rhodesia) Squadron to fly Hawker Hurricanes. They had been pulled out of the Western Desert for a break, and posted to Teheran, capital of a country then known as Persia. From there we moved westwards to Kirkuk, one of the big oil fields of Iraq. The winter weather was settling in, so it did not take us long to organise a rugby field. We had some rousing games against the London Scottish and London Irish regiments, Habaniya, the large permanent RAF base to our south near Baghdad, and a few others in the vicinity who were able to muster a team to give us a game.

After a few months there, we started moving back to Egypt and ended up at El Alamein, west of Alexandria. We slowly moved along the coast until we reached Tobruk, where we spent some time before being brought back to do a stint on the defence of Alexandria.

Taking off one morning in the dark and a sea mist on a dawn patrol, my undercarriage hit a bomb shelter at the end of the runway, and I landed in hospital with a bashed face, broken jaw, broken leg, broken shoulder, and a back which at first was thought to be broken but fortunately was only buckled. It was a bit of a mess. The squadron doctor’s comment was that if I had not been so fit and strong it could have been the end, but after five months of expert medical attention at the Fifteenth Scottish Hospital on the banks of the Nile in Cairo I was passed fit for flying.

During my stay in hospital there was a South Africa Division and a New Zealand Division in Cairo. Rugby was

the natural consequence. There were a couple of excellent games. For the first game I was still in a wheelchair with my leg propped up, in an excellent spectator position right on the centre line, and rather embarrassingly attracting sympathetic attention. Boy Louw, one of the greatest rugby Springboks, chatted with me, clearly a bit apprehensive as to how his chaps were going to perform. There was another good game too, Rhodesia vs the Rest, and the Rhodesians won — it goes without saying that there was a very good celebration that evening at the Rhodesia Club! With all this going on, my time convalescing passed reasonably quickly.

I resisted a suggestion to return home as an instructor, and set off to rejoin the squadron, which was stationed at Ijacio on the Island of Corsica, flying Spitfire Mark IXs.

IV: CORSICA AND THE PARTISANI

On Corsica we were part of an American group and, when not escorting the bombers (Mitchells, Bostons and Marauders) on their daylight missions, we spent our time on strafing raids, principally train busting and attacking heavy motor transport. As German aircraft were conspicuous by their absence, this was the next best thing to engaging them and it provided us with good sport. We flew over the famous leaning tower of Pisa on many occasions, and on one return trip I came down low and did a tight circle to obtain a better view — it certainly does lean over at quite an alarming angle.

We were positioned further north than our counterparts on the Italian mainland and thus were able to cover targets beyond their reach. I remember the arrival on the squadron of a young Rhodesian pilot, Jack Malloch, who was hit by flak on a strafing raid and bailed out behind the lines shortly before the war ended. He returned to Rhodesia and

built up his own air freight business, which from 1965 onwards became one of the main arms of our sanctions-busting operation. In the mid-1970s he obtained from our air force a MK 22 Spitfire which had been in mothballs since 1954. Using his contacts all over the world to find the necessary spare parts, he painstakingly restored it to its former glory and on 29 March 1980 it flew again with Jack at the controls. On many occasions subsequently Rhodesians were treated to the spectacle of seeing this, the most beautiful aircraft ever made gracing the skies above them. Tragically, on 26 March 1982, Jack and his beloved Spitfire were lost in an unexpectedly violent hailstorm.

An entry in his log book from those days in Italy reads: 'June 9, 1944 — a good day. Six of us got 15 flamers and 14 damaged — Ian Smith was leading.'

They were stimulating times, and few days passed without similar occurrences. One morning about a month later I was leading a flight on a strafing raid into the Po Valley, and soon picked up a railway line which led to a large marshalling yard. We went straight in picking on the most attractive targets of locos and fuel tanks. There were some healthy explosions with columns of black smoke billowing up. I then made the mistake against which I had often warned others: I went back for a second run. There was no sign of any opposition but, with the element of surprise in our first attack, this was normal. It is different, however, once you have stirred the hornets' nest. I had enjoyed a long run of successes, and it had led me to overconfidence and complacency, and the target was very inviting. I told the other members of the flight to keep their height and observe if there was any reaction while I attacked another line of tank cars. As I pulled up out of my dive there was a resounding thud which shook the Spitfire, so I turned left towards the coast and base, telling my number two to follow me and the rest of the flight to carry on with the mission.

Noticing that my oil pressure had gone, I tried to gain as much height as possible. If I could cross the coast even a few miles out to sea, there would be a good chance of being picked up by one of our sea rescue craft. They were constantly on the lookout between Corsica and the mainland and would be able to pick up my ‘Mayday’ radio message. However, this was not to be. My temperature gauges were off the clock and I began to feel the heat from the engine. Alan Douglas, my number two, first told me that black smoke was pouring out and then that flames were engulfing the whole engine. I realised the danger, because if the fire reached the fuel tanks, the whole aeroplane would explode. There was only one answer — I had often gone through the drill for such an emergency, so there was no hesitation. I jettisoned the canopy, released my harness and, although I would have preferred more height for the operation, I turned the Spit over on its back, rammed the stick forward and out I came perfectly.

I pulled the rip cord immediately, but no sooner had the parachute opened than I landed on the side of a mountain and bounced a few times before coming to a stop alongside a passing bush. My immediate objective was to distance myself as far as possible from that position, in case anyone in the surrounding countryside had witnessed my drop. Eventually I saw a thicket of bushes and made for it, thinking it would be a suitable place of refuge. After resting there for a while to regain my breath and survey the scene, I came to the conclusion that this was so obviously the best place in the vicinity to obscure myself that it would attract attention for precisely that reason. So I moved further up the mountain to an inconspicuous bush, similar to others in the area, and found that it offered ample cover when I lay down and sheltered in it. I took off my Mae West, as the sun was hot, and then did another recce to assure myself that this was the best position from which to await further developments.

Suddenly a man in civilian clothes appeared on the scene near the point where I had landed, and, as he walked, he waved and beckoned, obviously trying to attract my attention. I lay low, not knowing whether it was a genuine offer of help or a trap. A little later a young boy with his flock of sheep moved past, but did not notice me.

Things were quiet for about an hour until a gang of Germans with a tracker dog appeared. Fortunately they had not located the parachute, and as the sheep had crossed my tracks there was no response from the dog. They shouted into the large thicket I had first selected for cover, and with obvious frustration raked it with a burst of automatic fire and then moved on.

With the setting of the sun it gradually grew colder. We had been told that most of the rural people were friendly, and realising that sooner or later I would have to make contact, I came to the conclusion that there was no point in further delay. When the young shepherd passed back with his sheep I therefore emerged from my cover and approached him. He was surprisingly composed, and took me around and down the mountain until we could see a house across the valley below us and could hear someone chopping wood. Using sign language, he told me to sit and wait. After a short while he returned with his big brother, a tall gangling chap, most friendly, and they led me down to the house. There I was introduced to the mother, a well-built lady with a pleasant smile, and to the third son. Then I was taken into a bedroom to be presented to the father, obviously a sick man. A good meal of minestrone and bread followed, and then a surprisingly comfortable first night indoors.

Next morning the mother took me about half a mile away to a small recess in the mountainside, well obscured by the undergrowth. Her explanation made it clear that this was a precaution against a German search — a wise one, because over the next few days the Germans returned repeatedly to

question her. She left me with a blanket in what was to be my home for the next few days. She came back twice a day with her basket, in which one could see the chestnuts she was collecting, and when she removed these with the cloth which was underneath them, there was food for me.

Once the coast was clear I lived a reasonably normal life in her home, observing sensible precautions. The local *partisani* (resistance movement) had an efficient system of communication if the Germans were moving in the area. Moreover, we were located in Valescura (obscure valley), well named as we were certainly far removed from the beaten track. I kept fit by constant walking — indeed mountain climbing — collecting chestnuts (*castania*) and mushrooms (*fungi*), doing my exercises each day, and chopping wood for the fire and bread oven. My hostess was concerned that I was doing this as compensation for my keep, but after a while I managed to convince her to the contrary — I hope! My adopted family, Zunino by name, went out of their way to accommodate me and, considering they were a peasant farming family, certainly did me proud.

One of my main preoccupations was learning the Italian language, as this would be most important for my return through the lines, something which was constantly in the forefront of my mind. Fortunately, an English Captain Davis from the nearby village of Olba presently contacted me. He was one of those who had escaped in a breakout from a nearby POW camp. He had been offered shelter by Jannie and Nini Pesce in the mountain retreat they used to get away from their business in Genoa. They were a very fine couple, with positive pro-British and anti-Nazi sentiments, and subsequently I visited them on many occasions in their lovely home. They were happy to offer me an English–Italian dictionary and a *Complete Works of Shakespeare*. I could not have wished for anything more. Moreover, whenever I was in their company I would receive a few lessons in basic Italian grammar.

After about a month, the commandante of one of the local *partisani* regiments arrived, an imposing character sporting a handsome beard, an automatic under his arm, a bandolier full of ammo, and a string of hand grenades around his belt. He had come to enquire about my wellbeing and to see if there was anything he could do. Fortunately he had a sufficient working knowledge of English for us to be able to communicate. After a full discussion it was decided that I should accompany him back to his headquarters, and I also obtained from him an undertaking to assist me in returning to the Allied lines.

My rank? Captain, I replied. He declared very firmly that he would promote me to a major forthwith. From that moment I was introduced to everyone as the *Englasie majore pilote*. The quickest and neatest promotion I had ever received, and it soon became clear to me that my elevation had the effect of enhancing my Commandante's prestige. After all, none of the other regiments in the area could boast an *Englasie pilote* and a *majore* to boot.

It was an interesting change of life, and most stimulating to participate in the discussions and planning. We lived well on good food and wine, had clothes made from captured winnings (ambushes), haircuts from the communal barber, and on a few occasions drove around in an old Fiat.

We were based in the village of Moretti. I was given accommodation by Dr Prando and his charming family in their fine residence, his retreat from his practice in Genoa. There was a second regiment based in the village under Commandante Mingo, an outstanding man who had been an engineer in the Italian army before defecting to join the resistance movement. Instead of carrying a gun, he walked around with a small brass tipped cane in his hand, his only protection being about half a dozen hand grenades on his belt. On the outskirts of the village was a magnificent house owned by a man who was in the poultry and egg business, who had obviously made a lot of money. Living

with him was a colonel who had been invalided from the army with a heart problem. According to Mingo, the colonel was a brilliant man, the youngest to have reached such a position in the Italian army. He also had defected to the resistance movement, not in an active capacity, but to give moral support and advice. Mingo and I often dropped in for a discussion, always stimulating, and an occasional game of bridge.

Sadly, there were times when some of our boys were killed, fortunately infrequently. Tragically, one weekend while I was away visiting the Pesces, the Germans attacked the village with two armoured carriers and a truck-load of troops. Instead of disappearing into the surrounding country with the other partisans, Mingo decided to stand his ground and confront them. He put up a most courageous performance and succeeded in eliminating three Germans, but once his grenades ran out, there was nothing more he could do. He was killed. Before departing, the Germans conceded to the local populace his great bravery and handed over his body for them to bury with dignity. The egg baron's beautiful home was burnt to the ground — they had obviously received information on him. The local *partisani* had the consolation of knowing that it was because of their successes in ambushing and harassing Germans in the area that the attack had taken place. Far from reducing operations, their efforts were immediately redoubled, and as a result the Germans decided to pull out of Sasello, a nearby town from which they operated.

Accordingly, a great victory parade through the streets of the town was laid on, with flags flying and bugles sounding, accompanied by much cheering and waving from the locals. Early next morning Nino and a few of the other young officers burst into my room and awakened me, saying: '*Majore, Majore, avanti* — we gotta de rosta beef of pork for you!' Many was the time that my friends had promised that one day they would give me what everyone knew was

the Englishman's favourite dish — roast beef. That day had come — but it was roast beef with a difference! One of the locals had produced a pig to celebrate our triumphant arrival. In Italy once there is meat on the table, there must be wine also — so it was quite a day.

Regularly I raised the question of returning to the Allied lines, but it always met one strong objection: the need to take more time to improve my command of the language; I looked too much like an '*Englasie officier*' — tall, fair, with a moustache — if only I would remove it. For me to attempt to go now would be '*periculosissme*'. For a while I went along with this, but it was beginning to wear a bit thin. I had been with them for three months — certainly three of the most interesting months of my life — but we had witnessed the first fall of snow up in the mountains and I was not going to allow myself to be hemmed in there for the next six months. I therefore made it clear to my friends that I would be leaving within the week. When they realised that my decision was irrevocable, they accepted it philosophically and gave me every assistance, including letters of introduction to other *partisani* groups.

I decided to go west into France. They concurred. A British corporal, known in our area as Bill, asked if he could accompany me. After about ten days, three others (French, Austrian and Polish) who were living in a *partisani* camp we passed through, asked if they could join in. Generally we were given food, shelter and direction, although occasionally people bustled us on, afraid of German reprisals. On one such occasion when we were given some food but no shelter, I pushed my way through a door into a barn and noticed a big log of wood burning under a line of half drums, similar to a system we sometimes used for feeding cattle in Rhodesia. They were drying chestnuts. I put my hand down and it was beautifully warm, while outside it had been bitterly cold. I

rounded up the rest of the gang and we had a very comfortable night on a bed of chestnuts!

The following day we bumped into a *partisani* commander with a few of his men. He invited us to spend the night at his headquarters in the mountains, where he was in control of a large area. He said his wife had often expressed the wish that he would bring back a British officer, so this would be a pleasant surprise for her. She was a handsome woman, tall and slim, with black hair but blue eyes and bright, rosy cheeks. They lived in a very big house, with numerous outbuildings — indeed, a small village, with cattle and sheep grazing, orchards and vineyards and ploughed lands. We were given five star treatment: good beds and excellent food, including meat, butter, cheese and fresh vegetables. Sipping wine, we talked long into the night.

The next day a fine looking young doctor in his Alpini uniform and hat accompanied us as our guide. Not only was he a mountaineer, but as we approached the French border the country became more difficult and he knew the area well. He was a most pleasant and enlightening companion. The following morning we parted company to enable him to return, as he was the only doctor in the area and had calls for attention every day. Moreover, he was a marked man by the Germans and we were now entering a dangerous area. He gave us careful and detailed directions — only two more days' travel were needed — and advised me to divide the group up so that it would be less conspicuous. One half could spend the day and night where they were, but Bill and I went on. The other three were to follow the next day; once we were out of the danger zone, we would wait for them.

I had carried with me my small first aid pack, incorporated in a pilot's Mae West, with a syringe and ampoule of morphine, bandages and various medicines. I gave it to the doctor, saying that his need was probably

greater than mine. After a close inspection he expressed his gratitude and we parted company with a warm handshake.

That night we were taken by a Frenchman and his wife into their farmhouse, given a good warm meal and a place to sleep in a barn alongside a fine-looking bull. There was a big German base in the town below. They were doing a lot of patrolling, and in case they arrived during the night, it was agreed that our host would claim no knowledge of our presence, and that we, likewise, would co-operate. I took Bill to the far side of the barn to ensure that the bull was between us and the door. We buried ourselves in the hay, which was, in any case, a necessity to protect ourselves from the cold. I instructed Bill that if anyone opened the door he was to ensure that every part of his anatomy, including his head, was well buried beneath the hay.

Next morning our host's brother — an official in the town — came up to see us, a wonderful effort, as he was disabled with a bad leg. First he spoke to us in Italian, asking questions in an obvious attempt to establish our authenticity. Once satisfied, he switched to English, which he spoke immaculately. The plan was for us to cross to the other side of the valley that day, across a river, a railway and a main road. It would be difficult and dangerous because there was only one bridge across, with sentries who halted and interrogated selected people, so it was a question of keeping a cool head and taking our chance — there appeared to be no alternative. We were given careful instructions and a rendezvous the other side for late afternoon. Our host's brother would be there to meet us. I told them of our three friends following, and asked for assistance if they should pass by, saying that we would wait a couple of days on the other side before the final crossing over the Alps.

Bill and I sat and waited. We did not say much. I did some exercises, which always made me feel better. At midday our

hostess gave us some bread and hot milk. Then our host took us along the side of the mountain to a point where we could see the bridge and gave us our final directions. He bade us goodbye, and I could see it was an emotional occasion for him, because he was a man of great sincerity and simple strength. He had previously spoken to me of his deep admiration of Britain, and of those dark days when it stood alone against the Nazis. He had begun to say that, if he refused help to a Britisher who passed by … but then he was at a loss for words, and simply shook his head.

I surveyed the situation for a few minutes, then we moved slowly down and took cover behind a mound a few hundred yards from the bridge. I noticed that if people came across singly or in pairs, the sentry seldom stopped them but, if they were in larger groups, he usually examined one or two before allowing them to pass. Bill was beginning to have doubts about the whole plan, and suggested that we go back to our hosts of the last night. I reasoned with him quietly, but firmly, assuring him that there was as much danger in going back, as in going on. Moreover, we must not lose sight of the danger which our presence brought to those who sheltered us. It would be inconsiderate of us to overstay our welcome. I concluded that the time had come for us to move. There was a gap in the people moving below, so I took him by the arm and said: ‘Quickly, here’s our chance.’ I sent him first, saying that I would follow close behind, judging that if I went first he might turn back. ‘Just look straight ahead and walk quietly on,’ I said. Our luck was in — it worked! The sentry on the other side was not concerned — we had been told that the only danger was on the entry side.

We went straight to our rendezvous, about an hour’s walk, and met up with our host’s brother and his daughter who had accompanied him on his walk from the town below. We were taken indoors and introduced to the man who was to be our guide across the Alps and his wife. We

had left the Italian *partisani* and were now in the hands of the French *maquis*.

Our friend, the author of that day's successful plan, having assured us that we were in trustworthy and competent hands, took leave of us, as he had to be home before dark, and his lame leg slowed his movements. His daughter, a fine-looking, striking girl, obviously of courageous character like her father and uncle, asked many searching questions about the part of the world I came from and about my life as an RAF pilot. She gave me a butterfly brooch which she was wearing on her coat as a talisman of good luck for the successful completion of our mission — a simple but valued present, something which I have kept and treasured ever since.

The following afternoon, two of the other three arrived safely (the Austrian and the Frenchman) and we had a warm reunion. The young Polish lad did not make it. At the bridge with the German sentries his nerve had cracked, and he had decided to go back. I was sad, because he was only a youngster, and I thought that had I been there I could have persuaded him to come along.

We set off mid-morning on the next day for the final lap. We did not start earlier because the latter part of the journey took us out of the forest and up the open side of the mountain, a climb which we could not attempt until after dark in order to avoid German observation. It was a warm sunny day, and the walking was pleasant. We reached the end of the forest about 4 p.m. and kept under cover while eating the bread and drinking the wine which we carried. Just before dark we started to move out, as our guide assured us that we were obscured from the German observation posts for the first few kilometres. The climb became progressively steeper, and once we reached the snowline it became much more difficult, although with the snowy background we could see surprisingly well in the dark.

Suddenly our guide stopped and gripped his knee, obviously in pain. He had been having some problems over the past few months but thought they had ended. He would have to return, because it would be madness for anyone not one hundred per cent fit to attempt the climb before us. He could indicate the directions for us to continue, but it was our decision. I asked him to explain what he had in mind. He pointed to the main mountain above us, and then, below it to the left, a smaller peak. We were to cross to the right of that — below it, to the left, we might bump into a German observation post. It was important to remember that we should not attempt our descent until daylight. There would be a ravine which would give us protection from the German observation posts, and eventually we would run into American patrols. This, however, was clearly something we should avoid doing during darkness.

Although this prospect was not all that inviting, I believed we should carry on. Our guide had brought along a friend whom he wished to familiarise with the route, so that he could be used in future as a guide. I looked at him and he nodded his agreement, so we parted company, and our group of five continued the ascent. The cold was biting more viciously, especially as we were clad in light summer clothes. Over the more difficult places where we were slipping back on the ice, it was necessary to help one another. Bill seemed to be having more trouble than the rest of us, and on one occasion when I went back to help him over a tough spot he complained that he was tired and cold. The climb ahead looked so formidable that he wanted to go back. I made it clear in no uncertain manner that there was no question of that. I put my shoulder behind him and urged him to get moving. Every step was a battle on ice which was continually getting harder and more difficult to grip. Each time I looked up at the crest above us it seemed to be as far away as ever. After a few more hours of climbing we came across a ledge of black-looking rock

protruding from the ice, an enticing place for a rest, but after a few minutes, feeling the cold penetrating through my whole body, I roused myself and got the party moving again, believing it would be better to keep the blood circulating.

Contrary to expectations, as we approached the summit, the gradient lessened, and we made greater progress, no doubt stimulated by the expectation of finally getting there. We reached the top shortly after midnight, but our problems were far from over. Taking to heart the warning to avoid attempting a descent before dawn, we were faced with an agonising wait of eight hours sitting on blocks of ice on top of the Alps, clad in our summer clothes, an experience I would be reluctant to wish even on my worst enemy. Except for our French friend who had joined us the previous day and was reasonably clad for the occasion, the rest of us sat and shivered. I had never thought that one could become physically weary of shivering and one's teeth ache from chattering. As my feet were not only cold, but soaking wet, I decided to take my boots off. Those eight hours seemed to take longer than the previous twenty-three days of walking. When it was light enough for us to commence our descent I decided to put on my boots, but they were blocks of ice. Within about a mile the bottoms of my socks had disintegrated, and I was slipping across the ice on bare feet, which led me to conclude that if this ever happened again in the future, I would keep my boots on!

After a few hours' walking we came across an American patrol. As soon as they spotted us, they dropped to the ground with their guns pointing in our direction, so I asked the others to stand where they were and I walked slowly forward with my hands in the air, making it clear that I was unarmed. Once they heard my story they relaxed and came forward. We beckoned to the others to advance and join us, and then we were transported a few miles to the Americans' canteen where we enjoyed the warmth of their

hospitality and some much-needed food. We then parted company, as aircrew were to be returned to their bases by air, others by road and sea. In spite of the short duration of our association, because of the stress and tension under which we had been living we had grown close to one another. Understanding and trust had been built up, so there was emotion at our farewell. I appreciated their gratitude when they said that had it not been for my assistance they would still be behind enemy lines. As they were now in safe hands, I could leave them with a clear conscience.

V: THE END OF WAR

Sadly, my hoped-for posting to Britain and the Western Front did not materialise. In spite of interviews at as many levels as possible, I was confronted by the fact that regulations (and I certainly had cause to curse them that day) stated that I was to be returned to the command from which I was operating at the time I was shot down. I enquired about the possibility of hitch-hiking on a flight to London, but it was made abundantly clear that the problems were insurmountable. So the following day I was on that great old workhorse the Dakota (DC 3) — I think it fair comment to say that no other single type of aircraft could claim to have made a greater contribution to the war effort — from Marseilles to Naples.

There were no problems at Naples. The camp was well organised, but I was very much on my guard when reporting my entry, because it was well known that if one was missing behind enemy lines for more than three months this resulted in a posting back home. The chap behind the desk read my form and said: ‘We can fly you back to Cairo immediately, and there they will make plans

to get you home.’ I replied that it was my wish to go to Britain, as I had many relatives there and it was in fact my second home. I kept a straight face. Fortunately he was a reasonable and decent type, and he nodded his head and said: ‘If that’s what you want, that’s fine.’

The miracle had worked — I could hardly believe it. I was one step nearer to getting back into action, this time in Germany on the Western Front, if only there were a ship leaving tomorrow. It did not take the bush telegraph long to get the message back to my squadron, and within a few days two of my old mates arrived to see me: Dinks Mowbray and Brian Wilson. In addition, Ian Shand, the squadron leader of 237 Squadron, walked into the mess. He had flown down on some business, and we had lunch together. He listened to my account of the previous five months and said: ‘What you did is clearly worthy of recognition, so I would like you to fly back with me this afternoon so that we can make our recommendation.’ Shortly before my sojourn behind enemy lines I had been asked to submit my record of operations to wing command, as I was one of the top-scoring pilots on our squadron, so that would still be standing to my credit.

It would have been a happy event to go back to the squadron and see them all again, but I immediately saw red lights flashing. What if a ship suddenly departed, and I missed it? Ian did not think that posed a problem. It would be possible to check on that, he said, and I would be away only a couple of days. But of even greater concern was the possibility that, once I was back at the squadron, someone might raise the question of being missing for more than three months, and that meant a posting back home, something to be avoided at all costs.

I had to decide quickly. It was no easy task, and difficult to explain to Ian what was going on in my mind. He was a person whom we all held in high regard, since he been awarded a DSO and DFC. I told him that, as Dinks and

Brian had arrived only that morning to see me, I did not want to walk out on them. So I said that I would think over his suggestion during the weekend, and if satisfied that no boat was about to depart, I would come up to the squadron with Dinks and Brian on the Monday. We left it like that. I decided to sit tight, and every day just hoped for the news that we were to sail, believing that thereafter I would be safely out of reach.

The following night, Saturday, I talked Dinks and Brian into coming with me to watch the finals of the Mediterranean Boxing Championships. Not surprisingly the overall standard was good, but one contest was outstanding: the cruiser-weight final between an American and a Frenchman. The American was a tall angular black fellow, while the Frenchman, by contrast, was a neat compact chap, with fair hair. It was obvious to anyone who knew anything about the sport that the Frenchman was a master-craftsman. About halfway through the first round he let rip a punch, executed with the utmost composure and timing, which connected with his opponent's jaw and felled him as if poleaxed. I took note of his name from the programme, and it remained in my mind: Marcel Cerdan. So I was not surprised to read a few years after the war ended that he had won the world cruiser-weight title, and in France he was acclaimed the new Carpentier. Tragically, not long afterwards, at the peak of his career, he was killed in an air crash.

It seemed an interminable time — about ten days in fact — before the order came to embark. I planned something for each day, exploring the history and art of Naples. As the opera season was in full swing, I saw a number of good operas at the famous St Carlo Opera House, and on one occasion Gigli's daughter was the leading soprano.

I had been given the sad news that we had lost a few more members of the squadron during my absence. There were so many occasions when emotion surged through my

whole system, thinking of those chaps sitting around a table in the mess or on the end of one's camp bed in the tent of an evening, who never returned from a sortie the next day. I was only postponing my return home, but they would never go home again. Some of them had shown outstanding bravery, but they would merely go down in history as the unsung heroes, if at all. There are few more moving moments for me than a visit to the grave of the Unknown Soldier, or attending the Armistice Day Service on 11 November each year: 'At the going down of the sun, and in the morning we will remember them.'

Fortunately the journey to Britain was uneventful. I enjoyed having a look at Gibraltar, a magnificent sight, which lived right up to my expectations: imposing, strong, independent, courageous, even defiant, exactly what one would have expected from this great historical symbol of the British Empire.

In spite of the drabness of war, Britain was still inherently beautiful, with its lovely countryside, meadows, fields of crops, undulating hills and magnificent trees. London, with all of its history and majesty, was one of the great capitals of the world. But sadly the bureaucracy was there, grinding slowly, and not willing to be motivated by a bloke who came from a country called Rhodesia, and who was impatient over a humdrum thing like getting a posting to a Spitfire squadron on the Continent. But at last someone moved: I was to do an air-firing course up in Shropshire before a squadron posting. This was something of a mystery to me, since I certainly did not need any more practice at air firing, and valuable time was passing. The powers that be, however, thought it would be a wise precaution, because it was now six months since I had last flown.

Fortunately the station in Shropshire was more attuned to the operational theatre and things moved. Much to my delight the squadron commander called me to his office

after a few weeks and pointed out that my results clearly showed that I required no further practice, so he would be happy to move me on. The next day I was on my way to a transit station south of London, and soon after to a posting with 130 Squadron, part of 125 Wing based at Celle, in Germany. It was a good posting — the wing was under the command of Group Captain Johnny Johnson, who had shot down the greatest number of German planes to date. He was ably assisted by Wing Commander George Keefer, a Canadian with a tremendously successful record. Frank Wolley was our squadron commander and there were many other colourful personalities.

The days which followed were stimulating, but the writing was on the wall as far as the Germans were concerned, and their final collapse came even sooner than we expected. I felt a kind of frustration that there had not been more time to mete out more punishment to the Nazis and the fascists who had brought so much suffering, tragedy and destruction to our world. However, when one allowed reason and logic to prevail over heart and emotion, there could only be tremendous relief and satisfaction that in the end right had prevailed over evil, and that the things we 'Britishers' had been brought up to believe in had triumphed. The priority now was to get the fighting men back to their homes, wives and families. One shuddered at the thought of how long it was going to take the wheels of bureaucracy to begin turning.

Some of us were talking in the officers' mess one evening on where we would go from here in order to bring about the kind of future we had been fighting for, a decent clean world, where our children would not be faced with the kind of situation that had confronted us. There was almost unanimity: if we did not clean up Russia with its communism, which on the evidence looked no different from Nazism or fascism, then we were leaving the job half finished. How could one condone the dreadful fact that

Stalin had connived with Hitler over the invasion of Poland, and joined in dividing the spoils of their ill-gotten gains. However, there would be problems getting the politicians to go along with this — maybe not Churchill, but Roosevelt certainly seemed to have been conned by Stalin.

Then 125 Wing was broken up and the various squadrons went their different ways. First stop for 130 (Punjab) Squadron was in Denmark — we had been adopted by the Maharajah of the Punjab and he had donated considerable sums of money towards purchasing Spitfires for the squadron. Moreover, a certain 'modest' sum was placed at the disposal of the squadron commander to be used at his discretion to ensure that the Maharajah's pilots did not suffer 'unnecessary' hardships. A liberal interpretation necessitated that whenever we arrived at an important city, especially a capital city, we should indulge ourselves in a worthwhile dinner and hold an appropriate celebration. And there were several occasions which remain very vivid in my memory. We would inevitably end up with the rendering of many stimulating songs, and a few of the favourites had an African background. One was about the 'Zulu Warriors' and another concerned a 'Matabele from Bulawayo'. As I was the only African on the squadron, obviously no one else could be expected to play the lead when these came up.

From Celle we flew to Copenhagen, the first RAF squadron to land there, and we spent a few happy days before making our way down the coast of Europe en route to London. Thence we travelled to Aberdeen, where we enjoyed the local hospitality for a fortnight before flying across the North Sea to Kristiansand as the first RAF squadron to land in Norway, part of the operation to clean the Germans out.

Fortunately this was not a very arduous task, and there can be few more pleasant spots on this earth to spend your summer months — about eighteen hours of sun each day,

swimming, boating, fishing, rugby, soccer, and eating lobster and salmon were the place's main atractions. As officer in charge of sport, my hands were full. One of our pilots was a Swede, and as a result of his contacts we made a plan to fly to Stockholm one long weekend, where we experienced fantastic hospitality. We were taken over by the locals who insisted on paying for everything.

As winter approached, we were pulled back to a station in the south of England. There, we organised a few games of rugby against army camps nearby, and one across the Welsh border — all good rousing stuff. But the time had come to plan for my return home and to make the necessary arrangements for university after the new year.

VI: HOME TO RHODESIA AND UNIVERSITY

Rhodesia was just the same, still God's Own Country, seen from the Dakota which flew me from Durban, where my ship had docked. My parents had motored down to meet me at RAF Kumalo, Bulawayo. The next day we drove back home to Selukwe where a warm welcome awaited me from dear Mesa, our faithful old servant, who put his arms around me and cried. During the time I was missing after being shot down, he constantly complained about the 'terrible Germans', and on occasion, according to my mother, his language was not all that choice! The dogs had not forgotten me either, making a great fuss. Dogs of all kinds and sizes, from fox terriers to mastiffs, have always been part of my life. Whenever one of our dogs dies, I am deeply distressed.

My father had aged noticeably, and I only then learned from my mother that during the time I had been behind enemy lines he had gone down with double pneumonia and nearly died. Fortunately his spirit was in no way dampened

and there was much for us to talk about. He asked me, now that I had had a good look at much of the rest of the world, was I still happy about Rhodesia and Africa generally? Obviously, black advancement would progress gradually, with better education and better healthcare, then there was the problem of the local custom of polygamy and the tradition of large families. This had been necessary because, under their previous existence before the white man came, more children had died than survived. However, with more blacks accepting medicine and taking advantage of the improved health standards, the majority now survived, and the population explosion was a growing problem. I had often thought on these questions, and we philosophised at length on various aspects of them.

My father had a brother and his family well established in the United States, and they had expressed a desire to take me in with them in that tremendously exciting country. But there had never been any doubt in my mind: this was my country, my home, and I had never had any problem living with and getting along with our black people. There was a cultural gap associated with our respective history, tradition and ways of life, but provided things could be done in our own time, maintaining standards of Western civilisation, there was no reason why we could not all live together to our mutual benefit, gradually bringing our black people in, as and when they were prepared to accept change.

Certainly, there were a few mischief makers around who wanted to chase the white people away, believing that all the good things would then simply fall into their laps. The communists had already started their propaganda, but our average black was not interested. Traditionally, he was conservative and satisfied with the manner in which things were progressing.

And so I went back to Rhodes University for a final year. This time I was reluctant to give up, having already lost five

years to the war. Nevertheless, it turned out to be a stimulating experience. Nearly 50 per cent of the students were ex-servicemen, so understandably they made a tremendous impact on everything in general. This meant that times were not exactly normal for an institution accustomed to taking in teenaged school graduates and, as I was elected chairman of the students' representative council, there were not many dull moments. We were faced with some controversial, even provocative situations, which demanded great patience, skill and tact. Although these occasions were spiced with considerable quantities of down to earth, unambiguous discussions, the end result was a balance of mature consideration and a sense of fair play. Into the bargain, the university authorities had the good sense to give a little ground at appropriate times. I maintained close contact with Major Walker and drew on the wealth of his great experience. Fortunately our friendship and mutual respect matured over the year.

I still found time for sport, mainly rugby and rowing. The rugby club was powerful, to the extent that we were represented by two first-league teams, one in the Town League, and one in the Country League. But the rowing club, as usual, was battling against tremendous odds, and so I dedicated myself to giving them as much support as possible. Sadly, we found ourselves without a coach, the previous incumbent having stood down because of other commitments, so, as the most experienced member of the club, I took on the task. As anyone who understands rowing will appreciate, to coach a crew from the stroke's seat is to complicate an already difficult function. Moreover, we had a young freshman as cox, and he had to be taught from scratch.

In the end, though, it was all worthwhile. To succeed, to win, is a satisfying experience at any time. But to defy all the predictions and overcome almost insuperable odds is something special. As I said earlier, our victory in the Inter

Varsity Boat Race was such an occasion. As a culmination, in the end-of-year awards, I was presented with an honours award, the highest in the university. It was in fact a tribute to the crew and the club; I was merely its recipient.

There was another minor incursion into sport during this final year at Rhodes. We created a ‘Gentlemen’s Cricket XI’ to play occasional games against teams from selected farming communities — always ‘away’ games, on a Saturday. These were happy occasions, played with one objective only: the love of the game. Discussion on whether we won or lost was not permitted, and there was a strict rule that no member of the team would partake of any practice, nets or otherwise.

In the final analysis my post-war year at Rhodes turned out to be a most worthwhile experience. At this stage of my life I had no intention of entering the political arena, but the year granted me valuable insight into the art and psychology of working with one’s fellow-men, and the benefits which flow from listening to both sides of an argument. I was to learn subsequently from my political life that, while there was often a need for committees, these could also be used for shelving a problem or passing the buck!

It had always been my view that a degree in economics was a good background for most avenues in life, and could only be of assistance in my career as a farmer. Little did I appreciate at that time how well it would also serve me during my political life. In the latter part of my first term in Parliament, I was appointed Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. Later on, my first cabinet portfolio was Minister of Finance, and following that, during our UDI years, I sat as Chairman of the Prime Minister’s Economic Council, the body responsible for planning the overall strategy of our economic war. For the next fourteen years this was our greatest challenge. During my whole political career, stretching over forty years, the solid foundations in

practical economics which were laid down at Rhodes gave me basic guidelines which were of real assistance in forming conclusions based on those sound economic principles which always remain constant.

Those long serving and faithful servants of the university, Professor David Lidell and Professor Hobart Houghton, with their honest and unaffected approach, made a lasting impression on those of us who passed through their faculties.

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Settling Back Home

I: FARMING IN RHODESIA

And so back home — always a good feeling, but even better when one is a member of a close-knit family built around worthwhile traditions. It is worth repeating: great nations are built on the foundation of great families. There was also the advantage of being part of a small rural community, where people were interested in one another, and prepared to lend each other a helping hand. That communal spirit, turning out to support your local team, making your contribution to the social life of the community, is the bedrock of civilised life.

Once Christmas and the New Year festivities were over, I started to plan for the few remaining formalities necessary for my final demobilisation, things which had been left in abeyance in my rush to get back to university. There was the finalisation of my pay and gratuity, the search for my luggage, which had been sent back home from Cairo after I was shot down behind the lines and had gone astray, and a final medical examination. These were things of little consequence, but none the less time-consuming and necessitating visits to Salisbury. The medical examination was simply to ensure that all necessary medical attention had been received before discharge, and to ascertain whether any assistance was needed for those disabled.

My medical was the last item on my agenda. There were a chairman and three others sitting around the table. ‘We’ve had a look at your records and noted what happened

to you. Have you any particular problems worrying you?' said the chairman in a quiet, unemotional tone. His name was Dr Gelfand — I had never seen him before, but was going to see a great deal of him in my subsequent life. Once I started spending more time in Salisbury after my entry into politics, I consulted him on many occasions, and a great friendship grew out of these contacts. He eventually became Professor of Medicine at our Rhodesian University, and had to his credit a number of eminent books dealing with tropical diseases and other matters affecting our indigenous peoples. On one occasion, after I became Prime Minister, Gelfand arrived at my office with one of those people living in the Zambezi Valley who have only two large toes. Otherwise the African seemed perfectly normal, and when Mike Gelfand asked him if he knew who I was, without hesitating he replied: 'The Prime Minister.' He said this in spite of the fact that he lived in one of the most remote parts of the country, and had never previously visited any urban centre. Mike informed me that to the best of his knowledge these people occupied only one area of the valley, and numbered fewer than one hundred. This transformation was a phenomenon which had probably developed to assist in climbing trees in order to obtain food.

While in Salisbury I learned that short refresher agricultural courses were being held at Gwebi for returned servicemen. Gwebi was a very good government agricultural research station about half an hour's drive north of Salisbury, and there were plans to turn it into an agricultural college. I applied and was accepted for a course a few months later.

Apart from working on a few local farms in a temporary capacity, my most pressing concern was whether or not to apply for a Rhodes Scholarship. My professor at Rhodes had promoted the idea, and there were attractions: the opportunity to broaden one's horizons, continue the search

for learning and acquire more qualifications, along with the possibility of a Blue at rugby or rowing. But there were also many counter-arguments. The war had taken up five years of a crucial period in my life, and those years had given me as much experience of life (and education) as I would have received in twenty years of normal life. So I talked and listened, but my mind was fairly well set before leaving Rhodes in the last year, that I did not want any more excursions giving me more theoretical experience of life, I wanted to start living it.

Gradually things started moving. I spent a couple of months on a tobacco farm in Mashonaland, learning a little about a branch of farming with which I was not familiar. Then I leased a piece of land near Selukwe which enabled me to commence building up my cattle herd. Fortunately I did not have to wait all that long for the opportunity to take over a farm with the option to purchase. And so over the period of one fateful month in my life, August 1948, I bought a farm — my own piece of land — became a Member of Parliament, and most important of all, married. Janet enjoyed the experience, if not unique, at least stimulating and fascinating, of spending part of her honeymoon helping to win votes for her husband in his election campaign. We succeeded in the election, as we did in the other two operations we undertook that August.

Janet was the third of the Watt sisters I had met — Helen was the first, also a teacher, whom I met during my pilot training days at Thornhill; Isabel was second and was now living with her husband on the Wanderer Mine in Selukwe. Janet was the last, and was a recent immigrant to Rhodesia — we had known one another for about a year. I suppose I had been fairly normal in my relations with girls; they were always there, and there were parties and dances. However, other things, mainly sport, and the open-air life which Rhodesia offered, seemed more important to me and therefore received priority. Then the war had come. I met

some wonderful girls, especially during my final year at Rhodes, but I had never previously met anyone quite like Janet. She had a fantastic personality, she was always smiling and helpful and interested in others, highly intelligent and ready to contribute to any conversation, and in addition was a talented sportswoman who had represented Western Province at hockey and played good tennis and golf. Probably the qualities I admired most in her, though, were her courage and honesty of purpose. She was opposed on principle to side-stepping or evading an issue, no matter how difficult the problem, and her tendency was to opt for a decision requiring courage, as opposed to taking the easy way out. At my stage of life I had the wisdom necessary to make a realistic assessment, devoid of emotion and immature fantasies, of our ability to live and work together. I could not think of anything I wanted more, and fortunately my feelings were reciprocated.

The farm was a piece of rough, undeveloped land, part of a big ranch owned by one of those international corporations which had as one of its principal objectives the opening up and development of the Dark Continent — in keeping with Rhodes's dream. It was the Bechuanaland Exploration Company, which had its headquarters in London, and owned vast interests in Bechuanaland and Rhodesia.

My piece of land was known, according to the survey diagram, as 'Remainder of Subdivision 4 of Aberfoyle Ranch'. It was bordered on the east by the Impali River, and on the west by the much larger Lundi River. Most important of all, the farm had a perennial stream running through it, with beautiful clear pools of water and a rich population of fish. We learned from the local people that the stream was called 'Gwenoro' — *gwe* meaning 'the place', and *noro* being the name of one of our most majestic and beautiful antelope, the kudu. 'The Place of the Kudu'; it

did not take Janet and I long to make up our minds, and ever since it has been known as ‘Gwenoro’ farm. Many years later, when the government established a dam on the Lundi River as the main water supply for the city of Gwelo, this was named ‘Gwenoro’ dam.

Our land had been utilised over decades as a squatting camp for workers on the main section of Aberfoyle Ranch. There had been indiscriminate ploughing without the necessary measures for soil protection, and uncontrolled wood cutting, not only for fuel, but — even more devastating — for building houses under the traditional ‘pole and dagga’ system. At least a hundred saplings are used for one small room. Unfortunately, because of termites and wood-borer, these shacks do not last, so replacement is an ongoing process. The reclamation work was considerable, requiring long-term dedication. To destroy, to hack down, is easy and swift. But to start from the bottom and build up again is a long-term process.

Fortunately, there were some areas in sound natural condition, and the important fact was that we were able to arrest further deterioration. Today, over forty years later, it is a different place and a joy to behold, but there is still much more to be done. We are not unique in this regard. All land requires dedicated people who believe in that well-known maxim that we do not inherit our land from our fathers, we borrow it from our great- great-grandchildren, and each generation is honour-bound to pass it on in better condition than it was in when received.

We were now faced with the complicating factor of Parliament, which we had not originally anticipated. Unexpectedly, in July 1948, Godfrey Huggins and his United Party (UP) had been beaten on a vote in Parliament, and he had decided to go to the country through a general election. The principal opposition was the Liberal Party, consisting in the main of farmers, miners and industrialists who believed that the UP were bogged down with over-

conservative policies, that their edge had been dulled by being too long in power, and that the time had come for a new look with the emphasis on more development and free enterprise.

Some of the leading supporters of this party approached me and suggested that I should stand as their candidate in Selukwe. I thanked them but declined — I had my hands full trying to organise my future life, and in any case the thought of entering Parliament had not crossed my mind. The Liberal Party, however, were not to be put off: I was a local boy with a respectable record at school, university, and in the war. Moreover, my family's record of dedicated service to the community and beyond was really outstanding. They spoke to my father, who simply advised them against trying any circuitous routes, as I was one of those people who made up my own mind, and they obtained an undertaking from him that he would not attempt to discourage me.

After a few days they returned and we had a long talk over a cup of tea on the desirability of good leadership, because without it there was not much hope even for the best country. We decided that what the British had done to Churchill and the South Africans to Smuts was the result of complacency among good people. I had shown that I was prepared to make sacrifices for what I believed in, as had many of my wartime colleagues. Was it not important to follow this up, because the danger of undesirables gaining control and destroying the good which had previously been achieved was ever present? Their appeal to me was to make a stand for those things we had fought for, and because I had shown the ability to lead, they hoped I would accept my responsibility as far as the future of our country was concerned; otherwise, our recent sacrifices, indeed the whole history of Rhodesia and everything that it stood for, would all have been in vain.

They were of course preaching to me my own beliefs and philosophy. How could any man of principle turn a deaf ear to an appeal to accept his responsibility? I pointed out that they did not have to convince me on the principle, that I was more concerned at this stage with the priorities of my life, establishing my base, and from there considering other moves. At the same time one had to concede the futility of striving and dedicating time to building a farm and a home and a family, if, in time, all was to be lost because of political incompetence and opportunism. I asked them to let me sleep on it, and assured them we would meet again in a few days' time.

We had a long family discussion that evening, and as usual my parents offered sound, dispassionate advice. In the final analysis the decision clearly rested with me, my convictions and my heart, but if my inclination was in that direction they believed that the potential was there. I had the ability to reason and think clearly, to express myself in public, the will to stand my ground even against steep odds, and the willingness to work for a cause. If politics was going to be part of my life, there were many arguments to persuade me that sooner was better than later — there is, after all, a tide in the affairs of man …

Then, most important of all, I had to talk to Janet who, at that time, was teaching at a school in Gwelo, the capital of the Midlands Province, about half an hour's drive from Selukwe. She simply replied: 'What do you want to do?' She had lived her life in an unusual political atmosphere, in a part of Cape Town which had so strongly supported Smuts and the United Party that no opposition had ever contested the seat, and there had never been an election. She had therefore never in her life voted politically or been part of any election campaign, so she told me there was little to be gained by relying on her help or advice.

It was not an easy decision. There was a challenge which always had a magnetic attraction to me, and any

suggestion of shirking responsibility must be resisted — so the die was cast, and Janet gave me her full support. Thus, in addition to a farm and marriage, we threw in this parliamentary election thing! We spent our all too brief honeymoon at the Victoria Falls, then rushed back to get on with the election campaign.

II: EARLY DAYS IN POLITICS: THE FEDERAL ERA

Sadly, and contrary to many of the predictions, the Liberal Party were soundly beaten on 16 September 1948, losing six of their eleven seats. Thus they had five against Huggins's twenty-four. The wily experience of Huggins and the United Party, assisted by the establishment, big business and finance, and the monopoly press, which successfully misrepresented the case against the Liberal Party, together proved unbeatable.

However, Selukwe was constant and voted for Smith. For the first time in history a youngster, still in his twenties, was elected to the Rhodesian Parliament. At the conclusion of my first campaign meeting a few of the old-timers were talking in the local pub and one commented: 'I remember Ian Smith in kindergarten at our school just up the road, and now I am being asked to accept him as my Member of Parliament?' One of my supporters made the simple reply: 'You were happy to accept that he should go away and fight for you in the war!' The question was settled. From now on politics became first an adjunct to, but, with the passage of time, a dominant part of our lives.

We were a small country with a small population, and no problems of any consequence, hence Parliament normally had only two sittings during the year, covering overall a period of approximately three months, sitting in the

afternoons, with a half-hour break for tea on the lawn. There were six cabinet ministers who ran the country. So I had time for my farming and family.

The parliamentary work was stimulating, and for someone with an enquiring mind, the opportunity to observe the inner workings of government was intensely absorbing. I seemed to have a facility to participate in the goings-on and some of my speeches attracted attention and support. After a few years I was elected to the position of chairman of the public accounts committee, probably the most important of all the parliamentary committees, the one which worked closely with the Auditor General in scrutinising all government expenditure, and that alone was an education.

However, there was one matter above all others which constantly returned to the forefront of our minds: our country's political future, the gaining of our full independence. There were those who advocated the *status quo*, the easy way of just doing nothing. After all, we had 'virtual' independence. We governed the country as we thought right. Britain had no legal power to intervene in our affairs and had never attempted to do so. If we turned *de facto* independence into *de jure* independence the only difference would be that it would cost us more in foreign representation, a service which we now received free through British embassies.

But there was a growing feeling, especially among the younger people, that Rhodesia had come of age, and that it was time for genuine freedom. The Liberal Party had always taken the lead in this campaign and had initiated debates in Parliament. There was no opposition. Huggins had said: 'We can have our dominion status tomorrow — the British government has assured me, after our exemplary record, it is there for the asking.'

But Huggins had come to the conclusion that an even better idea was Federation with Northern Rhodesia and

Nyasaland. The Federation would be workable, big enough to be economically viable. At afternoon tea once, he said in my presence that the British had told him how impressed they were with the Rhodesians' overall performance, their efficiency, their economic success, their honesty and loyalty, their racial harmony — no one could fault us. Whereas, by contrast, the colonial policy was a failure, Huggins said, and the British were hoping that we could transpose our successful system to Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

This sounded sensible and right, and the important thing was that we were working with people we could trust, the British. We had always worked together for our mutual benefit, and stood by one another when the need arose. We were in the fortunate position of dealing with proven friends, in fact with our own blood relatives. There were some who believed that in a crunch they would drop us, but I found that difficult to believe. Nevertheless, my instinct and training told me to be prepared for every contingency — after all, the British people had rejected Churchill after the war, and those socialists certainly had some strange principles and philosophies, so clearly there was a need to be on guard.

The plan for Federation was formulated, the legislation prepared, a referendum of all voters was held, and a clear majority supported the Federal concept. Generally my nature is to support positive, as opposed to negative, thinking. Although I had reservations, I decided on balance to support the campaign.

At one stage during the debate in Parliament, I asked for the insertion of a clause to the effect that if the Federation ever broke up, then Rhodesia would automatically be given its independence, in keeping with the current situation where we were being given a choice between independence or Federation. This certainly had the effect of putting the cat among the pigeons, and sent the

government benches and their advisers running hither and thither. Eventually, however, they returned with the perfect reply: regrettably, my suggestion was impossible to execute, because one of the vital conditions of the Federation was that it was indissoluble, and any attempt to undermine this principle must be rejected. A main reason for this was that the new government would need to raise loans for development. Furthermore, explanatory talks were already under way and any suggestion that the Federation could be dissolved would destroy all these plans. Another problem was: who would accept responsibility for debts if the Federation broke up? It seemed a straightforward, honest reply. History, however, has proved the opposite. Looking back on it now, as always, it is easy to be wise through hindsight!

Nevertheless, I had always favoured some sort of closer association of territories in British Central and East Africa. The economic opportunities were clear, at least. It was also obvious, given post-war British thinking and colonial policy, that this was the last chance to create a great new state which might eventually include South Africa. Thus, along with other members of the Liberal Party, I joined Huggins's new Federal Party on 29 April 1953, and I was elected to represent the Midlands in the new Federal Assembly on 15 December.

The new set-up was a big change for us, especially as Salisbury had been chosen as the Federal capital, resulting in two Parliaments in Salisbury, Federal and Southern Rhodesian. In addition there were many big new developments, such as a Central Reserve Bank and Federal law courts, and the mining, industrial and financial houses from the two northern territories established their head offices in the capital city.

The politicians from the two northern territories became part of the scene: from Northern Rhodesia, we had Roy Welensky, who had been the leader of elected members to

their council. He was an old warhorse who had been leader of their Railway Workers' Union for many years, and between this and his political activities he had developed many qualities in the art of tactics, negotiation and oratory. One of their black representatives, Douti Yamba, had a facility for talking on any subject, for any length of time, and a ready smile no matter how tough the going. From Nyasaland we had Malcolm Barrow as leader, a well-known tea grower, quiet and urbane, and their leading black representative, Orton Chirwa, a lawyer, who was one of the most able debaters in the House, always cool and collected.

The talk was that Huggins was contemplating retiring, and Welensky was his obvious successor. There was not much offering from the Southern Rhodesian side. Julian Greenfield was an able lawyer, who had earned himself a good reputation practising as an advocate at our bar, and as a cabinet minister his performance was immaculate, but he was such a quiet, retiring person that he never came up for consideration as a leader. Apart from him, there was a fair amount of dead wood at the top which needed trimming. Welensky and Barrow were knighted and Sir Godfrey Huggins went further up the ladder and became Lord Malvern — all part of the normal system of acknowledging loyalty to Britain.

The Federation went well right from the beginning, with both internal and external confidence mounting, resulting in new investment and economic expansion. The great Kariba dam and hydro-electric power plant was constructed on the Zambezi River, and has been a tremendous asset, not only in generating cheap, clean power, but as a fantastic tourist and holiday attraction with magnificent big-game viewing, fishing and luxury cruises. The Victoria Falls is upstream of Kariba lake, fortunately still preserved from human predacity, and will always rank as one of the wonders of the world. Coupled with Kariba, the Zambezi River, the Wankie National Park teeming with its herds of

game and big cats, this must be one of the most exciting tourist packages to be found anywhere.

Malvern retired as Prime Minister in 1956, and Welensky's succession was smooth and uncomplicated. But problems were developing at territorial government level, with Garfield Todd, the new Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister, advocating policies which were not only out of step with public opinion, but which would play into the hands of extremist black politicians at the expense of moderate black opinion. To our north there was a build-up of power-hungry revolutionaries, and the injustices and suffering which they had inflicted on the mass of the people whom they deceitfully claimed to represent had become patently obvious.

It was the Suez crisis of 1956 which first sounded the alarm, and brought those of us associated with Britain and the Empire face to face with the hard reality that Britain could no longer call the tune on the international stage. The United States was now in the driving seat, constantly propagating the philosophy that colonialism was inherently bad and that the pace of its elimination had to be stepped up.

The Americans joined forces with the Russians in this anti-colonialist campaign, albeit for opposing reasons. The Russian plan was for world conquest, the takeover by Marxism-Leninism. As the metropolitan powers pulled out of their empires, the Russian plan was to move in. The Americans, on the other hand, believed that the presence of the colonial powers was denying them the opportunity to develop in these areas the expertise, skills and economic success of their free enterprise system. Sadly, they seriously misjudged the situation.

First, the Russian plan was organised and well laid, their reconnaissance forces already present on the ground in the countries concerned. As everybody knows only too well, in the fields of espionage and propaganda, the Marxist-

Leninists are world beaters. Moreover, it is common knowledge that once they control a country, the free enterprise system goes out the window — and that is exactly what happened in every case.

The second point, which should have been obvious to the USA, was that wherever Western colonialism was the vogue and the free enterprise system thriving, with American skills, capital and equipment everywhere — big mining and industrial development, motor cars, heavy transport, earth-moving equipment — all doors were open to everybody, including the Americans. But once the Russians moved in, everyone else was frozen out. So the result turned out to be contrary to the United States' expectations. However, there is no way of correcting these mistakes, we have to live with them. This is easy for the Americans: they live 10,000 kilometres away and can go on living their own lives. The problem lies with the people on the spot, who have to go on living with the disaster forced on to them. The truth of this will become patently clear as the rest of my story unfolds.

For a period things looked good for the Federation, and Welensky succeeded on 27 April 1957 in extracting valuable concessions from Britain: the membership of the Federal Parliament would be increased; the British government would legislate in Federal matters only at the request of the Federal government (similar to the Convention which applied to Southern Rhodesia); there could be no secession from the Federation, and the review conference due to be held in 1960 would produce a programme to enable the Federation to become a full member of the Commonwealth, with dominion status. We could not have asked for anything more — but from past experience we could not help wondering what was included in the small print. However, the concessions gained were positive and gave us hope that Britain was going to stick to its guns and honour its commitment to make a success of this great new concept for Africa. The necessary legislation

was enacted in early 1958, and approved by the British Parliament. It was all very encouraging.

Meanwhile, Todd had acted positively in the territorial sphere in Southern Rhodesia, and had dealt surprisingly firmly with black agitation, which was beginning to rear its ugly head. He even went so far as to invoke a state of emergency in order to crush the trouble at Wankie, the big coal mine in north-west Matabeleland, in February 1954.

But the other side of his character was ever present, and there was a constant feeling of unease among the members of his division of the United Federal Party over his tendency to give priority to black political advancement at the expense of economic and material advancement. The question came to a head when his cabinet colleagues discovered that behind their backs, he was involved in talks with Joshua Nkomo and the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, the leaders of the newly revived Southern Rhodesian African National Congress, which was engaged in massive intimidation campaigns in the battle for support among their own people. Clearly this placed them in the category of terrorist leaders. In the new year (1958), Todd's cabinet resigned and at an emotional Congress in Salisbury, Todd was defeated and Sir Edgar Whitehead elected to replace him. Whitehead was not a good choice — a bachelor, he was a bit of a recluse, and when he had a few drinks in the evening he tended to fumble and stumble. His election was a panic measure, concocted on the spur of the moment, and proved to be a disaster which lead to the party's downfall. A couple of other potential candidates would have been better choices, but declined to offer themselves. We were discussing the problem during the Congress lunch break when Bennie Goldberg (the Federal Minister of Education) summed up the position succinctly by commenting: 'In the final analysis, if we have to choose between Todd and a donkey, then it's the donkey!'

Whitehead returned from Washington, where he was serving as the Federal diplomatic representative, to take over as the new Prime Minister. Constitutionally it was now necessary for him to become a Member of Parliament, and the manner in which this was planned highlighted his inept judgement. There were a number of safe seats, which he could have chosen for a by-election, but he opted for the constituency of Hillside in Bulawayo, at the opposite end of the country to his home-ground of Umtali. It therefore came as no surprise when he was defeated on 17 April 1958, as there was a growing feeling that the government was distancing itself from the views of the electorate, and Matabeleland in particular took exception to having this intruder dumped on them.

This precipitated a general election on 6 June, at which Whitehead and his United Federal Party managed to win seventeen seats in the thirty-seat Assembly with the assistance of the preferential vote, a new device being used for the first time in the country, and without which they would have been defeated by the Dominion Party, which increased its holding from four seats to thirteen. Todd and his new United Rhodesia Party were eliminated. Clearly, the Rhodesian electorate were concerned, and the entrenched establishment could no longer take their support for granted. On the other hand, the Dominion Party, the main opposition, left a lot to be desired, as within their ranks one could not discern men of well-tried and proven records. They owed their recent success to the negative aspect of the electorate’s disenchantment with the government’s performance.

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The End of Federation

The Federal government also went through a general election on 12 November 1958, and there was strong support for Welensky and the party, winning forty-six seats or two-thirds of the House. They were conducting themselves well and there was little criticism, in contrast to the territorial government and the Todd débâcle. Welensky brought a few new faces into his cabinet. Some of my friends believed that I should have been given the agricultural portfolio, but this went to John Graylin, a lawyer from Livingstone, an able, quiet, decent person, and he did the job well.

As a consolation I was made Chief Whip, and appointed as our representative to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, both of which took up more of my time, but my family and farming interests were left intact. My old friend Bennie Goldberg became Minister of Education — this was a subject which had always been dear to my heart, and I had served on a number of parliamentary committees, so Bennie, a bachelor who had little experience in this field, was always grateful for the liaison we developed on the subject and often invited me to participate in meetings with ministry officials. There are few things more satisfying than being able to make a contribution to the education of our children.

However, a few ominous changes in the British government’s attitude began to reveal themselves, subtly and covertly at first, but with more black politicians to our north beginning to flex their muscles, the British displayed no desire to oppose their extravagant demands, and hence the dreadful philosophy of appeasement gained momentum.

At the last Federal election the Dominion Party won eight seats and the quality of their members helped to keep the government on its toes, something which was absent in the previous Parliament, where there was virtually no opposition. Their leader was Winston Field, a well-known and respected farmer who had served as President of the Rhodesian Tobacco Association. Among others: Clifford Dupont, a lawyer with a Cambridge degree, was a popular and capable personality; and Robbie Williamson, a chartered accountant from Gwelo, was known for his financial acumen. They were destined to play a part in the defeat of Whitehead in the 1962 election.

Meanwhile, there was a change in the British government's attitude on the question of colonialism, at first faintly discernible, but steadily and 'diplomatically' growing in emphasis with the passage of time. Not only the Suez crisis, but the constant anti-colonialist pressure from the USA was beginning to tell. The well-known and tried policy of gradualism and evolution, with the accent on the local people having adequate training and preparation, was rapidly fading into the background. We were entering the era of the 'scramble to get out of Africa'.

There were a couple of countries in west Africa where the British had been ensconced for 100 years and which had long been recognised as the first in line for independence and, if the timing were advanced by a few years, that could be accommodated. The Gold Coast (Ghana) was the classic case, to be followed by Nigeria, and these would vindicate the wisdom and practicality of Britain's policy.

History, of course, was to prove no such thing. Ghana was the first, in 1957, to be brought, with much pomp and ceremony, to independence. It looked impressive and everything possible was done to assist in making the process a success. Clearly, Ghana had much in its favour: a sound economy, a well-trained civil service brought up in the British traditions of honesty, discipline and efficiency,

and the goodwill of world opinion, hoping for success in this great new experiment. Nigeria was set to follow in 1960.

The talk in British political circles, however, was that as far as east Africa was concerned the time scale was different, and the granting of independence would probably take another fifteen years. This was important, especially with regard to placating the white population of Kenya, who had been encouraged to settle there after the First World War and actually to buy and own land, contrary to previous colonial policy. This encouragement was repeated with even greater emphasis after the Second World War.

But all this was of little concern to us for many reasons. First, our Federation was a refreshingly new concept, brought in at the instigation of the British government, with Rhodesian concurrence and overwhelming Commonwealth support asssuring us that this was the solution for our area. There was the unequivocal commitment that, once Federation was accepted and implemented, there was no going back. The constitution did not permit dissolution. Moreover, the ink was still not dry on the additions to the agreement that Welensky had just brought back from Britain, and these included a reiteration of the declaration that there could be no secession from the Federation and an undertaking that the British government would legislate in Federal matters only at the request of the Federal government. What more could one ask for?

If, in the end, the British did decide to appease the black extremists and renege on all their promises, then at least we Southern Rhodesians could fall back on our independence, which had been offered to us on many occasions and which had been the alternative to Federation. There were still many who believed that this should have been our choice in the first place, but once the

die was cast we all worked together in order to ensure success.

There were a few odd happenings in the two northern territories. Hastings Banda returned to Nyasaland (Malawi) from his self-imposed exile in Britain (July 1958) and Kenneth Kaunda was beginning to flex his muscles in Northern Rhodesia, but this, after all, was part of African politics.

By the end of the year, however, it was clear that insurrection was being organised and co-ordinated in all three territories, and unfortunately the territorial governments were slow to react. The typical Christmas and New Year atmosphere prevailed, and the agitators took advantage of this.

Early in the New Year the position continued to deteriorate and things were getting out of hand. As a result of pressure from the Federal government action was taken. States of emergencies were proclaimed in all three territories. Banda and Kaunda were arrested at the instigation of the British government, and a number of the trouble-makers were rounded up in Southern Rhodesia. Because the problem had not been nipped in the bud, it turned out to be more serious than it should have been.

While it is most desirable to show great patience and tolerance when dealing with people and their problems, one must always be on guard against subversion and terrorism. Terrorists are adept at using the freedom inherent in our philosophy and constitution in order to subvert freedom. Intimidation is a dreadful instrument, and it is used most expertly by those who are disciples of the philosophy of communism, or fascism, or Nazism — there is no difference between them. They are all dictatorships which believe in the ‘one-party state’ philosophy: once power is seized, it is held for ever, and anyone who dissents receives a clear message: change your mind, or else!

When you live in Africa, where the majority of the adult population is still illiterate and does not understand a Western democratic system that is foreign to it, and where the vast mass of the people live in rural areas with no electricity, minimal means of communication, where the forces of law and order are few and far apart, the ground is fertile for terrorists. So while the administration of justice must always be scrupulously fair, it must be firm and prompt if you are going to get the message over that your decent law-abiding citizens will be protected against the gangsters and the bully-boys. And the more primitive and simple the society you are dealing with, the greater the need for positive and swift action. Even more important is the need for anticipation, in order to ensure that trouble can be forestalled, because once it gets into its stride it is extremely difficult to contain.

When dealing with law and order, and justice, it is important to emphasise the need to be on the side of law-abiding citizens, as opposed to the criminals. I come down heavily in support of those who believe that our modern system of justice tends to lean over towards the law-breaker. So while supporting impartiality in the administration of justice, as depicted in our coat of arms showing the scales evenly balanced in the centre, if we have to choose between the good guy and the bad guy, there should be no equivocation.

Once firm action was taken, law and order was restored. However, the fellow-travellers in Britain took their cue, and in their turn started their agitation, of a different kind from that practised in Africa, in order to pressurise the British government. It had the desired effect, and the government, in spite of the fact that they (the Conservatives) had increased their majority at the general election in October 1959, decided to appease their critics and appoint a Royal Commission to advise on the future of the Federation. This is a classical tactic of governments which lack the courage

of their convictions: they pass the buck. Clearly this devious manoeuvre should have been resisted, especially as it had been written into our Federal agreement that there would be a review conference in 1960.

Welensky made the tactical error of agreeing, and the Commission, under the chairmanship of Monckton, arrived in Salisbury in February 1960. Harold Macmillan, the British PM, had already departed from London on his trip to Africa, visiting Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and our Federation, and ending in South Africa where he made his famous 'Winds of Change' speech. Clearly this was a signal to Monckton, who was an old, trusted friend of his, an able lawyer who had a reputation of being a skilled negotiator and tactician. A sudden dramatic change in Britain's colonial policy emerged, and the most outrageous thing of all was that it was not the Labour Party, but the Conservatives, our 'trusted' friends, who were the architects of the plan.

The Monckton Report of September 1960 pointed to factors which were aggravating relations between the territories and which could have been handled. But then it almost nonchalantly made the 'suggestion' that the British government should be prepared to permit secession. This, of course, was absolutely Machiavellian, and in total conflict with the repeated agreements and promises of the British government. The principle of 'no secession' had been repeated and clearly underlined, only the previous year, in the agreement which Welensky brought back from London as a result of his talks with the British PM Macmillan.

There could be no doubt in anybody's mind that the writing was on the wall. A new move had already been made in Nyasaland, giving the blacks a majority in their legislative council. The obvious tactic now was to strengthen the relationship between the two Rhodesias — this, after all, was what we had originally wanted, but

Nyasaland was thrown into the deal by the British because it was not viable and too small to stand on its own!

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The Formation of the Rhodesian Front

In contrast to the sounding of the Federal death-knell, the position in Southern Rhodesia was strengthened at a conference held in Salisbury in February 1961, with Duncan Sandys in the chair and, surprisingly, the black leaders Nkomo and Ndabaningi Sithole participating. A new constitution was agreed with a complicated voting system involving an 'A roll' and a 'B roll', with a cross-voting influence. I disliked the racial connotation, and thought it would have been preferable to retain our own system of a non-racial common voters' roll. But there were some important concessions along the road to our ultimate independence, and in the final analysis this was our main objective. The remaining UK government's reserve powers were eliminated, with a few minor exceptions. In return Rhodesia accepted a Declaration of Rights, justiciable by the Privy Council, and a local Constitutional Council which could report on discriminatory Bills. To this there was no objection. The convention that Britain would legislate for us only if we so requested was formally endorsed by the Commonwealth Secretary.

There was, however, an all-important omission: a guarantee of our independence in the event of the break-up of the Federation. The excuse given, that such inclusion would have provoked an acceptance of the fact, was especially hollow in view of the Monckton Report. We would live to regret this weakness.

Of interest is the fact that the black leaders signed the agreement on 7 February 1961, only to renege on it a few

days later. Moreover, they sent out messages to black voters to boycott the voters' rolls.

Our government was committed to putting the new constitution to a referendum of the electorate, and I was quite clear in my mind that I was unable to support it. The first step was to submit it to a special party congress held in Salisbury, and I was the only dissenting voice out of 400 delegates. A number of my Federal colleagues, including some ministers, while conceding that they had reservations, believed that they had to stand by Whitehead and the territorial government. Even the senior statesman Lord Malvern had advised against bringing in a new constitution. But Whitehead was immovable.

A few weeks after the congress, I went to speak to Welensky. I had known him for many years, I was the government Chief Whip and had always had good relations with him. I spoke at some length about my misgivings over the new constitution, and told him of my disappointment that some of my Federal colleagues, while indicating their reservations, felt obliged to go along with it. Surely, I said, we should make a decision on principle, and not for the convenience of Whitehead and his associates. Accepting Welensky's special concern about Northern Rhodesia, I argued that any weakening of the Southern Rhodesian position could only be to the detriment of Northern Rhodesia. I told him that, in the short time since the congress, a number of delegates had approached me to say that on reflection they now realised they had wrongly assessed the position and should have voted against the constitution. People were looking for a lead, I urged, and he was the one to give it. More time would enable us to correct the flaws and omissions in Whitehead's plan, and at the same time we could work on strengthening Northern Rhodesia's position.

I was one of those who had always believed that bringing the two Rhodesias together was what really mattered, and

that Nyasaland would probably be better on its own. One only had to look at the map; their future was east not west. Roy nodded his head, and took time before replying, saying that the matter had given him great concern and precipitated much soul-searching. As I no doubt knew, he said, he and his cabinet colleagues did have serious reservations, and in this they were joined by Malvern, but sadly they had been unable to influence Edgar. While on the surface Whitehead might have appeared soft and pliable, once he had made up his mind he became immune to other ideas, almost as if he had been ‘God sent’.

Roy’s problem, or weakness, so he said, was the fact that all his political life had been spent in Northern Rhodesia. He represented a Northern Rhodesian constituency, and he feared that if he came out in opposition to Whitehead and the territorial government he would be accused of intruding into our affairs, and this would be resented by Southern Rhodesians. I found it difficult to accept this, pointing out that the majority of his team were Southern Rhodesians, and the old warhorse, Malvern, would support such a move, as would other distinguished Southern Rhodesians, including, so I had been told, retired Chief Justice Tredgold. I felt strongly that the time had come to have the courage of our convictions and make a stand on principle.

My remarks seemed to have stirred him, and smarting a little, he said: ‘Let me remind you that I was born in this country, the same as you, and the good of our country is always uppermost in my mind. I have worked with these blacks in the political field longer than most people, so I know what I am talking about when I say that I am not prepared to hand over to them. Personally I could not live in a country where they were in control.’ He sat back in his chair for a few moments, I think regretting the statement, made in an emotional moment. ‘Make no mistake,’ he continued, ‘we believe in the same principles, but I have to

deal with the practicalities of how to cope with the problem.'

Clearly, there was no point in continuing the discussion, so I thanked him for seeing me, and expressed the hope that he would give further consideration to my suggestions. As I strolled down to Parliament from the Prime Minister's office, my spirits were low — it would not be easy if all the big guns were on the other side. I recalled words that I had heard on more than one occasion: the problem with Welensky was that his big talk was never backed up by action. Let's hope that it will be different this time, I thought, because usually you get the best out of a man when he has his back to the wall. But certainly that morning's meeting left me frustrated and depressed, since he exhibited all the signs of a beaten man.

The campaign for the referendum on the new Southern Rhodesian constitution was warming up, and the composition of those in opposition was indeed interesting: on the left were ex-Chief Justice Tredgold and Garfield Todd; on the right were Winston Field and the Dominion Party, with Nkomo and Sithole and the black nationalists adding their weight. So I found myself in the company of strange bedfellows!

The vote was taken on 26 July and resulted in a convincing 'Yes' vote for Whitehead — not surprising, as he received the full support of Welensky and the Federal machine. One of the gimmicks used by them was: VOTE NO FOR NKOMO. Clearly, this was a vote catcher for them. Nkomo himself and his National Democratic Party (the successor to the banned ANC) had held their own obviously unofficial referendum three days before, on Sunday 23 July. In an atmosphere of farce, with those who voted doing so several times, Nkomo secured a 'No' vote. It heightened tension and produced riots in which the police were forced to fire for the first time since 1897, killing two rioters.

Whitehead had his ‘Yes’, but when the legislation passed through the British Parliament to give effect to the agreement it deviated substantially from what had been agreed. The British legal drafters had inserted Section III, which retained for the United Kingdom the right to intervene by Order-in-Council, everything else to the contrary in the constitution notwithstanding. By the time this was discovered by our legal ministry, the thing was a *fait accompli*. I need to emphasise here that the White Paper, Command 1399 (on which the Southern Rhodesian electorate voted) stated explicitly that the proposed new constitution will eliminate all the reserve powers at present vested in the Government of the United Kingdom, with the exception of those affecting the position of the Sovereign and the Governor and the right of the British Government to safeguard the position regarding international obligations and undertakings given by the Government of Southern Rhodesia in respect of loans under the Colonial Stock Acts.

It was accepted that these reservations would be removed only with our final independence, or dominion status.

Our electorate was repeatedly assured during the election campaign, by Whitehead, Welensky, and even the Governor Sir Humphrey Gibbs, among many others, that ‘the White Paper contained the provisions of the new constitution’.

They told us that ‘this constitution represents independence for Southern Rhodesia in the event of the Federation being dissolved’. Welensky is on record as saying: ‘The provisions of the constitution are that future amendments to our constitution will rest with us here in Southern Rhodesia. I wasn’t going to leave that power in London for all the tea in China, because you might have a Labour government one day which would be quite

agreeable to making changes which were unacceptable to us.'

Meanwhile, to the north of us, things were not going all that smoothly. In the spirit of Macmillan's 'Winds of Change' speech, the Belgian government decided that the time had come for them to pull out of the Congo. Tragically, instead of an organised plan for withdrawal and transfer of power, they allowed a state of panic to develop, leading to chaos and a stampede, with the white people being caught up in the usual pillage, murder and rape associated with such events. The responsible authority took the first plane back home, and simply abandoned all commitments. The refugees poured down through the two Rhodesias, where emergency committees were set up to provide accommodation, food and medical facilities. It was the latter half of 1960. This event had a profound effect on our people, making them realise all the more positively the danger of capitulating to the metropolitan powers, who were ready to cut and run at the drop of a hat.

For some time prior to this Welensky had been working on a scheme for the secession of the copper-rich Katanga province of the Congo, and adding it to the adjoining Northern Rhodesian copper belt as part of the Federation. It was a pleasant piece of fantasy, but never likely to be realised. Even Welensky had now to concede its termination.

On the home front, Whitehead was confident, even defiant, after his resounding victory in the referendum for the new constitution, and he was gearing himself for the coming general election. He passed legislation removing redundant racial discrimination, and embarked on his well-publicised 'Build a Nation' campaign, encouraging black people to participate in the new scheme, which for the first time in our history included special seats for our blacks and incorporated a system whereby black votes had a limited

influence on white seats, or more correctly, common roll seats.

But as usual, Whitehead was failing to adjust to the realities surrounding him. The black nationalist leaders were urging a boycott of the election, and in characteristic fashion were mounting campaigns to out-intimidate each other. There was a marked increase in violence generally, with a special emphasis on arson, a particularly evil weapon against people living in wooden shacks with grass roofs.

White resistance had already strengthened because of the Congo débâcle, and this kind of local barbarism exacerbated their feelings. The fact that Nyasaland already had a Parliament with a black majority, and that the same process was under way for Northern Rhodesia, meant that more alarm bells were ringing. Adding fuel to the fire was the fact that our black agitators believed that these changes in the two northern territories were forerunners of what was coming their way, resulting in an increase in their militancy and subversion. Accordingly, white voter antagonism was growing, and the campaign for black voter resistance was succeeding. Thus, Whitehead's strategy of gaining support from black voters by means of the new cross-voting procedure was in jeopardy.

Meanwhile Welensky was engaged in a bitter conflict with the British government to secure the Federation of the two Rhodesias, and while it was absolutely clear that he had right on his side, it was equally clear that this was of little consequence when dealing with British politicians. I certainly wished him well in his efforts, but from my position on the outside, things did not look well. There was talk within the ranks of the party, including among cabinet ministers, that everybody was absolutely fed up, nauseated by the British government's deviousness, and that a plan was being considered to take matters into our own hands — and this plan had Welensky's blessing.

This kind of talk was music to my ears, but I wondered if there was the necessary courage. Several times while sitting in Parliament and at our caucus meetings, I had looked with a discerning eye at those occupying the cabinet seats. They were nice chaps, good friends, but in all honesty there was not one who inspired me as having those qualities needed in an emergency, when a stand has to be made on principle. There was a time when I thought Welensky might — but I was beginning to have doubts even about him.

In the midst of all of this Whitehead was proving to be more and more of a disaster. I thought of that afternoon during the tea break in the Southern Rhodesian Parliament when Huggins (then Prime Minister) had told us of the British government's wish that our Southern Rhodesian system should be spread to the two Northern territories. That was one of the reasons that had influenced me to support Federation. But as things were going now, Whitehead was effectively eroding that base.

Accordingly, I had come to the conclusion that I should return to Southern Rhodesian politics. If Welensky succeeded in keeping Northern Rhodesia in the fold, that would have my full support, but if we lost Southern Rhodesia, all was lost. A number of my Federal colleagues tried to dissuade me — I had them joining me at the breakfast table, conceding that they had been sent on a mission — in a manner similar to what happened when I had opposed the new constitution, Whitehead's brainchild. There was never any ill-feeling, but I simply told them that they knew me well enough to understand that I always gave careful consideration to such matters, weighing the pros and cons before making up my mind, but once that was done there was no equivocation. Our political world was riddled with compromise, appeasement, indecision, all part and parcel of the deviousness which permeated our society — I felt strongly about this permissiveness, but at

the same time tried to avoid over-reaction. However, it is a sad fact of life that whenever there is a tough issue, the easiest way out is to do nothing. Meanwhile, the extremists keep on doing their thing all the time — with them there is never any let-up.

I put my thoughts to Winston Field, the Dominion Party leader of the opposition in the Federal Parliament, and we agreed to work together and devote ourselves to the Southern Rhodesian territorial field. The DP would be solidly behind Field, so my task was to convert Federal Party supporters.

The next morning I motored out to see D.C. 'Boss' Lilford, who lived about twenty miles out from the city. 'Boss' Lilford not only had considerable farming interests but was a miner and an industrialist. He was a well-known, highly respected national figure, a long-time supporter of Huggins and the establishment, and into the bargain, one could say, a financial tycoon. If I could win him across, this would be a great coup. He was six feet five inches tall, a strong character, and a straight talker, qualities which sometimes provoked, but at least let people know where they stood with him. As a five-year-old child he had been taken on a family holiday to the sea, where he was fascinated by the coloured fishermen who went out each day in their boats, and brought back their catches in the afternoon. The person in control of this operation was respectfully referred to as 'Boss' by the other operators. From then on Lilford made it clear to the rest of his family that this was how he wished to be addressed: 'Boss'. It stuck for the rest of his life.

I had a long discussion with him and his wife over a cup of tea, and in the end he simply said: 'We'll back you.' We formed one of those friendships based on trust and belief in certain fundamental principles, able to resist any pressure. He became a tireless worker for our cause, was able to bring in money for the party machine with a facility which

few people have, of being able to extract blood from stone, and I always knew that once he committed himself to a task, it was as good as done.

The news got out that we were forming a new party, and a steady stream of my Federal friends offered support, but an even bigger number of younger Rhodesians, ex-servicemen of my vintage, started coming forward. It can be fairly said that Rhodesians in general had been apathetic towards politics — they just got on with their private lives, their various businesses, families, our wonderful outdoor life, sport. There had never, ever, been a political problem or question of any consequence. Now, however, there was a sudden realisation that times were changing, and interest in the new party was definitely mounting. We therefore planned a meeting to which prominent people from all over the country were invited. The response exceeded our expectations, and we formed a committee to organise a congress to launch the new party. I proposed Winston Field as the chairman; he was well-known, highly respected, had sound and balanced political views, and he had my support as leader of the new party. I was satisfied that there was general agreement for this, but a bunch of ex-servicemen farmers from the influential area north of Salisbury believed that he was the leader of a party which had failed in previous elections, and they were looking for a new leader. They told him so to his face. After the meeting they approached me and asked me to take on the job. I refused firmly, and accused them of impetuous action which could prejudice all our efforts. Fortunately, they accepted my stand and came with me to Field’s home, where the matter was rectified. Our congress was a great success, and we got ourselves geared up in preparation for the election.

Welensky dissolved the Federal Parliament and held a general election in April 1962 in a desperate but meaningless effort to prove local support. We simply turned

our backs on it, being fully occupied on the territorial front, so the election turned out to be a non-event.

The movement towards secession of the two Northern territories was clearly gaining ground, so Whitehead came to the conclusion that time was not on his side. Moreover, figures proved that the boycott of the voters' roll by black voters was successful. It was also common knowledge that the new party, the Rhodesian Front, was growing in strength every day. Accordingly an early general election was called for December 1962.

A political awareness had suddenly gripped Rhodesians, as there was a general feeling that the hour had come, and that if they did not arouse themselves they were going to lose their country altogether. The response was tremendous. Voluntary helpers exceeded our requirements, and finance came in steadily. Surprisingly, some of the big corporations, which had been consistent supporters of the establishment, made contributions, for they, too, were beginning to discern red lights flashing on the horizon. Our campaign headquarters was running smoothly, with charts for every constituency, and the indications were so positively in our favour that by election day we were quietly confident.

The result substantiated our prediction. On 14 December 1962, the Rhodesian Front won thirty-five of the fifty 'A' roll seats (mainly white voters). Whitehead collected the 'B' roll seats, with the exception of one that went to a white independent, Dr Ahrn Palley. He was one of the most able politicians this country has produced, and although our political philosophies did not coincide, we always respected one another and maintained friendly relations. The Rhodesian Front had a working majority of five seats.

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The First Rhodesian Front Government: Field and Independence

After the results came through I told Winston Field that he would probably have a long list of potential cabinet ministers looking for jobs, so I wished to let him know that I would be perfectly happy to be left in peace on my farm. He smiled and said: 'No such luck, I've got you down as Deputy PM and Minister of Finance. We work well together.' Sadly, it was only to be for a short time, as will be seen later.

Once in office, we wasted no time in getting to grips with the independence issue. Nyasaland's right of secession from the Federation was announced, and this was associated with a typical piece of British duplicity. The decision was made in September 1962, but the British government colluded with Whitehead to hold back the announcement until after the Southern Rhodesian election, accepting that news of Britain's formal break of the Federal constitution, in violation of all the agreements and promises given, would prejudice Whitehead's election chances.

Clearly, Northern Rhodesia was next in line for its right to secede, with Kaunda and Nkumbula making strident demands. Could anyone in his right mind believe that, having made the concession to Nyasaland, Britain could resist Northern Rhodesia's demand? And having been devious and dishonest once, why should anyone worry if they simply repeated the process? Whether you kill one, two or five people, you can be hanged only once. Our task

was to ensure that we could save Southern Rhodesia from the shambles. If Welensky could rescue Northern Rhodesia that would be great, and he would have our full support all the way, but the time was rapidly approaching for a firm decision. He would have to draw a line and make it clear to the British that there was a point beyond which they could not push him. I wondered if he would do this.

Sure enough, on 29 March 1963 the British government announced Northern Rhodesia's right to secede. Welensky was in London at the time, and as an indication of his resentment he refused an invitation to lunch with Macmillan at 10 Downing Street. I approved of that. He also used some strong language about British deceit and treachery — good stuff, but meaningless if it was not going to be backed up with some action.

Field was in London at the same time, making our expectations clear, and he had discussions with Macmillan and 'Rab' Butler, who assured him that they accepted that Southern Rhodesia was a separate case all on its own, and that they would honour their obligations to us. Their handling of the Northern Rhodesian case, however, indicated that we could not take things for granted.

Our plan was simple and honest. Southern Rhodesia had been promised independence time after time. Sir Godfrey Huggins, when Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, told us that if we wanted dominion status we could have it — it was there for the asking. It had been written into agreements, and endorsed by both the Conservative and Labour Parties. The theme was clear and consistent, and had never been challenged. As recently as 1961 in the referendum on our new constitution, Whitehead and his supporters had stressed on every platform: 'It means independence if the Federation breaks up.' So, we simply said to the UK government: 'If you want our co-operation, please reiterate your commitment on our independence.'

Welensky endorsed this stand. I was in touch with Greenfield and Caldicott, old friends of mine from the Federal government, and they added their weight. However, I waited in vain for some positive action from the Federal government. It seemed as if they were drifting along with the inevitable.

When negotiating, trying to strike a bargain, one must avoid putting the other party in a position where agreement is too difficult, out of their reach. It is best to try to put them in a situation where they can give answers for their action. Obstructionism is not part of the game. What could be more reasonable, almost temptingly so, than to say to the British government that we would go along with independence for the other two members of the Federation, providing we were included. All three territories would receive independence at the same time. After all, we had possessed ‘responsible government’, quasi-dominion status or independence, for forty years. And in the words of the British government our record was impeccable, we had been a model of efficiency, correct constitutional behaviour and economic viability, something unusual with emerging countries. By comparison, the two Northern territories had not experienced one day of ‘responsible government’. In all honesty, fairness and justice, how could we be faulted on such a stand?

In a letter sent to the British government dated 20 April 1963 we stated that unless our government received unqualified recognition of Southern Rhodesia’s right to full independence on the same day that either Northern Rhodesia or Nyasaland received theirs, we would not attend the dissolution conference. We were a happy, united and dedicated team, and no one flinched from the task ahead.

The Federal government were in complete agreement, and in March 1963, after the British government’s announcement of the right to secede and the need for a

conference to deal with dissolution, Welensky spoke in powerful language, accusing the British government of betrayal. During an interview at Salisbury airport on his return from London he said: ‘If Labour came to power in Britain at least they might stab us in the breast and not in the back.’ But more importantly, he went on to say that if the Federation were to be dissolved, at least Southern Rhodesia must get its independence and be saved from the wreckage.

In his reply Butler (the British minister concerned) equivocated, and talked about the need for discussion on the franchise and the Land Apportionment Act before our independence. Our answer was quick and direct: we pointed out that the new Southern Rhodesian constitution had been accepted by the British government as containing everything necessary for protecting the rights of all our people. What more was there to talk about? We reiterated that our attendance at any conference was conditional on receiving, in writing from the British government, a guarantee of our independence.

The British government then invited Field for talks in London in late May, and we thought it would be a good idea for him to meet them face to face, and give it to them straight from the shoulder. If the Afro-Asian bloc was the obstacle to Britain fulfilling its obligation to us, then we agreed reluctantly to accept independence outside the Commonwealth, but to retain our links with the Crown, in keeping with our reputation as the most loyal of the loyal. This may not have been a very practical suggestion, but it indicated our willingness to go on trying to solve the problem, provided there was no deviation from the principle of our independence.

Sadly, Field was unable to make any impression on the British. The main theme from Butler was that the African bloc was becoming more aggressive and threatening and that this issue could break the Commonwealth. To this

Field replied that as far as the rest of Africa was concerned, they were all one-party states or dictatorships, and this should disqualify them from the right to be heard. But we were learning fast about the ‘double standards’ of the world in which we were living.

Field, however, did have a new thought to put to cabinet on 7 June: that we should agree to attend the conference, providing Butler came to Salisbury en route to the Victoria Falls in order to finalise our independence issue. We would be sticking to our principles, he said, and it would put us in the position where we were co-operating, as opposed to being obstructionist. Influential friends in London, outside of government, in what he believed to be a genuine spirit of help, had warned him of the dangers of not attending the conference. The British could carry on without us, leaving us ‘out in the cold’ over the division of Federal assets, finance, the army and air force, and we would be the only losers. Speaking to me privately in his office the day before, after I had advised him again not to go to the Conference, he said: ‘We must keep our feet on the ground and realise that if the British government really made up their mind they could crush us as easily as a big boot can crush a beetle.’

I went home in sombre mood that evening, accepting that while any ill-considered and impetuous decision might be prejudicial to our cause, we must nevertheless try to avoid surrender. As Churchill said: ‘Never, never surrender.’ My gut-feeling was that the British, using their notorious methods of diplomacy, had resorted to the tactic of using mutual and ‘trusted’ friends to help in the softening-up process. Naturally, their trust was more to their own people, the British, than to the Rhodesians. The new suggestion did seem reasonable, and there was no deviation from our stand on independence, so cabinet concurred, albeit somewhat uneasily.

The next morning Field called me in, saying that according to his grapevine the Federal government went along with this new tactic, but in order to clarify the position he had arranged to go along and meet them, and he would like me to join him. We walked down, a matter of about 500 yards, and were shown in by the secretary. Welensky greeted us and said, 'Sit down.' With him were Barrow, Caldicott and Greenfield. Field outlined his case, briefly but clearly, and ended by stressing the point that we were not deviating from the principle of insisting on a written confirmation of our independence.

We then asked if any of them would like to say anything. There were no offers. I watched them carefully, trying to detect any feelings, but they were poker-faced. I expected to hear Welensky confirm that they, too, would support us in not attending the conference until confirmation was forthcoming, and better still, that the Federal government would remain in position until such time. They were still the power in the land, controlling the Federal finances, both the army and air force in all three territories. Immigration was also under their control, which meant that they could prevent anyone from entering the Federation, including representatives of the British government.

This would not involve war and the tragedy of killing people. The Federation would simply carry on in keeping with their constitution, until the British government had dealt successfully with the legalities of the dissolution, the break-up. There were the very clear undertakings from Britain to both Federal and Southern Rhodesian governments, reiterated as recently as a year before, that the British government would not legislate in our affairs without our assent. Such a stand would have been impregnable. As we walked back to our offices Field made the point that they could not say we had not kept them informed, and I expressed my surprise that there had been no comment from them.

It is important to record that as soon as the Rhodesian Front government came to power they released all those who had been detained by the previous government. Nkomo, who had been living outside the country, returned, and our government advised the blacks to participate in politics under the new constitution which had made concessions in their favour. But Nkomo refused and ordered a continuing boycott of the voters' rolls. There was in-fighting between the two main leaders, Nkomo and Sithole, and their party broke into two factions later in 1963. This, as usual in Africa, led to a campaign of violence between the two opposing groups, with the poor, innocent black people caught in the middle.

Meanwhile the British government were making plans for the conference at Victoria Falls, a place which had frequently been used for such occasions, conveniently placed on the border between Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia. Although the township and hotel with its conference facilities is situated on the south bank of the Zambezi River, it is regarded as a kind of no-man's land for such occasions.

We were holding ourselves in readiness for the pre-conference meeting with Butler in Salisbury, and were awaiting notice of the time of his arrival. About a week before the conference was due on 28 June, Field called us to a cabinet meeting to say that he had been visited by the British High Commissioner with a personal message from Butler to say that his health was not all that good and his doctor had told him he was over-tired. Would we assist by agreeing to have the pre-conference meeting with him at Victoria Falls? This would relieve him of the extra effort of travelling to Salisbury and then flying back to Victoria Falls. Field thought that if we refused we would be accused of being unreasonable, and as it would not involve us in any extra travel and effort we should show willingness. There was not immediate agreement, and there were some

searching questions. Clifford Dupont in particular was uneasy, always suspicious of ‘these British politicians’. I wondered if it was not part of a cunning tactic, but one is always sympathetic to a person who is unwell. Dupont interjected: ‘My guess is that he has never felt better in his life!’ After seeing Butler in action at the conference, I had to agree that Dupont was right. Field, however, pressed the point, but it was with little enthusiasm that we conceded to the request.

Victoria Falls is an exciting place to visit, and after dumping my luggage in the hotel room, I walked down to Devil’s Cataract to have a quick look at the awe-inspiring sight of the massive column of water roaring down into the gorge below. Looking down over the edge we were able to breathe in some of the spray which was drifting across.

Butler and his team had arrived as arranged, the officials had met, and Field and Butler had talked, and plans were made for our meeting. I remember walking down that long passage leading to the north-east wing, thinking to myself that all I wanted was a simple, straightforward confirmation of our request, without any escape hatches which would subsequently enable the British to manoeuvre their way out. If this was not forthcoming, I was ready to return to Salisbury.

As soon as we were seated, Butler got straight to the point and said: ‘I am in the pleasant position to be able to tell you that HMG has given the deepest consideration to your request that Southern Rhodesia will get independence no later than the other two territories. In view of your country’s wonderful record of “responsible government” over the past forty years, during which time you have conducted yourself without blemish, managed your financial affairs in an exemplary fashion, and above all the great loyalty you have always given to Britain in time of war, not only in the two world wars but subsequently in Africa and with your air force in Aden, I have been asked to

convey to you our government's long-standing gratitude for your exemplary record, and to confirm that in these circumstances we are able and willing to meet your request. Personally I wish to thank you for meeting me here rather than in Salisbury, and to express my gratitude to you for agreeing to attend the conference because I anticipate great difficulties with the Nationalist leaders of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland and will require your constructive assistance if we are to succeed in producing an equitable and sane solution to the dissolution exercise. My latest information is that Hastings Banda has no intention of attending, saying that he already has a commitment to his independence, so why waste his time?'

Winston Field nodded his head approvingly and said that it looked as though our conditions had been met. 'What do you think?' he enquired, looking at me. I was listening with meticulous care, and was unable to flaw Butler's presentation, which after all was based on fact, on history which everybody knew. It was all completely proven. Had it been a trumped-up case designed to pull the wool over people's eyes, maybe one would have had an uneasy feeling. One thing I did notice was that no one was taking a minute of the meeting — our cabinet secretary Gerald Clarke was sitting quietly listening.

I took my time, and there was a kind of embarrassing silence with everyone looking to me, but I was unconcerned, and, when ready, simply said: 'It sounds all right. Are we now going to sign an agreement?'

Butler very carefully and meticulously replied: 'In all these matters dealing with inter-family affairs, between the mother country and her colonies, there must be trust, because without that it simply would not work. Our record with you substantiates that, would you not agree? The thought of signing documents which could be subjected to legal wrangling is completely out of character with the spirit of trust which we believe in and which has

characterised our Commonwealth. We will now work together in producing your new constitution, and that will be the document which we will both honour.'

Field agreed and said: 'If you give your word to all of us here, as you have done, I accept that we must take it on trust.'

That sealed it. We rose from our seats, and as a parting shot I looked straight at Butler and said: 'Let's remember the trust you emphasised, if you break that you will live to regret it.'

The above is a copy of the minute I wrote when I returned to my room while the event was still fresh in my mind. It coincides with the record of the others present at the meeting, with whom I had subsequent discussions.

We went into the lounge and sat and talked for a few minutes. I made it clear that I was not completely happy, but Field did not think there would be any problem, and ended by saying: 'If we give them their marching orders now, or in six months' time, there's no difference, so let's give them a chance.'

It seemed reasonable. The conference passed without any serious problem, but the thing which struck me most was the passive attitude of the Federal team. They rarely participated. We had told them about our meeting with Butler and the undertaking he had given. I am being wise through hindsight when I say they should have suggested a joint meeting between our two delegations and the British, so that they too would have been witness to Butler's message, and we could have had secretaries recording the meeting. They were the ones who had been dealing with the British government for the past ten years, and had within the past twelve months experienced 'British duplicity and treachery', to quote Welensky's own words. Moreover, let me repeat what Welensky said, during the campaign for Whitehead's 1961 constitution at their party congress on 22 February 1962. He said: 'These proposals

mean that future amendments to our constitution will rest with us here in Southern Rhodesia. I wasn't going to leave that power in London for all the tea in China, because you might have a Labour government one day which would be quite agreeable to making changes we could never accept. So I believe we have given you a real guarantee for the future.'

Very clearly, he nailed his flag to the mast. If he had followed it up at this Falls conference, things would have ended differently.

It had been accepted before the conference that the armed forces would come to Southern Rhodesia *en bloc*. This was vital to us because both army and air force were highly efficient, and constituted the most proficient fighting force in sub-Saharan Africa, other than South Africa's. The British had made it clear that they did not wish any of this to fall into the hands of the two Northern territories. The other important function was the distribution of assets and liabilities, the overall economy. In my capacity as Minister of Finance, I was chairman of the committee dealing with the financial aspects of dissolution. This was no small task, in addition to my duties in the Southern Rhodesian Treasury, and the independence issue. The exercise threw up interesting facts, and the British representatives working with us were open in their praise for the Southern Rhodesian administration and the overall efficiency which they encountered. One of the most telling aspects was the discrepancy in the development and services provided in Southern Rhodesia, by comparison with the two Northern territories. For example, in the fields of education, health, housing, cultural and sporting amenities for the indigenous peoples, Southern Rhodesia had provided, in proportion to population, double the facilities that the British government had provided in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This is pertinent, especially in view of the criticism directed at us by the starry-eyed do-gooders and

opportunist black politicians that we had not done enough in these fields. We never denied the need to do more, and the record shows our constantly increasing efforts. But a government has to be realistic and deal with the practicalities as they exist.

It is difficult for people who have never lived in this part of the world to appreciate that sub-Saharan Africa is different. It was the last part of our world to come into contact with western European civilisation, and when the pioneers arrived in this country the local people had no written language, no form of currency, no schools or hospitals, and lived in makeshift houses with grass roofs. The wheel had not even evolved, nor had the plough. The change which has taken place is absolutely phenomenal, and is a tribute to what the white inhabitants did over a period of ninety years.

I recall clearly an occasion during my university vacation soon after the declaration of war in 1939 when my mother asked me to talk to Bob, one of the fine black men who worked for us, and whom my father had often said was superior to some of the whites who had worked for him. The problem was that Bob would not agree to send his son, the eldest of his children, to school. He was a good-looking and intelligent boy and, as I had always got on well with Bob, I suggested that perhaps I could influence him. Bob was a great tea drinker, so we sat down one afternoon over a cup of tea while I explained to him the benefits of education, and how this would be an asset to him and his family in the future. He listened carefully and then said he would think about it. The following week, after a weekend of cogitation and discussion with his family, he asked if we could talk again. Methodically and unemotionally, he explained to me that while he accepted that there were some benefits from education, he had to get his priorities right. At this stage his son’s first responsibility was taking care of the home, the mother and family, the cattle, and

with the rains, the planting and cultivation of the crops. On reflection I accepted that his decision was in keeping with what 90 per cent of his contemporaries would have done. Their history, way of life and traditions were far removed from those of our Western civilisation, and people of character and consequence do not lightly jettison their culture. Of course, there was no guarantee that we were right, and they were wrong — time would tell and there was no need to rush these things. We were, after all, living in different worlds, and they were not all that enthusiastic over the white man's calendar and watch and the importance he attached to time. Their lives were governed by the sun, as they always had been. Even before the crack of dawn, the bulbul give a warning that dawn is about to come, and the guinea fowl start their 'catankering', and one is awakened by nature's reveille. To those of us who live on farms, that is one of the good things of life that has not changed. People who live with nature get up, and get out. If it is summer you get moving and do as much as you can before the scorching sun starts beating down on your back. After the sun has moved overhead on its way north, you know that winter will not be far away, so it is time to prepare the grain bins for the incoming crop, and pile up the stack of wood for the winter fires. Conversely, when the sun starts moving southwards, and the weather begins to warm up, it is time to cut some thatching grass to repair the roofs, and cart the manure to the lands before the rains come. Calendars and clocks do not help with these things. This was a field in which the black man knew as much as the white man, and he had an additional asset, the witch doctor, who could throw the bones and invoke the help of the spirits in order to forecast the weather pattern. Those were the days before weather stations were dotted around the world, with radio communication. The concept of satellite pictures on TV screens every day would have been rejected as a ridiculous absurdity.

Then the war came, and that was followed by my final year at university, and so five years had passed before I really got back to base. Bob was not as fit and strong as he had always been, and the first essential, according to our doctor, was the removal of his teeth, which were all rotten and undermining his system. The plan was for me to motor him to Gwelo, where there was a very good dentist, an anaesthetic at the hospital, and within half an hour it would all be over. Bob was horrified and was surprised that I was prepared to make the suggestion — he had never in his life been in a hospital, and he certainly was not going to start now. As I knew, he was perfectly happy to have iodine or ointment on cuts and bruises, but the idea of putting him to sleep for an operation! What if he did not wake up from the sleep? He was truly incensed at the suggestion. I was disappointed, because of his health problem, but not all that surprised because of my knowledge of our local people, and understanding of their beliefs and customs. The doctor informed us that this was one of our greatest problems, as Bob was not an isolated case. The indigenous population needed time to adapt to the rapidly changing world which was surrounding them.

This problem was of great concern to our government, because throughout the country there were schools and hospitals being used to half capacity, for the reasons which I have been at pains to explain. It is important to record that this was one of the major causes for the lack of facilities in subsequent years when we were unable to meet the requirements. One of the dramatic developments during the post-war years was a growing awareness among our black people of the desirability of education if they were going to catch up with the white man and his European civilisation, and secondly the need to accept health facilities in order to combat disease and prevent premature death. In spite of the allocation of increased funds and the dedicated effort of government officials, the

unprecedented demand for increased facilities was insurmountable. The problem was aggravated by the fact that our black people had the highest rate of population increase in the world.

Later, in 1967, our government, faced with mounting pressure for increased education facilities for black children, in keeping with our constructive approach to such problems, set up a committee to investigate how best to solve the difficulty. The report, which was not finished until the following year, was comprehensive and revealed some startling evidence when presented to us by John Wrathall, the Minister of Finance. Before the advent of the pioneer column in 1890 the local population had remained at around 300,000, kept in check by constant war, disease, pestilence, malnutrition and starvation caused by droughts. With the coming of the white man, however, all this changed. He prevented the wars, provided medicines for the people and veterinary services for the stock, and even in times of drought food was available. It was estimated that the indigenous population was now between 4 and 5 million. The finance necessary to provide education for everyone would consume the whole of our present national budget! The vast mass of the people were in the lower income bracket, and their contribution to the fiscus was minuscule. The thought of increasing tax was rejected because of the adverse effect this would have on confidence, investment, and thus overall development, which in turn would lead to fewer job opportunities. The current sanctions campaign against our country was an aggravating factor. Then there was the problem of providing teachers, assuming that buildings could be provided. From the time a child is born it takes a minimum of twenty years to produce a teacher. Accordingly, it was necessary to take into account a situation where if extra resources were diverted to building more schools, we would be confronted by a situation of insufficient teachers.

Our construction sector was already working to capacity with a shortage of professional staff and skilled artisans. The facts clearly indicated the government's growing commitments, not only to education but to the other humanitarian fields such as health and housing. The committee stressed the need for planned, balanced development, and emphasised the importance of co-ordinating effort in order to ensure the optimum use of available resources.

Sadly, the report pointed to destructive elements from the black nationalist parties, which had destroyed school buildings and burnt books and equipment — actions which detracted from the enthusiasm of those who were working to channel extra funds into education from an already over-strained budget. Any thought of lowering our standards for possible short-term benefits would clearly lead to long-term disadvantages, and the report concluded that there was no case for a change in the government's well-thought-out policy. The criticism against government stemmed from political expediency and emotional opportunism, and paid scant regard to the historical legacy of a people who were at first contemptuous of the white man's education, rejecting it, then, after the post-war revolution, changing dramatically to the opposite extreme. This created practical problems beyond man's control, and had nothing to do with lack of understanding or desire to meet people's needs.

To return to late 1963: the work of the dissolution committee was on course, and the magnitude of the problem was all-absorbing. However, my colleagues in cabinet and caucus were urging me to give more time to the independence issue. I sensed a feeling from among them that Field was not pressing the British hard enough and that things were drifting along. What had happened to our condition that we would not attend the Falls conference unless we received a guarantee in writing confirming our independence?

Field informed me that according to his information Macmillan was about to retire. It had been well known for some time that he had health problems, that his likely successor was Alec Home, and that such a change would clearly be to our benefit. With this I concurred, but thought we should start thinking and planning for such an eventuality. We did not have to wait long: Alec Home took over as Prime Minister in October, and Field suggested that I should visit Britain and check up on the financial assistance which we were promised as a consequence of our co-operation in winding up the Federation. It would also provide an opportunity to see if there was any improvement in our case for independence, now that Home was at the helm. We hoped for a more honest and direct approach. I flew into London on 27 October and, after a full briefing from our High Commissioner, Evan Campbell, arranged for a meeting the following day with Duncan Sandys, who had taken over responsibility for Southern Rhodesia now that Butler had moved to the Foreign Office. I found Sandys abrupt, even tending to aggressiveness, completely devoid of those qualities of diplomacy and tact associated with British ‘statesmen’. After talking at length and without making any headway, I caught Evan Campbell’s eye, and we obviously agreed that we had endured enough. Before departing I felt compelled to point out to Sandys that his offensive attitude was not conducive to harmonious negotiations. For the first time during the meeting he smiled, and said that he thought I had misjudged him!

Three days later, on Thursday 31 October, I saw Alec Home, and this was a different and pleasant encounter. We seemed to be operating on the same wavelength, and I was satisfied that he was going out of his way to try to help, but he talked about the problems with the members of the OAU and their obsession with pressing the case of their friends, irrespective of the justice or merit of what was involved.

There were two important points to bear in mind, Home said, when dealing with these people. First, they formed a united bloc, and stood together whether they agreed or not on the issue. This gave them a powerful voice, irrespective of the fact that the majority were bankrupt and in chaos. Second, many European countries were developing a complex over colonialism, with the resultant feeling that they owed something to ‘these poor people’.

Home had noticed that even some of the older members of the Commonwealth were expressing concern that we might provoke a situation which would lead to a break-up of the Commonwealth. I wondered whether we would not be better off without some of them, and expressed the hope that we would not be party to bending the rules and breaking agreements in order to appease these people. On this we agreed, but he stressed the opposition they were running into, and hoped that we would play our part in trying to find a solution. To which I pointed out that our case was a straightforward request for fulfilment of the undertakings given by the British government. He assured me that he was in the picture, but as I knew, there were differences of opinion on this question. He was still settling into his new seat, but would try to get a message to me via Duncan Sandys which I could take back to Salisbury.

Meanwhile I received an invitation from some of my RAF friends to attend a big flying display due to take place on Sunday 3 November. The weather was fine and we took off from the middle of the city in the largest helicopter I had ever seen. The view below of the magnificent English countryside made me think of Shakespeare’s words: ‘This earth of majesty, the other Eden, demi paradise’.

One could only enjoy the fine-looking aircraft, the expertise of the pilots, the friendly people and the warm hospitality. What a pleasant relief from politics with all its artificiality and intrigue! Then one of the organising officials approached me and said that Mr Campbell, our

High Commissioner, was on the phone. Evan informed me that Sandys had contacted him personally to express his displeasure that I was attending some function in the country when he had hoped to meet me that day! I asked Evan to send him a courteous message, in contrast to the one he had sent, saying that I was otherwise engaged, and would contact him tomorrow.

When we met the following morning, I opened the conversation by telling him of the wonderful day I had spent at the air display and how impressed I had been at the tremendous progress in British aviation, and that I hoped he and his ministerial colleagues would have an opportunity to witness it themselves. He agreed, albeit unenthusiastically — he really had no option!

We talked at length, and although his demeanour was more congenial than on the previous occasion, the final result gave no cause for joy. He repeated and elaborated on the message which I had been given by Alec Home, stressed the danger of disrupting the Commonwealth, and told me that there would even be opposition from some left-wing Conservative MPs to the agreement for which we were asking. It would assist if we showed some flexibility and, for example, gave blacks greater representation in our Parliament. I told him forcibly that I was surprised at his suggestion, in view of the fact, as I was sure he was aware, that our blacks had the same access to the vote as did our whites. In addition, the 1961 constitution, the brainchild of Sandys and Whitehead, had introduced a ‘B’ roll to cater especially for our black people, and the lack of greater representation of blacks in our Parliament could be traced to the fact that they had accepted the advice of their Nationalist leaders and boycotted the elections. I asked: what was the British government doing to put over this kind of message?

I was fed the typically evasive tactics which are the hallmark of British politicians. Sandys believed that our

discussions had been useful, and that after my return it would be wise for our governments to commit themselves on paper. I was not so sanguine, believing that British decisions would be motivated by their own party interests, certainly not the best interests of Southern Rhodesia.

David Young, Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, accompanied me on the trip to make plans for the financial assistance we had been promised in conjunction with our co-operation in the dissolution exercise. Obviously, the British officials were waiting for the signal that we were acquiescing to the machinations of their political masters, and when this did not happen, Young came away empty-handed.

My report did not surprise my cabinet colleagues, and clearly had the effect of making them more determined to bring the matter to finality. We therefore dispatched a message to London requesting clarification as a result of my visit, but the reply once again was evasive. Then, like a bolt from the blue, in early December a message came from Sandys suggesting that Field attend a meeting with them in London at which Sir Robert Menzies (Australia), Lester Pearson (Canada) and Julius Nyerere (Tanzania) were present, to help solve the Southern Rhodesia issue. We rejected the idea immediately, pointing out to the British that they had consistently stated that our case was between Britain and Rhodesia and that outside participation was unwelcome. They were compromising on principle in order to gain time through delaying tactics.

Both cabinet and caucus were incensed at the latest developments, and the suggestion of bringing in one of the discredited black leaders to sit in judgment on our case was especially offensive. Although the Conservatives were traditionally our friends, it was plain that the dominating issue before them was their impending general election, and the Rhodesian issue was to be relegated to the background until that had taken place.

Some caucus members were growing restless and asked for a meeting with me; they believed that Field was losing the initiative and allowing the British to out-manoeuvre him. Federal MPs and even ministers were saying that Field had bungled the whole thing by climbing down on his demand for an ‘undertaking in writing agreeing to our independence’ before attending the Falls conference, and that he was now letting it slip through his hands.

A group of six approached me, and expressed themselves most forcibly in their condemnation of the British government’s devious behaviour. Unless Field was prepared to confront them, he would have to go. Among the delegation were two retired British army officers who had come to settle in Southern Rhodesia after the last war, Alan McLeod, who had been awarded the DSO on three occasions — and (the story went) had been recommended for the VC on two of those — and Andrew Dunlop, who wore the DSO ribbon. These two, maybe because they were by birth such true-blood Britishers, were bitter in their condemnation, especially of the Conservatives, whose dishonesty, they averred, was utterly despicable. They made their case unemotionally and with dignity, and gave the impression that either of them would have been happy to take on the whole British government single-handed! These were the calibre of men who had made Great Britain great. The other four, just Rhodesians like myself, were no less forgiving. All of them were in no mood to be sidetracked. It was therefore no easy task for me to convince them that all of us in cabinet, including Field, shared their strong feelings.

We now had a plan for Field to make one more visit, in a final effort to bring the British government to its senses. If that failed, we would have to contemplate more serious action. At the caucus meeting which followed, there was strong criticism of Field, and only when I backed him up and pleaded for patience for one more attempt were those

leading the attack prepared to relent. The attitude of caucus appeared united. As we walked down the passage of Parliament at the close of the meeting, Field thanked me for my support, and I sensed a kind of sad desperation about him. My comment was that we could still live in hope, more to comfort him than from any strong conviction. I was upset at the way things were going, because the two of us had been the main participants in an unbelievably successful operation: the ousting of the defunct Whitehead government and the replacing of it with something which gave Rhodesians hope. We worked well together, there was understanding and trust between us. But clearly he was losing the confidence of his caucus, and some of his ministers were beginning to ask questions. In all honesty there had been a few occasions when my faith was put to the test, but I thought he could still redeem himself by confronting the British government. The time had come for a virtual ultimatum from him to the British: 'You must honour your commitment to us over our independence, or you force us into a position where we will have no alternative other than to take matters into our own hands. The timing would be for us to decide.'

When I talked it over with him, he was unenthusiastic. He said that we would have intolerable forces mounted against us, and he did not believe he could go along with my line of thinking. Better we should continue to negotiate; in the end the British would come to their senses, particularly since we knew how disenchanted they were with the performance of the newly independent countries to our north. I disagreed, believing that the OAU would grow in strength, not through performance or the justice of their cause, but because of the guilt-conscience of the free world. Already history had proved that they would resort to appeasement and back down, no matter how outrageous the demands. Our recent contacts and communication with the British had endorsed my feelings. Although the

opportunity would present itself on Field's impending visit to London, I had a gut-feeling that he would not rise to the occasion.

His trip took place the end of January 1964, and his talks with Home gave him hope that if the Conservatives won the coming election, they would definitely meet our request. But there were two serious drawbacks: the current feeling was that the Conservatives would lose the election, and second, Home was not prepared to commit himself in writing. The talks with Sandys were not so congenial, but Field left a paper stating our recommendations for the consideration of the British government. He told me of his conviction that Home was a man of his word, who would not let us down.

Within a matter of a few weeks, however, all our hopes were dashed. In the typically autocratic manner that one had grown to expect from Sandys, our proposals were rejected out of hand on the grounds that they would be unacceptable to the rest of the Commonwealth. Certain members would resign if our proposals were accepted. All the main issues were evaded: the long list of promises made by the British government, the impeccable record of Rhodesia, our loyalty to the mother country, our participation at the Falls conference and the agreement struck in this connection; the list went on and on. Once again it was made abundantly clear that we were merely a pawn in the game. The British patently recognised the seriousness of what they were doing, and as part of their message pointed out the dangers associated with a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI), and the consequences which we would suffer therefrom. Our team, though, was united in its frustration at such prevarication, and was unable to contain its disgust over British hypocrisy and double standards. Field certainly shared in these feelings. Our views were stated clearly in the address made

by the Governor, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, at the Opening of Parliament which took place on 25 February, 1964:

> It is now plain that the British government are not prepared to be brought to any conclusion on the question of independence except on the most extravagant terms, not because of misgivings about my government's competence and ability to govern in the interest of the country, or the logic or rightness of my minister's case, but because they wish to placate at all costs members of the Commonwealth who have declared openly their hostility to my government and my country.

There was talk of UDI throughout the country, and the message from caucus was that it looked as if things were coming right. Des Lardner-Burke, an attorney from Gwelo, the capital city of the Midlands, produced on 11 March 1964 the constructive idea of passing a Bill through our Parliament requesting Britain to give legislative effect to the convention that Britain would not interfere in the internal affairs of Southern Rhodesia. After all, how many times had we been assured that the convention was as good as a guarantee? The principle had been reiterated and underlined in the recent 1961 agreement signed by Sandys and Whitehead and incorporated in our new constitution. It was emphasised strongly by both Welensky and Whitehead in their referendum campaign supporting the new constitution. In all honesty and justice, on what grounds could there be any objection, other than some cunning scheme to retain for the British government the power to do what they had consistently claimed — both Labour and Conservative governments — they would not do? There was a positive feeling that this would have enabled Field to hold his caucus together.

Surprisingly, when the vote was taken in Parliament, although we had the necessary majority, Whitehead and the

other UFP members voted against it. We were completely taken aback at this two-faced behaviour. At the last referendum they had assured the electorate that this was what they were voting for, and now they were refusing to support us in securing Britain's confirmation in writing. Those of us who live in Africa know from experience that this is the kind of thing we live with: white liberals climbing on the bandwagon of black nationalist movements, hoping to gain favours in return. It was bad enough having to cope with this kind of behaviour from the British, but coming from our own Rhodesians, this was blatant treason. There was another factor which influenced the UFP: they had never forgiven us for beating them at the last election, committing the unpardonable crime, for the first time in history, of ousting the Establishment. From that time onwards, we noticed a sullen resentment, and a lack of communication and assistance in our running battle with the British government, never more obvious than at the Victoria Falls conference.

Sadly, the British government informed us that they would not accept our motion. Sandys, plainly embarrassed, had passed a verbal message to our High Commissioner in London. Obviously we had called their bluff! It was clear from Campbell's message that the British had salved their consciences by using the pretext that the UFP had not supported us in Parliament. The matter never came to a head, however, because Field decided, after receiving a message from Sandys, to shelve the procedure of forwarding the Bill. By so doing, he lost the opportunity of putting to the test the convention of non-interference in our internal affairs, because our Governor (the Queen's resident representative) would have signed on our behalf, while the British government would have advised the Queen not to consent! For the first time in our history, Britain would have breached the convention, proving conclusively and publicly that any agreement made with

their government was not worth the paper it had been written on. But all of this had the effect of putting Field more and more on the spot. Distrust of the British grew by the day. Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland had received their independence, with acclaim. And what had they done to earn this? What was their record? In all honesty it was almost non-existent, consisting of little other than the continual hurling of abuse and insult at Britain.

Caucus had endured more than enough. What was Field going to do? Why had he sidelined Lardner-Burke's Bill? Meetings were the order of the day, and feelings were running high. Field believed that we should allow more time, but his critics believed that time was not on our side, and that he was guilty of procrastination. A few backbenchers who were known for their moderation and logical thinking confided in me their belief that Field would not be prepared to confront the British, that the British knew this, and that this was the reason for their continual evasion: they knew they could get away with it. While resisting it at first, the backbenchers had come to realise that he must step down. Jack Howman and I were the only members of cabinet who had not been with Field as members of the Dominion Party, and it was his ex-colleagues who first came to the conclusion that he must go. For a long while I had urged patience; this is part of my character, and in addition I felt a loyalty to the man, as I was his deputy. But in the end I too had come to the conclusion that he would never get himself to face the crunch, not because he lacked courage, but because he was unable to accept that his kith-and-kin Britishers in Britain would betray their kith-and-kin Britishers in another part of the world. Tragically, he was wrong.

The decision was made by caucus, which was their right. Jack Howman said he was unable to go along with it, and he spoke to me afterwards indicating that in no way did this indicate personal opposition to me. He had entered the

political arena only a couple of years ago as a result of a personal request from Field. They had established a friendship and a mutual loyalty which he could not abandon. In no way did this affect the great friendship which existed between us. He went into the wilderness for a couple of years, and then came back into the fold, saying that he was impressed with the dignified manner in which I had handled what he knew was, to me, a difficult and unhappy situation, and that there had been no rancour and recrimination. If he could be of any assistance in helping the cause, he said, he was available. I am happy to say that in time I brought him back into the cabinet, and he contributed many years of invaluable service. One other member of caucus, Rollo Hayman, also expressed reservation: while he was concerned about the way things were going, he was in favour of giving Field more time. Caucus disagreed.

Fortunately there was no emotion attached to the decision, as the question had been thrashed out so many times in recent months. I was elected to take over as leader; this came as no surprise, as I had been forewarned. It was recommended that Ian Dillon, as Chief Whip, should convey the message to Field, but I said that, as his Deputy, and now successor, I believed I had an obligation, no matter how painful, so the two of us went together. Nobody would have enjoyed doing it, but once a decision is made in life, then one must face the consequences. One saving grace was that Field had been forewarned and so was expecting our message. He made one request: arrangements had been made for him to attend an air force day in the Midlands on Sunday 12 April, which he would like to keep. Obviously I agreed. The meeting was cold and unpleasant. I walked back to my office with a heavy heart. Fortunately, there was never any unpleasantness between us afterwards, and whenever Winston attended our caucus

meetings he always conducted himself with great dignity, and was accorded due respect by the members present.

It is interesting to reflect on the pros and cons of declaring independence at that time, as many of our members had advocated. A cold analysis indicates that there would have been a number of distinct advantages. First, we would have been faced by a Conservative government in which the majority of Conservative MPs were openly sympathetic to our cause and were ready to support our independence on the existing constitution. On the other hand, as far as the Labour Party was concerned, there was not a single one of its MPs who would do likewise. Second, British government officials were given an extra eighteen months to work out further arguments and plans against us. Third — and of great significance — it gave all our deadly enemies this extra time to marshal their forces and plan their strategy.

They passed resolutions at OAU meetings. Meetings are held regularly for want of other things to do. There is a plethora of meetings of the British Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Commonwealth finance ministers, Commonwealth foreign ministers, Commonwealth prime ministers, all have annual conferences, and every now and again some other kind of ministers will find an excuse for a conference. These grow in popularity by the day. We live in a world which suffers from conference-itis, for obvious reasons: every delegate is not only treated to super-class travel and accommodation, but there is also a handsome financial allowance paid in foreign exchange. All Third World countries are deficient in this commodity, so they eagerly grab anything that is offering, paying scant attention to the fact that they are using their taxpayers' money. These political leaders, ministers and MPs, are unconcerned that the vast majority of those whom they represent are in the low wage-earning bracket, from countries which are among the poorest in the

world, with large sectors of their communities receiving inadequate basic facilities. An unacceptably high number of these poor people are suffering from malnutrition and starvation, often leading to death. If the money, recklessly frittered away through these conferences, were to be diverted to constructive and humanitarian use, much suffering could be prevented, and many innocent lives saved. It is a well-known and proven fact that 90 per cent of these conferences achieve nothing of consequence. Many of the participants are aware of this, but are nevertheless prepared to condone this abuse of power.

It is sad to record that the once highly respected British Commonwealth, which stood for the principles of democracy, justice, human rights and the free enterprise system, is now a total fraud. Today, the majority of African countries enjoying membership of the Commonwealth are either one-party dictatorships or military dictatorships. Whether their philosophy is communism, fascism or Nazism is of no consequence, because there is no difference between them. The people who use these techniques do so for two main reasons: power and money. Power to keep themselves in office, and money to line their own pockets. Under a dictatorship it is so easy: any opposition of consequence, other than minorities which can be handled as a cat handles a mouse, is simply eliminated. And when you control the communications media of your country, as they all do, the truth is kept away from the people. Money comes easily too, from those who wish to buy favours. On my overseas visits to North America, Britain and Europe, I am frequently asked by people in the financial and business world: ‘Do you know of any political leader in sub-Saharan Africa who does not operate a numbered banking account outside his own country?’ As I live in sub-Saharan Africa, obviously I do not reply, not in public, at any rate!

Perhaps one should not blame these countries for being members of the British Commonwealth, because benefits

do flow from it; the lion's share of the organisation's support comes from the British taxpayer, and there are always special favours for 'developing countries'. But surely the older founding members of the Commonwealth, which believed in those old-fashioned qualities of freedom and justice and parliamentary democracy, should not condone the double standards which now dominate this once venerable organisation?

It would be so simple to lay down the code of principles governing membership. In fact they are already there, and those countries which do not comply should be requested to leave. This would involve more than half the present membership. What a breath of fresh air that would be! There must be many members of the free world society who join me in condemning dictators who suppress freedom of thought, speech and action. What is truly amazing is the number of political leaders who condone such behaviour and turn a blind eye to it.

Following the same line of thought, there is another world organisation deserving of examination: the so-called Non-Aligned Movement. It was formed by countries that claimed to be non-aligned to the two superpowers, the USA and USSR, after the Bandung Conference of 1955. India headed the Movement, Fidel Castro was head of the NAM for a long period of its history, and Mugabe was a chairman. Prominent among its members are Afghanistan, Angola, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, Nicaragua, North Korea — all in the former USSR's sphere of influence at one time or another — so to claim non-alignment is a blatant deception. The majority of members represent impoverished Third World countries. But one would not believe that when witnessing one of their conferences, as we did in our country in 1986. Executive jets fly in from the four corners of the globe, and delegates take over the most expensive hotels and live like kings, eating caviar and drinking champagne and Scotch whisky. The talk of the

town was: go down to the conference centre and you will see more new Mercedes Benz motor cars than you would at the factory in Germany! And what do they achieve? One of the doyens of the NAM in answer to this question said: ‘In all honesty it must be conceded that so far we cannot point to any success, and clearly NAM has to make greater efforts.’ It is sad to report, however, that all these years later there has been no change. Every item on their agenda, year after year, falls within the purview of the United Nations. It is an incongruous situation, where the majority of their members are among the strongest supporters of the United Nations, yet their discussions and resolutions are tantamount to a vote of no confidence in the UN, taking it upon themselves to perform, presumably more efficaciously, the functions of the UN. I have never been one of those who considered the UN to be one of the success stories of our generation, but if there was to be an assessment of the most useless organisations of our time, pride of place must go to NAM. Of course, with the demise of USSR there is now only one superpower, so perhaps the message will get through in the next decade or two. Meanwhile the holders of office are wallowing in extravagant luxury.

It would not be so tragic if they were not frittering away their taxpayers’ money, diverted from productive channels which could be providing better education, health, food, recreation, and general advancement for the people they purport to represent. Truly a classic example of criminal abuse of power — but dictators can get away with it.

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The Premiership in 1964

It did not take long for the British government to react to the change of leadership in Rhodesia. There were expressions of alarm at the takeover by ‘extremists’, and they commenced a propaganda campaign to this effect, warning the rest of the world of impending irresponsible action. On the contrary, it was clearly necessary for me to go through all the actions of trying to reach agreement with the British. Obviously this was our first choice, with the alternative of unilateral action as a last resort, and only after we were satisfied that all other possible avenues had failed. I would have to be personally satisfied that there was no alternative. Caucus supported me to a man, contrary to public opinion, which had been stirred up by the liberal, left-wing media. There was no suggestion of any impetuous, ill-considered action.

The first thing for me to do was to make personal contact with the British government to see if it was possible for me to succeed where Field had failed. The British were gradually getting the message that this was more than the normal change of one PM for another. The entire character of the scene had been altered. For the first time in its history the country now had a Rhodesian-born PM, someone whose roots were not in Britain, but in southern Africa, in other words, a white African. Unlike his predecessors who, when they talked about ‘going back home’, were thinking about Britain, his home was Rhodesia. This was something which the British had not previously come face to face with, and our information was that they were apprehensive about dealing with this new situation.

For my part the last thing I was aiming to do was to create an impression of unreasonableness and inflexibility. But I believed it would be wrong to mislead anybody, particularly the British, into believing that there was any chance of getting us to accept a solution which was not in the best interests of Rhodesia. Any attempt to use us as a pawn in the game of international politics to appease the OAU and their fellow-travellers was a non-starter. We would allow ourselves to be influenced only by what was in the best interest of Rhodesians, all of them, black and white. How could any fair-minded person fault such thinking? So it was important to send out a clear signal: the time for shilly-shallying had come to an end. There had been more than enough prevarication, and we wanted to know where we stood. Not only was I satisfied that my caucus was solidly behind me, but I also knew that this was the mood of 90 per cent of Rhodesians, who were convinced that justice was on their side. They were sick and tired of political double talk.

I sent a message to Alec Home suggesting that we get on with the business, reiterating our claim for independence based on the new 1961 constitution which we had recently signed with the British government. This had been sold to the Rhodesian electorate on the basis of a future independence constitution if the Federation should break up. In Rhodesian eyes it was not an ideal arrangement, but in exchange for securing their future Rhodesians were prepared to compromise on something which was workable. Moreover, as my predecessor had stressed more than once, our participation at the Victoria Falls conference was contingent upon the British accepting the principle of our independence on this basis. If the British were not now prepared to comply with this agreement, we would like to have the reasons spelt out. In replying, once again, the British government equivocated: could we not initiate a move which would give our blacks greater representation

in Parliament? But that was exactly what we had done only two years ago, with our new constitution. The British government had concurred. Why were they now going back on this?

For some time we had been planning a trip for members of the Chiefs' Council to visit a number of countries to put over their case. Twenty-nine Chiefs departed on 1 June visiting India and Pakistan, and thence Europe on their way to Britain. They were pleased to have a meeting with the Pope in Rome, but were resentful of the fact that in London they were shunted off on to Sandys and denied access to Home. The Chiefs were the true representatives of our black people, but were now running into problems from black politicians who were trying to eliminate a system which would deny them total power in a future government. The Chiefs particularly resented the fact that these politicians were resorting to intimidation among the simple unsuspecting tribesmen in order to turn them against their traditional leaders, the Chiefs and Headmen.

In the years after the confrontations of 1893 and 1896–7 a strong liaison had developed between the Chiefs and government, and there was great and mutual respect and trust. Before the arrival of the white man, Chiefs were autonomous in their own areas, and differences were not always settled in a peaceful manner. Indeed confrontation between Matabele and Shona was always violent. The Matabele, who stemmed from the militant Zulu nation, were the more aggressive and better disciplined, and over the years they had gradually extended their territory eastwards, taking over land from the Shona-speaking people. It was the arrival of the pioneer column in 1890 which saved the Shona.

In June 1893, there were reports from Fort Victoria that Matabele raiders had made incursions into the area, murdered a number of the Shona men and abducted maidens and cattle sufficient for their requirements. This

was further east than the Matabele had previously ventured. The authorities in Salisbury concluded that this could not be tolerated, and a force was organised to ensure that the decision was conveyed. They had a few skirmishes once they penetrated deep into Matabeleland, but had no problem entering Bulawayo and restoring law and order.

Sadly, there was a tragic event associated with this operation, which earned for itself a memorable page in Rhodesian history. Major Alan Wilson and his patrol were on the right flank of the advancing forces, and they ran into a strong contingent of Matabeles. Heavy rain was falling, and when they came to the Shangani River it was in full spate, and blocking their forward passage. They defended themselves valiantly and accounted for a large number of the enemy, but there was no let-up in the rain, and eventually they ran out of ammunition. They sent a couple of their men on horseback to obtain supplies and reinforcements from the main column, but by the time they returned it was too late. The majority of Wilson's men could have extricated themselves, but they were not prepared to abandon their wounded colleagues, and remained with them to the end. Alongside Cecil Rhodes's grave on top of the famous 'World's View' in the Matopos Mountains is a magnificent memorial to Alan Wilson and his men, with the inscription: 'There were no survivors'. The Matabele warriors who fought that battle against them are recorded to have paid them the tribute: 'They were men, and their fathers before them were men too.'

This episode brings to mind a strange anomaly. Most of the criticism of the white man and his history in Rhodesia comes from Shona politicians as opposed to the Matabele. Clearly, had the white man never arrived, there is no doubt that the Matabele would have systematically extended his territory until he had pushed the Shona over the border into Mozambique.

Gradually, once peace was restored, the Chiefs' activities were co-ordinated, first at the level of provinces, with Provincial Chiefs' Councils, and above that an overall National Chiefs' Council. When I took over as PM the chairman of their council was a Matabele, Chief Umzimuni, a massive man, six feet four inches tall and weighing 260 pounds. Sadly, he died of heart problems, and was succeeded by Shona Chief Chirau, a strong man who was not prepared to allow the post-1980 black government to deflect him from his beliefs and principles. He died suddenly while in his prime, from what the government reported to be natural causes, but his family and friends assured me that they were very unnatural. An aggravating factor was that the new PM, Robert Mugabe, was born and educated and grew up in Chirau's country, and as a tribesman from that area traditionally owed special allegiance to Chief Chirau. Obviously there was a clash, and those who came to power through the barrel of the gun were going to stay there by the same means.

A few months after assuming office, I suggested to the Minister of Native Affairs that I should join the Chiefs at a meeting of the National Chiefs' Council, as a gesture of my respect and interest in their affairs. He agreed. Next day he came to see me in company with his top civil servant, one of the doyens of the ministry, who had dedicated a lifetime of service to understanding the people with whom he was working, and learning their culture and traditions. He gave me a comprehensive briefing, a tactful lesson in their system, the tradition, the respect and dignity associated with it. His advice was that the initiative should not come from me, but that the invitation should come from the Chiefs, confirming the authority which they enjoyed in their own field. Of course, I readily acquiesced. He said he would simply think aloud in the presence of some of the Chiefs, and he was sure they would react favourably. The plan worked and I was invited to the next meeting of the

council. It was an impressive affair, conducted with efficiency and dignity with the president of the council, Chief Umzimuni, in the chair and everyone, including the Minister and Secretary of Native Affairs, deferred to his authority. This gave the lie to the story which was being propagated by the black nationalist politicians and their Marxist-Leninist collaborators that the Chiefs were stooges of the government and retained their positions at the convenience of government. In fact Chiefs are appointed for life through the system of their tribal structure, and this has never been interfered with. There have been cases where Chiefs have been removed from office because of serious violations of the accepted code of conduct, but this decision has always been made by the Chiefs' Council, and not government.

There was no excuse for Alec Home's refusal to give the Chiefs a hearing during their visit to Britain. Clearly, he was pandering to black politicians who were attempting to undermine the Chiefs. Their resentment was fully justified. As a result their distrust of the British government increased, and there was a growing realisation that their only hope was to work with their own government.

At the beginning of that same month, June, I received a message from the British government that, contrary to past precedent, I would not receive an invitation to the pending Commonwealth prime ministers' conference even though Rhodesian prime ministers had attended all such conferences since their inception in 1931. Clearly, the British had given way to the pressure from the black Commonwealth countries. This was one more sickening example of the British government's double standards and the policy of appeasement with which we were to be constantly confronted. I expressed my resentment publicly, saying:

> We are not excluded because we are no longer loyal to the Crown or to the ideals on which the Commonwealth was founded. We are excluded because the Commonwealth has outgrown itself and there is no longer room for us among the motley of small countries which have recently been granted independence and admitted to the Commonwealth without regard to their adherence to the ideals and concept on which it was founded. I wonder if we are really wanted in the Commonwealth any longer, and if we can serve any purpose by remaining?

I have tremendous respect, admiration and loyalty to the Queen, but she is no longer the Queen we used to know. She can no longer speak her own words. She is now the mouthpiece of party politicians in Britain and cannot speak her own mind and heart. Even if the government were to become communist, she would have to utter their sentiments.

However, I was not prepared to allow this to deflect me from the course of trying to achieve a settlement. I wrote back to Alec Home, reiterating the points on which we sought clarification, and referred to his assertion that Whitehead had not stated in our Parliament, as we had claimed, that the new constitution meant independence. I quoted him the facts from our *Hansard*, when Whitehead said in his final summing-up in the debate: 'I would say to all honourable members that over the past eighteen months I have devoted a very substantial part of my time trying to win independence for Southern Rhodesia before it is too late, and I believe we have achieved what we set out to do.'

I found it extremely trying to cope with people who were so adept at twisting the truth. The British could not possibly deny that, if they had disagreed with this statement of Whitehead's, they were under an obligation to inform us so. They were bound to be straight and honest

with us, especially when they knew the vital importance of what was taking place. This was a decision that was going to affect the whole future of a country, and therefore it was absolutely vital for them to guarantee that people would not be misled, especially by wilfully covering up blatant distortions of the truth — anything else would be monstrous deceit.

To suggest that the British could have overlooked this, that they were unaware of the fact, would be laughable. The British civil service is noted for its thoroughness and meticulous attention to detail. We knew from our own experience that whenever any of our people said a single word not in keeping with their interpretation or beliefs, the next morning one of their officials was on our doorstep seeking clarification. The awful truth is that they knew that if this was made clear at that time, in 1961, before the Rhodesian electorate had cast their votes in the ensuing referendum, the result would have been 'No' and not 'Yes'. This was the all-important issue, and no one would deny that the decision hinged simply on this fact of the issue on independence. Whitehead said so, Welensky said so, as did all the protagonists for the 'Yes'-vote. I was one of the main opponents who campaigned against acceptance, and there is no doubt that we lost because Rhodesians believed that, in spite of the imperfections which were conceded, the all-important principle of ensuring our independence in the event of a Federal dissolution, which at this stage was patently obvious, was the determining factor. But British civil servants, especially those in the top echelons, are hand-picked from a waiting list of university graduates, and trained in the 'diplomatic' art of deciphering such problems and determining how they can be turned to best advantage. In this case the answer was obvious: to disclose this inconsistency would have been a *faux pas* of disastrous magnitude. Simply to overlook it was the obvious tactic. This was 'Perfidious Albion' at its best.

The obvious way, in British eyes, to avoid a continuation of this kind of embarrassing correspondence was for me to pay a personal visit to London, particularly in view of the fact that I had stressed the need for the British to give me their clear proposals in writing. These of course would be made public. Evan Campbell sent a message giving Home's view that it would be preferable to get the impending PMs' conference out of the way, and then he would welcome a visit from me.

The conference turned out to be a bit of a damp squib, according to Evan Campbell, with Home managing to preserve some sanity, supported by Menzies of Australia and Sir Keith Holyoake of New Zealand. The Asians displayed no enthusiasm, while the Africans, supported by Canada, were indulging in their usual excesses. I made a brief comment expressing my disapproval that the conference had discussed the affairs of Rhodesia behind my back, and accordingly I treated this arrogant performance with the contempt it deserved.

In view of the fact that there was to be an election in Britain before the end of the year, probably in October, there was a suggestion that I should delay my visit until the next government was in office. On the other hand it could be advantageous to get a feeling from the Conservatives, in case Labour won the election, and I could take the opportunity to meet with Dr Antonio de Oliveira Salazar in Portugal, en route.

We left for Portugal on 2 September. It was one of those old-fashioned countries, with little of the flashy high life of the modern world. Existence there was simple and basic, with the people closer to nature, to family life, to straightforward and honest principles and a belief in their own history and culture. They were proud of their achievements: modern shipbuilding yards, an efficient fishing industry, glass and marble factories which produced magnificent masterpieces, some of the best wines in the

world, and the high standard of their agriculture. Then there was the Algarve, with its lovely clean beaches and modern buildings, more English than Portuguese, and a favourite place for British pensioners and holidaymakers.

Salazar was one of the most remarkable men I had met. He was referred to as a dictator of Portugal, but this had no bearing on the truth. He was a quiet, retiring, intellectual university professor, who committed to paper his philosophy for solving the political problems of his country. This had such an appeal that he found himself drawn more and more into political discussions and eventually was almost press-ganged into accepting the position of president. He lived in a modest house where convent nuns cared for him, and there was one security man who controlled the entrance gate. A secretary met me and took me to his office, which was comfortable and adequate. It appealed to me, maybe because it reminded me of my own office, which people sometimes said was not sufficiently imposing for a PM. His eyes were blue and crystal clear; he had grey hair and an aquiline nose. His whole face displayed character and he spoke quietly and in measured tones. His actions were dignified, and everything about him depicted modesty, that characteristic which is probably the most important ingredient of civilised man.

We had much to talk about, because we had much in common: our concern about the Russian plan for world domination, and about how the Russians were inexorably moving down the African continent. Even more insidious were their moves into key areas in the Middle East and South America. In the face of this threat Salazar was appalled at the complacency of the major powers of the free world. He expressed his special concern for Southern Rhodesia, assuring me that Portugal would continue with its proven policy of evolution in Mozambique and Angola, bringing local people into positions of authority as and when they proved themselves. But it was clear that Britain

was coming more and more under the influence of the black members of the Commonwealth, and it was obvious to any logical observer that these countries were being manipulated as tools by the Russians. He was particularly distressed that the British were going along with this, not because they were unaware of what was taking place, but because of Britain's policy of appeasing the OAU. His sources confirmed this, and he was pleased at the opportunity to pass it on to me.

The Portuguese had learned from experience that the British government was not always trustworthy. Did I think there was any hope of the British government meeting our request? I reiterated our case history, pointing out that it was absolutely water-tight, and said that in all honesty I did not see how the British could continue to renege on the agreement which they had made with us. He assured me that he had followed our history meticulously, obviously because of our mutual interests in the area, and that there was no doubt in his mind of the justice of our case. Moreover, he was convinced that what we were trying to do was in the best interests of our black people, as well as of the whites. Then with much circumspection, speaking quietly, almost hesitatingly, he enquired as to whether I planned any action in the event of British intransigence continuing. I stressed that I was a patient man, by nature opposed to impetuosity, but that if we finally came to the conclusion that there was no point in further negotiation, that Britain clearly had no intention of honouring its obligation, expressly because of their desire to appease the OAU, then I must be honest and give him a straight answer: we would take matters into our own hands and declare our independence.

His serious, almost impassive face suddenly came alight, his eyes sparkled and his mouth stretched into a gentle smile. He did not speak, and I sensed that he was overcome by a certain amount of emotion. He slowly rose from his

seat, came up to me, and shook my hand very warmly before resuming his chair. He then said that he was pleased to meet a man who had the courage to put the interests of his country first, and that he could not fault the plan as I had explained it. Regrettably, he was of the opinion that the British would fail to honour the contract which they had made with us, with the consequence that I had mentioned. Portugal would give us maximum support, and according to his information South Africa would do likewise. He thought that the going would not be easy for us, but knowing the calibre of our people he was satisfied that we would finally win through.

I found the simplicity, sincerity and quiet determination of the man tremendously impressive, and the meeting will remain with me as an unforgettable experience. In my estimation he was a man of great honesty and dedication who could be relied on to stand by his word. Sadly for us, he was not a young man, and time eventually caught up with him. Had he stayed on for an extra decade, Rhodesia would have survived.

Another outstanding personality we met in Lisbon was Foreign Minister Nogueira, who had an incredible knowledge of the whole world scene, applying to it an analysis and reasoning that was totally absorbing. He spoke the English language as if it was his mother tongue, and was fluent in many more. His wife was of Chinese extraction, and she could speak even more languages than her husband. She was not only highly intelligent, but charming and beautiful.

The talks with the British commenced on Monday 7 September at 10 Downing Street. The atmosphere was pleasant and the tone constructive. Alec Home appeared genuinely interested in reaching an agreement, but it was obvious that his room for manoeuvre was circumscribed by the views of Commonwealth prime ministers. Sandys also played a constructive role, in spite of his somewhat blunt

exterior. The issue centred on our ability to satisfy the British that our proposals had the consent of the peoples concerned. This was no problem for us, and I once again outlined our plan. We would hold a referendum of all voters on the voters' roll. They were aware there was no racial qualification to our roll. The fact that the black nationalist politicians had advocated a boycott of the rolls was not our responsibility. Those who followed this advice had only themselves to blame. Then there was the major problem of 3 million tribesmen, peasant farmers who had no education and were unable to read and write, but nevertheless had their own traditional system which served them well. At the level of the extended family, or kraal, the leader emerged naturally through acceptance by the family, and, as long as he enjoyed their respect and confidence, he was their representative and spokesman. Whenever a problem arose which involved other kraals in their area, the kraalheads held a joint meeting. If the problem extended beyond their area of jurisdiction, they chose, from their midst, their representative, or Headman, to convey their message to their Chief, who was the leader of a much larger section of people. A Chief usually ruled the people of between four and six Headmen.

Most problems were solved at that level, but if not, the Chief would take it to the next meeting of the Provincial Chiefs' Council (there were five provinces). Finally, there was the National Chiefs' Council. An analysis of the system points to many advantages. I know of no method which gives more honest and genuine representation, stemming from the 'grassroots' and ensuring that the people's feelings are accurately submitted and explained. The system is devoid of corruption, nepotism, intimidation, propaganda and brainwashing, all those evil and undesirable ingredients which play such an important part in modern government. Those of us who live in sub-Saharan Africa, and understand the traditions and customs

of the people, have no option other than to condemn the actions of the major free world countries: in their typical arrogant manner, they took it upon themselves to lay down pre-conditions to the grant of independence. The countries concerned were compelled to abandon their tried and proven system, and replace it with the Western democratic system. Everywhere it has been implemented it has resulted in disaster and the complete antithesis of what was anticipated. The result was one man one vote — once. Today sub-Saharan Africa is riddled by one-party dictatorships or military dictatorships, financially bankrupt and in chaos. If only people would come and see for themselves — I have yet to find a single fair-minded person who has not been convinced after a visit. It is easy, when you live ten thousand kilometres away, to prescribe solutions, knowing that if the whole thing blows up and goes sour, you do not have to live with the results. The finest guarantee that the rest of the world can have, that we are completely dedicated to producing the best solution for all of our people, whatever their race, colour or creed, is that we, and our children after us, will have to go on living with the result. Clearly, we could not allow ourselves to be used as a pawn in the game of international politics, or as a means of appeasing the OAU.

Home and Sandys listened patiently, as did the other two members of their team, Dilhorne, the Lord Chancellor, and Burke Trend, the Cabinet Secretary. Home replied by saying that, while my case was convincing to the British, from their experience of the governments which emanated from the ending of colonialism they accepted that the end-result left a lot to be desired. Unfortunately neither the Commonwealth nor the UN, judging from recent resolutions, would accept our plan. The British government were looking for something which would go beyond an Indaba, a traditional, formal meeting of Chiefs and Headmen, who together amounted to fewer than 1,000

people, and were looking to us for suggestions as to how the referendum could be expanded to cover a wider range of people.

I made three main points in reply: first, it must be stressed that the great mass of tribesmen had no understanding of the meaning of the word constitution; they had never in their lives voted in an election or a referendum, and any attempt to explain to them the intricacies of our constitution, which, by any standard, was involved and complicated, would be not only farcical, but dishonest. Second, any such exercise would obviously undermine the authority of the Chiefs and the whole tribal structure. For the first time in history the tribespeople would be led to believe that their Chiefs and Headmen were no longer their leaders, and that something else had been introduced into their lives which was absolutely beyond their comprehension. This would provide a happy hunting ground for the extremist politicians, whose objective was to destroy the tribal structure. Anything which maintained law and order, regulated people's lives and supplied them with services, preserved their standards of justice and freedom, was anathema to the spread of communism. In view of the fact that, currently, the majority of members of the British Commonwealth, and the UN, were communist-oriented, their actions were predictable. Third, it had been only two years previously that we had brought in our new constitution, created and signed by our two governments. As Duncan Sandys was the British signatory, I did not have to draw this to his attention. What was the reason, I asked, for this sudden change of heart on the part of the British government? Why were they going back on their word? Was it because of conviction, or because of a desire to appease? I felt we were entitled to a straight answer.

This straight talk seemed to ruffle their feathers, and I was accused of being obstructionist and not facing up to

reality. On the contrary, I countered by pointing out that it was the Rhodesians who had to *live* with our decision — that was the reality. We were being asked to accept an arrangement which would obviously be to the detriment of our country. This we could not do: if we were confronted with such a situation, we would have to go our own way. Both Home and Sandys spoke strongly against such action, believing that there would be serious consequences in it for us. I assured them that we had made our assessment, and as realistic people we were not blinding ourselves to the result. But all the evidence was clearly to the effect that this would be preferable to the alternative we were being offered.

We had spent many hours in intensive deliberations, and decided to adjourn until the morrow. That night we attended a dinner at 10 Downing Street with Sir Alec and Lady Home and a number of other dignitaries. It was there that I was given the true facts, which confirmed what I suspected all along. With their general election due in a matter of weeks, it would be crass folly for the Conservatives to make such a controversial decision. It would bring down upon them the whole wrath of the OAU, the communist-dominated UN, and the liberal establishment generally. Alec Home said, with what I thought was complete sincerity, that if they won the election he would make an agreement with me within one year, before the next Commonwealth PMs' conference, and no impending general election hampering his movements.

I understood. One had to be logical, comprehend the niceties of the situation, whether one approved or not. Any attempt by me to deliver a homily on the morals of politics in our world would have been out of touch with reality. We were entangled in a web of political dishonesty and intrigue. There was general agreement on that point; the problem was how to extricate ourselves. As Alec pointed out to me, anything we did to prejudice the Conservatives'

chances would contribute to a Labour victory, and he thought it unnecessary to remind me of how disastrous this would be for us. And, of course, he was right. The whole situation was an absolute disgrace, it was unjust, unfair, and impossible to condone. One had an urge just to turn one's back on the whole thing and walk out. But it is in times like this that one needs to keep a particularly cool head. After all, the Conservatives were the lesser of the evils facing us!

When talks resumed next morning our conversation was no more than a rehash of the previous day's discussion. To me it was somewhat meaningless in view of what had transpired at the dinner, and I was reconciled to playing my part: trying to avoid rocking the Conservative election boat, and accepting that we would make no progress in our talks.

That night Evan Campbell threw a splendid dinner at the Dorchester, attended not only by Home and Sandys, but by the Labour leaders as well. It was a surprisingly happy occasion, and I came to the conclusion that had it not been for the OAU, the UN and such, there would not have been much difficulty in striking an agreement, even with the Labour Party. Evan had invited Carl de Wet, the South African Ambassador, a very likeable and intelligent person, a medical doctor by profession. He took us by surprise, saying, in a most dignified manner, that this memorable dinner coincided with the birthday of his PM, and he wondered if we would care to join him in drinking to the health of Dr Verwoerd. A note in my diary records:

> I liked it, but when I looked at a couple of the socialists in our midst, it was clear that their reaction was in the opposite direction. I admired Carl for having the necessary courage — these are the things which stimulate life. I should mention that he is a grandson of General de Wet, one of the most famous and heroic generals of the Boer War.

The final meeting at 10 Downing Street was held the following morning, with the preparation of a communiqué being the main task. With the various political parties already commencing their election campaigns, we had accepted that it was in Rhodesia's best interests to avoid provocation of the Conservatives. Accordingly the communiqué was designed to satisfy both parties. It declared that Southern Rhodesia claimed independence on the basis of the current constitution. The British stated that they would have to be satisfied that this was acceptable to the people of the country as a whole. I, the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister, replied that I would be prepared to introduce legislation to bring about independence only if I was satisfied that the majority of the people supported my request. Preparation had already started for the exercise to carry out this test of opinion, which was essential whether the British desired it or not. The Rhodesian officials would now get on with the task.

I had been through one of the most exasperating, traumatic experiences of my life, and was unable to eradicate from my mind the dreadfully hopeless situation in which my poor country, Rhodesia, was ensnared. British politicians, including the Labour Party, conceded the justice of our case, and had expressed their desire to assist in producing a solution. But they were hamstrung by the views of other people in the outside world, who were extraneous to the problem. It was agreed that constitutionally there were only two parties involved: Britain and Rhodesia. But for reasons of political expediency, winning votes in an election, the views of others must be taken into consideration. Alec Home assured me that if the Conservatives won the election we would reach agreement within months. Sadly, political analysts believed Labour would win. And when the British electorate cast their votes, no one would be thinking of Rhodesia. They would be influenced by their own lives, and

rightly so: the cost of their bread and beer, health and education services, availability of jobs and accommodation. Little would they know that the fate of a great though small country, Rhodesia, some 10,000 kilometres distant, could be prejudiced by their vote.

Truly this was, by any standards, a dreadful miscarriage of justice. We were caught up in this evil web of political intrigue, expediency, appeasement — indeed, corruption — all tied together in the same package and labelled ‘Diplomacy’. What could we do to extricate ourselves? If we were denied access to justice, to a court of appeal, what was the alternative? Welensky had said that there was a limit to the amount of British dishonesty that we could tolerate. It was common knowledge that plans were being formulated to give the British their marching orders. Winston Field had told me that at one of the social functions in London attended by British cabinet ministers, it was openly stated that the best way out of our impasse was to take matters into our own hands — but, he added, of course no one was taking minutes!

On the aircraft flying back to Rhodesia my mind was preoccupied with the future, so the agonising predicament brought to a head by the meetings of the past week moved, at least temporarily, into the background.

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The Advent of the British Labour Government and the Issue of Independence

The Rhodesian public were well pleased with my achievement, and on my return to Salisbury on 13 September 1964 I received a warm welcome home. Even the local national newspaper, the *Rhodesia Herald*, which had consistently opposed and criticised our government, wished me 'good luck', and went on, 'He is the first Prime Minister who has admitted that all the people should have a say in determining the future of Rhodesia.'

The two important by-elections that were pending in Salisbury constituencies took place on 1 October, and both Roy Welensky and one of his lieutenants, Sidney Sawyer, were soundly beaten. This was in keeping with our predictions, because although the elections were held in constituencies most likely to support the old establishment of Malvern and Welensky, Rhodesians had turned their backs on compromise and appeasement. They had made up their minds that we were no longer dealing with friends whom we could trust, but with enemies who would happily sell us out for their own convenience.

Soon after my return from London I set up a committee of eight MPs, four government and four opposition, to investigate and report on the best means of testing black opinion. They reported on the numerous complicated problems. First, there were large numbers of alien workers from foreign countries (countries which were independent, but whose people preferred Rhodesia, because they enjoyed a better life there). Second, the vast majority of

urban workers were also tribesmen, so where would their votes be recorded? The fact that the majority of indigenous people were illiterate, and did not possess birth certificates, compounded the difficulties. It would be virtually impossible to guard against a number of malpractices associated with voting, such as identifying people and avoiding multiple votes. One also had to overcome the people's natural resistance to a system which was foreign to them. And probably most important of all, there was limitless potential for organised intimidation.

All of these were serious and complicated problems, with which foreigners were unacquainted and thus found difficult to comprehend. It conclusively confirmed the evidence which had been accumulated over many years. If we were to embark on any bogus exercise in an attempt to influence outside opinion, this would be reckless and irresponsible action. We would try to satisfy world opinion, but in the final analysis we would have to do what we knew was best for our country, and face the consequences.

The process of holding a grand Indaba of Chiefs and Headmen was under way, but it was a far more involved and complicated exercise than I had imagined, involving approximately 700 people. In turn it was necessary for them to obtain evidence from some 30,000 kraalheads who, at the level of the family, represented an estimated 3 million tribesmen.

The nationalist politicians lost no time in getting their gangs of intimidators into the field, and already one Chief had been burned alive in his thatched-roof hut. I was advised to avoid delay at all costs, and the reasons were obvious. Intimidation is a dreadful evil at any time, but even more formidable since we were dealing with a primitive society, of simple, peaceful people, living under rural peasant conditions in huts built of local wood poles with thatched roofs. They had no electricity, and their only security came from the odd isolated police camp, which

might be 100 miles distant. The normal mode of transport was on foot, or, for the fortunate, a bicycle. Added to this was a new dimension, previously unknown in our country, provided by gangs of intimidators led by well-trained terrorists recently returned from indoctrination camps in Russia, China, Libya and North Korea. They were charged with the task of disrupting our plans of working together with our black people for a peaceful constitutional change to bring about our independence. Their first objective was to undermine our system of preserving civilised standards, with its justice and freedom and evolutionary progress dedicated to raising people's standards of living, giving them improved facilities and a better life. All of this was anathema to the communists. In order to achieve success they required power to implement their plan. There was no hope of this where people were living in peace and contentment. This had to be changed, so that the people were living in fear, their lifestyle disrupted, and their daily needs unfulfilled — the fertile soil in which communism thrives.

There was overwhelming evidence that the agitators and intimidators had moved out of the cities and towns and were now operating in the rural areas among the simple, unsuspecting tribesmen, and using their despicable tactics of intimidation against the Chiefs and Headmen. The decision was made to hold the Indaba as soon as possible, in order to minimise the effects of the campaign of intimidation, and so the date was set for 22 October.

The British general election was due to take place on 15 October, and I gave instructions that a message should be sent to the incoming government informing them of the Indaba and requesting them to send observers. Sadly, there was a miscalculation somewhere down the line, and the message arrived in London on the day of the election, instead of the day after. The message reached Alec Home at his constituency in the north of Scotland, and he sent a

message back saying that my method of dealing with this was not quite in keeping with his ideas, and he therefore could not commit himself to supporting it! You could have knocked me over with a feather. I was unable to understand how any normal person would not have been able to comprehend that the message was for the new government. My office were of the opinion that this was made clear to the local British High Commission and that they had misrepresented the message. A view was expressed that the rushed reply played into Wilson's hands, but I question this. I believe Labour would have declined the invitation in any case.

However, we were faced with the change — Labour had scraped through with the slim majority of three seats. Once again, we were in an impossible position. The British electorate had decided to change their government for reasons affecting themselves and their lives; not one of the voters would have been influenced by Rhodesia. But had they voted Conservative, the Rhodesian problem would have been solved. Because they voted Labour, there would be no solution. Clearly, we could not continue in this invidious position.

Six hundred and twenty-two Chiefs and Headmen gathered in Salisbury on 22 October for the biggest Indaba ever held in the country. Eight nations agreed to send observers: Australia, Austria, France, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Greece, South Africa. But Britain refused, although it claimed to be the responsible power. Once again we had to ask: how could we be expected to accept such deceit, especially when the tradition of the Indaba was such an important part of our history, starting at the beginning when Rhodes and the Matabele met in the Matopos in 1893 and agreed to end their war. Then in 1923, when Rhodesia obtained 'responsible government' an Indaba of Chiefs was consulted, in which the British participated. There was a similar procedure on the

declaration of war in 1939. When discussions were taking place on the formation of our Federation the then Labour government sent their Secretary of State, Patrick Gordon Walker, to the Chiefs' Indaba in 1951. The Monckton Commission set up by the British government in 1960 to report on the Federation stated: 'It is important that nothing should be done to diminish the traditional respect of the Chiefs. In Southern Rhodesia it is part of the Government's policy to increase the prestige, influence and authority of the chiefs in their tribal areas. We endorse this policy.'

As is clearly obvious, when it suited the British government, they supported the Chiefs and the concept of the Indaba. When it did not fit in with their underhand intrigue they conveniently changed their minds. How could any fair-minded person blame us for coming to the conclusion that we had to terminate this perfidious association?

The Indaba continued for five days. As is customary, time is not a factor; it is important that representatives speak their minds and elaborate on their reasons. One Matabele Chief who represented Matopos, one of their most sacred places, told the gathering that there was a very large boulder on the hill where Rhodes and the Matabele made their peace. Recently this had crashed to the bottom, making an amazing noise like thunder coming from the heavens above. This was an omen telling them to cut their strings so that they could live their own life in their own land. Most of the talk, however, dealt with practicalities. All the Chiefs and Headmen were deeply concerned at the increasing intimidation, this dreadful thing which was new to their lives. Not only men, but women and children were being killed. There were youngsters, upstarts, who had no standing in the community but who were received by the British government. Yet when they, the Chiefs, the fathers of their people, visited Britain, the Prime Minister did not

even meet them. And now, on this, the most important occasion in their lives, the British government had once again insulted them by refusing to send a representative to hear their views. The Chiefs were deeply hurt at this blatant discourtesy. All of these actions indicated the British government's ignorance of their history, traditions and way of life, and their obvious lack of concern for what was now taking place. This proved that they could no longer be of any service to their country. The Chiefs' decision was one of unanimous support for independence on the 1961 Constitution.

Our next step was the referendum of our electorate on 5 November. This was a resounding success, with 89 per cent of the voters in favour of independence on the 1961 Constitution.

By any yardstick these two tests of opinion indicated almost total support. The Chiefs represented the tribesmen, who constituted 90 per cent of the population. As for the rest, they had access to the franchise, and thence participation in the referendum — indeed this also applied to any tribesman who wished to avail himself of the opportunity. All Rhodesians, whatever their race, colour or creed, had equal access to the voters' roll.

However, as we had anticipated, our opponents claimed that our consultations had not gone far enough. But they did not point out that the reason large numbers of blacks did not participate was the intimidation. The nationalist agitators demanded a boycott of the voters' roll and the referendum. In fact, their demise was self-inflicted, so who else could be blamed? But as we were aware, it was part of the communist-inspired plan to disrupt and discredit the process, and the British government were prepared to turn a blind eye to this.

While we were conducting these two exercises, the new British government were getting into their stride, and the first move came from Arthur Bottomley, who had taken over

the Commonwealth Relations portfolio. He sent a letter declining the invitation to send observers to the Indaba, but saying that as an extension of his pending visit to Zambia for their independence celebrations he would be available for a visit to Salisbury in order to have discussions with me, providing he could also hold discussions with the two nationalist leaders Nkomo and Sithole. His arrival was scheduled for 26 October. I had no option other than to tell him that this was unacceptable. His visit would have coincided with the important and sensitive Chiefs' Indaba. Moreover, the nationalist thugs were intimidating and murdering innocent people, and both Nkomo and Sithole were not being detained because of their political activities; rather, they had been sentenced to prison by our High Court because of their *criminal* activities. And these were the people whom Bottomley wished to visit! Yet he was not willing to extend the courtesy of a visit to the Chiefs' Indaba. I found it difficult to believe that there could be such lack of sensitivity from a British minister, and it only added validity to the Chiefs' claim that the British government were conniving with the terrorists in their campaign of intimidation, arson and murder. This was only the first of many occasions when I had to make it clear to the British that they could no longer call the tune in Rhodesia.

In a short time a letter from Harold Wilson followed, on 23 October, regretting my reply to Bottomley, and asking me to visit London for talks with the two of them. I had to refuse this as well, not for any churlish reason, but because of pressure of work, the referendum campaign, and a sitting of Parliament — once these were over I would consider the invitation. Referendum campaign meetings had been planned for me throughout the country, and I would have thought it obvious that I could not leave the country during this period.

Surprisingly, Wilson then had a rush of blood to the head, and immediately sent a message demanding from me a statement that there would be no UDI; if this were not forthcoming, he would issue a public statement warning of the serious consequences. This kind of behaviour was completely out of keeping with the accepted code of conduct between members of the Commonwealth and was entirely unprovoked on my part. I did not believe it was out of place for me to ignore it. When the resident British High Commission enquired about the reply, they were informally told that if by now they had not received the message that this kind of tactic did not work with me, let them learn the lesson this time.

Bottomley gave the game away in a statement made on his return from Zambia, on 27 October, to the effect that their strategy had been deliberately aimed at backing the efforts of Todd, Whitehead and Welensky in swaying the Rhodesian electorate away from supporting us in the referendum. This, of course, was a serious breach of the often repeated convention that the British government would not interfere in Rhodesia's internal affairs. If I were searching for reasons to support a UDI, they were making a positive contribution.

It looked as if Wilson was beginning to get the message that his bull-headed tactics would not work, and he sent a message on 17 November saying that the British government were hoping for a peaceful solution and that they had 'no preconceived plan', i.e. they were open to negotiation. On this basis he suggested that I should visit London for discussions with him. He had failed to do his homework on this one, and I reminded him of his letter, sent to one of our black agitators just two weeks before the last election which brought Labour to power, in which he had said: 'The Labour Party is totally opposed to granting independence to Southern Rhodesia as long as the

Government of that country remains under the control of the white minority.'

In my reply I reaffirmed that independence should be based on the wishes of the majority, and that in keeping with this he should accept the results of the Indaba and the referendum of the electorate. However, I found the spirit of his latest communication with me to be in conflict with this letter (to the black agitator) referred to above, and accordingly I believed it was necessary for him to confirm to me this change in British government policy.

Wilson's reply was evasive and reiterated a number of generalities that we had heard before. I allowed a couple of weeks to pass and on 15 December sent a message regretting that he had failed to reply to my question. In addition I thought it appropriate to give them some straight talk about the record of their government during the short period they had been in office:

> It is with regret that I have to record that during the short tenure of office of your Government there has been a drastic deterioration in relations between our two Governments. Your Boycott of the Indaba, which was planned in complete sincerity and good faith and which was condemned by you before you had even shown the courtesy and fair-mindedness to listen to the evidence, had given us cause for suspicion. Moreover, the attempt on the part of your Government to intimidate us through the medium of economic blackmail, and threats to place us virtually in the category of an enemy state is something which has caused deep resentment in the minds of Rhodesians.

I went further and, in reference to Wilson's recent remark indicating his concern over the communist threat to Africa, reminded him that we had been aware of this for some considerable time and had continually warned the Western

world about it. I hoped it was unnecessary for me to repeat that we had pointed out to him that 'the leaders of subversion in our country whom your Government is so desirous of meeting are financed from these same Communist sources'. I asked if the recent violence in the Congo (where black mobs had rampaged through white settlements assaulting, raping and murdering) had changed his government's attitude to the Rhodesian problem.

> If not, I must impress upon you the seriousness of this situation, and indicate that I believe our two countries will continue to drift further apart, as they have done over the past two months, and that relations between us will become more and more strained until eventually a break will become inevitable.

Finding himself in a corner with no ready reply, Wilson changed his strategy. Officials of our two governments were still engaged in talks about the financial aid promised to Rhodesia as part of the winding up of the Federation, and he decided to use this as a lever to get his way, by sending a message through Johnston, his High Commissioner in Salisbury, to Gerald Clarke, our Cabinet Secretary, saying *inter alia*:

> The undertakings which the British Government gave the Rhodesian Government at the time of the dissolution of the Federation were of course entered into on the assumption that political relations between our two countries would remain normal. My Government feel it would be less than honest not to recognise that talk of a UDI is bound to throw a shadow of uncertainty on the future financial relations between the two Governments. In the absence of any assurance on this subject the British Government think it would be preferable to defer

> further financial talks until it has been possible to clear the air by discussions on the political issues.

This was absolutely scandalous. The Victoria Falls Agreement included a written promise of financial aid to Rhodesia in exchange for our co-operation in winding up the Federation. We had complied with our side of the agreement and now the British were trying to back out of their commitment, in order to pressurise us into dancing to their tune. This was blatant blackmail, which one might expect if dealing with a bunch of gangsters. I replied to him on 13 January 1965: 'I am so incensed at the line of your High Commissioner's letter that I am replying directly to you.' Was I correct to assume, I asked, that he intended to break a legal agreement between our governments because he believed there might be a breakdown in negotiations? In fact the impasse was caused because he would not give a straight answer to my straight question. I went on:

> As you are not prepared to abide by these agreements and intend to stand by the policy openly revealed in your High Commissioner's letter, it would appear that any undertakings given by the British Government are worthless. I must therefore state emphatically that such immoral behaviour on the part of the British Government makes it impossible for me to continue negotiations with you with any confidence that our standards of fair play, honesty and decency will prevail.

Wilson did not reply for more than two months. In all honesty he could not have found it easy. Then on 29 March he sent a message denying any attempt to exert financial pressure, and mentioning certain commitments and payments which had been made. But these had been initiated by the previous Conservative government. It was a wishy-washy effort and made no positive contribution to the

situation. Surprisingly, the financial talks had resumed, although they took place covertly, without any formal notification. In fact, we had reconciled ourselves to a situation where there would be little, if any, British assistance, and we were getting on with our own affairs. Happily, the economy was showing positive signs after the depression which followed in the wake of the Federal dissolution. People were growing to realise that Rhodesia was going to stand its ground.

In the midst of all this there was a short dramatic intervention: Churchill died. I was invited to his funeral on Saturday 30 January. This was laid down in Churchill's will; had the decision been left to Wilson I would certainly not have been invited. I flew into London the day before, 29 January, and found Evan Campbell deeply incensed over the fact that he had not received any invitation for me to a lunch at Buckingham Palace on the day following the funeral. He had ascertained through his network that the other PMs had received theirs; clearly, this was a bit more of Wilson's dirty work! I urged Evan to relax, saying that it would have no effect on me personally.

The funeral was a magnificent exhibition of British pomp and ceremony at its best; I doubt whether any other country in the world can match Britain at that kind of thing. Everybody who was anybody was there. I had a few words with Alec Home, Robert Menzies and Keith Holyoake, and General de Gaulle and I nodded to one another. After it was all over we went our own ways, and Evan apologised that he had arranged a lunch at his home with the South African Ambassador and a few other friends, believing that I would be at the Buckingham Palace lunch. That was no problem, and so I returned to my hotel with a few friends for a quiet lunch, which we were enjoying when a gentleman in a splendid uniform came up to our table. He informed me that he was the Queen's equerry, and as the Queen had noticed that I was not present at the lunch, she had asked

him to make enquiries. On contacting Mr Evan Campbell he had been given the message that I had received no invitation. (Wilson would write later in his memoirs the arrant nonsense that Evan Campbell told him that I had received the invitation and, in fact, had it in my pocket while lunching at the hotel.) The Queen was concerned, the equerry said, and had sent him post-haste to the hotel to express apologies and ask me to accompany him. Obviously my friends appreciated the predicament. I bade them farewell and, leaving my half-eaten lunch on the table, left for the Palace.

As soon as I walked in, the Queen left the people with whom she was in conversation and came to greet me, expressing her sorrow over the non-arrival of my invitation. She could not have been more gracious, and in a few minutes we were joined by Prince Philip. I was touched by the genuine interest they showed in Rhodesia, and also by how well informed they were. I was impressed, too, by the amount of time they devoted to talking with me, and by their sincere hope that our problem would be solved amicably. It was a happy and worthwhile occasion, which gave me the opportunity to meet and chat with a number of people, including some Asians who were most friendly and considerate over the problems we were facing. A few of the black delegates also spoke encouragingly and in what seemed to be a very short space of time the afternoon had passed. When I returned to my hotel room there was a letter lying on my bed: the invitation to the lunch. The next day, Evan Campbell told me that he had heard the previous evening that Wilson was spitting mad at the luncheon. Campbell added: ‘Well, the Queen certainly foiled his plot!’

Wilson had suggested at the Buckingham Palace lunch that, as we were both in the city together, we should have a talk at Downing Street at 4 p.m. Evan (back from his lunch) and I discussed the pros and cons of this in view of my latest message reiterating my request for a straight answer

and insisting on honesty and fair play from the British if we were going to make any progress. I concluded, however, that the best way of dealing with these points would be in a face-to-face discussion. The major objective was our independence issue, and Wilson's pettiness and destructive behaviour should be ignored. His secretary had suggested that in order to avoid publicity we should use the side entrance. My reply was that whatever entrance we used would not affect the tone or result of the meeting. Wilson, again, would twist this in his memoirs to put me in a bad light by claiming that I had suggested a clandestine entrance through the back door because it was difficult for me to come through the front door. Why was it difficult for me? Why should I be so melodramatic? After all, I was keen to publicise my cause, not hide from the press.

At 4 p.m. Evan accompanied me to 10 Downing Street through some side entrance, and Wilson was pleasant enough and spoke in a most reasonable manner. He had a suggestion which he hoped would help to break the deadlock: a visit to Rhodesia by Bottomley, accompanied by the Lord Chancellor, Gardiner, to meet and discuss matters with the government and meet a representative cross-section of opinion. I saw no problem as long as they accepted the condition which we had always stipulated, namely no meetings with anyone who was in prison for a criminal offence. Otherwise, we would expect them to conduct themselves in a normal and responsible manner, and plan an itinerary with our officials. Wilson accepted this, and I undertook to consult with my people on my return, and officially communicate our reply. There was little else of importance to discuss, as Wilson wished to await the report of Bottomley and Gardiner. I ended by reminding him that we were still awaiting a reply to my last message to him, and he nodded his head and said that there had been some misunderstanding. It turned out to be

a very tame meeting, with none of the sparks flying that had been anticipated.

On Sunday morning, Evan brought the message that I had been invited to the Savoy for morning tea with Robert Menzies and Keith Holyoake. It was obvious to us that Wilson had asked them to try and twist my arm over the independence issue, but I said I would be very happy to have a chat with them as we had much in common. I arrived at the Savoy promptly at eleven o'clock and had a warm reception from Menzies and Holyoake. We settled down to my favourite drink, tea. I then took the initiative and said to Menzies: 'The Springboks gave your cricketers a pretty good lesson on the last tour, didn't they?' He was a great fan of cricket, and I knew that this would be a sound tactic for opening the bowling. He came back immediately: 'Our weakness was with our opening bowlers, and I told our people back home that if we could get some of those Rhodesians playing on our side, we would have won.' He was right. Godfrey Lawrence was one of the best opening bowlers in the world at that time, and Colin Bland one of the greatest fielders the game has ever seen. I made the point that if Don Bradman had still been playing he might have been able to cope with them. Of course, said Menzies, if one could arrange a game between the eleven best Australians and eleven best Springboks of this century, that would certainly be something worth watching. One can keep up that kind of conversation for a very long time, but after half an hour, and starting my second cup of tea, I turned to Keith Holyoake. As most people probably know, if cricket is Australia's national sport, rugby union is certainly New Zealand's. And two of the greatest rugby union teams in the world are the All Blacks (New Zealand) and Springboks (South Africa). 'I just want you to know, Keith, that the Springboks have perfected a new technique in their rugby and they believe it's a world beater, so in view of the All Blacks' coming tour of South Africa I thought I

would pass the message on to you.' Without blinking an eyelid he said: 'We know all about that, we've had our observers over there for some time now!' After about a quarter of an hour of rugby talk Menzies said, looking at the time, 'We must get moving to our next appointment.' He then looked at me with a twinkle in his eye: 'We were actually supposed to have talked some politics with you.' To which I replied: 'I had guessed that.' He went on: 'I always said that I didn't think you would resort to any unreasonable action.' I simply came back: 'You can be sure of that.' So ended a pleasant occasion. Wilson was to accuse me, in his memoirs, of failing to mention to Menzies my meeting with him, Wilson, at Downing Street. Well, there is no surprise in that. As I have said, we did not discuss politics.

I returned home and, in due course, Bottomley and Gardiner arrived in Salisbury, on 22 February. They displayed considerable energy in moving around the country. At a meeting with the Council of Chiefs there was some very straight talking and, according to our reports on a number of occasions, Bottomley was left feeling uncomfortable. The clear message he received was that the Chiefs were conscious of the disaster in Africa around them as a result of the granting of independence, and it was their wish to continue to work with the Rhodesian government.

The meetings with the black extremists took Bottomley by surprise, for they refused to accept his suggestion that they should renounce violence and work constitutionally. He had meetings with farmers, industrialists, professional bodies and trade unionists; they all gave him the same message: they wanted the British out. In discussion with some of my ministers he seemed quite a changed man, but once back in the midst of his Labour comrades in London, he was quickly moved back into line. They were not concerned with the facts from Rhodesia, they were dedicated to placating their comrades at the OAU and the

UN. Two events took place during Bottomley's visit. The South African government gave us a substantial loan on easy terms, and a Portuguese trade delegation arrived for talks. The British government paid serious attention to these events; we obviously had good friends in strategic places.

Bottomley's report to the House of Commons was more reasonable and conciliatory than we had expected. He gave a balanced analysis of the opinions which were expressed to him and ended:

> We emphasised that it was not our intention to impose majority rule by force and reiterated that whatever settlement was reached must be acceptable to the majority of the population of Rhodesia. I am not without hope of finding a way towards a solution that will win the support of all communities and lead to independence and prosperity for all Rhodesians.

He avoided being specific on the question that really mattered, but perhaps this was because Wilson had decided to re-enter the fray: at long last he sent a message to me on 29 March. It was placatory and much along the lines of Bottomley's report to the House. He was not satisfied, however, with our test of acceptability, nor that the 1961 constitution was acceptable as a basis for independence, nor did he reply to my outstanding questions. He proposed another meeting with me in London, but I was still of the opinion that this would only delay matters, as he was still evading the main issue.

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The Final Steps to UDI

I came to the conclusion at this juncture in 1965 that one of the means of strengthening my hand would be to increase my majority in our Parliament. It was clear that politicians in Britain dreamed of getting rid of Smith and the Rhodesian Front and replacing them with more malleable left-wingers, so if we could prove that this idea was a non-starter it might have a positive effect on both the British government and public opinion. Moreover, with our present majority we were not in a position to pass constitutional amendments through our House, and the time might come when we would need to do this. So there were exceptional circumstances which pointed to our holding an early election, rather than continuing for another two years, as we were entitled to do. Of course, one always takes a chance at this game, we might have lost and been out of power. But then it was important for me to know where I stood with my electorate. Rhodesians were certainly going through testing times, and if I did not have the backing of the people, then the honest thing would be to move out. My personal feeling was that I had endured enough outside interference in the affairs of my country; unless this could be terminated we would lose everything we believed in. I was prepared to make the necessary decisions, and face the consequences, honestly believing that this was our only hope. I would, however, take a lead in this only if convinced that I had the blessing of the Rhodesian people.

On 31 March 1965 I went to see the Governor, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, and laid before him my plan. I believed that if I could increase my majority in Parliament it would

strengthen my hand in the negotiations, and this might help to bring the British to their senses. I added that a two-thirds majority necessary for constitutional changes would be desirable. He told me that, in view of the fact that there were still two years' life of this Parliament to run, he would have to ask David Butler (leader of the opposition in succession to Whitehead) if he could form a government. Although he accepted that it was a formality, Gibbs said he was obliged to do this constitutionally. I agreed, and so he turned to St Quinton, his secretary, who was present at the meeting, and asked him to get on the phone. Fortunately Butler was available and arrived within a short time. We were having a cup of tea and a chat on the farming season (Gibbs was still actively farming in Matabeleland) when Butler was shown in. Gibbs simply told him that I wished to hold a general election and asked him if he could form a government. Without hesitation, Butler said, 'No.' 'Well, that settles that,' replied Gibbs.

Realising the importance of the election, I extended myself to the limit, and held meetings in nearly every corner of the country. These attracted massive audiences, larger than had ever been seen in the country, indicating a political awakening among our people. Surprisingly, many previous opponents came forward in support. For these obvious reasons we were confident of an increased majority, but the results exceeded even our most optimistic expectations. On 7 May, we won all fifty 'A' roll seats — both Butler and Whitehead lost their seats — the electorate had given them a clear message. Of the fifteen 'B' roll seats, thirteen went to black candidates, one to an Asian and one to a white man, Dr Ahrn Palley.

In the official speech opening the new Parliament, it was made clear that we believed we now had a mandate to lead Rhodesia to full independence and that it was our intention 'to pursue vigorously the negotiations with the British government for the grant to Rhodesia of independence'.

For the first time in our history we had a black leader of the opposition, Josiah Gondo, an able man with strong convictions, and someone with whom I was able to work. Sadly, he was later killed in a motor accident. Had he been alive today I believe he could have made a positive contribution.

What more did the British government require to prove that the majority of people in Rhodesia wanted their independence under the present constitution? The Indaba of Chiefs and Headmen had given unanimous support, the referendum had given a positive affirmative vote, and now the general election had indicated total support. If the British government would not accept this overwhelming evidence, then we wanted their reasons, without equivocation. We had endured enough evasion and double talk.

We then received a message through the local British High Commission, pointing out that the Commonwealth prime ministers' conference was to be held in London shortly, in the middle of June. The British proposed to attempt to steer it away from extreme action, and stated that if we avoided provocative action it would obviously help. With the reasonableness which we had always shown, we agreed.

After all the 'hot air' of the Commonwealth conference had blown away, a suggestion came from the British that we should accept another visit from Bottomley, and we agreed. In fact, they decided to send Cledwyn Hughes, the Minister of State, and he arrived on 21 July. It was immediately apparent that he did not have the power to make decisions, and was simply putting out feelers in the hope that he could take something back with him. We made it clear that there was only one way out of the predicament, and unless the British government accepted this, we would have to get on with it ourselves. In one of my public remarks I commented: 'When we have our independence

we will also have what the independent countries to our north do not have, economic independence, without which there is no real independence.' In one of the discussions I told him we would accept a senate with a blocking mechanism in the hands of blacks, and if that did not meet their requirements, what exactly would? We had asked this question many times, in vain.

We waited and waited for a reply, and it became more and more clear that, in spite of all our efforts, the British were not prepared to make a clear decision. The local High Commission offered, as an excuse, the fact that Bottomley was visiting Ghana and other west African countries. This merely confirmed our long-held suspicions: they were consulting the bankrupt and communist dictatorships before replying to us. Had not Ghana staged one of the early coups in Africa?

Our considered opinion was moving in the direction of a declaration of independence, nothing emotional or impetuous. Even the more cautious members of cabinet were saying: 'What more can we do?' It seemed to me that the British government was misinterpreting our reasonableness and patience as a sign of weakness. If so, this was a major blunder, for I would have thought that any observant person would have detected a quiet determination, motivated by our belief in the justice of our cause, and our growing resentment at the deceit and treacherous behaviour of those with whom we were dealing. At one of my public meetings I expressed the spirit of Rhodesia by quoting those tremendous words: 'All the soul of man is resolution, which in valiant men falters never, until their last breath.' I was told afterwards that this had brought tears to many eyes and lumps to many throats. Rhodesians did not flinch from the thought; they were ready for it.

Then Bottomley put his foot in it with a statement made in Ghana, that Britain would grant independence to

Rhodesia only if there was majority rule in the country. This was contrary to everything that had previously been stated. One of the established British principles, supported by all parties, was: ‘unimpeded progress to majority rule’. How could there be progress to something which had already been achieved? If this principle was now violated the game was up; there was nothing more to talk about. It had the effect of making Rhodesians more determined and more united. Bottomley was eventually alarmed at reports of the resentment his words had aroused and sent a message on 7 September expressing deep concern. His government, he wrote, had studied Hughes’s report, and he felt it was necessary for him to visit Rhodesia for talks with me. But in view of the Labour Party conference at the end of the month, he would be able to make the trip only after 12 October.

I replied, asking why there had been no response to the proposals we made to Hughes. It was now 11 September and we had been waiting since 27 July for a reply. I stressed that the impression was gaining ground that the British government had no intention of granting independence to Rhodesia. I asked: did they realise that the question was one of extreme urgency to us? Were the proposals given to Hughes acceptable or not? In Bottomley’s reply he asked: ‘What proposals?’ It would have been laughable if it had not been so desperately serious. I said that I had come to the conclusion that we should make one more effort, no matter how bleak the prospect, and if the British were not prepared to make the effort to come to Rhodesia, we would go to Britain. I emphasised that the talks would have to be final and conclusive, as Rhodesians were sick of indecision: ‘I cannot go on much longer leaving the people of Rhodesia and the future of Rhodesia hanging in suspense.’

I arrived in London on 5 October with Lardner-Burke (Justice) and we joined up with Wrathall (Finance) and

Harper (Internal Affairs) and van der Byl (Information), who had gone ahead. The talks were long and tedious, with no sign of any honest intention from the British side; in fact, quite the reverse, with all their effort directed at extracting more from us. They were asking for so many changes in the 1961 constitution that the end result would in no way resemble what we had started with, and when I pointed this out they conceded that this was their idea. We believed that a senate would be the ideal place for the Chiefs and were prepared to give them the majority of the seats, involving a blocking mechanism in the hands of blacks. But this was unacceptable to the communist-dominated OAU, and thus unacceptable to the British Labour Party. The fact that we were trying to bring in a system of checks and balances, akin to the House of Lords, made no impression.

Would we be prepared to lower our standards in order to accommodate our black people? The answer was simple: the fact that blacks were not participating had no relevance to standards. It was occasioned because the black nationalists had forced a boycott of the system. If one lived in the part of the world where we lived, one very clearly realised the importance of maintaining standards, not lowering them. Moreover, we reminded them that the existing standards were part of a constitution supported by the British government and they had been party to creating it and bringing it on to the statute books. Obviously, they were now resorting to politics of convenience and appeasement.

Wilson then turned to the Land Apportionment Act, and asked if we would be prepared to repeal it. We pointed out that modifications were constantly being made. If there were any specific aspects which needed attention, we would willingly consider them, but it was a much more complicated matter than appeared on the surface. For example, were the British aware that if the Act was

repealed this would throw open the tribal trust lands to all races? These lands had from the beginning been reserved for the exclusive use of tribesmen, protecting them from the big consortia, and the expertise, experience and finance of our white community. This would be absolutely catastrophic for our black people. There was a stony silence from the other side of the table. There were other examples of the dreadful ignorance of the British, which indicated all too plainly that they were not being guided by the interests of the country and its people, but were being motivated by political expediency, and a desire to meet the extravagant wishes of their friends, no matter what the cost.

I warned that their intransigence, and the fact that they were placing extraneous and foreign interests before the considerations of Rhodesia, was driving us into a corner. Clear signs were emerging that the vacillating policy of no finality was eroding confidence, with a resultant decrease in investment and an increase in emigration. If we allowed this to continue it would be a dreadful betrayal of the trust placed in us by our people, both black and white. Looking Wilson straight in the eyes I stated in a measured and deliberate tone that they were placing us in a situation where we would have no option but to take matters into our own hands. I did not want them to claim that we had not made them aware of the seriousness of the situation.

It was clear that we had exploited all avenues of possible agreement. Repetition and recrimination were creeping in. It was Friday 8 October, so we decided on a communiqué: ‘Despite intensive discussion, no means has been found of reconciling opposing views. No further meeting is planned.’

I was surprised that Wilson and the rest of them agreed to put into writing that our differences were so great as to make our positions irreconcilable. It was plain to us that this was a blunder, because it established the fact that there was only one way out for us.

It was also accepted that each side was free to issue its own statement, and I said:

> We had done our utmost to meet the British government on their five principles and in the process put forward many constructive suggestions which, if accepted, would have established a basis for independence that would have been fair to all parties concerned. The facts of the matter are that as the Rhodesian ministers suggested new proposals to help meet the British point of view, so the latter's demands increased, in the end rendering it impossible for the opposing views to be reconciled.

Later that day we were to be confronted by the nasty pettiness of the Labour Party. The BBC had invited me to appear that evening on their popular *Twenty-Four Hours* programme, and the plans were made. However, shortly before my departure for the studios, Rhodesia House was informed that I would not be required. The Chairman of the BBC, Lord Normanbrook, subsequently conceded, in reply to questions, that this had been done as a result of a request from 10 Downing Street. And Wilson subsequently conceded the point in debate in the House of Commons.

It was a fact that I had been interviewed by the BBC shortly after our arrival, and that this had a very favourable impact on the listening public, who previously had been denied our side of the story. Wilson knew this, and decided to take no more chances, especially as it was so easy to censor it. Such is the power of the mass communications media, and the ease with which they can be manipulated.

I decided to delay our departure in order to make contact with the Conservatives, and ensure that we did not miss any last minute opportunities. On Saturday I spent a happy afternoon at Twickenham with my rugby friends, lunched on Sunday with Robert Salisbury and his family at Hatfield, and that evening had a meeting with the Conservative

leaders Home, Edward Heath (the new leader of the opposition) and Selwyn Lloyd and formulated a plan which they then took to Wilson. The idea was to have a treaty which would guarantee that there would be no regression as far as political rights and advancement were concerned. The treaty would have international backing, and the Privy Council would be brought in as a final Court of Appeal. There would be increased efforts in the field of education, and all of this would promote economic advancement and thus black participation in government.

It would have been difficult for Wilson to turn the suggestion down, especially as he was being criticised for his blunder over the communiqué at the end of the talks on Friday, and this would give him an opportunity to redeem himself. He suggested a meeting for the next morning, Monday 11 October, and I agreed.

We made it clear when we met that the concept of a treaty as an additional guarantee was completely acceptable to us. As we had never entertained any ideas of breaking agreements or contracts, there was no problem.

It is pertinent for me to mention here that there were occasions when it was suggested, not by any member of my government, that we should accept an agreement, and then as and when necessary bend it to our requirements, as had been done in so many other parts of Africa. I always made it absolutely clear, however, that any such thought was completely out of the question. Apart from the blatant dishonesty associated with it, we were going to continue living in Rhodesia, and the idea of pulling a fast one over fellow Rhodesians was insane. And that is the most secure guarantee that anyone in the world can have: when people are dealing with their own lives, the future of their children and grandchildren, they will be meticulous and tireless in their dedication to ensuring that they find the best possible solution to their problems. We have to go on living with the results of our decisions; the rest of the world does not. It

was a facile solution to think that, because the British had been deceitful in their dealings with us, if we subsequently broke that agreement it would be a shot in the eye for the British. Nothing could be further from the truth: they would be 6,000 miles away, living their own lives and worrying about their own problems, completely unconcerned about the chaos with which we were landed.

The meeting was not prolonged, and was amicable by comparison with some of the others, ending with Wilson saying that he was prepared to give further consideration to the idea of a treaty. I came to the conclusion that he was not serious, for he showed little interest. No doubt he would turn it to his advantage by demonstrating his willingness to continue trying. If he failed to follow it up, as we believed he would, then at least it would demonstrate to the Conservatives the intractability of the Labour Party.

We departed on 12 October and Wilson immediately appeared on television. Having denied me the opportunity to put over my side of the case, he now had a clear field, and he used it to advantage. His speech was well prepared, and he used dramatic language to tell the British public that we were trying to do something which was out of step with the world around us, and of the catastrophic consequences which would result. No doubt it sounded impressive to people ignorant of the facts, and who only heard one side of the case. Realising that there was considerable sympathy for Rhodesia and their record in the Commonwealth, he was careful to avoid criticising me personally, and, in fact, recognised my sincerity, and appealed to me to continue trying for a settlement. Very adroitly, he changed course from the irreconcilability expressed in the communiqué of last Friday. He ended with the words: ‘I know I speak for everyone in these islands, all parties, all people, when I say to Mr Smith: Prime Minister, think again.’

But how long could we go on in this twilight zone of indecision and expectation, trying to deal with people whom we could not trust? They gave us one story last week in London, and then a few days later turned it around in a manner calculated to bring us into disrepute. Moreover, why was there no mention of the positive and sincere recommendation sponsored by the Conservative leaders, of an international treaty to guarantee our agreement, and which he promised would receive his serious consideration? The whole scene reeked of hypocrisy and cynicism and understandably it was difficult for us to believe that they were thinking of the best interests of Rhodesia.

I had noticed, though, that Wilson was manoeuvring for tactical advantage, and trying to ensure that he did not place himself in a position where he appeared to be responsible for any breakdown of negotiations. It was with this in mind that he sent me a message on 12 October, the very day I had left London, suggesting that a mission of Commonwealth prime ministers should visit Rhodesia and recommend a solution to the problem. As with any constructive suggestion, we gave it serious thought, and the following points emerged. In view of the fact that we held a meeting with Wilson on the very day, his message was dispatched, why, we asked, did he not discuss the idea with us? Second, both parties, British and Rhodesian, had consistently stated that the matter was one between our two countries alone. It was clear that outside interference would complicate the issue and could ultimately get completely out of hand. Third, our problem had been discussed on more than one occasion at Commonwealth prime ministers' conferences, unfairly behind our backs, and provocative and one-sided resolutions had been passed against us. Obviously these people had prejudged the issue, and were not prepared to be influenced by facts or truth.

Our considered opinion was sent in a message on 18 October, giving all the above objections. In addition we drew attention to the most recent evidence that Nyerere of Tanzania had threatened to withdraw his country from the Commonwealth if Britain agreed to grant independence to Rhodesia before majority rule — something which had never been accepted by any British government. This was blatant blackmail from Tanzania. The Zambian government added to this by saying that Wilson's latest proposal was no more than a time-consuming device! And India disassociated itself from the idea. In other words Wilson's plan was floored before it started, so the whole thing turned out to be an utter farce. How could we allow ourselves to be led into such an obvious ambush? Why, I asked, did Wilson not make a greater effort to reach agreement with us during the week which we had just spent in London?

I made one more appeal, writing to Wilson on 20 October, asking that the British government grant us our independence and put us on trust to observe and abide by the principles of the 1961 constitution, and we would accept a solemn treaty to guarantee the agreement. If we broke the agreement, we would stand condemned by the whole world; even our friends would turn against us, and the British government would have universal support for any action they took. I stressed that we had made a decision in principle on the action we were to take if the British government continued to deny us what we believed was our proven right. 'Its implementation and the consequences which flow from it now depend entirely on your response to the appeal I now make to you at this eleventh hour.' Wilson could not claim that he had not been given an absolutely positive and serious warning.

Local businessmen who kept in close touch with the British High Commission had been surprised for some time that their official attitude had been one of discounting the

possibility of UDI, and this must have influenced Wilson and his colleagues. Clearly this had now changed, with a state of near alarm developing in Britain. The British government embarked on an, intensive brainwashing campaign, with Rhodesia hitting the headlines on a daily basis, on using extravagant language, and African nationalists appearing with increasing frequency on BBC programmes.

Wilson replied to my letter the next day, 21 October, saying that, as obviously there was still much to be discussed, he and Bottomley should visit Salisbury without delay. I agreed. This was an encouraging sign, because it meant that Wilson, at long last, had woken up to the fact that unless he made some constructive move, we were heading for our UDI. It was still my most earnest wish that, if possible, this should be avoided.

The large British party arrived in Salisbury on Monday 25 October and on the following morning business opened with a meeting in my office. I began by informing the British team that, in the short time since my return from London, I had received evidence of an increasingly realistic opinion among our black people, believing that a continuation with the current constitution would be preferable to the unpredictable future after a UDI. I added that we had made it clear to those who were in restriction, that if they gave an undertaking to forgo violence and unconstitutional action, they would be released. I hoped that the British were prepared to support us in this effort.

Wilson replied positively and, turning to the question of the treaty, tried to increase the area it was to cover. To our minds, however, the position was clear: it was to ensure that nothing would be done to curtail black political advancement. Wilson’s new proposal was that all government’s legislation would require approval of the Privy Council, clearly a ridiculous proposition. Wilson claimed that his interpretation was in keeping with Alec

Home's original idea. But, when I suggested that the matter could be settled by a simple message to Home, we never heard anything more on the subject.

When the meeting broke up Wilson handed me a personal letter from the Queen, in which she mentioned the happy memories she had of our beautiful country, and expressed her hope that we would succeed in solving our problem. There were some misleading comments in the media concerning the letter, and so I took the opportunity at a lunch given by the Mayor of Salisbury to put the record straight by quoting from it.

Then, much to Wilson's embarrassment, he received a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr A. Michael Ramsey, expressing support from the Council of Churches, adding that if Wilson 'should judge it necessary to use force I am sure a great body of Christian opinion would support you.' Wilson disassociated himself from the suggestion, and the Council of Churches renounced the proposal, saying that it was purely personal. A letter was circulated saying that the latest hymn adopted by the Anglican Church was 'Onward Christian Soldiers, shoot your kith and kin', and numbers of Rhodesians throughout the country threatened to burn their bibles and send the ashes to Ramsey.

Over the next few days the British interviewed people — anyone and everyone covering a wide spectrum — and there was strong support for our government's stand, except from Nkomo and Sithole. Wilson openly admitted that they were impossible, that they refused to work together and thus combine their effort, refused to renounce unconstitutional action, refused to negotiate with our government, refused to accept Wilson's five principles as a basis for negotiation, and demanded that the British should use military force to eject the current government and install their government. Wilson was clearly disillusioned, and I was pleased that he had been subjected to their irrational behaviour. We hoped that it would bring him

down to earth and make him realise the kind of people we were dealing with, and the complexity of the problems with which we were trying to grapple. Dealing with our black people was something we took in our stride; the problem was with the extreme nationalists who were stirred up by the communist agitators, and even more insidious was the treacherous support which was constantly on tap from fellow travellers like the British Labour Party and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

On the Thursday night, 28 October, we had an enjoyable dinner at the prime minister's residence — 'Independence' — and were treated to a good repertoire of stories. Angus Graham (the Duke of Montrose and my Minister of Agriculture) was in his element. At one stage Wilson asked if we should talk business, and I said 'No' because on these occasions we preferred to relax. Serious discussion could be left for the conference room, where minds were usually clearer. It is sad to recount that the press was by this time printing the story that Wilson and his comrades had used the occasion as an opportunity to lecture us on the folly of a UDI — they call it British diplomacy, but I can think of stronger terminology.

All parties understood that there had been no progress, and there was an air of despondency over the scene. However, this was suddenly broken the next morning, when my office received the message that Wilson had a new proposition which the British believed had excellent potential. The meeting was laid on and Wilson put forward his suggestion: a Royal Commission of three eminent, highly respected people to carry out an impartial investigation and make a recommendation. The chairman would be Sir Hugh Beadle, Rhodesian Chief Justice, assisted by one other Rhodesian and someone from Britain, whom he would prefer not to be a member of the Labour Party. Obviously it would not succeed in pleasing everybody, but if its recommendation called for a bit of give

and take from both sides, this could be a way out of the impasse. I saw distinct possibilities. Maybe because of the shock of his meetings with Nkomo and Sithole, Wilson was beginning to see reason. We decided to adjourn to give us time to consider; we would meet again after dinner. The first point requiring consideration was the commission's terms of reference. The British had their ideas, and so did the Rhodesians. Each side was trying to ensure that its own wishes were laid down as a guide to the commissioners. Clearly this was unworkable. The idea of a commission was to recommend an agreement, something which we had failed to do. We should not be trying to do the work of the commission. The talk was going on and on, and we were making no progress, so I stressed the point that if we were going to have a commission then we should ask them to get on with the job, and not tell them how to do it. Wilson agreed, and made a very encouraging comment, that if the commission produced a report which he disliked, or the majority of his government disliked, he did not see how he could reject it. I concurred, saying the same applied to me, and in addition stressed the point that we were the only ones taking a risk, because if the recommendation prejudiced us, our country and our lives would be at stake, while if it went against the British, they would not bat an eyelid, but simply get on with their lives and business exactly the same as before. It was for this very reason that some of my colleagues were uneasy about the idea. I stressed the time factor, making it plain that we were not prepared to get caught up in an exercise which might drag on. We were all suspicious that Wilson's strategy was to go on buying time, but he had no compunction in saying that he was of the opinion that they could complete their task in two months. It all seemed to me to be too good to be true, but maybe it was an astute plan on his part to extricate himself from the lock-grip of the OAU and the UN.

Wilson flew out of Salisbury on the morning of Saturday 30 October to consult with his cabinet on this new proposal. He would ask Bottomley and Elwyn Jones to deal with any loose ends which required attention. Wilson called in to Ghana and Nigeria on his way home, presumably to obtain their concurrence. According to the local British High Commission he received a rebuff in Ghana, but in Nigeria, where the leader Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was one of the mature and experienced leaders, he received support for his proposal. Once again this gave some hope.

On 3 November Wilson dispatched the message we were awaiting. It started on the right foot, accepting that the Royal Commission should carry out its analysis based on the existing constitution. But — a very big 'but' — Wilson insisted, in all their discussions the commissioners were to inform everyone that this constitution was unacceptable to the British government. Second, before commencing their investigation they were to submit a report on how they proposed to carry out their task. Third, the report would have to be unanimous. Finally, the British government would not commit themselves in advance to accepting the report.

The last three points clearly annulled the first point. It was farcical for the British government to appoint a Royal commission to report back to them, and instruct the Commissioners that, when taking evidence, they had to inform all and sundry that the proposal they were putting forward was unacceptable to the British government! Was this not a scene from Gilbert and Sullivan? To appoint a high-powered commission of most distinguished people to investigate and then have insufficient confidence in them to allow them to decide how to conduct their task — was this not tantamount to a vote of no confidence in them before they commenced? To claim that we had agreed that the report would have to be unanimous was a blatant lie. Not only did my entire cabinet attend that final meeting after

dinner (as opposed to the team of three at the conference table), but also present, taking their minutes, were the cabinet secretary and his deputy. Not one of us could recall the question of a unanimous decision being mentioned. And if it had been brought up, is it not ridiculous for anyone to believe that we could have agreed to such an illogical suggestion? It is a well-known and established procedure that if a commission, or committee, or panel of judges is not unanimous, it submits a majority report and a minority report. Finally, not only were our memories clear, but the secretariat's report minuted Wilson's comment that even if the commission's report was not to his liking he could not see how he could reject it. Now he was trying to renege on this. The conclusion I came to was that he had received messages from his 'comrades' in the Commonwealth, the OAU and the UN. Wilson had succumbed to the pressure, and so was going to extricate himself by breaking the agreement he had made with us, and introducing new conditions which he knew from previous discussions were unacceptable to us.

I despatched a message forthwith to Wilson, expressing our utter dismay at these latest proposals which were a clear contradiction of what we had agreed in Salisbury before his departure. I gave him the reasons as stated above, and then added:

> I therefore regret to tell you that the only conclusion to be derived from your letter is that it is tantamount to, and can only be interpreted as, a rejection of the proposals agreed with you in Salisbury. The impression you left with us of a determined effort to resolve our constitutional problem has been utterly dissipated. It would seem that you have now finally closed the door which you publicly claimed to have opened.

In spite of this clear message, added to the many other occasions when I stressed that we were being driven into a situation where we would have no alternative to a UDI, when Wilson spoke in the House of Commons on the day of our declaration, 11 November, he said: ‘Smith gave me no indication that a decision to take illegal action had been taken.’

What a sad reflection on our society, when the prime minister of a country like Great Britain can make an important statement in their renowned and highly respected Parliament, which is such a travesty of the truth, and get away with it. If it were an isolated case, perhaps it would not be so serious, but judging from our history with Britain, it was a regular performance.

On 7 November Wilson sent a message suggesting that Chief Justice Beadle should come to Britain to discuss the Royal Commission. But he had already invited Beadle, who had accepted, informing me that he was going in his private capacity in the hope that he could make some contribution. As usual, Wilson was being careless in his handling of the truth.

On 8 November I sent another message reiterating to Wilson that our positions were obviously irreconcilable, and for good measure spelt out again the points mentioned in my previous message indicating how he had reneged on the agreement we had made on the Royal Commission. In spite of our misgivings, we were prepared to stand by the agreement, and all that was now necessary was for Wilson to honour his part of the agreement — time was running out.

Our contingency planning had been going on for some time, ensuring procurement of fuel and other essentials, equitable distribution of strategic requirements, export routes, a state of emergency had even been proclaimed on 5 November — an obvious precaution — and yet Wilson

could still claim on 11 November that he had not received any prior indication of ‘illegal action’.

All day Tuesday 9 November, we waited for a reply from Wilson. All Wednesday morning, 10 November, we waited. That afternoon we gathered in the cabinet room to make arrangements for the final decision. I encouraged free discussion, even at this late stage. There was no emotionalism or raised voices. We had been through so many crises and periods of expectation, hope and then disillusionment. Clearly, there had been a number of times when we had been through the trauma of reconciling our natural feelings and impulses with the considered reasoning of our consciences. We were seasoned campaigners at living by that deadly game of ‘by guess and by God’.

It seemed to me that everyone had exhausted his views when my PPS entered to say that Johnston, the British High Commissioner, had turned up with an oral message from Wilson — at 7.30 p.m. It sounded strange, but then we had learned from experience that we were dealing with a strange man. Instead of going out personally to speak to him, and then returning and briefing cabinet, I suggested that Johnston be brought in. Not only would this save time, but my colleagues would see for themselves what was going on.

I asked for a copy of the message he had brought to read to us. He replied that his instruction was to put nothing in writing. I asked if he did not agree with me that this was most unusual. Johnston did not reply. I wondered if I should ask him to go away and return with something in writing, as was the custom. But I thought, on the spur of the moment, that this would play into Wilson’s hands, since he could then accuse us of ejecting his emissary and refusing to accept his message. I told him to proceed. There was absolutely nothing new. It was a rehash of the Royal Commission proposals, with the introduction of new

wording in the hope that this would create new impressions. Finally, Johnston said that, when Beadle returned, he would be able to reassure me on any outstanding points. We did not want reassuring. How long had we been going backwards and forwards through the process? The only thing we had been reassured of was that Wilson was dedicated to appeasing his ‘comrades’ in the OAU and the UN. All the time Wilson was doing this at the expense of Rhodesians, those whom he spuriously claimed he was trying to assist. We wanted a straight answer: was he going to honour the agreement we made when he was last in Salisbury, on setting up the Royal Commission? A simple message saying ‘Yes’ and the matter would be solved. Even a direct ‘No’ would have been preferable to the perfidious diplomacy and intrigue and blatant deception which went on day after day.

We were all of the same opinion: the contents of the message, and its form of delivery, far from helping, had hardened our position. A few members of cabinet were so exasperated that they were ready to finalise the decision there and then. But we had been through a long and testing day, so I insisted that we retire for a good night’s sleep. We would return at 8.30 the following morning, with fresh, clear minds, and make a decision. I told Gerald Clarke that they could carry on with the preparations, because it looked fairly certain that a decision would be made in the morning — if we changed our mind, no harm would be done.

On 11 November 1965, everyone was present on time in the cabinet room. I asked if there were any more contributions. There was a general expression of approval that I had insisted on delaying a decision the previous evening, because, as one of them said, ‘This will probably be the most important decision we will ever make in our lives, so it is right that we took more time and now apply fresh minds in order to be absolutely certain that the

decision which we now make will reflect our considered opinion and most serious judgement.'

I allowed time for thought and discussion. It was clear that there were no further contributions necessary. I was about to bring matters to a head when once more my PPS entered to say that Wilson was on the phone. I had a gut-feeling that this was just another attempt at a delaying tactic, an effort by Wilson to establish himself as not being the one responsible for the breakdown. My office had been informed the previous day that the British High Commission were aware of the fact that we were about to come to a conclusion, and the 'hot line' to 10 Downing Street was working to capacity to keep Wilson completely in the picture.

My assumption was correct. When I picked up the receiver, he was most courteous, even condescending in his tone, and commenced by saying that he believed we should appoint the Royal Commission forthwith, as the differences between us now were minimal and could easily be resolved. If we were prepared to say 'Yes', now, he would put it to his cabinet, and if they agreed he would put it to the heads of Commonwealth, and this, of course, would be subject to Britain's sovereign right, to accept or reject. But, as I pointed out, we had told him before his departure from Salisbury that we accepted the commission, so why had this not been processed? The clear answer was that he was attempting to introduce changes to accommodate his friends in the OAU. He was trying to hedge his bets, in such a way that whatever happened he was going to win, and he added nothing which gave me any hope.

I told him that I had come down from a cabinet meeting to take his call and that I would now convey his message to them, but it would not be right if I did not say that the feeling of my cabinet was that this thing had gone too far. We were sick and tired of never-ending British prevarication.

He concluded by saying that, on a number of occasions, he had made the point that he was convinced I was negotiating in good faith, but that he could not say this was true of some of my colleagues. He hoped that I would be able to influence them. I assured him that there was no substance in his accusation. My cabinet team was cohesive, and on the question of our independence there had never been any serious difference of opinion.

I slumped back in my chair for a few minutes to contemplate the situation. I was overwhelmed by a feeling of absolute frustration. There was within my whole system a very strong desire to preserve my links with the history and tradition and culture that I had been brought up to respect and believe in. But over the last half decade this had taken a tremendous battering. When one looked at the composition of the current Commonwealth, the whole character of it had changed. Within Britain itself, we were landed with a socialist government, hell-bent on appeasing the cult of Marxism-Leninism, at the expense of the old traditional values of the British Empire. This was never part of my tradition and culture. But most important, and above all else, was the treatment to which we had been subjected: the breaches of agreements, the double standards, the blatant deception and blackmail with which we were confronted. To put it crudely, we had had an absolute bellyful. Rhodesians simply wished to be left to lead their own lives. And in all honesty it had to be admitted that the Conservatives were as much to blame as Labour. They had had opportunities on a number of occasions, but had lacked the necessary courage, and their treachery after the Victoria Falls conference could never be forgiven. Now came this final episode: the last two days waiting, and this morning, the third day, still anticipating the simple reply: ‘Agreed, we are setting up the commission.’ After all, it had been their suggestion, not ours.

I retraced my steps upstairs to the cabinet room with a heavy heart. How could anyone recommend a change of course? My colleagues were waiting anxiously, and I took time to recount the conversation which had taken place. The general tenor of the response was that they could not detect any change of heart, and they were correct. There was no sudden, impulsive rejection. There were questions and a general discussion: if we accepted this, would we not yet again allow ourselves to become embroiled in more inconclusive wrangling that would play on the uncertainty and ebbing confidence of our people, stimulate the terrorism in the tribal areas — where innocent people were being murdered — and give new hope to the agitators? We could foresee acrimonious wrangling, starting with the composition of the commission and continuing with these other additional concessions which Wilson was trying to extract from us. I could see that these anxieties were overwhelming.

There were no more questions or comments, so I said quietly, deliberately avoiding emotion, that it seemed as if we were ready for a decision, in which case I believed each member should give me his individual answer. Do we declare our independence — 'Yes' or 'No'? I went around the table, and each one, quietly but firmly, without hesitation, said: 'Yes'.

I suppose it should have been a very dramatic occasion. In fact it was not. We had been on the edge of the precipice for so long, had resolved ourselves to making the decision so many times, that our steel had been tempered; we were ready for it. Moreover, our consciences were clear; we had gone to the absolute limit in trying to avoid it, and so how could any reasonable, honest man fault us? My stand had always been straightforward and consistent: we came to an agreement with the British government at the Victoria Falls conference, they repudiated the contract, we were asserting our right to implement the contract.

One of the most persistent accusations hurled at us over the years was that we took this action in order to ensure permanent white minority rule. History proves conclusively that this is a blatant lie. It was, of course, a continuation of the campaign of the communists, who had all along been trying desperately to frustrate our legitimate objective. Now that they had lost, they embarked on their misinformation campaign, trying to besmirch our motives. The only way they could succeed was by twisting the truth and, as everyone knows, the communists are world-beaters at that game. What is so sad is the gullibility of the free world: the vast majority allowed themselves to be hoodwinked.

Let us examine the facts, the truth. Going back to the original Rhodesian constitution of 1923, there was no racial connotation to the franchise, and from that date there have been people of every race, colour and creed on the voters' roll. The next step came forty years later with the 1961 constitution, and this embodied the addition of a 'B' roll with a debased franchise qualification especially designed to cater for our black people. The normal roll, or 'A' roll as it was now called, remained open to all irrespective of race, colour or creed. So this new constitution, far from trying to entrench our white people, did the reverse, and facilitated and encouraged the participation of our black people. The constitution was accepted by, and carries the signatures of, representatives of the British government, the Rhodesian government, and the black nationalist leaders. It enshrined the principle of 'unimpeded progress to majority rule' and the British representatives involved in drawing up the constitution estimated that it would culminate in a black majority government within ten to fifteen years. If this is the manner in which white Rhodesians attempted to perpetuate their rule of the country, their incompetence, not to say stupidity, was most remarkable.

It was this same 1961 constitution that we agreed with the British at the Victoria Falls conference would be our independence constitution — no changes were requested. In all the post-Federation discussions with both the Conservative Party and Labour Party, no changes were requested. The five principles laid down by the British strengthened the position of our black people, and these were accepted by our government. The first one was clear and concise: '1. The principle and intention of unimpeded progress to majority rule, already enshrined in the 1961 Constitution, to be maintained and guaranteed.'

In Wilson's letter to me of 29 March 1965 he said: 'What the British Government wish is a peaceful transition to majority rule, the principle of which is enshrined in the 1961 Constitution.' This was exactly what we had been urging since the Victoria Falls conference.

On the final day of our talks with Wilson in London on 10 October, we had discussed the suggestion made by the Conservative Party leaders of an internationally backed treaty to provide an additional guarantee that the 1961 constitution would in no way be breached, and this received the full support of the Rhodesian delegation.

Wilson's visit to Rhodesia later in October had culminated in his proposal for a Royal Commission, and once again we were in full support of the implementation of independence on the basis of the 1961 constitution in which was enshrined the principle of unimpeded progress to majority rule.

One could go on, providing more examples of evidence proving conclusively that at no time in the history of our country was there any attempt to interfere with free access to the voters' roll and the principle of unimpeded progress to majority rule. But right up to the present day one still comes across articles accusing Rhodesians of trying to perpetuate white minority rule — such is the power of the communist propaganda machine.

Returning to the scene on 11 November in the cabinet room, where we had just made our fateful decision: I asked Gerald Clarke what came next, and he left the room to check. We had set up a committee to prepare the declaration, and they had studied many previous similar occasions. Obviously the most appropriate was the American declaration. A suitable form had been arranged and printed. Clarke returned to say that everything had been arranged in the nearby conference room; the photographer was on his way. We went along; each member of cabinet signed the proclamation of independence, and the official photograph was taken. The proclamation was a handsome document and well laid out. The annexure was the existing 1961 constitution which, as shown clearly above, guaranteed majority rule, irrespective of race, colour or creed. The Act conferring it on Rhodesia was part of British legislation, passed by the British Parliament at Westminster.

I went to Government House to inform Humphrey Gibbs. His staff had already heard the radio announcement that I was to broadcast to the nation at 1.15 p.m. He simply said: ‘So this is it.’ I replied: ‘Yes.’ He said he was deeply sorry, for he had hoped that we could avoid it. I assured him that I had hoped likewise and, as he knew, I had worked incessantly to prevent it. Sadly, in our judgement, the time had come. He accepted my words philosophically and said: ‘I will return to my farm and try to get more milk out of my cows.’ It was a sad occasion for both of us, as we had been friends for many years. We shook hands and parted.

I then went to the broadcasting studios to record my message to the nation. I began by reading the proclamation:

> Whereas in the course of human affairs history has shown that it may become necessary for a people to resolve the political affiliations which have connected

them with another people and to assume among other nations the separate and equal status to which they are entitled:

And whereas in such event a respect for the opinions of mankind requires them to declare to other nations the causes which impel them to assume full responsibility for their own affairs:

Now therefore, we, the Government of Rhodesia, do hereby declare:

That it is an indisputable and accepted historic fact that since 1923 the Government of Rhodesia have exercised the powers of self-government and have been responsible for the progress, development, and welfare of their people;

That the people of Rhodesia, having demonstrated their loyalty to the Crown and to their kith and kin in the United Kingdom and elsewhere throughout two world wars, and having been prepared to shed their blood and give of their substance in what they believed to be a mutual interest of freedom-loving people, now see all that they have cherished about to be shattered on the rocks of expediency;

That the people of Rhodesia have witnessed a process which is destructive of those very precepts upon which civilisation in a primitive country has been built, they have seen the principles of Western democracy and responsible government and moral standards crumble elsewhere, nevertheless they have remained steadfast;

That the people of Rhodesia fully support the request of their Government for sovereign independence and have witnessed the consistent refusal of the Government of the United Kingdom to accede to their entreaties;

That the Government of the United Kingdom have thus demonstrated that they are not prepared to grant sovereign independence to Rhodesia on terms acceptable to the people of Rhodesia, thereby persisting in

maintaining an unwarrantable jurisdiction over Rhodesia, obstructing laws and treaties with other States in the conduct of affairs with other nations, and refusing assent to necessary laws for the public good, all this to the detriment of the future peace, prosperity, and good government of Rhodesia;

That the Government of Rhodesia have for a long period patiently and in good faith negotiated with the Government of the United Kingdom for the removal of the remaining limitations placed upon them and for the grant of sovereign independence;

That it is the belief that procrastination and delay strike at and injure the very life of the nation, the Government of Rhodesia consider it essential that Rhodesia should obtain without delay sovereign independence, the justice of which is beyond question;

Now therefore we, the Government of Rhodesia, in humble submission to Almighty God, who controls the destiny of nations, conscious that the people of Rhodesia have always shown unswerving loyalty and devotion to Her Majesty the Queen and earnestly praying that we the people of Rhodesia will not be hindered in our determination to continue exercising our undoubted right to demonstrate the same loyalty and devotion in seeking to promote the common good so that the dignity and freedom of all men may be assured, do by this proclamation adopt, enact, and give to the people of Rhodesia the Constitution annexed hereto. God save the Queen.

I then went on to say:

Today, now that the final stalemate in negotiations has become evident, the end of the road has been reached. It has become abundantly clear that it is the policy of the British government to play us along with no real intention

> of arriving at a solution which we could possibly accept. Indeed, in the latest verbal and confidential message delivered to me last night, we find that on the main principle which is in dispute the two governments have moved further apart. I promised the people of this country that I would continue to negotiate to the bitter end and that I would leave no stone unturned in my endeavours to secure an honourable and mutually accepted settlement; it now falls to me to tell you that negotiations have come to an end.

I stressed how hard we had tried to reach an accommodation with the British. The decision, I said, was the product of deep heart-searching and ceaseless conference. I had learned the lesson of the Federation and could not

> permit this country to drift in the present paralysing state of uncertainty … In that case matters were permitted to drift and plans for action were formulated too late to prevent the destruction of this noble concept of racial harmony. However, Rhodesia has not rejected the possibility of racial harmony in Africa. The responsibility for the break-up of the Federation was Great Britain's alone. Their experiment failed and they are now trying to foist the same dogma on to Rhodesia.

I expressed my determination to prevent a repetition of that process. I stressed, however, that the proclamation did not signal a departure from principle. It did not mean that the constitution would be torn up and the protection of the rights of all peoples abrogated. There would be no diminution of African advancement and prosperity. Indeed, it was the government's intention to bring the Africans into government on a basis acceptable to them. I reminded my audience that we had never asked for anything other than

independence on the basis of the constitution, adjusted only where necessary to fit an independent country. MPs, judges, civil servants and the members of the armed forces and police would continue to carry out their duties in terms of the constitution, and current laws would continue to operate. The proclamation did no more than to allow the government to assume the powers given to British ministers. There was no intention to quarrel with either Rhodesia's neighbours or with the British people with whom Rhodesians had fought the common enemy in two world wars. I reaffirmed our loyalty to the Crown, the Union Jack and the national anthem.

I acknowledged that, while many had longed for UDI, there were others who had reservations. We could not, however, continue as we were because the British-declared intention was to hold another conference to change the constitution. Furthermore, there would be no solution to the racial problem as long as the African nationalists believed they could, by fomenting trouble, induce the British to hand over the country to them. The uncertainty had to be ended if the essential prosperity was to be achieved that would allow the improvement of the standard of living of all the people. Sanctions were threatened, but I expressed my belief they would be overcome by the natural resources of Rhodesia and the enterprise of its people. And I did not believe that the rational world would combine to destroy the economy and so hurt the very people for whom they were invoking sanctions.

I concluded:

> In the lives of most nations there comes a moment when a stand has to be made for principles, whatever the consequences. This moment has come to Rhodesia. I pray — and I hope other Rhodesians will also pray today — that our government will be given the wisdom and the strength to bring Rhodesia safely through.

I call upon all of you in this historic hour to support me and my government in the struggle in which we are engaged. I believe that we are a courageous people and history has cast us in an heroic role. To us has been given the privilege of being the first Western nation in the last two decades to have the determination and fortitude to say: 'So far and no further.' We may be a small country, but we are a determined people who have been called upon to play a role of worldwide significance. We Rhodesians have rejected the doctrinaire philosophy of appeasement and surrender. The decision which we have taken today is a refusal by Rhodesians to sell their birthright. And, even if we were to surrender, does anyone believe that Rhodesia would be the last target of the communists in the Afro-Asian bloc?

We have struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilization, and Christianity — and in the spirit of this belief we have thus assumed our sovereign independence.

God bless you all.

There could not have been many people in the country who did not listen to the broadcast — expectations had been building up for some time. The media were taken aback at the normality of everything that afternoon and over the ensuing days. The people were smiling and getting on with their jobs. I went back home for lunch and, when Janet met me, I told her of my hope for a quiet afternoon and evening with no visitors, and that was how it was.

We were fortunate that no one came round or telephoned. In those days, callers simply drove up the drive, because there were no security people to stop them at the gate. And Janet and I answered the telephone as there were no staff at the residence — there never had been. (Today, it is a veritable fortress surrounded by soldiers with automatic rifles, barbed-wire entanglements,

a bullet-proof vehicle in which to travel surrounded by armoured lorries, followed by an ambulance.)

I went to my office next morning, as usual accompanied only by my driver, and there was a fairly sizeable crowd there to greet me. I mingled and talked to them, and there was no security presence. Yet at the UN, members of the OAU were accusing Rhodesia of being a 'Threat to World Peace' (a notion which the former US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson ridiculed in an article). Often, when I walked out of the office to my car, on my way to lunch, there would be people standing on the pavement, and I would talk to them, sometimes sign an autograph, and one of the most frequent comments was: 'In this country we see the happiest black faces we've ever seen.' Also: 'Everything is so quiet and peaceful.' I remember being shown statistics by the Police Commissioner that *pro rata* to population Rhodesia had the lowest crime rate in the world. And as I indicated earlier, the exercise dealing with the break-up of the Federation showed that we had provided better facilities for our black people in the fields of education, health, housing, recreation and cultural facilities than anywhere else in sub-Saharan Africa. And this is what the British were determined to bring to an end — to the extent that they were prepared to break solemn agreements made with us.

Probably the most compelling argument in support of our taking of independence was the recent history of Africa; we were living cheek by jowl with the results. For example, Ghana was the first British country to be granted independence in 1957, and the British government claimed that this glorious example would prove the success of Britain's colonial policy. Within a couple of years their President Nkrumah had established a one-party dictatorship, half of the Members of Parliament were imprisoned, the leaders of the opposition had been eliminated, the economy was in ruins, and the President

had established an external multi-million-pound personal bank account. We could not know at the time that in the following year, 1966, he would be ousted and lucky to get out with his life.

Next in line for independence was Nigeria, in 1960, and we were told that this was a mature country with links with Britain and Europe going back over 200 years. There were big religious and ethnic differences within the country, but the British-made constitution was designed to cater for those. Nevertheless, the country was soon enveloped in dreadful civil war between the Muslims in the north and the negroes in the south. Corruption was rampant and the economy soon in ruins. While our negotiations were at a peak in October 1965 we received reports of hundreds of murders during their elections. In spite of this, preparations for the Commonwealth prime ministers' conference in Lagos in January continued. At its conclusion Wilson spoke in glowing terms of the great success of Nigeria's independence, and of how well the other newly independent countries of the Commonwealth were progressing. Britain was proud of the part it had played in bringing all of this to fruition, Wilson said. Within days of the conference ending, their leader and dictator, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and a number of his ministers, were barbarously murdered.

Then came the Belgian Congo's independence, also in 1960. The country was immediately plunged into civil war, with deaths running into tens of thousands and the white settlers caught in the middle with murder and rape carried out with impunity. Refugees by the thousand flocked through Rhodesia, and our whole country rose to the occasion to provide assistance. Needless to say, the graphic description of the atrocities to which these poor people were subjected, backed up by medical evidence from our doctors and hospitals, left an indelible impression on our people.

Then, in quick succession, came independence for Tanzania, Zanzibar, Uganda and Kenya. The story was the same: tribal violence and massacres, political opponents imprisoned, coups, streams of white refugees who had been dispossessed of their property and were passing through Rhodesia, rampant corruption and the establishment of external bank accounts by their leaders. In the short period of Zambia's independence, October 1964, there had been massacres of government opponents, corruption was in full swing, and Kaunda had stated his intention of forming a one-party dictatorship. Yet Britain was more than happy to give them their independence, but not Rhodesia, which had to its credit an exemplary record of over forty years of self-government. How could Rhodesians accept such blatant hypocrisy, and condone such devious double standards, especially when the price was their own future, their own lives?

As I have stated on so many occasions, when British solutions for Africa went wrong — and this has happened in every case — the British were looking in the opposite direction, disassociating themselves from the resultant disaster. When people have to go on living with the decisions they make, they go out of their way to ensure that they avoid such blunders.

The record is clear for everyone to observe: British policy for Africa led to one man one vote — once. Thereafter, dictatorship ensued, with the resultant chaos and denial of freedom and justice. By contrast, we believed that our policy would prove successful. It was one of gradualism in order to ensure that people fully understood the complicated democratic system. From experience they would learn about its pitfalls, and this would assist them to avoid the disasters which we had witnessed in countries to our north. We referred to it as 'meritocracy', and tragically the world will never know whether it would have succeeded and proved the exception to the rule — evolution in

preference to revolution. It is important to understand that with the introduction of Western democracy into sub-Saharan Africa we were experimenting with a system of government which was foreign to, and unknown in, those parts.

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The Immediate Consequences of UDI

Clearly, our UDI would infuriate the starry-eyed liberals and the frustrated communists, but I was placing my faith in the theory that sudden storms are short. Wilson was dashing hither and thither in London, making extravagant statements. Certain African states were demanding an immediate invasion by British forces. If only they could have had a bird's eye view of Rhodesia, they would have realised the stupidity of their behaviour, because things there were completely normal and calm, an oasis of peace in an otherwise turbulent continent.

The day after our declaration I visited Government House accompanied by Dupont and Lardner-Burke to clear up Gibbs's position. He had changed his stance from the previous day when he told me he would go back to his farm in Matabeleland and try to get some more milk out of his cows. Not surprisingly, the British government had asked him to remain at his post, as in their eyes he was still the Governor. In fact, because of the new constitution which we had brought in, his authority no longer existed, and the maintenance of this pretence was of little concern to us. I gave instructions that he should be allowed to continue living in the residence with no pressures placed on him.

Rhodesia dominated the correspondence between the heads of Commonwealth for a few days, with Wilson stating that it was the government's intention to restore legality and freedom in Rhodesia. Had he been truthful, he would have admitted that there was more freedom in Rhodesia than in any other country in Africa, and that constitutionally the action which we had taken was

necessary in order to implement the agreement which we made at the Victoria Falls conference. Wilson also stated that there was no intention to use force, and this came as no surprise because I had heard, through my security channels, that he had received a positive message from his chiefs of staff that any thought of military action would be a non-starter. This was logical to anyone who understood the intimate relationship between the Rhodesian and British security forces, and the great loyalty and dedication which Rhodesia had always shown. In the last war our army and air force units were integrated with the British, and this had continued up to UDI — every year one of our air force squadrons flew to Aden, where they indulged in combined operations with the RAF over a period of one month. We had constant radio communications with RAF Aden, and our crack SAS unit was on call, ready for service with the British army. Nowhere else in Africa did anything like this apply, so any politician in Britain who contemplated a fratricidal war against Rhodesia was living in the dark. The heads of the security forces in Britain were not interested in appeasing the communist aspirations of the OAU. They were more concerned with the qualities of loyalty and honesty and the bonds of friendship which held us together. Just as important were the ties of family and nationality which had preserved the British Empire during times of stress. They had not forgotten the last world war, when together we faced what appeared to be imminent disaster.

We were disappointed at the performance of the Conservative Party which, apart from a few of our staunch and loyal friends, allowed themselves to be taken along by Wilson, offering a few mild suggestions about practising moderation. They let Wilson get away with using, as an excuse for his retaliatory actions, his concern that undesirable foreign powers might exploit our successful defiance as a pretext for gaining a foothold on the continent. The Tories should have immediately pointed out

that his recent mishandling of the Rhodesian problem, leading to UDI, was giving a great boost to the communist campaign in Africa, and was in fact aiding and abetting the communists in securing their existing foothold in Africa. Here was incontrovertible evidence that Wilson and the Labour Party were undermining a country which had a worldwide reputation for promoting the concept of Western democracy and the free enterprise system. So it was Wilson, not Smith, who was creating the fertile ground for hostile foreign penetration into Africa. Another pertinent fact given to me at that time was that the communists were supplying arms to their terrorist allies in Africa to carry out their brutal attacks on innocent civilians. And now Wilson was cutting off arms supplies to Rhodesia that should have been used to maintain law and order and to protect our citizens. The only time they had ever been used beyond our borders was to assist Britain in its role as an international peace force. But this was now conveniently forgotten as part of the exercise to placate the OAU and UN.

Sadly, the Conservatives were going through a period of indecisive leadership, and this was not helped by the fact that Wilson was working with a slim majority of three, and was therefore contemplating a general election. Accordingly, the main preoccupation of the Conservative leadership was to keep an eye on their voters and avoid doing anything which might be regarded as provocative. So, if in doubt, the best tactic is to do nothing. This meant that Wilson had an easy passage with his legislation, enabling him to impose sanctions and, although the Conservatives did not like it and were uneasy, they had no real will to oppose. *Hansard* records that Wilson thanked the Conservative opposition for supporting the government plan and contributing to national unity; in Rhodesian eyes, this was indefensible, if not downright treacherous.

Rhodesians wasted no time in rolling up their sleeves and getting on with the job. The plans of government and its

ministries were in place from the beginning, but the most important and encouraging factor was the enthusiastic response from the private sector, which came forward immediately and offered assistance. They set up committees to organise their own sectors, created liaison with other sectors, and ultimately with government. There were leading members of both industry and commerce who were not supporters of my government, and opposed our declaration of independence, but they made it absolutely clear that they were, first and foremost, Rhodesians and in the present circumstances they had only one loyalty. Everyone became a member of the team, and the energy and dedication which came forth were quite staggering. As things developed over the years, I often thought that this single factor contributed more to our success than anything else. It was self-help and free enterprise at its pinnacle. People regarded it as a privilege to be able to participate. Within a matter of days we were receiving approaches from agents representing countries other than Britain, who had sensed that opportunities would be presenting themselves as a result of British sanctions. Such is the force of free enterprise.

In London the British government attempted to intimidate our people working at Rhodesia House into denouncing UDI, telling them the British would offer them employment. But they ran into a stone wall. They tried the same tactics through radio broadcasts to Rhodesia, and these were regarded as great jokes by all but a small number who were British citizens and who decided to return to their homes.

Kaunda of Zambia was under pressure from some of his OAU friends to cut his links with us, but he had enough sense to realise that this would have meant committing suicide, because his transport links to the ports for his exports and imports ran through Rhodesia. The essential coal and coke for Zambia’s copper production, and many of

their other industrial requirements, came from Rhodesia. It was one thing for those countries to the north that had no contact with us to preach boycott, since they were thinking only of their own selfish interests, but it would have been quite another for Kaunda

Kaunda, however, did hit on a tactic, probably with Wilson's connivance: he asked for British troops and an RAF squadron to move into Zambia, on the pretext of it providing protection for Zambia's power supplies and mines. We had communicated with Kaunda, assuring him of our intention to maintain normal communications and supplies, so it was clear that this was a manoeuvre to placate certain people; both Wilson and Kaunda could point out to the OAU that they were taking the necessary steps to frustrate the 'evil intentions' of the 'wicked' Rhodesians.

My diary records a number of interesting and comic events associated with this exercise. Air traffic control in Salisbury handled all traffic passing from northern Africa southwards, as there was no other contact. When the RAF squadrons landed at their destination in Lusaka, Zambia, they signed off by saying: 'Goodbye, and thanks Salisbury.' Back came the reply: 'Goodbye RAF, and enjoy yourselves.' The British, both RAF and army, soon made contact with the Rhodesians on the other side of the Zambezi at Victoria Falls and Kariba and paid regular visits in the evenings to their messes, and on both Christmas and New Year's Eve joined enthusiastically in the toast to 'Smith and Rhodesia'. This took place both north and south of the river. So we were not surprised to hear that the RAF squadron commander told Arthur Bottomley that his pilots had made it clear that they would not comply with an order to attack Rhodesia.

On the humorous side, my PPS said, with a smile on his face, that our air force commander had been on the phone with a message from his CO at Victoria Falls, who had received an SOS for help from his RAF counterpart on the

northern bank of the river. The message related that Bottomley had waved his farewell, hand towards the Zambians who were attending his departure, saying: ‘There are no more noble creatures on this earth and we have so much in common with them.’ The RAF officers had spent much time trying to work that one out — maybe politicians were more intelligent than airmen, and was I able to help them with their problem? Interestingly, Bottomley was not on his own as another British minister, Cledwyn Hughes, in a farewell speech to the British troops before leaving for home, ended by saying: ‘I wish you all a happy white Christmas’ — snow in tropical Africa, in the middle of summer!

The depths to which the British government were prepared to descend in their vindictiveness were disclosed in their action in stopping the payment of pensions to their British pensioners living in Rhodesia. I responded by making the decision that not only would we continue to pay Rhodesian pensioners living in Britain, but that we would also pay the British pensioners living in Rhodesia who had been forsaken by their own government: ‘Two wrongs do not make a right — we will not descend to the level of the British government.’

The British then resorted to another underhand trick, one which was frowned upon in international circles, and which also had a boomerang effect. They seized our assets in the Bank of England, in spite of objections from the bank, because this action was in conflict with banking principles and reflected on the bank’s integrity. Fortunately, we had moved our gold and assets to other countries as part of our precautionary measures, and so there was only a small amount in our trading account which fell into the hands of the British bank robbers. The more our Ministry of Finance experts delved into the problem, however, the wider became the smiles on their faces. We had been affronted in an unethical manner, and were perfectly within our own

rights in defending ourselves against the British plunderers. The list of our financial obligations to Britain was a long one, but those obligations had always been meticulously honoured, although, nowadays this might sound strange, coming from a country in Africa! There was interest and redemption of loans from the British government. Clearly, through their own action they had prevented us from honouring these. There were loans from British banking institutions, there were remittances from rents and dividends from shares to people living in Britain, and we were forced to tell them to look to the British government for their payment as the matter had been taken out of our hands. Our Treasury set up a trust fund into which all these amounts were paid, awaiting the day when we would be free to meet our obligations. The Ministry of Finance informed me that on the balance of payments exercise we stood to gain in excess of £20 million per annum, and on the side of public debt obligations we were over £100 million to the good, a most welcome windfall, thanks to Harold Wilson's vindictiveness.

Both Wilson and Bottomley, no doubt through frustration, accused me of dishonesty and untrustworthiness. But they could not substantiate their claims. Wilson went further and stated that he was not prepared to have any dealings with me or any other members of my government. History was to prove him wrong.

Meanwhile, the British government's actions and threats against us had given an impetus to terrorist activities. The Minister of Law and Order, Lardner-Burke, had stated that approximately 800 men had left for terrorist training in Russia, China and Libya. Some had already been infiltrated back into the country, with the result that there was a growing incidence of subversive activities. It was important to note that these had started well before 11 November, so clearly terrorism was not caused by our declaration of independence. In fact the record shows that it first reared

its ugly head during the period when Garfield Todd was Prime Minister, and the first terrorist incursion across the Zambezi into northern Matabeleland was during Whitehead's term of office. So all the stories which circulated in profusion, saying that black resistance and terrorism were triggered off by our 'unconstitutional' declaration of independence, were part of communism's propaganda attempts to give some respectability to their acts of terror. They claimed that these were not committed against constitutional governments in Rhodesia, but only against the illegal post-UDI government. And tragically, Wilson and his government were giving them encouragement — this was endorsed by evidence we obtained from captured terrorists. Lardner-Burke's report indicated that violence and intimidation were increasing. Factories and transport seemed to top the list of targets, and the grenades and explosive devices used there were of Russian manufacture. Chiefs, Headmen and other loyal black people had been subjected to arson, intimidation and cruel destruction of their livestock. Government forests had been set on fire; this was particularly perverse, since it amounted to the destruction of the terrorists' own national heritage. As Lardner-Burke said, 'We cannot stand idly by and allow communist-inspired terrorism and insurrection to sabotage our nation, and the most effective way of combating this is by utilising the state of emergency. Any other civilised country in similar circumstances would do likewise.' The encroachment of communism down the continent of Africa was gathering momentum, and it was important for those countries that believed in freedom to stand together in order to hold back the evil tide.

Then we were confronted with a vile new problem: a constant stream of subversive propaganda from Radio Zambia, enticing Rhodesians to resort to violence and sabotage, to burn down factories and tobacco barns, destroy power lines, murder white farmers. What made it

especially evil was the fact that Zambian Broadcasting was not only subsidised by the British government, but they also provided equipment and personnel: their director of broadcasting, for example, was seconded from the BBC.

Wilson's next move was to impose oil sanctions, something which had previously been considered but, as we will see, was not well thought out. He struck a bargain with US President Johnson that, in return for British support of America's Vietnam policy, Johnson would assist with the oil embargo. This was just one more excellent example of how Rhodesia was being used as a political shuttlecock by outside countries, and how the leaders of so-called free world countries could lend themselves to corrupt decisions in order to win support for their own policies. America had no interest in or desire to do anything about Rhodesia. The British were unconcerned about Vietnam. But their leaders were dragging their countries into both these conflicts for their own selfish interests.

Anyone, even with average intelligence, could have worked out that an oil embargo against Rhodesia would hold as much water, or oil, as a sieve. Our main port in Mozambique, Beira, had always been of even greater service to Zambia and Malawi, so there could be no blockade there. Lourenço Marques was the principal port for Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand, South Africa's largest industrial area, so no one could interfere with that. Then there were all the South African ports, stretching from Durban on the east coast to Walvis Bay on the west coast. These were the major ports for all the countries in south and central Africa. But most important was the question of Zambia, because all their exports and imports passed through Rhodesia, with the exception of an insignificant minority. Could anyone honestly believe that Rhodesia, being denied fuel in violation of internationally accepted rights, would permit fuel to traverse its transport

system to supply another country, especially a hostile country?

But this was no problem for Wilson. There would be an airlift. RAF transport planes did a daily run from Dar es Salaam to Lusaka, and managed to fly in 2,500 gallons of fuel, using, however, 4,000 gallons per day to perform the task. Into the bargain the runways were not constructed to cater for these heavy aircraft and so they started breaking up, and the roads out of Lusaka, taking a pounding from heavy transport, went the same way. Many Zambians started complaining: was it all necessary, and where were they being led?

We passed into 1966 with things going reasonably well. We had introduced fuel rationing, in keeping with plans which had been prepared, and there were few problems. People started forming lift clubs: instead of four individuals going to work each morning in four separate cars, they used one car. It was more economical, there were fewer traffic problems, no parking problems, and people began to get to know their neighbours. A spirit of community help started and this was to continue to develop right to the end. It proved a great help in the days when we faced security problems.

Our immediate concern was the drought, which was becoming extremely serious, especially in Matabeleland and our other ranching areas. This was a cruel blow in our first year of independence, on top of sanctions and all the other associated problems. It involved us in a massive exercise of transporting cattle to the high rainfall areas in the north and east of the country, allocating priority cold storage commission facilities to the drought areas, and the cartage of fodder to the affected areas. In spite of all this, many cattle died of malnutrition.

Wilson, whose original estimate was that we would collapse in a matter of weeks, had now stretched his guess to months, and he was receiving strong support from much

of the left-wing media. However, a number of British Members of Parliament visited Rhodesia during the Christmas — New Year recess, and all they could find was peace and an air of law and order, and security. There was none of the signs of repression and the 'police state' which Wilson had been dramatising. Gradually some of the more balanced British newspapers began to question Wilson's handling of the situation, and gave more space to supporters of the Rhodesian cause.

Edgar Whitehead, who had been one of my strongest critics and had opposed our UDI, had left Rhodesia to retire in England. He wrote an article for the *Spectator*, in which he ridiculed sanctions, saying they would be no more effective in producing a change of government in Rhodesia than they had been in Cuba. He criticised the Conservatives for joining Labour in a bipartisan policy, and accused both parties of misjudging the Rhodesian character. He rubbed it in by saying: 'They have forgotten what they would have done to anybody in 1940 who suggested that they should give in to Hitler because if not they would be subject to sanctions and a shortage of petrol.' That was a cruel blow — *et tu Brute*!

A few of the black leaders to our north then had a rush of blood to the head, and decided that the quickest and easiest way to solve the Rhodesian problem was to organise a meeting of Commonwealth prime ministers. They had no right to do such a thing, but they did it. There was a convention that these meetings never discussed the internal affairs of member countries, but that was of no importance to them. Britain had stated publicly, including at the UN, that the matter was between Britain and Rhodesia and that they would not tolerate any outside interference, but to them that was also irrelevant. Tafawa Balewa, Prime Minister of Nigeria, agreed to take the chair, and arranged to hold the meeting in Lagos in January. Menzies of Australia, and a number of other leaders,

refused to attend, but Wilson, after hesitating for a while, capitulated and agreed to participate. It was the first time in history that the British sovereign did not attend the opening ceremony. It was just one more of those sad cases where traditions and standards were debased. There was much irresponsible talk at the meeting, resulting in recommendations which even Wilson was forced to reject; it ended on 12 January 1966 with a communiqué in which the British Prime Minister assured them that 'the Rhodesian rebellion would be brought to an end in a matter of weeks rather than months'. They all went home with happy hearts. Nigeria, the largest and most progressive of the newly independent countries of Africa, a wonderful example of how expertly they had adapted to democracy, was congratulated on taking the initiative and conducting this unique meeting in the crusade to bring freedom to Africa. Three days later, their Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa, a number of his ministers and their families, were brutally murdered in a most barbaric manner.

The day after the Commonwealth conference, our Chief Justice, Sir Hugh Beadle, came to tell me that he was going to London in an attempt to get Wilson to adopt a more realistic line and accept that the only way out of the predicament was to talk to me and my government, and that moreover, Gibbs supported him strongly in this approach. It was obvious to both Beadle and Gibbs that our support from the Rhodesian people was consolidating, and there were clear indications too that the economy was coping well, in contrast with the picture which Wilson was trying to give to the world. In fact, the record showed that our trade worldwide was increasing, and this applied equally to Africa, and in particular to Zambia. Worthy of note was an article by the editor of the *Daily Times* of Lagos, written after a visit to Rhodesia during that same month of January, in which he stated that the generally accepted picture of Rhodesia as a police state where the

people were repressed and denied freedom was a ‘massive fraud’. He was struck by the courtesy which he received, and was impressed by the absence of discrimination and the general atmosphere of peace which prevailed. Not surprisingly, Mr Enahavo received his marching orders at the end of the month. For someone who lived in the climate of sub-Sahara, communist one-party-state dictatorship, he made the classical mistake of stepping out of line. Needless to say, it gave us much satisfaction to draw this kind of event — and there were many others — to the attention of the British government. I was informed, not surprisingly, that they simply looked the other way. What else could they do!

The oil embargo, one of Wilson’s main weapons, was not working. There was an immediate sympathetic response from our friends in South Africa, who were privately ferrying in drums of petrol. This received much publicity, with a resultant psychological boost and strengthening of ties between our two countries. But the cardinal point in our favour was that the South African government had made it clear that in principle they were opposed to sanctions, and it was their intention to maintain normal relations between our two countries, so bulk supplies were crossing our border at Beit Bridge by rail and road. Moreover, there was a large refinery at Lourenço Marques, so there was no problem in obtaining additional supplies from Mozambique.

An article in the London *Sunday Times* of 27 February had the headline SANCTIONS HAVE FAILED, and after quoting much evidence in support of the claim, made the point: ‘Either Mr Smith and his colleagues are convinced they are winning, or they are bluffing on a colossal scale. I think the latter supposition can be dismissed.’

Another positive factor was the decision by the Conservative Party to send Selwyn Lloyd, the former Lord Privy Seal, on a fact-finding mission to Rhodesia from 7–16

February. We welcomed this, for not only was he one of the senior and influential members of the Conservatives, but it appeared that this move might indicate an end to the Conservative Party's policy of allowing themselves to be dragged along in the wake of the Labour Party's campaign of vindictiveness and vengefulness on all Rhodesians, whatever their race, creed or political conviction. Not surprisingly, Wilson protested over the visit, but it was more than time for the Conservatives to re-establish their individuality and start facing up to principle as opposed to political expediency.

Lloyd spent a busy ten days interviewing a wide spectrum of people, and produced a positive report which underlined a few basic facts. In summary he believed that a solution to the Rhodesian problem was possible, and that talks between the two governments should take place. Wilson castigated the Conservative Party for giving comfort to Rhodesia, but within a matter of weeks followed their advice by sending a representative, Duncan Watson of the Commonwealth Office, to Salisbury on 21 March, to 'test the water'.

Britain had two main prongs to its sanctions strategy: oil and tobacco. They chose correctly, because if the arteries of transport are not functioning efficiently, any country will grind to a standstill. Tobacco was our biggest earner of foreign exchange and sustained more people than any other sector of our economy. It was the oil blockade, however, which produced the drama. Rhodesia's main supply of oil came by pipeline from the port of Beira to our refinery in Umtali. Wilson's plan was to prevent oil tankers from entering Beira, and in April he succeeded at the United Nations with a resolution agreed by the UN Security Council authorising Britain to prevent oil reaching Rhodesia through Beira. The whole thing was highly irregular, with the UN making a decision in conflict with their own charter. The Conservatives attacked Wilson for

his recklessness and dishonesty. He had stated on many occasions that this was a British problem, and asserted that no external interference would be brooked. Into the bargain, he had made an emphatic statement in the House of Commons that he had no intention of instituting a naval blockade of Beira. South Africa lodged an official complaint over the illegal and unprincipled action. Portugal, too, expressed its gravest objection against Britain and the UN for their action, which prejudiced the economy and infringed the rights of Mozambique. Clearly this action was a total breach of the UN principles, and was setting a precedent for many more occasions where the rules were bent to accommodate special favours.

With typical British 'gunboat diplomacy' an aircraft carrier, HMS *Ark Royal*, and the frigates, *Rhys* and *Cambrian*, were despatched to patrol off Beira. However, the first tanker carrying oil for Rhodesia, the *Joanna*, simply ignored the warships and sailed through to its destination. We had been receiving a blow-by-blow account, and the event was received with much rejoicing in Mozambique and Rhodesia, and even further afield.

Regrettably, the oil was never discharged. This blatant defiance of Britain and the UN stirred tremendous controversy, and such was the pressure brought to bear on Portugal that they decided to resort to diplomacy and produced a different plan to supply us with our requirements. It is said that discretion is the better part of valour, but Rhodesians were disappointed in what appeared to be a climb down, as opposed to their prevailing mood of standing up to British duplicity. The first Portuguese thinking was to produce six shallow-draft tankers which would ferry oil from Lourenço Marques to Beira, keeping in territorial waters and thus evading interference. It sounded reasonable and practical, and would have enabled us to keep our refinery going, but clearly would have been subject to international pressure. This led them to their

second plan: they could supply us with our requirements from the Sonarep refinery in Lourenço Marques. This would be impossible to detect because it was the supply base for the whole of Mozambique and also provided some of Eastern Transvaal's requirements. Britain went on trying to pressurise Portugal and South Africa, to no avail. The Portuguese reminded them that it would be a contravention of internationally accepted convention for them to restrict access of goods to a land-locked country, and reminded them that Beira was the main port serving Malawi. South Africa simply reiterated that in principle they were opposed to boycotts and sanctions, and for good measure pointed out that they had always provided the main ports of access to a number of land-locked countries, notably Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia, in addition to Rhodesia. Was Britain suggesting, the South Africans asked, that South Africa should interfere with these normal trading patterns? Would such action not be reprehensible? So at last, even Harold Wilson seemed to accept that he was flogging a dead horse, and he moved on in search of new fields.

The tobacco floors had opened for their annual sales at the end of March, and we had made preparations, knowing that these had been targeted for special attention. Our tobacco sales had the reputation of being one of the most efficient business organisations in the world, and was on the list of attractions to visitors. The sing-song talk of the auctioneers, the speed at which bales were sold, the facility with which they were removed from the floor and the sweet aroma of freshly baled tobacco, were memories which stayed with you. But all this came to an end. As we knew that British spies were trying to identify the buyers, we were forced to make the sad decision to exclude visitors. Salisbury was bustling with tobacco buyers from all over the world, except Britain and the USA, and we set up a Tobacco Corporation that, among other things, would serve

as a residual buyer if need be, for we were determined to keep our tobacco industry alive. The corporation was a magnificent success, and continued to operate for the duration of sanctions — for the next fifteen years — and our tobacco growers, who had the reputation of being among the best in the world, streamlined their production methods and increased their efficiency and effort to even greater heights. This was just one more of the many examples of how dedicated Rhodesians overcame almost insuperable odds. There were many other cases, not only in the primary industry fields of agriculture and mining, but also in secondary industry, where we were successful in entering new markets. An especially pleasing case drawn to my attention was the sale of a large consignment of transistor radios to the USA.

Complementary to the stepping up of exports was the need to reduce imports, and this stimulated a number of innovations and ‘make-do’ arrangements in the area of import substitution. We used a cartridge starting mechanism for our Hunter fighter aircraft. As these were now unobtainable from Britain, our air force technicians produced a substitute at a fraction of the original cost, so that even had it been available there would have been no need to return to the old system. The reconditioning (servicing) of our jet engines had been done in Britain, but we now turned to our local aeromechanical engineering firms, which had developed much expertise over the years, and the results of their work never let us down. In view of the fact that we have no winter rain of any consequence, our wheat production was less than 10 per cent of our requirements, and the remainder we imported from Australia. Farmers accepted the challenge and established irrigation schemes, and within two years we were not only producing enough for our own requirements, but a small surplus for export. An ethanol plant was constructed alongside our large sugar industry in the Lowveld, and

soon we were gradually incorporating this into our petrol. It would be a boring exercise if I were to attempt recounting all the other operations which kept Rhodesians busy.

It came as no surprise to me when Finance Minister Wrathall introduced a favourable first UDI budget in July. There was no increase in income tax, and the overall picture was one of confidence and an expanding economy. Our information was that this had come as a bad shock to Wilson and his government.

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First Moves to Settle in 1966: HMS Tiger

Wilson had already initiated contact with us at the level of ‘officials’ — this was to enable him gradually and tactically to break out from the corner in which he had placed himself by saying that he would not negotiate with ‘an illegal regime’. It was Selwyn Lloyd who had put the cat among the pigeons after his visit to Rhodesia in February, when he gave his opinion that the problem was capable of solution, and that it was time the British government started negotiations. Ever since, pressure had mounted from various quarters, and Wilson’s problem was that pressure from the OAU and black Commonwealth members was in the opposite direction. He would dearly have loved to remove the Rhodesian thorn from his side, but how to placate the howls from the left?

Once again we came face to face with our perennial problem: politicians who were looking for a solution to appease our external opponents, in preference to serving the best interests of Rhodesia. So we became involved in what were commonly referred to as ‘talks about talks’, while Wilson was preparing the ground to enable him to start talking himself. Civil servants from both countries held meetings in London and in Salisbury, but they found it was not easy to produce a peg on which Wilson could hang his climb-down. While I had made it clear from the outset that I was happy to join in talks to resolve our problem, there could be no pre-conditions about surrendering our independence, or a return to legality — as far as we were concerned, we were the legal government. So the British

had the problem of facing up to the facts of life — simple for me, but apparently difficult for them.

Wilson had started to disentangle himself from situations which he had created, and which were now proving an embarrassment. A lesson which people usually learn early in life is that it is easier to create a problem than to solve it. Britain's financial commitment to Zambia showed no sign of diminishing, and his boast that the problem would be solved in 'weeks not months' had now been extended to 'a year or more'.

The announcement was made that the RAF squadron and British troops in Zambia were returning home at the end of August. They were given a grand farewell party by the Rhodesians at the Victoria Falls, and many messages of good wishes were conveyed to me, including one saying that if need be they would be prepared to come back and help us — no doubt given in the spirit of the occasion! And, as I was told, sent by one RAF pilot to another! They pulled out of other commitments, such as the airlift of fuel to Zambia, with less embarrassment, and after discouraging the use of Rhodesian Railways to transport their copper to the ports, they now advocated it as the most desirable method. To add another dose of dishonesty to the operation, they made the transport payments to us through a neutral international bank, in keeping with our stipulation — this latter action in violation of Britain's recently imposed legislation.

Problem seemed to follow problem, and an especially embarrassing one began to appear on Wilson's horizon: the Commonwealth prime ministers' conference, which was scheduled for September. So for good tactical reasons the British decided to adjourn the 'talks about talks'. My comment was that 'Wilson had made so many impossible commitments and talked himself into so many incredibly difficult courses impossible of fulfilment, that he had to

face up to the tremendous task of talking his way out of the predicament in which he now found himself.'

Kaunda was incensed at the cutting down of British financial aid and in typical manner resorted to hurling abuse and insult at Wilson, in which he was joined by a number of other black Commonwealth leaders in demanding a military solution in view of the fact that sanctions had proved to be a failure.

The prime ministers' conference duly took place, and as usual was accompanied by much verbosity and many threats. The final communiqué of 14 September bore the taint of the new modern Commonwealth. In place of the traditional, reasoned, balanced and mature wisdom associated with such occasions in former days, it was now split into two clear-cut divisions. On one side, unfortunately consisting of the majority, were the failures, the have-nots, who resorted to the traditional tactic of blaming everyone else for their deficiencies. On the other side, unfortunately the minority, were the responsible representatives of those countries which had proved themselves to be truly independent and could stand on their own feet, the success stories. The first category were destructive, with their false accusations and threats; the other constructive with their efforts directed at co-operation and assisting one another to improve standards of life. The failures resorted to the parrot cry that they were in their current predicament because they were exploited by the colonial powers. But Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Rhodesia had gone through the same history, and as a matter of interest, so did USA and South Africa, and they are all glorious success stories. Those who have not made the grade must stop looking for a scapegoat, and look to themselves: their corruption, incompetence, nepotism, external bank accounts and high leisure preference. 'The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars, but in ourselves.'

It is sad to record that the Commonwealth, once highly respected and trusted, is today an absolute fraud, and utterly distrusted. Let me quote from the foreword, as printed in the Journal of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth, where it states that its members are ‘united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and human rights and freedoms, and the pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy’.

The majority of members, however, are either one-party dictatorships or military dictatorships; whether they are communist or fascist is immaterial, because there is no difference, they are equally evil. Surely the decent thing to do would be to ask members if they subscribe to the principles of the Commonwealth, and confirm parliamentary democracy, not only by word, but also by action? If not, they should do the honest thing and pull out. By accepting their presence the whole organisation is brought into disrepute, and no one can be released from responsibility for condoning such deceit. Because of the tolerance of these double standards, Wilson found himself forced back even further into a corner by the communiqué issued at the end of the prime ministers’ conference. This stated that most of the heads of government advocated force as the only means of bringing down the Rhodesian government and that Britain should refuse to resume discussions with the Rhodesians. Moreover, if these threats failed to force the Rhodesian government to step down, Britain should take the matter to the UN through a resolution requesting mandatory economic sanctions. Wilson opposed these, and was supported by Australia, Canada and New Zealand. But the mob (all the failures) were in full cry, howling for blood at whatever cost.

The Conservative Party accused Wilson of deviating from undertakings given in the House of Commons and on 15 September demanded an immediate recall of Parliament. Wilson, as would be expected, denied the accusation. He

would do this with conviction, because he had no intention of complying with the communiqué. In fact, Sir Morrice James, an Under Secretary at the Commonwealth Office, had already flown into Salisbury. His first call was at Government House, where he assured Gibbs of the British government's intention to commence negotiations with the Rhodesian government. Both Gibbs and Beadle had warned Wilson of their disenchantment over the continuing vacillation, and Gibbs had gone so far as to indicate his intention of resigning if there was no positive action. James's second objective was more complicated. He asked: would we accept a visit from Bowden, the new Commonwealth Secretary? There was no problem on my part — I had indicated that I was always ready to talk. The problem was with the British — we would not accept any back-door methods. The talks would be official, government to government, and clearly this would be flying in the face of the Commonwealth prime ministers' communiqué, on which the ink had hardly had time to dry. But we could not be expected to help Wilson pull his chestnuts out of the fire.

Our conditions were accepted, which surprised some people, but my view was that the British would have been naïve not to have anticipated our stance, and to have embarked on a mission which was doomed to failure could only have embarrassed them. One of Wilson's better qualities was that once he had made up his mind on a course of action, he wasted no time. Herbert Bowden, the new Commonwealth Secretary, accompanied by the Attorney General, Elwyn Jones, arrived in Salisbury on 19 September. So much for all the staged drama that they would never have contact with the illegal Rhodesian government, that we would have to renounce our UDI, and that all communication would have to be through the Governor.

The talks went better than expected, and I found Bowden reasonable and easy of communication. The problem was that he was unable to come to conclusions and make decisions, no doubt because he was new to the job and still finding his feet, and accordingly was in constant touch with Wilson in London. The differences between the two sides were not insurmountable. We were not unreasonable and were prepared to go out of our way to meet Britain's requests for a wide extension of the black roll vote, a test of acceptability for the new constitution, and a final appeal to the Privy Council in London, among others. But the British would have to accept that the plan would necessitate a transfer of power from the existing constitution to the new one — there could be no abandonment of our independence. With a bit of give and take and reason on both sides we could find a way out of the predicament, since it looked as if Wilson was seeking a way to extricate himself from the nightmare of another prime ministers' conference. I had a final meeting with Bowden on the day of their return to London, 26 September, and his reasonable approach led me to believe that there was hope.

The British again wasted no time, and Morrice James returned to Salisbury on 14 October with the plan that they had drawn up. There were still certain points of difference, but these were negotiable, especially as Bowden had indicated his readiness to fly out for further discussions if need be. But the sting was in the tail — the British insisted that our Parliament would be dissolved, the Governor would assume control and he would appoint ministers to act until a new Parliament was elected under their new constitution. In addition the British government would have the right to bring in troops if they thought it necessary.

This was sheer dishonesty. There had never been any doubt in anybody's mind that these things were totally unacceptable to us. The suggestion of British troops coming to assist was repugnant — Rhodesia was one of the

most peaceful countries in the world, and our forces of law and order had proved their capacity to deal with any eventuality. To add fuel to the fire, their message ended with the threat that if we rejected their proposals ‘the consequences for Rhodesia and the whole of central and southern Africa would be incalculable’. I was surprised that Wilson had not learned by then that any attempt to blackmail us would be rebuffed.

We despatched our reply without resorting to abuse or provocation, putting forward our constructive suggestions as to how we could bridge our differences, stating that once this had been done and the new constitution determined, we would then be ready to discuss the procedure for implementing the change. As diplomatically as possible, we made it clear that their wishful thinking over the question of surrendering our independence was a non-starter. We were ready to accept a visit from Bowden to finalise matters.

The reality of the situation was that we were growing in strength with the passage of time. The morale of our people was high, and they seemed to thrive on the challenge of beating sanctions. Moreover, the facts proved that the economy was positively moving forward. And most important, South Africa continued to reiterate publicly their opposition to sanctions — and this message had been relayed to me personally. We made a point of using all channels — diplomatic, business, financial — to ensure that the British were made aware of these facts, and Gibbs and Beadle were kept in the picture too. Another victory for us, and a rebuff to the British, was a High Court decision on 9 September in our favour against two detainees appealing against their detention, where the verdict stated that while the Rhodesian government was not the *de jure* government, it was the *de facto* one, and in complete and effective control of the country.

Moreover, criticism in Britain was mounting, not only from the opposition Conservative Party, but from responsible opinion expressed in the media, which was drawing attention to the escalating costs to the British taxpayer of Wilson's reckless excursion into the sanction operation, which was boomeranging on Britain. Another interesting facet of note is that not only had Wilson become anathema to white southern Africa, he had also provoked distrust among many black states to our north which resulted in them pouring scorn and insult on Britain, their erstwhile friend and ally. Kaunda was on record as saying that he 'abhorred Wilson's deceitful and dishonest ways'. We were forced to change our trading partners because of sanctions by Britain and the USA, and fortunately and unexpectedly this resulted in a number of benefits for us in products that often cost us less than previously. Some of the countries to our north also diverted trade away from Britain and the USA because of resentment over their duplicity.

Zambia suffered most, admittedly because it eagerly joined in with Britain's machinations on sanctions, which Zambians were assured would last for only a few weeks, and for which they would be generously compensated. But when the whole thing went sour, it became a different story. Zambia was told to go back to the old ways of dealing with Rhodesia, and thus was forced to the humiliation of climbing down in front of its friends in the OAU. It was, after all, their only course to survival, because the only effective route to their ports of entry and exit was through Rhodesia, and the coal for the copper belt and coke for the lead mine at Broken Hill came from our big coal fields at Wankie, just south of the Zambezi River, our common border. It was fair comment to say that any reasonably intelligent person could have worked that out in advance, and therefore they had only themselves to blame, but in all fairness to the Zambians, they were led into the trap by the

British. We had appreciated immediately the disaster that Zambia was heading for, and passed the message on to them time after time through the leaders of the big mining houses operating in South Africa, Rhodesia and Zambia. The same message was conveyed through the joint management of the railways and the electricity supply commission which operated in both our countries. Britain also had the knowledge and expertise to make the correct assessment. The only ones who did not were the poor Zambians, and for the sake of political expediency Wilson was happy to pull the wool over their eyes.

The methods used to circumvent Rhodesia, Britain's brainchild, became more and more ludicrous. The road route transporting the copper and lead to the coast was double the distance, and for the importation of coal and coke it was ten times as far. Moreover, once the tropical rains started, the roads became impassable. While Britain bore the cost of all of this, plus the transport by air of liquid fuel (by kind courtesy of the British taxpayer), the biggest loss was the dramatic fall in copper production, which constituted more than 90 per cent of Zambia's export and revenue. Britain was unable adequately to compensate for this, and there were hidden losses such as the reduced throughput and thus sub-economic utilisation of the sophisticated and highly capitalised plant, which were never assessed.

I could not help but have a feeling of some sympathy for the manner in which the Zambians had been cheated, and although there was little love lost between our two countries, when comparing them with the British Labour Party government I came to the conclusion that they were probably the lesser of the two evils. In my New Year's message to the Rhodesian nation on 1 January 1967 were included the words: 'I believe that the present British government will forever stand condemned because of its policy of fighting the war of sanctions to the last Zambian

— this they continue to do with smug satisfaction, without even turning a hair.'

The southern African scene at this time was facing a new threat: the march down the African continent of Communist imperialism. We were already facing the problem of unbridled black nationalism, and this required great wisdom and experience if it was to be guided correctly in order to avoid the pitfalls of corruption, nepotism and incompetence which inevitably end up in a one-party dictatorship. I had listened to a very interesting briefing given by our Security Council (comprising myself in the chair, the Ministers of Defence and of Law and Order and the National Joint Operational Command — Nat JOC)* on thecommunist plan for Africa, as part of their overall scheme for world domination. The map showed clearly how they had firmly established themselves in a number of countries in north Africa, methodically moving on to new ground once a base had been secured. The ultimate target was South Africa, which was not only the industrial giant of Africa, but was one of the most richly mineralised parts of our world.

It was a few years later that I was pleased to receive a report that the United States had been alerted to this development and, as a result, their Congress Committee on Strategic Minerals and Mining had sent a mission to investigate. After visiting Zaire, Zambia, Rhodesia and South Africa they produced a commendable report and in most expressive language termed the area 'the Persian Gulf of strategic minerals of our earth'. Apart from the greatest world deposits of gold, diamonds, platinum and chrome they itemised a list of other strategic minerals in which many countries, including the USA and Canada, are deficient. The only other country where one could find a similar conglomeration of these minerals was the USSR; if the Soviets could have gained control of this area,

therefore, they would have had a virtual world monopoly. The report warned the American Congress and the nation of this potential danger, and urged them to rouse themselves from their complacency.

The communists' plan, as explained by our Security Council, was to establish a saddle across Africa to our north and use this as the launching pad for the final assault on South Africa. They were already established in Tanzania through the good offices of Nyerere, a well-known communist who had invited the Chinese in. From there they had obtained a foothold in northern Mozambique, where they were assisting the terrorists. The Soviets were moving south from their bases in Libya and Ethiopia and had established a footing in Zaire and Zambia, from where they were planning to make reconnaissance trips into Angola that would open the way into South West Africa. Mozambique on the east coast, and South West Africa on the west coast would give them the foundations for their pincer strategy against South Africa. Finally, Rhodesia was the king-pin in the centre — it controlled the main transport routes to the south, was the bread basket of central Africa and had a degree of industrialisation second only to South Africa in the region.

The whole picture was clear and logical, and subsequent history has proved our analysis to be absolutely correct. What is so totally inexplicable, though, is why our friends in the free world could not or would not see this, and went on supporting communism in its plan to eliminate the last vestiges of the Western democratic system from Africa.

It did not surprise me that the Afro-Asians were on the side of the communists, for two main reasons. First, they could be bought, and second they wanted the white man out of sub-Saharan Africa — in this they were total and unashamed racialists. As the whites were on the side of the free world, they were on the side of the communists. As for Harold Wilson, we thought he probably wanted to extricate

himself from the predicament in which he found himself with these people, who now dominated the Commonwealth. There was also the theory that the USA were making it known that they were becoming disenchanted with the sanctions game, especially as it now looked as if it was going to drag on, contrary to assurances they had been given. So I was not surprised when it was mooted that Bowden should come for further talks, and he flew into Salisbury on 25 November.

Before continuing, however, let me record our anguish, indeed disgust, at being banned from participating at the Armistice Day Service at the Cenotaph in London. This was a despicable act on the part of the British government, prompted by blatant vindictiveness, against a country which had been one of the most loyal members of the British Empire and was proud of the long list of its countrymen who had paid the supreme sacrifice in the cause of defending freedom. There were a number of our loyal supporters in Britain who were ready to defy the ban and place a wreath on behalf of Rhodesia, even if it meant confrontation, but I advised against this because of our feeling that it would be wrong to debase such a solemn and dignified occasion. We would have gained nothing by trying to match the Labour government's spiteful and absolutely disgraceful behaviour. Instead, we resorted to positive and constructive thinking in typical Rhodesian fashion. With the aid of our friends of the Anglo-Rhodesian Society we organised our own ceremony at the Cenotaph in the afternoon, engaged the Salvation Army band and one of their commissioners to offer prayers, observed the one-minute silence, and the buglers sounded the last post. Our High Commissioner in London, Mr Sydney Brice, led the wreath-laying ceremony with the inscription: 'From the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, Government and People of Rhodesia'. Those in attendance included Lord Salisbury, a number of Conservative Members of Parliament, many

other dignitaries, and a supportive congregation which was estimated at being in excess of five thousand. It was described to us as a glorious and stirring occasion, and a great credit to those who participated. Wilson and his Labour Party comrades were angry and frustrated — strange people!

Coinciding with Bowden's visit there were positive contributions from Portugal and South Africa. Portugal made it clear that it would not allow itself to be separated from South Africa if sanctions were applied, and Zambian copper relied almost exclusively on the Portuguese ports in Mozambique and Angola. Ben Schoeman, one of South Africa's best known and most respected ministers, told Wilson in clear, unequivocal language that if there were a showdown between their two countries, Britain stood to lose more than South Africa did. It had been made very clear from the outset that South Africa would not abandon Rhodesia, not only for moral reasons and because of our strong mutual historical ties, but because there was much evidence to indicate that if sanctions succeeded against Rhodesia, South Africa would be next on the list. So it was important to prove the point that sanctions would not work, as history had demonstrated on a number of occasions in the past (over Italy and Abyssinia for instance).

The talks with Bowden showed that the differences between us on the constitutional issues did not involve matters of principle, and these we were capable of bridging. The problem lay with the method of bringing in the new constitution, or as the British liked to refer to it, the return to legality. In our view it was straightforward and uncomplicated. Once we had finalised the new constitution, the British would carry out their exercise on the test of acceptability. We believed this was unnecessary, but even more important it was impossible of execution and would in fact be a meaningless exercise. Nevertheless, it was one of the conditions laid down by Wilson, so we would

assist where we could. Once that had been successfully completed, our two Parliaments would pass legislation substituting the new for the old constitution.

The British, however, were insisting on an interim government during the test of acceptability. This was part of the pettiness that Wilson was obsessed with, trying to humiliate us, make us climb down. Clearly, this was not on, but there was another real and practical reason why we could not contemplate the idea, as I explained to Bowden: assuming the test of acceptability failed, we would find ourselves in the position where we had abandoned our current constitution, only to find that the one we had agreed with the British to replace it had been rejected; we would then be left high and dry, a country without a constitution — an absolutely ridiculous suggestion, unless, of course, it was a deliberate tactic to bring about our defeat and destruction. In this case, it was a brilliant piece of Machiavellian or Wilsonian scheming. Bowden returned to London on 27 November with a clear message from me: it was obvious that we were within reach of settling our differences on the constitutional issues, and it was important that we should concentrate on these, as they were the core of the problem. I stressed the need to build trust between our two sides, and this necessitated honesty and frankness. The idea of getting us to abandon our present constitution as an ‘interim’ measure was a non-starter, and merely served to create suspicion in our minds. It would be preferable for us to remain as we were. For good measure, I gave him facts to substantiate our case that we were coping with sanctions, and were growing in strength with the passage of time. I believed that Bowden was amenable to our thoughts, but I wondered if he had the strength of character to convince Wilson.

Two days later Morrice James was on our doorstep; clearly Wilson was determined to get on with it. The message he conveyed was dramatic: an invitation from

Wilson to join him for talks on board a warship off Gibraltar in the Mediterranean, Gibbs and Beadle to join us. This was indeed a climb down for Wilson, because he had stated on a number of occasions that he was not prepared to meet me until I had returned to legality! By contrast, I had always made it clear that I would meet him any place, any time.

I took Jack Howman, Minister of Information and Immigration (Lardner-Burke, who dealt with constitutional matters, was out of the country on leave), and we were joined by Gibbs and Beadle. We flew out of Salisbury on Thursday 1 December, landed on Ascension Island to refuel, and landed in Gibraltar early Friday morning. The air crew enjoyed talking to me, and on the first leg of the journey the captain asked if I would like to take a turn at the controls, and he moved out of his seat. I asked him to take George out (the automatic pilot) so that I could get a feel of the controls. It was a clear night and pleasant looking up at the stars and, as there was no turbulence, the ride was smooth. It was good to find that my instrument flying was reasonable, because this branch of flying needs the greatest amount of practice. And although I had been getting in a few hours over the past years with our air force chaps flying me around the country, this did not involve any night flying. We talked away with the number two pilot sitting in the right-hand seat with the captain moving in and out of the flight deck. At one stage someone came in and tapped the number two on his shoulder. He moved out of his seat, put his hand on my arm, said, ‘I’ll be back in a minute,’ and walked out. I was happy to have no talking for a while, as it gave me an opportunity to have a good examination of the instrument panel and all the dials before me. The thought passed through my mind: I wonder what old Harold Wilson would say if he knew that Captain Ian Smith (the traitor from Rhodesia) was at the controls of his RAF Britannia single-handed with no one else in sight and all his ‘loyal’ subjects including Governor Gibbs and Chief

Justice Beadle, sitting behind. Suddenly the number two pilot rushed in and, looking at me anxiously, said: ‘I didn’t realise I’d been away for a quarter of an hour, are you all right?’ I nodded my head and said: ‘Sure — go on and finish what you were doing.’ He paused for a few moments, looked around and, apparently satisfied with everything, went off again. After about five minutes they both came back, said they had all been discussing their problems back in Britain, and had a number of questions to ask me. Put briefly, my views were that Britain’s problems flowed from the bankrupt philosophy of socialism which transferred efficient free enterprise into incentive-destroying state enterprise, with its more money for less efficiency. And second, Britishers and other members of the free world should reject communist propaganda about the evils of colonialism, and tell the truth about how they had spread the light of Western civilisation to those parts of the world which had not yet emerged. One of them commented that their problem was lack of effective leadership. I had been with them for two hours, so I went on my way after wishing them a safe landing, because landing on Gibraltar is like landing on an aircraft carrier. As I found my way back to my place everyone else seemed to be asleep, so I settled down under a blanket — fortunately, the seats had been extended, so there was room to stretch one’s legs.

I went up on to the flight deck for the landing and enjoyed it, for the simple reason that it obviously was not easy and therefore was a challenge. It was a dull, grey morning, just beginning to get light, typical of Europe at that time of year. A visit to such a world-famous landmark could only be a stimulating experience — I had seen it in the distance as we passed through the Straits on the journey from Naples to Britain at the end of 1944. As we came in to land it was easy to get a bird’s eye view of the whole area, and as we drove down to the harbour one could

appreciate the layout, and our driver was able to give explanations to all our questions.

The cruiser *Tiger* was a few miles off shore, and we were ferried out in a compact small craft, and piped aboard as we climbed up the ladder that had been lowered for us. Wilson and his team were there to meet us, and he asked if Howman and I would come along to his room for a few words while the baggage was being unloaded. He wanted to take the opportunity of having a few confidential words with me, before going to the conference table, to stress the importance of the occasion. He spoke of the difficulty of his position within his own party and with the Commonwealth prime ministers, and of how important it was for us to show great responsibility in the discussions we were about to start. I thought it was arrogant of him to try to lecture me on the gravity of the occasion, and so I intervened to remind him, quietly but firmly, that if the wrong decision were to be made this would have no adverse repercussions on Britain. They would go on in their own sweet way, but Rhodesia would suffer, maybe disastrously, so it should be obvious that we were more anxious over the need to arrive at correct decisions than were the British. Second, if he found himself in an awkward situation with his Afro-Asian friends of the Commonwealth, this was a problem entirely of his own creation, and I thought it wrong that he should try to implicate me in it. In fact, if he examined some of my comments, I said, he would find that I had predicted that he was heading for a dilemma of his own making. So we broke it up, and as we walked away Jack Howman commented: 'You certainly cut him down to size!'

The ship was moving out to sea as we went up to our quarters, and it was a pleasant feeling — in fact, the whole set-up of efficiency, expertise and power had an appeal for me. We had wondered why Wilson had chosen a warship off Gibraltar as the venue for the talks. It was clear that he was not going to let me loose in London, because according

to our reports there was a sizeable wave of sympathy and support in our favour, and our friends there believed that if they could gain me access to British TV and the rest of the media this could be beneficial. So Wilson clearly felt this had to be prevented.

After the conference had ended there was speculation that Wilson believed that on a British warship I would be at a psychological disadvantage. If so, it misfired. First, my disposition is not amenable to that kind of pressure, and second everyone on board, from the captain down, was most courteous and kind and we were shown around everything we wished to see, including the new gun turrets, which were computerised to home in on approaching targets. Our second evening on board, my secretary brought a message from the petty officers' mess inviting us to a drink before dinner. I appreciated their kind hospitality, and we went along. The place was packed with people, and when our glasses were charged the chief petty officer formally welcomed me, and raising his glass said: 'To Rhodesia.' We had a good swig, and I expressed not only my thanks but also my surprise, to which he replied: 'You don't have to worry, the complement of this ship is 674; 672 are on your side, and the other two buggers went overboard long ago!'

Later that evening my secretary recounted that some of the chaps he was talking to had made the point that, if Harold Wilson entered their mess, he would certainly get a frosty reception. So any idea that I might have found myself at a psychological disadvantage was wishful thinking on Wilson's part.

Wilson was subsequently criticised for allocating our delegation inferior accommodation while he and his cronies took the best quarters. But we were not concerned with such trivialities: my cabin was adequate, with a comfortable bed. Next morning I went along to the toilet — there were six of them in a row — which was open at the

top, with a gap of about eight inches at the bottom. I had just settled down on my seat when someone moved in next door and took out a pipe and started smoking — there could be only one person with that kind of sweet smelling tobacco, so I said: ‘Hello Jack [Howman], how did you sleep last night?’ He had no complaints about his accommodation either.

The conference room was adequate, furnished with everything we required. At one stage the ship started rolling a bit, so sea-sickness tablets were made available. I noticed that Wilson and some of the others opposite accepted, but I was enjoying it and feeling for the first time that I really was at sea. There was a competent member of the British team, Marcia Williams, who was always available and able to deal with any of our problems. We started talking mid-morning on Friday, continuing for long hours on Saturday and Sunday, after dinner at night and even into the early hours of the morning. It would be tedious to go into the details, which are in any case included in the official documents of both governments. It was a pleasant surprise, though, to see how much progress we made in reconciling our differences on the constitution, issues such as the number of Chiefs in the senate, and the composition and number of ‘B’ roll seats. In the end both sides conceded that a successful conclusion had been achieved.

The stumbling block remained: the bringing in of the new constitution, or as the British liked to refer to it, the return to legality. We had made our stand clear to Bowden in Salisbury, but obviously Wilson believed that he could push us further. We listened patiently, and would have helped if we could, but the British plan was absolutely unacceptable. It meant that we would dissolve our government and Parliament and hand over total control to Gibbs, the Governor, who would then ask me to form a new government, which he would expect to be more broad-

based than my current government. It sounded reasonable and accommodating to everyone. But the factual position was that Gibbs, as the appointee of the British government, would take his orders directly from them. They could instruct him to ask anybody to act as prime minister and form a government, even Nkomo or Sithole, who were in restriction for their unconstitutional and terrorist activities. And having abdicated, I or the Rhodesian government would be powerless to do anything about it. Harold Wilson would be in complete control. To us, it was incomprehensible that anyone could make such a suggestion. Our plan was simple and logical: the British should carry out their test of acceptability on the new constitution, since they wanted this and we did not. Once that had been finalised our two Parliaments would legislate simultaneously to bring in the new constitution. I asked Wilson what the position would be if his test of acceptability failed, we having abandoned our current constitution, and the replacement, on which we had both agreed, rejected. Did he not accept that this would place Rhodesia in a disastrous situation? He claimed that there was an answer: we would negotiate a new constitution. I pointed out that this would necessitate us giving further ground to the extremists and we had no more ground to give. Clearly, this would put us on the slippery slope, at the whim of a British Government, which one day might be Conservative, the next Communist. I reminded him that never in our history had we been governed from London, that we had always enjoyed our own ‘responsible government’ with control in Salisbury. ‘What,’ I asked, ‘is your objection to our plan?’

He replied that he was unable to deal with an illegal government like ours, and it was therefore necessary for us to return to legality before he could recognise us and carry out the test of acceptability. I pointed out that he was negotiating with us at that very moment, although he had

previously stated that he would never talk to me until I had restored constitutionality, so there was an obvious answer: keep up the good work and change his mind again. And second, Gibbs was still there, and in his eyes the only legal authority, so he could carry out his test through the good offices of Gibbs, and we would ensure our co-operation in making everything necessary to this test available.

As most people knew, Wilson was a master tactician, and if one avenue was closed to him, he swiftly moved to another. He returned to his commitment to the Commonwealth prime ministers, and said that my proposal would mean a breach of his undertaking to them. My reply was simple: Rhodesia could not be expected to pay the price for his mistakes. For good measure I reminded him that they had made that decision behind my back, without consulting me, in spite of the fact that I was leader of a Commonwealth country, so surely they could not now expect me to respect it.

Again, he quickly changed his tactic and reminded me that if we failed to agree, the matter would go to the UN, to the embarrassment of both himself and myself. I was unable to accept this, as both Conservative and Labour governments in Britain had emphasised on a number of occasions that our problem was an internal matter between our two countries, and that they would brook no interference from outsiders. Moreover, Britain could always exercise its veto at the UN.

Once again he found a way out. Circumstances had changed dramatically, he said, and Britain was faced with the possibility of the Commonwealth breaking up over the Rhodesian issue. We no longer had any friends in the world, he declared. But, I asked, was I not correct in saying that, at the prime ministers' conference the previous month, Australia, Canada and New Zealand had been opposed to taking the matter to the UN? India believed it was a matter for Britain alone and a couple of the black leaders were

indifferent. He seemed stunned for a few moments, so I went on: the option he was placing before us was UN sanctions, and there was much evidence indicating that this would place us in no more difficulties than obtained in our current situation. The alternative was for Rhodesia to sign its own death warrant — what would he do under those circumstances? There was no come-back from him.

The main problem was that time was running out, said Wilson, and we had to have finality within twenty-four hours so that he could take the decision back to his cabinet in London. I simply repeated what I had told Bowden in Salisbury, and told them all in that conference room that his proposal was unacceptable, but that I was prepared to take it back to my government in Salisbury to see if there was any change of opinion. At this point, Wilson got a bit warm under the collar, stating that he had been led to believe that I was attending the conference with full power to make a final agreement, and Morrice James, who was at the table, confirmed this. I think that I did raise my voice, for the first time at the conference, when I barked across the table at Wilson: 'What could be more final than my answer, which is no?' The thought of Harold Wilson, of all people, questioning my integrity was not something I found easy to accept. I asked for Gibbs and Beadle to be brought into the meeting, and without hesitating they both concurred that all along, going back to the meeting with Bowden in Salisbury, I had made it absolutely clear that the British terms for a return to legality were unacceptable. Wilson looked a bit like a pricked balloon. I strongly emphasised the point that, having arrived at agreement on the new constitution, we had solved the most difficult problem. To allow the thing to founder over the mechanics of implementation would go down in history as a dreadful blunder on the part of Wilson and his Labour government. At this, both Gibbs and Beadle nodded in agreement.

Wilson then asked if he could have a private discussion with Gibbs and Beadle, and so our team withdrew and had a cup of coffee and a talk among themselves. After about twenty minutes we were asked to return to the conference room. Gibbs and Beadle had obviously given Wilson the message, so he proposed, in somewhat subdued manner, that we should regard the proposals as a working document which we would refer to our respective cabinets for acceptance. He added that our reply should be a clear acceptance or rejection — either 'Yes' or 'No' — and the British government for their part would do likewise. Sometimes he behaved like a normal adult, at other times like an adolescent trying to establish his authority. I simply replied that what they did was their affair, and that we would decide on our own action.

When we disembarked from the *Tiger* it was after midnight on Sunday 4 December. The ship had moved in close to the harbour, and as we looked up from our little boat below, it made a truly impressive picture. I saluted it, and said: 'Thanks for the kindness and consideration you showed to us. Apart from the Labour Party politicians, it was a memorable and stimulating experience.'

Within a short while we had boarded the aircraft, and were on the long trek back home, landing at Salisbury around 8 p.m. I had a brief meeting with my cabinet, giving them a copy of the document which I had brought back, asked them to read and if possible digest it before retiring for the night, and told them we would meet again on the morrow to consider and decide.

It was 8.30 a.m. on Monday 5 December and the meeting was in our cabinet room. Before departing from the *Tiger*, Wilson had confessed his disappointment that he had not succeeded in convincing me, because the British believed that if I said 'Yes' my cabinet would follow, and likewise if I said 'No'. Whereupon I gave an undertaking that I would deliberately refrain from expressing my views until my

colleagues had expressed their feelings. I stuck to my word. First of all, I asked if there were any questions for clarification — there were a few. Then I encouraged discussin. At 12.30 we adjourned for lunch and reconvened at 2 p.m. The debate was deliberately rational and unemotional, and I advocated taking the maximum time required. First one, then another, declared that they had firmly decided while others went on talking. We broke for a cup of tea and a stretch of legs. Finally, everyone had given his verdict. Opinion was unanimous. It was agreed that, while the constitutional proposals could be accepted, some with great difficulty, the terms for a return to legality were completely out of contact with reality and therefore destroyed any possibility of our accepting them. All that remained was the preparation of our statement, and this was ready soon after 6 p.m. I read it to the gathering of press and Rhodesians eagerly waiting for the news.

There was much evidence indicating that British public opinion was strongly on our side. The Conservatives lambasted Wilson in the Commons, where Alec Home made the telling point that, if Britain believed it necessary to invoke mandatory sanctions ‘because the constitution of a country falls short of the standards of democracy that we require, we should be at war with half the world today’. R.T. Paget, a Labour MP who was knowledgeable on African affairs, bitterly criticised Wilson, saying that he had ‘a remarkable capacity for getting himself distrusted’. He went on to say that ‘journalists on papers of every colour and opinion in Rhodesia all agreed that they could not find one person, including Welensky and Malvern, who thought the proposals were acceptable’. Enoch Powell MP did not mince his words: ‘We have now stood up in the face of the world, and told a big, black, bold, brazen lie. How Dr Goebbels would have relished that one.’

Then the constitutional lawyers got busy and proved that UN action to impose sanctions against Rhodesia was a

violation of their own charter, and they quoted chapter and verse that utterly ridiculed their actions. As history has shown on a number of occasions, however, the UN is averse to allowing itself to be influenced by the truth. The great bulk of Britain's newspapers criticised Wilson for his double standards in turning a blind eye to all those countries in Africa which had thrown their newly won independence constitutions out of the window and substituted one-party state dictatorships, while now declaring war on Rhodesia because 'it desired to preserve the excellent constitution which had recently been agreed and implemented by the British and Rhodesian Governments'.

We challenged the UN on the point that if, as Britain maintained, Rhodesia was not an independent state, but a part of Britain, how then could Britain impose sanctions on itself? And conversely, if the UN imposed sanctions against Rhodesia, then we must be an independent state and thus have the right of hearing at the UN Security Council. We were not even given the courtesy of a reply! The case presented against us was a mischievous distortion of the truth. In an attempt to correct this, we invited the UN to send a commission of investigation to get the facts — we had nothing to hide. Again, there was no reply from this world organisation, with its charter promoting peace, justice, freedom and fair play.

By his actions Harold Wilson had demeaned Britain to a position where decisions affecting the mother country and the British Commonwealth were no longer made in the House of Commons, but by the African members of the Commonwealth. To the British people was left the dubious honour of meeting all the costs! And these mounted to hundreds of millions of pounds. Wilson spelt it out very clearly: sanctions were necessary to prevent a break-up of the Commonwealth. The African members, all those whose economies were in tatters and who practised the one-party

state system, had given him that clear message. The other members, who truly practised the principles of the Commonwealth, had opposed sanctions. Britain alone was left carrying the baby, and this involved not only financing Zambia's costs for flying in fuel, using sub-economic transport routes, importing commodities at more than double the price, subsidising the heavy loss on copper exported, but also Britain's export and import losses, which were not inconsiderable.

There was one more important adverse effect on Britain's economy. If they could resort to such vindictive action against Rhodesia for what were so obviously devious reasons, then there were red lights flashing on the horizon for South Africa, at that time Britain's largest trading partner. The South Africans embarked on a deliberate policy of trade diversification, which led to Britain losing many of the trade benefits which it had previously enjoyed with South Africa — another price Britain had to pay for Wilson's policy of appeasement.

The drift towards double standards continued to accelerate year after year, and today it has reached a state where it can truly be said that the Commonwealth is the biggest political fraud in the world. Its charter underlines parliamentary democracy and the freedom and justice associated with it, but the majority of its members have become one-party dictatorships, where there is no freedom and no justice.

Footnote

*Comprising the service chiefs, the police and the Central Intelligence Organisation.

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Renewed Settlement Efforts in 1968: HMS Fearless

With the coming of the New Year, 1967, we made an assessment of our position. While we were coping with sanctions better than most had anticipated, they were a hindrance and we would have preferred them out of the way. We were planning to reduce the tobacco crop because the stockpile was above our normal target. This was unwelcome news, because tobacco was our largest foreign exchange earner, and our biggest employer of labour. We initiated a scheme to encourage and assist tobacco farmers to diversify into other crops. Nevertheless, our balance of payments position was healthy, and there was positive economic development covering a broad spectrum of activities, with considerable investment noticeable in the mining field. While our trade with Britain had decreased, the void had been rapidly filled by France, Japan, Germany, Italy and a number of smaller countries. Our motor assembly plants had their supplies from Britain and USA cut off, but these were immediately taken up by France and Japan. Our sanctions busters were in their full stride, thriving on the problems and opportunities which presented themselves.

I recall an occasion which truly warmed my heart. We have in Rhodesia, in fact in my own home town of Selukwe, one of the finest-quality deposits of chrome ore in the world. It is owned and mined by one of the big American consortia, but because of sanctions they were now denied the right to make shipments to their smelting plants in the USA. Fortunately, because of its high quality, we had no difficulty in disposing of it. One of our top sanctions

breakers brought in a report to say that they had traced a number of consignments of Selukwe chrome to the USSR, and had discovered that the Russians were selling an inferior grade of their chrome to the USA at double the price they were paying us for the quality chrome. Such was the price the Americans had to pay for allowing the British socialist government to seduce them into joining the sanctions war.

This was not all: most of our transport, tractors and other farming machinery, heavy earth-moving equipment, came from the USA. That was also cut off, and ever since we have obtained our requirements elsewhere; no harm was done to Rhodesia, but obviously American industry lost markets. Is it not fair comment for me to say that US taxpayers' money was being used to subsidise countries in Africa which had espoused the communist philosophy of one-party state dictatorship, to the detriment of one small country, Rhodesia, which was a staunch supporter of the free world and the free enterprise system, and which had always fought alongside Britain and America in the struggle to preserve democratic freedom and justice? I have never found a US politician who could justify those decisions.

Unfortunately, there was a gradual increase in the number of terrorist incursions into Rhodesia. Sadly, the main target of the terrorists was black people, simple, unsophisticated peasant farmers who did not comprehend what was happening, but were forced at the point of a gun to provide food and shelter and political support. One of the highly respected senior Matabele leaders, Chief Sigola, sent an invitation to the Secretary General of the UN to visit Rhodesia, in which he said:

> Rhodesia is a peaceful country; there is no war here. The talk of the overseas people is the only thing that could cause a war here. Our only trouble is from terrorists who come with bombs from Russia and China, communist

> countries with no freedom of speech or opposition parties. We plead with you to come and visit us in our country to see for yourself what a peaceful country it is. Why should the UN, which is made to keep the peace, come and interfere with us in this country where we are already so peaceful. In our Sindebele language we say: 'You cannot have two bulls in one paddock.' We have our bull in this country, which is our Government. We do not wish to be ruled or interfered with by anyone else.

Needless to say, there was not ever the courtesy of a reply.

From the black opposition Members of Parliament there was strong condemnation of the terrorists. One made an appeal 'to every citizen to take up arms and defend the country from foreign infiltrators who are killing for the sake of killing, and robbing poor defenceless elderly people'. Another thought that 'the terrorist infiltration was a British trick to give them an excuse for invading Rhodesia', and another stated that 'while the opposition had differences with the government, we are one as a nation of Rhodesia, and in the maintenance of law and order'. Yet another believed that 'Wilson should protest to Zambia on behalf of the African people whom he states he is championing'.

In my turn I lodged a protest with the British government, accusing them of condoning the Zambian government's action in harbouring terrorists operating against Rhodesia. I stressed that the main target of the terrorists was innocent blacks, who were being tortured, maimed in a most barbaric manner, and killed in order to enforce their subjugation. We knew that the British Embassy in Lusaka was completely in the picture, and on the evidence available to us they were not only condoning, but actually conniving with Kaunda in promoting this unholy business. But when it suited Wilson he ignored us,

and by contrast when he wanted to use us he turned on the charm.

For a few months there had been stories that Wilson was once again thinking of talking to us. This would be no problem for him, owing to his facility for changing sides while giving the appearance of remaining constant. One minute, in the presence of his Afro-Asian friends, I was the greatest evil on earth and he was not prepared to communicate with me. But when convenient, he would change his tune and say I was the only reasonable one on the scene, being pressurised by my cabinet colleagues. So it came as no surprise when he decided on 13 June 1967 to send Lord Alport on a visit to Salisbury for an exchange of views. According to our information, Wilson was motivated by reports that sanctions were not working, and the British economy was heading for the doldrums. We were not impressed by Alport, who had served in Salisbury for a time during Federation. Nevertheless, he had a busy time from 24 June on, and in his report gave the assessment that not only were sanctions proving ineffective, but that with the passage of time they would become even less effective. Moreover, he furnished Wilson with information which the Labour Party found most depressing: the fact that he found the majority of black people just as anxious as the whites for Britain to come to a settlement with our government. This was at the end of July.

Our Finance Minister, John Wrathall, confirmed to me the healthy state of our economy, and he made public figures indicating that British exports to Rhodesia were still surprisingly high, in spite of sanctions. ‘One can only conclude,’ he said, ‘that the British government are adjusting their figures to bamboozle their Afro-Asian friends, or that they do not know what is going on in their own back yard. It seems to me that Mr Wilson and his ministers are now being forced to adopt the tactics used by bankrupt governments the world over. They have to keep

Rhodesia on the front page of the newspapers in order to divert attention from the increasing economic chaos into which Britain has been led by their socialist policies.' For good measure Wrathall added Mr Simbule's humiliating jibe — the above-named gentleman had been appointed Zambia's ambassador to Britain, and commenting on his new post, he described Britain as 'a humbled, toothless bulldog wagging its tail in front of Ian Smith and fearing him like hell'. The acceptance of an ambassador is always subject to approval by the government concerned, and there are cases on record where the appointee has been turned down as undesirable. Certainly, no aspiring ambassador to Rhodesia would have survived such an insult. But Mr Simbule was welcomed in London with open arms!

Another encouraging report came from the Commissioner of Police, indicating a large decrease in the overall number of crime cases — in some branches the reduction was in excess of 50 per cent. Terrorist incursions were on the increase, and the count was approaching 200, but they had all been accounted for, killed or captured. An interesting new development was the capture, in August 1967, of a small band of South Africans moving through Wankie game reserve on their way to Botswana and thence to South Africa. We handed those over to the South Africans, who were happy to have information as to where they were receiving their training, and the numbers involved. The beneficial spin-off for us was that the South Africans became even more cooperative with their assistance and this led to a South African police presence helping to guard the border along the Zambezi. One of our MPs even made the claim that there was evidence to prove that the British government was supplying arms to the terrorists. This provoked South African Minister Ben Schoeman to say that, if this were true, it would have serious repercussions, and he asked for a British response. They issued a denial.

Early in August, Gibbs informed me that he had received a message from Wilson indicating that he was thinking about more talks. Neither of us was surprised, but throughout the country there was a growing feeling not all that amenable to the idea, since things were going fairly well and we would surely be better off without an agreement of the kind the British were looking for. Moreover, distrust of Wilson and the Labour Party was such that Rhodesians were hoping to avoid contact with them. So at our Rhodesian Front congress, which took place in September, not surprisingly there was a resolution calling for no more talks. While in my heart I sympathised with this feeling, thinking of the long term I knew that we should keep trying. I had always found the bulk of Rhodesians to be reasonable and logical, even under pressure, and the congress agreed with my thinking. But Wilson got the message that it was not going to be a bed of roses.

A message came through Gibbs on 10 October that George Thomson, the new Commonwealth Secretary, was making a trip to Africa in October and it was suggested that he visit Salisbury. En route he stopped over in Uganda, where there was a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting, and was taken aback at the hostility directed against him and Britain there. Instead of finding himself among friends, as he had thought, he was in the front line of fire from the ‘wild boys’ who believed that by now the British should have invaded Rhodesia. Milton Obote, President of Uganda, expressed the view that Britain should be expelled from the Commonwealth. However, when it was pointed out to him that without Britain’s financial support the association would be insolvent, he changed his mind.

Thomson was a pleasant enough, quiet-spoken Scot, not the kind to stir up problems, but a ‘new boy’, unsure of himself, who would certainly make no decisions. We talked at length on 8 November. He assured me of his dedication

to solving our problem, and that he would report back accurately to Wilson. We decided, at his request, that our talks should remain confidential until mutually agreed otherwise. Wilson endorsed this publicly on 7 December, saying: ‘I do not believe that anyone who wants these talks to succeed would want to destroy any hope by premature publication.’ Five days later, however, the details were published — I was informed only after the event. It was of little consequence to me, because I had nothing to hide, but it was an indication of the people with whom we were dealing. I quoted from a comment made earlier in the year by Lord Shawcross, a former Labour Party Attorney General, who spoke after a visit to America, saying: ‘The leadership of Britain is utterly discredited. Almost every pledge the Prime Minister has made has been broken. The feeling of distrust of the government is now felt throughout the country and abroad.’

For a while Wilson seemed to be scheming about how to extricate himself from his predicament, but the Conservatives were keeping up the pressure to reopen negotiations. As there was no response from their government they decided to send Alec Douglas-Home to Salisbury at the end of February 1968. He spent almost a week holding discussions with a broad cross-section of people, and returned to London with the firm impression that there was positive evidence in favour of a resumption of talks. Although there were signs that this was in keeping with Wilson’s thinking, the last thing he was going to do was to give the Conservatives any credit for it. So he withdrew even further into his shell.

Meanwhile, we simply got on with our normal business in a country where things were quiet and peaceful, and the threats and admonitions of Wilson and his cronies simply ignored. We had realised from the outset that acceptance of our legality by our courts would take time, and there was no thought from our government that we should in any way

attempt to influence this. Rhodesians had always been meticulous in their acceptance of the principles of maintaining justice and abiding by the codes of honesty and decent behaviour. Sometimes these may be inconvenient and uncomfortable, but that was part of life if one believed in civilised standards. It was important that the rest of the world should know that this was not just another banana republic, with politicians arranging things to suit their own convenience.

One of the most sacred principles of Western Christian civilisation was the independence of an impartial judiciary, and as far as we were concerned, this was absolutely sacrosanct. It would probably take a couple of years, we were told — and in fact it took a bit longer — before the final decision was given by our Appellate Division. On 13 September 1968, Chief Justice Sir Hugh Beadle said, in a logical and balanced decision, that the courts had found themselves in a position where they were no longer able adequately to perform their duties. Unless the judges recognised the Rhodesian government there could be no rule of law in Rhodesia. According to British law, revenue raised and payment of civil service salaries had been illegal for the past two and a half years. The current government were in effective control, and there were no signs of internal dissent. In fact, recent by-elections had confirmed support for them. ‘In this situation this Court, if it carries on at all, can only carry on as a court taking cognisance of the fact that the present Government is now the *de jure* Government and the 1965 constitution the only valid constitution, which this Court now proceeds to do.’

In a nutshell, the court’s decision identified the absurdity of the British government’s position. They were bluffing themselves that they had powers which in fact were non-existent. Their only achievements had been in persuading the UN and certain Afro-Asian countries to support resolutions designed to change the economy and security of

the country, to the particular detriment of the large mass of the community, whom the British claimed to be protecting.

It is of interest to record that, when the Commons debated in June Wilson's action in promoting sanctions at the UN, the Conservatives launched a telling attack with Alec Home accusing their government of openly encouraging terrorism against Rhodesia, and Patrick Wall referring to: 'a vile order being imposed at the behest of the UN against our own people'.

Although the resolution was approved in the Commons, it was rejected by the Lords, giving an indication of the strong feelings in favour of Rhodesia prevalent at the time. What was particularly galling, not only to Rhodesians, but to all fair-minded people, was the pettiness and spitefulness of the Labour Party politicians: they impounded the passports of a number of Britishers living in Rhodesia who had distinguished themselves by serving Britain, one of whom had been knighted for his governorship in Uganda, Sir Frederick Crawford. A young schoolboy had his Rhodesian passport confiscated when visiting his grandmother in England, and a Rhodesian holder of the Victoria Cross was denied entry to attend the centenary celebration of the order. Sporting contacts with Rhodesia were banned, but it stands to the credit of the British Lions rugby team that they were not prepared to cancel their game in Salisbury during their South African Tour. It was a warm feeling to know that there were some sportsmen in the world who had the courage to stand up to the politicians and tell them to keep their noses out of sport. It was this kind of behaviour from the British government which made more and more Rhodesians wonder whether it was worthwhile trying to retain links with a country prepared to descend to such levels.

We were soon confronted by another event which reflected on the British government's policy on terrorism. The biggest incursion to date commenced at the beginning

of 1968, with the terrorists taking their time, planning carefully, moving by night, and confining themselves to the tribal areas where they could evade contact with white people. Not only were their intimidatory tactics against the tribesmen merciless and effective, but they were also putting into effect their Marxist-Leninist psychological tactics, in which they had been well drilled. They were telling the locals that their plan was to take away all the good things from the white people and hand them over to the blacks. Simple people, who inhabit remote areas and have no comprehension of what is going on in the world around them, are easy targets for communists. The terrorists established their main camp some eighty kilometres inside the country above the escarpment overlooking the Zambezi valley, in mountainous, well-wooded country, with much grass for additional cover. They established a number of underground dug-outs in which they lived and kept the equipment and arms that they were storing for attacks against the commercial farming areas lying further south. In spite of all their precautions, however, they should have realised that it was only a matter of time before they would be discovered. A game ranger passing through the area noticed an unusual bootprint on the ground, which from his description was soon identified as being of Chinese origin. The alarm was sounded, and a reconnaissance planned. This turned out to be a rewarding exercise, for although the terrorists were well dug in and put up some resistance, they were eventually rooted out and over one hundred killed. They had built up a considerable amount of equipment, arms, clothing and food, of both Russian and Chinese origin. In spite of denials from the British, we were satisfied with the accuracy of our report from Lusaka that their High Commission had been aiding and abetting the terrorist cause with travel documents and finance.

The next event of consequence was the appearance on the scene, in June 1968, of my old friend Max Aitken, son of Lord Beaverbrook, one of Churchill's great supporters and a cabinet minister during Second World War. Max had succeeded his father as chairman of Beaverbrook Newspapers, and I had maintained a contact with him that stemmed from our flying association in Egypt during the war. The *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express* had always adopted a realistic and honest approach to the Rhodesian problem.

Max was deeply concerned over the tragic mishandling of the affair, and believed that even the Conservatives were not without blame. This came out in a discussion with his legal adviser, Lord Goodman, who also happened to be Wilson's lawyer. This led to an approach being made to Wilson, by now amenable to a possible breakthrough over Rhodesia, especially as another Commonwealth prime ministers' conference was looming in the New Year. Anything which would help to divert attention from all the local problems which were closing in on the government was worthy of consideration. So Aitken and Goodman arrived in Salisbury, with Wilson's blessing, on the understanding that the visit was to be kept secret — even Governor Gibbs would not be put in the picture. It was difficult to keep Goodman under cover, because he was a large man, both in height and mass, with prominent features and large, husky, black eyebrows, dressed in the dark suit associated with members of the British legal profession. But surprisingly, they got away with it, staying for four days. Nobody picked this up. Our discussions were constructive and subjected to incisive analysis by the clear, well-trained legal brain of a man who was highly rated by his profession in Britain. Both men had no difficulty in comprehending the problem and discerning the best means of dealing with it. But as I explained to them before their departure, Wilson constantly had a bogey-man leaning over

his shoulder in the shape of the African members of the Commonwealth, whose irrational approach paid no consideration to the best intents of the inhabitants of Rhodesia, but were obsessed by the racial approach of driving the white man and his Western civilisation out of sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, both Goodman and Aitken believed that the case was so clear, the solution so obvious, and above all honest and just, that they could convince Wilson. From past experience I had my doubts, but I wished them well.

Surprisingly, they seemed to have won the first round, for Wilson, as a follow-up, sent one of their top officials, James Bottomley (no relation to Arthur), for consultations with me on 20 September. The visit once again underlined our differences and I made it clear that I could not change on the major points, so I was doubtful whether anything had been achieved. But I was wrong, Wilson thought otherwise.

In the interim, on 5 September, we held the most controversial annual congress in the history of the Rhodesian Front. Over the past couple of years we had devoted much time to the creation of a new constitution for our country, bringing in changes to meet the circumstances of the time. The government had set up a commission composed of blacks and whites under the chairmanship of W.R. Whaley, one of the country's most eminent lawyers, and after interviews across the broad spectrum of all our population groups, they produced a well-reasoned report. But there were many others who wanted to be in on the act, so our caucus set up their own committee, and our party had their committee, and there were others, too. We looked at them all and out of a great deal of honest effort produced the final paper for presentation to our congress.

However, there had developed a strong right-wing backlash, stoked by the treachery and vindictiveness of the British government, and these people believed that the answer was to produce a racially divisive constitution and

break off all contact with the British government. Feelings were running high, and on the eve of the congress, a number of my close, loyal supporters expressed concern that we might lose the vote on our proposed constitution. I was not complacent, because there were a couple of my cabinet colleagues, in addition to a few constituency chairmen, who were openly opposing us, and a considerable amount of emotion was being generated. My reply was that we had, in complete honesty, produced a constitution which we believed was right for our country and all its people, and I was confident that we would win the day. As we all knew, the vast majority of the MPs supported us, and if by some chance the hotheads did succeed in dominating the congress, then my inclination would be to hold a general election, which there was no doubt in my mind that we would win. They all agreed and were satisfied.

That night at home I discussed it with Janet and we both agreed that in no way were we going to deviate from those ideals in which we honestly believed. There were too many politicians in the world ready to say: ‘These are our principles, but if you do not like them we can change them for you.’ If need be, we would be perfectly happy to go back to ‘Gwenoro’ and do some farming. It always gave me much satisfaction to know that I was not in politics in order to make a living and that consequently I did not have to keep my job at all costs. And here I touch on one of the weaknesses of our democratic system: representatives are always looking over their shoulders and compromising on their true beliefs in order to win votes, a process which produces politicians who are followers, not leaders.

The atmosphere was noticeably tense as the delegates streamed into the conference hall. Fortunately, in Ralph Nilsen we had a very good party chairman, a man who had the courage of his convictions. In his introductory speech he reminded delegates of the heavy responsibility which lay

on their shoulders and told them that the decision they made would have a marked effect not only on Rhodesia, but on the whole southern African subcontinent. In my contribution I reminded the congress of the principles we had always believed in, and the platform that had brought us into office. We believed that merit was the criterion for advancement, not race, and while there could be no appeasement of Wilson and his Labour Party government, we should not permit their despicable behaviour to prejudice our attitude towards our own black people. It was important to remind ourselves that we represented them in Parliament, that the vast majority respected and supported us and, unlike the British politicians, we and our children would have to go on living with the decisions which we made. Fortunately, I am not a great orator. In my view great orators are great actors, and while actors are fine in a theatre, they are highly dangerous on a political platform, where it is so easy to play on mob psychology and stir up emotion that can lead people to impetuous decisions that they subsequently regret, decisions coming from the heart rather than a cool, calculating mind.

Unfortunately, many of the contributions were not only heated, but there was bitterness and even hatred, which we had never experienced before; but if you are actively going to participate in politics, you must learn to live with this kind of thing. Even if ninety-nine per cent of the people are moderate and reasonable, it is that other one per cent who will be in the front line of any political battle. When the question was finally put to the vote, however, we managed to carry the day, albeit with a slim majority. A few dozen of those who opposed us immediately walked out of the hall, but they were a small proportion of the more than 600 delegates present. There were others who subsequently resigned from the party, including one of my cabinet ministers, Angus Graham, but the majority who were on the

losing side, in the true spirit of democracy accepted the decision and agreed to support it.

The party's congress decision was vindicated at a by-election which followed shortly in a constituency known to be right of centre. Our candidate's opponent, the representative of the dissidents at our congress and other extreme right-wingers, was so thoroughly thrashed that he forfeited his election deposit.

Speculation was growing over renewed talks, and there had been reports in the media about the visit of Max Aitken and Lord Goodman, followed by the Bottomley visit. As to how Wilson explained these visits away to his Governor, Gibbs, visits which had been kept secret, your guess is as good as mine! However, the next move came on 28 September through Gibbs: an invitation to talks, once again at Gibraltar. The most important thing about negotiations is to secure for yourself a situation where you talk from strength, as opposed to a defensive position where you may have to retreat to an inferior situation. Fortunately, our position was improving, the economy better than our expectations, and the morale of the people good — I sometimes thought *too* good. But we kept our feet firmly on the round, and had enough common sense to realise the futility of making unreasonable demands that would lose us the support of the responsible and moderate people in the world, and would also be out of step with our philosophy for our own people.

We took off from Salisbury on 9 October and, in addition to Jack Howman, we had Des Lardner-Burke, our legal and constitutional minister. This time Gibbs was by himself, because Chief Justice Beadle was *persona non grata* in view of the Supreme Court decision confirming our *de jure* status. Almost two years had passed since the previous excursion to Gibraltar, and both the scene and the atmosphere had changed in the meantime. Instead of cruising up and down the Mediterranean on the *Tiger*,

there were two warships, *Fearless* and *Kent*, moored alongside one another in the harbour, and the British occupied the former and the Rhodesians the latter. Wilson's two cabinet colleagues were Elwyn Jones, the lawyer, and George Thomson, the quiet-spoken Scot.

Wilson certainly went out of his way to show courtesy and consideration, as did the rest of the British, except Jones, who seemed to have a chip on his shoulder and believed that his mission in life was to be unfriendly to 'colonialists'. There were many great Welshmen in Rhodesia, people in the mining and rugby worlds, who would have been happy to give him their answer. On one occasion, across the conference table he passed an offensive remark to Lardner-Burke, and I replied that I was sad to note his behaviour, which was counter-productive in view of what we were trying to achieve. Wilson immediately agreed with me, commenting that we should try to conduct ourselves with dignity. The talk among our party was that the British were leaning over backwards in an effort to counteract the criticism they had run into in Britain after the previous *Tiger* conference for treating us like second-class passengers. I had never found Wilson personally offensive, although he was maybe occasionally a trifle superior, but, as that kind of behaviour never affects me, it was of no consequence. Our problem lay in a deep-rooted distrust of him, of his constant vacillation. One minute he was agreeing with the Africans and their excessive demands; the next he was trying to come to an agreement with us in conflict with his concessions to the Africans. In mitigation it should be conceded that he always had the extreme left wing of his party on his back, which believed that he should not even talk to us. These people were worse than the African politicians who, no matter how misguided, were at least trying to gain for themselves benefits that they had failed to achieve through their own efforts. The starry-eyed liberals, by contrast, were trying to atone for the guilt

complex associated with their country's past history. Not only is this complex ill-founded, it is cowardly: they are trying to run away from their own history. They have allowed themselves to be brainwashed by communist propaganda, which besmirched colonialism as suppression and exploitation. The communists wanted the metropolitan powers out so that they could get in to spread their doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, their own brand of colonialism. And, of course, as the record shows, they were successful, not only in Africa, but in the Americas, the Middle East and the Far East.

In reality, colonialism was the spread of Western Christian civilisation, with its commitment to education, health, justice and economic advancement, into areas which were truly 'darkest Africa'. The people in these areas of sub-Saharan Africa had never seen a white man, had no written language, no medical facilities, and no currency, so barter was their only means of trade. For some unknown reason, they had never had contact with Western civilisation until, in some parts, as recently as 100 years ago. What makes this all the more surprising is that in northern Africa there had been some of the earliest civilisations, going back 4,000 years, pre-dating our modern Western civilisation. But if one studies history, what is demarcated on modern maps as north Africa is truly western Arabia, with the people occupying those countries being of Arabian stock — their culture, traditions, history, language, religion and race are Arab.

The development and advancement of the people of sub-Saharan Africa has been remarkable, and today they enjoy a standard of living which is much higher than that of a number of other Third World countries; the credit for this is due to colonialism. But it is sad to record that they have been going downhill over the past few decades, since the ending of colonialism. Not only are their economies in

tatters, but their people are denied their basic rights: freedom and justice.

So I say to the people of Europe that if their countries were involved in the colonisation of sub-Saharan Africa, they should hold their heads high, be proud of their historical association with forces that brought light to the dark continent, helping its peoples to emerge into modern civilisation. I myself certainly prefer having dealings with some of these honest-to-goodness black people, than with the two-faced liberals of the Labour Party or the Fabian Society.

Regrettably, Wilson had a number of the latter courting him, and without their presence we might have made some headway. There were times when it looked as if reason was prevailing and we made progress, only to find at a subsequent meeting that we had returned to where we were before. Considering the time of year, the weather was very mild in Gibraltar, and we had tea on deck in the sun. As on the previous occasion, Marcia Williams was always present, with her efficient and considerate organisation.

After four days of talks on the *Fearless*, we had still not overcome the main stumbling block of the return to legality, with the British insisting that we renounce our current constitution, abandon power and virtually drift in space until a test of acceptability had indicated an acceptance of the new constitution. There was no provision for what would happen were this new constitution to be rejected. I repeated that it would be criminal for us to agree on a new constitution and then let everything crash over the mechanics of implementation. It was obvious that there were, among the Labour Party, those who were determined that, above everything else, Rhodesia should be humiliated. We agreed only that the British should sum up the negotiations by laying out the proposals in the form of a paper.

To me it was sad that the conference ended like that, especially as the atmosphere had been so friendly, and there had been genuine attempts to bridge the gap between the two parties. I even had a feeling that I would have liked it to succeed for Wilson's sake, as he had taken the initiative in the face of powerful opposition from within his own party. He told me on one occasion that two of his ministers had threatened to resign if we made this agreement. Some of my people disagreed with me, believing that it could be part of a cunning scheme which would enable Wilson to present himself to the British public as the reasonable guy who was going out of his way to accommodate us, while Smith was intransigent, not prepared to move. In the end we produced a communiqué simply stating that there remained a gulf between the two parties, but that efforts to settle would continue and the Commonwealth Secretary would be available for further discussions if necessary.

It was only when we received the paper on the British proposals for a settlement that we were confronted with a 'second safeguard' for entrenched clauses. We had not discussed this. We had conceded the need for a constitutional safeguard, and it had been agreed that this would be covered by a blocking quarter of black votes in Parliament. Now, however, the British were attempting to include another clause, which would mean that, even after legislation had passed through our Parliament with the majority necessary for an entrenched clause, any person would still have the right to refer it to the British Privy Council on the grounds that it was politically undesirable. Even if the legislation passed through our Parliament with 100 per cent support, this appeal could still be lodged. We had accepted an appeal concerning the law of the land, our constitution, but now we were being asked to accept that a British court could decide as to whether the Rhodesian Parliament was making the correct political decisions. We

would be charging the courts to make a political assessment, as opposed to giving a judicial interpretation of the law. Not only did we object to the British Privy Council holding such powers, we would also have the same objection as far as our own Rhodesian Appellate Division was concerned. Never before had Britain attempted to include such a condition in any constitution. As I pointed out at the time, the British government were trying to assume additional powers that were a derogation from the sovereignty of our Rhodesian Parliament. Clearly, it was an attempt to accede to our independence with one hand, while taking it away with the other.

Lord Dilhorne, a former Lord Chancellor, went on record saying that a blocking quarter was an adequate safeguard, and that it would be out of place to ask the Privy Council to give a political judgment. So Rhodesians were not the only ones to object to the Labour government's attempt to include this condition, which was certainly without precedent, and which would have been tantamount to giving us second-class independence.

We were disappointed at the British attempt to introduce more restrictive conditions, especially as this was out of keeping with what had transpired on the *Fearless*. It was not the first time that we had been confronted with such a change of course after Wilson and his team had returned to London, and we were trying to fathom who were the culprits.

There were people, both in London and Salisbury, who pointed out that, once we were independent, any safeguard such as the one we were dealing with would be completely meaningless, and any British government attempting to use it would simply be ridiculed. Therefore, we were asked why we did not accept the British terms, knowing that they could be ignored. This came from well-meaning friends, incensed at the continuing British deviousness. While I sympathised with their frustration, and appreciated their

good intentions, I had to make it clear that we could not be party to any plan based on taking unconstitutional action at any time in the future, since once you open that door, when and how do you close it? No matter how strongly one felt over British deceit and no matter how much pleasure one would derive from exacting retribution, it was important to realise that we were dealing with our Rhodesian constitution, and that our actions would be part of the legacy we would leave to our Rhodesian people. An honest, clean history, to which future generations could look with pride, was a *sine qua non*.

We did not have to wait long for the next Wilsonian tactic. Thomson, in the new guise of minister without portfolio, flew into Salisbury on 2 November, accompanied by a new face, Maurice Foley, minister of a newly established hybrid, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. They were accompanied by one of the top British civil servants, Sir Denis Greenhill, with whom we had previously worked and whom we found most agreeable. The talks were cordial and constructive — at least on the surface — but we wondered what was going on behind the scenes during the frequent adjournments. Our Independence Day, which coincides with Armistice Day on 11 November, was drawing uncomfortably close for British politicians, so they decided to make a strategic withdrawal at this time, departing two days before and returning two days after it, using this time to visit some of their 'comrades' in adjacent countries. Once again it was obvious that the British team had no power to make decisions. Their tactic was to try to push us in their effort to obtain more concessions. But I was at pains to reiterate what had previously been said on more than one occasion: while it was easy for the British, who were merely playing politics, we were dealing with our lives and could not give way on matters of principle.

They returned to London on 16 November. The talks had gone on for longer than any of the previous negotiating

sessions, but there was little of consequence to report. Perhaps two items I can mention: first, an agreed statement to the effect that: 'the new Constitution makes the same provision as the 1961 Constitution for steady advance to majority rule'. This was a repetition of what had been enshrined in every Rhodesian constitution, and I mention it merely to debunk the claim by the terrorist movement, repeated *ad nauseam* by the present Zimbabwean government, that our UDI was motivated by a desire to perpetuate white minority rule. Second, there was a request by the British that the terrorist organisations, ZANU and ZAPU, which had received their training in Russia, China, Cuba and Libya, should be allowed to regroup and participate in the test of acceptability. This would enable them to employ their well-learned tactics of intimidation, arson and even murder to ensure that voters followed their instructions. We already had ample evidence of the barbaric measures they were ready to use as part of their process to blackmail the masses into giving them support. I replied, giving Thomson and Foley the facts in no uncertain way, and asking if they were suggesting that we connive with them in resurrecting the Nazi Party and their swastika? That was the last we heard of *that* monstrous idea.

As part of my speech to the Rhodesian nation on 19 November 1968, I said:

> After listening to what I have told you I am sure you will accept the validity of my claim that this alternative proposal is infinitely worse than the original one. I find it difficult to believe that the offer was made seriously.
>
> It was clear to us throughout the talks that the British were obsessed with the question of black majority rule and that this dominated all their thinking. They are prepared to accept that the white man in Rhodesia is expendable. We Rhodesians believe that there is a place

> and a future for all Rhodesians, black and white. Any other suggestion is unacceptable for us.

I mentioned that it had been agreed that the doors of negotiation should be kept open, and added: ‘In case in the end we fail to agree, your government is continuing its preparation for a long haul, so that whatever happens we will sooner or later arrive at our destination.’

In keeping with this intention, it is significant to record that on our Independence Day of 11 November 1968, the new Rhodesian green and white flag was raised for the first time, and the Union Jack lowered for the last time while the BSAP band played ‘Abide with Me’. It was a nostalgic moment, which those who witnessed it will never forget. It was the culmination of actions by past British governments, both Conservative and Labour, involving blatant dishonesty, reneging on agreements, and attempts to appease the Marxist-Leninists of the African bloc. If they had played their hand correctly we would still have had a country practising the ideals of the British democratic system, as opposed to a Marxist-Leninist one-party dictatorship, and we would still have had a flag flying in Africa proudly displaying a Union Jack in a prominent position — instead of a Zimbabwe bird superimposed on a Marxist red star.

Fortunately, the indications at the end of the year were that things were continuing to improve, so there was no need to compromise and contemplate any short-term solution. There had been some strong criticism from a number of the financial and business kings, who were putting their profits before the national interest, but they were in a distinct minority. There were our ever-present political opponents, who had been against our UDI, and they were always ready at the drop of a hat to come forward and claim that they could do the job better. They were in an advantageous position in that the national press gave them complete support. In one of their attacks they

accused me of being an arrogant dictator, and in the next breath complained of my indecisive leadership! Internally, these people were discredited and of little consequence, but to Harold Wilson and our other external enemies they gave hope that our government would be overturned, and this made them more intransigent in their attitude towards us.

Finance Minister Wrathall was able to give me an encouraging picture early in the New Year, 1969. Our national production was up, and development in industry and housing was outstripping the availability of materials. Because of sanctions, we were exporting at a discount and importing at a premium and obviously this was skimming some of the cream off the top, but because of the extra effort Rhodesians, both black and white, were contributing, our balance of payments was under control and, most important of all, the morale of the people was high.

We looked on with interest at the Commonwealth prime ministers' conference taking place in London from 7 January 1969, and enjoyed the spicy reports which were emanating from it in profusion. Indira Gandhi stated that India was contemplating withdrawing from the Commonwealth, as it was no longer credible. Lee Kwan Yew (Prime Minister of Singapore) expressed his deepening disenchantment with the Commonwealth. Ayub Khan expressed desperation, and it was not long before Pakistan was out of the Commonwealth. Sub-Saharan Africa, as usual, was in chaos. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania were one-party dictatorships and were busy expelling Asians in spite of the fact that they had been born locally. Kaunda had been in power in Zambia only for a short while, and although he had so far resisted the establishment of a *de jure* one-party state, he achieved the same result *de facto*. Nigeria was in the midst of a violent civil war and a number of other west African countries had eliminated all opposition.

When the media representatives in London enquired whether all of these violations of human rights in Africa would come under scrutiny at the conference, there was a simple, clear cut reply: 'The internal affairs of member countries have always been protected from discussion.' Yet the internal affairs of Rhodesia were the principal item on the agenda.

Wilson, with his usual sleight of hand, evaded all obstacles and seemed to have satisfied the Afro-Asian bloc by assuring them that NIBMAR (No Independence Before African Majority Rule) was still Britain's policy — the fact that the *Fearless* proposals had thrown it out of the window seemed to have evaded everybody. Moreover, when speaking in the Commons soon after all the prime ministers had returned home, he reiterated that the *Fearless* proposals remained on the table

It was difficult for anyone who followed the proceedings to treat the conference seriously, and I made the comment that 'one could not have any respect for people who had jettisoned democracy and all the basic freedoms and standards of decency that the Commonwealth once stood for and fought for'. I was not alone in these views, as some of our black MPs spoke about the Commonwealth in equally scathing terms. The leader of the opposition in our Parliament, Percy Mkudu, a man highly respected by all shades of opinion, visited the OAU conference in Dar es Salaam to put the case for a peaceful settlement in Rhodesia, because it was the black people who were suffering and being killed by the terrorists. He was told that unless he committed himself to supporting the terrorist movement he would not be allowed to address the conference, so he returned to Salisbury immediately.

I got on well with Mkudu and we had many constructive discussions. He saw clearly the need for evolutionary change and recognised the important part played by the Chiefs and the tribal structure. He also openly conceded

the tremendous advances which the black people were making, with many of them enjoying a standard of life superior to that of a large number of whites. He also assured me that he and his colleagues were well aware of the rampant corruption and denial of human rights in most of the countries to our north, and supported our resolve to prevent the same thing happening in Rhodesia. In my turn I appreciated the need for him to steer a middle course, because if he were seen to be too close to our government, he would be branded a stooge of the white man. It was not only the OAU who supported the extremists and terrorists to the exclusion of everyone else, it was the same with the British government, who had scorned our attempts to bring in the Chiefs and the moderate, responsible black people. They were not thinking of a solution which would serve the best interests of Rhodesia, they were mainly concerned with appeasing their friends in the OAU.

Our biggest problem was to get Britain and the rest of the free world to understand Africa. Let me repeat that, to my reasoning, the true Africa is sub-Saharan Africa. Our problem was to bring these Africans across, to try to bridge a 2,000-year gap in the shortest possible time. Clearly this was an evolutionary process, and from our experience on the spot we were satisfied that we were making good progress with it. The evidence emanating from the break-up of the Federation proved conclusively how much more we had done for the advancement of our black people than the British had done in the two colonies to our north. We had enough intelligence to understand that it was in the best interest of all Rhodesians, white as well as black, to ensure the progress of our people in the fields of education, health, housing and economic well-being. The results were there for anybody to witness, with the development of a middle class, and a growing number of black people joining the ranks of the wealthy, owning modern houses and employing their own servants, whereas a few decades

previously they themselves had been the servants. But it took time, planning, professional services and finance to bring about the necessary improvements, and if people tried to run before they could walk, they invariably tripped. Africa to our north is a glaring example of this simple truth, bankrupt and in chaos as it is, because what should have been an evolutionary process was allowed to run riot and develop into a revolution. Contrary to professed communist philosophy, it has led to the establishment of Marxist-Leninist dictators who live like kings while their subjects degenerate into poverty, malnutrition and an end to their freedom.

Fortunately the majority of our black people had been alarmed by these tragic developments, and were happy to work with us to prevent the same happening in our country, but our attempts were being undermined by Harold Wilson and the British Labour Party. What made it so contemptible to me was that I well knew from my contact and discussions with them that many of the Labour Party had the intelligence and awareness to comprehend our predicament, but they were taking the easy way out by appeasing the excessive demands of the OAU, instead of confronting them with their record of one-party dictatorships and blatant abuse of power.

These were the people who were now holding us to ransom. What more, we wondered and asked, were we expected to do? Not only overseas visitors, but those who came on a mission seeking evidence, including a number of British MPs, conceded how much more we had done for our black people than had been done in all the surrounding countries. We had provided better schools, better hospitals, better houses, better recreation facilities, and a higher standard of living. We also had peace, which was exceptional and almost unique in the world, and a declining crime rate. Yet the UN, with the support of both Britain and the USA, had passed a resolution declaring that Rhodesia

was a ‘threat to world peace’. As the historian Kenneth Young said in his book *Rhodesia and Independence*:

> After four years of struggle it appeared that Britain had come off worst in her war against her tiny adversary with its puny budget, its midget exports and its miniature army, civil service, police and air force. But the spirit and courage that made Britain great were not extinct; they had emigrated.

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The Home–Smith Agreement, 1972

So as we moved into 1969 it was clear that Wilson and the Labour Party had decided to shelve the Rhodesian question and concentrate on their home front, where their problems seemed to be getting out of control. The time was approaching when they would have to face up to a general election.

I mentioned to Humphrey Gibbs that he should once again point out to Wilson that we had solved the main problem of agreeing on the new constitution, achieving what most people had believed to be the impossible, and that this was going to be thrown overboard because of Wilson's insistence on a ridiculous procedure of returning to legality in an attempt to exact retribution. When so much was at stake, this was unbelievable pettiness, in conflict with the spirit of reconciliation that we had all agreed would be necessary if we were to secure a just settlement. If Wilson was prepared to allow his blatant appeasement of the OAU to be the rock on which all our efforts would now founder, this would be a dreadful indictment of him personally, and the Labour Party in general. Gibbs accepted that it would be worth trying, but judging by their record he was 'not sanguine'. It seemed that our best bet was to hope for a Conservative victory at the next British election.

We now had more time to concentrate on our own affairs and the finalisation of our new constitution. This introduced the original concept of representation in Parliament proportional to contribution to the fisc. If the UN operated on such a principle, there would be a lot more wisdom and justice emanating from its headquarters! The flaw in our

plan was that it was based on a racial division. This was introduced into Rhodesia for the first time in our 1961 constitution, and was the principal cause of my break with the government at that time. Prior to that, there had been no racial division in our franchise qualification, and it was my strong belief that we should perpetuate the principle and continue our philosophy of trying to establish a genuine meritocracy in keeping with Rhodes's famous dictum: 'Equal rights for all civilised men'. However, once racial division was introduced — and of course it had also been part of the Federal constitution in 1952 — it was accepted as an easy means of providing a short-term solution to black political aspirations.

Thus my requests for a return to the old system of a non-racial qualified franchise were always rebuffed on the spurious ground that it would take too long for our black people to make any impact in Parliament. So we were caught up in a situation which — regrettably to my mind — had entrenched a political racial division into our constitution. Had we attempted to remove it now it would have been interpreted as prejudicial to our black people. When I queried the inclusion in the new constitution of a clause which could fairly be interpreted as moving it to the right, the answer was that it would give us room for manoeuvre when we next talked to the British. I was reminded of the occasion when we were negotiating with Harold Wilson and his team, and at the end of a long day of talks, Gerald Clarke said that the British chaps had commented to him that what they found disconcerting was that, once I stated my position, they were unable to get me to move. According to them there had to be give and take in negotiation. They were prepared to follow this rule, but there was no response from us. Of course, as I have pointed out before there was a logical reason for this: we were dealing with the future of our country, and decisions which would effect the lives of our citizens.

One of the more controversial proposals of the constitutional committee was that Rhodesia should become a republic. This was no easy decision for many of us who from birth had been ingrained with the ideals of the British Empire. It had, however, become increasingly difficult for us to separate monarch and Empire from the deviousness of the politicians. Wilson went so far, later, as to drag the Queen into his machinations by getting her to include in a speech at the Jamaica Commonwealth conference in April 1975 some provocative remarks about Rhodesia which were a distortion of the truth. This caused a large number of our older generation of loyal citizens to become extremely angry, tearing up their pictures of the Royal Family, and pulling down their Union Jacks. Some remarked that if only her father or grandfather had been alive, Wilson would have been put in his place, but it was no easy task for the young Queen.

The new constitution was duly brought in, followed by the proclamation of a republic, on 1 March 1970. Soon afterwards, on 10 April, a general election resulted in the Rhodesian Front winning all fifty 'A' roll seats for the second successive time since UDI.

This phenomenon of a party winning every seat in an election aroused the curiosity of a number of political analysts, and we had visits from many overseas historians and scientists to investigate whether it was genuinely a free election, or whether it was the normal African affair of one man, one vote, one candidate. They were pleasantly surprised to find that there was no suggestion of malpractice from any quarter. Moreover, we had achieved our victories in spite of the fact that the only national daily newspaper in the country had consistently opposed our government, and used their monopoly to direct a constant stream of British-inspired criticism against us. I met a number of these visitors and explained the reasons for this incredible unity among Rhodesians, telling them how even

our erstwhile opponents were appalled at the hypocrisy and double standards of the British and other free world governments, and that this applied to our black as well as our white people.

Of great significance, however, was that, contrary to predictions, the Conservatives won the British general election a few months later, in June, and while the new Prime Minister Edward Heath was absorbed with Europe and the movement towards a Common Market, the Rhodesian question was left in the capable hands of the Foreign Secretary, Alec Home, who had both experience of and a feeling for our problem. Once again the good offices of Sir Max Aitken and Lord Goodman were invoked. We had lengthy discussions in Salisbury from early April 1971, and when the decks were sufficiently cleared to the satisfaction of Lord Goodman and the British officials who accompanied him, Alec Home flew out on 15 November, accompanied by Attorney General Peter Rawlinson and Dennis Greenhill, who was the top civil servant in the Foreign Office. The negotiations went on for some time and, after give and take on both sides, we signed an agreement on 21 November 1971.

I realised that it would not receive the approval of the extreme right wing of the Rhodesian Front, but likewise the left-wingers — who had always opposed us — would be unhappy. But that certainly did not worry me, because our history had consistently shown that the great majority of Rhodesians fell within that middle group of reasonable, responsible people who opposed extremists whether they were left or right. The problem with an extremist is that he tends to provoke another extremist in the opposite direction, with the divergent factions constantly trying to outdo one another, thus driving themselves deeper into the trough of unreasonableness and bitterness.

As far as our agreement was concerned, we could honestly claim to have produced one which complied with

the principles which had been laid down by previous British governments and to which we had never taken exception. There was to be an immediate increase in black representation in Parliament, and the principle of majority rule was enshrined with safeguards ensuring that there could be no legislation which could impede this. On the other hand, there would be no mad rush into one man one vote with the resultant corruption, nepotism, chaos, and economic disaster which we had witnessed in all the countries around us. Fortunately, reports from all corners of the country indicated that there was general satisfaction and relief over the agreement. Not only were the white people happy, but of significance was a report that in Highfield, just outside Salisbury, which had always been the centre of black political activity, the people were openly celebrating. The obvious truth was that the Rhodesians had endured enough, and tragically our black people had suffered most from both sanctions and terrorism. After six years we could now shake off the shackles of sanctions and work together to build up the economy of our country and improve the standard of living of all our people. Once again, here was conclusive evidence that there was no truth in the claim that the Rhodesian Front government was attempting to impede the process to majority rule in order to maintain control in white hands — quite the reverse.

There remained, however, the test of acceptability among the Rhodesian people as a whole, and on the evidence before us we were satisfied that it would receive approval, although, as we had always stated, it would be impossible to obtain an honest assessment from our black people, since the vast majority of them had never exercised a vote in their lives, could neither read nor write, did not understand the meaning of the word ‘constitution’, and were completely bemused by all the talking and manoeuvring going on around them. The danger was that

the communist-motivated extremists would mount an anti-campaign, resorting to emotional tactics and mob-psychology, and the very effective weapon of intimidation. But our experts in this field believed that intimidation would have only a limited effect, especially in the big cities, because the people still held strong memories of the dreadful atrocities, in particular the petrol bombings, perpetrated by the terrorists over recent years. It was important to avoid procrastination in order to minimise the time that the opponents to the agreement would have to mount their evil plans.

Alec Home agreed with us on this point, and undertook to expedite the appointment of the commission to carry out the test of acceptability. I was happy that we now had something positive in prospect, and that everyone was working towards it. Probably above everything else was the hope that it would bring to an end the useless fighting and killing between Rhodesians. It would get them working together to build their wonderful country, and to create a better future for all their people. People would recognise that at last decisions affecting our future would be in our own hands, free from the outside interference of the scheming politicians who had used us mercilessly as a pawn in their efforts to gain favour and support on the chessboard of international politics. Neither side could claim complete victory, and this would have the advantage of bringing opposing sides together with a minimum of rancour and revenge seeking, but sharing hope for genuine reconciliation.

On 25 November it was announced that Lord Pearce, a distinguished British judge, would be chairman of the commission. Sir Maurice Dorman, the former Governor-General of Malta, and Sir Glyn Jones, the former Governor of Nyasaland, were the two deputy chairmen. Lord Harlech, the former British Ambassador to the United States, was the fourth member. Harlech caused us some

concern, as I was informed that his recent record of service in Washington had not actually covered him in glory, and accordingly he was not rated very highly. Meanwhile, the black extremists had reorganised themselves under the banner of the newly formed African National Council (ANC) with the same leaders in positions of authority, but they had introduced an astute new ruse to cover up the old faces, who were still tainted by association with the intimidation and petrol bombing. They brought in Abel Muzorewa, the first black man ever to have been made a bishop in Rhodesia, and made him the leader of the new party, thus giving themselves a much more acceptable face of respectability.

We had agreed with the British that the Pearce Commission would begin work the first week in December and complete the task before Christmas, as dilly-dallying would play into the hands of the mischief makers bent on sabotaging the agreement. Our people waited anxiously for news of the arrival of the British team; all the plans on our side had been completed, the programme agreed, transport, accommodation and back-up services arranged. We sent reminders through the British Embassy in Pretoria, but still there was no confirmation. Frustration was building up. Eventually the message came: the British had decided, in view of the approach of Christmas and the festive season, that they would postpone their arrival until after the New Year. I received a few cutting comments: ‘Obviously the work of the Foreign Office — some of us have been suspicious of their commitment to the task all along! ‘This made me recall that, after signing the agreement with Alec Home, members of our secretariat had mentioned that the British Foreign Office in general were out of step with Home on the Rhodesian question.

Meanwhile, our opponents were taking advantage of the delay, making all the running while we did nothing to counter their campaign. This was because we had agreed

with the British that we would maintain a position of neutrality in order to eliminate criticism that government was abusing its position in order to influence people unfairly. However, if one plays according to the rules of the game, while the others break all the rules and resort to underhand tactics, regrettably, it does not guarantee success — certainly not in the game of politics.

Once the commission started its work of holding meetings with Africans to ascertain their views on the settlement, it was clear that the African nationalists had established their cells in all the districts. Leading agitators travelled ahead of the commission, from meeting to meeting, orchestrating the opposition. Fortunately, we were told, the commissioners could see through this and, at the level of the officials, the information was that the test was going favourably.

Suddenly, Harlech flew back to London — most unusual in the middle of such an important exercise. We wondered why, but were told it was for personal, family reasons. At the same time a request to see me came from Lord Pearce, and this was arranged. He thought it desirable to put me in the picture, and simply wished to say that so far things seemed to be going according to plan and that he did not anticipate any problems. I expressed surprise at Harlech's sudden departure, but he simply replied that it was a family matter and that his absence should be of short duration. However, our report from Rhodesia House in London did not tie up with this, as Harlech had been to see Prime Minister Heath. After his return from Britain, moreoever, our reports indicated a distinct change in the attitude of the British, who now started making negative predictions about the outcome. A member of our cabinet office staff, an immigrant from Britain, who had developed good relations with one of the British team, broached this sudden and obvious change. His contact conceded the point, but said

that at his level, which was some way down the scale, he was unable to fathom the reason for it.

To cut a long story short, the commission finished its work on 12 March 1972, and when its report was eventually published in May it stated that, while the majority of Europeans were in favour of the proposals, the majority of black people were not. We were sad, indeed sickened, at the farcical nature of the whole thing. As the truth came out, bit by bit, it made one realise the impossible position in which Rhodesia was placed, no matter what government was in power in Britain. Alec Home was as disappointed and frustrated as I was, and the same applied to our supporters at Westminster and generally throughout the world, but sadly there were more powerful forces working in the British government, which had contrary ideas, as I shall explain.

First of all, let me deal with the complete farce surrounding the test of acceptability. I recall dealing with this during one of my discussions with Harold Wilson at 'Independence' in October 1965 when I explained to him how ridiculous it was to expect to obtain any indications of the views of our black people through such an exercise. I gave him the reasons I have already mentioned: they had never in their lives cast a vote in any election or referendum for the simple reason that it had never been part of their culture or way of life. Even if we concluded an agreement, all our efforts could land on the rocks through our bungling, allowing the terrorists, through their well-known methods of intimidation, to stampede innocent and unwary people into making decisions which they did not comprehend. Wilson was cool and completely at ease over the problem, saying he understood my point completely, but that we had to satisfy the rest of the world, and that this was why the test of acceptability was concocted. However, he assured me quietly and firmly, in between puffs at his

pipe, that if we made an agreement I need have no fears about the test of acceptability.

I often thought back to this discussion, and it was clear that there was nothing dishonest about this approach. The fact of the matter was that our two governments were constitutionally responsible for making the decision, and if we made this in all honesty, believing it was in the best interests of the country, then it would be irresponsible to allow some extraneous force to deflect us. The difference in this case was that I had made the agreement with Alec Home, Foreign Minister, not with the Prime Minister, Heath. And he had different ideas, as I was to learn in a report from our ambassador in London. Heath was completely engrossed in obtaining British entry to the EEC, but his problem was securing majority support in the House of Commons, as the Labour Party were opposed to entering the Common Market, as were a faction of the Conservatives. The obvious tactic was to gain the support of the Liberals, who were fence-sitting on the question, but they had made it clear that they were unhappy about the Rhodesian agreement, which was contrary to the wishes of the OAU. If this did not go through, they would be happy to support an agreement on the Common Market. Hence the sudden visit to London by Harlech, his meeting with Heath, and the subsequent dramatic change of course by the Pearce Commission.

A classic example of ‘Perfidious Albion’. How could anyone condone Heath’s action in selling Rhodesia down the river, especially after his Foreign Minister, Home, had pinned his flag to the mast? To raise the hopes of Rhodesians, both black and white, to such heights of expectation, and then nonchalantly pull the rug out from under their feet, was callous and unforgivable. If we were not faced with Harold Wilson and the Labour Party using Rhodesia as a pawn in order to appease the OAU, it was

Ted Heath and the Conservatives using us as a bargaining chip in order to win votes in the House of Commons.

One can imagine the frustration, indeed the fury, which built up in the minds of Rhodesians when they learned that the reason for the rejection of our agreement hinged on the desire of the British government to join the EEC. Those of us who understood what was taking place under the test of acceptability were unable to condone the hypocrisy of the operation.

Apart from the fact I have already pointed out, that the vast majority of our black people were unable to comprehend what was taking place, the commission had seen less than 5 per cent of our black people — and yet they were prepared to submit a report purporting to represent the views of 100 per cent! At one of the meetings, before the procedure began, the leader of those attending rose and stated that they were not interested in the commission, ripped apart the explanatory paper which had been handed around, and all those present got up and walked away. On a number of occasions, before the people had completed asking their questions, they were informed that time had run out and that the meeting had to be drawn to a close. This simply added more confusion to an already confused picture. I was interested to read a comment by Lord Coleraine, a well-known authority on African affairs, to the effect that whether the Pearce Commission returned a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer, it was entirely worthless as a test of opinion. That was the awful truth, and showed clearly that Rhodesians were not the only ones who scoffed at the farce that had taken place! But the result for Rhodesia was a tragedy.

The report of the Pearce Commission was debated in our Parliament on 6 June 1972. Referring to the test of acceptability, I said: ‘The Rhodesian government has consistently maintained that if agreement was reached on a government-to-government basis the fifth principle [test of

acceptability] would be superfluous.' From the minutes of the 1971 meetings it was clear that the British team regarded the test as an unfortunate encumbrance which should be cleared out of the way as soon as possible, and they believed it could produce only the correct answer. In fact, it produced the wrong answer for Alec Home, but the right one for Ted Heath.

The absolute fraud of the Pearce Commission Report became all the more obvious when I received a report during the early months of 1973 (April–May) that Bishop Muzorewa, who had led the campaign for the 'No' vote during the test of acceptability, was now conceding his mistake, and thinking about reopening the matter with me. I duly received a message in July and we met in August. On his arrival at my office he presented a memorandum outlining his thoughts, which stated, *inter alia*:

> I believe a settlement is still possible if we could establish a mutual and genuine spirit of goodwill and trust. The 1971 proposals were rejected by the Africans on the understanding and belief that they did not have faith in the Government to honour the terms of the proposals. We believe that if our requests are genuinely honoured and implemented this would be the cornerstone of a new dimension of racial unity in the building up of the Rhodesian Nation which is a desire which we wish to achieve. Our fears can only be removed by the Government in a written and pledged statement of assurance and guarantee. If these are genuinely furnished by the Government, we, the African leaders to whom trust has been given by our people, would accept the proposals and would request Her Majesty's Government and the Rhodesian Government to implement them forthwith.

This created no problems for us, because we were simply being asked to reiterate assurances which we had given on many previous occasions. We produced and signed a joint statement:

> The Prime Minister and Bishop Muzorewa met on 17th August, 1973 to discuss the question of the constitutional settlement. The Prime Minister gave Bishop Muzorewa a solemn undertaking on behalf of the Government of Rhodesia that if the 1971 proposals for a settlement are ratified, they will be fully honoured by the Government. Bishop Muzorewa accepted the undertaking and stated that he had complete trust in the Prime Minister. In these circumstances Bishop Muzorewa in his capacity as President of the African National Council gave an undertaking that he accepted the 1971 proposals for a settlement, and that he would urge the British Government, on behalf of the African people, to implement the proposals.

It looked as if, after all our misfortunes and setbacks, things were coming right, and that the truth of what our people believed in and hoped for was emerging. As a matter of interest, after the debate on the Pearce Commission Report I received a personal message from Alec Home commiserating with me and suggesting that my best way forward would be to make an agreement with the responsible black leaders within the country.

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The Loss of Mozambique, Vorster and Détente in 1974–5

While we had been attempting to settle with the British, our African nationalist opponents in ZANU had taken advantage of the crossing of the Zambezi River in the Tete Province of Mozambique by FRELIMO, the Marxist party, in its armed rebellion against the Portuguese. The presence of FRELIMO along our long north-eastern frontier meant that ZANLA, the armed wing of ZANU, had safe havens in Mozambique from which to penetrate the adjacent tribal areas and then the white farming areas of Centenary and Mount Darwin. In late December 1972, ZANLA launched its first hit-and-run attack on a white farmhouse, wounding the young daughter of the farmer, Marc de Borchgrave. This began a pattern of such incidents, which included the use of landmines in the roads, and meant that we had to deploy more troops and commit more resources to defeating the campaign of terror. For the moment, we were able to contain the threat to the north east, and then we began to get on top of it.

All was not yet in the clear in late 1973 with regard to securing an agreement with responsible leaders within Rhodesia. I was informed that Muzorewa was having problems with some of the more recalcitrant members of his executive; they were trying to extract more concessions, working under orders from the extremists ensconced in Lusaka. I sent a message suggesting that the Bishop come and talk to me. He requested an immediate increase in black representation in Parliament which, he thought, would satisfy the demands of his ‘wild boys’, and we agreed on an extra six seats. He went away satisfied.

The haggling within his party, however, went on. I could see that we were getting into the normal routine that the communists have perfected: extract as much as you can, take it away and tuck it under your belt, and then find a pretext to come back and ask for more.

Muzorewa was caught in the middle: he supported the agreement with us, but lacked experience and political acumen. The old seasoned leaders were able to mould him to their wishes.

Then, suddenly, a new dramatic factor entered the scene: the revolutionary change of Government in Portugal after the left-wing military coup on 25 April 1974, which enabled the terrorist elements in Lusaka and Dar es Salaam to persuade the ANC in Salisbury to hold their hand on the premise that Angola and Mozambique were about to be handed over to the locals, and that this would change the whole situation. In time I received a message from Muzorewa to say that the executive of the ANC had rejected our agreement.

In Parliament on 19 June 1974, I said: ‘Mr Speaker, for the second time in history I have succeeded in doing what was expected of me, and for the second time the other party to the agreement has reneged.’

I was maintaining contact with the Bishop in the hope that we could still find a solution. However, there was a problem of which I was aware, and which Muzorewa had mentioned as an aggravating factor: a group of extreme left-wing liberals, white people, were encouraging the reactionary forces of the ANC in their opposition to Muzorewa coming to an agreement with me. They claimed that their support among the white electorate was growing and that if they were returned as the next government they would support their friends in the ANC. This was monstrous deception, as they did not even hold a single seat in our Parliament, and were clearly motivated by self-interest as opposed to the welfare of their country.

We had enough problems dealing with a two-faced British government and communist-inspired terrorists who were doing their utmost to destabilise our black people, without a small faction of white self-seekers trying to throw spanners in the works for their own self-aggrandisement. In order to call their bluff, and at the same time let the whole world know how Rhodesians felt, we decided on a general election, and this was held on 30 July 1974. Once again the Rhodesian Front had a clean sweep and won every 'A' roll seat. Everyone now knew where they stood, and the dissident whites who had been sniping at us from the sidelines were ignominiously defeated.

About this time South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, decided to visit Hastings Banda of Malawi, and en route broke his journey to spend a night with me. We talked at length, covering the whole political spectrum, and he was at pains to explain to me his belief that a number of countries to our north were prepared to talk and help in solving the problems of southern Africa. These were the first signs of his new détente policy of reaching an accommodation with black Africa, which was going to dominate his thinking in the years immediately ahead. I encouraged him in his line of thinking, and assured him of our support and co-operation. However, the changed circumstances in Mozambique were to be regretted, as a communist regime in power there, under the thumb of Nyerere, would not assist us. I had received a message from powerful forces in Mozambique, both military and civilian, indicating their opposition to the revolutionary changes in Lisbon, and their desire to prevent a handover in Mozambique. Their plan was to take over Mozambique south of the Zambezi, with the co-operation of South Africa and Rhodesia, and form a kind of federation. To me it sounded attractive, with Beira continuing as the main port for Rhodesia and Lourenço Marques for Johannesburg and the Rand complex. The people north of the Zambezi could

make their own plan with Malawi, as they were a discrete part of the country, which historically had close links with Malawi. The people in Mozambique assured me that Mozambicans in general would welcome such a plan, and the initial approach to our two governments would come from Mozambique, so there could be no suggestion of unwarranted interference from South Africa and Rhodesia.

I liked the idea, but it would not be practicable without South African agreement and participation. Vorster listened attentively, and then said that the idea was new to him. He was not interested in anything north of the Zambezi, but obviously the country to the south had close connections, and he would like to give the idea consideration and would communicate with me. I was encouraged by his positive attitude, but, as time was of the essence, I was concerned that no message was forthcoming. When we next met, some months later, and I enquired about it, he replied that they had given the idea close examination and much thought, and had come to the conclusion that there would be unfavourable reaction from the rest of the world, and that therefore they could not support it. I reiterated that the initiative would be taken by the Mozambicans and that once they had succeeded, and they were certain of success, they would look to us to maintain normal relations, as opposed to turning against them. Obviously, this would assist in defeating terrorism. I was sad to see that he had made up his mind, and was not interested. Clearly it would have been in conflict with the new détente policy.

John Vorster’s détente policy was coming more and more into the open, and on 23 October 1974, he spoke in their Parliament giving his vision of the future. Shortly after that it was arranged through the South African Embassy in Salisbury that the South African Foreign Minister, Dr Hilgard Muller, should pay me a visit. He flew in early in the morning and was in my office by nine o’clock. The secretary to the cabinet, Jack Gaylard, had received a

communication the day before from the South African Ambassador to say that he would not be accompanying the minister to the meeting, which was the normal procedure, because the subject of his communication with me was highly confidential and sensitive, and he hoped we could talk *tête à tête*. This obviously added to the anticipation and drama.

I was sitting at my desk, with Muller in the chair opposite. He leant forward slowly, his elbows on his knees, looking down at the floor for quite a long time, before speaking hesitantly and *sotto voce*. By nature, he was a quiet man, but this was something out of the ordinary. His Prime Minister had impressed on him that this was the most important message he had ever asked him to transmit. It was difficult for him, he said, adequately to convey the gravity of the situation facing the white man in southern Africa, but there was now a new hope emerging because of the wonderful breakthrough which his Prime Minister had achieved through his détente policy with the black countries to our north. The major European powers were very supportive of this initiative on the part of South Africa, and there was a general feeling that this was going to bring peace to southern Africa and a new era where all countries would work together in order to create a better life for all the people in the area. They had already achieved great success and Vorster and he had visited a number of the black leaders to our north, where they had been welcomed with open arms, and received unequivocal support for their new policy of détente.

Muller spoke with great seriousness and much feeling, and took time to go into detail, explaining all the intricacies of this wonderful new brainchild they had produced. It was the result of exhaustive exercises carried out by their best people, involving meticulous investigation, research, planning and anticipation of future world trends. Now he came to the most important part of his present mission. In

keeping with the spirit of co-operation and trust which we had developed between our two countries, his Prime Minister was dedicated to ensuring that a Rhodesian settlement was part of the overall plan. Kaunda had committed himself, and that meant the others would fall into line. Zambia needed a settlement of the Rhodesian problem, because it was aggravating their situation, which was deteriorating by the day. Kaunda could control Nkomo and Sithole — but in order to do so it was necessary for him to have them with him in Lusaka. The South Africans realised the gravity of what they were asking from me, the release of these people from detention. They had never questioned our action in detaining them, and were not doing so now — the principle was right, as the South Africans well knew, for they had to live with the problem of terrorism. But with the advent of détente, this completely new climate had opened the door to peace and a settlement of our problems. South Africa believed we should not miss this opportunity for this great prize which was now in the offing, and he hoped Rhodesia would concur. He then added that his Prime Minister had stressed the importance of making it clear that South Africa was in no way attempting to indicate to us what kind of settlement we should seek; this was our problem and, as I knew, South Africa had never tried to interfere. They simply believed they could help, through Kaunda, in getting Nkomo and Sithole to the negotiating table, as opposed to resorting to terrorism.

Hilgard Muller certainly put on a good performance, full of drama and emotion, the kind of thing these foreign-affairs types have got to perfect if they are going to do their job. He need not have bothered as far as I was concerned, for I am far too experienced and down to earth to be influenced by such tactics. I assured him of my approval of the détente philosophy, and reminded him that we had been practising it for the past decade and more, quoting chapter

and verse of how we had made agreements, going back to the agreement at the 1961 constitutional conference which Duncan Sandys signed on behalf of Britain, Edgar Whitehead on behalf of Rhodesia, and Joshua Nkomo on behalf of the black opposition. There was a formidable list that I was able to present to him, ending with my recent agreement with Muzorewa and his ANC. Every time, these solemn agreements had been broken — by them, not by us. So we could talk from practical, personal experience. He looked a little subdued, being on the receiving end of such telling evidence, and while I did not relish placing it before him, it was important to ensure that the South Africans kept their feet on the ground. From our contacts with them we realised that the South African government were inclined to live in an ivory tower, and that this tended to make them feel they were immune to what was going on in the world around them.

There was also a measure of arrogance in their attitude. One of the classic examples of this came when Vorster stepped in and told the visiting MCC cricket team that they could not include Basil d'Oliveira in their team to tour South Africa. d'Oliveira, a talented, non-white South African, had been forced by the apartheid policies to emigrate to Britain to be able to play cricket at county and international level. South Africans have never since been able to excuse themselves not only for the insult involved, but also for their blatant political interference in sport. I speak as one of those who has campaigned strongly in recent years against political pressure to ban sporting contacts with South Africa. We have always had the question thrown back at us: 'Who started it?'

I certainly did not need to be convinced by Muller of the desirability of settling our problem: we had tried to do so again and again. And what satisfaction it would give us if we could make a contribution to bringing peace to the whole of South Africa. That was my message to Muller. In

fact I was able to assure him that it involved no change in our attitude and policy — it had been our constant stand, and those in detention well knew that, if they gave an undertaking to act within the law and the constitution, they would be released immediately. Some had done precisely that, and were now free men. There was a small hard core which remained, but I had no hesitation in saying: 'Let's try again.' It was worth reiterating that, from our experience — and I had recently been through it again with Muzorewa and the ANC — those people used every possible trick to gain a bit more ground. However, I said, they were always found wanting when it came to fulfilling their side of agreements. So it was important to emphasise the need to be doubly on guard when dealing with such people. I was sure he was aware of that well-known saying: 'Eternal vigilance is the price of Freedom'.

He assured me that he would convey the 'wisdom of my words' to his Prime Minister, but he believed that there were two important new factors which would ensure the success of this initiative. First, the countries to our north, especially Zambia, were desperate for a settlement which would bring peace and thus an end to the fighting. Second, South Africa would now be participating as an honest broker and a witness to any agreement. It was difficult for me to believe that the black leaders to our north would accept the 'honest' context of the South African government's intentions.

I could not help thinking to myself about how many times I had listened to a similar theme from others, including the British. One could only hope that this time things would be different, for the obvious reason that we were both in the same boat. I had so often heard them say: 'We will either sink or swim together.' There was after all a compelling reason for us to work together. Unlike the British, we were both part of Africa, it was our continent, our home, and we had to go on living with the decisions we made.

So Hilgard Muller's mission was not nearly as difficult as he had contemplated, and 'the most important message his Prime Minister had ever asked him to convey', turned out to be a bit of an anti-climax. I was able to give him a quick, direct reply. The South Africans would provide the transport to Lusaka for the released detainees, and Muller departed immediately for the airport to convey my 'most welcome message to his Prime Minister'.

If only, I thought, they would face up to reality: South Africa's greatest priority was to find a solution to its own internal problem, as opposed to believing that through diplomacy it could sell apartheid to the rest of the world. Sad to say, the South Africans still had a lot to learn about the game of diplomacy. But their biggest problem was that they were trying to sell an unsaleable product.

If one analysed the South African predicament, it was clear that they were now in the middle of changing course, and were dithering as to which way to go. I recall John Vorster saying to me in one of our discussions at his official residence, 'Libertas', that they had been forced to the conclusion that their philosophy of apartheid was unworkable. Land was a very emotional issue. They had taken land from white areas for allocation to black areas, and there were many signals that this exercise was going to run into very rough weather. Equally important was the fact that it was imposing an unbearable burden on the economy, and this would not lessen. The government was therefore in the process of rethinking.

The original concept of apartheid, as explained by the then Prime Minister, Dr Malan, when he first used this previously unheard-of word, was the division of the country into different areas in order to accommodate different peoples according to their history, culture and traditions. Whether one approved of this or not, it was possible to argue the pros and cons. The nearest English word portraying a similar meaning is 'Balkanisation', which

derives from the division of parts of Europe into a number of states known as the Balkans. Even Britain has a well-trodden record in this area: it separated, with disastrous results, India and Pakistan, Palestine and Israel, and Ireland between the Protestants and Catholics. Coming closer to home, the metropolitan powers divided sub-Saharan Africa while sitting at their desks in London and the other capitals of Europe, drawing lines on a map, and certainly never taking the trouble to consult the local people on the ground. This was brought home to me most vividly on an occasion when I was visiting the border between the eastern districts of our country and Mozambique and was shown a part of the border where there was close settlement on both sides, and which was consequently easy crossing ground for the terrorists. We had recently built a security fence along the boundary and I was informed that the local Chief wished to discuss a new problem which had arisen. His people lived over a wide area of the surrounding country, and the dividing line, he pointed out, had bisected the area with some of his people on the wrong side. Of particular concern to him was that he had seven wives, three of whom now had their huts on the Mozambican side. I could not resist the thought that the old man should have been grateful for the fact that I had contributed towards reducing his workload! Regrettably, that would not have gone down very well in the face of their customs and traditions — so I kept my thought to myself.

Vorster’s National Party, however, was now faced with no small problem: how to climb down from their philosophy, which was the foundation, the whole basis of their party’s existence. The effect on their electorate would certainly have been traumatic. The result was that they simply allowed things to drift as far as the reallocation of land was concerned, but preserved, even strengthened those aspects which perpetuated racial segregation. This created an

entirely new situation. A division within a unitary country based purely on race, declaring that white people were first-class citizens and blacks were second-class citizens, was unprincipled and totally indefensible. Not only would it be impossible to gain support for such a philosophy anywhere else in the world, but most important of all, it would create bitterness and hatred among the great mass of the people — a blatant affront to them, based purely on race. I believed that there were answers to the problem without abandoning our Western civilisation, and lived in expectation as to how the South Africans were going to deal with it.

There was another worrying development drawn to my attention by my caucus, of a change of attitude towards us by the Afrikaans press in South Africa, which in contrast to their English language press, had always been supportive of Rhodesia. They were now indicating in no uncertain manner, as part of what was clearly an orchestrated campaign, that Rhodesia was not doing enough to settle the constitutional problem. At the same time they started reminding us that we were leaning heavily on South Africa for support, and that this was beginning to become an embarrassment. Rhodesians on their customary holiday visits to South Africa were getting the same message, albeit with reservations and embarrassment, from their relations and friends. A few of my cabinet ministers with strong South African associations informed me in confidence that they had received the message from influential connections with the Afrikaans newspapers that the signal had come down from the highest authority, i.e. the leaders of the Nationalist Party. The prime minister was by convention the chairman of the company which controlled the Afrikaans Press. I was in regular contact with the South African Prime Minister, and he had never even hinted at such a thought, assuring me, on the contrary, that they were happy at the way we were conducting affairs. But there was

a clear answer to that: the South African public were positively on our side, the South African police were standing shoulder to shoulder with our troops guarding the Zambezi; any sudden turn about by the South African government would be highly suspect. I was reminded of the recent big rugby match at Loftus Versveld in Pretoria where, much to my embarrassment, the welcome from the crowd on my arrival was greatly in excess of that accorded to Vorster. Clearly the South African government was embarking on a campaign to condition their electorate. By nature I am not an alarmist — quite the reverse — but this caused me great concern, because there had always been trust and understanding in my relations with the South Africans; this was the essential difference between them and the British government.

I fully understood the concept of détente, and the need for tact and strategy, and we had always gone out of our way when the need arose. But our dealings were always honest and straightforward. I hoped that my suspicions were ill-founded.

We released the leading detainees in early December and they were flown to Lusaka, where they were pressurised into accepting unity of their two factions under the ANC with Muzorewa as leader. Of interest was the fact that both Kaunda and Nyerere insisted on dealing with Sithole, as the leader of ZANU, and would not accept that he had been replaced by Robert Mugabe, his hitherto secretary-general, as was being insisted. It was clear, on the other hand, that Nkomo was the leader of ZAPU, the other faction. But my information was that any attempt to unite the two factions under Muzorewa and the ANC had no chance of succeeding and would be purely superficial.

Of more immediate interest was the ceasefire of 11 December, which had been arranged between the South Africans and Kaunda. Once again my advisers were sceptical. Each gang of terrorists had its own leader, and

was a law unto itself. Messages from headquarters in Lusaka would have to be carried by foot hundreds of miles to countless destinations, many of which moved from day to day and were therefore unknown, and obviously had no means of recording receipt of messages.

Tragically, it ended in disaster. A few impromptu meetings were arranged between Rhodesian security forces and terrorists — with our people suspicious and at the ready — and they went off peacefully. Then, on 23 December, on a bridge across the Mazoe River, a group of five South African policemen met up with and started talking to a band of terrorists. The South Africans were persuaded to lay down their arms and were immediately shot and murdered in cold blood. They had been warned of this possibility. Once again I was told by our security chiefs that this was another example — and there had been numerous others — of South Africans being killed because they had been put in to do a job for which they had not been trained. Our troops were young, fit and hardened for the task, with quick reflexes and specialist training. We had special police ‘sticks’ (units) trained for similar work. But the South Africans had been trained as policemen, not fighting men, and many of them were over age for the task. This was the result of a decision by their politicians, who were trying to bluff the world that their forces were not soldiers, but merely policemen guarding the borders against infiltrators. We had warned against this on a number of occasions, but to no effect, and sadly it led to unnecessary casualties.

Vorster, however, was in no way deterred from his détente mission. He waxed eloquent at a meeting we had in ‘Libertas’ about the warm reception he was receiving from the black leaders to our north: ‘I’ve got them eating out of my hands,’ he said, holding his hands out cup-like in front of me. ‘They have promised that if I can help them solve the Rhodesian problem they will acknowledge South Africa as

we are today.' 'With your apartheid intact?' I asked. 'Certainly,' he replied. 'But you don't believe them?' I queried. 'My dear friend,' he said, 'You've been out of touch with the world around you for so long that you are unaware of the changes which have taken place.'

I thought for a few seconds and then said: 'I hope your expectations are fulfilled, but I would say to you that I have always been very much a part of Africa, have lived among and have a very great understanding of the people, and I wonder if because of your policy of apartheid you haven't lost touch with black Africa.'

There was no immediate comeback, so I continued: 'I hope you are not going to use Rhodesia as the "sacrificial lamb" in your scheme?'

He replied: 'On the contrary, as you know from past experience, South Africa's policy has been absolutely clear that we have no desire to tell you how to solve your problem. We have been consistent in resisting outside intervention from every quarter, Britain, the UN, the OAU. Our role, in keeping with the wish you have expressed, is to do what we can to assist in bringing the different parties to the negotiating table. Thereafter it is up to you.'

I was pleased to have that for the record, because there were a few worrying signs that they were trying to do more than that. But I reiterated that we were grateful for their efforts to promote dialogue. There was one more important point for me to mention: there were rumblings in Rhodesia that there were plans to pull the South African police out. Without hesitation Vorster said that was news to him: 'Let me reassure you that if we have any such plan I will keep you fully in the picture, and I do not believe we will resort to it without your concurrence.' Again I was thankful for his message, which appeared to me to be absolutely sincere.

The next thing I heard through my 'grapevine' was that Hilgard Muller had been to Lusaka on the détente trail, that Nyerere was supporting Kaunda in uniting the

Rhodesian factions under Muzorewa and the ANC, but that there were problems. Nkomo and Sithole were digging their heels in to retain their identity, and Mugabe and a strong band of his supporters were not accepting Sithole as leader of their party. So there were four of them — Muzorewa, Nkomo, Sithole and Mugabe — all claiming to be the leader. That's Africa. Anyone who does not comprehend that kind of scene does not understand Africa. There is actually a lot of logic, common sense and practical experience associated with it. Even in our small country there are at least half a dozen clear divisions: Matabele, who claim that they are a nation of people, not a tribe, and Karanga, Shangaan, Manyika, Chizezuru, Makorekore, Batonka, each one with their own area of land, on guard against their neighbours because of encroachment, theft of stock and crops, and skirmishes which had gone on over the centuries. They trust only their leader, not someone else whom they do not even know. When you think of it, this is not greatly different from the attitude of the clans in Scotland, of whom my forebears were a part. At one of our cabinet meetings there was a comment: 'The South Africans do not even understand their own black people, what chance is there of them understanding anything about ours!'

So, during the early months of 1975 there was much to-ing and fro-ing between Pretoria and Lusaka, and pressure on Kaunda and Nyerere to whip their Rhodesian comrades into line. The South Africans were satisfied that the plan was on course and our people were then brought in to the discussions; the reports were encouraging. There were a few points which we believed were fundamental: first that the talks should take place on Rhodesian soil. It was a Rhodesian problem to be discussed by Rhodesians, and this was agreed — the Victoria Falls on the border with Zambia was the obvious place. Second, there should be no pre-conditions; this was accepted.

We were constantly pressing for implementation of the ceasefire, which had been part of the agreement when we released the detainees at the end of last year, and we were continually receiving assurances that they were working on it. This was again typical: make an agreement, and while you comply with it, they always have an excuse for not meeting their obligation. And often they do not even worry about providing an excuse.

Now there was a new suggestion. The terrorist leaders claimed that they were having difficulty in getting their men to accept the genuineness of the ceasefire while the South Africans were continuing with their aggressive attitude of patrolling the border. It would assist if they pulled back a little. The South Africans thought it a reasonable request and were preparing to comply. Our information was that the terrorists on the ground were ready to comply with the ceasefire. They were weary, and short of food and supplies, and were not receptive to political pressures. This ploy of getting the South Africans to pull back was the brainchild of the politicians sitting in Lusaka, and we were unhappy that the South Africans were being taken for a ride, but, we were landed with a *fait accompli*. The obvious answer was to point out to the leaders in Lusaka that they had failed in their part of the agreement and, at least until they showed some positive signs of complying with the ceasefire, that they were in no position to ask for more concessions. We were convinced that they had no intention of fulfilling their side of the agreement.

The South Africans tried to placate us by saying that they were pulling back only a short distance; if there was no proof of the ceasefire materialising, their troops would return to their positions on the border. But our people thought differently: they believed this was the thin edge of the wedge, the beginning of the South African plan to pull out, as I had mentioned to Vorster at our meeting last year.

Our security chiefs had expressed concern on a few occasions that our ammunition stocks had run perilously low, and that supplies from South Africa were not forthcoming. It became so desperate once that our chief of staff and senior supplies officer flew down to Pretoria. They had always maintained excellent relations with their South African counterparts, and the degree of trust and co-operation was of a high standard and had never wavered. The South African commander took over the problem immediately, and never left his telephone until it was cleared to his satisfaction. He showed great feelings of anger and sorrow over what had taken place, and confided that it was politicians and not the military who were to blame.

A request came in for me to go down to Cape Town for talks with the South African Prime Minister on the new developments which were taking place. I welcomed the opportunity to make sure that we were on the same wavelength, and that each party was getting the correct message. With the new détente concept in full swing, South Africa was certainly exploring new country, and there were many exciting new developments, with many people trying to get in on the act. To me it seemed the concept was right, but that it was not going to be a quick easy exercise — quite the reverse. I was worried that the South Africans were over-simplifying a deep and complex problem in conducting constitutional negotiations with black nationalist leaders who were dedicated to the Marxist-Leninist philosophy of one-party state dictatorship and committed to supporting the terrorist gangs surrounding them. Once these people had decided on a course, they did not allow themselves to be confused by fact, or logic, or negotiation. The barrel of a gun was far more effective in getting people to make up their minds, or if need be to change their minds. And the principles and basic decisions were not determined by local circumstances, but made in

Moscow, and Peking, and Libya, and Dar es Salaam — countries with no links, trade, economic ties or transport routes with southern Africa. If Kaunda expressed an opinion, it was always subject to approval by Nyerere and the OAU in Addis Ababa with its hot-line to Moscow. We spoke from considerable experience — even the British conceded this — but I was not sure the South Africans did. So I welcomed the opportunity for a face-to-face discussion.

The meeting was laid on for 16 February 1975, and Jack Gaylard, the cabinet secretary, flew with me to Cape Town. We were met by our ambassador, Harold Hawkins, and drove straight to Groote Schuur where Vorster was awaiting me. Hawkins said that from his contacts it did not seem as though there was anything out of the ordinary about our meeting; Vorster simply wanted to keep in contact concerning the détente exercise. How wrong he was!

Vorster took me through to the side lounge where we had talked previously, and there awaiting us were Hilgard Muller, P.W. Botha, then his Minister of Defence, and Jimmy Kruger, the Minister of Police. This was unusual, because on all previous occasions we had met privately, and other ministers were called in only if there was some special information I was looking for. Vorster went straight to the point and said that the South African government had come to the conclusion that there would have to be a dramatic change in their policy towards Rhodesia, and because this was so serious and far-reaching he had brought in three of his colleagues to ensure that he was putting over the message clearly and correctly. For some time now, he and his cabinet had become concerned at reports that their troops in Rhodesia were questioning the justification and morality of asking them to fight for a cause which was in conflict with South Africa’s philosophy and beliefs. As I knew — everybody knew — South Africa’s policy was apartheid, while Rhodesia, by contrast, had a common

voters' roll which would eventually result in majority black rule. Their cabinet had given this matter deep and long consideration, as they were not prepared lightly to accept a departure from the course which they had expressed over the past decade. While Vorster and his political colleagues had no wish to change, obviously they must give consideration to the men on the ground, the people whom they represented, and the signal which they had been receiving for some time now was positive and consistent. He spoke at length and had obviously prepared his case well.

Muller was then given the nod, and in characteristic fashion he presented his vision of the same theme, smoothly and quietly and with great feeling for their men, who were parted from their wives and families, and were obviously engaged in dangerous work, as witnessed by the deaths of those five who had recently been killed. If their forces no longer had the heart to fight, believing that our cause was no longer their cause, then the South African cabinet obviously had a great problem on their hands, which they had to face up to in complete honesty: 'We cannot side-step this issue; it would be morally indefensible if we attempted to do so.'

I wondered how he could talk like this and look me straight in the eye. It had been only a few months ago, the end of the last year, when he had come to Salisbury on that 'most important mission', requesting the release of the detainees as part of the détente exercise. He had agreed with me then that there could be associated problems, but made not even a suggestion of the problem we were now discussing, and which the South African cabinet had been considering *for some time*.

The next contribution in the orchestrated chorus came from Kruger, and although he talked for some time he did not manage to add anything to what had already been said. Unfortunately for him, his facility for presenting a case left

a lot to be desired. Finally, Botha spoke. I wondered what his contribution would be, because we were constantly getting messages through our security network about the dissension and ill-feeling which prevailed between foreign affairs (Muller) and defence (Botha). So I was not surprised when his contribution, while not disagreeing with his colleagues', was mild, brief and apologetic for the message which he had to convey.

Vorster then spoke again in an obvious attempt to soften the blow, saying that there was not going to be any immediate action, and if the détente exercise succeeded then of course the problem was solved, but the South African government believed that they should give me the earliest possible warning of the new situation which was confronting them.

It certainly came to me like a bolt from the blue, and the more they talked the more I was convinced that it was a trumped-up case as part of the campaign to pressurise us into coming to an accommodation with our terrorists. In fact, it was subtle blackmail. I was unable to fathom why it was necessary to resort to these tactics, because I was as keen on détente as Vorster, had encouraged him, and given him our utmost co-operation. What more was expected from us? Certainly they had never criticised our actions, or tactics, or philosophy, and we had always believed that they had accepted that our dealings were direct and honest, and that this feeling was reciprocated. I was at a loss to fathom what was taking place.

I told them that, in all honesty, the message had come as a shock, and that I would like to clear my mind on a number of points before returning to discuss the changed scene with my cabinet and caucus. I told them that I found it surprising that we had never had an inkling of this new development in spite of the fact that our security forces worked closely with the South Africans, from the level of the general right down to the private troopie. The South

Africans had a colonel permanently stationed in Salisbury as a link man to keep in contact with the South African forces and relate to our people any problems which developed. Our Ambassador Hawkins had good relations with the top South African officials and with a number of government ministers, and he had not mentioned this to me. Vorster interjected to remind me that this was a new development, which had come as a surprise to their cabinet, so there had been little time for the message to spread — he wished to put me in the picture at the earliest opportunity. He was changing his ground, because at the outset of the meeting he said that his cabinet had been giving the problem long and deep consideration. I came back saying that probably the most worrying thing was that we had not picked this up in Rhodesia, the source of the problem, and I would certainly want to know from our security chiefs the reason for such a lapse. Vorster immediately pointed out that this was really a matter for the politicians, and he hoped that I would not do anything which would create factions among their troops. Muller interjected, saying that we were dealing in the realms of politics, and as the army was non-political, it would be wrong to embroil them. But they were embroiling the army as a means of covering up their political decision, using their soldiers in a blatant attempt to appease Kaunda and Nyerere. They were obviously feeling uneasy about the way my thinking was developing — not surprisingly, because clearly they were on shaky ground. I assured them that I would be responsible in my action, but that it was a tremendously serious situation for Rhodesia with which I had been confronted, and on the evidence before me, incomprehensible. I simply wanted to get to the bottom of it all, to find the truth, so that we could ensure there was no misunderstanding, no mistake. I was sure it would be the wish of the South African cabinet that Rhodesia should

be satisfied that what was taking place was based on fact, on the truth. There was no reply.

I had always been of the opinion that the South Africans serving in Rhodesia were basically volunteers, and that far from resisting, they looked forward to doing their stint on the frontier. Surely the problem, I argued, could be solved by confining Rhodesian postings to volunteers — after all, this was a system which had been put into practice with the South African forces in the last world war. It was obvious that they had not anticipated such a suggestion. After a while Vorster ventured the opinion that it might cause problems, but that they would give it thought.

I then reminded him of a point he had consistently made to me over the years, that the further north we could hold the line against communism the better, and that the Zambezi was a far stronger defence barrier than the Limpopo — hence the South Africans welcomed the opportunity to play their part in the battle to hold the line against communist encroachment down the continent of Africa. As I saw it, that position had not changed: we both opposed communism, and we both supported freedom and our democratic way of life. Moreover, South Africa had always proclaimed its opposition to interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Was its new stance not in conflict with these principles?

They thought for a while, because it was not an easy question to answer. Then Vorster said, speaking very quietly, that he acknowledged the points I had made, and certainly there was no deviation from those principles. But they were now confronted with a new situation, new evidence had been produced, and as practical people they had to face up to it.

It had become patently obvious that they were being less than honest in the case they had presented to me, so I decided to put it to the test in another way: the problem centred on the fact that our Rhodesian philosophy was not

compatible with South Africa's apartheid — did that imply that if we were prepared to change and come into line with South Africa's policy, the problem would be solved? This caused immediate and deep consternation, with all of them shaking their heads negatively. Vorster said that would not help; it would simply create more problems!

I had proved my point, so I simply made the observation that, in any case, Rhodesians would not be prepared to make the change. Obviously, they were relieved, and Vorster reiterated that it was their hope that détente would succeed, and that would mean that they would never have to face up to making a decision. They were grateful at having the opportunity to meet and put me in the picture.

I stressed that Rhodesia would continue to act responsibly and co-operate in the détente exercise and specifically in the effort to find a solution to our problem; to the best of my knowledge, the South Africans had never had cause to criticise our efforts in this regard. But I wished to make it clear that decisions affecting the future of our country and its people should be left in our hands, because we would not be prepared to surrender the principles we believed in and had fought for, and even if it meant that in the final analysis we had to go on alone, our history had shown that we would face up to the challenge.

Vorster was quick to come in and say that, as I knew, and as history recorded, the South African government had consistently stated that the settlement of Rhodesia's problem was a matter for Rhodesians and that South Africa had no intention of trying to tell us how it should be done. South Africa was constantly trying to get the rest of the world to desist from interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, and if South Africa did not practise what it preached, clearly the rest of the world would accuse it of hypocrisy and double standards.

But what had he been doing over the past few hours other than pressurise me over our internal affairs? And

what made it all the more reprehensible was that he was using a dishonest, concocted story in order to support his case. What were they doing when they delayed the delivery of our ammunition supplies, other than giving us the message as to what would happen if we did not pay attention to their wishes? And there had been similar cases with the delivery of fuel. What I could not tolerate was the deviousness. We fully understood the position we were in, and how we relied on them. Whether we liked it or not, we were sensible, practical people, and we went out of our way to avoid confrontation. Relations between our security forces could not be better. I had often spoken to their security chiefs on their visits to Rhodesia, and in confidential discussions they assured me of how well they worked with the Rhodesians. In my relations with Vorster, I said, we had never had a difference of opinion — certainly he had never mentioned such a thing. If something was wrong, if we were out of step, why not say so in a straightforward honest way? And we could try to put it right, and if need be make counter-suggestions. How could we deal with a problem if we did not know what the problem was?

Vorster said that lunch was prepared and asked me to join them, but I simply could not have faced up to that, so I used the pretext that there was pressing work back home, and I would have a snack on the plane. As I walked out towards the front door, Mrs Vorster came across and greeted me. She pleaded with me to have some lunch before going to the aircraft. She was a genuine and kind person whom we always held in high regard and I sensed that she was aware of the content of the message that Vorster and his colleagues had passed on to me, and her whole attitude was one of sadness and compassion. As she held my hand I thanked her for her kindness, but assured her that my time had run out.

Driving with me to the airport, Hawkins and Gaylard were shocked at my account of the meeting. Hawkins was particularly irate, as he had been in close contact with Brand Fourie (cabinet secretary) over the past week planning the meeting between the two prime ministers, as always in the past, and there had been no suggestion of any other ministers being present — this was pure deceit. Moreover, there had not even been a whisper about the concern of troops fighting for a cause other than apartheid. These people were obsessed with one thing, according to Hawkins, détente, and this was a blatant attempt to ensure that I got the message, and that Rhodesia would not step out of line. I asked Hawkins if he knew of any case where we had stepped out of line, or if he had heard any rumblings in that direction? Absolutely not, he replied, and he and the other Rhodesians at the mission had such genuine and strong contacts with the South Africans, both in Cape Town and Pretoria, that they would have picked up any such information or feelings.

So the picture was clear. The local politicians wanted us to make greater progress towards our settlement: this was what the front-line presidents (of Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia) expected as South Africa's contribution to détente. The predicament of the South African side was that they were unable to indicate precisely what they wanted us to do. Any attempt to bring the matter out in public would land them in hot water for acting in conflict with their declared stand of no interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and the South African public and their own Members of Parliament would be up in arms. So they had to resort to underhand means. Hawkins believed that the majority of their cabinet were not in the picture, and there could be trouble in gaining their support for such action, especially as the deceit associated with the tactics would be patently obvious. Foreign Affairs were the principal players in the

scheming and conniving, and because of Vorster's obsession with détente they found him a willing partner. Kruger was easy to manipulate, but P.W. Botha must have been a reluctant participant, because the security forces would never subscribe to this. When I told of my question asking if the problem would be solved if Rhodesia changed its policy into alignment with South African apartheid, Hawkins immediately interjected: 'That must have made the blood run from their faces!'

Our adoption of apartheid would have destroyed the main plank of détente: the imminence of a black government in Rhodesia that was being dangled before Kaunda and Nyerere. What a feather in their caps if the South Africans could deliver this, and in return receive a pledge concerning an end to terrorist incursions into South Africa, and establish friendly relations with the governments to the north. My comment was that I could not believe that the South Africans were so naïve as to fall for this, when the evidence before them was so clear. Communists were masters at the craft of extracting concessions from their opponents, and then reneging on their part of the contract. If they were challenged they simply waved a mocking hand, claiming that this was compensation for past exploitation by the white man.

The subservience of Vorster and Hilgard Muller to the demands of the black terrorist leaders to their north was something I found incomprehensible. One could understand it, although not condone it, from British politicians, but South African, especially die-hard members of the National Party! Gaylard said that what shocked him was how suddenly the whole scene had become infested with treachery and intrigue. We would have to get to the bottom of it, and he was convinced that our investigations in Salisbury and those of Hawkins in Cape Town and Pretoria would disclose that it was nothing more than a confidence trick.

As we flew home — a long journey chugging along in the old Viscount — I wrote my diary of the meeting, as was my custom. As I would be giving my cabinet colleagues a comprehensive briefing the next day, I was happy to have time to ponder over this unusual event, try to fathom the reason for it and, above all, plan future strategy. We were obviously confronted by a profound change in South African thinking, and it seemed to me that this would necessitate dramatic and traumatic replanning of tactics and, in particular, our long-term objectives.

Above all, I was unable to fathom why they had suddenly abandoned the direct and honest approach, the trust which had always been there. I had never shown any reluctance or resentment when facing up to tough and difficult decisions. How many times did we do this with the British? And it was continuing. That's part of politics. It was only a few months before that I had accepted Vorster's request to release our detainees, in spite of my reservations. There was deep concern from many of my cabinet and caucus members, because of their belief that the South Africans did not fully understand the scene, and were getting out of their depth. Some went so far as to claim that the South Africans were using us for their own ends. However, I stressed the need to retain our faith and trust and reminded my team that, since one could not guarantee success in politics, we had to try to reduce risk to a minimum. We stuck to our part of the plan. And this had happened on more than one occasion: we talked, argued, finalised the best conclusion, and got on with it. What was the problem, I kept on asking myself. What had happened to bring about this dreadful change? A situation of mutual trust and respect and genuine friendship had now been changed to a position where there was obvious deceit, leading to suspicion and distrust. Any attempt by Vorster to make amends for what had happened, to correct the situation, would not change the history of what had taken

place. While it would be possible for the wound to heal, the scar would remain for all time.

My cabinet colleagues were deeply shocked at the message I brought back. I urged them to take time and think deeply. When we came back for deliberations the following week, the general consensus was that Vorster was obviously trying to pressurise us to accommodate him over détente, and that our best tactic would be to await further developments.

There followed a visit from South African security chiefs, who made the trip specifically because they had received a report of the Cape Town meeting. They debunked Vorster's story and on their return took the issue up with their minister, P.W. Botha, who admitted his embarrassment at what had taken place. The generals made it clear that they took exception to politicians manipulating the security forces for their own convenience, and especially when this involved bending the truth, since it made fools of them in front of their Rhodesian counterparts. On a subsequent visit of mine to South Africa, when I broached the question with a few of the cabinet ministers with whom I was in contact, they were obviously taken aback and ignorant of the situation of which I spoke, in spite of the fact that Vorster had informed me that he was presenting the case after careful consideration by his cabinet!

It was shortly after my Cape Town visit that Chitepo, one of the black nationalist leaders living in Lusaka, was killed by a bomb explosion. I was briefed that his death was a product of the inter-factional strife within ZANU. This seemed to be confirmed when the head of ZANU's armed wing, Josiah Tongogara, was arrested in Zambia and imprisoned by Kaunda for the murder. Then a judicial commission of enquiry, set up by the Zambian government, found that Tongogara and others were responsible. I (and everyone else) learned later, when Ken Flower of the CIO published his memoirs in the 1980s, that he and the CIO

had concluded that the assassination of Chitepo would serve to broaden the rifts between the terrorist organisations and their supporters. And, at least in the short-term, Flower was right: the death of Chitepo sowed deep suspicions among the terrorist ranks.

For some time we had accumulated considerable evidence of dissension along tribal lines among the Shona-speaking terrorists in Mozambique, accompanied by fighting and even killings. Their supply lines and communications were bad, and there was lack of leadership and direction from the top, as the political leaders were competing for control. Our security forces had made contact with a number of terrorist leaders who were showing interest in coming to an accommodation with us. Their food and other supplies were short; the local Mozambicans, who were themselves short of food, resented the intrusion of foreigners who made additional demands on their meagre supplies; and, probably most important of all, the Rhodesian security forces were having great success in the war against the terrorists, and their kill-rate had reached the highest peak ever.

For all these reasons our security chiefs and their ministers were not enamoured of Vorster's détente capers. Obviously any successes in this direction would have the effect of strengthening terrorist morale, and encouraging them to stand together. They presented their case convincingly. Clearly, this placed me in a dilemma. My logic and reasoning was to support them, and urge them to step up their campaign, which was proving so successful, and request that Vorster hold back for a while on his détente exercise. But it was obvious that this would have proved disastrous. Not only had I supported Vorster in his plan, but our officials were co-operating and working with the South Africans. Any attempt by me to delay the plan, especially after the recent Cape Town meeting, would play right into

Vorster's hands and enable him to accuse me of going back on my word.

It was our belief that the South Africans were misjudging the situation and were walking into a trap. This was, however, a matter of opinion and we could be wrong. Therefore, we obviously would have been on shaky ground if we had tried to get the South Africans to change course, especially in the new circumstances where, I think it is fair to say, they were even prepared to resort to a bit of 'blackmail'. This was a classic example of double dealing, with the South Africans saying publicly that they had no intention of interfering in our affairs and telling us how to solve our problems, while at the same time pressurising us to support them in their scheming to make South Africa more acceptable to the rest of the world. We were able to stand our ground with any other country if they were trying to pressurise us to accept conditions which were not in Rhodesia's interests. South Africa, however, controlled our lifeline and had already made it clear to us that, if need be, they were prepared to use this control to force us to co-operate. Thus we had little choice in the matter.

At the official meetings taking place with the South Africans, the Rhodesians tactfully suggested that time appeared to be on our side because of new developments of contacts with terrorist leaders in Mozambique, and that there could be advantages in allowing time to put this to the test. However, these suggestions were brushed aside by the South Africans, who clearly had no intention of deviating from their course. We were presented with Vorster's latest brainchild: a meeting in a South African Railways saloon parked on the middle line of the Victoria Falls Bridge, half on the Rhodesian side, half on the Zambian side. This was a bizarre attempt to appease Kaunda and the Rhodesian blacks who were using him as a stalking horse to gain concessions via South African government pressure on Rhodesia.

Part of the South African pressure on us to co-operate with them came as a result of their ill-fated interest in Angola, where they were planning a large-scale incursion with the agreement of the USA. In return for American support for the Angolan operation, Vorster agreed to withdraw the South African police detachments from Rhodesia, part of an obvious attempt to appease Kaunda and Nyerere. In the beginning of August 1974, I received an early-morning phone call informing me that the South Africans were pulling out. I replied that it was difficult to believe this in view of the fact that Vorster had given me a categorical assurance that no police would be withdrawn until he had personally discussed the issue with me. There must be some mistake, I declared, and as soon as I arrived at my office we would get a message off to Pretoria. I was assured there was no mistake; the main part of the convoy had passed through Bulawayo in the early hours of the morning, and the vanguard was already at Beit Bridge. Clearly, they had decided to travel during the hours of darkness so that they would be over the border before the matter was brought to our attention. The response which I received from Vorster, which did not arrive until the following day, simply indicated that this had been done as part of the détente exercise, in return for which there would be benefits for all of us who lived in this part of southern Africa. There was no comment on the breach of the undertaking which he had given me. In all honesty we should have been informed. No doubt it would have been an embarrassment to admit that we had been used as a pawn in a South African game.

Nevertheless, in pursuit of an accommodation of our problems, I visited Vorster in Pretoria and, on 9 August, committed the Rhodesian government to attending a formal conference without any pre-conditions with the ANC at the Victoria Falls before 25 August. Mark Chona, the Zambian

Foreign Minister, signed on behalf of our African nationalists in the ANC. The agreement was:

> (a) The Rhodesian Government through its ministerial representatives and the ANC through their appointed representatives will meet not later than 25 August on the Victoria Falls Bridge in coaches to be supplied by the South African Government for a formal conference without any preconditions.
>
> (b) The object of the formal meeting is to give the parties the opportunity to express publicly their genuine desire to negotiate an acceptable settlement.
>
> (c) After this the conference to adjourn to enable the parties to discuss proposals for a settlement in committee or committees within Rhodesia.
>
> (d) Thereafter the parties to meet again in formal conference anywhere decided upon to ratify the committee proposals which have been agreed upon.
>
> (e) The South African Government and the Governments of Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia, respectively, hereby express their willingness to ensure that this agreement is implemented by the two parties involved.

I signed, but I was amazed at the impracticality of the South African plan of trying to fit everyone into a railway coach with a conference table down the centre surrounded by chairs. We would have no problem, as my delegation would amount to five, but on the other side would be the four factions, each with about a dozen hangers-on, all determined to make their contributions. Why not use the nearby Victoria Falls Hotel, an ideal conference centre which Kaunda himself had attended for the conference handling the break-up of the Federation? The South Africans conceded that it was done in order to placate the black extremists, who were averse to attending a

conference on Rhodesian soil — in spite of the agreement in Lusaka on 11 December 1974 that negotiations should take place in Rhodesia. In reply to a query from me, Vorster simply stated that as the plan had already been laid and the others had all agreed, he hoped I would not obstruct. Clearly, I had been compromised.

As the preparations continued an additional reason for the Falls Bridge plan became obvious: the South Africans were determined to be in the foreground, in order to gain for themselves maximum credit for any resulting success. Hence the use of South African Railways facilities, and the position of 'no-man's land' in the middle of the bridge which they would not have achieved at the Victoria Falls Hotel. Not only were they pressurising us into going along with their scheming, they were now involving themselves in planning the details, and the more we observed the plans they were making, the more convinced we became that they would end in disaster.

Our information sources had been well established in Lusaka over the years and been proved to be highly reliable. They told us that the various factions had not reconciled their differences, were not prepared to accept Muzorewa as leader, and were determined to ensure that the conference did not succeed. I drew this to Vorster's attention, and in reply he assured me that the plan was underpinned by both Kaunda and Nyerere, and there was no doubt that the opposing elements from their side would be firmly put in line — surely it was obvious that they dare not confront the northern leaders on whom they relied totally for their existence. It sounded good on paper, but our chaps in Lusaka were adamant that it was no more than a papering over of the cracks. We continued to get worrying reports from our officials who were working with their South African counterparts. They said that, when they put forward differing proposals, they were eventually confronted with the words: 'If you don't like what we are

offering, you always have the alternative of going it alone!' Into the bargain, there continued worrying reports of lapses in the supply of strategic essentials from South Africa. More subtle blackmail!

The date for the conference was fixed for Monday 25 August. We flew up to the Falls the day before, in order to check on the arrangements and ensure that our people were giving maximum assistance and co-operation to the South Africans. We were met by a horde of press men and TV cameras. The whole place was buzzing, and it was obvious that the novel concept of a conference in a railway carriage on the middle of the Falls Bridge had caught the world's imagination. The South Africans would be happy, I knew.

We went straight down to Devil's Cataract and had a brisk walk around that corner of the Falls and, as always, it was magnificent and exhilarating. Then we went on to the bridge to have a look at the conference set-up. The saloon was exactly in the middle, bisected by the boundary line, impressive with its stinkwood furniture, but once the delegates were seated at the table there would be no space for people to move from one end to the other. There were buffet saloons attached to both ends, loaded with every conceivable kind of drink. This worried me, knowing how different people react differently to alcohol. The presence of so much of it was hardly going to be conducive to the atmosphere we were trying to create for a serious and contentious meeting which was going to be charged with emotion. The last thing the participants required was additional stimulation!

After lunch we exchanged ideas and discussed tactics. Our position was straightforward, as had been accepted at the Pretoria meeting, where Mark Chona, Kaunda's representative, had made the agreement with Vorster. The plan was simple: bring the two opposing sides together, the Rhodesian government and the black nationalist leaders, to

reach an agreement that each side would appoint representatives to meet in Salisbury in order to negotiate a new constitution. We had made two requests: first, there should be no pre-conditions and, second, the negotiations should take place in Rhodesia. It was, after all, a meeting of Rhodesians discussing a constitution for Rhodesia. Vorster sent me a personal message to assure me that our requests were accepted unreservedly, and Chona had brought with him a message from Kaunda confirming that the question of one man, one vote was not for consideration. It all looked good in theory, but we wondered if the deeds would match the words. On the one side we had Vorster coaching the Rhodesian team, and on the other Kaunda (and Nyerere) coaching the black nationalists. The Rhodesians would play according to the rules of the game, but what about the black nationalists? Their record was far from consistent.

We received confirmation that Vorster was flying up from Pretoria the next morning, Monday 25 August. He and Kaunda would personally give their blessing to the conference and then leave it to the two delegations to get on with the substance. My passing comment, before our meeting broke up, was that it would have been much easier, and more certain of success, if we had simply received a message after the Vorster–Chona meeting in Pretoria, informing us that the plan had been finalised and a date given (which could have been agreed) for the negotiating team to meet in Salisbury. That would have avoided all the ballyhoo and the expense, and time consumed in laying on this jamboree. I was quickly reminded by one of my colleagues, however, that I had missed the main point: South Africa’s involvement and the credit which they would derive from it, and thus the need for maximum publicity.

We went down to the Falls once again for a late-afternoon viewing, with the setting sun as a background, and the rainbow in the spray was more spectacular than at our

morning visit. One of the attractions of Victoria Falls is that its character can change, not only by the day, but often by the hour. We had a good dinner, a stroll in the fresh air and got off to bed early so that we would be up bright and fresh with the dawn.

Vorster, accompanied by Hilgard Muller, duly arrived in good time and was brought to our hotel, where accommodation had been laid on for the day. We were staying at the new Elephant Hills Hotel, a magnificent place overlooking the Zambezi a short distance above the Falls. We could see the spray billowing up on our right and immediately below was the beautiful golf course designed by Gary Player. As we looked down over the scene, Vorster commented: 'I wish we had the time to stay over an extra day, I would enjoy a round on this course. 'There were kudu and impala grazing the green grass, and warthog running around with their tails sticking straight up into the air.

We went inside and talked about the meeting, and Vorster reassured me that the plan was on course. Only yesterday Kaunda had reiterated that our nationalist leaders had received a firm message from both him and Nyerere that there could be no backing down from the agreement. Vorster had warned Kaunda that he did not have time to waste on any wild goose chase, so he was satisfied that my fears were unfounded. I was pleased to hear this and simply repeated that it was in conflict with our information, but that we would soon know the truth. The Rhodesian team were ready, I said, and he could rest assured that we would honour the agreement. He graciously expressed his appreciation to me, conceding that he was well aware of our reservations, and thus that we were reluctant participants. He believed the result today would prove that our fears were unfounded. He said he would be meeting Kaunda on the northern side of the bridge, and together they would put in an appearance at the opening ceremony to make it clear that what we were about to do had their

support and blessing. Thereafter they would retire to an adjoining coach on the Rhodesian side to hold their own meeting while we were in session. The meeting between Vorster and Kaunda, their first ever, was an important breakthrough for Vorster's détente. Relations between the two countries had been cool for some time, as Kaunda had accused Vorster of misleading him on an issue they had been working on, so this would be an additional bonus from the bridge meeting.

We motored down separately, parked on the Rhodesian side of the bridge, and walked across. After examining the conference layout, Vorster continued and met up with Kaunda on the Zambian side, and they returned together. We talked for a few minutes before they moved on to their coach on the Rhodesian side. We moved in to the conference area, and gradually the others from the Zambian side drifted in. There were six on our side, and about forty on theirs, packed in like sardines. Vorster and Kaunda then entered; fortunately at our end, where there was room to move, but only just. It would have been impossible to move from one end to the other without walking along the top of the table. First Vorster, and then Kaunda spoke, briefly and tactfully, wishing us success and God's speed in our mission to bring peace to Rhodesia, and then departed to their saloon to await the result, which, according to the plan, should have come soon.

Muzorewa was sitting in the chair at the opposite end of the table to me. At least that was in keeping with the plan, as there had been some speculation that he would have been replaced by Nkomo or Sithole. I asked if he wished to open proceedings, or if he would like me to do so. He chose to speak first and immediately got into his stride, out of keeping with his usual retiring, even timid character. It was obvious that he had been primed by the aggressive members around him and had been forced to change his stance in order to retain his position as leader. He stated

that during the days preceding the conference they had given very deep thought to the proposals which he was about to submit to us. They believed it was important to be direct and honest, so that there was no doubt in our minds as to what they believed necessary if we were to reach agreement. First, and most important, one man, one vote was a basic necessity. In addition they demanded an amnesty for all terrorists, including those who had been convicted of murder by our High Court, and the right of everyone to return to Rhodesia immediately to conduct political campaigns.

This was a blatant breach of the agreement on which the conference had been arranged. I replied with the utmost calm and dignity that I had been assured on a number of occasions by Mr Vorster that both President Kaunda and President Nyerere had confirmed to him that the Rhodesian black nationalist leaders in Zambia had accepted that this conference was being held purely and simply to bring together the Rhodesian government and the nationalist leaders in order, first, to agree to hold a meeting to resolve their differences, and second, to determine a venue in Rhodesia. Specifically we were assured that *no* pre-conditions were to be discussed and, in particular, the question of one man, one vote was not at issue. Moreover, I said, all this had been confirmed to me only this morning by both Vorster and Kaunda. Accordingly, we were taken aback by this new and unexpected confrontation. Clearly, from what I have said before, it was not unexpected by the Rhodesian team — we had given ample warning that from our experience we doubted that they would comply. In keeping with their Marxist-Leninist training an agreement was something which enabled them to win a tactical advantage, to gain ground and thereafter to be rejected.

My reply provoked a flood of rhetoric. The speakers evaded my question and returned to their parrot-cry of being a suppressed people who had been denied freedom in

their own country. All they were seeking, they said, was to return home and live normal, peaceful lives. I allowed them free rein, and when they eventually appeared to have run out of steam, I simply reminded them that there was nothing preventing them all from returning home at any time and leading normal, peaceful lives. They were in their current position of their own volition, and the whole purpose of our meeting was to clear the decks and facilitate the process. I refrained from reminding them of how they had rejected all the opportunities offered to them by the various agreements made with British governments. These had promised them preferential franchise facilities and extra money to improve educational studies, to develop their farming areas, and generally to promote improved facilities for our black people. I was tempted to remind them that our constitution offered all Rhodesians equal rights, equal access to the vote whatever their race, colour or creed, in fact, preferential facilities for our black people. But sadly, at the instigation of their nationalist leaders, accompanied by the usual intimidation, they had rejected these offers, renounced the method of constitutional evolution, and in its place resorted to unconstitutional means and terrorism in order to overthrow the legal government of our country.

My brief contribution enabled them to get their second wind, and they came back more vehemently than before, covering all the same ground again, and then adding that it was pointless, indeed, presumptuous of anyone else to believe that they could negotiate on their behalf. They were not prepared to delegate that authority to anybody. This was no surprise to me, as it was exactly in keeping with the message which I had given to Vorster and his associates on more than one occasion. Vorster, however, assured me that, on this occasion, it would be different because Kaunda and Nyerere were not only their black nationalists mentors, but also controlled their lifelines, and were in a position to

throttle them if they dared attempt to bite the hand which was feeding them. Vorster reminded me that the exercise he was urging me to participate in was not the brainchild of the South Africans working in isolation, but that Kaunda and Nyerere had made it abundantly clear that they were determined to bring the Rhodesian problem to finality, as it was clear to them that the terrorists were failing in their mission, and Zambia and Tanzania were carrying the can — they had had enough.

For me it was time for a break, to get outside for some fresh air and away from the buzzing noise of the air conditioner. It was even more important to confront Vorster and Kaunda with the impasse in which we were landed. My suggestion of an adjournment was welcomed from the opposite side, and there was a rapid evacuation from the saloon. We were informed that Vorster and Kaunda had departed from the bridge some time earlier, and gone their separate ways. So we returned to our hotel to meet up with Vorster, while our counterparts from the Zambian side of the conference table lost no time in occupying their refreshment saloon with all its inviting contents, both solid and liquid. Not a very promising outlook for the afternoon session. As it turned out, however, I need not have worried. During lunch we related what had transpired to Vorster and Hilgard Muller. Clearly, they were shocked. Muller was obviously deep in thought, trying to fathom out a scheme, and eventually he produced one. After lunch, he said, I was to accompany him across the river to Livingstone, where together we would meet Kaunda and sort out the problem. But one could immediately see the fallacy in his plan: Kaunda conniving with Ian Smith in order to outwit the black Rhodesian politicians and force them back into line. The idea was still-born. Vorster was quick to agree with me, and decided that he was returning to Pretoria. As they were discussing whether Muller should stay to meet Kaunda and Mark Chona, we decided to take our leave of

them and prepare for our return to Salisbury. I resisted the temptation to emphasise that once again our assessment had been proved correct. We knew from experience that any such comment was best left unsaid.

We sent a message to the captain of our aircraft to plan for our impending departure, and went to the airport via the bridge to see if, perhaps, there was any chance of a resumption. Apart from the train crew and the security personnel, the place was deserted. We were informed that within about an hour our ‘friends’ had drained their saloon dry of its contents, and had weaved their way across the bridge to their cars on the north bank. I was pleased to hear from the steward in our saloon that not a single bottle had been opened. ‘Not like over there,’ he said, looking contemptuously to the northern side. They must have rejoiced with a gigantic celebration, because both saloons were stocked to the ceiling with every imaginable liquor from Drambuie, Scotch whisky, KWV brandy and the rest — enough to satisfy any normal requirements for a long while. It had been cleaned out in a few hours! And sadly, in return, the South Africans had been told to mind their own business.

There was a clear difference in attitude between the black and white sides. Although Kaunda and Nyerere had given a commitment on behalf of the black leaders to negotiate without preconditions, when the black leaders rejected that commitment, they concurred. My sources confirmed that both Kaunda and Nyerere were openly saying that it was not for them to tell black Rhodesians how to solve their problems, as this would be tantamount to interfering in their internal affairs — branded as an unpardonable crime worldwide. By contrast, the South Africans were attempting to solve the problem in the best interests of South Africa. Whenever we put forward our thoughts or ideas, we received a clear message — ‘or else’! It is difficult to point a critical finger at the black people

about loyalty to their cause and their people. However, the history of white communities is littered with cases of deceit, treachery and betrayal. One can but hope that our case will be an object lesson for future South Africans. When the crunch comes the blacks will stand together, but with the white people, dog starts eating dog.

Jack Gaylard arrived at the bridge from the hotel to say that a message had come from Livingstone indicating that there was no hope of carrying on with the meeting that afternoon. From the description which we had received of the condition of a number of their delegates, I doubted whether any of them would have been fit to make a meaningful contribution even the following day. We went on our way.

We had a pleasant flight home, and over a cup of tea philosophised over the day's events. Our hopes for developments in the cracks which had begun to appear in the ranks of the terrorists would have suffered a setback, for a strong message would now go out assuring them of the success of the conference, and the need for continuing a strong and united effort for the final victory that was now within sight. In contrast to the general incompetence which permeates communism in practice, their propaganda machine is highly efficient, and we would have to be prepared for this. It was a sad setback, as we had been receiving growing evidence that large numbers of terrorists had come to the conclusion that their methods could never succeed, and that the only sensible way was negotiation. After all, the Rhodesian government had on many occasions shown their willingness to meet and talk and the 'men in the bush' now believed that their leaders would accept this offer. Now more time would be wasted before anything further could be done because it would take time for the rank and file in the bush to realise that the Falls Bridge meeting had produced no results. We accepted that we would have to pick up the threads, as we had done before,

but Rhodesians were acclimatised to this, and would not be found wanting.

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The Kissinger Agreement of 1976

After the collapse of the Falls Bridge conference Muzorewa decided to travel, visiting Britain and the USA, in an attempt to drum up support. Sithole concentrated on building up his power base in Lusaka, Mugabe did likewise in Mozambique, and Nkomo decided to come back and try his hand in Salisbury. So much for the agreement which Vorster sold to us, with the support of Kaunda and Nyerere, on the basis that they had united the four leaders.

The Falls Bridge débâcle, followed by the disastrous incursion into Angola in November–December 1975, in no way dampened the spirits of the South Africans. Having failed in their efforts to use the British and, following that, Kaunda and Nyerere, as a lever to solve the Rhodesian problem, they now saw an opening to use America. Hitherto the Americans had shown little interest in southern Africa, but they were now beginning to awaken to the insidious encroachment of Soviet imperialism down the continent. They did tend to blow hot and cold, understandably so, because their main concern was their confrontation with the USSR, and that involved them principally in Europe, and thereafter the Middle East and Central America. So we were subjected to a continuing subtle pressure, never applied directly to me, but around the corner via our mission in South Africa or through our Foreign Affairs Ministry's contacts with the South African delegation in Salisbury, always indicating that they were not attempting to interfere in our affairs, but if they could be of assistance …

I asked our negotiators to think aloud in front of their South African counterparts, with all dignity and tact, that if it had not been for the South African escapades involving the Falls Bridge conference, the withdrawal of the South African police from the Zambezi, the release from detention of our terrorist leaders, etc, there was a strong likelihood that the problem would have been solved by now. They were not hopeful, however, because of Vorster's obsession with his détente brainchild. The main obstacle to the South African efforts was that Kaunda and Nyerere and the other black leaders to our north questioned the South African credentials for playing a part in trying to solve our problem, when the South Africans themselves were indulging in even greater entrenchment of apartheid and the elimination of their political opponents. When people practised such double standards, then obviously the sincerity of their motives was suspect. Put bluntly, they were not trusted.

I harked back to that occasion in Pretoria in 1974 when Vorster was telling me that Kaunda and the others had sent him a message requesting his support in settling the Rhodesian issue in return for their acceptance of South Africa and its philosophy of apartheid. When I had questioned whether that was credible, he had nonchalantly replied: 'My dear friend, you've been so out of touch with the world around you for so long, that you don't know what's going on nowadays!'

We simply kept on with our task, and renewed our contacts with the terrorists in the bush, picking up where things had broken down because of the Falls Bridge conference. The good news was that the war against the terrorists was going better than ever. Now that the Mozambican government had openly declared war against Rhodesia on 3 March 1976, and were actively assisting our terrorists in a stepped-up terror campaign across our eastern border, we were indulging in more frequent cross-

border raids. There is a generally accepted convention worldwide that, if a country is attacked by its enemies operating from outside its borders, then that country is completely within its rights to go in and attack the bases from which the operations were launched. We had mounted a number of successful attacks, the kill-rate was high and the security forces were revelling in taking the offensive. During one particular period we had eliminated one hundred terrorists in return for two of our people killed. The assessment I received was that it was only a matter of time before there would be a general crack-up among the terrorists.

Then, however, reports started coming through, via security force channels, that these raids were beginning to worry the South Africans, as they were detracting from the 'détente' effort. Clearly, this was a political question, so I sent a message to Vorster asking for clarification. A reply came in no great hurry, saying that it was a matter for the security forces, and pointing out the need for liaison. Nevertheless, I was receiving stories of frustration from our troops in the border areas, because they were suddenly being restrained from crossing the border owing to some 'political directive'. So I immediately arranged a tour of the JOCs (Joint Operations Commands) along our eastern border, and in order to ensure that there was no misunderstanding I took the army commander, Lieutenant General Peter Walls, and a few of his top aides along. Meeting with and talking to the troops on the ground was always a stimulating experience for me, and on this tour I made it clear in deliberate language that as far as our government was concerned we welcomed the successful cross-border attacks, and hoped for even greater success in the future — accordingly, any suggestion of political restraint could be discounted. One could detect a number of raised eyebrows.

I was never able to ascertain exactly who was responsible for conveying the message to our people, other than that a garbled message had come through our security network indicating that our raids into Mozambique were causing the South Africans to question whether these were not prejudicing détente and that it might be an idea if they were first cleared with the South Africans beforehand. This was a ridiculous suggestion, because if information came through that there were a bunch of terrorists at some point across the border and if our forces were denied freedom to plan a reaction, the opportunity would be lost. One can imagine the frustration of troops waiting for clearance to act, which could take days, or even never materialise. This was another example of how the South African politicians were resorting to devious methods of pressurising us in order to assist them in their plan of appeasing the terrorists — I was sad and despondent. Regrettably, that was not all: there were continuing reports of supplies being held up, ammunition, fuel, spare parts for aircraft, necessitating constant approaches to the South Africans. We were informed that the South African security people with whom we liaised were openly unhappy over this new development, which necessitated clearance at political level and obstructed action. Our analysis led us to the conclusion that this was a continuation of the strategy to impress on us our dependence on the South Africans, and thus ensure our compliance with their wishes: subtle blackmail.

I wondered what more they wanted us to do. Whenever their ideas differed from ours, we made our representations in a logical, reasoned manner, and at no time had there been a confrontation. There were times when we deferred to their judgement and, as the record shows, invariably we were proved right and they were wrong for the obvious reason that we understood our problems better than they did. The Falls Bridge conference was the most recent

example, and it resulted in a setback from the advantageous position into which we had worked ourselves. Instead of recognising these facts and accepting the need for greater consultation with us, they moved in the opposite direction, working with their partners in their détente exercise, Kaunda and Nyerere, the British, and now the Americans, and then passing on to us their conclusions — in all honesty, their directions.

Supporters of ours on the local scene, including some of my caucus members, questioned what they termed our lack of resolve in standing up to South African pressure to move us in the wrong direction. They were not aware, however, of the intrigue of the South African government, or at least of Vorster and those closely associated with him, and the resultant facts with which we were confronted. The last thing I was prepared to do was to initiate anything which might indicate to the public that we were unhappy about the strained relations which were developing, because there was no doubt in my mind that this would be to the detriment of my country.

I longed for those carefree days when I was flying around the skies in my Spitfire, saying to myself: ‘Let anyone cross my path and he will have to take what comes his way.’ Conversely, of course, I might have been on the receiving end, but that was part of life and of little consequence. But now there was a big difference: there were millions of people whose interests were paramount, and most important of all the children who still had their whole lives before them. There were so many visitors from overseas countries, mainly Britain, USA and the Commonwealth, who expressed deep feelings for what we were standing for, and how our efforts were being sabotaged by our so-called friends. Why, they asked, did we not adopt a more offensive tactic, capturing towns along the railway line into Mozambique and eventually even take Beira, thus securing the terrorist supply routes? With our tremendous security

forces such an operation was feasible, and the local people in Mozambique would be on our side — they were fed up with terrorists eating their food and seducing their women. Rhodesia, like Israel, had some of the finest soldiers in the world, and we should take advantage of this. It was surprising how many people talked thus.

Of course there was a big difference between the situations of Israel and Rhodesia. Israel was not subjected to UN sanctions, and their friends stood by them and supported them, in particular the USA, which provided them with the most sophisticated armaments in the world. Rhodesia was operating under mandatory UN sanctions, more comprehensive than any previously imposed, and our friends, far from supplying our requirements, had stabbed us in the back. We had survived because of assistance from South Africa and Portugal. With the collapse of Mozambique, only South Africa remained. We had been getting along fine in that situation, but the changing circumstances were worrying. It had been made clear to me by Vorster on more than one occasion that, while trans-border raids to deal with the terrorist bases were perfectly in order, any deep penetration involving more than transitory occupation was tantamount to invasion, and therefore unacceptable. So that was the clear answer to those who thought we should take Beira. Moreover, as I have indicated, the most recent evidence was that the South Africans were getting edgy over *bona fide* attacks against terrorist bases. So things were not as easy as they appeared on the surface, and I sometimes had problems convincing some of my oldest and most trusted friends. There were many people who could not credit that the South African government would treat us in such a way, and believed that I should disclose the facts, as they were of the opinion that the South African public would not stand for such antics.

They were wrong, however. Politics is involved and deep. There would have been spontaneous strong support in South Africa for Rhodesia because of the ties that had always existed between our two countries, and the respect for the fight which we had put up against terrorism and communism, which were now both knocking at the South African door. Yet such support would be momentary, because tomorrow the headlines would be focusing on the problems and the dangers facing South Africa: inflation and the escalating cost of living, education and health facilities, sanctions and the direction in which their country was heading.

South Africans are no different from other people, subject to a rule that applies everywhere in the world: your friends will think of you and try to help you, provided only that it does not detract from their lives. Those who are prepared to make a stand on a matter of principle, especially when it demands a sacrifice, you can count on the fingers of your hands. That is why it is so unfair of governments and peoples to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. It happens more and more with the passage of time, in spite of the fact that it is in conflict with one of the founding principles of the UN, and perhaps one should not be surprised that the UN itself is the greatest culprit in breaking this principle.

We now went through a period of waiting for the next move from Vorster. The USA, conscious of their about-face over Angola, were seeking means of compensating South Africa, and reinstating themselves with the OAU. If by working together the USA and South Africa could solve the Rhodesian problem, this, they thought, would stand them both in very good stead. We were on course, with the war very much in our favour, and the psychological campaign, convincing the terrorists that there was no future in fighting, was once again progressing well. Our fervent hope

and prayer was that we would be left in peace in order to get on with our task.

It is important that I should underline clearly that Rhodesia at no time opposed the philosophy of détente, which in practice means solving problems and differences by discussion and negotiation, as opposed to by confrontation and war. Our record had always been consistent. The first glorious example was when C.J. Rhodes went on horseback into the Matopos Hills, unarmed, in order to meet and speak to the rebelling Matabele Chiefs in 1896. They agreed to stop their fighting and work together. Over the years the Rhodesian government had never deviated. When the British government reneged on the agreement made at the Victoria Falls conference in 1963, we talked and talked and talked. In the end we were forced to insist on the implementation of the contract which had been made, but at no time was our door closed to negotiations. There were the meetings on the warships in the Mediterranean, and after the second meeting, on HMS *Fearless*, it had been Harold Wilson who had slammed the door to more negotiations, and taken the issue to the UN. We never changed our stance and, before long, Wilson came back and talked. We talked to the black terrorist leaders time after time, I even sat around a table and negotiated with terrorists who had been convicted in our High Court for planning to kill me.

When détente, however, is twisted into appeasement for the gaining of questionable short-term benefits by compromising on the long-term future, then surely one is entitled to question the motives, and consider the credentials of those participating? This was the agonising position in which Rhodesians now found themselves. There were many good, sensible people asking me, ‘Is it not time we called a halt to this détente business, because we only come out on the losing side?’

And if one looks back and analyses the history of the past half century, the pages are littered with cases of how détente, or 'diplomacy', has been corrupted into appeasement, to the advantage of dictators or political gangsters, be they Nazis, fascists or communists. Always it is to the disadvantage of the free world. One of the early classic examples was Chamberlain's meeting with Hitler in 1938, after which he returned to London and, holding in his hand the paper which Hitler and he had signed, claimed to have brought back 'peace in our time'. In fact all he had done was to condone Germany's invasion of Austria and Czechoslovakia, and thus give the Nazi tyrants the green light for the rape of Poland, which led to the Second World War. If the major countries of the free world had made a concerted stand at that time, confronting German aggression, it is likely that the war, with all its dreadful carnage and suffering, could have been averted. Fortunately for Britain, and indeed the whole free world, we had Winston Churchill, who had warned time and time again against appeasing the German war machine with its maniacal demagogues. The cost in human lives and suffering for that period of détente was a dreadful price to pay.

Yalta was another terrible example of appeasement, where Roosevelt sided with Stalin, against Churchill's advice, resulting in the post-war division of Europe between the communists (the USSR) on the one side, and the free world (Britain and the USA) on the other. In all fairness it must be conceded that Roosevelt was a sick man and unable to cope with the task. If he had handed over to Truman, who proved to be one of America's great presidents, the position would have been different. It was totally unforgivable to abandon so much of Europe and hand it over to the communists. The glaring and obvious case was Poland. We declared war because of Hitler's invasion of Poland, and after finally defeating and driving

out the Germans, we handed Poland over to Stalin, a monster no less evil than Hitler.

If the three victorious powers — Britain, the USA and Russia — had formed a joint force to occupy the liberated countries, there would have been no Iron Curtain in Europe. All those countries that were occupied and persecuted by USSR for the following forty years would have had immediate freedom in the same way as those countries which came under the wing of Britain and the USA. Sadly, the thread of appeasement was still discernible in many parts of the world, with the communists steadily moving forward, and the free world retreating. We saw this at its worst during the presidency of Jimmy Carter — every time Russia took a step forward, he moved two steps backwards. Fortunately for the whole free world, Ronald Reagan put an end to that. The change which took place was amazing to outsiders. During Carter's time I personally questioned a number of Americans on their government's negative attitude and received no answer. Once Reagan took over there was a complete transformation, with Americans once again standing tall and able to look you in the eye.

Our greatest concern, of course, was with Africa, where we had witnessed the steady encroachment of the communists down the continent, while the free world retreated. That was what détente had come to mean to us. But we believed that Rhodesia was going to be different; the Zambezi was going to be the dividing line. To the north it seemed to be a lost cause, and it was becoming more and more clear, even to our black citizens, that conditions in those countries were deteriorating at an alarming rate. The freedom and better life which they had been promised was non-existent, corruption and nepotism and the one-party state philosophy rampant. Therefore our hopes of preserving our freedom, with its free enterprise system, were based on sound foundations, particularly as the South

Africans had assured us on numerous occasions of their support, and of their belief that the Zambezi was a far stronger fortification against communist encroachment than the Limpopo. Everything, however, turned on the actions of the South African government. As soon as they retired into the background, our black nationalist leaders came forward and negotiated, but once the South African government emerged on to the scene, invariably with the connivance of the British government, they stepped back. I received this message on a number of occasions from the black leaders, telling me they had had a communication from the British, usually through Lusaka, saying, 'Hold on, because we are starting a new initiative with the assistance of the South African government.'

After the Victoria Falls fiasco, I was not surprised to receive a message that Nkomo wished to talk. This was duly arranged, with meetings taking place in October 1975, and my hopes rose with the news that this initiative had Kaunda's blessing. There were only a few problems, and we finally came to an agreement to implement what was scheduled to have been accepted at the Falls Bridge conference. Plans were made to hold a signing ceremony in Salisbury and Kaunda had assured Nkomo that he intended to be present for this important occasion. The date was arranged for the first week in December 1975.

Janet and I decided to take a break down at the coast, and we duly left after our 11 November Independence Day celebration. We received a message from Harold Hawkins informing us that South African Railways had kindly offered us a trip on the Blue Train, so we flew to Pretoria, and much to our surprise and pleasure were accommodated in the presidential suite. A trip on this train, generally regarded as one of the finest in the world, is indeed a glorious experience. We arrived in Cape Town the following day, and after a brief stay to attend to a few matters, motored to Knysna, the heart of the great stinkwood and

yellow wood forests of South Africa. This must be one of the most beautiful spots on earth; it has retained its rustic, small-town atmosphere, with smokeless factories turning out their beautiful and exclusive furniture. We had previously spent a number of happy holidays among these friendly people, and this proved to be no exception, with many expressing strong feelings of support for Rhodesia. One day we visited the nearby town of George, where we met a spontaneous demonstration of feeling. In one big shopping complex a lady shook my hand and said in a voice which was audible to many surrounding people: 'We would like you to know that the people in these parts support you in what you are trying to do for your country, no matter what others, including our government, may say.' It was an embarrassing moment, and I thanked the person concerned and moved quietly on. I knew only too well that no matter how much sympathetic support we had from the South African public, any moves from their government would be played in such a way as to make it clear that their actions had received our support and were planned specifically in the interests of Rhodesia. They knew they were safe from any contrary view from our side — otherwise we would have paid the price.

Shortly after this a message from Salisbury came through our diplomatic office in Cape Town with a request from Nkomo that I return immediately to sign the agreement, as he had made plans to fly next week to see Machel and the following week to see Nyerere. I understood the reason for this, as Nkomo had always been Kaunda's man while Nyerere and Machel had supported Sithole and ZANU. Clearly this was Kaunda's plan, in order to ensure that the other two were kept on side. I was not all that enamoured with the idea of cutting short our holiday, which was brief enough; moreover, Nkomo had had the past three weeks at his disposal in order to accommodate his friends. So I expressed these views to Harold Hawkins and asked him to

convey them to Salisbury. Eventually a message came saying that Vorster would be happy to lay on a jet to fly me up to Salisbury at my convenience, and that he hoped this would enable me to meet the request from Nkomo. The subtle pressure was obviously being kept up. It had been our intention to depart from Knysna on the Monday, so we agreed to accept the offer of a direct flight and flew out on Sunday 30 November. It meant missing our return trip on the Blue Train, but there was the compensation of less travelling and getting back home sooner.

The 'Declaration of Intention to Negotiate a Settlement', paving the way for a constitutional conference, was duly signed on 1 December 1975. Nkomo and his friends were appreciative of my early return, and went on their way to brief Machel and Nyerere. At the last moment Kaunda had decided against attending the signing ceremony. Clearly, he had decided for tactical reasons that it would be safest not to commit himself publicly. History proved him right. In order to give Nkomo time to convince Nyerere and Machel of the desirability of supporting our agreement, we agreed to meet again after the New Year.

Over a long period I had been holding occasional meetings with Dr Elliot Gabellah of the ANC and his supporters based in Bulawayo, and recently we had a constructive meeting at Government House in Bulawayo. They believed that the war had got bogged down, and were in favour of open negotiation, which they claimed the majority of Matabeles supported. Gabellah was a sensible pragmatist, and I was impressed with the calibre of the people around him, including young, successful, professional and businessmen. He had recently returned from a trip outside the country, and came to see me on 12 January 1976 in his usual constructive way, trying to assist. He reported that he had a few meetings with Muzorewa while in Malawi, and found him on the horns of a dilemma. Muzorewa, intrinsically a peaceful man, was hoping for a

peaceful settlement. However, under the influence of Sithole, he had become a supporter of terrorism. Thus he had acquired a dual personality, was disillusioned and unable to make up his mind. In Mozambique the terrorist movement was split into the Karangas and Manicas, between whom there was a deep and bitter schism, and this is where Gabellah thought Muzorewa could play a part through being the only one acceptable to both factions. Of Nkomo, Gabellah's assessment was that he was the most balanced and experienced of my opponents. If I made an agreement with Nkomo, Gabellah promised that he, Gabellah, and his followers would support it, meaning the support of virtually 100 per cent of the people of Matabeleland. He believed Muzorewa would also back it. For that reason it would be desirable to encourage Muzorewa to return home. There was a battle for control of the terrorist forces in Mozambique between Sithole and Mugabe, and Gabellah believed Mugabe would come out on top because of his more extreme stance, which had a greater appeal to the young hot-heads.

Gabellah spoke with deep feeling about how fortunate Rhodesians were by comparison with those living in surrounding countries. Not only did they enjoy a better standard of living, but they certainly had more freedom. In most of the countries he had visited, the kind of criticism of government which was an everyday occurrence in Rhodesia would be dealt with quickly and formidably. With a gentle smile on his face he said: 'Those who talk much about fighting and making blood flow are the non-participants, talking from the background of their comfortable positions, remote from the hot-spots.' Moreover, he added, their sons were far away in America or Europe, where they would remain until the danger was over. His plans were to visit Botswana and Swaziland, and from there he would meet up with Muzorewa again, either in Maputo or Lusaka.

The constitutional negotiations with Nkomo were continuing. My diary records:

20.01.76 — Another meeting with Nkomo and party, and progress is slow. One pleasing feature is the congenial atmosphere, with both sides ready to crack a joke. At one stage Nkomo mentioned the time that was lost when he was in detention — I reminded him that the concept of restrictive legislation had been the brainchild of Garfield Todd, but because of his summary ejection from office, it was his successor Edgar Whitehead who had the privilege of implementing the legislation. In fact Nkomo was in detention before our Government came to power. Nkomo laughed and said that Todd had now seen the light and joined the right political party. When I asked which party, he replied: ZAPU of course. I was aware of that fact!

The South Africans were loath to leave us alone, as my diary again shows:

> 06.02.76 — A message from Harold Hawkins [the Rhodesian diplomat] to say that Vorster had called him in for a briefing on how the talks were going, and then thinking aloud wondered whether it might not be a good idea for South Africa to have an observer present. If we agreed he hoped an invitation would come from us, as they did not want to be seen to be pushing in! We discussed the idea and concluded that it would be preferable if they stayed at home.

That evening I broadcast to the nation, warning that a new terrorist offensive had begun and, to defeat it, Rhodesians would have to face heavier military commitments. All was not gloom, however; the next day:

> 07.02.76 — Spent a few hours this morning watching our Currie Cup cricket game against Western Province, and Rhodesia put up a very good performance. Eric Rowan,

> one of South Africa's great batsmen, was there, and he came and had a good talk with me — cricket and politics! That evening a message came in reporting a successful encounter, where we had bagged 18 terrorists with no casualties on our side. An enjoyable and successful day.

Our negotiations with Nkomo resumed on 10 February with us working through memoranda from both sides on the whole range of constitutional issues: the franchise, the judiciary, distribution of land etc. South African (and through them, British) pressure continued and on 17 February 1976 Harold Hawkins came up on a visit to put us in the picture. He said the South Africans were still smarting and divided over the Angola incursion. The military operation was well planned and executed, with the result that their advance was easier and much more rapid than expected. In a matter of weeks they were within striking distance of Luanda but, when their politicians received this news, there was panic. After consultation with America, the South African troops were ordered to pull back, to the total amazement and disbelief of all those involved. Attempts to get together the relevant cabinet ministers to consider the countermand and clear up the resultant confusion were in vain — ministers were at their holiday resorts for the Christmas break. There was bitter division between the Ministry of Defence, which wanted to get on with the job, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had opposed the idea from the beginning. Eventually, Hawkins said, after the New Year, a message from the Prime Minister's office confirmed the withdrawal. It was a humiliating surrender, according to South African military intelligence.

This conflict within South African ranks had now spilled over on to the Rhodesian scene, Hawkins believed. All the Defence people were on our side, believing that we were winning and therefore supporting us. Foreign Affairs were

obsessed with détente and the appeasement associated with it. Vorster was in the middle, vacillating between the two, but the weight of British and US opinion on the side of Foreign Affairs was influencing his judgement, much to the concern of Defence. Hawkins said that he had found Vorster despondent and uncertain as to which course to follow.

It is interesting to speculate on what would have happened if the South African forces had occupied Luanda. Savimbi would have been the popular leader, with the support of the free world. The Russians and Cubans would never have appeared on the scene. This would have denied the communists their most important base in southern Africa, from whence they spread their tentacles into Zaïre, Zambia, Mozambique and South West Africa, giving them the saddle across Africa which had long been their objective. For the following twelve years this enabled them not only to spread their communist doctrine, but instigate the murder of many thousands of innocent people and promote the creation of chaos, starvation and misery which is the fertile ground in which communism thrives. And now it is left to the free world to try and gather up what is left, and restore order from the shambles.

I was pleased that we had the opportunity to put Hawkins fully in the picture to enable him to brief the South Africans. I gave him copies of our latest communications with the British to hand on to Vorster. He phoned, on his return, to say that Vorster was grateful for this action and was happy with the way things were going.

The recent happenings in Angola had brought home to us the urgency of trying to settle our Rhodesian problem. Clearly, we were the kingpin in the area. I felt strongly that we deserved to be given an opportunity to try our system, something between those to our north and to our south, with our black and our white people working together in the interest of all Rhodesians, with equal opportunity for

everyone whatever his or her race, colour or creed. There was clear proof of the success of our policy: as so many visitors constantly remarked — 'the happiest black faces we have ever seen'. Moreover, as I have said, our black people had the best facilities in the fields of education, health, housing and cultural facilities in Africa. They were anti-communist, and openly conceded the merit of an evolutionary programme of gradualism. Statistics going back over many years had also consistently shown that our crime rate *per capita* was one of the lowest in the world — one more convincing pointer to the success of our philosophy and the resultant contentment of our people. We wondered what more the free world expected us to do. It was clear what the communists were seeking: a revolutionary takeover by their minions. We kept on asking ourselves whether our friends of the free world were aiding and abetting this move.

We were not the only ones to express disapproval of Ted heath and his Conservative government. The British electorate felt likewise and had voted them out of office. The interest of the British Labour government in our affairs, and that of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, James Callaghan, was suddenly more openly displayed:

> 26.02.76 — Met with Nkomo and his team this afternoon for a brief discussion to try and clear up a few points which were worrying them. This evening met Dennis Greenhill (British Cabinet Secretary) and his two aides McNally and Laver — he had been sent by Callaghan to make an assessment.

I was happy to talk to Dennis Greenhill, the former head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, because over the years we had always found him balanced and constructive. He came to see me the following morning by himself before

they flew back to London, and assured me that Callaghan was prepared to face up to a decision, and was genuinely trying to help. I made the point that the correct decision for Rhodesia would be unpalatable to the OAU, and therefore I did not believe the British government would face up to it — I hoped I would be proved wrong. After a full discussion he assured me that I had convinced him on the soundness of our case; now it was his task to try and convince the British politicians. He and his party were going away with different ideas from those they had come with — he never ceased to be amazed at how much the distance of six thousand miles could distort the true picture. The general atmosphere of calm and contentment in Rhodesia was the complete opposite of what people overseas were led to expect.

By March 1976 we were having difficulties meeting the expectations of Nkomo. South Africa sought to supply more pressure:

> 11.03.76 — A visit from Connie Mulder [the Minister of Information] accompanied by Brand Fourie. Clearly a South African tactic to use Mulder, a well-known right-wing conservative in place of the soft liberal Hilgard Muller! Best wishes from his Prime Minister. The message was the same as we had previously been fed — a settlement was urgent and they hoped we could offer more concessions. Fourie said that Kaunda was becoming more demanding, and they felt he might turn against them. I pointed out that the answer was simple — go back to the Falls Bridge agreement to which Kaunda was a party. I was complying with that, wasn't it time for Kaunda to knock some sense into Nkomo's head. The discussion with Mulder was most friendly — I was sure the South African Government would not wish us to compromise on basic principles which were the foundation of our Western Christian Civilisation. He

agreed with me completely, as I knew he would. He was satisfied with my assurance that we were making progress, and our distinct hope that if we were left alone we could reach agreement.

There was no doubt in my mind that by the time we parted company, Mulder was on our side. Regrettably, once back in Cape Town he would find himself out of step with their Foreign Ministry. This was just one more example of how the South African government 'refrained' from interfering in our affairs. I am reminded of a meeting I had with a well-known South African opposition politician when he visited this country the previous year. He had worked with all four National Party prime ministers — Malan, Strijdom, Verwoerd and Vorster since 1948. With the first three, when they gave an undertaking they kept it, he said, but Vorster would tell you one thing today, and do the opposite tomorrow. A *slim kêrel* — too cunning by half!

It was April, and reports from the war front continued to be positive, both in the area of eliminating terrorists, and in communication with some of their leaders who supported a negotiated settlement. I received a visit from young Winston Churchill, who had come to make his own personal assessment of the situation. He agreed with me that basically the Conservative Party were wishy-washy on their stand over Rhodesia, and were allowing Labour to make all the running. The pressure from the South Africans continued, including making difficulties over loans we needed to meet our defence obligations. On 21 April, Harold Hawkins flew up from Cape Town to brief us. He said that the South Africans never stopped talking about their hopes that a settlement of our problem was imminent. Vorster had told him the same story that he had given me at that meeting in 'Libertas' on his return from a visit to Europe, that he was taken aback at the hostility against South Africa from their traditional conservative friends,

who had made clear to him the total unacceptability of apartheid, which was an even greater evil than communism. ‘We have got to make changes,’ he said. I asked Harold when he thought the changes would come. It was over a year since their representative at the UN had made an appeal to the rest of the world to give South Africa one year, and that then they would see sweeping progress in the removal of racial discrimination, but they had done nothing. Harold replied that the National Party were not yet ready for these changes. ‘Was there any lead from their leaders?’ I asked. He said: ‘No.’ It seemed to me, I said, that they were using the Rhodesian issue as a decoy to distract attention from their problem. ‘You’re right,’ he said, adding that they were still enmeshed in great controversy over the retreat from Angola. Kaunda and their other friends in Africa had expressed their disappointment at what happened, as those leaders who had opposed their participation in South Africa’s détente exercise were now cock-a-hoop, saying that their ignominious retreat had pricked the bubble of South Africa’s military might, and made the communist victory all the more glorious. This had increased the bitterness of the Ministry of Defence and the military chiefs, because as everyone was well aware, the truth was the opposite: had it not been for political intervention, there would have been a total South African victory in a matter of days. So we Rhodesians were not the only ones on the receiving end of South African political chicanery.

Although the negotiations with Nkomo had got nowhere, I turned to the question of bringing some of our black people into government, which had been under consideration for some time, but I was reluctant to do this as part of any agreement with the British, believing that it was a matter for Rhodesians to decide among themselves. When we made the agreement with Alec Home in 1971, I believed this would present the opportunity to make a

start. Unfortunately the Pearce Commission Report put an end to those ideas. I realised, however, that we could not go on waiting indefinitely, and we started firming up plans. In one of my meetings with Muzorewa when we began discussions after Pearce, I mentioned my plans for bringing blacks into government, and Muzorewa responded immediately by requesting me to hold my hand, as this would be valuable for him to use in any agreement we made. Clearly, this was logical, and was part of the talks we were holding. But once again the talks dragged on. Then there was the Falls Bridge conference. Then the talks with Nkomo. Finally, in my broadcast to the nation on 27 April 1976, I made the announcement that I was bringing into government a number of black ministers. This was not as easy as it sounds, though, and I was surprised at how much evidence I was given of the pressure and even intimidatory threats from the terrorist organisations against any blacks actually cooperating with the government.

Our hot-pursuit raids on terrorists across the Mozambican border were increasing and proving most successful — it had been proved in many parts of the world that this was the most effective means of dealing with terrorists operating from the safety of a ‘neutral’ adjoining territory. However, we were concerned about reports of women and children in their camps. Once again, it was no easy problem to solve, as the majority of women were trained and used arms. The older women prepared the food and the children carried the supplies. It was explained to me forcibly that it was impossible to separate them, that they were all terrorists, and that part of the communist teaching was to use women and children as a means of protecting the fighting men. It was pointed out that the terrorists had no compunction about killing women and children; indeed that they seemed to show a preference for doing so as part of their trade that made them better terrorists. We sent messages, by pamphlets and word of

mouth, warning that all camps were subject to attack and that women and children there should move out. We were unable to think of what more we could do.

The most successful raid of the year was on 9 August against Nyadzonya, one of the terrorists' main camps about fifty miles east of Umtali. Our recces had been monitoring it for some time, and it was a busy operational area. About seventy Selous Scouts went in, using army transport with Mozambican number plates, and a few Mozambicans who were Portuguese-speaking. There were no problems at the border post and they drove down the main road to Beira for about twenty miles before turning north to their destination. The whole operation went like clockwork. The terrorists were caught off guard and about 500 eliminated, and the camp destroyed. Major road bridges in the vicinity were blown up, and the group returned home without a scratch to man or vehicle. It was certainly a daring operation, but well planned and efficiently executed. The motto of our famous SAS regiment is: 'Who dares, wins'. It was not carried out by them, but by an equally famous regiment, trained to the same standard of excellence. The success of the operation reverberated around the world, and messages of congratulation came from far and wide — the telephone exchanges were jammed! Our security chiefs informed me that their South African counterparts were strong in their praise and congratulations.

My shock may therefore be imagined when, a day later, Harold Hawkins was summoned by Vorster and given a message in no uncertain terms expressing his disapproval of the raid, claiming that, in his recent meeting with two of my ministers (of Finance and Transport), David Smith and Roger Hawkins, he had warned against this kind of thing. In the report back from these ministers there had been no mention of this, and when I called them in they were taken aback and said this was news to them. Their secretary produced the minutes of the meeting with Vorster; and

there was no record of any such discussion. I replied accordingly to Vorster and made it clear that if we renounced our right to hot pursuit, this would be tantamount to abject surrender to terrorism. Was this what we were being asked to do?

This was followed by a message saying that their air force commander (General Rogers) was flying up for an urgent meeting with our OCC. The South African government insisted on an immediate withdrawal of their helicopter crews and signallers who had been working quietly and well with our people for a number of years. Rogers apologised and made it clear that the message he was conveying was a political one, and did not reflect the views of their defence force.

Vorster announced the withdrawal of the helicopter crews on 26 August, but continued to claim that the South Africans were not attempting to influence us in our internal affairs. Jack Gaylard reminded me of the meeting in November 1974, attended by him and Tony Smith, our Attorney General, in Lusaka during the early days of Vorster's détente. They had discussed the proposal that during the negotiations the terrorists inside Rhodesia should be allowed to remain in their various positions in the field with their arms, i.e. to allow them to continue intimidating and killing innocent Rhodesian tribesmen with impunity. We could understand the Zambians, the terrorist supporters, sponsoring such a monstrous suggestion, but when the two South African government representatives sided with them, this came as a dreadful shock to our two representatives. It was a complete reversal of their previous form, where they had always sided with us against terrorism. But we were now living with this new thing, almost a cult, called détente. It was only the Rhodesians who were on the receiving end; it never applied to South Africa, or to the terrorists.

Obviously, we had many and long discussions on our problems, and on what the future held, not only for ourselves, but for South Africa as well. One of the constant themes which threaded its way through these discussions was our concern that the South Africans had no identifiable long-term objective. They vacillated between appeasing the OAU one day, and then abusing and threatening them the next. One moment Vorster was saying that they had no option other than to abandon apartheid, while others of his ministers were further entrenching it and claiming that it was the only means of preserving the white man and his civilisation. I recalled that at one of our recent meetings in Pretoria Vorster said: 'If we hadn't embarked on this détente exercise, we wouldn't be sitting here holding this meeting tonight.' He paused for a moment and went on: 'We have cut the black countries to our north completely in half — they are at one another's throats.'

I was not the only one who was unable to make head or tail of that, as none of my colleagues could. There was an obvious contradiction at the heart of his statement.

It was a sad and disturbing time for us to observe this change of front on the part of the South African government, especially as we were unable to fathom what they were trying to do. Was this part of a plan, a pact they were trying to make with the free world to enable them to preserve the Republic of South Africa as a bastion of the Western Christian civilisation established by the European settlers? Whether we agreed or not, if we knew what was going on, at least we could try to make a contribution. But we were completely in the dark. In days gone by, Vorster and I would have long and interesting discussions over our plans for the future. But détente had changed this. When I questioned the wisdom of believing that the black leaders to the north would be prepared to accept South Africa with its apartheid philosophy in exchange for assisting in the settlement of the Rhodesian problem, I was accused of

being out of touch with the world around me. Yet it was not long afterwards that he informed me, after his return from a visit to Europe, that even his staunchest conservative friends had impressed on him that apartheid was the greatest evil on this earth. South Africa would have to make the necessary changes. Perhaps it was not surprising that our confidence and trust in the South African government was a bit jaded. Vorster was clearly avoiding personal discussions with me and, at one of my meetings with our CIO, I was told that they had been given a clear message from their South African counterparts that Vorster hoped that future meetings, as far as possible, could be arranged with my Minister of Finance, David Smith, on the pretext that the discussions had financial implications. Evidently David was not in the habit of asking searching questions! More serious than that, direct pressure was exerted, through a comment to Harold Hawkins 'in confidence', that Vorster found it difficult to accept P.K. van der Byl as our Minister of Defence, dealing with such highly confidential and sensitive matters. The issue at stake was P.K.'s comments to the press over the removal of the helicopter crews, which had infuriated Vorster. In addition, still fresh in the minds of the National Party were the memories of his father, a leading member of General Smuts's opposition in the South African Parliament, one of the strongest critics of their government. That was going back almost thirty years — I could not believe it! However, I was assured that if we wished to maintain our favourable relations and the smooth supply of our requirements it would be advisable to heed the warning. Clearly, I had no option, and on 9 September, in a cabinet shuffle, I gave Reginald Cowper Defence but kept P.K. as my Foreign Minister. We noted, again, that there was no attempt to interfere in our internal affairs!

While our military successes were escalating and the morale of our people was high, there were moments of

deep concern, even depression, among those of us who knew what was going on in the minds of our South African friends. The strongest feelings emanated from my Afrikaans-speaking ministers, who clearly found it more difficult to reconcile themselves with the obvious about-face.

In the first week in September, I received a visit from Daantjie Olivier, the South African Ambassador in Salisbury, bringing me a message from Vorster, asking me to come down to Pretoria with a couple of my ministers to hear a plan which they had worked out with Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State, and which Vorster believed was reasonable. We were aware that since February 1976, Kissinger had expressed an interest in solving the Rhodesian impasse and had discussed it with the British. Indeed, he adopted proposals put forward by Callaghan and had set out to sell them. He had toured African capitals in April and May and had conferred with Vorster in Bavaria in June and on 4 September in Zürich.

On the morning of 13 September 1976, as Kissinger began a much-publicised tour of Africa, we went to the Pioneer Day Raising of the Flag Ceremony at Cecil Square. As usual it was a dignified, happy occasion involving prayers and a short talk from the attending parson, with many people gathered around in silence, paying their respects on this solemn occasion. Nothing flamboyant, just a simple acknowledgement of the arrival of the pioneer column a mere eighty-six years previously, and the raising of the Union Jack to signal the establishment of another outpost of the British Empire. Visitors to our country invariably comment on the high standards of civilisation which have been built up in such a short space of time.

I selected David Smith, my Finance Minister, and Roger Hawkins, the Minister of Transport, to accompany me on the trip to meet Vorster. Hawkins was needed because South Africa was said to be experiencing transport

bottlenecks, which were affecting our vital supplies, all part of Vorster's arm-twisting. After lunch, we flew down to Pretoria, where we were met by Harold Hawkins and taken to his home, where we had dinner and talked long into the night. Next morning we were off to Union Buildings for our meeting with Vorster, H. Muller and P.W. Botha. We were asked to wait at the entrance to the office for a few minutes while TV cameras were set up, and then there was a great fuss made of our entrance, much shaking of hands and smiling at one another — something we had never experienced previously, but no doubt all part of the subterfuge to demonstrate to the South African people the friendly and co-operative relations which existed between our two governments.

The meeting started with Vorster giving his usual long dirge on the problems facing the white man in southern Africa, and how important it was for us to try and assist one another. He hoped that we would concede that South Africa had done much to help Rhodesia, and he assured us that they would continue to the best of their ability. If it had not been for the fact that I knew it would have been to the detriment of my country, I would have asked how he reconciled this with the withdrawal of the South African police from the Zambezi, the holding back of our essential supplies in order to pressurise us into supporting his détente, the protests over our cross-border raids to eliminate terrorists who were murdering our innocent civilians, the vindictive withdrawal of the helicopter crews and the signallers.

Vorster then went on to say that he had warned Kissinger that we were a proud and brave nation, and that if there was an attempt to push us too far we would fight to the last man, and there would be nothing left in Rhodesia. Kissinger had replied that he was well aware of these facts, and for this reason had refused to accept some of the conditions put forward by the British, thus compelling them

to make certain concessions. Vorster said he had to admit that the offer did not measure up to the kind of thing we were looking for, but that it was necessary for us to face up to the facts of life as far as the white man in southern Africa was concerned and this applied to South Africa as well. If we were not prepared to accept this offer of the hand of friendship from our only friends in this world, Vorster warned, then we would be on our own, with sanctions tightening, terrorism increasing, and finally the Russians coming in.

I found the case unconvincing — we were satisfied that our terrorists had come to the conclusion that they desired a settlement, we were riding sanctions fairly comfortably, and the thought of the Russians coming into these parts smacked of panic. We had often received strong messages from our various contacts to the effect that, if the Russians attempted to expand their operations beyond Angola, this would provoke a confrontation with the UK and the USA. Indeed the South African military chiefs had reiterated the same message. I subsequently confirmed in my diary that it was in 1971 that Vorster said: 'The next two years are the most vital — if we can see those through, then sanctions will be meaningless.'

However, all this had now been overtaken by détente, and trying to live in the past did not help. As the record clearly showed, Rhodesians were prepared for change, and our performance was straight and consistent. It was the others around us who were constantly vacillating.

Vorster then went on to explain the kind of plan that Kissinger would bring — it was a bit disjointed, as he was picking out parts from notes before him, and it appeared to us that he was leaving out what he did not want to divulge. The first step was to set up a council of state consisting of three whites and three blacks, with a white chairman. They would be given two years to work out a new constitution, which had to lead to majority rule. The plan had the

backing of Kaunda and Nyerere, and that guaranteed its acceptance. The free world would provide a trust fund of two billion dollars to guarantee pensions and foreign exchange for those who wished to leave the country. Once more we were reminded: ‘If this fails we will not be able to pick up the threads again. The writing will be on the wall for the white man in southern Africa.’

We decided to break for lunch to give us time to consider, and then to return to give our views. Before departing I stressed that it should be made clear to Kissinger, and indeed all and sundry, that every constitution in the history of Rhodesia led to majority rule, and in all the negotiations we had never asked for anything else. Vorster nodded his head in agreement, and then said: ‘They are looking for a quickening of the pace.’ I replied that this had never been absent from any negotiation in which we had participated. As he knew, it was part of the talks I had with Nkomo earlier that year. Again he nodded his head in agreement.

Over lunch we came to the conclusion that it would probably be a good thing to bring the Americans in, since this might have a stabilising effect on the South Africans. I never thought the day would come when I would say that. And, we concluded, until we were given the whole picture by Kissinger, we were unable to make an assessment. We returned to Union Buildings and gave them our thoughts, and I asked Vorster to impress on Kissinger that if they tried to push us too far, rather than accepting abject surrender, we would face the consequences. I pointed out that the kind of changes envisaged would involve amendments to the constitution, necessitating a two-thirds majority in Parliament. This surprised Vorster. And, I continued, they would be wrong to presume that this was a foregone conclusion. We would hold ourselves available for future meetings. I realised that there would be no point in delaying matters, because our black nationalists would have received the message as to what was taking place,

and accordingly would not come forward for further discussions. To that extent we had had the rug pulled out from under our feet.

On the flight home there was little talk. We were all deep in thought, wondering what tomorrow would offer. There would be nothing coming from the South Africans — we could only hope that Kissinger would be better. His recent remarks in Lusaka were not encouraging, and I had received a book from some interested person in America entitled: *Kissinger — Communist Agent*! But it was virtually Hobson's choice for us — what a desperate position for the poor Rhodesians. I had no difficulty in dealing with our enemies, but when it came to our friends …! I only hope that when the crunch comes for them, as it inevitably must, they will be prepared to make a stand.

Between 15 and 17 September we were at Umtali for our annual congress. The timing could not have been better, because I wished to update them on the situation, and ascertain whether I had their support. There had been a bit of wild talk from a few of our members, including Desmond Frost, the party chairman, who were questioning the need for negotiations. As we had not yet met Kissinger and accepted or rejected his proposals, any details were obviously *sub judice*, but I was able to give delegates a general direction, and apprise them of the overall difficult situation with which we and, indeed, the whole of southern Africa, were confronted. After my speech and the debate which followed, I received warm, unanimous support, and when Frost was challenged from the floor to show his hand, his full support was also forthcoming. When we returned to the hotel to collect our baggage, written in chalk across the big glass door at the hall entrance were the words: 'That will be the Frosty Friday!' It was Friday the seventeenth. And a clear message to Chairman Frost!

The previous night after dinner had been my first opportunity to brief my cabinet colleagues on the talks in

Pretoria — not surprisingly, they were stunned. One question was: ‘Does Vorster still deny that he is using us as the sacrificial lamb?’ In the end we came to the conclusion that we had to make the best of the situation confronting us, and until we received the terms from Kissinger it was difficult to come to any conclusions. There was a discussion on Kissinger the man, but nobody could offer any firm views, until someone said: ‘He can only be an improvement on Vorster!’

On Saturday 18 September, the day before we were due to meet Kissinger, we flew down to Pretoria after an early breakfast. Not only did we want time to think about and plan the meeting, but there was also an opportunity that afternoon for some decent clean enjoyment, in the midst of all the sordid politics and dreadful despondency surrounding Rhodesia: a rugby test match at Ellis Park between the Springboks and the All Blacks, two of the greatest rugby teams in the world. For good measure, there was also a Rhodesian, Ian Robertson, in the Springbok team. In the past Vorster and I had always sat together watching the game, but not today — I was shunted off to one side. Not that it mattered, because my seat was as good as any, and I had greater access to my New Zealand friends who were present, and many other well-wishers who went out of their way to express concern for Rhodesia, and their incomprehension at the behaviour of their government. The President of the Rugby Union apologised, saying that he had been asked to put me aside from the main party. Fortunately, that kind of thing has no effect on me, but those who were accompanying me were taken aback at the pettiness and discourtesy. The Mayor of Johannesburg also sympathised.

On the Sunday morning, after the introductions, Kissinger suggested that he and I go into a small adjoining room. He told me that, as he saw it, he was being asked to participate in the demise of Rhodesia. If this were so, he

said, then it was one of the great tragedies of his life, an experience he would have hoped to be spared, but fate had decreed otherwise. Anything he could do to lessen the impact, would be his wish. Kissinger admitted that the package he had to offer was unattractive, but it was the best he could extract from the other parties, the British government and the front-line states, who had to be taken along. Callaghan had assured him that I was the main impediment to a settlement, and therefore would have to be made to stand down. However, Kissinger rejected this idea, saying that it was not for him or any outsider to make that decision, it was for the Rhodesians to choose their leader. And in any case, according to his information, I was the only person who would be able to sell an unpalatable deal to the Rhodesian electorate.

I assured him that the record proved conclusively that I had always been constructive in seeking a settlement to our problem, but had always made a stand, with the strong support of Rhodesians in general, against any surrender to communism. From our experience we had found the socialists in Britain to be small-minded men, often upstarts with large chips on their shoulders and, into the bargain, as far as Rhodesia was concerned, they were still seeking revenge for our UDI. This was no surprise to Kissinger, who had already experienced their deviousness, and now had evidence that they were conniving with the black presidents behind his back. Sad to say, he believed he had had more honest dealings with the black presidents. This did not surprise me, because we knew only too well how many British politicians were happy to bend their principles in order to curry favour with the OAU.

Referring to the terms he had to offer, Kissinger said that, regrettably, it had to be accepted that the Western world was soft and decadent, and it was difficult for him to claim that the USA was any different. Their Congress had refused to support him and President Ford whenever they tried to

take a strong line, e.g. in Angola, when even the loud-talking conservatives had collapsed and voted with the 'Nos'. He did not see the free world lifting a finger to help us, and, with the passage of time, he only saw our position deteriorating. On the evidence now available it looked as if Gerald Ford would lose the presidential election at the end of the year, and with Carter in office then the Lord help us ... Accordingly, in his assessment, he believed we should accept this offer, unattractive as it was, because any future offer could only be worse. Once again, he stressed that his heart was heavy for us and our wonderful country, about which he had heard so much. If we rejected this offer, there would be understanding and sympathy, never recrimination from him. Rhodesia was one of the great tragedies of the modern world, and the fact that he was a participant made him sad. The decision was for us to make.

I assured him that I was a realist and that Rhodesians were inured to the cynicism of the West, so he would find us co-operative in seeking a solution. However, we were of Africa and, therefore, Africans. It had to be pointed out that Africa was different from the rest of the world, and consequently it was a fallacy to reason with logic in these parts. He conceded that he had much to learn about Africa, which clearly was a deep and involved subject, and he had come to the conclusion since taking part in this exercise that the people he was dealing with, likewise, were ignorant about the subject. Finally, he wished to pass on to me respects from his wife, who was away in Cape Town for the day. Like me, she was conservative by nature, had Scottish blood through ancestry, and believed that we had much in common.

We agreed to return and join the rest of the party. He gave them an abbreviated version of what he had told me, and then outlined the plan which was on offer. As he had indicated, it was not attractive. We made it clear that we believed it would be preferable if we called a conference in

Rhodesia of blacks and whites and hammered out our own constitution — in other words resurrected the Falls Bridge plan. We said we were currently receiving the clearest indications we had ever had that our black politicians were sick and tired of the procrastination and would welcome a settlement. This likewise applied to the rank and file of the terrorists, but not to the leaders who were living comfortably in Lusaka, Dar and Maputo. But, we argued, for this to succeed, it would need the backing of the free world — that was our main stumbling block. Every time we were progressing towards an agreement, the message would come through to them saying: 'Hold your hand, the British and South Africans are making a plan which will offer you a better deal.'

Kissinger was sympathetic, but the problem as he saw it was that it had been made unequivocally clear that this was a package deal tied up by the British, Americans and South Africans on the one side and the black presidents (Kaunda and Nyerere) on the other, and that there could be no going back over all that ground again. Our option was to accept or reject. If we rejected, the next offer would only be worse. My suggestion of a conference of Rhodesians with the backing of the free world was a non-starter. The free world did not have the stomach to stand up to the black presidents. So we would be left on our own. If that were our decision, he would understand and sympathise and would never be party to any action which would be to the detriment of Rhodesia. He spoke with obvious sincerity, and there was great emotion in his voice. For a while words escaped him. Then he said he would commit himself full-time to this task until it was completed. If we agreed that day, he would fly off immediately to reconfirm the plan with Kaunda and Nyerere. If we rejected it, he would be off to the other side of the world for his business there, and Rhodesia would be behind him.

I understood clearly the significance of his message: we would be on our own. That had been made clear to me at Ellis Park the previous afternoon. The case had been explained with superb clarity; the man had an obvious capacity for grasping a situation, analysing it, and putting forward the pros and cons. Moreover, all of us had the refreshing feeling that it had been done with honesty and sincerity.

We had been talking for more than four hours, and decided to adjourn for lunch and then reconvene at 'Libertas' and meet up with Vorster. As we rose to leave the room, Kissinger expressed his appreciation for the manner in which we Rhodesians had conducted ourselves and again expressed his anguish for the tragedy which was unfolding — he only wished he could do more to help.

As we left the American Embassy a crowd of people cheered us. We talked much over lunch, and the consensus was that the offer seemed to be the least of the various evils facing us. Kissinger was right: the free world was weak and decadent, and on the retreat; the thought of Jimmy Carter was frightening; we knew we could not trust the British government; most important of all, where did we stand with the South African government? We could get along without the rest, but without South Africa's assistance there would be serious problems, and it had been made clear that there were a number of areas in which South Africa could turn the screws on us.

According to plan we arrived at 'Libertas' at 5 p.m. and joined Kissinger and Vorster. I explained our reservations about the plan, and indicated the changes we thought necessary to make it workable and acceptable to Rhodesia. If Rhodesians believed it was a sell-out, there would be a mass exodus of skills, expertise, professionalism and investment, with resultant disaster. It was important to realise that the changes envisaged would necessitate constitutional amendments requiring a two-thirds majority

in our Parliament. This fact surprised Kissinger, as it had Vorster previously. Vorster said they were satisfied that, if I supported it, there would be no problem. He was happy to use me when it suited him but, when it did not, I could be discarded.

We returned to the Falls Bridge plan. 'Why could not Rhodesians be given a chance to work that one out?' we asked. If the free world gave it their support, we would succeed. Whenever the other party backed down and broke the agreement, we explained, this was condoned, and then Rhodesia was asked to make more concessions. Why could not America and South Africa support us in implementing the plan, which was the brainchild of Vorster and Kaunda and Nyerere, with the concurrence of the black nationalist leaders? It was accepted by the Rhodesian government, and then rejected by the black nationalist leaders. Kissinger conceded that our case appeared to be strong, but he was unaware of the Falls Bridge plan. To me this was incomprehensible. We put him in the picture and he was deep in thought, when Vorster came in and said that we were dealing with past history which was not relevant to the world of today. I made the point that it was relevant to the future of Rhodesia, and that only a few months before Nkomo had been happy to discuss it with me, until he got the message from Lusaka to hold back because South Africa and America were producing a new plan. I turned to Kissinger and pointed out that at that time he was visiting Lusaka, and he agreed. I asked if Vorster had not put him in the picture on the Falls Bridge agreement, and there was silence!

Then Kissinger made the point that his current mission was to ascertain if his new proposal would be acceptable to Rhodesia. These matters which I had brought up, he declared, were none of his concern, and therefore regrettably he did not believe he could make a contribution. He saw no hope of extracting more

concessions from the British and the black presidents. On the contrary, according to his latest information, the British government were suggesting that they might have gone too far — this was the kind of deviousness with which he was associated. For that reason, he argued, an early decision from us was important, in order to close the door on the offer and thus ensure that there could be no backtracking.

This gave Vorster the opportunity to come in and make the point that if we accepted and then the black leaders rejected, we would be in the right and would receive not only sympathy but practical assistance from the free world. I asked if that would include South Africa. He replied: 'Certainly, I can vouch for that.' I then asked if they believed it would mean a removal of sanctions and recognition from the free world, and he said: 'In my opinion there would be a strong obligation — it would be quite immoral if they did not.' He looked towards Kissinger, who seemed to concur. Kissinger repeated his concern about the need for urgency and enquired how soon I could give a reply. I responded that my cabinet was meeting a couple of days later, Tuesday, and caucus would finalise the matter on Thursday. It was decided that we would break for a few minutes so that all parties could consult.

I enquired as to who was the person with the Colgate smile who never stopped talking. 'Pik Botha, the South African representative in America,' replied Harold Hawkins. 'This whole plan is his brainchild.' Botha was constantly leaning over the shoulders of Vorster and Hilgard Muller, and seemed to be influencing much of what was going on. Among ourselves we had the feeling that Kissinger was absolutely straightforward and genuine, and taking into account the current negative attitude of the South Africans, it seemed that, contrary to our better judgement, we had few options.

After a while Vorster asked us Rhodesians to join him and Hilgard Muller in one of the side rooms. Vorster said that it

was necessary to inform us that his government had come to the conclusion that they were no longer able to go on supporting us financially or militarily. Not only was it imposing an intolerable strain on South Africa's resources, but it was attracting growing criticism from their friends in the outside world, who were accusing them of assisting Rhodesia in its efforts to obstruct an agreement with the black nationalists. This was the first time such an argument had been submitted to us, and Kissinger had made no mention of it — it obviously lacked sincerity. Vorster went on to say that he felt strongly over the need for urgency and therefore we should make our decision, which would enable me to make public my acceptance that night. For a few moments there was a stunned silence on our side, and then I expressed surprise at his suggestion in view of what I had explained earlier to Kissinger — the need to take my cabinet and caucus with me, and the requirement of a two-thirds majority in Parliament, without which the whole exercise would be abortive. I reminded him of the dramatic and far-reaching decision we were being asked to accept, and asked, if he was facing such a decision for his own country, would he take it upon himself to give an answer without consulting his cabinet and caucus, indeed the congress of his party?

Then Des Lardner-Burke (my Minister of Justice, Law and Order) really gave Vorster an earful, expressing absolute incredulity at the suggestion, which he referred to as quite irresponsible, in view of the fact that Vorster was aware of the system as it operated in Rhodesia. Lardner-Burke had dealt with Vorster in the days when he was South Africa's Minister of Justice. I was reminded of the days when Des was a fiery loose-forward playing rugby for Rhodesia! Then Jack Mussett waded in and asked if they were trying to get rid of me as the Prime Minister of Rhodesia. If I did not have the courtesy to follow the correct procedure, especially when dealing with a matter of such gravity and

magnitude affecting our country in a most dramatic way, our Parliament could very well reject the offer, and rightly so — was that what the South Africans wanted? For a man normally reserved and very deliberate, Mussett's attack was surprisingly vigorous. Vorster, obviously shaken, got up and walked out, while Hilgard Muller lay back, slumped in his chair. The Rhodesians clearly felt they had been provoked, and the rumblings went on.

Within a short while, Vorster returned and asked us to come through to the main lounge and join the others. Kissinger asked me to sit alongside him, and in his quiet manner said that, while he fully understood the problems which confronted me, we had no option other than to go through with the process. He hoped that I would try to expedite it, because, as he had previously said, there were people — including the British, who were playing the leading part — trying to undermine the plan which had been mutually agreed. This was unbelievable, he said, considering it was a British plan. He was simply being used as the middle-man. I assured him that there was no need to remind me of the urgency. I had come to the conclusion, reluctantly, that Rhodesia had no option and, as we flew home that night, I knew each one of us would be wrestling with his conscience, trying to see if we could find a way out from the dreadful dilemma which confronted us.

We decided to recapitulate in order to ensure that there was no misunderstanding, and I asked Jack Gaylard to make a clear record. At this point Kissinger rose and went towards the front door, returning immediately and saying in a loud voice: 'Come and let me introduce you to your hero, Ian Smith.' He had with him his wife Nancy, who had just returned from Cape Town. A tall, pleasant, clean-cut-looking woman, she was obviously interested in meeting the 'rebel' from Rhodesia. Unfortunately our meeting was all too short, as duty called. Des Lardner-Burke and Mussett told me they wished they had had a camera to

record the faces of Vorster and Hilgard Muller, who were clearly unable to comprehend what was going on: how could anybody think like this about their *bête noire*! And there was even worse to come.

Vorster deliberately made the point that, while we were explaining the proposal to Rhodesia, we should emphasise that no pressure had been applied to us by South Africa. There was a stunned silence. I had to think for a few moments, because it was difficult to credit what had taken place. There was a look of absolute incredulity on the faces of my colleagues. I replied that I could not accept the request because it was the complete antithesis of the truth. However, in a spirit of co-operation I would give an undertaking that with the exception of my cabinet and caucus, I would refrain from mentioning that we had been subjected to pressure. I had to impress on him that my cabinet and caucus simply would not believe me were I to tell them that I believed the decision was in the best interests of Rhodesia, and I was not prepared to deceive them by twisting the truth. I asked if he would care to have an opinion from my colleagues, and he quickly said: 'No.' This was fortunate, because I could see that both Des Lardner-Burke and Mussett were having difficulty restraining themselves, and if they had spoken their minds it would have been akin to throwing a petrol bomb into the arena.

It did not take long to summarise the position and Kissinger once again expressed his appreciation for the courteous manner and directness with which the Rhodesian team had conducted themselves, under what he knew must have been desperately difficult circumstances. He assured us that he would continue right to the end to obtain the best possible terms for Rhodesia — to do anything less would be in conflict with his convictions and his conscience. It was important for me to stress that one of the dangers I saw ahead was that the black leaders to our

north would be pressurised into backing down on the agreement they had given, and that we would then be caught in the middle — I spoke from bitter experience. Vorster was quick to point out that this would not happen because it was Kaunda more than anyone else who was desperate for a settlement of our problem, as it would relieve many of the pressures on him. I countered, saying that, as we all knew, Nyerere was the dominant personality, that he would make the final decision and that a settlement of our problem would not bring him any benefits. In fact, I pointed out, his country would lose some of the trade benefits which they were enjoying as a result of Zambia's trading problems to their south. Then I had to remind Vorster that he was repeating to me exactly the same story that he had given me during the run-up to the Falls Bridge conference when I had expressed my doubts that our black nationalist leaders would go along with the plan. It had been Nyerere on that occasion who had condoned their backtracking. There was no reply from Vorster.

It was getting on for 9 p.m. when we took our leave for the airport, and Kissinger bade us a warm farewell, expressing the hope that we would meet again! Rupert Anelick and his boys in South African security accompanied us to the steps of our aircraft and, as so often before, gave us their best wishes for our settlement — they were great people, whose sincerity was never in doubt. A warm welcome also awaited us on board the Rhodesian aircraft, from Captain Beck and his crew and the smart, clean-looking hostesses — a breath of fresh air. We settled down to a good dinner on board and had ample time to discuss the happenings of our historic day.

Upper most in our minds was the South African eagerness to throw us to the wolves in their desperate panic to try to buy time and gain credit for solving the Rhodesian problem. What made us so sad is that we knew their plan would not work — throwing morsels to the

crocodile never does, he is merely encouraged to come back for more. One of my team commented on the change he detected in Vorster. He had previously been firm and straight, now he was weak and vacillating, and ‘looked like a worn-out and punctured motor car tyre’. The worrying thing to my mind was not so much the change which had taken place over the past couple of years — one is entitled to adapt to changing circumstances — but the lack of logic and reason associated with it, and the covert and veiled manner in which it was carried out. Rhodesians were inured to disappointments, and the need to make tough decisions — tell us the worst and then we can plan for it — but when you are told one thing one day, and then confronted by something completely different the following day, without any prior warning or explanation, it is difficult to know what to do. We had been subjected to this type of treatment so many times in recent years, I suppose we should have taken it in our stride, but normal people of character are unable to discard their priciples for the sake of convenience.

I thought back on those wonderful times when there had been great trust, understanding and harmony. We had a common enemy, international communism, working its way down the African continent, and the further north we could hold the line the better. The Zambezi was a far stronger line than the Limpopo, and South Africa was eager to play its part in preventing terrorist incursion. It was equally important for South Africans that sanctions against Rhodesia not be allowed to succeed, because they accepted that South Africa was the ultimate target and that success against Rhodesia would only encourage the communists. Rhodesia was then the frontline in the fight against terrorism, while South Africa was still very much in the background. Thus the South Africans were pleased to have the opportunity to gain practical experience from their association with the Rhodesian war front. Now all of this

had been reversed, and the reason stood out like a sore thumb: Rhodesia was to be the sacrificial lamb which would buy for South Africa peace and acceptance of their apartheid philosophy. As Vorster had told me: Kaunda had given him that undertaking, and if Kaunda accepted, how could the rest of the world object? I could not credit that a man of Vorster's experience of politics in Africa could have been so naïve. No doubt it was a case of necessity being the mother of invention — he simply *had* to find a way out of his predicament.

All of us were impressed by Kissinger's sincerity and straightforward approach — he was merely the middle-man, trying to assist in solving the problem. He had repeated in front of Vorster his sadness at being implicated in one of the great tragedies of modern history, and that, if we believed we were unable to accept the offer, he would respect our decision and as far as he was concerned there would be no recrimination. So clearly there was no American pressure on South Africa to force the issue.

It was after midnight by the time we landed, but there were no signs of fatigue among us; we were too deeply motivated by the dark clouds of impending tragedy looming on the horizon. I advised the others to rest well and take things quietly during the day before them and prepare for what was going to be a strenuous week of informing the party and the country, and making some of the most traumatic decisions that had ever confronted us.

On Tuesday 21 September, the cabinet sat both morning and afternoon, with a break for lunch, and the discussion was intensive and constructive, with some members finding it difficult to credit the story we gave them. There were comments such as: 'It looks as if in the end we are beaten, it will not be through enemy action, but because of what our friends have done to us.'

At the close of our discussion we decided to sleep on it, and come back with fresh minds in the morning for our

decision. There was not much discussion when we reconvened. It was indeed a solemn, sombre occasion, and the decision most painful, but not difficult. Having a gun pointed at one's head leaves no room for equivocation. No one disputed the fact that we had been given no option. Under those circumstances, a pragmatist faces up to the situation and plans the best means of coping with it. If we could encourage and marshal responsible black opinion and, above all, eliminate intimidation, there would be a chance of rescuing something. If Kissinger could get his plan off the ground expeditiously … But there were too many 'ifs', and — especially in African politics — these almost invariably go contrary to normal expectations. We hoped that the following day's caucus would react unemotionally and with logic. It would not be easy, but from experience I knew that Rhodesians, especially when under pressure, performed with great maturity and, while they could stand their ground if need be, this did not involve impetuousness and a reckless disregard of the long-term interests of the country and its people.

There was an air of expectation around Parliament on Thursday 23 September when I arrived for the caucus meeting, with shoals of pressmen at the entrance. The message had come to my office reporting the scene, asking if I wished to enter through a side door in order to avoid possible pressure. As this would have been contrary to my normal behaviour, I refused. At Parliament, I simply informed the press that at the conclusion of our meeting there might be some worthwhile news. They accepted gracefully.

Caucus, like cabinet before them, were most responsible. The news of what transpired at the Pretoria meeting was met with incredulity. The questions continued after lunch and I was determined that no one would be denied the right to express his views, even if it meant returning on the morrow. We described again what we had been through

many times over the past couple of years from the time we first began to detect the change in South Africa. I told of how I had warned Vorster that, if Rhodesia was eliminated, the communists would then have cleared the road for direct access to South Africa, their ultimate objective. Vorster had been warned that any concessions we were forced to make today, South Africa would be forced to make tomorrow; that if the countries to our north were given access through Rhodesia to the Mozambican ports this would weaken South Africa's influence throughout the area; that responsible black opinion in Rhodesia, which was openly telling the world that South African blacks were enjoying more freedom and more justice and a superior way of life to the blacks to our north, would be silenced; and so on, and on. Ignoring the answer clearly before the South Africans, I said, Vorster was blindly dedicated to his course of appeasement, and anyone who attempted to reason in a contrary direction was given a crude response. Indeed as far as I was concerned, he had resorted to a different tactic because his intimidatory technique had not worked with me. Thus, whenever possible, he avoided contact with me and worked through other people.

One member of caucus with strong South African and Afrikaans connections spoke with circumspection, but strong emotion, condemning the South African government, as opposed to the South African people, for their treachery to the cause of the Christian civilisation which their forefathers had brought to the country. A cabinet minister begged to differ, saying that he was convinced that his counterpart in the South African cabinet would be deeply distressed if he knew what was going on, and that only a few ministers in addition to Vorster were party to the plan.

There was a great deal of anguish and soul-searching, and seeking of a way out of our predicament. Could we not get all the women and children safely out of the country,

and then the men would make a stand and defy Vorster and his gang? Regrettably there was no sensible, practical way out. Finally, with one exception, the caucus agreed with me and the cabinet decision. They accepted that we were confronted by the one country in the world which controlled our lifeline, and which had now issued an ultimatum leaving us no alternative. I was overcome with a deep feeling of pride for the dedication and loyalty of my team, which had stood by me over the years of so much frustration, deceit and treachery from people whom we had believed to be our friends. They were the kind of people who make great nations, who will carry on to the end if need be, not throw away everything in a vain bid to gain a moment of glory at the expense of what we had built for future generations. The only responsible course was to do what we could to rescue the maximum from the tragedy that was about to unfold.

The next morning I received a telephone call from the lone dissenting caucus voice of the previous day, apologising for any embarrassment he may have caused, but adding his support to our decision. He explained that his constitution was simply unable to accept and digest at such short notice the South African treachery with which he was confronted. Overnight, however, he had come to the conclusion that withholding his support, far from helping, would be to the detriment of his country. That evening, Friday 24 September, I therefore broadcast to the nation, giving them the sad news. Obviously they knew something was happening, with the meeting in Pretoria, followed by cabinet and caucus and the accompanying speculation in the media. Experience shows that human nature is usually hopeful, in spite of the fact that their optimisim often turns out to be wishful thinking. This was a more savage blow than anyone expected, however, in view of the commonly held belief that if Rhodesia went, this would be the first nail in South Africa’s coffin, and for that reason we would stand

together for our mutual benefit and protection. Although this was the cruellest blow of all, our people behaved with great courage, firmly bracing themselves for whatever was in store.

During the following week, my office was inundated with messages of commiseration over the betrayal. There were also congratulations for the manner in which we had handled it and pledges of loyal support for the future. While these were traumatic, indeed desperate, days we had the reward of being part of a small nation which not only believed in but put into practice those old-fashioned ideals and principles which throughout history had created great nations. They were built on the indestructible foundations of courage, integrity, loyalty and a determination to put into practice the philosophy of: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. Let us not deny that the conditions under which Rhodesians had been living for the past decade tended to instil in people those desirable characteristics, in the same way as they did in Britain during those dark years between 1939 and 1945. Good people, in similar circumstances, brought up under those same traditions, no doubt would have reacted in the same way. So let me emphasise that in no way is this a claim that Rhodesians were a superior people. We simply happened to be living in Rhodesia at this point of history, when we were challenged by the forces of evil. We decided to close our ranks and make a stand for those ideals of Western Christian civilisation on which our country had been built. It was a time when it was a privilege to be able to say: 'I am a Rhodesian.'

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The Geneva Conference

Within a matter of days a cable arrived from Kissinger in Dar es Salaam spelling out in precise words the acceptance of the agreement by Kaunda and Nyerere on the first positive step. About a week passed before a message came in requesting me to visit Pretoria for a meeting with Edward Rowlands, the British Minister of State, and William Schaufele, the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. They had been travelling around to our north discussing the Rhodesian plan with the black presidents, but were reluctant to travel the short distance to Rhodesia to discuss the Rhodesian plan with the Rhodesians. It certainly was not the first time we had been confronted by this kind of arrogance. They received a swift 'flea in the ear' in response, and the following day, 4 October 1976, arrived in Salisbury.

I cannot remember meeting people who were so indecisive, and simply did not know what was going on around them. Apart from the Rhodesian government, they did not know what other parties would attend the conference. Could Kaunda and Nyerere not tell them? No, it was a matter for the Rhodesians to decide. 'What are you going to do?' I asked. 'We really don't know,' they replied. 'We hope it will emerge!'

The venue? They asked if I would accept Lusaka. I replied, 'No, why not Rhodesia?' which was the home of all the participants, and had always previously been the venue. The blacks were against this, Rowlands and Schaufele said, because it would not be neutral ground. What about Pretoria? That was unacceptable as, not only the OAU but the whole world would not touch the South Africans with a

bargepole. ‘But who,’ I asked, ‘was the honest broker in the plan that we are now implementing?’ I was obviously being far too honest and straightforward. I thought of Vorster telling me that he had these people to the north eating out of his hands and that in return they would recognise and accept South Africa. I smiled to myself, but then quickly stopped, realising the tragic seriousness of what lay ahead. What about London, I enquired? That was unacceptable, as there would be serious problems associated with it. The reason was obvious: they were not prepared to let me loose before the TV cameras and press in Britain — Harold Wilson had learned that lesson when I was last there. ‘It will probably have to be in Switzerland,’ I said. ‘Just get on with it.’ Geneva was selected.

The agenda? There could be no problem with that, I suggested, because it had only one item on it — the interim government — as agreed in Pretoria. Well, they said, when dealing with blacks you cannot expect that kind of thing. ‘We’ll have to let them talk about anything and everything, and once they’ve run out of steam, we’ll bring them back to the focal point.’ I warned Rowlands and Schaufele that if they did not take a grip on affairs and give a positive lead, the exercise would abort. There was, I warned, a limit to how far I was prepared to allow myself to be pushed around in any attempt to deviate from the agreement which we had made. Inwardly, however, I knew that this was brave talk from an unsure foundation. In spite of the strong front put on by Rhodesians, this agreement had damaged our hopes for and confidence in the future. We hoped to gain something from a settlement of our dispute, an end of sanctions and peace. But there was no way of going back to where we were before — this had been compromised by the Kissinger agreement. It had been made absolutely clear to us that any attempt to turn back would result in a head-on clash with the South Africans. Moreover, it was clear to me that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to repair the

damage that Rhodesian confidence had suffered. So there was only one way, and even with that we would be living with the ever-present danger of Rhodesia falling between two stools.

It was an odd meeting with a couple of befuddled men unable to give any answer to anything. They were pleading for help and guidance and clutching at straws. I can only hope that I succeeded in inserting a degree of firmness into their spinal columns.

News started coming through of a change of attitude from the South Africans. As part of the pressure against us, they had been holding back supplies and assistance, but once we acquiesced to their plan, things which we had been awaiting for six months suddenly came forward. Their army general, Magnus Malan, said he now had the political directive to meet our requirements. Their air force general, Bob Rogers, indicated that he now had the clearance to train our Mirage pilots without charge, whereas previously we had been informed we would have to pay. Also, the pressure to withdraw helicopter crews had vanished. The Ministry of Defence confirmed that the $20 million South African loan, which was being held back, was now available. There were sighs of relief all around. It was so easy for the South Africans to convey their messages, in keeping with their oft-pronounced statements that there was no attempt to interfere in our internal affairs, and no pressure was being applied.

My main concern now was to get the Geneva conference going, as delay played into the hands of the obstructionists opposed to the plan. We had received messages that the Soviets were attempting to persuade Kaunda and Nyerere to hold back their support for the conference, and some of the black nationalists were also unenthusiastic about it. Moreover, the spectre of Jimmy Carter on the US Presidential horizon induced trauma. All of these negative factors pointed to the need to avoid procrastination, but

regrettably the British lacked the will to take any firm action that might be resented by those dragging their feet. So we kept up the pressure every day, and eventually the message came through that Geneva was ready to accept us and that the British hoped that we could expedite our departure as there was much pre-conference work to be done. We did just that. My delegation included four of my cabinet, namely David Smith, my Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance; P.K. van der Byl, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mark Partridge, Lands, Water Development and Natural Resources; and Hilary Squires, Justice and Law and Order. We flew out of Salisbury on Wednesday evening, 20 October 1976, to a warm send-off from a large crowd of well-wishers.

In Geneva we found the British conference chairman, Ivor Richard, had not yet arrived — after exhorting us to hasten our arrival! Perhaps I should have expected this, and it was a pattern which was going to continue for the following two months — meetings were arranged and then cancelled, then rearranged, with half the people arriving while the other half did not turn up. When you are part of Africa, this is part of life, and the only way to survive is to acclimatise yourself.

As soon as Richard arrived, on Friday 22 October, we held a meeting to ascertain what was happening. I requested that the conference start the next day. This was impossible, he explained, because he would have to meet each delegation leader in order to confirm the agenda. I pointed out that this had been agreed at my meeting with Kissinger and, as he was well aware, Kaunda was advocating the British plan. Indeed, I recalled for Richard, in the midst of our meeting we had had a break to enable Kissinger to phone the British in order to clear a point which I had raised. It was absolutely certain, I insisted, that the proposals constituted a package of five points not open to negotiation — it was merely a question of acceptance or

rejection. This had been repeated by me in my broadcast to the Rhodesian nation on 24 September, which had given our government's acceptance of the package. As a result of this broadcast, I told Richard, I had received messages of approval and gratitude from both the British and US governments. I hoped there was no suggestion that Kissinger had misled me, or that the messages from their two governments were bogus?

Richard denied that there were any such thoughts in his mind. I expressed satisfaction at this, and hoped his words would be backed up by deeds. I was reminded of what Kissinger had said at the Pretoria meeting when he had stated that his information was that the British were already conniving behind his back with the chaps to the north to secure changes in the agreement. 'What is the word they use to describe them,' he said; 'per …' I supplied him with what he was looking for: 'Even you Americans are familiar with "Perfidious Albion".' Kissinger had smiled and shaken his head appreciatively.

It did not take long for Richard to indicate that he had got my message. He promised to contact the black delegations promptly and try to have things organised by the next day. We met him again in the morning in a much more harmonious atmosphere. Instead of trying to give me advice, Richard sought advice from me on the best way to handle our blacks. He indicated that he agreed with me but believed that, for tactical reasons, it would be undesirable to disclose this in case it lead the black delegation to conclude that we were conniving behind their backs. Out of the blue he then started talking about the game of rugby, maybe feeling that this would humour me. Then he mentioned Harold Wilson's latest book and added that he had seen him on his way through London, and Harold had asked him to pass on to me his kind regards. He spoke about his job at the United Nations, but confessed that his greatest wish was to be in the House of Commons. For that

reason, no doubt, he would be aiming to make a success of this operation.

Next day was Sunday 24 October, and after an early breakfast we had a pleasant drive through beautiful country to Chaminix where we took the cable car to Aiquille du Midi, the highest cable car ride in the world (3,842m) — a magnificent view looking across at Mont Blanc and the massive glaciers in the valleys below. That evening we attended the service in the local Anglican church. It was a happy day, which kept our team close together. As a matter of interest we were informed through the security network — all delegations had security coverage — that we were the only ones to have attended a church service; this was to be the pattern for the duration of the conference.

By Wednesday 27 October, there was still no meeting of the conference and some of the British team had expressed their frustration to some of our chaps with whom they were in contact.

Then, that day, we were handed our cards of admittance to the conference, on the top of which were written the words: ‘The Smith Delegation’, followed by the name of our representative. That was more than I could stomach. It was obviously a deliberate attempt on Richard’s part to degrade our status and thus gain favour with the black delegations. I told our secretariat to arrange an urgent meeting with Richard, and it was laid on for after dinner that evening. I took along my four cabinet colleagues, and Jack Gaylard, the secretary to the cabinet. I immediately confronted Richard with the cards and informed him that we were not ‘The Smiths Delegation’, but the ‘Rhodesian Government Delegation’. He replied that this was not acceptable to him. I retorted that I was not asking him, I was telling him — it had already been done. I held before him my own card, where the change had been made in bold capital letters. (On the drive back to the hotel one of my team commented

that when I delivered that blow, Richard reeled back as though he had been hit between the eyes with a hammer.) I accused him of indulging in puerile behaviour, and an obvious attempt to appease our opponents, and reminded him that in all our correspondence with the British government we were addressed as the Rhodesian government and I as Prime Minister. I warned him that, if he continued in this frame of mind, there would be no conference. Moreover, we had in our company senior civil servants, some with forty years' service to a number of Rhodesian governments, not to any individual. I had to tell him that we found his behaviour unacceptable. This was pretty strong and exciting stuff for my chaps, who were having their first experience of this kind of game, and they joined in with gusto. Hilary Squires, my Minister of Justice, who had enjoyed a record of being a very able QC, had no difficulty in tying Richard up in an extremely tight knot, with Mark Partridge giving his tail the occasional twist. For good measure, P.K. van der Byl inserted his characteristic cutting thrust.

For a while, Richard sat back, obviously trying to assess what had struck him. It took some time for Richard to concede that he appeared to have misjudged the situation as far as we Rhodesians were concerned. I corrected him, pointing out that it was not a question of appearance, it was an obvious fact. He conceded our right to change the designation on our conference cards. Then, in mitigation, he pointed out that he had experienced a couple of awkward days dealing with the black leaders, who had resorted to abuse when all their demands were not met. He assured us, however, that he had stood up to them and put them in their place. Regrettably, this was not the message we had received through our grapevine, which told of him backing down and appeasing them. He assured us of his continuing wish to co-operate with us and offered us drinks

before we departed, but I declined for the obvious reason that we were in no mood to prolong contact with him.

On the next day, Thursday 28 October, at long last, the conference was due to commence at 3 p.m. We arrived in good time and were immediately surrounded by the press — some 500 reporters had gathered for the occasion. As we were entering the conference room Jack Gaylard came up to me and said: 'The British apologise, but the opening has been delayed two hours.' We decided to return to the hotel, and as we left the UN building I felt for the media chaps standing out in the cold and rain, so I cracked a joke with them.

I asked for an adequate reason from Richard before returning and he came through on the telephone immediately, full of apologies. He said Nkomo and Mugabe were being difficult. They were even questioning his position as chairman. In the end they were convinced by his arguments, he said, but needed an extra two hours to report back to their supporters. I reminded Richard that the agreement had been signed and sealed months ago, and that we had all come to the conference on that agreement. Once again, I had to tell him that his tactics were wrong and that anyone who understood Africa would confirm this. Pandering to their arrogance and excesses, I explained, simply encouraged these people to indulge in more outrageous behaviour because it paid dividends. If he had stood his ground, which had been well prepared and accepted by everyone, the conference would have gone according to plan, and there would have been a little more humility and reasonableness from those concerned. He pleaded with me for understanding and I assured him that Rhodesians would never be found wanting in that regard. As soon as we received the message that the others were at the conference centre, I assured him, we would depart from our hotel.

The conference room was ablaze with lights and the clatter of cameras when we arrived, and after about half an hour I was compelled to remind Richard that we had work to do. The opening address from Richard was reasonable, save for a message that he read from Callaghan which referred to our country as Zimbabwe, when, after all, according to British law the country was officially known as Rhodesia. However, on the credit side, the conference had started with the black delegations present in spite of the fact that they proclaimed volubly that they would never participate with Richard in the chair. To those who understand African politics that was par for the course.

Muzorewa took the honours, with vacant seats on either side of him, one with a placard bearing the name Comrade Enos Nkala, the other, Comrade Edson Sithole, both missing from the conference. His delegates were well presented, as were Sithole's, but the others were a scruffy-looking assortment. Mugabe's crowd looked like a bunch of gangsters, but one of my team commented that they looked exactly like what they were!

Next day the leaders of the delegations spoke. Nkomo and Mugabe told in mournful tone of the dreadful sacrifices which the white governments had exacted from the poor black people. I bit my tongue in order to resist reminding Mugabe of what the Matabeles had consistently exacted from the Shonas in the years before the white man brought both his Western civilisation, with its justice and law and order, and an end to the murder and carnage and plundering which had previously been the order of the day. The only point of interest in Muzorewa's address was his glowing account of the contribution of great King Lobengula to building the Zimbabwe nation. A piece of comic opera was my comment! If Lobengula had been alive, there certainly would not have been room for any politicians in the country, and anyone promoting the name Zimbabwe would have had his head lopped off. Sithole

seemed to be hanging back, so I spoke briefly, appealing for constructive contributions and expressing the hope that we would expedite matters so that we could return home and get on with the business of building our new nation. Sithole then came in with the only responsible and constructive contribution from the black leaders. He gave one hope that maybe we would succeed in forming an agreement.

The next step was for the constitutional lawyers to draw up a plan of action for our consideration. It was felt this would take a couple of days to work out, and I concurred. Boredom and frustration have a debilitating effect, so we laid on visits to some farms, always a refreshing experience, and one of the big watch-making factories.

By the middle of the following week, on Wednesday 3 November, I was looking for progress and asked for a meeting with Richard. He informed me that he was having difficulty in pinning our friends down — they were asking that a specific date for the final grant of independence be written into the agreement. I assured him that this was no problem, as the original agreement had laid down that this should be finalised within two years, allowing sufficient time for the drawing up of a new constitution and completion of all the other necessary requirements. All that was necessary was for us to sign the agreement — what was the problem? He said he would convey my message to the drafting committee. Once again I urged him to be firm, otherwise the black leaders would continue to attempt to include provisions which were not part of the agreement. As that was unacceptable to me, I warned, it would mean drifting on indefinitely. If he could not bring the matter to finality, I said, it was my intention to return home and wait for a conclusion. I reminded him that, unlike the others, I had a country to govern. He thanked me for my constructive approach, and assured me of his determination to pressurise the others to a conclusion. I

departed with little hope that he would have the courage to follow up his words with deeds.

Over the weekend George Smith, our constitutional expert, informed me that there had been no progress, as the British were attempting to accommodate new demands from the black delegations. I arranged to meet Richard on Monday 8 November, and asked for the cause of the hold-up. He evaded the issue and talked about trying to secure the confidence of the blacks, which was necessary if we were to make progress. Appeasement? I asked. He was distressed that I should make such a suggestion. Why then, I asked, did he not arrange a meeting for us to endorse the five principles which had been laid down, as this would enable us to implement the plan. 'Why not tomorrow?' Surprisingly, he agreed.

We, the leaders plus three delegates, met the next afternoon and I took van der Byl, Squires and Gaylard. It was a chaotic meeting. Instead of dealing with the agenda, the blacks indulged in political diatribes, talking about anything and everything which came into their minds. Eventually, after showing commendable tolerance, I asked Richard when he was going to restore order and deal with the agenda. From a reclining position in his chair, he replied: 'Don't ask me, ask the other delegates here.' I could hardly believe my ears. The other delegates sat quietly, waiting for the next move. They did not have to wait long. In a deliberate but unemotional manner, I upbraided him for his behaviour and reminded him of the duties of a chairman. On our side of the table we wanted a straight answer: was he going to continue to condone the irrelevant and chaotic conditions which we had just witnessed, or would he restore some semblance of order to the meeting? If not, I said, it would be necessary to find a new chairman. I hoped this might shake him to his senses, because earlier the black delegations were objecting to his chairmanship while I supported him — but alas, he had

turned out to be anything but a success. He made some responses to my attack, but we made it clear that we were unimpressed and eventually he adjourned the meeting so that he could put more work into the preparation. Afterwards my team said they had found it a stimulating occasion. One does not enjoy resorting to that kind of tactic, but a stand had to be made. The black delegates refrained from participating. They simply sat back and enjoyed the spectacle.

Before dinner that evening we went to meet Richard and Antony Duff of the British Foreign Office in a constructive effort to see if we could get things back on to the rails. Richard expressed surprise at the vehemence of my attack on him that afternoon — my simple reply was that he had asked for it. He complained over the impossible behaviour of the black leaders, especially Mugabe, who constantly disagreed with his suggestions. What did I think would happen if Mugabe was excluded? Perfect, I replied, he had always been the 'fly in the ointment' as far as coming to an agreement was concerned. Even Kaunda had expressed such a feeling. Richard was absorbed with the idea and asked a few penetrating questions, obviously wondering how to solve his problem. He, too, believed that with Mugabe out of the way we could agree. I had to tell him, though, that I did not believe the British government would entertain the idea — they were too intent on their policy of appeasing everybody. Once again I impressed on Richard the need for firmness. Arrange a meeting, I told him, and proceed in keeping with the agreement of which everyone was aware. If there were delegates not prepared to attend, carry on without them — thus solving the problem in a peaceful, tactful manner, without deliberately excluding anybody. I was prepared to guarantee that there would be no absentees once they realised that he meant what he said. He quietly nodded his head in agreement, saying, 'You have probably given me the answer.'

I then informed him that it was my intention to return home, to deal with pressing matters, but that I would leave part of my team in Geneva to carry on the work, and would return once I had received the message that they were ready to get on with the job. Richard expressed disappointment at my decision to depart, but I reminded him that originally I had agreed to come to Geneva for a couple of days, a week at the outside, to confirm an agreement which had already been made. A month had passed and there had been no progress, because of vacillation and indecision, and he well knew who was to blame for that, as I had reminded him on a number of occasions!

After dinner the American, William Schaufele, the American Assistant Secretary of State, came for a discussion. He repeated what he had previously said, that they were trying to assist, but that this was a delicate operation, and had to be done tactfully. He hoped that I would be prepared to adjust a little, if need be. I asked him to be more specific. I was waiting, I said, ready to implement the agreement which I had made with Henry Kissinger. This was clear and specific, as everybody knew. Did the Americans have a different view now? He was quick to reply in the negative, but told me they were worried over what appeared to be a looming Carter victory, which presented a distinctly bleak outlook. I told him there was an obvious answer: if Richard had got on with his task, it would have been completed three weeks ago, and we would all have been back in Rhodesia, implementing the agreement. I suggested that his effort should be directed towards Richard.

I departed for home the following day — what an exhilarating feeling! Back in Salisbury, I spent a few weeks briefing my people on the happenings in Geneva, and caught up on the local security position — our forces had just raided ZANLA camps in Mozambique with some

success. There were some worrying reports that people were beginning to express concern about Rhodesia going the same way as the rest of Africa around us. I had a happy weekend at ‘Gwenoro’ and a final cabinet meeting before catching the plane on 7 December for my return with Jack Gaylard to Geneva. Harold Hawkins met us on our way through Jan Smuts Airport that night and said Vorster had asked him to convey his good wishes. The South Africans, Vorster had said, were happy with the developments to date, and hoped that we would keep the conference going right to the end. My comment was that it was easy offering advice while sitting in Pretoria, but a different matter sitting cheek by jowl with the communists in Geneva. We flew SAA and landed at Windhoek — I liked the look of the place, since it had the air of a frontier town, a bit like Rhodesia. Our contacts with South West Africa over the years indicated that there were many similarities between us, with philosophies which had much in common. I regretted that we did not share a common boundary, as it was my assessment that we would have worked well together.

I was on the flightdeck for the take-off from Windhoek and the landing next morning at Zürich. While there I was able to listen to the 6 a.m. BBC news. We made a quick connection to Geneva, there was a short press interview at the airport, and a warm welcome back to the Rhône Hotel, where they had gone out of their way to accommodate us, and always shown great kindness. Having bathed, changed and lunched, I agreed to a meeting with Richard. Frank Wisner, the latest American representative, had sent me a note that he wished to see me urgently with a message from Kissinger that he wanted me to receive before seeing Richard. The note, however, did not arrive in time, and Richard’s secretary asked if the two of us could have a private meeting before joining the rest. I went along reluctantly, because it is an overplayed practice of trying to

pre-condition a person with a bit of flattery or offering ‘confidential’ information which, in fact, is dished out to all and sundry, like toffees to children. There is a case for personal discussion if two prime ministers or leaders are holding meetings — but a private discussion with Richard?

There was a surprise: Richard introduced me to his wife, who had recently arrived. She was a pleasant lady, neat and trim. Richard mentioned his concern at some of my critical remarks referring to his conduct as chairman. I reminded him that I had a reputation of thinking carefully before expressing opinions, and reluctantly I had to assure him that I meant what I had said. The successful conclusion of our conference, the reason for our presence in Geneva, was the only matter of concern to me, I said. Sensitive personalities had to be put to one side. I reminded him that my country was suffering, that innocent people were being killed every day, unlike the comfortable life that others were living in Geneva or London. We had been hanging around this so-called conference for nearly two months, and the parties were further away from agreement than when we started. I reminded him that he had assured me on my departure for Rhodesia of his determination to bring the other parties to the table and insist on an acceptance of the five principles. In fact, the others had now taken a more extreme stance, and had placed themselves publicly in an impossible position. Second, during my absence he had given way on the question of setting a date for independence. Third, after assuring me that we were working to a common objective of dividing Nkomo and Mugabe, in order to move the latter out of the way, and having the assurance reiterated in a message he asked van der Byl to pass on to me in Salisbury, I was subsequently confronted with a press photograph of Richard coming out of a meeting with his arms around Nkomo and Mugabe, boasting of his success in uniting them in their common objective. Or at least, according to views expressed to me

on a number of occasions by Richard, was it not Mugabe's objective? All of this smacked of double standards, I said, and was leading us along the road to disaster. I simply wanted to know where I stood.

While I was talking it was clear that Richard was thinking hard, and he came back at me saying that he took issue with everything I had said. 'Let me hear your case,' I replied. He claimed that he had kept van der Byl in the picture during my absence, and that anything to the contrary was not factual. I asked if he was insinuating that I had been misled by my representatives? He demurred. Unless he could substantiate his claim, I warned, I must take exception. Moreover, I asked, what was the reason for our meeting in private? As he had questioned in particular the veracity of messages sent to me, I wished the other members of my team to be brought in so that we could hear both sides of the story. He concurred with my request.

When the others arrived, Richard stated that it was his intention to call a meeting of all delegates the next day, Thursday 9 December, to enable me to present my proposals for consideration. I was quick to inform him that I had no proposals for submission. He knew, and everybody knew, I declared, that my proposals were the same as on the day I arrived — the formal acceptance of the agreement — and this should have been finalised within two days. Strange as it might seem to him, I continued, my proposals did not change from day to day with the prevailing circumstances. We were sick and tired of the constant prevarication. I was ready to come to a meeting to implement the first step, i.e. the appointment of a council of state as accepted in the agreement we made in Pretoria. If he was suggesting a meeting to argue the pros and cons of setting up a council of state, that was a non-starter. I suggested that we retire for the night, and I would be ready to attend a meeting tomorrow in order to do what we had come for: implement the agreement.

The following morning, I had an early visit from the American Wisner with the message from Kissinger. There was nothing new in it, however: Kissinger simply hoped that reason would prevail and that we would succeed in finalising the agreement. As Wisner was travelling to London the next day to meet Kissinger, I was happy to send a message back to him that we had been waiting almost two months to sign the agreement and had been met by provocation and obstruction from the other side. To compound matters, Richard was playing a devious game, even to the extent of openly siding with the opponents of our agreement. Rhodesians were appalled, I concluded, that he had not even got them into the starting stalls as the first step in the exercise.

Later in the morning, we went back to see Richard to ascertain if there had been any progress. He repeated his wish for me to put my plan to a meeting of all delegations. I reiterated that he was wasting our time. As he well knew, my plan was the agreed plan, and I was patiently waiting for him to do his job. He was trying to use me as a decoy to draw the fire of their attacks away from him, the chairman, who had been charged with the task of getting the agreement accepted and signed. I regretted having to accuse him of cowardly behaviour. Was he prepared to hand over to me the chairmanship of the conference? If so, I would comply with his request. He looked disillusioned and depressed — I almost felt sorry for him.

Out of the blue, he stated that, because of my stand, he would be flying back to London that afternoon for consultation with Callaghan and Kissinger. This came as a relief. I thought maybe some sanity would be restored to our scene. As a parting shot I told him that all along it had been clear to us that he was operating on a tight rein from London which never worked. I added he should either have the courage to get on and do his job properly, or get out. I hoped he would put that message over clearly in London.

He shuffled a bit, but did not disagree. When we departed he shook my hand warmly and said: ‘I hope we manage to work something out.’ I sometimes felt he agreed with me, but that the politicians in London were controlling events. And they were scared stiff of doing anything contrary to the wishes of the black delegations, as this would put them in the bad books of the OAU. We were surrounded by the press as we walked out, but I deliberately avoided saying anything which might make it more difficult for Richard in London.

While I waited for the British response, I had a very interesting meeting on Saturday 11 December with a Kenyan, Washington Nkulu, who was working for UN and had degrees from Cambridge and Yale. He had been persecuted on a number of occasions and had spent periods in prison for expressing views contrary to those of his government. His experience had been that he was treated well by his white prison supervisors, badly by the black. He was in touch with Nyerere, the real leader in that part of Africa, who was trying to help find a solution to the Rhodesian problem. I queried whether that solution would not be biased in favour of the black nationalists. He agreed, but added that the black governments in our part of the world desired to end the fighting and associated economic problems and therefore would not go too far in supporting the extremists. He said that the story which was being propagated in black circles was that I was untrustworthy and looked down on blacks, while his white friends told him the opposite. Especially of interest to him were some black professional people from Rhodesia who had informed him of their concern that we might go the same way as the rest of Africa around us, into bankruptcy and chaos and a one-party state with its denial of freedom. They tended to side with me and my philosophy of gradualism. He was pleased to meet me to try to make his own assessment. Speaking as a black African, he had to concede the inadequacies of his

own people. They lacked compassion, maturity, balance, those important ingredients of civilised man, and the politicians were easy prey to corruption and power hunger. He explained that the northern presidents, chiefly Nyerere and Kaunda, believed that Nkomo, as the father of African nationalism in our country, was the best man to support as leader, working together with Muzorewa. I pointed out that they had missed the boat at the Victoria Falls Bridge conference, again at the talks I had with Nkomo at the beginning of the following year in Salisbury, and now they had once again missed an opportunity. I said that Richard would not have attempted to bring together Nkomo and Mugabe, to the exclusion of Muzorewa, as he only the last week had done, without the concurrence of Kaunda and Nyerere. I hoped that I did not appear arrogant when I said that, if these people had only listened to me, our problem would have been settled years ago. Sad to say that they had even taken John Vorster for a ride on more than one occasion, and we were about to witness a repeat of this now. What was particularly galling to Rhodesians, I said, was that we were being used as a pawn in the game, and on each occasion history had proved that we had been right in our assessment, and our so-called friends had been wrong. My visitor thanked me for giving him a refreshing and interesting view of the African scene. He said he would be visiting Nyerere the following week, and would pass my views on to him.

On Sunday 12 December, we received a message from the British saying that it seemed Richard would not be receiving prompt answers to his problems, so I informed them that we could not go on waiting indefinitely for something which might or might not happen, so we would return home. Moreover, our delegation had now been in Geneva for over two months, and with Christmas approaching it was time for them to rejoin their families. I met Richard that afternoon and was told that the new

British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Crosland, would announce in the British Parliament on Tuesday 14 December that the conference would be adjourned for a short while. It was never reconvened.

Even the press corps was beginning to lose interest, and so were happy to hold an ‘end of conference’ meeting with me. It turned out to be a rip-roaring affair, with no punches pulled. I went through a brief history of the whole sordid affair, and how Rhodesia had been conned into going along with it. I was not expecting anything from London because of the change of leadership in America: the disaster of Carter. This enabled the British socialist government to sidetrack Kissinger and thus placate the OAU. I emphasised that Rhodesia, in keeping with our past record, would honestly adhere to the agreement. In spite of the fact that the other parties had broken the agreement, we would not use this as a pretext to wriggle out of it. As soon as the British were prepared to call together all parties and place the agreement on the table, we would be there. My parting comment: this conference is about to make history by adjourning before it has actually commenced!

On my way out that night, I met Frank Wisner at Geneva Airport. He expressed Kissinger’s regrets at the way things had gone. It was interesting for us to speculate on what assistance we might receive from South Africa in our predicament, a situation which had been forced on us by Vorster. It was no use looking to Kissinger — he had been sidetracked through no fault of his own. From the British socialists we could expect little, in fact only obstruction. Although officially the agreement had been made with Vorster and Kissinger, everybody knew that the substance had been formulated by the British government. Kissinger confirmed this to me, so they were the third leg to the agreement. Geneva had proved conclusively that there would be no finality without the approval of the OAU. Any

thought of decent, straightforward honesty and adherence to a contract was wishful thinking.

In an effort to revive the conference, on 1 January 1977, Richard and his team flew into Salisbury. His original message indicated that he would arrive in the following week after visiting the northern presidents, but I advised him to see me first in order to ensure that he would not be sponsoring proposals unacceptable to Rhodesia. He explained that he had failed to sell the original agreement to the blacks in Geneva, and therefore was presenting a new proposal which incorporated a British appointee as chairman of the transitional government as opposed to one of the black representatives, and the Rhodesian government representation would be reduced from a half to one third of the members. I accused him of attempting to breach the solemn agreement to which his government was party, and told him this clearly indicated lack of integrity and courage on his part.

I could not believe that he was serious in making such a proposal. Did this new proposal carry the endorsement of Kissinger, whom he had recently met in London? There was no reply. Hilary Squires pointed out that he was recommending that we should place our destiny in the hands of the British government, which for more than a decade had been our deadly enemy, and had resorted to every tactic, mainly foul, to bring us down. Even worse, I added, they were now conniving with communist terrorists in their unscrupulous plan to achieve their evil objective. Each one of my team joined in giving him the lambasting he deserved. I was wondering how he was going to extricate himself from the fix in which he had been landed. He fell into the trap of losing his temper and shouting at us. There is an effective means of dealing with such a situation — I smiled at him and replied in a cool and quiet voice: ‘We seem to have touched you on a very tender spot! ’The meeting was not prolonged, and it ended with the message

that we would be happy to join in a conference when he was ready to put the agreement with the five principles on the table.

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The Internal Settlement of 4 March 1978

Over the next few weeks, in early 1977, there were many discussions with my cabinet and the security chiefs. Regrettably, there were signs that our white community, for the first time, was beginning to have doubts about our future. It was sad that these wonderful people, who had shown such incredible strength and loyalty from the commencement of our constitutional problems with the British government, dating back to the early 1960s, were beginning to have doubts. Their doubts were not about the British, Americans, Europeans or the communist-inspired Commonwealth, whom we had known all along we could not trust. Instead, they were about the South Africans, whom we had believed would stand together with us.

Our joint position was a lonely one, as we strove to persevere with our Western civilisation on the southern corner of the African continent. Our philosophy and manner of dealing with the problem differed from that of the South Africans, and only time would tell who was right. But at least we understood Africa and its problems — we were after all Africans, albeit white Africans. Our history was interlocked, going back to 1890 when Cecil John Rhodes's pioneer column set out from Mafeking. In 1914 our men had fought on the same side in the First World War. Once again in 1939, our men had stood together, fighting for freedom in the Second World War. There were other links which bound us closely together, such as a customs union under which we enjoyed preferential trading conditions, and many of the big companies drew no distinction between their operations on either side of the border,

transferring people at will. In the field of sport we were virtually a fifth province, participating in all the major provincial competitions, with many Rhodesians gaining Springbok colours and representing South Africa in international competition.

A large number of Rhodesians had family contacts in South Africa. When Smuts, the South African Prime Minister and great wartime leader, was defeated in 1948 in the first post-war election, Rhodesians were greatly shocked. They consoled themselves by saying that the British electorate had done likewise to their great wartime leader and hero, Winston Churchill. It was part of the fluctuations of politics, which occasionally reached unpredictably irrational proportions.One had to live with these things, and ride the punches. The South African electorate would come to their senses in time, the Rhodesians believed.

In fact, things turned out quite the reverse. The National Party received more and more support with each election. There was no change in relations between our two countries, and things continued exactly the same as before — after all, the internal affairs of South Africa were their business, and Rhodesia had always strongly supported that founding principle of the UN which says: ‘Thou shalt not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries’. So we continued our normal lives, and our sadness over what happened to our old friend General Smuts was gradually lost in the mists of time. We were busy developing our own young, growing country, and building our own lives.

Bearing in mind the events up to early 1977, it is useful to review what had happened to Rhodesians and how they came to rely on their neighbours and not the British. With the passage of time, after 1945, we had gradually become more conscious of the changes taking place in our relations with the British government, and although these were still distant from us, any intelligent observer could not help

detecting certain trends which seemed to be in conflict with previous understandings. The democratic system of government with elections bringing different parties into power adds confusion and destabilisation. A Conservative government by nature believes in maintaining the *status quo* as far as possible, and that any change should be evolutionary. A socialist government believes in bigger and quicker change, of a revolutionary nature, necessary to make up for lost time, because socialism is a comparatively new philosophy. Moreover, when governments are dealing with their own local affairs, they think twice and take great care to ensure that they are not acting against popular opinion and thus losing votes. But when they are dealing with affairs which affect the lives of people in another country, that is different. Rhodesians had found themselves confronted by this kind of situation more and more. The granting of independence became the fashion — first Ghana, and then Nigeria — the principle was never in doubt, it was merely a question of timing. Our Rhodesian prime ministers attended all the meetings of Commonwealth leaders (in those days there were only half a dozen representatives) and so we were kept fully in the picture as to what was going on. It was always conceded that Britain's presence in the colonies took the the form of that of a protector, a guardian, until such time as the locals were able to take over and govern themselves.

I recall our Prime Minister, Lord Malvern, shortly before his retirement in 1956, recounting to us the events of his last prime ministers' conference. The question of independence for the emerging countries, Ghana and Nigeria, was mentioned in passing, but there was still much work to be done in education, training, experience. It was generally accepted that it would require at least another ten years. Malvern added: 'Fortunately, it has no bearing on our case, because as everyone knows Rhodesia was offered

dominion status in 1945, at the end of the war, so if need be we can have it tomorrow.'

In principle it was completely reassuring, especially because, as we all knew, it was based on fact, on recorded undertakings which we had received from the British government. How could anyone question their veracity?

However, the other side of the picture was that Malvern had failed to bring back from London any conclusive agreement on the question of the future of the Federation. He had hoped to secure confirmation on the question of dominion status, and a positive move in that direction. His case was based on the preamble to the Federal constitution, in which it was stated, as part of the declaration, that the Federation would be entitled 'to go forward with confidence towards the attainment of full membership of the Commonwealth', i.e. dominion status. But the British government was not prepared to go along with Malvern's request that the Federal government should be granted Commonwealth status, while the northern territories (Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland) remained as colonies, directly ruled from London. To support his case, he used the situation which prevailed in Australia, where there was a clear analogy to what he was seeking. Ten years earlier, the idea would have been accepted with alacrity. But now the mood had changed.

Although Macmillan's 'Winds of Change' speech of early 1960 was still four years off, the move towards independence was gaining momentum. The British government had stated their desire to appoint a commission to review the future of the Federation. This was done in the face of strong opposition and criticism from our leaders, because it was in direct conflict with the principle that 'the Federation was indissoluble'. But, confronted by African nationalism, the British government found little difficulty in bending their principles.

Malvern was getting on in years — he had served as Prime Minister for twenty-three years, a record for the Commonwealth. Those close to him said that, apart from the fact that he was tired of politics, what had got him down was the blatant dishonesty of the British politicians with whom he was now dealing. They were totally unlike those with whom he was accustomed to working in the past. He thought that Welensky, not a born and bred Englishman like himself, might be better able to cope with this new generation of British politicians. That was what most of us thought, and certainly Welensky's talk, not only his looks, was far more pugnacious than that of Malvern.

Welensky lost no time in getting to grips with his problem and, in 1957, shortly after becoming Prime Minister, he visited Britain and returned with what sounded like worthwhile concessions. Amid a few mundane changes, such as an increase in members of the Federal assembly, there was a British undertaking only to legislate in Federal matters at the request of the Federal government. It sounded impressive, but it was something the Rhodesian government had always enjoyed. Most significant was the agreement that the Federal review conference which was scheduled to take place in 1960 would 'consider a programme to enable the Federation to become eligible for full membership of the Commonwealth'. Again it sounded impressive, but in fact it was merely a repetition of what was included in the preamble to the Federal constitution. So, while what Welensky had obtained sounded good and gave some satisfaction to 'the man in the street', to those who had some idea of the history of what was going on, it was treated with a pinch of salt.

Added to our suspicions, which were slowly but surely being translated into fact, we were suddenly confronted, in 1957, with a dramatic acceleration in the pace of granting independence. Only in the previous year Malvern had told us that a minimum of ten years was still required to ensure

adequate preparation for those few countries which were most advanced. Yet less than one year later Ghana was granted independence, and nobody seemed to raise an eyebrow. In 1960 Nigeria received its independence, Tanganyika in 1961, Uganda in 1962, and Kenya in 1963. But what about our Federation, and all the associated promises? The British seemed to be applying two rules: one for black Africans, and another, completely different, for white Africans. Their actions were motivated by pressure from the OAU, and the majority of the leaders representing the OAU were communist-oriented. So clearly the dice were loaded against Rhodesia, whose government was still in white hands, and was also powerfully anti-communist.

It is also important to note that during this period a Conservative government was in power in Britain. Conservatives are known for their opposition to rapid and extensive change. They believe in evolution as opposed to revolution, and are reluctant to deviate from the well-tried and proven track. Above all, they were the founders of the concept of the ‘British Empire’, and the centuries-old proud record of explorers and pioneers who had carried the Union Jack and its torch of freedom, justice, Christianity, and Western civilisation to the most remote parts of the world.

We had to ask ourselves: what would the position be when the next Labour Party government came to power? They were socialists, their beliefs and philosophy the complete antithesis of those held by the Conservatives. This was a horrifying thought to contemplate. It would have been unnatural, indeed unintelligent, if Rhodesians had not begun to look around for other friends, whom we hoped would be more honest, more trustworthy and, probably most important of all, who were faced with the same problems and shared the same hopes for the future. We looked for people who were part of the world we lived in, and who, when making decisions concerning their future,

were not looking over their shoulder to some other part of the world.

First and foremost there was South Africa, our southern neighbour, with whom we had always had close ties in the fields of economics, transport, culture, education, sport, family, holidays and the language of English, common to both our countries. Then there was our eastern neighbour, Mozambique, a Portuguese possession, and to our north-west Angola, the second Portuguese possession in this part of the world. Our relations with Mozambique were second only to those with South Africa. Our railway system was linked to their two main ports of Lourenço Marques and Beira. Rhodesians holidayed in the east coast areas, and Mozambique supplied labour recruits for Rhodesian farms, mines and industry. Admittedly, Mozambique was under the direct control of metropolitan Portugal, but at this stage there were no signs of the Portuguese government resorting to the appeasement strategy manifesting itself so clearly in British politics, and among all the governments in the world they were one of the strongest in their condemnation of communism.

As the problems with the British deepened, thinking in Rhodesia began to change its orientation, slowly but perceptibly, towards our south, and then to our east. With the passage of time contact and friendship grew, and the links were strengthened. This was especially valuable to us with our assumption of independence in 1965. Indeed, without the clear support of South Africa, and, to a lesser extent, of Portugal, we could never have embarked on the exercise.

I have already indicated that distrust of British politicians escalated violently over the break-up of the Federation, and even their old and trusted friends like Malvern and Welensky used strong language to condemn the blatant breach of contract associated with its dismemberment. When the British betrayed Rhodesia by refusing to comply

with the many agreements which had been made, and finally deceived us into assisting them in winding up the Federation with the promise of our immediate independence, contempt for British politicians knew no bounds. Many of my erstwhile political opponents, who believed that I had been over-sensitive in my suspicions of the British government's intent, came forward and offered their open support for the stand which I was taking.

While our confrontation with Britain grew, leading to the final break in our declaration of independence in 1965, support from South Africa mounted, not only from the man in the street, but also at government level, and this became stronger with the passage of time as we proved that we were succeeding. A well-known and highly respected personality in South African politics, the former Minister of Transport, Ben Schoeman, told me many years after the event that, sadly, his assessment had been that we would not last six months. Once it became clear, however, that we were winning, each morning as he walked out of his house, he made a habit of taking his hat off to Rhodesia as a mark of respect. It was not only the English-speaking South Africans who proclaimed their support for us, but the Afrikaners as well. The Afrikaners have never forgiven the British for the Boer War, and especially their handling of their women and children in concentration camps. This left a bitter legacy that has not diminished with time. Many was the time I heard South Africans say: 'If only we could stand together and be as united internally as we are in our support for Rhodesia!' Of course, as every South African knows, the divisions in South African whites are not only between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking, but also between Afrikaners themselves, and often this is where one finds the bitterest feelings.

As far as Rhodesians were concerned, it was reassuring for us to know that, if all our erstwhile friends, including the British, turned against us, the South Africans could be

trusted for the obvious and sound reason that we were in the same boat, and we would either survive or sink together.

From the time of our declaration of independence, South Africa was staunch and consistent. First there was Verwoerd, with his quiet, deliberate manner, highly respected by those who worked with him for the strength of his beliefs and principles, and his great mental capacity. He was followed by Vorster, who was even more outspoken in his criticism of Britain and the other Western nations joining in the cult of the permissive society. He quoted to me from a message which he had sent to Alec Home in which he laid down clearly his objections to British interference in South Africa's internal affairs, pointing out many blatant injustices in different parts of the world which Britain appeared to be condoning. He said:

> It is time to bring these people to their senses and make them realise that this is our country where we have built up over the centuries our own culture and traditions and history, the same as the Americans or Australians for example; they do not try to interfere in their affairs, they are afraid of the Americans. We must give these people the message that we are not going to allow the communists to come in here and take over, and as we have agreed, the Zambezi is the strongest line for us to work from.

We were both on the same wavelength, and it was reassuring to my cabinet and caucus to have this confirmation. But Vorster's whole character changed with his vision of détente. We were forced against our better judgement to acquiesce. The release of the terrorist leaders, the abrupt withdrawal of the South African forces without any prior warning, the Falls Bridge conference, the meetings in Salisbury with Nkomo under the auspices of

Vorster and Kaunda — each in turn failed because of South Africa's arrogant belief that they knew more about our internal affairs than we did. And it is significant to note that on each occasion, not only our politicians, but civil servants as well, predicted they would not work. However, although they set back the progress which we were making, they did not destroy our base. After each failure, we were able to go back and start building again.

The agreement reached in Pretoria in September 1976 with Vorster and Kissinger was completely different. In all the former cases, although we were convinced they would not produce results, it was a matter of opinion, and sometimes the almost impossible *does* happen. So, in the previous circumstances, knowing how strongly Vorster felt about his 'détente', I went along with him. The Pretoria agreement, however, was the antithesis of the philosophy and principles of not only the Rhodesian Front government, but all its predecessors too — as the record clearly demonstrates. A question which often came up in our discussions latterly was: 'What will we do if Vorster goes too far and asks us to go along with something which is unacceptable and in conflict with our beliefs?'

My reply was always consistent and to the point: 'We would have to tell him in complete honesty, that while we had gone out of our way to accommodate him in his détente exercises, the time had now come to inform him that he was asking us to accept things which we were convinced were to the detriment of our country, which therefore we were unable to accept.'

There was a somewhat sullen acquiescence, for a number of my team felt that we had already passed that point. But I always urged positive thinking and expressed my hope and belief that such a situation would never eventuate. It was unrealistic to me to believe that Vorster would go so far as to attempt to jettison us, to use us as the sacrificial lamb

for some end which could only be speculative and might end, like all his previous efforts, in disaster.

However, I was wrong. On that fateful day in Pretoria Vorster placed the proverbial pistol to our head. If we turned down his plan, we were faced with his threat to cut off our supply line and, if into the bargain Britain and America were actively to support the terrorists, something which appeared highly likely, the future looked bleak. Kissinger's proposal seemed to be the only glimmer of hope on an otherwise black and desperate-looking horizon. Kissinger offered a two-year period in which Rhodesians would work out in their own country a new constitution. The hope was that we could convince the reasonable black participants of the benefits of responsible action that would retain the confidence of our white people, encourage them to go on living in the country, making their contribution towards its development and welfare. South Africa, the USA and Britain were the guarantors of its success, and we were informed that they could also ensure the support of the major European powers. It was, nevertheless, Hobson's choice that confronted us. One of the main complications facing me was the possibility, as Kissinger had mentioned, of the communists influencing Nyerere and Kaunda, especially Nyerere, to withdraw their support of the agreement. We would then be landed in the position where we had burnt our bridges only to find that the promised road ahead had been blocked. But then, as Vorster had reassured me, having accepted the agreement we would be in the right, the others in the wrong, and under those circumstances our free world friends would stand by us. Kissinger sat with an immobile face, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. It seemed to me as though he had concluded, in all honesty, that he was unable to vouch for Carter and the Democrats.

We were now confronted, in early 1977, with the dreadful situation that our worst fears had been realised. Ivor

Richard had attempted to extract from us, as part of what I regarded as his scheme to appease the black extremists, our concurrence to change the Pretoria agreement, the British plan which Kaunda and Vorster had brokered on their behalf. With Kissinger gone, only Vorster remained as part of the agreement. It left me with a desperately uneasy feeling, because of the clear change in Vorster's character over the last few years, associated with his escapade into détente.

I had asked Jack Gaylard in January 1977 to keep Harold Hawkins, as our diplomatic representative in South Africa, well briefed, so that he could ensure Vorster was fully in the picture. I did not want Vorster to be in any doubt over the shambles in which the Pretoria agreement now lay. The reply was to the effect that the South African ministers, as was the custom, were at their coastal holiday homes, and would be gathering in Cape Town towards the end of January for the opening of Parliament. A message eventually came through in February expressing Vorster's great concern over the obvious breach of the Pretoria agreement, and assuring me that he was using his best endeavours to remedy the situation. He would keep in contact with me. Sadly, the evidence before us clearly indicated that he would continue to use us as a bargaining counter in his campaign of appeasement.

This was the predicament confronting Rhodesia. Confidence had been dealt a serious blow by the Pretoria agreement because we were compelled to accept conditions which were obviously to our detriment. There were to be certain compensations, however: an end to sanctions, an end to the terrorist war, financial assistance to promote the economy, and a restoration of external confidence and investment. While we had complied with our part of the agreement, paid our price, the other parties to the agreement had reneged. This delivered a second blow to the already battered Rhodesian confidence —

moreover, it was a blow below the belt. A number of Rhodesians who had accepted the first shock, and decided to live with it, now had second thoughts, and changed their minds. It was one thing to accept an unpalatable decision — Rhodesians had faced up to this on more than one occasion — but the obvious treachery of our so-called friends of the free world, who were blatantly condoning the breach of agreement by the communists and terrorists, was difficult to accept. My immediate concern was with the security forces, because, although we were enjoying a most successful phase with a very high kill-rate of terrorists, there was a definite indication of declining confidence among our fighting men in the long-term future of our country. Some were openly talking about making plans to emigrate. If this escalated it would have a serious detrimental effect on our ability to hold the security situation, and thus erode the strength of our negotiating base. While no thinking man argued against the need for a negotiated settlement, it was critical to operate from a strong position in order to avoid having to give way to the communists. So, although the need for a settlement had never been greater, obviously for tactical reasons it was essential to present a strong and united front to enable us to negotiate from a position of strength.

I sent a message to Vorster suggesting a meeting, in the hope that he was genuinely concerned over the dangerous situation in which he had landed us, and would have some constructive thoughts as to how to help. Arrangements were made and I travelled to Cape Town on 9 February. Vorster commiserated with us and reassured me that he was in communication with the British and Americans, urging them to get the Pretoria agreement back on the track. There was a new British Foreign Secretary, Dr David Owen and, Vorster said, the South Africans believed he was an improvement on his predecessor, the late Anthony Crosland. This was typical diplomacy and wishful thinking.

I told him of the deteriorating confidence in Rhodesia, and in particular of the potential drain from our security forces. Accordingly, I said, it was my intention once again to commence working with our internal black leaders in the hope that we could make progress towards a settlement. Anything he could do, I said, to prevent outside interference, which in the past had always prejudiced our efforts, would be welcome. He indicated that he had got the message, and would do his best to convey it to the British and Americans. Because it would have been tactless and damaging to our cause, I refrained from mentioning that the South Africans were the main culprits in the affair!

When dealing with African politicians, infinite patience is a *sine qua non*. They go back for consultation, to the most basic level, time and time again. This is part of tribal culture and tradition, whereby the Chief never makes a major decision until he is satisfied that he is representing the views of his people — in keeping with the best traditions of democracy. The disadvant age is that a weak leader tends to become a follower, even an appeaser, and shirks the responsibility of convincing his people that while a tough decision may not be the most palatable at that time, it is in their long-term interests. I had numerous discussions with Muzorewa, Nkomo and Sithole, and we were making progress. I held meetings with Vorster and he was supportive of what we were doing. Then he and I met Owen, the new British Foreign Secretary, in Cape Town on 13 April. The meeting was reasonable, but it was difficult to tie Owen down to specifics — he was obviously keeping his options open, anticipating communication with his American counterpart, Cyrus Vance of the Carter administration.

In the middle of 1977, Vorster visited Europe and met US Vice-President Walter Mondale, who arrogantly attempted to bully Vorster into pressurising Rhodesia to accept conditions we had mutually agreed were unacceptable and

would play into the hands of the communists. Fortunately, Vorster resented this attempt to intimidate him, and they parted company on a sour note, with a resultant increase in South African sympathy for Rhodesia, a clear bonus for us.

The new South African Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, who had left us with anything but a favourable impression at the Pretoria meeting with Kissinger, had received an invitation to London to meet Owen and Vance, and asked to see me *en route* on 4 August. Botha informed me that the South Africans were still disenchanted with American intentions as a result of Mondale's offensive attitude to Vorster, and they considered Owen ineffective. Another factor assisting us was the attempt by America and Britain to pressurise South Africa into making additional concessions on South West Africa. The South Africans resented this interference in their internal affairs and the ill-advised Anglo-American incursion into the Rhodesian scene resulted in a beneficial ripple effect in our direction. Botha assured me that Vance and Owen were going to be on the receiving end of a positive message to distance themselves from South African affairs, about which they were dismally ignorant. He would be advising them to concentrate their energies on the Soviets' dreadful record of injustice and violation of human rights, not only in their own country, but in many other parts of the world which they had subjugated. This was in keeping with sentiments which I had often expressed to Vorster, and accordingly received my strong approval. I requested that he use every opportunity to impress upon them my desire to abide by the Anglo-American agreement signed in Pretoria last year, which they were, apparently, attempting to derail. Did the British and Americans not accept that they were honour-bound to bring Nyerere and Kaunda and the others back to their commitment? I asked. Botha was in full agreement, and we parted on a happy note. My hope, as I noted at the time, was that the South Africans would not allow themselves to

be enticed away by the perfidious tactics of British diplomacy — after all, they had fallen for these on a number of previous occasions.

Earlier in the year, twelve of my MPs had defected — and not surprisingly, they became known as the ‘Dirty Dozen’. They complained that government was not adhering to party principles and election promises, and they were not prepared to accept that we had been forced into this situation by the South African government. Moreover, they claimed, if the South African government were pressurising us, we should confront them publicly and South Africans would support us. They were conveniently overlooking, however, the fact that history proved clearly that no such thing would happen. The twelve were not thinking clearly. They were ruled by emotion rather than reality. The general consensus within the party was that we were well rid of them, for they were reactionaries attempting to put the clock back, and were thus a destabilising element within our organisation. They were not prepared to accept the party’s challenge to go back to their electorate for confirmation of their actions, but showed a preference for retaining their seats in Parliament and exercising power without responsibility. Not only were their views unlikely to promote racial harmony, but our public in general were concerned as to whether they would influence our government’s thinking. In order to ascertain where we stood with the electorate, I came to the reluctant decision to hold a general election. There was no doubt in my mind that Rhodesians would have no truck with the devious scheming of the twelve dissidents, but there was no other way of proving this point. A premature general election had a destabilising effect on a country and was a waste of taxpayers’ money, but the antics of these twelve MPs was contrary to our accepted philosophy and was prejudicing our efforts towards settlement. One way or other the air had to be cleared.

The election took place on 31 August, and as had happened in all previous elections, the Rhodesian Front won all their seats. The twelve defectors, and others who were persuaded to join their ranks, found themselves on the receiving end of a positive rebuke. Not only did the result give us the strong mandate we were seeking for our internal policy, but it was an important ingredient as far as our negotiations were concerned. In my eve of poll address I said: 'A strong vote of support will be a message to the British and US governments that the Rhodesian nation is determined and united; while we are prepared to negotiate a fair and just settlement, we will not participate in any plan which will lead to our own destruction.'

The result was also, we hoped, a message to the South African government who, according to Harold Hawkins, had been opposed to our holding a general election because anything which detracted from their plan was frowned upon.

I had visited Pretoria on 27 August, concerning the South Africans' latest initiative. They had made a plan for Owen and Andrew Young, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, to visit them that week, and Owen and Young had indicated their willingness to travel to Salisbury for discussions with me as soon as our election was over. Both Vorster and Pik Botha stressed that they had made it clear to the British and Americans that their approach had to be realistic, otherwise the South Africans would not support it — they had had enough of being pushed around by these outsiders. My reply was to the effect that I would abide by my often repeated comment that an honest, constructive attempt to assist would be welcome, but as the South Africans knew, we were making progress, albeit slow, with our internal settlement, and this kind of intervention by outsiders, as we knew from past history, far from assisting, had always set matters back. I resisted saying, as I would have done in normal circumstances, that it would

have been preferable if Vorster had consulted us before making his plan. In the discussion which followed with my cabinet colleagues, it was clear that the South Africans were using Rhodesia as a foil to distract the British and Americans from the South West Africa issue.

Owen and Young arrived at 8 a.m. on 1 September, the day after our election. There were brief discussions. Then, at the main meeting an hour later, Owen presented their proposals. These went beyond what we had been led to expect in making concessions to the terrorists, and the meeting was aggravated by Owen's arrogant and ill-mannered attitude, and his attempt on a couple of occasions to mislead. When I tripped him up, Young was obviously upset and, on one occasion, expressed his concern to Owen that he had not been correctly informed. In my minute after the meeting I wrote:

> Owen is one of these petty, little men trying to fill a job which is too big for him, using an arrogant posture in the hope that this will impress his audience. By contrast Young appeared sincere, with a sense of humour and a streak of humanity. On a couple of occasions when Owen was prating over past happenings, Young expressed the view that there was no point in crying over spilt milk, we should concentrate on looking forward. As Owen drawled on with his sanctimonious utterings, Young was obviously bored stiff, and at one stage when Owen declared that the deal he was offering was firm and could not be altered, Young interjected saying that he believed we should show reason and be prepared to talk and negotiate. By the end of the meeting we had shot so many holes through Owen's plan that he looked like a punctured tyre with hair dishevelled and bleary eyes, finally conceding that we should set up a bipartisan committee to deal with the problem.

The most surprising, indeed alarming aspect of the whole episode, was that at a press conference that afternoon Owen presented a paper which went much further than he had indicated at our morning meeting, virtually handing over complete control of government and army to the terrorists. To add insult to injury, the paper which he presented obviously could not have been prepared following our morning meeting, which dragged on until lunchtime. In fact, the British conceded that it had been prepared and printed in Britain before their departure. All of our Rhodesians associated with the exercise were taken aback. Jack Gaylard, who attended the briefing and saw the paper, spoke to Owen and his secretary indicating the irregularity and warned of the consequences if my first information came through the communications media. Owen agreed to phone me and explain and apologise — I am still awaiting the phone call! Our people who were liaising with the British team were informed that Andrew Young, who had become increasingly disenchanted with Owen's general behaviour and obvious unhelpfulness, had expressed strong disapproval at this latest flagrant breach of decent and accepted standards. From that moment on their relations became more strained, and the joint exercise terminated.

I travelled down to Pretoria to consult Vorster on 12 September, taking with me David Smith and Jack Gaylard. He informed me that Andrew Young had told him that the Rhodesian problem had been wrongly assessed because Nyerere, on his recent visit to the USA, had succeeded in pulling the wool over Carter's eyes, and 'that's what we are landed with when he insists on poking his nose into affairs over which he is completely ignorant'.

I had been led to believe that the meeting was between Vorster and myself, to enable us to go over recent happenings and think about the future. I was wrong, because the two Bothas (P.W., the Minister of Defence, and

Pik, the Minister of Foreign Affairs), and Chris Heunis, the Minister of Economic Affairs, were ushered in, and it was obvious from the outset that they were working to a pre-arranged plan. Normally at these meetings the persons participating are predetermined, with equal numbers on either side, but I had been confronted with this kind of situation on previous occasions, so it was not all that surprising. Harold Hawkins was the one most concerned and incensed, because he had made the arrangements with Brand Fourie, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and had not been given this information. Hawkins subsequently informed us that Fourie assured him that he also had been kept in the dark, and was most apologetic.

Vorster began by underlining the troubled times in which we were living, and the growing problems confronting all of us who lived in southern Africa. Then Pik Botha came in and spoke of the pressures that South Africa was being subjected to, even by their friends of the free world — foreign ministers, through constant repetition, can do this kind of thing in their sleep. Then it was P.W. Botha's turn, and he simply spoke of the financial stringencies militating against their giving us additional assistance in the defence field. As on previous occasions, I felt he was a reluctant participant in what he was doing. Then Heunis, in his turn, talked about the oil embargo and the sanctions which could delay the completion of SASOL II, the second oil-from-coal plant. They needed about another two years and so must buy time, Heunis said.

A number of salient points immediately came to my mind, but I held myself in check as I had been warned by our finance ministry that they were in the middle of negotiating a loan. It had been three years previously, in October 1974, that Vorster had appealed to us to assist in his détente exercise, on the argument that they needed two more years before they would be self-sufficient. By contrast I could not help but think of the occasions recently when Vorster had

told me that they no longer had any friends in the world, even the free world! Hence his new tactic of trying to convince his party of the need for South Africa to move away from their apartheid philosophy. The South African electorate, however, were being kept in the dark.

Once Heunis completed his talk, the next part of the orchestrated performance came into play. A secretary entered and handed a letter to Pik Botha, which he duly opened and read: a message from their Washington office, warning of the dire consequences if we did not succeed in bringing peace to our region. There was a small slip-up in the short discussion which followed, when Vorster referred to part of the message which Botha had omitted to read. It was obvious that they had already seen this message which had ‘suddenly’ arrived from Washington!

Vorster then solemnly made the main point, which appeared to be the reason for calling the meeting: he had to tell me that after serious and deep consideration the South African government had come to the conclusion, reluctantly, that Rhodesia had to accept a majority of black faces, not only in the Parliament, but also in the cabinet. He then paused and looked, as did the others, awaiting the impact of this thunderbolt upon me. My answer was simple and to the point: we had accepted that condition as part of the Anglo–American agreement, here in Pretoria last year, to which Vorster was also party, indeed a guarantor. Could he report any progress on its implementation? I added.

There was a deathly silence — and then Vorster replied that, regrettably, as we knew, the British and Americans had backed away from that under pressure from the OAU, and accordingly South Africa was supporting us in our efforts to bring about an internal settlement. I reminded them that we were in the midst of this exercise and that over the last couple of years our efforts had been bedevilled by outside interference, which had distracted the black leaders from the negotiating table. If it had not

been for the fact that I was hamstrung because of their control of our lifeline, and their sensitivity to alternative suggestions, I could have quoted chapter and verse to prove that South Africa was the main culprit in this.

Vorster then said that the message he wished to pass on to me was that the South African government detected growing pressure from the rest of the world for Rhodesia to settle its problem, and that in these circumstances it was becoming more and more difficult for South Africa to go on supporting us. I could only repeat that we had settled the problem with the agreement made in Pretoria last year — why did he not throw that back in their faces? Were we not in danger of falling into the trap of joining Carter and Wilson in their appeasement of the communists? Did he recall telling me a couple of years ago on his return from a visit to Europe that it had been made clear to him that apartheid was the greatest evil in the world, even worse than communism, and South Africa had to face up to that? Did he believe this situation had changed? He replied: 'One has to deal with problems in life as they present themselves, and at this stage Rhodesia is the problem confronting us.'

He gave me an excellent opening to say: 'Let me repeat what I have told you on a number of occasions, that the communists are experts at exploiting the domino principle, and if they succeed in eliminating Rhodesia, then the road will be clear for the next objective, which is RSA. However, rightly or wrongly we have embarked on a course for Rhodesia, and I do not see any way back. Our main concern is to succeed in making a plan with the moderate and responsible black people in our country, and thus avoid a communist takeover. And from our previous contacts with the South African government I believed they supported us in what we were doing. Do you wish us to change this direction?'

‘No,’ replied Vorster. They would continue to support us, but it was important for us to communicate like this, and the South Africans wished to apprise us of the seriousness of the situation, and the need for urgency.

As I made my note of the meeting on the flight back to Salisbury I felt, not for the first time, a surge of sadness at the insincerity of the whole thing. A lack of trust had grown between our two countries, where previously there had been understanding and a sense of mutual interests in the need to draw a line against the encroachment of communism down the African continent. Was it still our endeavour to preserve the Western civilisation which had been established in our part of the world? Added to that was the frustration at our impotence to stand up to the South Africans when they were pressurising us on to a course we knew was wrong, and at how easy it was for them. No one else in the world knew what was going on, not even the South African public, when supplies simply did not arrive.

An additional worrying aspect was that the communist propaganda machine was using the breakdown of the Geneva conference as another opportunity to attack white Rhodesians for their intransigence, accusing me personally of not being prepared to accept majority rule. This was a blatant misrepresentation of the truth, for every Rhodesian constitution had enshrined the principle of majority rule and all the constitutional changes which had been made over the years did only one thing: hasten the process. And this was particularly so over the last few years. To make things worse, the British Socialist government was joining the communists in accusing us of attempting to frustrate the principle of majority rule. This was monstrous deception, because they knew the truth. But they were a major world power, wielding considerable influence with the communications media, and dedicated to appeasing the

OAU. Knowing the kind of people we were dealing with, this was not all that unexpected.

But what we found completely incomprehensible were stories that had been coming through for some time indicating that our South African friends were indulging in some negative thinking aloud, indicating that they were finding some of our actions inconsistent. This, of course, played into the hands of the communists, who claimed that it supported their accusations. We asked Hawkins to check at his level as to whether he could get any facts to support what we had heard, and Flower to enquire through his CIO network. Hawkins replied: Brand Fourie told him that neither he nor Pik Botha had ever made such a claim, but that Vorster had. They had not been able to obtain any substantiation. Flower told us that van den Berg, the head of intelligence, confirmed that Vorster had mentioned this to him, but he had been unable to pinpoint any case in support. Going back a few years, I recalled mentioning a comparatively small point to Vorster over a rumour I had heard concerning him and his government. He abruptly informed me that he hoped I was not the kind of person who took rumours seriously. Fortunately I was able to refer to a similar case he had mentioned concerning my government, adding that I always thought it better to clear the air if anything like this cropped up. But I was not sure he agreed with me.

Poor Rhodesia. We had enough problems with our enemies, without this kind of treatment from our few friends. That day's meeting was a classic example of an attempt to pressurise us, intimidate us. And it was absolutely unnecessary. We had known for a number of years that we had no options, going back to the beginning of Vorster's détente. The final *coup de grâce* came at that Pretoria meeting in September 1976. We knew that was the end, the final betrayal, and all we were trying to do was make the best of the disaster gradually enfolding us. At

least we hoped for some assistance from South Africa, as Vorster had promised. But instead, at this last meeting, we were confronted with the sickening spectacle of South Africa conniving with the British and the Americans — and the communists — in order to pressurise us to give more ground. And doing it in an underhand way.

I was incensed at the humiliating situation in which I found myself. I had a compelling urge to say publicly that it was unacceptable, and together with those Rhodesians who felt the same — and there were many, black as well as white — make a stand. Better to go down standing and fighting, than crawling on our knees. But I was not an ordinary individual, free to act according to my heart. I had to think of our wonderful country, and its people, especially the young people; of what future generations would think and say about those who had gone before. That was my life.

When I reported the day's happenings to my cabinet on the next day they were greatly angered by the persistent sheer dishonesty and hypocrisy we were encountering. As one of them asked: did Vorster not assure us at the outset that he was not attempting to interfere in our internal affairs, and that decisions affecting the future of Rhodesia should be made by Rhodesians? Above all they wanted to know what he was prepared to do in order to fulfil his promise to stand by us in the event of the others reneging on the Pretoria agreement. The unpalatable truth was that he was once again sacrificing Rhodesia in order to gain some advantage for himself, albeit dubious and unspecified.

If it had been clear that South Africa was going to benefit, to win something in return, no matter how unpalatable, how unacceptable his behaviour, at least one could comprehend what was going on in South African minds. But if this was just one more attempt to appease the insatiable appetite of the communists and their fellow travellers, then it was clearly just one more step backwards down the slippery slope, and that seemed criminally stupid.

Not one of my cabinet colleagues was able to comprehend what the South Africans believed they were going to achieve, not only for Rhodesia, but for themselves. To betray one's friends, indeed resort to treachery, is something any normal person would try to avoid. If by so doing you are able to gain something for yourself and those whom you represent, there is at least an intelligible reason for your behaviour, no matter how dishonourable. Surely even Vorster had now come to accept how wrong he was when he attempted to convince me that Kaunda and Nyerere had indicated their acceptance of South Africa and its Apartheid philosophy in exchange for a Rhodesian settlement? It would be insane for anyone to go on giving credit to that kind of thinking — indeed I thought it insane at the time. We wondered if there was a completely new offer — this time from Jimmy Carter and James Callaghan, Harold Wilson's successor. Otherwise, what would be the incentive?

We had even considered the possibility of going back to the position we were in at the previous year's Pretoria agreement. The other parties were guilty of breaking the agreement, so both legally and morally we would have been within our rights to declare it null and void and return to the original status. Tragically, that was a non-starter. The hopes and morale of the Rhodesian people were shattered by what they considered the betrayal of that agreement, and consequently the exodus of white Rhodesians was gaining momentum. People were making alternative plans, and any suggestion of an about-turn by our government would not carry conviction. And rightly so, because obviously we would be able to hold such a position only until the next time Vorster decided to twist our arms — as he was clearly doing at the previous day's meeting.

Rhodesia had been trapped. As I indicated at that dreadful Pretoria meeting with Kissinger, there was a distinct possibility that we could be left in the lurch. But

Vorster assured us that South Africa and our friends of the free world would stand by us because, after all, we would be in the right. Kissinger clearly was non-committal. He had warned of a probable Carter victory at the impending US presidential election, and of the disaster that would bring. Tragically his prediction proved correct. Kissinger no longer had the means to help. Vorster did.

We all came to the conclusion that our salvation lay in working together with our internal black leaders — in spite of their shortcomings they seemed more reliable than our so-called 'friends' of the free world.

Then a completely new and unforeseen development suddenly occurred, and helped to take my brooding mind away from the South African scene. A message came from the Lonrho mining company chief, Tiny Rowland — not exactly one of our friends — that he had an important and urgent message from Kenneth Kaunda that he would like to deliver personally. He was sure arrangements could be made for a confidential visit. I agreed, and the meeting was arranged promptly, with no fuss. Rowland flew in to New Sarum with his legal adviser Advocate de Villiers, and we met in the officers' mess there on 24 September. Rowland related that Kaunda was convinced that the time was opportune for a Rhodesian settlement and a number of other black leaders concurred. They were fed up with the inability of Britain, the USA and South Africa to produce a solution. The answer lay in our own hands. He requested that I fly to Lusaka for a meeting, and return the same day. Lonrho's jet would be laid on.

Rowland was at pains to reassure me about my personal safety, but I interrupted him to inform him there was no problem and that, as far as I was concerned, the sooner I met Kaunda the better. It was arranged for the following day, Sunday. Rowland was pleased, almost excited over the prospects, although he is a cool, suave character. I had P.K. van der Byl with me and, as we drove back to town

together, he strongly approved of the whole concept and agreed to accompany me. I expressed my doubts as to whether anything would come out of it but, especially in our current circumstances, every opportunity had to be used. My fear, as expressed at the time, was that there were so many conflicting interests, and at least four potential leaders jockeying for position, that it would take a firm hand to bring about any semblance of order.

We got away to an early start on Sunday 25 September, and flew off in the direction of Malawi, but then came in to Lusaka from the east, in order to avoid any suspicion which might be occasioned by an aircraft approaching from the direction of Rhodesia. We landed at the old Lusaka strip, where Kaunda was waiting. He accorded us a warm welcome and we boarded a waiting helicopter. Only the golf course separated us from State House, and we landed in the midst of guinea fowl and small buck. The place looked much the same as when I had last seen it in Federal days, and we went into the private office for a confidential talk with Kaunda. His welcome was most cordial and pleasant, and he thanked me for my effort in making the journey. He said he thought it was time we worked together to bring an end to the senseless war, and to the friction growing between ourselves and neighbouring countries. The whole thing, he felt, was getting out of hand and becoming an embarrassment to all the countries involved. I endorsed his sentiments and stressed the need for decision and action. In reply to a question, I gave him an assessment of the relative strengths of our black leaders: Muzorewa 60 per cent, Nkomo 15 per cent, Sithole and Chirau 12.5 per cent each. Kaunda was especially concerned about Nkomo — his protégé — who, I told him, was losing support because he was spending too much of his time away from his political grassroots. My chaps ascertained that Nkomo was actually in the building, hoping he might be called in to participate — but it was not to be.

Kaunda then asked if I would be prepared to have a discussion with some of his ministers and, while this was being arranged, we took a walk in the garden and golf course. Then we went into the conference room for a discussion on Africa in general, and Rhodesia in particular. We were given a break for lunch, followed by a half-hour rest (which was the custom) before returning to the conference table. We never really got to grips with anything, and when I attempted to pinpoint what they considered the requirements for our settlement, they tended to generalise, talking around the problem. The only time they got a bit warmed up was when P.K. spoke of the great asset of our super civil service, and our highly efficient army, the great majority of whom were black, and of their loyalty to the government they served. One of Kaunda's chaps butted in and said that did not mean anything — look at Uganda, where the poor soldiers acting under orders had to kill innocent people, whether they liked it or not. This was completely irrelevant and, as I could see the possibility of it developing into a friction point, I immediately defused the situation by suggesting that we change the subject to something more constructive. Kaunda agreed.

The time passed quickly, and as there were no night-flying facilities where we landed, we had to plan our departure. At least we had broken the ice, and I came to the conclusion that Kaunda probably wanted a reaction from the remainder of his cabinet, who were unaware of my visit. Finally, he gave me the message I had been hoping for: we should use the previous year's Anglo–American proposals, as presented by Kissinger, as a basis for negotiation. It was particularly pleasing to hear Kaunda criticise David Owen's 'Jack-in-the-box antics'. It was one of a number of points on which we agreed, and we parted on amicable terms, with both sides saying our deliberations

had been constructive and worthwhile and that we were looking forward to the next meeting.

The flight back was indeed pleasant, the whole atmosphere happy, with everyone smiling, devoid of the bitter frustration, the claustrophobic feeling that had engulfed us on so many of our return trips from Pretoria in recent years. It was an unbelievable, absolutely ridiculous situation, a kind of tragi-comedy, that we felt more comfortable talking to our black enemies in the north than to our white friends in the south. Although we might disagree with the blacks, at least we knew where we stood with them. By contrast, the South Africans changed their stance every day.

At our normal Tuesday meeting on 27 September, I told my cabinet of the visit, and they were taken aback, especially over the security aspect, but that soon faded into the background because of the interesting story we recounted. My factual, and no doubt mundane recording of events was augmented by generous quantities of P.K.'s spicy insertions. The cabinet were positive in their views, expressing the hope that this might lead to something constructive. My comment was that if it was left to Kaunda I felt we could make a plan, but interference from outsiders, especially those who lived far from the scene and did not understand what was going on, could derail the affair. Someone interjected: 'If Pik Botha hears about it, he will try to get a finger in the pie, and that can only be bad news!'

By 30 September the news that I had been to Lusaka broke in London and caused somewhat of an uproar, with the British and American governments doubting its veracity. They could not believe that I would set foot in Zambia. The report claimed that Kaunda had not believed that I was coming until I stepped out of the aircraft. It added that the Zambians had been impressed by my moderation and restraint. And the South African reaction,

as expressed by Pik Botha to P.K. van der Byl on a trip, was also complimentary. President Bongo of Gabon, P.K. also revealed on his return on 7 October, approved of Kaunda's initiative and promised to speak in support of it during his impending trip to the UN.

There was more news concerning Kaunda that day, 7 October. Derrick Robinson, Ken Flower's number two at the CIO, returned from London via Lusaka and had a lengthy, three-hour discussion with Kaunda. He was still keen, but could not be more precise with details, Robinson reported. Kaunda was facing a difficult few weeks and was about to make a dramatic speech declaring a state of war, necessitated by Zambia's desperate economic situation. Robinson added that Kaunda had warned: 'We will, of course, come within his line of fire, but we must disregard this!' In fact, to ease the pressures on his economy, and despite pressure from Nyerere and Machel, Kaunda opened his southern border with us.

The British and Americans were pressing their plan and intended to send out their Resident Commissioner-designate, Field Marshal Lord Carver, to assess the situation in Rhodesia as part of his functions would be to command all the forces. All we had heard of him — that he was a socialist, that he was the potential 'General Spinola' of Rhodesia — was confirmed on 10 October when I had an interesting discussion with Sir Walter Walker, a famous British general with strong Conservative leanings. General Walker had found himself in hot water recently because of his straight talking criticism of the British socialism and permissiveness of the day. He warned me that General Carver — who was about to visit Rhodesia — was a socialist.

The Kaunda initiative was sadly following its predictable course. We had a report on 22 October from two of our emissaries who had visited Kaunda at his safari lodge in Luangwa Valley. They could not meet at State House in

Lusaka because Mugabe and some of his terrorist thugs were there. When Kaunda expressed his disenchantment over being landed with them at Nyerere's request, one of our chaps reminded him that they would still have been in detention in Rhodesia had we not received a message from Vorster and Kaunda himself in 1974. He simply replied: 'Perhaps we should think more deeply before rushing into these decisions.'

The message from Kaunda, however, was that, because of pressure from Nyerere, any arrangement we made should bring in Mugabe as Nkomo's number two. The fear I expressed after my Lusaka visit seemed to be materialising: we would grind to a halt because of external interference. Our best bet was to leave things alone for a while, let the dust settle, and then see what their thinking was.

The South Africans were absorbed by their internal affairs and were resorting to strong-arm tactics in the run-up to their general election, banning certain newspapers and locking up editors. However, it had the desired effect, with the National Party increasing its majority in the December election. The rest of the world also helped — when outsiders attack a country and their government, there is a natural tendency for the people to unite. Into the bargain the opposition was divided, and many of their old adherents believed that they were no longer worth supporting. My diary comment was:

> With this strong mandate maybe Vorster will have the courage to implement some of the changes he has been talking about over the last few years. Their Apartheid policy is disintegrating around them, because, in spite of their Homelands policy, they have no policy for the blacks in the white areas, no policy for the Coloured Community, no policy for the Asians. They concede privately that Apartheid is unworkable, but they are not coming clean with their electorate, for fear of losing votes.

> With growing antagonism from the world around them, from Africa around them, including Kaunda and Nyerere, it should have been absolutely clear that South Africa's priority was to provide internal peace. Surely that was the obvious way to confound their external enemies — it did not require a genius to work that out. And the longer they delay coming to grips with the problem, the more difficult it will be to solve.

Things quietened down over the festive season, but early in the New Year we recommenced talks with the internal black leaders. The door was still open to Kaunda, and that message had been conveyed to him, but I doubted whether Nyerere and the truly dedicated communists would ever go along with a settlement based on the Anglo–American agreement of September 1976.

In my New Year's message to the Nation on 31 December 1977, I made a number of pertinent points which reflected our situation:

> The British have been trying to settle the Rhodesian problem in a manner which would best settle their own interests, rather than the interests of Rhodesia. Rhodesians have thus come to the conclusion that their best bet is to bring Rhodesians together around the settlement table, to the exclusion of outside interference. The talks are proceeding well and I believe all delegations will agree that we have made significant progress.
>
> The basic position remains the same. In exchange for acceptance of the principle of majority rule, we are negotiating the inclusion in the constitution of those safeguards necessary to retain the confidence of our white people, so that they will be encouraged to go on living and working in Rhodesia and thus continue to

make their contribution to the economic progress of the country.

We are seeking safeguards which will ensure that a future Government will not be able to abuse its power by resorting to actions which are dishonest or immoral. Things which are every bit as much in the interests of black people as white. For example, a justiciable Bill of Rights to protect the rights and freedom of individuals; independent courts free from outside interference and influence — provisions which will protect all people irrespective of race, colour or creed. There are standards and ethics, professional and others, which are important to maintain and guarantee. In too many countries in Africa we see people dying from starvation, preventable diseases, government organised murder gangs — these are things which acknowledge no barriers of race or colour.

I am sure it is unnecessary for me to remind you all of the agony and desperation of living under the threat of intimidation and violence — those tools of the terrorists. The need to maintain the standards and impartiality of our forces of law and order cannot be over-emphasised.

It is to protect all of these vital essentials that we are insisting on certain constitutional safeguards — important for all Rhodesians, black as well as white.

Finally, I would like to compliment all Rhodesians on the manner in which they cope with the problems which confront them, almost on a day-to-day basis, and a special word for those who live in security-sensitive areas, where the presence of danger always prevails. These wonderful people are a constant source of inspiration to us all.

Once again you will all join with me in offering grateful thanks to our magnificent security forces for enabling us to go on living not only in safety, but in hope for the future.

> Let us hope that with 1978 a new era is about to begin. With goodwill, understanding and courage, we should grasp the opportunities open to us to end our dispute, to the benefit of all our peoples.

It was on that basis that we started talks in earnest. Those participating were Muzorewa, Gabellah (from Matabeleland), Chikerema, Ndabaningi Sithole, and the two Chiefs, Chirau and Kayisa Ndweni. I knew from past experience that time and patience would be required, because every time something unusual or unexpected arose, there would be an adjournment for them to consult their various committees or executives.

In the midst of this, in mid-January, an invitation arrived from the British to attend a conference in Malta to which they were inviting Nkomo and Mugabe and their followers — now working together as the Patriotic Front. This was clearly an attempt to divert attention from our internal negotiations, and I had no intention of falling for that.

The internal meetings went on day after day — sometimes due to problems with Sithole, sometimes with Muzorewa — but fortunately Gabellah was a stabilising influence there and Chikerema and the two Chiefs, Ndweni and Chirau, were consistent and stable. Sometimes there would be an adjournment for half an hour to an adjoining room, sometimes for the rest of the day for consultation. I told them of the invitation to attend the Malta conference, and of my refusal because of my commitment to our internal settlement. However, progress was slow.

On 19 January 1978, we were encouraged by a pleasant surprise: a message from Harold Hawkins, who had spoken to Scott, Britain’s ambassador in South Africa who had just returned from London, and said the feeling in Britain was that we should get on with our internal settlement. He wondered what was holding things up. It seemed that the British were not all that happy with the arrogant demands

of the Patriotic Front. Moreover, the previous day in London the US ambassador told our representative that the Americans were not concerned over where the solution was produced, provided it was the correct solution. Interesting, we thought; maybe they were finally coming to their senses.

Our problem, however, was to bring sense into our discussions. The Africans were taking turns at being difficult, trying to extract additional concessions. I continued to urge patience because I knew they were playing to an outside gallery where it was an advantage to be able to claim they were driving a hard bargain. There was no way our discussions would be kept confidential. But things got even worse when some Africans attempted to go back on positions which had been laid down in documents, and I had to call this to their attention. The two Chiefs became very angry, and on one occasion they exploded, with Chirau saying that they condemned two-faced politicians who could not keep their word. Ndweni made the point that the Chiefs were the true leaders of their people, unlike the politicians, and that therefore they could be trusted. Their looks conveyed their absolute contempt at those to whom their words were directed. They urged the politicians to have courage and cease being afraid of the consequences of being truthful.

After the meeting, the two Chiefs spoke to me privately, asking if it would not be possible to abandon those who did not have the courage of their convictions. Regrettably, I replied, it was not practical politics, and they accepted this. Maybe, they said, they would be murdered, but that was their life — they would join the other Chiefs who had gone that way. We agreed we would leave that decision to God. Rhodesia needed leaders who were strong and dedicated — we had been chosen to lead, and we would get on with it. I can work and die with people like that.

Friday 27 January was a particularly bad day, with Muzorewa and his team proving inconsistent. I clearly detected the influence of Muzorewa's white advisers. All the other black delegations attacked UANC (Muzorewa) for going back on their word. It was even suggested that henceforth we institute a plan that would avoid the predicament of parties reneging on agreements made. There were strong words about dealing with people who were so openly duplicitous, and that, if this was the standard of behaviour we could expect from potential leaders, it was a sad reflection on the future of our country. With that Muzorewa jumped to his feet, saying that he was not prepared to be insulted and was therefore walking out. He and his other delegates stomped out together. The other black delegates believed it was an orchestrated performance for use in appealing to the gallery. It was certainly not one of our better days. We decided to adjourn until after the weekend.

I spent the next day, Saturday 28 January, catching up on my affairs and was having a quiet evening at home with my family when the phone rang. It was Jack Gaylard, to pass a message on from General Peter Walls to the effect that his South African counterpart, General Malan, had contacted him to say that he had received a message from Pik Botha indicating their government's deep concern at the news that there had been a breakdown in our negotiations, and that as a result they wanted Malan to plan the removal of certain military equipment from Rhodesia. The news had been passed to them by Muzorewa, with whom they were in private contact. I could not believe my ears — to think that they would descend to this kind of diabolical Machiavellian scheming in order to pressurise us! Gaylard was not surprised, because Brand Fourie had informed Hawkins that morning that Vorster was upset over the news of the breakdown. To compound the whole sordid affair, I could not credit that they would be surreptitiously dealing with

one of the black leaders behind my back, instead of maintaining an honest straightforward approach with our government; at least we should have been given the opportunity to state our side of the case. Gaylard also informed me that in reply to his query as to whether Foreign Affairs were the evil geniuses behind this kind of treachery, Hawkins had given him an unequivocal reply: Vorster was the mastermind and driving force. This was made clear by Brand Fourie, who was always the bearer of messages, and into the bargain it was obvious that the Minister of Defence would not accept such an instruction unless it had the authority of the Prime Minister. Malan had made it clear to Walls that the South African Defence Force were unhappy at having to do the dirty work on behalf of others.

We had enough problems dealing with some of these local chaps, without our friends to the south adding fuel to the fire. If Muzorewa knew, I thought, that he had the support of the South African government, it would encourage him to dig his heels in even further. I could not credit that the South Africans were so naïve that they were unable to comprehend what they were doing, siding with the odd man out, when the rest of us were ready to move forward. This was yet another bungling interference in something which clearly they did not understand. And Vorster would still be claiming publicly that he had no intention of trying to pressurise us or interfere in our internal affairs!

Over the weekend there was much coming and going and talking, and feelings within the UANC ran so high that, at one stage, a couple of them had to be separated to prevent them coming to blows. I had a representation late on Sunday 29 January from some responsible and trustworthy white people who had been trying, from the background, to guide Muzorewa. They were deeply concerned at the walk-out, and assured me that certain white members of the UANC team were the culprits. These people were

attempting to cause a breakdown of our talks as part of their plan to bring Nkomo and Mugabe back into the negotiations. The problem, my informants felt, was Muzorewa's lack of decisiveness. They were satisfied that he acknowledged his mistake in walking out — the problem now was to help him save face while climbing down. They were seeking my concurrence and co-operation.

It was obvious to me that if either Muzorewa or Sithole walked out completely, this would play into the hands of the British and their terrorist protégés. When we held our meeting, however, on Monday afternoon, 30 January, I was confronted by an exceptionally strong wave of resentment from the other black delegations. They said that we could not allow any delegation to believe that they had a right of veto, or that, by simply walking out, they could hold up proceedings. During the weekend, they had received messages that Muzorewa was claiming that he was standing alone in fighting for the rights of blacks, while the other black leaders were conniving with the government. This, they claimed, was not only dishonest but also cowardly, for as we all knew it was merely a show in order to placate the extremists.

They were, of course, right, but for the reasons already mentioned it was important for me to pour oil on the troubled waters and urge tolerance and restraint. I made no attempt to convince them that they were wrong — clearly, they were not. My efforts were directed at convincing them of the rewards of succeeding in producing a settlement involving all the internal parties, and of how a failure would be a cause of rejoicing among the terrorists, our mutual enemies. I told them of the information which came from impeccable sources that the British government had infiltrated the UANC, from which vantage point they were plotting to frustrate our settlement, and of how their task was facilitated because of Muzorewa's vacillation and inability to make positive decisions. The problem of

defusing the situation was not easy, but in the end they agreed to accept my reasoning and philosophy. We adjourned *sine die* pending information from the UANC.

We called another meeting on Wednesday afternoon, 1 February, and Muzorewa and his followers arrived. They spent a great deal of time attempting to vindicate their action, but it rang hollow. The other delegations did not pull their punches and Muzorewa looked a bit like the proverbial cornered rat, trying to defend and protect himself. I began to feel some sympathy for him, knowing that he was being used as a tool by the unscrupulous British. Finally, it was made absolutely clear that everyone else had endured more than enough of their humbug, and we adjourned until the next day to give them the opportunity to reconsider their stand.

The talk of the town on Thursday morning, 2 February, was that Muzorewa had been subjected to strong criticism for his inconsistency. Even some of his close friends were threatening to change their loyalties to one of the other parties if he continued in this manner. At the afternoon's meeting the UANC delegation was more relaxed and friendly, and Muzorewa requested permission to submit a new paper which placed their position before the conference. He hoped this would receive our consideration. Everyone agreed. There was the clear advantage of having this on the record and thus making it more difficult for him to change ground. A short discussion ensued, with a few questions of clarification on the paper, and then there was general agreement on a long adjournment over the weekend to enable delegates to relax and reflect.

We met again on the afternoon of 7 February, but made no progress. The UANC were obviously still suffering from a guilty conscience over their blunder, and were nit-picking over details in an effort to avoid getting to grips with the main problem. They continued this for the next few days, and I became concerned at the strength of criticism against

Muzorewa. At one point he offered, as a reason for wanting time off, his wish to offer prayers for the poor people who were being killed in Mozambique in our security forces' raids. He was promptly subjected to a terrific broadside from the other delegations, accusing him of praying for terrorists in Mozambique while the innocent locals in his own country, including women and children, were being murdered every day by terrorists. He was asked: did he not understand that what we were trying to do was to negotiate a settlement and end the war and the killing? As Muzorewa was looking harassed and depressed after a few days of consistent hammering, I was genuinely concerned that he might break down and resort to some irrational action, as he had done previously. So once again I recommended a long weekend break.

There followed a week of posturing and procrastination with the UANC in almost continuous session, messages from their supporters in Britain and USA urging them to agree. One of their strong supporters from America, who had been a generous contributor to their finances, arrived on the scene, and after a number of consultations, I decided the time was ripe to make the final attempt. Two members of the UANC executive had informed me that they had given Muzorewa the message that if he failed to sign the agreement, they would walk out on him. I made it clear that we had been more than generous in the patience and time we had given them — indeed, there were some who complained that we had gone too far, and were displaying weakness. Accordingly, I warned, if at the next meeting the UANC continued their obstruction, the other parties would continue without them.

The plan worked and, at our meeting on 15 February, Muzorewa had no hesitation in offering his acceptance of the draft agreement. After going through the formalities of tying up a number of loose ends, we emerged on to the front lawn where a large number of press and TV reporters

had gathered. They received the good news with enthusiasm, and there was much talking.

There had been no further representation from the South Africans following their outburst after Muzorewa's walk-out. I had asked Gaylard to contact Olivier, the South African Ambassador, and give him the facts, and also remind him that the problems we were now facing were caused by the Anglo-American agreement of September 1976 which we accepted, under duress, because of pressure from Vorster. Gaylard assured me that Olivier, a very sensible and down-to-earth person who was highly respected in Rhodesia, conceded his embarrassment at what had taken place, and was happy to convey our message. That seemed to have quietened them down, but I wondered for how long.

The next couple of weeks were taken up by the constitutional experts and the secretariat in translating our agreement into legal terminology. This proved to be more difficult than anticipated. Once again Muzorewa was the main obstructionist, trying to insert some of his ideas that had previously been rejected. Fortunately two members of his negotiating team, Chikerema and Gabellah, were a constant source of help in bringing things back to sanity. Two others who were more on the periphery, Stanlake Samkange and Enock Dumbutshena, obviously intelligent and constructive, made valuable contributions. Once again, tolerance and patience were needed.

I was concerned about the pressure on the two Chiefs, which was aggravated by the delay in finalising our agreement. Kayisa Ndweni reported that the influence of Nkomo and ZAPU was gaining ground in Matabeleland, based on the belief that division among the Matabeles could only rebound to their detriment in the final analysis. I suggested that he arrange a meeting with Nkomo and plan to bring the Matabeles together — this was their only hope. He agreed enthusiastically, and I offered what help we

could give. Chirau's problem was more complicated because the Shona speakers were divided into a number of factions. He had received threatening letters, and one of his strongest supporters had been killed by terrorists.

David Smith visited Pretoria to put Vorster in the picture. Vorster preferred talking to him and it was a relief for me to avoid the face-to-face meeting. He told David that while he was sympathetic to our problems in the negotiations, a number of his ministers were showing impatience. He supported the economic assistance we were receiving from South Africa but, he warned, his economic ministers were beginning to question this. David indicated, however, that we had known for some time that Vorster was in the driving seat on the Rhodesian question. Harold Hawkins had assured David Smith that, from his contacts with ministers — and there were many — they were not informed on the Rhodesian situation. Still, David reported to me that he got the feeling that Vorster was becoming less starry-eyed over his détente dreams. He was particularly critical of the facility with which some of his black friends changed their minds. My comment to David was that we were constantly facing similar problems with our white friends! But our main predicament was the fact that they were unable to comprehend that we were holding the line against terrorism and communist encroachment, not only in our own interests, but for the benefit of all of those who believed in preserving Western civilisation in southern Africa. Any aid which they gave us, I felt, would help to relieve their burden, and would be cheap at the price. We agreed that there did not seem to be much hope of hammering that one home.

On his return on 27 February, Ndabaningi Sithole reported to me on his successful visit to Britain, claiming that even Owen had conceded to him that if our plan produced a successful conclusion they would have to acknowledge it. My reports on his visit were

complimentary, with TV appearances which connoted reason and moderation. His information was that opinion in both Britain and the United States was moving in our direction. Moreover, with the impending general election looming in Britain, an unsolved Rhodesian problem was something which Callaghan and the Labour Party would be well advised to avoid.

Finally, on 2 March 1978, after a great deal of manoeuvring, cajoling and threatening, the rest of the participants succeeded in getting Muzorewa into the starting stalls, and a public announcement was made that evening that a signing ceremony would be held the following morning.

At 10 a.m. on Friday 3 March, we gathered at Governor's Lodge, Salisbury, amid much excitement and a great gathering of press and TV cameras. The prepared document was distributed for examination, and after approval the long table was made ready for the signing ceremony. Muzorewa stood up with the comment: 'I am in the mood for signing!'

This was an obvious reversal of form, because if it had not been for his obstructionist tactics, which produced no alterations, we would have completed this exercise five weeks earlier. He then proceeded to extract from a carrier bag one of those colourful embroidered fancy-dress costumes which he had gathered in one of the countries to our north, and proceeded to don it as his signing garment. I detected a contemptuous smile from a few of the onlookers. We then went through to the big room for the signing ceremony and, as usual with these events, it was bursting at the seams with media personnel, glaring lights and cameras buzzing and clicking. We signed five copies, one for each of the four leaders and one for the record.

After it was over we returned to the conference table, and it came as a surprise to me when Muzorewa commenced proceedings by saying that he wished to

compliment me on my performance during the difficult and often acrimonious proceedings which we had been through, and how I had succeeded in bringing everybody along until we finally reached this signing ceremony. I had a few words to say that had gone through my mind on a number of occasions when feelings were running high during various altercations. Often during the heat of political argument the participants resort to strong, sometimes violent language. It is important that we do not allow resentment and grudges to linger on after the occasion. As in a game of rugby, you tackle your best friends as hard as anyone else, but once the game is over you are friends again. My plea was that we should leave behind our past differences, and work together in order to translate into reality our mutual hopes for the future. If we failed, we would be confronted by the dreadful alternative offered by the terrorists. Muzorewa was departing for London that evening to explain to people what we were aiming to achieve, and we wished him well.

That afternoon I had a number of TV and press interviews, including one with Walter Cronkite, which was beamed to and from New York by satellite. Although commonplace nowadays, at that time this was something new and exciting.

One question I was asked repeatedly: ‘Was not this morning’s ceremony an emotional and traumatic experience for me?’

In all honesty my answer was: ‘No — we went through that in 1976 when we reluctantly accepted the Anglo–American agreement in Pretoria.’

Those who could read between the lines knew that was our Rubicon.

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The Interim Government of 1978–9

Once the four leaders had signed the 3 March 1978 agreement, it had to be sold to the world. Accordingly, as has been said, Muzorewa departed immediately for Britain. Sithole and Chirau flew out as part of our effort to explain what we were trying to achieve. I was the only one denied the opportunity to give a helping hand, as Britain had denounced me as a rebel and a traitor and accordingly to all its friends I was *persona non grata*. But our enemies, the communist terrorists, were given red-carpet treatment wherever they went!

It was just as well that I remained on the scene because, apart from a busy schedule catching up on the affairs hanging over because of the negotiations during the preceding months, a message came in through our security network indicating that there was a move by a group of some of the more aggressive members of the UANC, spurred on by a few terrorist sympathisers, to oust Muzorewa as leader during his absence overseas. I immediately sent out a message to those who, I was sure, would not be party to such treachery, warning that such action would not only destroy everything we had succeeded in achieving through our agreement, but would amount to conniving with the terrorists in their evil machinations. Fortunately, we managed to nip the affair in the bud.

As part of our new role, I had, on 20 March, a pleasing and informative meeting with Frans Joseph Strauss, the Prime Minister of Bavaria. Strauss was one of Germany's great leaders, with a long and proud record of opposition to communism. He had been a loyal friend to Rhodesia,

recognising the injustice of the case against us. His knowledge of international affairs was remarkable, and he had a great facility for making profound judgements and expressing himself clearly and concisely. Strauss maintained that, with a few exceptions, the world was going through a period of indifferent leadership. Russia and its satellites in the OAU were calling the tune, with USA and Britain in retreat. This was normal and expected from the socialists in Britain, but to witness the leader of the free world, the USA, floundering in such incompetence, was tragic, and would cost the free world dearly. Carter was incapable of handling the problems surrounding him, and his indecision and misjudgement succeeded only in compounding them by the day. By the law of averages, Mondale should have been an improvement, but he was not!

Gaylard briefed me that evening on the meeting in Pretoria with the British and American envoys, John Graham of the Foreign Office and Steven Low, the US Ambassador to Zambia, and our representatives. The British and Americans were evidently concerned that our agreement might succeed to the detriment of their friends, the terrorists, and therefore they were seeking their inclusion. Our representatives made it clear that we would not accept another débâcle such as happened at Geneva in 1976. As we had made public, however, we had pledged that the door was open to anyone who wished to return and participate in our election. As this election would probably not take place within the next twelve months, because of the preparations needed for registration of voters and delimitation of constituencies, there was ample time, and we would facilitate their return and participation. This was an absolutely genuine offer, for the participation of all Rhodesians was clearly desirable in order to reflect the true wishes of all the people.

The interim government showed pleasing progress. On 9 April I noted in my diary:

> Our Executive Council [comprising Muzorewa, Sithole, Chirau and myself] meetings are going surprisingly well, and there is a great deal of understanding of one another's problems, with a willingness to listen to advisers, and an acceptance that there is much to be learned about the business of Government. Sithole emerges as the astute politician who is always thinking ahead and planning his next move. Muzorewa has been reasonable and logical, and while over-cautious, nevertheless more sure of himself and positive than I had expected. Chirau, consistent as always, making his contributions carefully and methodically, and never deviating from his principles. We have introduced a unique system for Ministers, with two of them in each Ministry, one white minister from the previous Government and one of the new black ministers working together in harness in order to enable the new ministers to gain experience. A brilliant idea in theory, which we hope will work out in practice. Reports so far are favourable.

I kept on reminding my executive council colleagues that they should not allow themselves to be deviated from our main objective, which was an effective ceasefire. I warned that, the more they argued among themselves and aroused dissension and controversy through party politics, the more they would detract from its success. The government had mounted its campaign through radio broadcasts and pamphlets, distributed by hand and dropped from the air over Mozambique and Zambia. It also used personal contacts with a number of terrorist groups. In addition, I urged, there was a considerable amount which the black political parties could contribute, by using their grassroots

network to spread the message of our agreement and of the hopes and benefits which it offered our black people for the future.

It was encouraging to note early indications of support from the outside world, first from the Conservative Party in Britain, followed by resolutions of support in the US Senate and Congress. This was a clear recognition of the fact that we were carrying out what they had been asking of us for years. Moreover, there was an awakening by the free world, albeit belated, to the dangers of Russian encroachment down the African continent. With Russian hardware and Cuban troops running out of work in the Horn of Africa, Mozambique was an attractive proposition for the completion of their plan for a saddle across Africa to our north, and thence the pincer movement down the flanks of South Africa.

It was obviously in our interest to buy time — a Conservative government in Britain, and a change of leadership in the US, could only be to our advantage. Meanwhile, we were working positively to liaise with those members of the free world who were constructively trying to assist. Accordingly, we were not surprised to receive a message from the British Foreign Office suggesting a meeting. We welcomed the approach and replied that the door was open. But they were obviously trying to pull a fast one when they came back suggesting Nairobi or Livingstone as the venue. Eventually, they accepted an invitation to meet in Salisbury on 17 April.

It was a joint Anglo–American team which arrived. With Owen, the British Foreign Secretary, and Cyrus Vance, the US Secretary of State, was Andrew Young, the US Ambassador to the UN. We were pleased at the high level of the representation, which indicated that they were taking things seriously, and the inclusion of Young in the American team gave me personal satisfaction, because of his honesty and straight dealing. We received the message

that they had landed at the airport, and they arrived on time for the meeting at 10 a.m.

Owen was the first to enter, and he swept in with a grand expression of self-importance on his face, something which his meagre and slouching physique was unable to match. He brushed past a few members of my delegation and effusively greeted each black member he could reach, including one of the messengers, who was somewhat embarrassed. Finally, at the far end where I was talking to one of Sithole's members, he shook my hand. Vance followed quietly and with dignity greeted each person. Andrew Young did likewise, and I offered them tea. Vance said it was his first visit to Rhodesia, indeed southern Africa. He could not help, he continued, but be impressed with the beauty of the country, the fine-looking houses and the manner in which Salisbury had been planned and laid out. He noted the obvious general efficiency. All of this reminded him of the US and was in contrast to the other places he had visited in Africa. I told him that he had put his finger on what we were trying to preserve in Rhodesia, and was pleased to hear him reply that it was his hope that he could make a contribution in this direction.

I welcomed our visitors, and gave them a rundown of the situation in which we found ourselves: since 1960, I pointed out, Rhodesia had been trying in vain to settle its problem with the British government but we had failed because of Britain's unwillingness to abide by agreements and understandings. The 1976 Geneva conference was a classic example of how they had succeeded in driving blacks and whites further apart. Eventually all Rhodesians, whatever their colour or party, had come to the conclusion that they should together solve the problem, to the exclusion of outsiders. The exercise had gone quicker than anticipated, I assured them; we were well on course, and any thought of deviating us from our goal was a non-starter. I hoped the contributions made by our guests would be constructive

and contribute to our objective of bringing peace to our country.

Both Owen and Vance indicated that it was their intention to do precisely that. Their contribution went along the lines we had expected. We were all of the same opinion, they said, and they wished to emphasise that it was their hope that they could contribute towards a settlement that would bring peace to Rhodesia. It was their belief that a conference of all parties was the answer. ‘Similar to the recent Geneva conference?’ I asked. There was an uneasy silence. Could they inform us on what progress they had made in Dar es Salaam, whence they had come? In all honesty they had to admit that there were problems, as the Patriotic Front wanted to dominate any settlement, and this they conceded was unacceptable. But they had been successful in convincing the Patriotic Front of the desirability of a conference which would embrace all parties, they concluded.

Our answer was simple and logical. We pointed out that the history of the past two decades was littered with failed conferences. We had now succeeded in bringing about an agreement, and had made it clear that the doors were open to the Patriotic Front. They could come in as equal partners, but not preferential partners. We asked: what more did they want? My three black colleagues came in strongly, making a number of pertinent points. I noticed that Vance and Young were impressed by their case, but it was clear that Owen was having difficulty in breaking away from the indoctrination he had been given by the terrorists in Dar.

Our case was strong. Many of those who were now working with us, like Sithole and Chikerema, had been on the side of the terrorists, but had concluded that it was a destructive path to follow, and had now adopted the constructive approach of working constitutionally. We had invited the Patriotic Front to come in and work with us.

Sithole asked the question: ‘What are the leaders of the Patriotic Front fighting for?’ Without hesitation Andrew Young replied: ‘For personal power.’ The obvious embarrassment of Owen and those around him would have done credit to a theatre drama. On a subsequent occasion, when Young was making a forthright contribution, Vance quietly put his hand on Young’s arm and said: ‘Let me deal with this one.’ Finally, we extracted an undertaking from them that they had a better understanding of our position, and they would support us if we could show that we had the support of the Rhodesian people, even if this was contrary to the views of the Patriotic Front and others.

At the end of our meeting we suggested that our guests should precede us in talking to the media, of which there was an over-sized gathering, and that we would follow. Vance, Owen and Young were striding off in that direction when suddenly they stopped. Owen talked to Vance, Vance talked to Young, and the latter turned and came back into the room. Far from looking upset, he had a twinkle in his eye. I moved towards him and said: ‘You’ve got a problem — you’re far too honest to make a success of this game of politics.’ He replied with a smile: ‘I’m not worried.’

Before the visiting delegation departed, Vance asked if he could have a few minutes of my time. He stressed how pleased he was that he could make the trip and of how it had opened his eyes. Apart from being impressed by the high standards and sophistication of everything, he was struck by the peace and quiet and happiness of the people. Contrary to what he had been led to believe, the obvious sincerity and genuineness of myself and my black colleagues in our dedication to making a success of our agreement impressed him. As a result he would have a greater and more sympathetic understanding of our problem and we could rest assured that this would be reflected in future decisions which emanated from the USA. Our security people also reported that their American

counterparts were impressed with the arrangements, which were superior to anything they had found elsewhere in Africa.

As so often happens when things seem to be going along smoothly, something crops up which throws a spanner in the works. One of the UANC team, Byron Hove, the Co-Minister of Justice, who had not been party to our negotiations and had returned home from exile in Britain after matters had been concluded, started playing party politics. He was making statements designed to play to the extremists' gallery with the object of winning votes at the impending election. This was a breach of the understanding which we had made and it had incensed the other black parties — indeed Muzorewa himself condemned it in strong language. We set up a ministerial committee to look into the matter, and Hilary Squires, Hove's fellow Co-Minister of Justice, reported that Hove had blatantly lied to them. It was decided that he should apologise publicly or be asked to resign. It ended with the latter, and unfortunately was the cause of some dissension and recrimination. My main concern was that it would detract from our 'safe return' policy, as terrorist sympathisers would use it as an argument to dissuade those who were contemplating a return.

All was not just politics. On 13 May 1978, I had, as I wrote in my diary:

> A pleasant break away from it all, with a happy trip to Kariba to unveil a memorial to Operation Noah. This had been a fantastically successful exercise, rescuing thousands of wild animals [when Lake Kariba started to fill for the first time], something quite unique and which had never previously been done in the world. My heart was in tune with that small, simple, dignified ceremony, in keeping with the concept and execution of the

operation, which extended over a period of a few years in order to ensure maximum rescue.

Two days later, on Monday 15 May, it was back to the situation of the hour. David Smith reported to me on his South African trip, on which Ernest Bulle of the UANC, his co-minister, had accompanied him. It was a pleasant trip, and the first meeting with Vorster most harmonious. He had asked to see them in order to wish them well in implementing the new agreement, which the South African government fully supported. He then told Bulle that they were of the opinion that the UANC were the best party to back, and money was being made available to them for the purchase of Land-Rovers, cycles, typewriters and other things they had requested. Before our two co-ministers went on to their meeting with the South African Finance Ministry, Vorster assured David Smith that everything had been arranged for us. And so it was. The $150 million loan we had requested was available, and the arrangements were tied up expeditiously. David mentioned how impressed our team was with the efficiency of the South Africans, headed by their minister, Owen Horwood.

I asked if there were any signs of the difficulties that Vorster claimed, at the previous meeting, he was having with his ministers over assistance for Rhodesia. David replied that, as we believed at the time, it was clearly a put-up job, in order to ensure that we did not step out of line. Our problem was that their judgement had been so bad over the last half dozen years, it had consistently led us up blind alleys. Fortunately, for the time being things looked better, as there was now a new horse in the race, the UANC, on which they had decided to put their money in the hope that they could win them to their side. Past history indicated that they had invariably been wrong, but I had made it absolutely clear that the Rhodesian Front was not going to take sides. We would run our election of the white

candidates, leaving our black people to make their own plans and elect their own candidates, thus ensuring as far as possible that we would have their genuine representatives. Vorster mentioned to David Smith that they were carefully monitoring our experiment in the belief that it might be a model which they could use in South West Africa. We found this intriguing. They did not give us credit for having the ability to produce solutions for our own problems, but now, out of the blue, they believed we may have produced an answer for one of their own problems! As I have said previously, they had had apartheid for so long in South Africa that they had lost touch with the political thinking and aspirations of their black people.

By mid-June another problem had arisen. There was growing concern among some black political thinkers, shared by our security chiefs, over the lack of progress with our ceasefire and safe-return campaign. So I decided at the joint meeting of the executive council and council of ministers on 15 June to initiate discussion. My emphasis was on the fact that there was undeniable evidence that the various factions in our government were politicking for the coming election, to the extent of indulging in destructive criticism of one another, promoting ridicule and disaffection, which was playing into the hands of the terrorists. This was one of the principal contributory reasons to the fact that our safe-return campaign policy was not going well. It was necessary to reiterate what I had said previously, that without effort and dedication to our safe-return campaign, there would never be a next election. Many of our friends who had assisted in the formation of our territorial government, black and white, were expressing deep concern, even despair over our obvious lack of dedication to our cause. Some had gone so far as to suggest that, if we were unable to improve on our performance, it might be necessary to contemplate bringing in Nkomo. Personally, I had discouraged this line

of thinking, because as one of the architects of the plan which we were now implementing, I was dedicated to making it succeed. I asked for honest and frank discussion, and it was forthcoming. The strong criticism was refreshing, with each party claiming that the others were guilty, and that they were in the clear. They then accepted my recommendation that we have such meetings regularly, with members producing evidence to substantiate accusations against parties deviating from the code we had laid down. One hoped that it would at least have the effect of promoting caution and consideration over people's actions and utterings.

Another milestone on our constitutional road was passed on 20 June with the opening of Parliament, with the black members of the executive council and ministers participating. It never entered my mind at the time, but one of my ministerial colleagues subsequently pointed out that we were witnessing the end of an era, the last time that a white prime minister would be handing to the president the speech for the opening ceremony. I suppose it should have been an emotional occasion, but I was preoccupied with ensuring that everything went well, and that everybody played his part in keeping with the dignity of the occasion. It was important that these world-famous traditions, which had been created by the Mother of Parliaments, cherished and nurtured over the centuries, should be respected and preserved in order to ensure their safe transposition to those who inherited.

Later that evening I sat back and pondered. It was indeed a fair description to refer to the occasion we had witnessed as the end of an era, and it was not without emotion that I reflected. Although by nature a phlegmatic person, it would have been unnatural if I had remained unmoved by an occasion that was the beginning of the ending of a glorious chapter in the history of the British Empire. Over a period of eighty-eight years, a small band of people, mainly of

British stock, had turned a piece of untamed African bush into a classical example of modern Western civilisation. The cities and towns were well planned and constructed, orderly and clean, similar to those found in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; the road system was well developed, with trunk roads from north to south and from east to west; an efficient railway system with connections to South Africa and Mozambique provided Zambia with its only viable outlet to the sea; an electricity network traversed the whole country, which many experts believed was the finest in Africa; all in all, a sophisticated infrastructure with secondary industry established on a broad base. Agriculture was comparable to Western standards, on which we had based our performance, and we had become the bread-basket of central Africa. Visiting educationalists rated our schools highly, and when attending overseas universities Rhodesians acquitted themselves to a high standard. All of this was serviced by accepted professional standards in the fields of finance, medicine, engineering, law, accounting, architecture and the other services which are part of Western civilisation. These achievements had never been questioned, as already stated. Prior to the escalation of the terrorist war, the record indicated that Rhodesia was one of the most peaceful countries in the world, with a crime rate well below average, and the ratio of policemen lower than that of any other country we had studied.

Our crime was that we had resisted revolutionary political change. No one, apart from those who resorted to a deliberate twisting of the truth, could question the principles on which our constitution was based. It was a constitution which had been drawn up by the British and Rhodesian governments together. Our citizens had access to the vote whatever their race, colour or creed. For the past fifty years we had been accepted as respected and responsible members of the world community. We were a

member of the British Commonwealth of Nations and our prime minister attended their conferences along with the other prime ministers. The performance of our government was highly regarded. Our human-rights record was impeccable, and of special note, we were economically viable. As our prime minister after the last world war, Sir Godfrey Huggins (later Lord Malvern) had told us: ‘We have proved ourselves, and our record is such that the British government has told me that Rhodesia can have its independence whenever they wish — it is there for the asking.’

Well — we had certainly asked for it time and time again, not only the Rhodesian Front, but previous governments as well. And now we had gone even further and made changes to our constitution in order to give our black people greater participation in government, in fact control of government. We hastened the process, contrary to our better judgement. From our experience it would have been preferable to have taken more time, to have allowed for training, the development of skills and expertise, the acquiring of all of those things which together connote civilisation. And we did have experience of Africa. We lived in the middle of it — surrounded by countries riddled with corruption, incompetence, indolence, nepotism and all those other evil aspects of communist dictatorships. Ninety per cent of them were bankrupt and in chaos.

It was our belief that we could avert this, through bringing in and working with our responsible black leaders — at least it provided hope of preventing a communist takeover. If the free world gave us their blessing and support, it would succeed. And there was an obligation for them to do so, because we had now done what they had asked of us. What more did they want? But the power of the communists and their minions in the OAU seemed to be too powerful for the free world leaders. In blunt language, we were part of a sick world, where appeasement and

compromise on accepted beliefs and standards were the order of the day. Although it served no purpose, it was only natural for Rhodesians to reminisce on our glorious history, not only on our record of achievement, but the high moral principles in which we believed, and the general standards of decency, fair play and honesty that we put into practice. But we were now confronted by a desperate situation: we had been trapped into burning our bridges behind us in order to underscore the honesty of our intention to abide by the agreement we had made with the free world — the agreement that was going to strengthen our hand to repulse the tide of communism sweeping down the African continent. Having fulfilled our part of the contract, we were patiently waiting with expectation.

However, Rhodesians were mature and realistic after their experiences over many years on the receiving end of deceit and treachery. Uppermost in our minds was the knowledge that we were fighting for our survival and the protection of those values in which Rhodesians believed. Our enemies would not be relaxing — extremists never do. This night of 20 June 1978, the same as every other night, as soon as it became dark the terrorists would be rampaging through the rural areas, terrorising and murdering innocent tribesmen not prepared to join their ranks. Fortunately, and surprisingly, considering all we had been through, most Rhodesians believed that bitterness and hatred were sterile liabilities devoid of any positive contribution. So the only sensible and practical thing to do was live with our history, and make the most of what we had been able to salvage. Although our destination appeared to be in sight, it was still in the distance, and the road ahead was fraught with concealed hazards and danger.

After dinner, on that night of the opening of Parliament, van der Byl reported on his visit to Europe. Tiny Rowland of Lonrho had flown across to France to meet him, offering

advice and help. Nkomo was keen to get back home, Rowland said, and was more than ready to break with Mugabe, whom he claimed was untrustworthy. Rowland claimed that Kaunda was fed up with Nyerere, who insisted on calling the tune in spite of the fact that he lived far away, with his interests oriented north and east. The outcome in Rhodesia was of no consequence to his country. Kaunda and Machel were more than ready for a settlement. Nkomo would like to have a meeting with me, and Rowland would be happy to make the arrangements. My stance was consistent: any constructive contribution was welcome. We had transmitted messages to both Nkomo and Mugabe that the doors were open to anyone who wished to participate in our election, and the necessary arrangements were in place. Obviously, the longer they procrastinated, the more difficult it would become for them.

The war against Mugabe's ZANLA and Nkomo's ZIPRA, within and without Rhodesia, was ever-present, but there were other concerns of a violent nature in June. The next day, 21 June, Rowan Cronjé, Co-Minister of Education, brought Chief Chirau and G.M. Magaramombe, the Co-Minister for Health, for a talk. They were concerned at the intimidation that was taking place, not only from terrorist sympathisers, but the UANC as well. Chirau claimed that some of his supporters had even been killed. I arranged for them to meet the security chiefs as part of a plan to give them some protection. They left satisfied with the arrangement, as we were agreed that there could be no compromise on our stand — the alternative would be a thousand times worse.

A week later, Rhodesians lost their first president. My diary entry:

> 28.06.78. 7 a.m. call from Armenel Dupont to say that Cliff had passed away in his sleep earlier in the morning. It was a merciful release. He had lost the use of his legs,

> and his arms and hands were going the same way — intolerable for a man who had always been so active. A wonderful character, maybe mercurial and unpredictable, but full of kindness with a ready smile on his face. His greatest attribute was his great courage, and he carried out his difficult task as OAG [Officer Administering the Government], and then President in an exemplary manner, ably and loyally supported by his devoted wife. Perhaps there was another reason why Clifford's passing was a blessing in disguise, because whilst always proud of his English ancestry, a graduate of Cambridge University with a love for rugby, cricket and horse-racing, his face took on a sombre expression when he made the point that British diplomacy was the most devious in the world.

Had Clifford lived another eighteen months he would have had the doubtful pleasure of witnessing further proof of his belief.

The effort to bring Nkomo into the settlement continued. On the evening of 2 July, Jack Gaylard, my cabinet secretary, came to see me with Ken Flower and his deputy, Derrick Robinson. They brought a message from Kaunda saying that he was prepared to arrange a meeting with Nkomo only if Machel participated. The reason was that, after our last meeting in Lusaka on 25 September 1977, Kaunda had been criticised for meeting me behind the backs of Machel and Mugabe. This new condition created a problem. My executive council colleagues, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau, were in the picture over my efforts to draw in Nkomo. We were agreed on the desirability of involving the Matabele in our transitional government. This new suggestion, however, would be unacceptable to my colleagues. Thus, if I accepted it secretly, it would place me in a position where I was working with the Patriotic Front behind the backs of my executive council colleagues, and

this was not on. Thus I told Flower that they should make an effort to obtain the services of President Khama of Botswana and President Banda of Malawi to arrange the meeting, or turn to Tiny Rowland, who was waiting in the wings. An unacceptable alternative was offered by the British, who had been trying to reinstate themselves as participants in what was going on. Gaylard and Robinson were also the bearers of a message from them suggesting a meeting in Europe between Nkomo, the Nigerian Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Brigadier Garba, and our nominee. Once again we had to tell them that they were getting away from the objective, which was a confidential meeting between Nkomo and myself. At the rate they were going the whole world would know about it before it started.

Every day brought difficulties, the next day's, for example:

> 03.07.78 — Dupont's State Funeral this afternoon, and it was held in the Cathedral with the usual dignity and organisation associated with such occasions. I was sitting quietly reading that evening when Chief Justice MacDonald arrived. He had to tell me how deeply incensed he was at the funeral over the lack of courtesy extended to him, and the final humiliation when he was asked to wait for a while as the coffin and principal mourners moved down the aisle. I was flummoxed — I was told where to sit, and where and when to move, that is always part of these occasions, they call it protocol and it applies to Ministers, and Judges, and Mayors and the like. I had often said that the less I had to do with protocol the better. But, he insisted that he was second in standing to the Prime Minister, and therefore should be treated differently. I had heard about his sensitivity over his position, and that those around him had to be on their guard lest they failed to acknowledge this situation.

> Nevertheless it came as a surprise and was so contrary to generally accepted beliefs and patterns of behaviour amongst Rhodesians. There were so many more important matters requiring attention.

The next day's difficulty concerned my colleagues. I was still hearing rumblings that certain members of the transitional government were not supporting the team effort. The executive council meeting went well until towards the end when Gabellah (deputising for Sithole) said that at ministerial level things were proceeding satisfactorily with a real spirit of working together, but that there was concern that this was not the position with the executive council. Muzorewa was in the chair, and all eyes were directed towards him, because all along he had been the weak link. I asked him a straight question: 'Let's be honest, you are the one in doubt, can you give us your position?' He replied that as we all knew, it was his central committee that made these decisions, and he was guided by them.

It was a dreadful position in which we found ourselves. Here was a man who was a leading member of our team, who had concurred with decisions which we had made, and now, only when he was cornered, conceded that he had done so under false pretences. I had to tell him that it was absolutely vital for him to let us know where we stood, otherwise our agreement would break apart. He pleaded for patience until after the coming long weekend when he would call together his central committee and give us the answer. The rest of us were stunned, but knowing the indecisiveness of the man, we were left with no option other than to go along with his plea. What made the situation even more inexplicable was that later that day, 4 July, one of the top civil servants contacted their party chairman, Mazawana, a highly respectable grey-haired retired school headmaster, who was emphatic that their

executive had long ago endorsed Muzorewa's full participation.

A stimulating visit on 13 July, however, from a couple of very bright Americans representing certain senators and members of their House of Representatives, offered Muzorewa a useful opening. In the last week a motion in their Senate to remove sanctions against Rhodesia was narrowly defeated by 48 to 42, and they were preparing another attempt. There was a plan to send Muzorewa over for some media coverage and contact with his church friends. This idea was supported by a long-distance call from Senator Garn, who was clear and positive in his support for Rhodesia and made no bones about his condemnation of Carter's attempts to appease their black voters, no matter what the cost.

A political meeting in Bulawayo on Saturday morning, 22 July, gave me a welcome chance in the afternoon to see Rhodesia beat Western Transvaal in a stirring game of rugby. I sat next to Johan Claasen, who had been a great Springbok lock-forward in his day and was now a lecturer at Potchefstroom University. I found him a charming, quiet, unemotional gentleman. We enjoyed talking rugby and philosophising on politics in between all the action. On the flight home that evening a few of my ministerial colleagues were aboard the plane, and we talked about the past and present. One of them, a South African by birth, recalled how I had warned Vorster at a meeting at 'Libertas' in 1974 of the communist tactic of dominos, knocking over one by one until they arrived at their ultimate objective. Vorster had replied that this time it was different — the blacks to our north needed South Africa's help, and in return they had given him their word! My colleague commented: 'Everything you predicted has come to pass. The South Africans, for so long living in an ivory tower, have not had the same contact and experience with blacks as we have. At

last they seem to be coming to their senses — hopefully not too late.'

The South Africans were now acting as a conduit for the British. On Monday morning, 31 July, I had a meeting with Brand Fourie, the South African Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who had flown up from Pretoria. He and Pik Botha had been in America the previous week, where they had discussed Rhodesia with Vance and Owen, who had suggested that Nkomo and I were the two who could solve the problem. Owen wanted to fly in to Salisbury at the coming weekend with Nkomo for a confidential meeting with me. Fourie said the South Africans had no strong feelings one way or the other, and would leave the decision to me. They had simply agreed to convey the message. My reply was simple and straight: I was not prepared to do anything behind the backs of my executive council colleagues. Moreover, we were constantly on guard over anything in which the British were implicated — so many times we had made agreements with them, only to find that they had left us in the lurch because of pressure from the OAU.

The internal security situation was grim and was brought home to me twice on Thursday 3 August. A delegation of farmers from the north-eastern area came to see me, as they were concerned over a new trend. Because the terrorists had consistently failed in their efforts to dislodge the farmers, they had now resorted to intimidating the labour, even to the extent of killing some of them in order to indicate what would happen to those who did not obey instructions. The labourers were strong in their resolution to stand their ground, but the farmers believed that some security assistance would be necessary. I assured them that the matter would receive immediate attention. After holding the position so effectively for so many years, and with the possibility of a settlement in sight, I promised them that we would continue to give them maximum

support. That afternoon there was a meeting with the Nat JOC, and they impressed on me their concern over the lack of success with the ceasefire campaign. They said that the black political parties in the transitional government appeared to lack motivation and were clearly not putting in enough effort. This was adding fuel to general despondency and a continuing drop in morale among the white community, and, associated with this, our emigration figures were running high. I was alarmed to hear that as a result we had reached the situation where we were losing one territorial company of our fighting men per month. This was an intolerable situation. With our small white population we simply did not have the manpower to sustain this loss, with the result that our performance in the security field would decline, and this would obviously play into the hands of the terrorists.

That night I was more depressed than I could previously recall. But clearly it was something I must keep to myself, because the last thing we wanted was any damage to the wonderful morale and fighting spirit of our Rhodesians. There was only one answer: continue, in fact increase, our efforts in the settlement field. There was to be another meeting of combined executive council and ministerial council a few days hence, and in spite of all the frustrations we would keep up the pressure for greater effort in the ceasefire campaign. And there was always the possibility of bringing Nkomo into our plan, and I was watching this very closely. These were the positive aspects, and if we had a breakthrough the whole scene could change.

Within two days, on Saturday 5 August, there were positive moves. I received a message from Derrick Robinson in London: Nkomo would like to meet me in Zambia next weekend. I said, ‘Fine,’ providing it was cleared with Kaunda, bearing in mind that he had had to do some explaining after my last visit to Lusaka.

Sunday 6 August brought a visit from John Graham and Steven Low (the British and US envoys) to inform me of their recent visit to London, where they held discussions with Vance and Owen. Their conclusion was that it would be desirable to hold a meeting of the six heads of delegations (the four internal settlement parties and ZANU and ZAPU), either at Kaunda's lodge in Luangwa Valley or one of the British stations on Cyprus. I concurred that the time was favourable — there had been positive resolutions in the US Senate and House of Representatives, and in the House of Commons the Labour government had narrowly defeated (only by six votes) a resolution in our favour. Therefore I promised I would put the matter to the executive council at our next meeting. This pleased them.

At the joint meeting of the executive council and ministerial council on Monday 7 August, there was again some strong talking: we were falling down because my black colleagues were not delivering the goods on the ceasefire, for the obvious reason that they were too busy fighting one another with an eye on the coming election. The result was that the Patriotic Front was having a free ride. My repetition of this fact was becoming tedious. Were they able to deliver the goods, or was it necessary for us to make a new plan? Gabellah made an excellent contribution, ending up by saying that at the rate we were now performing: 'Not one of the present three black leaders, including my own, will be the next prime minister.' Magaramombe came in strongly: 'Over the past month our parties, through internal fighting and inadequate positive effort, have been losing support to the Patriotic Front.' The meeting continued all day, and finally I stressed that at our next meeting there had to be positive results, otherwise drastic changes would be necessary.

There was some good news: that evening the two Chiefs, Chirau and Ndweni, gave me a report on their London trip. They had had good receptions from Owen and Margaret

Thatcher, and two meetings with Nkomo and the Nigerian Garba. All were positive in believing that we should get on with it.

At a further joint executive committee and ministerial committee meeting on 10 August, we attempted to take up things that had been raised the previous week. The proposal before us was: all four internal parties should come together as a United Front, work together and speak together on the same platforms in support of the ceasefire and safe-return policy. Chirau and Sithole were both in support, so we then looked at Muzorewa for his decision. After long contemplation he made his contribution: 'I have nothing to say!' It would have been laughable had our situation not been so desperately serious. He was the leader of the party which, it was believed, had the greatest support of our black people, and the *raison d'être* of the meeting, after adjournment for one week, was to receive answers to the question. He was sitting next to me, so turning to him I said quietly: 'We must have some decision from you.' To which he replied equally quietly: 'But I would rather not say anything.' It was extraordinary, with all the other members of the meeting looking at him in disbelief. Then one of his own UANC representatives on the ministerial council said to him: 'You must give us some answer.' As always, when he found himself in a position where he had no option, he produced a long rigmarole, going around in circles, and finally said that he had to have confidential meetings with first, myself, second with the joint Ministers of Law and Order, Hilary Squires and Francis Zindoga, and then he would give his answer at our meeting next week.

At our executive committee meeting that followed, I gave details of the plans which were being mooted for me to meet Nkomo and Kaunda in Zambia. It was my assessment that it could yield beneficial results, but I did not want to do anything behind their backs. In fact Chirau and Sithole

had held meetings with Nkomo. Muzorewa was the only one to show apprehension — if it leaked out, people might think I was conniving with Nkomo. Sithole's thoughts were in the contrary direction — some of his erstwhile friends were accusing him of being a stooge in working with Smith, and this would enable him to retort that the same applied to Nkomo!

A report from our information department people raised questions. It indicated concern that the monopoly Argus Press was constantly swiping at our transitional government with destructive criticism and pessimistic forecasts of the future. From the Rhodesian Front standpoint, they had always been our deadly opponents, constantly propounding a left-wing, ultra-liberal philosophy. But now we were doing what they had consistently suggested: handing over to a black government. We were working with the most responsible black people available, under a plan which aimed at retaining the confidence of our white people and ensuring good government. The alternative was to hand over to the terrorists, and accept a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship. Is this what the Argus Press wanted?

Momentum was gathering on the meeting with Nkomo. On Friday 11 August, Gaylard showed me the plan for our visit. Take-off was to be early Sunday morning and it was less than an hour's flight to Kaunda's personal camp in the Luangwa Game Park. Nkomo and the Nigerian Garba would be present. That was fine by me. However, the next day, there was a telephone call from Gaylard to say there had been a panic message from Zambia calling it off — the Nigerian could not arrive in time. On Sunday 13 August, there was a message to say that Kaunda had arrived back from the Pope's funeral, and had sent a message apologising for the inept planning. Could we fly up the following evening, spend the night having meetings, and return next morning? This suited me — we had to explore

every avenue, and this was just one more. If our local parties failed to deliver the goods, this could provide the answer. However, it was important for me to keep the internal scene viable, otherwise my bargaining position would be weakened.

We landed just after dark the following evening, Monday 14 August, as they hoped to keep the visit secret. It was a long drive, about forty minutes, to their State House on the other side of Lusaka. We were taken in to a big lounge where Nkomo came forward and greeted me, and introduced me to Brigadier Garba from Nigeria. He was a pleasant, tall individual, dressed in a colourful outfit with a kind of slit cap on his head. He had a good command of the English language, which was not surprising considering he was a Sandhurst graduate and a Foreign Ministry representative who had spent much time at the UN. He said that, judging from photographs he had seen, I had not changed much in appearance from the days when I was flying Spitfires in the RAF. Clearly, he was well trained in the necessary graces and diplomacy of foreign affairs. Kaunda then entered and was most affable, and we chatted for a while.

As soon as there was a break in the conversation I suggested that because of the time factor we should get on with the business at hand, and Kaunda readily agreed. He had come, he said, to stress the importance of what we were doing, and his hopes were that we would succeed. There were two points he wished to make before leaving us: first, his disappointment that after our last meeting, nearly a year ago, when he was led to believe that I had taken the initiative in making the plan, I had subsequently deviated from the arrangement. I immediately corrected him, pointing out that it was Rowland of Lonrho who had taken the initiative and, at a meeting held in Salisbury, placed before me proposals which he claimed had Kaunda’s support. At our subsequent meeting I had found that

support was not forthcoming. Fortunately both Gaylard and Robinson, who had liaised with Rowland in making the arrangements, were present, and they substantiated my account.

Second, Kaunda expressed his disappointment that time had been wasted because I had turned down a meeting with Nkomo in view of the fact that Garba was to be present. I expressed astonishment at what appeared to me to be a fabrication, and again looked to Gaylard and Robinson, who had dealt with all of these arrangements, and they confirmed my belief that this was a trumped-up story with no foundation. I had to express my concern that there were people close to Kaunda who were twisting the truth, maybe in an attempt to protect themselves. Kaunda was obviously embarrassed, and apologised, and then took his leave of us.

We then got down to serious business, with both Nkomo and Garba making constructive contributions with ideas that were balanced and in keeping with my own thoughts. We broke at 9 p.m. for supper and Kaunda joined us for a pleasant, sociable occasion. When he left us he volunteered to return at any time if we needed his assistance. We talked until after midnight, and produced a plan which I thought was workable, bringing both Nkomo and Mugabe into our existing arrangement. Nkomo thought that he and I should be joint co-chairmen, but I discouraged that idea, saying that I believed he would gain the necessary support on his own credentials.

My final question: it was all very well for those of us present to come to a consensus, but did they believe that Mugabe and his wild boys would go along with such an arrangement? Without hesitation Garba asked if I could return the coming Saturday, 19 August. If so he would fly to Maputo in his VIP jet the next day, Tuesday 14 August, hold meetings with Machel and Mugabe, and be back here in Lusaka with Mugabe to confirm our agreement. I thought it

would work — Nigeria was the most powerful and influential member of the OAU and with Kaunda as the main participant in the Rhodesian affair, and also an influential member of the OAU, the prospects looked good. I agreed to hold myself available for a meeting on Saturday.

We had a wait of a few hours, because we were due to take off at 5 a.m. before light. Kaunda had stressed the need for absolute secrecy, telling us, if it leaked out and we were questioned, that we should deny the meeting. This was a surprising change from last time, when he said just to be straightforward and honest, to tell the truth. They took me to the VIP suite for a rest, but my mind was too active, thinking of the meeting and contemplating the future. The accommodation for their top guests left much to be desired. While the framework was there, the upkeep and service were lacking, with the gauze on the windows in shreds, the bathroom dirty, with a small piece of soap and one hand towel for both shower and basin. A third-grade hotel in Rhodesia would have given better and cleaner service. The road to the airport was pitted with pot-holes, strewn with stones, and with dust flying everywhere. There were shanty towns on both sides of the road, with filth and rubbish dominant; a tragic deterioration from the days when the country had been called Northern Rhodesia.

The usual difficulty arose. On Thursday 17 August, Gaylard came to me to say that Derrick Robinson had received a message from Lusaka to say that the meeting arranged for Saturday was now off. Nyerere had objected, saying that it was going to put Nkomo in a preferential position to Mugabe. That was a twist, because they would have been in parallel positions. The problem, as explained to me on more than one occasion, was that Nyerere was the dominant personality, and in his presence Kaunda took a back seat. We had thought that with Nigeria and their man in the driving seat, they would call the tune. But we were

wrong, and so were Garba and Kaunda. I was not all that taken aback, because I had lived in Africa all my life.

There was some relief for me. On 18 August I enjoyed a rewarding trip to Bulawayo to open the annual Rhodesian Front fête, with strong support from the general public and enthusiastic work from all our wonderful party supporters. It was an absolute tonic to witness the dedication and optimism of our loyal people, especially considering the difficult times through which we were living. The next day, I enjoyed watching a great game of rugby in Salisbury against Eastern Province (South Africa) played in festival mood, as both teams were out of the running for the Currie Cup.

On Sunday afternoon, I received a phone call asking if I could go to Lusaka for a meeting, as Mugabe and Garba had arrived back from Nigeria. Surely, I asked, these people did not think that we could lay this kind of thing on at five minutes' notice? I requested them please to inform us whether it had been agreed to accept the plan we made last week, in which case I would travel up to Lusaka the next day to finalise arrangements. Or, I wondered, had they concocted some newfangled ideas which they would try to foist on us? If so, we would send a couple of our chaps up to find out if it was worthwhile.

The South Africans intruded. The four executive committee members met Pik Botha and Brand Fourie at New Sarum at 8.15 a.m. on 24 August. Pik started as usual by saying that they did not want to interfere in our affairs, but that they were concerned that we did not seem to be making progress with our plan, and so were wondering why we were opposed to an all-party conference. Clearly, Kaunda and his cohorts had requested the South Africans to pressurise us. We all spoke, reminding them of how much work we had put into our internal agreement, that it was a going concern and had received support in the US Congress, and a near-majority in the House of Commons,

and we believed it was important for us to keep going. If we could gain some support from the leading free world countries, and also from South Africa, that would ensure our success. Our reply was clear and unequivocal, albeit not what the South Africans had hoped for.

A week previously, on 18 August, I had broadcast to the nation in an effort to try and keep our people in the picture during these incredibly difficult times. There had been speculation in the media and overseas reports on the desirability of holding another conference of all the parties. I analysed the situation and explained that if this was to be a repetition of the Victoria Falls Bridge conference or the Geneva conference, then, as happened in those instances, we would be worse off than before we started. So while we maintained contact with all parties in the field, we would like to know that we were on sure ground before deviating from our current course. While we had run into difficulties in drawing up the new constitution, we were making progress and at the same time grappling with problems such as the 'ceasefire and safe-return' campaign, where it was conceded that there was room for improvement.

During my thirty years in politics I had many frustrations, dealing with the British politicians who had gone back on undertakings, the failure of the Pearce Commission to follow through signed contracts, and then black political leaders who reneged on agreements. Some of my greatest frustrations, however, were associated with the past five months, since we had signed our 3 March agreement. We had been trying to work out a system with four leaders pulling together in harness. Under those circumstances your progress is restricted to the rate of the slowest member of the team. I am one of those who has always been able to make a decision after weighing up the evidence before me. I often said to my cabinet colleagues that I would rather they made ten decisions, one of which was a mistake, than that they made no mistakes because

they made no decisions. Once you have decided that a decision is right, in the interests of your country, then the function of a leader is to lead and sell it to the people. So often the best medicine is unpalatable, and if you insist on soliciting support from the people, more often than not you will never succeed in administering the cure.

In my broadcast, I dealt next with the need for a referendum.

> At our last General Election we gave an undertaking that before introducing a new Constitution, we would submit it to the electorate for acceptance or rejection. At this stage we are, together with the internal black leaders, drawing up the Constitution. Once this is finally agreed and completed, the electorate will have the final say.

Finally, my greatest wish was to persuade Rhodesians to go on living in our wonderful country:

> I hope that in the end we do not have to leave, that we will have succeeded in the major objective before us, bringing about a new Constitution and a new way of life under this new arrangement which will mean that it will be worthwhile for us to go on living here, under conditions of the maintenance of law and order, and decent standards of civilisation.

We were still waiting on Kaunda. On 25 August a message came from Lusaka to say that Mugabe was obstinate, and that this was the reason we had received no reply to our question. It was just as well we had not made the trip to Lusaka, as it would have been negative. For my part, I had a happy afternoon on Saturday 28 August, watching Rhodesia play rugby against the USA Cougars. At the reception following the game they gave me a warm welcome and presented one of their neckties to me,

assuring me that all intelligent Americans were backing us in what we were trying to do.

The month closed with the sad news that John Wrathall had died from a heart attack. He had succeeded Clifford Dupont as our President, after serving with distinction as our Minister of Finance. Although he had been looking fit and was dedicated to his mission, he passed away quietly in his sleep — a nice way to go, but a shock for Doreen and the family. They performed their task efficiently and with dignity and were much admired by all those who knew them.

On 2 September our black leaders, on their return journey from Kenyatta's funeral in Nairobi, stopped off for meetings in Lusaka. We had received reports that the sparks were flying, with Mugabe the obstructionist, creating friction not only with our transitional government people, but also with Nkomo.

With a traumatic week just over, with a number of innocent civilians being murdered by terrorists, all of them black people — their only crime that they were not prepared to co-operate in terrorism — came the news of the tragic disaster of the shooting down of one of our civilian Viscount aircraft on its flight from Victoria Falls via Kariba to Salisbury on late Sunday afternoon, 3 September. The terrorists had managed to procure a number of heat-seeking missiles from those sources all over the world that are looking for financial gain, even at the cost of human life and tragedy. The bringing down of the aircraft and, still worse, the cold-blooded murder by the terrorists of ten of the survivors, including women and children, caused a degree of anger among Rhodesians difficult to control. During the days that followed, resentment and the accompanying desire to exact retribution mounted and I received more than one representation seeking permission to enter the area of the tragedy and make the local people pay for their crime of harbouring and assisting the

terrorists. I, too, would have derived great satisfaction in getting to grips with the gangsters associated with the crime, but sadly, this is easier said than done. We would continue to hunt down and destroy terrorism wherever it was found, but we knew on the evidence before us that many, if not the majority, of the tribal people were not voluntarily on the side of the terrorists, but had had pistols pointed at their heads. So it was necessary, although difficult, to counsel cool heads and remind people that two wrongs do not make a right: the sins of the gangsters should not be visited upon their fellow-tribesmen.

There was a strong feeling for me to broadcast to the nation, and on Sunday 10 September I announced that the government would introduce ‘a modification of martial law which will enable us to streamline procedures in order to facilitate the prosecution of our war effort while at the same time leaving intact those civil authorities which are required to play their part’. The new measures, I said, were to be applied in particular areas as and when required, and not on a nationwide basis. In addition, I declared, we intended to ‘liquidate the internal workings of those organisations associated with terrorism.’ I also warned neighbouring states that if they permitted the terrorists to operate from within their borders, they must bear the consequences of any defensive strikes we might undertake against terrorist bases in their countries. I attributed the escalation in the war to continued support for the Patriotic Front by Britain and the United States. Finally I named President Nyerere as the ‘evil genius on the Rhodesian scene and a stumbling block to a peaceful settlement’.

I decided to send a message to Vorster, telling him of the serious situation building up, the anger of the Rhodesian nation and the accompanying danger of a white backlash. I told him how Nkomo had stated publicly that when he came to power he would allow South African terrorists shelter and access through Rhodesia. Accordingly, I

wondered if the time had not arrived for South Africa to reconsider its decision to withdraw from Rhodesia, and restore at least some of the assistance previously given us. I believed it was important that, once more, I should point to the dilemma in which Rhodesia found itself, indicating the facts with which any unbiased person could only agree. It was fair comment for me to point out that from the time we had accepted the Pretoria agreement with Vorster and Kissinger in 1976, the situation in Rhodesia had steadily deteriorated. Surely, I argued, it was not unreasonable for us to request the fulfilment of the undertaking given at that time, that if we accepted the agreement and the other parties failed to honour their side, then our friends of the free world would acknowledge what we had done and give us their support? We had learned from past experience that we should not place much, if any, faith on undertakings given by our 'friends' in the Western world, but we still had faith that South Africa would be different. Not only did we believe that they had not been contaminated by the deceit of the permissive society and the 'diplomacy' of Western governments, but even more pertinent was the fact that we were in the same boat together. Any success which Rhodesia had in stemming the encroachment in communism down the African continent could only be to the ultimate benefit of South Africa.

Hawkins relayed to us the reply he had received from Pik Botha, which berated us for dillydallying over the holding of an all-party conference and the achievement of a settlement which would be acceptable worldwide. He warned us that South Africa had its hands full with the South West Africa problem and that they could not contemplate two wars on two fronts at the same time. And finally he was to remind me that their financial loans to us were on a monthly basis, dependent on our performance! This was obvious blackmail, without any attempt at subtlety. Just one more of those dreadful periods for us,

when the South Africans were conniving with the British and Americans, and with Kaunda and Nyerere and the terrorists, to pressurise us to accept an agreement at any price, even if it meant a sell-out to communism. Human nature does tend to promote eternal optimism, but from past experience we should not have been surprised. At least this was more honest than that fateful meeting at Groote Schuur on 15 February 1975, when Vorster had stacked the pack against me, with the message that the South African government had concluded that they could no longer ask their men to fight in Rhodesia because they had received the clear message that their troops were questioning the morality of being asked to fight for a cause which was not in keeping with their philosophy of apartheid. It was subsequently proved that this was a blatant lie. At least they were not now trying to blame other South Africans for their decisions.

We sent a message to Hawkins, asking him to stress, tactfully, that our growing problems were a direct result of the Pretoria agreement, that our loss of fighting manpower clearly originated from that date, that we were not asking the South Africans to fight on two fronts, but asking for the tools to enable *us* to do the fighting. We argued that, if the communists took over and facilitated South African terrorism through Rhodesia, the South Africans would then indeed have a second front to contend with. The communist dream of clearing the way for their ultimate objective in Africa, the final assault on the Republic of South Africa, would have been achieved. Why would the South Africans not allow us the time to finalise our plan, with which they had recently concurred, to bring into being a government which believed in free enterprise and the democratic system, as opposed to communism and terrorism? Had they not recently received a visit from our joint Ministers of Finance, Ernest Bulle and David Smith, and given them encouragement and support? Just where did we stand, and

how was it possible for us to plan and operate under such conditions? To say that we were confused and exasperated would have been the understatement of the decade!

After a few days Hawkins came back, saying that he had received an understanding and sympathetic hearing from Brand Fourie, who confessed that at times he was perplexed at what the politicians around him were doing. He conceded the inconsistency towards Rhodesia and with surprising frankness admitted that this changed in keeping with the last contact made by his ministers. If we were to send a delegation down including a black executive council member or minister, then our position would be reinstated. One problem was that Vorster was getting tired and therefore more decision-making was being left to Pik, and because of his emotional nature this led to greater inconsistency. Hawkins commented: 'They are clearly trying to curry favour with those whom they think will be our next government.' In the end Brand Fourie said that his ministers were well aware of the points made in our message, and at this stage it would serve no purpose to reiterate them. His advice was that we should wait for a change of climate. In current circumstances we would only succeed in receiving another rebuff. In the event, Vorster announced on 20 September that he was forced to retire because of poor health. He offered himself as President and was replaced as Prime Minister by P.W. Botha, his Minister of Defence.

In the immediate aftermath of the resignation, Janet and I flew to Durban as guests of the South African Chamber of Industries for their annual conference. It was a splendid affair, very well organised by highly efficient people. Mr John Cronjé, their president, was a most impressive man with great dignity and presence. I attended a number of their formal sessions, contributed to certain debates and answered their questions. The official banquet was a tremendous occasion, with the main hall filled to capacity

and the overflow in two adjoining rooms with closed circuit TV. John Cronjé's speech was strong and unequivocal, in spite of his quiet and dignified manner, calling for bolder action from their government in the removal of prejudice and unequal treatment. I always find it reassuring to be associated with people who have the courage of their convictions. It has the tonic effect of restoring one's confidence in one's fellow-men. He was hitting at the foundations of the National Party's principles and beliefs, a party which had enjoyed total power for so long that this kind of talk was branded as provocative and 'unpatriotic'. So many times had I heard members and supporters of their government saying in reply to such open criticism: 'Whose side is he on — ours or theirs?' With the obvious insinuation — right or wrong? Harold Hawkins and his wife were down from Pretoria for the occasion, and the reactions conveyed to him by the delegates were pretty direct and especially interesting to us in the circumstances in which we found ourselves. He found them strongly critical of their government's 'indecisiveness and lack of courage in making positive decisions'. 'They are drifting along, waiting for their party supporters to take the initiative — the very antithesis of leadership.' Harold was pleased to be able to report most complimentary comments on my contributions. They wished they had a few politicians who would give such straight and honest replies. Harold's wish was that Vorster and Pik Botha had been in attendance — they would have received a clear message. My reply was that they were immune to any thinking which did not coincide with their current philosophy — albeit this was one which seemed to change with the wind.

I used my speech at the banquet to give the facts about Rhodesia's history and policy, to counteract the malicious distortions of the truth which were constantly propagated against us, and to indicate what we considered to be the answer to black and white people living and working

together in Africa. I tactfully refrained from implicating my host country in any way, but because of the fact that we lived in the same part of the world, shared similar problems, and had always enjoyed close relations, my comments gave a number of clear pointers. Some of these coincided with policies Vorster had personally told me three years ago were imperative if South Africa was to survive, but this message had not yet reached his own South Africans.

On 28 September, I flew out of Durban at the crack of dawn, held a press conference at the airport in Johannesburg on the way through and arrived in Salisbury in good time for the opening session of our annual RF congress at 4.30 p.m. This was our last congress in the country under the name of Rhodesia. The place was packed to overflowing with representatives from every corner of the country. Considering the incredibly difficult times we were going through, the almost impossible odds that were stacked against us, there was no sign of abandoning ship. In the face of all of this, it was a great compliment to the mainstream of Rhodesia's political thinking that these people were gathered together, devoid of bitterness and recrimination, and dedicated to finding a solution to our political problem. Their contributions throughout the entire congress were constructive and most responsible.

It was time for an initiative. For some months I had been working on an idea of using Muzorewa and Sithole through their university and church connections in the USA to organise a visit by the executive council to explain to responsible American opinion the justification of our case. Our luck was in, and it worked, much to the chagrin of the British government — but they did not have a leg to stand on, because when it suited them they implicated the Americans *à la* Kissinger, and now they were objecting because we had taken the initiative.

On Saturday 7 October we landed at New York on South African Airways and, as we were making our approach, the captain came over loud and clear: ‘On behalf of myself and my crew we wish our Rhodesian friends everything of the best on their mission to the US.’ There was a tremendous round of applause throughout the whole aircraft — a very moving experience. Soon after landing we took off for Dulles Airport, Washington, and from there we motored to the American Security Council Centre at Boston, Virginia, where we were given a good platform to launch our visit. It was made clear to us that our hosts comprised a voluntary organisation of conservative thinkers, established with the objective of countering left-wing permissive organisations that constantly advocated appeasement and surrender.

Our two-week visit was well planned and the organisation left nothing to be desired. Coverage by the media seemed to be good, with some TV interviews as early as 6.30 in the morning. We had breakfast with senators on Capitol Hill, with Senator Hayakawa in the chair. There was a press conference in Dirkson Building and an afternoon meeting with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance at the State Department. Included in his team were Richard Moose, Anthony Lake and Andrew Young.

I was hopeful of some understanding and reason from Vance and his team, bearing in mind their constructive attitude when we had last met in Salisbury, and especially in view of the fact that they would not be encumbered by the British Foreign Secretary, David Owen, whose opinions were coloured by his obsession with the OAU. We were sadly disillusioned, however, because apart from a most courteous reception and attentive hearing, our ideas and recommendations were constantly blocked. At the outset, Vance explained to us his predicament at being attacked by the black caucus and pro-Africa lobby for granting us visas to visit the US. He subsequently regretted letting the truth slip out like that.

As with the British, we were held at arm's length in order to curry favour with the OAU, and now with the Americans, our plans were countered — albeit more discreetly — in order to avoid antagonising black voters. My colleague Sithole produced a compelling argument, pointing out that the Americans were living in the past; could they not appreciate that they were no longer dealing with a white-dominated Rhodesia government, but with a black-dominated Zimbabwe Rhodesia government? This seemed to take them aback, and they were at a loss for a response. There were two gentlemen sitting at the side of the table who, we subsequently discovered, were from the British embassy. One made the point that we could not claim that the existing government truly represented black opinion because Nkomo and his party were not represented. Sithole came back, pointing out that both Nkomo and Mugabe had been invited to participate in the transitional government and had been offered seats on the executive council — who was holding them back?

I made the simple point that the issue before the US and British governments was the choice between the existing constitutional government of our country, and the communist-backed terrorists who had openly proclaimed their intention of gaining power through the barrel of the gun. It was difficult to understand the reason for their hesitation in coming to a verdict. They were at a loss to find replies to the points we had made. We were disappointed that Vance obviously knew little about our case, and was constantly groping for material from the brief on his desk and relying on his assistants for information. Sadly their knowledge of the subject was superficial and of no real assistance. This was not surprising, because it was not their responsibility; they were dragged in simply because of the power they wielded.

Their British friends in attendance were of scant assistance in spite of the fact that one of them was the

ambassador, Peter Jay, who was the son-in-law of British Prime Minister Callaghan. According to our officials, the Americans were open in their criticism of his ineptness. Here was the tragedy of Rhodesia, being tossed about like a political shuttlecock by the big powers, which had only one objective: 'How can we use this to our political advantage?'

The communists, whether you agreed with them or not, were at least consistent, and the people they were supporting knew where they stood. They asked one simple question: 'Are you communists and will you work with us to spread our ideology?' If the answer was in the affirmative you received what you required; if negative, you went without. But no such principles guided the leaders of the free world. Their decisions were motivated by expediency — votes in their constituencies.

For the benefit of the Americans present, I reiterated the case we had presented on many occasions to the British government. Rhodesia was a classic example of a country which had been consistently dedicated to the ideals of the British Empire: freedom, justice, the Westminster system of government with its inherent democracy, and economics based on the free enterprise system. In every world conflict of this century Rhodesia had fought on the side of Britain and the USA against the forces of totalitarianism, both in Europe and the Far East. We had always been in the forefront of the war against communism, which was making significant gains in many parts of the free world. Our particular concern was with Africa, because we were part of Africa, and were witnessing the communist invasion down our continent. Now they were knocking on our door, having succeeded in building their saddle across Africa to our north, thus creating the safe base from which they were planning their strategy to take over and control the 'Persian Gulf of strategic minerals of this earth', and thence

on to dominate the vital Cape sea route, the main artery between east and west.

Vance and those around him expressed their deep concern and assured us of their dedication to the cause of spiking the guns of communists — but our efforts to get them to back up their words with deeds were in vain. They were excessively cautious in case they committed themselves to accepting anything which would be contrary to the wishes of the OAU. Once again we emphasised our support for an all-party conference, providing there were no pre-conditions. When Low asked: 'What do you mean?' Gaylard floored him by saying: 'How many times have you told me that our commissioner of police would have to step down?' There was no reply.

Sad to say that at the end of the day, in spite of our courteous reception and much pleasant talk, there was no progress. There were a few occasions when Andrew Young made contributions that were constructive, but these were side-stepped by the others, who pursued their course of appeasement. We were disappointed in Vance's contributions, especially after his positive performance in Salisbury earlier in the year, and his words of encouragement during our meeting. When I asked for a firm decision, however, they all shook their heads negatively and made the excuse that they would give our suggestions the 'most serious' consideration. According to our advice, Vance was unable to make any positive decision without referring back to Carter, who would then obtain clearance from the OAU.

On 12 October I had a pleasant meeting with Henry Kissinger, who went out of his way to get a full briefing on everything that had transpired since the Pretoria agreement. He expressed his sadness over the manner in which we had been let down — in fact betrayed — by the current American administration and, although Carter was proving a disaster, he had hoped for a more positive stance

from Vance. He believed our strongest tactic was to play on the telling point that a decision had to be made between the two options which confronted us: a government which would be brought in through the ballot box, as we were advocating; or a government which was going to be imposed through the barrel of a gun, as our terrorist opponents were threatening.

I assured him that this was one of the principal planks in our platform, and enumerated the points which formed the base of our case. He agreed that it would be dishonest of anyone to reject this. The tragedy of Rhodesia was that Gerald Ford had been defeated in the 1976 presidential election. After that, the agreement he had brokered collapsed — the sharks were biding their time in the shadows for just such an eventuality. On his way to Pretoria, Kissinger said, Nyerere had told him that he would not succeed in convincing me to agree to his plan. When he returned with my concurrence, Nyerere commented: 'You have achieved a miracle which will pave the way to bring peace to our part of Africa.' 'Then,' Kissinger recalled, 'he went back on his word — that shows how much you can trust those people.'

I reminded him that I had pointed out to him and Vorster in Pretoria that their approach was the wrong way round, as once they received the message that I had agreed, they would tuck that under their belt and ask for more. We had learned from experience that a prerequisite was to get them to commit themselves in public. When you live in Africa you have a better comprehension of these people. Kissinger wondered why Vorster and the South Africans were not attuned to this. I smiled and told him that I had previously warned Vorster that, after so many years of apartheid, the National Party had lost touch with black Africa.

I enquired after his wife and requested him to convey my best wishes. He replied: 'As you know she is a strong

conservative, and I got into plenty of trouble for not securing for you a better deal!' In conclusion, he reiterated his sorrow at being associated with this great tragedy of Rhodesia. In the face of tremendous provocation, he said, I had behaved with commendable dignity and restraint, and he had always been ready to say so openly and defend me against unjust accusations.

We had kept up a busy schedule in Washington, with TV interviews, a National Press Club luncheon attended by a capacity audience which gave us wide national coverage, and, on the final day (12 October), a meeting with members of the House of Representatives chaired by Congressman Ichord. This was followed by a second meeting with Senators Sparkman, Case, Javitts, Harry Byrd, Jessie Helms, Hayakawa and others who were all trying to offer practical help. Why were we opposing an all-party conference? was one question. It was easy to dispense with that canard, and prove that they had had the wool pulled over their eyes. We had consistently made it clear that we supported, in fact advocated, an all-party conference with no pre-conditions, and we had emphasised this point at our meeting with Vance. We were able to present press cuttings reporting that Nkomo and Mugabe were in opposition to the conference.

This put the cat among the pigeons — the senators, were taken aback, indeed incensed that the State Department had misled them. They ordered their aides to contact the State Department immediately and arrange a meeting with Vance that day, as he was departing on the morrow for South Africa and the Namibia talks. I sat back with much satisfaction, enjoying the strong and biting criticism of the senators, which was like music to my ears: 'How can we ever be expected to make a true assessment of any issue when we are fed such blatant misinformation?' Some felt that Vance would not be party to such deceit, and that he would be upset over what had taken place. But others were

unwilling to defend him, pointing out that he lacked the strength to discipline those who were ready to bend the facts in order to make them comply with their preconceived plans.

It was suggested that on my way out I drop in to pay my respects to majority leader Robert Byrd. He was courteous and proclaimed his concern over Rhodesia, and his hope that our mission would be successful. After parting company, however, I recorded my doubts as to whether he was one of those who would be prepared to back up his words with deeds. By contrast, I renewed acquaintances with a number of great and honest old familiar faces, such as Senator James Eastland, who along with all our other true friends mentioned above could be relied on to stand by their convictions.

From all quarters we met sympathetic understanding and commitment to support the obvious justice of our case, and surprisingly this was evident from the media people who had previously consistently opposed us and sided with the ultra-liberal establishment, the communists, the OAU, the terrorists. We welcomed this change and hoped that in time the administrations, both American and British, would come to their senses and acknowledge the justification of our cause — free and fair elections giving us a government based on the democratic system, as opposed to a government imposed through the barrel of the gun. We lived in hope and kept up the good fight.

One afternoon when we had a couple of hours to spare, we visited the Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, and it was time well spent. I asked my secretary to make a plan for us to visit the famous war memorials at the next opportunity. To my amazement he came back with a message from the White House saying that I should not visit the memorials. I asked him to inform them that my intended visit had no political connotations. During the last world war my Spitfire squadron was

attached to an American wing stationed on Corsica — we had given cover to the Mitchells, Marauders and Bostons for their bombing raids over Italy. I knew Americans who were killed on those missions, in addition to a number of my personal squadron colleagues who never came back. I merely wished to pay my respects to those brave men, who died so that the rest of us could go on living in peace. The answer came back: 'No change.' I was no longer amazed, I was deeply incensed. My secretary said that even the Americans with whom he was working were disillusioned and commented: 'That's typical of the White House these days.' I asked the top security man, Bob Nicholson, to come and have a chat — he assured me that his function was not to question where we went, but merely to ensure that we did not run into trouble, such as demonstrators. Next day we had a good tour of the monuments, some of them tremendously impressive, and I devoted some time, especially in front of the Second World War memorial, thinking of those who paid the supreme sacrifice. I repeated those tremendous never-to-be-forgotten words: 'At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.' It was a successful mission, and I slept contented that night. Bob Nicholson was happy too. He said so.

On Friday the thirteenth, we landed at La Guardia Airport after a short flight. There are lots of people and lots of traffic in many places on our planet, but New York takes pride of place, or rather it should hang its head in shame: a classic example of population pollution. We had a pleasant lunch with *Newsweek* on top of a skyscraper and an understanding and fact-finding discussion with their editorial staff. Unexpectedly, a pleasant girl behind the reception desk said she was sorry to read of my intention to pull out of politics because she felt that the wisdom of my many years of political experience would be invaluable to the future government. This was indeed a profound

comment, especially bearing in mind what ensued — a government so bloated with arrogance that they believe they know the answer to every problem. But, if chaos and disaster ensue, they look the other way.

We had a meeting with a number of prominent New Yorkers who were supportive to our cause. They believed it would be worthwhile to see Zbigniev Brzezenski, Carter's National Security Advisor, who was tough and shrewd, and who, they thought might be prepared to help — we readily accepted. Sadly, their spokesman phoned us in Los Angeles to say that Brzezenski was in favour but, as it impinged on Vance's preserve, he had to clear it with Carter who characteristically shied away from the idea.

That evening in New York, we were given a great dinner and a tremendous reception by the America–Rhodesian Association. When we arrived at the hotel there was a group of demonstrators indicating their opposition. One held a placard saying: 'Down with Smith', but he had forgotten his lines and was shouting 'Down with the Shah' — that had been his job last week! As we were laughing and pointing at him, one of his comrades jabbed him in the ribs and gave him the message — he immediately changed to: 'Down with Smith'. This was one of the many times that I had been confronted with 'Rent-a-Crowd'. While I am sympathetic to giving work to the unemployed, there surely must be many other more productive methods of doing it. For the first time in the USA there were policemen on horseback — beautiful. They were lovely, big horses and obviously effective at their task — the demonstrators clearly kept their distance. We had an excellent feast and all four members of our delegation were given a great reception after our speeches. It was embarrassing for me to be presented with a miniature replica of a lighthouse, because 'for so many years I had served as a warning beacon to the free world of the dangers of international communism'.

We took off that night for Los Angeles, and in spite of the fact that we put our watches back three hours, it was well after midnight by the time we booked into our hotel. This was my first ride in a DC10, and I was kindly invited on to the flight deck — it was good to know that the bonds of fellowship associated with air pilots were worldwide. I was fascinated by what I saw: we were flying over the desert and it looked pretty dead with an occasional light in the dim distance. We were talking about the world we inhabited, and they were especially interested in my views on Africa. These air crew chaps travel far and wide and had an intelligent comprehension of international affairs. Their assessment was pertinent, especially after our stay in Washington — 'If only our politicians would make honest decisions on the facts before them, 90 per cent of our problems would be solved.' Suddenly the captain said: 'See what we are coming to.' A fantastic panorama of glittering lights and flashing neon signs, like a massive rocket suddenly exploding in the wilderness: Las Vegas. And beyond, a long streak of lights stretching westwards into the distance: cars from Los Angeles on their way to spend a weekend at the gambling tables. I stayed with them for the landing and enjoyed the unusual experience of coming down in a Los Angeles fog, which I gather is a daily occurrence — we saw the deck only when we were a few hundred feet above it.

We spent three full days in the area. One day we visited San Diego for a lunchtime address to 450 editors at Edicon Congress hosted by UPF. We were pleasantly surprised at how supportive they were. En route to the airport, we stopped off for an hour to see their world-famous zoo, where the animals certainly live under almost ideal conditions. Coming from Africa, I always have reservations about animals in captivity, but there are positive aspects in the fields of research and education, preservation of endangered species, translocation and veterinary

requirements for damaged animals. The San Diego Zoo is certainly a credit to those associated with it. As I looked down from the hilltop on to the tremendous city, beautifully planned and laid out, the impressive naval base, there was for me a special emotional sensation. When my father emigrated to Rhodesia his elder brother, Lige, went to the United States and set himself up in business in New York. Their intention was to keep in touch, and when it was ascertained where the best place to live was, they would join up. Each was a strong character, and each believed he had made the right choice. Our families met once in England for a reunion, and although young at the time, I retained clear memories of the occasion. Lige was successful in his business, and at the age of sixty sold out and retired to a ‘small’ town in southern California named San Diego — we had never heard of the place. He spent a rewarding twilight period, active in local community affairs, and died at the great age of ninety-four. We kept in communication and during UDI years he constantly sent messages of encouragement and hoped that I would soon be able to manoeuvre myself into a position from whence I could ‘deliver a KO blow to those devious British politicians’. Happily, he did not live to witness the day when they, with the support of his US government, would betray their own kith and kin.

In between press and TV interviews, I insisted on a visit to Disneyland, which was absolutely fantastic and provided us with some of our happiest moments of the trip. There was all the beauty and romance of Walt Disney, coupled with the best of American expertise and organisation, and the management and staff extended to us a degree of kindness and hospitality that was quite exceptional.

We also had a constructive meeting with Governor Ronald Reagan, who impressed us with his genuineness and intelligent understanding of our Rhodesian problem, concluding with a commitment to continue supporting our

cause. There was growing talk of promoting him as Republican Party candidate for the presidency, and there was no doubt in our minds that in all respects he appeared to be head and shoulders above the current incumbent.

We had a tremendous dinner of 1,200 people hosted by the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, and there was no question as to whose side they were on. Senator Hayakawa, who had just flown in from Washington, came straight from the aircraft and gave us his strong support. After the dinner he joined in with a number of others at our hotel, and was still talking enthusiastically well after midnight.

I cannot believe that one could see more motor cars anywhere else on this earth than in Los Angeles — evidently because there is no public transport system. My hotel window looked over the main artery feeding the city, six lanes in and six lanes out, and I do not remember ever looking out and not seeing it packed to capacity, bumper to bumper.

On 17 October we had an early take-off by private jet for Palm Springs — a beautiful oasis of green in the middle of the desert, abounding with beautiful golf courses and magnificent residences, and home to more millionaires per square mile than anywhere else in the world! After a ten-minute drive, we were with Gerald Ford in his beautiful home, literally adjoining a golf course. As I said to him, this was exactly what I expected, knowing his love for golf! We talked for one and a half hours and his straightforward honesty was patently obvious. Like most of the others with whom we had talked, he was familiar with our problem and how we were trying to solve it. He added that, tragically, the Carter administration had not been willing to honour the agreement that Henry Kissinger had made with me. It was the irony of fate, he felt, that the destiny of Rhodesia lay in the hands of the American voters. He was repeating the theme which I had stressed so many times about British politicians using Rhodesia as a pawn in their game of

international politics. Gerald Ford promised he would continue to do what he could to help, but was under obligation to bear in mind a convention that ex-presidents should avoid open confrontation with the president in office. However, shortly afterwards, while we were still in the States, from a public platform he did speak in favour of accepting the existing majority-rule government in Rhodesia.

Our next stop was Houston. That evening and the next morning we had a number of TV and press interviews, and then the main function was a lunch at the World Trade Center arranged by Governor Conolly. Our audience, highly influential we were told, were once again understanding and helpful, with one exception: an ultra-liberal, who attempted to ask a provocative question. He was concerned that the British government were not in favour of what we were doing in Rhodesia, and this indicated to him that we were in the wrong. Very briefly, I outlined the history of events which had taken place in Rhodesia, underlining the British government's broken promises over our independence, which eventually had forced us to tell them, reluctantly, that the time had come for us to insist on the fulfilment of the agreement made between us — we were now going to run our own affairs. I ended by saying: 'It comes to my mind that although it was something that happened a few hundred years ago, I don't think the British have ever forgiven you for doing the same thing!' That brought the house down and presented Governor Conolly with the appropriate moment to wrap up a successful occasion.

By nightfall we were back in our hotel in Washington. The following day, 19 October, after a few TV interviews, we were taken to a farewell press lunch sponsored by the American Security Council, and it turned into a real rousing affair with any amount of give and take. Sitting at the top table with us was that great fighter for human rights and

freedom, Clare Luce Booth (in her eighties, we were told) still sharp as a pin.

Then on 20 October — our final day — we were up at 5 a.m. for one of those early-morning TV interviews, and then breakfast before going to our meeting at the State Department. It was the first time we had met Newson, who was substituting for Vance while the latter was overseas. Sadly, he was even more rusty on our affairs than Vance, and needed constant prompting from Moose and Lake.

After a tortuous couple of hours, literally educating them on the Rhodesian scene, we agreed on five straightforward points for an all-party conference. They were obviously trying to include pre-conditions, which was contrary to what had previously been accepted, and fortunately we had records to substantiate our case. The British representatives in particular were ridiculed, but they only had themselves to blame for not doing their homework and not having their facts. Their ambassador, Jay, was totally ineffectual, lacking not only in knowledge but maturity. On the one occasion when he ventured an opinion, obviously without premeditation, everyone, including the Americans, jumped on him. At my intervention, that we should cease dealing with trivialities and concentrate on material matters, Newson promptly and loudly agreed and passed on to the next item.

A particularly controversial point centred on their reluctance to join in an appeal for an end to terrorism, now that agreement had been reached on the holding of an all-party conference. The British in particular resisted this, obviously siding with the OAU and the terrorist movement, with the Americans passive and indecisive — by themselves, I think we could have convinced them. My three black colleagues came out strongly and were most telling in the case they advocated: ‘The whole cause of the fighting has now ended, and it is absolutely evil to continue killing our sons.’ I stressed the point that henceforth much

of the blame for the dreadful terrorist killing, maiming, torture, rape and general banditry would fall on their shoulders if they obstructed our appeal for peace. What more did they expect us to do? But all our efforts fell on deaf ears. The dedication of politicians to resort to almost any means to retain their positions of authority, accompanied by the associated material benefits, is compelling. The crime is compounded when they prejudice the interests of outside innocent parties while pursuing their nefarious objective. To make matters worse, the Americans had allowed themselves to be dragged into a situation where they found themselves out of their depth, allowing the British to dictate to them.

In the end we made some progress, and succeeded in getting our hosts to agree to a formula for an all-party conference, albeit with the British representatives as reluctant participants, unwilling taggers-on. The contribution and demeanour of the three black leaders of our team was beyond reproach. We worked well together, and complemented one another in the various fields we were explaining and promoting. It was obvious to me that a number of those in our audiences were pleased to witness for themselves the travesty of the picture that our enemies were trying to propagate: that Smith was a dictatorial white racist attempting to suppress all opposition.

We could not adequately express our appreciation to Bob Nicholson and his security men who had been commissioned to ‘keep an eye on us’. They were tremendously efficient, and always helpful and pleasant, especially when under pressure. There was therefore a certain emotional feeling when we bade them farewell, and dear Bob Nicholson insisted on coming with us to New York and seeing us safely on to our SAA flight to Johannesburg. We were all excited to get our noses pointed to home, and were welcomed on board by the typically warm South African hospitality, for which they are justly renowned.

As usual after a protracted absence, there was a pile of work awaiting us, most important being the clear evidence that we would not be able to comply with the 31 December date for introducing the new constitution. This was nothing new, as we had been forewarned of it months ago, but the press had got wind of it and were blowing it up as some serious breach of the agreement. In reply to a question, I made it clear that this had always been a possibility, had actually been stated publicly, and had been mentioned on our recent visit to the USA. This should have had the effect of defusing the issue, if it had not been for the fact that some of our black members, including Muzorewa, were adding fuel by expressing their alarm at the news. This was completely irresponsible action calculated at placating the hot-heads among their supporters.

I asked the secretariat to arrange a meeting of the executive council with the necessary information to put the record straight. The evidence was conclusive. At one of our meetings the previous month, prior to departing for the States, a report from the committee dealing with the issue recorded that the end of February was the earliest possible date. The reasons were obvious: there were still a few complicated issues, constitutional as well as others, requiring finalisation. And at that meeting Muzorewa had been in the chair. Moreover, at a meeting two months previously, the constitutional lawyers framing the new constitution informed us that their work would not be completed in time to comply with the agreement date. Into the bargain, I reminded council that when we signed the 3 March agreement we had been warned by the secretariat that it would be difficult to comply with the time scale.

Muzorewa did not have a leg to stand on, and simply asked for time to explain the position to his party’s executive committee. I suggested that he should have started that exercise at least three months before, but it would not have been helpful to have pursued the matter. It

was just one more example which added to my anxiety over his leadership qualities, as he was the person who, predictions clearly indicated, was going to be the new prime minister. There were some who, because of his vacillation, questioned his integrity. It was my belief that, because of his inability to make up his mind, he often found himself floundering. Consequently, he grasped at straws and ended up in conflicting situations. When he eventually took over he would need constant support and careful shepherding. In all honesty, he was no leader, and could be influenced by the one who last spoke to him — therein lay the danger. Our black people were now paying the price for using him as a 'respectable front' for their campaign in 1972 to reject the agreement I had made with Alec Home. After they had succeeded in this exercise, there had been attempts to move him aside, but he had successfully resisted these, so they were hoist by their own petard.

Life went on. On Saturday 11 November 1978, as usual, we celebrated our Independence Day and, in spite of all our troubles and problems, the spirit of the people was still high. I flew down to Bulawayo to join the Matabeles for their Armistice Day Service on the Sunday, and then had an important meeting with the Matabele Chiefs the following morning. It was obvious that they were deeply concerned about political trends, and their anxiety was aggravated by the fact that the Matabeles were not represented on the executive council. The other three members of the council, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau, were from the Shona-speaking parts of the country, and I was the only one they could trust and talk to. I pointed out to them that Nkomo was the political leader of the Matabeles, that we had offered him a seat on the executive council and, I asked, why was he not occupying it? They assured me that they had been urging him to do so, but that he seemed to be playing some game which they could not comprehend. The answer was clear. Nkomo had confided in me that he was

not the leader of the Matabeles, but the leader of all the black people in the country. However, he would be reluctant to make that point to the Matabele Chiefs. More and more it was becoming clear to me that, because of his scheming to be all things to all people, Nkomo was in danger of falling between two stools.

The four executive council members took off from New Sarum at 7 a.m. on 15 November for Pietersburg, South Africa, for a meeting with the new South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha and the inevitable Pik. After a two-hour flight, Harold Hawkins was there to meet us. The South African party had gone by chopper direct from Pretoria to the rendezvous. Hawkins was visibly annoyed to find that they had included Magnus Malan (commander of the South African Defence Force) without informing him, in keeping with accepted custom in order to enable us, if we wished, to include our equivalent in our team. Hawkins had accused Brand Fourie of deceit, and the latter had 'trembled with rage', but Hawkins was totally unrepentant. When he told us that we were to board a chopper and fly back to a camp on the banks of the Limpopo, our common border with South Africa — an hour's flight back in the direction from whence we had come — I queried why we could not have the meeting here in Pietersburg, which had all the necessary facilities and conveniences?

Still fuming over our hosts' 'trickery', Hawkins said: 'Camp David!' 'Camp David?' I queried. Hawkins shook his head: 'Yes, they've just come back [Pik and Brand from the USA] and they have not got an original bloody thought in their heads.'

One can only be philosophical on such occasions, so we climbed on board and set off to retrace our steps. What a useless waste of time and energy this was, especially when one took into account that at the conclusion of our meeting we would once again spend a couple of hours returning to Pietersburg in order to make our return flight home. To add

insult to injury, our helicopter was a big lumbering troop carrier, draughty and noisy, making communication and even thinking almost impossible. When we arrived at our destination we noticed the comfortable VIP transport our hosts had used! Fortunately it was a cool overcast day, as is usual at that time of year, with temperatures at around 120 degrees in the shade. We were given a kind reception by the army caterers and enjoyed a cup of tea before our meeting.

The object of the exercise was to pressurise us into expediting the implementation of our agreement. Clearly Rhodesia was an embarrassment to them, and they wanted to get shot of it, at almost any price. They were obviously — or more correctly Pik was — kowtowing to the black members of our council, and constantly throwing in the word Zimbabwe instead of Rhodesia. I explained to P.W. Botha how our target date of 31 December had had to be extended by an estimated two months, for the sole reason that the constitutional lawyers required the extra time to complete the task. This was nothing new, I explained; we had known the position for some months and I was of the opinion that we had kept the South Africans in the picture through Hawkins. 'Am I correct?' I asked him, and he gave a definite affirmative. 'And this was conveyed to our friends here?' We were given the same reply, and Brand Fourie nodded in agreement. Sithole made the comment that no one in this world was more eager for implementation of our plan than we were, because we lived with the problems and our own people were being killed every day. I asked if the South Africans could give us any suggestions as to how we could expedite our plan, but there was no reply. I took a few minutes to explain that the establishment of a responsible, democratic, anti-communist government in our country would not only be to the benefit of Rhodesia, but South Africa as well. P.W. agreed and assured me that there was no difference in our thinking on that point. But Pik had

to wax eloquent and tell us growing world pressure was building up against them, and that the Rhodesian issue simply added to their problems. I expressed the contrary view that, while our problem remained, the rest of the world knew that without South Africa's co-operation they would never solve our problem. For that obvious reason they dared not risk antagonising South Africa. But once Rhodesia was out of the way, in keeping with the well-known domino strategy at which the communists were world masters, I said, they would concentrate all their attention and energy on the ultimate objective: the Republic of South Africa.

That was an appropriate moment for them to pull back into the lounge, and so we adjourned for lunch, which was a splendid affair. There was a big marquee, a beautifully laid table with silver and candelabra and yellow candles, the best white and red wines (our members were conspicuous by their abstinence) and a buffet lunch, which left nothing to be desired.

It was suggested that we have a short session after lunch in order to summarise what had taken place. It would have been tactless of me had I given my opinion that this had been a classic example of an exercise in futility in view of the fact that we had not only kept them fully in the picture but they had every means of communicating with us through Hawkins in Pretoria and their ambassador in Salisbury. We certainly had urgent matters to attend to, and I would have thought the same applied to them.

Hawkins provided the answer: it gave Pik an opportunity to perform. He did it well, charging his speech with drama, pouring lavish praise on his new leader who had performed so brilliantly over the short period he had been in the chair, 'grappling with the extraordinary problems which the rest of the world was hurling at South Africa'. All of this was intermingled with gross exaggerations and flights of fancy. One moment he would be gazing at his leader, the next

dropping his eyes to the table and shaking his head in remorse over the dreadful evils which confronted his country, and thence looking upward to the roof with hands outstretched, obviously seeking guidance. One could only be impressed with his performance, he certainly exploited to perfection the Shakespearean assertion that ‘all the world is a stage’. I found it interesting and not surprising to hear from Hawkins that, in his early days, not only was Pik an actor of repute, but that he also wrote plays.

We were offered accommodation and hospitality for the remainder of the day and night before returning home, but there were no takers. The whole set-up was a familiar scene to me, but it set my black colleagues thinking, and they asked many questions after we left. What was the true object of the exercise, in view of the fact that all along the South Africans knew the answers? Did I believe that P.W. was straight and honest? They were not sure about Pik. Chief Chirau asked: ‘Why are the South Africans so frightened about the rest of the world, when they are so big and strong and independent?’ Sithole opined that their Department of External Affairs — by the next morning, if not that very evening — would be in contact with Nkomo and would be making a plan with him.

P.W. had barely settled into his new seat. One could only sympathise with him over the problems he had inherited, such as the ‘Information Scandal’ and the general feeling that his predecessor, Vorster, was totally involved in it. There was also the question of the elimination of apartheid, which Vorster had described to me as ‘the greatest evil on our earth, worse even than communism’. This was something which had to be faced up to, but something about which Vorster had done nothing for the ensuing three years. It was said that one of P.W.’s assets was that he faced up to problems and was prepared to make decisions. He had certainly inherited a basinful. As for Pik, my comment was that foreign affairs ministries in general seemed to be

part of a strange world, and once a person became entangled with them it seemed difficult to avoid becoming contaminated.

In my opinion there was a decent, honest way for South Africa that would preserve their Western civilisation. It was obvious that discrimination based on race, colour or creed was undesirable and unacceptable in any civilised community. But this did not mean that the safeguarding of rights, culture, tradition and decent standards should not be attempted, especially for minorities unable to defend themselves. They should introduce a strong federal system, which would encourage different groups to protect their identity, traditions and way of life, and secure this in a constitution immune from tampering and underhand influence. The large number of diverse nations and groupings in their country would support and protect such a system. Time was of the essence, because under their current system they were draining their economy, prejudicing expansion, depleting their white population, aggravating race relations not only with blacks but with their Coloured and Asian communities as well. This was having the effect of uniting everyone else in the country into a strong opposition against the white community, something which many of them would have liked to avoid. They simply wished to be treated with dignity, as human beings, and not regarded as second-class citizens. The important point was that they were not seeking power, and, in fact, would join with others in order to ensure that the communists did not succeed in their dream of securing a one-party dictatorship. It seemed to me that this would be the way to protect their civilisation, spike the guns of their opponents and once more open their doors to Western investment and immigration with all its professionalism, technology, skill and experience. Ensuring that people were content, with the opportunity to work for a better way of life, was the best solution to the problems of any country.

For a while there was no talk on the aircraft. We were all deep in thought, no doubt contemplating the future and wondering what hope there was for us as part of this strange world where one could no longer rely on loyalty, friendship, promises, a code of conduct — those old-fashioned qualities that no longer seemed to be of value. I said to myself those words which I have never forgotten from the day they were spoken to me by John MacDonald, one of the finest and most respected men I ever knew, our senior English teacher at the school I attended in Gwelo: 'The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, grapple them to thy heart with hoops of steel.' They were certainly few and far between those days!

We had a safe return flight and I was back home in good time to join the rest of the family for Janet's birthday dinner — a happy occasion which helped me to forget my problems for a while. Our two eldest children, Jean and Robert, married members of well-known local families, and fortunately these turned out to be happy and successful affairs. Alec, the youngest of our clan, was engaged to a Norwegian girl whom we had never met. Elisabeth arrived on a 'familiarisation' visit to have a look at us and allow us to have a look at her. She is a beautiful and charming girl, completely natural, and we have all fallen in love with her. Alec has made a fabulous choice, and in fact has shown great maturity over the whole affair, particularly gratifying because there is no more important decision in a man's life.

For the remainder of the month of November, we held executive council and ministers' council meetings almost on a daily basis, and gradually, through continually hammering away, we progressed with the constitution. There were embarrassing moments when certain members, through self-interest, attempted to insert conditions which were outside the terms of our agreement, but responsible opinion prevailed in the final event; 30 November was a great day: the final agreement was ready and the four

executive council members supported by their ministers' council members stood together and presented their case to the media. There were to be eight electoral regions, in keeping with the boundaries of the existing eight provinces. Of paramount importance was the devolution of powers to provincial authorities for all those matters affecting the daily lives of the people, such as education, health, local government, communications and law and order at the provincial level. Most important of all, the first majority rule government would have cabinet ministers proportionally reflecting on a party basis the representation in the legislative assembly. Right from the beginning this had been my foremost aspiration for two principal reasons: first it would contribute towards better government by including the experience, professionalism and skills of our white community; and second, it would help to maintain white confidence and morale, thus reducing the exodus of our people. In other words, we would have a government of national unity to help bind our people together in order to ensure that we could overcome the immediate difficulties before us and bring terrorism to an end.

The British and Americans had not given up on their pursuit of their settlement, however. Their envoys, Cledwyn Hughes and Steven Low, arrived on 5 December to see if we could make progress on the all-party conference. Hughes began by attempting to obtain our concurrence to the introduction of new conditions, obviously favourable to the Patriotic Front of Mugabe and Nkomo, that had not previously been discussed. Both Sithole and Muzorewa jumped on him, expressing dismay that he should attempt to introduce pre-conditions when he was aware this was contrary to what had previously been agreed. We had expected them to give us a venue and date for the conference. I quoted from the State Department's minute of our last meeting in Washington of 20 October, which

proved conclusively that their suggestion was a deviation from that agreement. Was this deliberate, or a mistake indicating that they had not taken the trouble to check the record? There was an embarrassing silence and, after fumbling for a while, Hughes queried the need for and desirability of our national government. Muzorewa simply asked why it was right for Britain to do this during the last world war, and wrong for us to do likewise under similar circumstances? That effectively shut up that one. The trouble was that they knew so little about our case, and we had the complete story. Every time they moved, they put their foot in it. In a short space of time the meeting collapsed, and they went off to think about it. Their problem was that they were trying to comply with further demands from the Patriotic Front, instead of pointing out that an agreement had been made and therefore they must comply with it. But that would mean standing up to the OAU and the communists — what a hope!

After lunch Hughes and Low came to see me at 'Independence' in an attempt to gain some concession that might help them to win the Patriotic Front across. I spoke to them about the crisis of confidence and the resultant loss of expertise, professionalism, experience, skills and capital through emigration. I explained that this had been triggered off by Britain's failure to honour the 1976 Pretoria agreement. Why did they not comply with this, then the problem would be solved? They sat speechless for a while and then pleaded ignorance. If we showed weakness, I said, and gave more ground to the terrorists, this would only exacerbate the situation and further lower morale and increase despondency. There was one clear, obvious answer, which would provide an immediate solution: the British and Americans had to cease trying to appease the terrorists. They were a bit depressed when they departed, and Low (the American) said with a tinge of emotion in his voice that he had developed a great love for

Rhodesia, and now this meant that he would never be coming back again. I urged him to cheer up; where there was life, there was hope!

The next day, 6 December, brought another American visitor. Senator McGovern was on a visit to Rhodesia and came to meet me in the afternoon. I told him that I had heard from people, with whom he had held discussions, that he was accusing me of lacking integrity and good faith and that this was prejudicing our settlement. I told him I hoped he could substantiate his claims. He was a bit taken aback, but soon collected his thoughts and started by mentioning the distrust which existed between the members of our transitional government. I replied that I found that strange in view of the fact that only a week ago we had all stood together in public at a press conference and announced the finalisation of our new constitution and plans for our impending general election. Did that not debunk his story? He then turned to the State Department briefing which he had received, and discovered that this was in conflict with his findings here. I was able to produce the agreement which we had made with them in Washington just over a month previously, and said we were patiently waiting for his government to comply with that. Then I reminded him of the agreement signed with Henry Kissinger in 1976. Could he explain, I asked, why his government had reneged on that? He quickly side-stepped that one, but was honest enough to admit that on the evidence before him he had been misled by the State Department, and graciously apologised for his false accusations against me. Then we talked at length, covering much ground, and his approach was totally constructive. In the end he gave an undertaking to add his weight to the call for a removal of sanctions, and the holding of an all-party conference without preconditions. It sounded hopeful, but I wondered if he was going to be any different from so many of the others who pledged support while they

were here, but readily changed their minds when under pressure from other quarters!

Apart from visitors I met our caucus, as Parliament was winding up for the Christmas recess and, especially in view of difficult times we were going through, it was important to keep them fully in the picture in order to eliminate any communication gap that might lead to misunderstanding. They had behaved most responsibly and, by taking time and having more than normal patience, I had succeeded in getting them to go along with a number of tough decisions. It was necessary to reaffirm constantly the deceit of our 'friends' in the free world, and the double standards with which we were confronted, and that this encompassed the South Africans as well. On the positive side, we had succeeded in producing an agreement and a new constitution with conditions calculated to preserve decent civilised standards. This would help to maintain the confidence of our white community and thus, we hoped, curb the flow of emigrants. As all of our enemies, in particular the communists and the terrorists, were becoming increasingly antagonistic to our plan, this must mean only one thing: we were moving in the right direction, and we had to keep up the pressure.

The South Africans remained a problem. Their judicial enquiry into the 'Information Scandal' had hit the headlines, and the judicial commission did not seem to have pulled their punches. Unfortunately it seemed as if Vorster could be implicated. It appeared that there was still much below the surface which was yet to come out. The problem for us was that this tended to make them oversensitive, with their Foreign Affairs Ministry looking for means of diverting attention. Hawkins told us that he was inundated with questions about the need for statements from our government of national unity, stressing the safeguards for maintaining standards and preserving the confidence of our white community. Was it necessary for me to make public

statements? Why should not the black members of executive council do this? Did we not realise this was provocative to the OAU?

In response, we sent a message to Hawkins requesting him to point out to the people down there that our four executive council members rotated in the chair weekly and statements emanated on this basis. The exception was that, until the constitution was promulgated and became the law, I was still Prime Minister and had to make certain announcements if they were to have any meaning. Moreover, the majority of our government were black ministers and they were adamant about the need to stress those conditions which would maintain white confidence internally, and externally the confidence of the free world, with the goodwill and investment which this would attract. Hawkins replied that he had given them this message a hundred times, but because of their obsession with appeasing Kaunda and Nyerere and the OAU they turned a deaf ear to it. It seemed quite clear that our plans to preserve confidence through the promotion of decent standards of civilisation, ensuring freedom, justice, prosperity and economic stability were regarded as of no consequence. And into the bargain they continued to inform the South African public that they were not attempting to pressurise us.

We had to keep trying to influence the outside world. A constructive interview with British TV on 14 December gave me an opportunity to put over a few truths. I told them that I did not believe Callaghan would face up to their much-vaunted all-party conference with no preconditions. We were waiting for the call, I said, but my gut-feeling was that they would back down because the OAU and their protégés were opposed. It would not be the first time that the UK and US administrations had resorted to deceit and sided with the communist terrorists behind our backs.

There was a unanimous decision that we would all take a break over Christmas and the New Year, so we flew down to the farm in the usual DC3 with the children, grandchildren and the dogs. It was a beautiful time to go, because there had been good rains, the country was looking lush green, the cattle were sleek and the mealies growing apace. The children enjoyed themselves driving tractors, riding horses and milking cows.

Regrettably, our security forces had to be more on guard than normal because the terrorists took advantage of such times to ply their evil trade, hoping that they could catch people off guard, especially women and children. A few such reports came in, including one on a farm about twenty miles from us, where a wife was brutally murdered and mutilated while her husband was away dealing with his cattle. On my return to Salisbury, I was shown dreadful photographs of approximately 200 cows lying dead in a kraal where they had been collected for veterinary inoculations the following morning. They had been mowed down by terrorist machine-guns during the night. The photographs showed baby calves trying to drink milk from their dead mothers lying on the ground. People who can perpetrate this kind of crime are more animal than human.

In my New Year broadcast to the nation I gave an assessment of the position in which Rhodesians found themselves. One particular issue I dwelt on was the constant drain of skilled manpower through emigration. I said:

> The main effect of the emigration of skilled personnel, which accelerated in 1978, will be felt in 1979 and become more severe unless the trend is stopped. This will be the main difference between 1978 and 1979. A growing shortage of skilled personnel will reduce rather than create employment. It will have an adverse effect on productivity. The basic fabric of the economy is, however,

intact and it will respond quickly to any improvement in conditions.

One afternoon I had a meeting with Albert Mells (MP for Gatooma) and his constituency committee, who were threatening to walk out on him because of their disenchantment with our proposed new constitution. We talked for a few hours and, after I gave them proof of the pressure we were being subjected to by the South African government, they conceded that we had no option. Included in his delegation were a few people of Afrikaner descent, and they were especially shaken by the information which I had given them, and apologised with emotion for the inconvenience to which I had been put, one of them with tears in his eyes. They could not credit that the South African government had behaved in such a manner, and in particular that they were deceiving public opinion by their oft-repeated statements that in no way were they attempting to pressurise us.

A note in my diary:

> The Abdim's Storks have been back with us for a few weeks (from their annual summer migration to Europe) and we have been worried that our old friend with the broken and buckled leg had not shown up — he has been here regularly for the past four years. Well he's back on the lawn in front of the house, and Janet and I went out and talked to him this morning, and as I rode my cycle around this evening he was very much in control of the situation and quite unconcerned. We are thrilled.

The brutal murder of rural people continued even though our security forces hammered ZANLA and ZIPRA both internally and externally. The South African pressure continued. For example, on 20 January 1979 I had a visit from David Smith and David Young, Minister and Secretary

of Finance respectively, to brief me on their visit with Ernest Bulle, his Co-Minister of Finance, to South Africa the previous month, and to have a general discussion on the economic picture. They were scathing in their condemnation of Pik Botha's insulting behaviour: 'After twenty years' experience at this kind of meeting, that was in a class of its own for rank bad manners and emotional acting.' Botha had also behaved so abominably that Bulle commented that his display was worse than he would have expected from an uncivilised savage.

Botha openly stated that the 'golden days of assistance from South Africa for Rhodesia were over'. There was a ganging-up among certain ministers to oust Horwood (Minister of Finance), as he was well known for his sympathetic attitude towards Rhodesia. If such a move should materialise, it would be a sad day for South Africa because at the IMF and World Bank and other international financial institutions Horwood was held in high regard. There was a volatile situation in South Africa, with many segments of government overreacting because of the 'Information Scandal', and this was not conducive to responsible and mature decisions, and their Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in the lead providing 'prima donnas' for the scene. It was clearly a worrying time for our Minister of Finance, and obviously if Pik Botha and his 'comrades' had their way, our problems could only grow. They were going through yet another appeasement epidemic. It was based on the philosophy that you can have an easier and better life today if you side-step those issues requiring greater effort and maybe even sacrifice, in order to ensure a better future for your children. Let me say from my experience in politics that it is much easier to sell to voters a commodity which will make them comfortable as opposed to one which will require effort. There are two ingredients necessary to stimulate people to make a stand. First, a cause which motivates them: freedom to live according to their

traditions, culture, religion, coupled with a determination to make a stand in order to protect these. Second, good leadership in order to mobilise and motivate. Many worthwhile and feasible causes have been lost through indifferent leadership. The gangsters, the extremists, never lack leadership or dedication. It is the decent, moderate person who, because of his reasonableness, is prepared to tolerate another point of view, who usually finds himself edged into the background in the rough and tumble and unscrupulousness of modern day politics. One of our most vital — indeed desperately urgent — tasks in life is to arouse moderate people when freedom and justice is under attack.

By late January 1979, the campaign for the referendum on the new constitution came to a climax. There was a particularly rowdy meeting in Salisbury, packed with a crude, undisciplined opposition from the reactionary right wing who were totally destructive in their contributions. Fortunately for us, their ill-mannered behaviour did their cause more harm than good. David Smith, who was speaking from the platform with me, was rewarded with applause when he likened the booing from our opponents to the noise from his cows when he was down on the farm. I was unable to resist jumping to my feet and adding, with respect, that to associate my bovines with such ill-mannered behaviour would be to insult them!

At long last, on 25 January, we received a truthful statement from the South African government on their attitude to our new constitution. This was necessary in order to correct the lies which the Rhodesian Action Party (RAP), our reactionary right-wing opponents, had been propagating. The South African government contradicted RAP's claim that they were opposed to our plan for 'stampeding' the one man, one vote process. Going back to Vorster's time, on a number of occasions he had given undertakings that he would make it clear in public firstly

that he supported us in what we were doing (if he were truthful, he would have admitted that he blackmailed us into doing it). Secondly, Vorster had promised that South Africa would oppose any move in the contrary direction. Pik Botha had given a similar undertaking to all four executive council members at the meeting at New Sarum in 1978, and at our meeting on the banks of the Limpopo on 15 November 1978 he had made a similar promise in the presence of P.W. Botha.

The above South African reply to the RAP was, nevertheless, engineered by me. In the week before, I had sent a message to P.W. Botha via Harold Hawkins (asking Hawkins to ensure that it went beyond Foreign Affairs and reached P.W.) pointing out that if they had not delivered the goods before my eve-of-poll broadcast, I would have no option but to take the initiative. No doubt that frightened them into producing the desired result — the thought of leaving it to me must have been a pretty grim prospect! We never ceased to be appalled at the South Africans' sheer dishonesty on the Rhodesian issue, on the one hand forcing us to do things against our better judgement, while on the other blandly making public statements that they would never contemplate trying to apply pressure to us. And RAP was trading on this in their opposition campaign, in spite of the fact that they knew, through the twelve dissidents from our caucus, the truth of the situation. We found it difficult to decide which was more devious, the South African government or RAP!

In the midst of our referendum campaign, there had been a fair number of seemingly influential visitors from Europe and America and, although they appeared to be impressed by our cause, we waited in vain for any response from their governments. I had a meeting on 29 January with visiting US Democrat Lowensen, who came with a reputation of being an extreme liberal. His attitude, however, was completely different, and he impressed me with his

straightforward honesty and constructive desire to get the facts and try to help. He openly conceded that the US Administration was not motivated by principle or morality, but by black pressure from the OAU and, even more important, in their own backyard, where the black vote had put Carter into office, and would mean win or lose for Carter next time! I could not help thinking to myself how unintelligent it was of the US electorate to place themselves in a position where their voters were so equally divided that a small percentage of extreme and racially motivated members of their community could hold the balance of power in their elections.

Referendum Day fell on 30 January. We cast our votes early and then moved around to various polling stations speaking to people. As usual it was a busy, exciting day. After dinner we went down to the central post office, where the results were coming in from all over the country — the place was a hive of activity. I had predicted a 70 per cent 'yes' vote, so it was a most welcome relief for me when it turned out to be 85 per cent. I declared it to be: 'a great positive decision which will consolidate and strengthen us internally, and be a forceful message to the rest of the world of our unity and determination'. The press had been very much in evidence, and one of them put it to me that this was my greatest victory ever, but I wanted time to consider that one!

The success for me was tempered by family departures. The next day, 31 January, I wrote: 'Elisabeth flew off back to Norway — we will miss her, because she fitted into our family perfectly and we have grown to love her so. Our hopes and prayers are that she and Alec will fulfil their dreams and plans.'

The day after that, 1 February, both my sons and my son-in-law were away:

> Alec left this morning for his stint in the Army, and as Robert and Clem are likewise doing service, all three are away. It is a tough time for the mothers and wives and sweethearts left behind worrying and hoping. And what makes it much more difficult for us, is that our friends in the rest of the world seem so unconcerned.

The overwhelming affirmative vote in our referendum had made a significant impact throughout the world and encouraged our friends to renew their efforts. There had been reassuring calls from both Washington and London. Our black colleagues in government were obviously exhilarated by the result, hoping that, in the coming first majority-rule general election, they could emulate our performance!

There had been no reactions from South Africa. Hawkins told us that they were completely engrossed in their 'Information Scandal', and the lambasting they were receiving, not only from their political opponents but, more important, from the whole country in general. It was becoming more and more obvious that Vorster had been completely in the picture all along, so much so that prominent newspaper editorials were calling for his resignation, and certain Johannesburg city councillors were refusing to attend the ceremony conferring upon him the freedom of that city.

We received further views from the outside world on 9 February, when Ken Flower of the CIO reported on his recent trips to Europe and North Africa, where he met, among others, King Hassan, the Shah of Iran, General Dick Walters (USA), and de Maranches (France). Everywhere he found strong criticism of the decadence of the free world, which hinged on the dreadful incompetence of their leaders. One of the comments as: 'A bunch of pygmies who would look more at home amongst their contemporaries in Rwanda Urundi.' And Flower relayed a comment from one

of the representatives attending a recent conference at Guadeloupe — discussing the sale of aircraft to China and assistance for the Shah — that: ‘Schmidt opposed everything the British proposed, d’Estaing sat on his hands, and Carter didn’t understand what was going on.’

On Monday 12 February, my intention to retire was questioned at a meeting with the president and members of the African Farmers’ Union. Dennis Norman (of the Rhodesian National Farmers’ Union) was in attendance. We had an intelligent and balanced discussion on a number of their problems, and finally left me with the message of their deep concern over stories of my impending retirement from the political scene, as they believed that it would be in the national interest for me to continue.

That day, Nkomo’s ZIPRA shot down a second one of our Viscounts, again on a flight from Kariba. This time no one survived as the stricken aircraft plunged straight into rugged hilly country. Again there was a wave of public anger. Our security forces responded, as they had before, with raids into Zambia and a long-distance bombing raid on a ZIPRA base near Luso in Angola at the end of the month.

Other concerns were raised on 15 February at a meeting in Bulawayo with the Matabele Chiefs. I spoke strongly on the stupidity of the Matabele nation being divided into two factions and fighting among themselves, while the Mashonas were milking the cow and getting away with the spoils. They ended by expressing their deep concern over this majority rule monster which confronted them, and expressed their desire to continue as in the past.

The question of my retirement met further opposition on the morning of 26 February in the party standing committee which met to plan for the impending general election. We faced the difficult task of scaling down the existing fifty constituency MPs to twenty, and I made it clear that I would be happy to stand down in order to make way for a younger candidate. There was complete

opposition to this suggestion, however, on the grounds that this would have an adverse effect on the morale of our white people and, on the evidence available, a large number of blacks into the bargain.

Not everyone was opposed, however. During lunch a message came from my secretary to say that David Smith wished to see me urgently. He had received a phone call from Pik Botha expressing concern at their information that it was my intention to stand in the election. David conceded that, during their unfortunate meeting at the end of December 1978, he had mentioned to Pik that he had heard me say that I would be ready to stand down if need be. Botha had used poetic licence when passing my comment on to his friends throughout the world, assuring them that I was retiring from politics and that no longer would I be a thorn in their flesh and accordingly ‘how happy we will all be’.

Botha was now sitting by his phone, I was told, awaiting the reply from David to pass on to his cabinet colleagues, and if it was the wrong answer we would live to regret it We agreed that it was deplorable that he could descend to such depths — the worst kind of blackmail, and a blatant contradiction of what they were telling the public. I wondered why he did not have the guts to contact me personally, but David said he thought the answer was obvious. My natural impulse, the same, I believe, as that of any normal man, was to tell Botha to go to Hell. But then, as so often in my position, I had to curb myself.

I told David that their days of blackmailing the white man, their so-called friends in Rhodesia, had ended They had already indicated their choice in the new Zimbabwe: Muzorewa and the UANC. We had a number of pointers to prove this. So, if they wished to do anything to my personal detriment, let them get on with it, because this would not harm my country. Thus my answer for David to pass on was clear and straight: ‘I have never given any undertaking to

anybody, or made any agreement concerning my retirement from politics. Moreover, there is a clear indication, not only from whites, but amongst black people as well, which has come to the surface particularly strongly during recent weeks, that I should continue in politics. The day I am shown that I am no longer wanted in the service of my country, I will stand down.'

As a final coup de grâce, I told David to ask Botha from me whether his request was made in promoting the best interests of Rhodesia, or in assisting him in his 'horse-trading' business aimed at fostering South African détente? Needless to say, there was no reply.

On 28 February, on the adjournment of the House in the afternoon, our final day, I made a kind of valedictory speech and at the end when I complimented this great Rhodesian nation with its tremendous people, a lump came to my throat and I had difficulty in completing all I wished to say. It was embarrassing, but there is just nothing one can do about this. Under such circumstances it would have been unnatural not to experience some emotion.

The South African pressure on me was unrelenting. On 5 March, Rowan Cronjé came to report back to me on his visit to Cape Town the previous week at the invitation of Pik Botha, who met him at the airport and took him straight to his residence where he talked non-stop for one and a half hours. Then they were driven to the Prime Minister's residence, where he laid on a repeat performance. P.W. sat, listened, and said nothing. Apart from the fact that they had given commitments to other people after his meeting with David Smith and Ernest Bulle in late December, Pik claimed it would be to my advantage to retire gracefully — I had such a fantastic world image and reputation that I would go out in a blaze of glory. Otherwise I would find myself in the degrading position of having to serve in a subordinate position to a black prime minister. Even my enemies in the world would be sorry to witness this, and, of

course, my South African friends would find it even more traumatic. Pik hoped that Rowan could get the message over to me, discreetly and without mentioning names. Rowan was taken aback by this, and pointed out that he had obviously informed me about his visit and whence the invitation had come — anything else would have been dishonest. It would be equally dishonest if he failed to report back the facts to me. For the first time P.W. intervened to say that he agreed with Cronjé. Pik was completely deflated, and the whole sordid business came to an end.

Rowan was obviously embarrassed, and apologised for the fact that he had been implicated, but I put him at ease by indicating that had he not gone we would not have known what was going on — I was pleased to have further confirmation of what we had suspected. It was clear that their Department of External Affairs believed that the new black government in Zimbabwe would be something they could manipulate and mould. Any of the white ministers from the previous Rhodesian government would obviously make their task more difficult, but the thought of Smith being one of the participants was a dreadful nightmare that could not be contemplated. On the return flight to Johannesburg, Rowan bumped into Jimmy Kruger, one of the government ministers; he was pleased to hear that I was fit and ready to be a candidate in the coming election. In Pretoria, Rowan also met a number of Nationalist Party MPs who reacted enthusiastically when told of my readiness to stand in the election. Yet Pik had assured Rowan that it was the united view of government, cabinet and caucus that I should step down from the political scene! I wrote in my diary:

> It is sad to record that I find myself in a position where I am more averse to dealing with certain members of the South African Government than the British. With the

latter we know that they are our enemies, and expect accordingly, but when your ‘friends’ treat you with such blatant treachery, your problem is compounded.

My decision to continue in politics was supported on 9 March in a series of meetings at party level with the standing committee and caucus and, at government level, with the executive council and cabinet. There was a strong conviction that I must not stand down, and the black ministers were unanimous in this view. As one of them said: ‘I can understand the South Africans wanting you out of the way, because that’s what Nkomo and Mugabe want, but it’s the last thing we need here.’ There was also representation from the security chiefs saying that the rumour of my retirement was causing concern among their men at a critical period, and they believed it was their duty to warn that such action would have adverse effects.

But in Cape Town the South Africans were keeping up the pressure on Harold Hawkins with the odd, seemingly casual question such as: ‘Any news about your Prime Minister’s position yet?’ They were always at pains, however, to indicate that the decision was mine, and that they were not attempting to pressurise me — other than threatening to cut my throat if I did not agree!

On two occasions since the New Year, I had suggested to Harold Hawkins that a face-to-face meeting between myself and the South African Prime Minister might help to clear the air, but there were no takers. I had a feeling that the message was stopped at Foreign Affairs and never reached P.W. My suspicions were further aroused when Rowan Cronjé mentioned that on his recent visit Pik had said: ‘We were hoping your Prime Minister would come down for a discussion, but unfortunately he couldn’t spare the time!’

A message came from Hawkins to say the South Africans would welcome a visit from David Smith and one of my other ministers, but not Rowan Cronjé, as evidently they

had been disenchanted with his obstinacy on his last visit, when he had refused to connive with them in their plan to deceive me. But their obsession with secrecy and covering up continued, for they insisted that the whole thing be in complete confidence and nothing mentioned about it. One would have thought that they had learned a lesson from the 'Information' débâcle, which was still raging. In the latest development, according to Hawkins, they had sent Hendrik van den Berg, the secret service chief, flying to Paris to buy off Eschel Rhoodie, the former, controversial, Secretary for Information, to prevent him selling his tape recordings — they were obviously concerned that this would implicate other people in their government, so a few million dollars of taxpayers' money might be a cheap price to pay to prevent this.

I was happy to send Hilary Squires along with David, not only because of his clear and logical reasoning, but because they represented the vital Ministries of Finance and Defence. We talked things over before they departed, and when the question of the secrecy of their meeting came up, I told them that it was a personal question for each man to agree or not — to which Squires replied: 'That will be the bloody day!'

The South Africans were using every means to force my hand. I had a visit one evening from Muzorewa and Chikerema; they had been asked by the South Africans to press me to stand down because, so their argument ran, my resignation would lead to recognition of the new government by the major free world countries. This was a compelling reason, and moreover, the South Africans promised, I would be taken care of and compensated anywhere in the world. I made two points in reply to Muzorewa and Chikerema: first I had no intention of living anywhere in this world, other than my own country; second, because of my strong objection to corruption, I rejected any such offer with contempt. I said I would be

influenced by what was good for my country, such as recognition and the removal of sanctions, but clearly we had to be on our guard because of those occasions when we had been deceived and betrayed by Britain, the USA and even South Africa. If they were to deliver the goods through recognition and the removal of sanctions, it would be a pleasure and a relief for me to pull out of politics, and I would gladly give that undertaking.

Muzorewa nodded his head in agreement and made it clear that he was merely the bearer of a message from the South Africans. He said that, on the evidence before them concerning the morale of the white people, and especially maintaining the confidence of the security forces, the UANC executive were convinced that I must not stand down. He then complimented me on the part I had played in our country, especially recently in bringing us to the current situation. History would record that I had been a great help and ally, and he hoped that my wisdom and experience would be available in the future interests of our country — his party would wish to take advantage of this.

On 12 March David Smith and Squires reported back on their Cape Town trip. It had been most pleasant and friendly. Why? I asked with surprise, what was the cause of the change? 'Absolutely fortuitous,' was the reply. One day made the difference between triumph and disaster. Brand Fourie had returned from Europe the previous day to give P.W. a devastating report of Pik Botha's meetings with the British, US, German and French governments. He had been affronted and literally snubbed by all of them. Owen's behaviour had been particularly disgraceful, while the French Foreign Minister had insulted them by sending his deputy to meet them on arrival. The South African Prime Minister was incensed, and vehemently made the point that none of them could be trusted. Accordingly, there was only one path to follow: those of us who believed in the same ideals of democracy and civilisation in southern Africa had

to stand together. ‘It’s an ill wind that blows nobody any good,’ was my comment. The South African government had learned the hard way what we had been trying to tell them for the past half dozen years: the rest of the world would use them when it was to their advantage, and then drop them like a hot brick when the wind blew from the opposite direction.

The South African *volte face* was characteristic of their over-reaction. One minute they were up to their ears in détente, with the rest of the free world working hand in glove with them to bring peace to Africa, but when things did not materialise according to their aspirations, indeed hallucinations, they were dumbfounded and resentful, and over-reacted in the contrary direction. Referring to the question of my position, the object of the visit to Cape Town, P.W. said Rhodesia’s two main priorities were to keep our white people in the country, and our white soldiers in the army. If it was believed that my continuance in politics would assist with these priorities, the answer was obvious. Squires, with his logical, analytical legal reasoning, commented to me: ‘I was happy that he didn’t attempt to explain why their thinking was in the opposite direction the previous day!’ I suggested to Squires that there could be a difference between the thinking of P.W. Botha and Pik Botha. I added that it would not surprise me to hear that the day after Pik returned to South Africa he was pressurising Hawkins over my retirement. P.W. asked our two to convey the message to me that he and the members of his government had always had great admiration for my courage and leadership during our long battle, and in the short time that he had been Prime Minister, he had come to realise the great burden and pressures that such a position carried.

Over the following week we had visits from General Malan and other security chiefs who had obviously been given political clearance to get on with the job. Malan

expressed his pleasure and satisfaction that he was now able to fulfil his plans, and give us the priority we deserved. He was scathing in his criticism of the double standards practised by the free world leaders against South Africa, but also conceded that some South African politicians had not acquitted themselves well. From the report I received this criticism was mainly directed at Foreign Affairs. Fortunately, the close contact which had been developed with P.W. while he was Minister of Defence was continuing, and this augured well for the future.

On the morning of 3 April I had a meeting with my three executive council colleagues to consider a plan which I had agreed with P.W. Botha in the previous week involving a treaty of cooperation and mutual support in the security field after the coming election. P.W. and our security chiefs had expressed apprehension as to whether the other three executive council members would support it, but I assured them that there would be no problem, as it was clearly to the advantage of all concerned. My prediction was correct, and the meeting was terminated with all four of us signing the declaration.

We then held a short informal discussion about the election, as it was necessary for me to apprise them of the fact that I was receiving a constant stream of reports that in many rural areas the candidates had not been seen or heard from, and the people were in the dark as to what was happening. A typical report was one regarding a meeting the previous weekend at Victoria Falls, where a large crowd turned out to listen to Zindoga and ended up informing him that it was their intention to vote for Smith — a ridiculously muddled situation, when they were confined to voting for a black candidate. So it was necessary for me to upbraid them as tactfully as possible, and urge them to greater effort.

The British made a last effort to disrupt our progress. On 11 April I had a report of meetings in London the previous

month at which David Owen had tried to convince our two leading Chiefs, Chirau and Ndweni, to break away from our Rhodesian plan and election. He received short shrift. When it was clear that he had failed to convince them, he lost his temper and his behaviour was reprehensible, according to the Chiefs' secretaries. I was saddened to learn of this behaviour from a so-called civilised Westerner. Whether you agree with them or not, our Chiefs are traditionally men of dignity and standing, and this kind of behaviour from a British minister appalled them. They had one word to describe him: 'Rubbish!'

The security aspects of the election were paramount. I wrote in my diary:

> 12.04.79 — For the past week I've been talking with Nat JOC about a few trans-border operations. From captured terrorists we have information that it is their intention to step up operations during our election in order to harass and embarrass us. ZIPRA has a base in Botswana, and they travel to and from Zambia using the Kazangula ferry. The ZIPRA HQ is in Lusaka, the nerve centre from which all their operations are planned. And they have a large base west of Lusaka from which operations in that area are conducted. One captive from that base tells us that they are planning a big operation to take over a landing strip in north-western Matabeleland, to which they will fly in aircraft from Angola. Our chaps on the ground are hoping that they will try, because they will all be eliminated and we would welcome a few extra aircraft to add to our fleet! But of course, they have neither the ability nor the nerve for such an operation.
>
> So we are going in tonight with a four-pronged attack, just to give them a reminder. The preparations have been meticulous, because at this kind of game the element of surprise is crucial and for that reason one seldom has a second chance. As always, there are great risks,

especially with daring operations, and one of these involves driving over the Kafue Bridge on the main trunk road, which is heavily guarded. But our SAS have a plan, and they are confident. These fantastic chaps have proved so many times in the past that they can do the almost impossible. I wished them well, and that night offered up a prayer for their safe return. Many a time I have heard visiting military specialists comment that our Army and Air Force must be, for its size, one of the finest in the world.

13.04.79 — The operation was a success which exceeded our expectations, with everybody safely back — the most serious casualties were two cuts and a bruise. The snatch from ZIPRA base in Botswana brought back 14 terrorists for interrogation, the Kazangula ferry was at the bottom of the Zambezi River, Nkomo's house, which is a stone's throw from State House in Lusaka, was demolished, and ZIPRA HQ and an arms cache nearby blown up. The base west of Lusaka was sent flying in all directions.

Poor old Kaunda; I felt a certain sympathy for him, having to put up with all these humiliations. Our crack troops, SAS, Selous Scouts and RLI, went into Zambia whenever they wished, and the local army did the only sensible thing: they got out of the way. This particular occasion was especially embarrassing for Kaunda, as he was hosting an OAU summit in Lusaka attended by 300 delegates. Apart from having their sleep disturbed by the explosions and gunfire, however, they were in no danger. As all Zambians, Mozambicans and Botswanans knew, we were interested only in Rhodesian terrorists who had declared war on their constitutionally elected government, using women and children and innocent civilians as their principal targets. There was that occasion in 1978 when our air force put an aircraft over Lusaka airport, giving instructions to the

control tower to delay all arrivals and departures, particularly those of the Zambian air force, while our aircraft bombed a nearby ZIPRA camp. The instructions — reinforced by a flight of Hunters circling the area — were all faithfully carried out until the operation was completed.

> 14.04.79 — The news of yesterday's exploits has reverberated throughout the world — our friends are thrilled and our opponents mad. The fact that there were so many OAU leaders in Lusaka is the cause of considerable alarm — what if we had killed them? It would have been easy enough, but as I have said, that kind of action has never been part of Rhodesia's code of conduct. We despise terrorists and have never believed that their despicable acts give us licence to reciprocate. Our troops are meticulously disciplined, and although this might sound outdated in this dreadful world, there is great spiritual solace in knowing that one has been able to abide by those genuine standards of civilisation to which we have constantly paid lip service and claimed to support.

These successes were topped off by the general election. By Saturday 21 April, I could record: 'A very successful week with a 63 per cent turnout of voters for the election, in spite of the fact that terrorists had attempted to intimidate people into abstaining.'

There was a big gathering of press and observers from different parts of the world, and they were highly impressed and commented favourably on the whole procedure. The results went much as we predicted, with a majority for UANC (Muzorewa), but fortunately not enough to encourage abuse of power. We received messages from supporters in Britain and USA, who believed that after our obviously free and fair and successful election things could

only move our way. They promised to assist us to realise our goals.

At least one lesson had been learnt. On the night of 20 April Ndweni, proud of his election success, dropped in for a short discussion and to thank me for my advice and encouragement. The next morning, Gabellah and Bafana came on a similar mission, and the most important point they both made was that the Matabeles now realised that their mission was to concentrate on Matabeleland, and stop trying to bluff themselves that they could influence politics in Mashonaland. It was so logical and obvious. No Matabele had ever won an election in Mashonaland, other than a turncoat who had deserted his own people, and no Mashona had ever won in Matabeleland. It was far better to be honest and accept these facts of life. They are different people with a different language, different culture, different traditions, but nevertheless they can live and work together peacefully in the same country, as happens in many other parts of the world.

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My Last Days in Office

Muzorewa was to take over power from the transitional government on 1 June 1979, so there was much to be done by way of preparation for that and to wind up my premiership.

In late April, I called in the service chiefs, Lieutenant General Walls, his deputy at combined operations headquarters (Comops), Air Marshal McLaren, and the commanders of the air force and army, Air Marshal Mussell and Lieutenant General MacLean, to apprise them of my plan to prepare the ground for Muzorewa to approach Khama of Botswana and Kaunda of Zambia in search of reconciliation and the promotion of trade, which was natural and had always been part of the scene. With a new black leader in our country, the time was obviously propitious, and there was no merit in delay. With Khama the position was straightforward, as he had always got on with the business of running his own country and avoided provocation. He was a mature person who had governed his country with wisdom, and the beneficial results of this were obvious. Kaunda, on the other hand, was a different case. He had got himself embroiled with the terrorists, his country was in tatters and deteriorating by the day, and his protégé Nkomo was waiting in the wings, expecting to take over as the new leader of our country. No doubt they were both kicking themselves over the opportunities they had thrown away, caused mainly by Kaunda's inability to stand up to Nyerere.

There were obvious tactics that we could use, however. First, we would desist from provocative attacks in and around Lusaka, and deep penetration into Zambia — those

acts which were so humiliating to Kaunda. But around our borders there would be no slackening of effort or lowering our guard. This would help to pave the way by enabling Muzorewa to take the credit. Second, I had asked the economic ministries to produce some plans which would be of economic assistance to Zambia. The Zambians desperately needed this, and it would obviously be a useful bargaining point for Muzorewa. The security chiefs were in full agreement, and said they would commence with their part of the plan.

I met Muzorewa on Thursday 3 May, to advise him of these plans, and he readily concurred. He said he would think of an emissary to send to Khama, and we would make plans for Kaunda, and follow that up with Machel. He asked a number of questions about simple problems that were cropping up, difficult to deal with for those without experience, and clearly indicating the advantage of our agreement for an evolutionary handover as opposed to a revolution with its associated convulsions. I reminded him of the most important change he had to face up to, as now that he was the leader of his country, he accordingly had to put the national interest before party interest. This meant orientating himself towards government and his official advisers, and away from party HQ and all its hangers-on. He agreed and expressed the hope that I would continue to make my help and experience available, and shaking my hand warmly, he said: ‘Thanks, my friend, we will go forward together.’ I noted in my diary that, if this were to materialise, he would need to produce greater qualities of leadership and develop the ability to make decisions.

I attended a pleasant dinner that evening with the van Vuurens, South Africa’s representative. Rowan Cronjé was there and recalled the meeting at ‘Libertas’ when Vorster was giving us a vivid description of the latest British thinking on our problem. I had asked, ‘Are there British here, and if so wouldn’t it be an idea if we met them

together?’ Vorster was taken aback, and after a few uneasy seconds admitted they were there, and agreed to make the request. It never materialised because of some lame excuse, but Rowan said he could never forget the coolness of my approach and the sixth sense which indicated to me that the British were probably around. An embarrassed Vorster had no option but to tell the truth, or face the probability of the information leaking out.

The next day, 4 May, brought wonderful news of the British election. I wrote a short note to Margaret Thatcher: ‘All Rhodesians thank God for your magnificent victory, and pray that you will have success in your difficult assignment. May you succeed in restoring decency and honesty to the British political scene.’

On Sunday morning, 6 April, I went out to pay my respects to the Selous Scouts and reassure them over the future of our country. I encouraged them to talk and ask questions, and Ron Reid-Daily, their colonel, said they were all satisfied. At the conclusion they sang their tremendous song — nothing could be more stirring. I had an interesting talk with Chris Schulenberg, the first man to win our highest decoration for bravery, the Grand Cross of Valour (GCV). The first citation covering his award of the Silver Cross in the SAS included a series of acts which seemed to be almost impossible, but the second dealing with his top award went even beyond that — it was difficult to credit the man’s complete disregard for his own life and safety. He introduced me to a couple of his black colleagues, who were highly decorated; one of them was our first soldier to be awarded both the Bronze Cross of Rhodesia (BCR) and the Silver Cross (SCR). I recall this being drawn to my attention, and specifically the fact that he was a black man. My response was direct: ‘I am not concerned with the colour, but the merit of the case.’This individual’s foot had been blown off by a landmine, and as soon as the wound had healed and the artificial foot fitted, he was back in

camp, insisting he should go on the next raid and performing with fearless bravery. Yet our ‘friends’ in the British and US governments persisted in accusing us of being white racists, attempting to suppress our black people.

It was our firm policy to preserve the highest standards for our awards; indeed, many people claimed they were too high. During our approximately ten years of war, mild to begin with, then growing in intensity, there were only two awards of our GCV: Schulenberg GCV, SCR (SAS and Selous Scouts) and Graham Wilson GCV, SCR and BCR (SAS). These truly were the bravest of the brave. There were a few citations, however, for the Silver Cross, which involved such exceptional valour that I felt they may have been deserving of the higher award — the margin was indeed slim. Then, as in most theatres of conflict, there were the unsung heroes, acts of courage and leadership which went unnoticed, sometimes necessitating the supreme sacrifice, just part of one’s duty in the cause of preserving freedom and justice and one’s country. ‘Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friends.’

I was being kept busy. On 8 May I had a visit from two influential Americans, the heads of Superior Oil and Falconbridge Mines, who believed that we were about to gain recognition from the USA. They were going back to do what they could to assist this process.

By 11 May, there had been a series of investitures over the previous few days to clear up the backlog before the new government takeover. An incredible act of bravery from a fifteen-year old schoolboy earned the Conspicuous Gallantry Decoration, one of our top civilian awards. He took on a gang of terrorists single-handed, wounded two of them, and when they retreated pursued them and continued the fight. As one of our senior commanders commented, listening to that citation brought on one a

sense of humility. There were also a number of awards to security force personnel involving tremendous bravery and, as on previous occasions, I sensed strong emotional feelings. It was all coming to an end, this tremendous nation of Rhodesians with their epic history of fighting a lone battle for freedom and Western civilisation, and they were wondering what the uncertain future would hold.

There were two worthwhile awards in the civilian field, to men who had consistently over the years made tremendous efforts on behalf of Rhodesia and had played a big part in helping to bring the various factions together for the 3 March agreement. Ken MacKenzie, a big industrialist in both Rhodesia and South Africa, and Andy Andrews, who was at the head of Aleghany Ludlum, the big smelters of Pittsburg, USA, had both achieved spectacular successes in the battle to overcome sanctions. While grateful for the honour, both assured me that they had been motivated by their love of our country, and the principle for which we were fighting.

On 12 May there was some good news from the UK, USA and South Africa. Margaret Thatcher said that it served no purpose in looking back; they must now assess whether we had complied with the ‘six principles’. Into the bargain, there was her reply to a question during the Conservatives’ recent election campaign. She said her assessment was that we had done enough for the Conservatives to recognise us and remove sanctions. And Carter, the real slippery customer, now said that he would make a decision on Rhodesia in a few weeks. His timing was right because, in a few weeks, he would be dealing with a black prime minister instead of a white prime minister, and that solved his problem. Finally, there was an encouraging message from Hawkins indicating that the South Africans had realised, albeit belatedly, that they could not trust their free world ‘friends’. They were now working for the formation of a constellation of states in southern Africa, with the object

of promoting the common interests of the countries involved, and bringing their peoples closer together. Hawkins said: ‘I refrained from commenting that at last they were accepting our advice!’

There also were personal matters to consider: the family got Alec to the airport in time to catch his flight to Oslo for his wedding. We would be moving out of ‘Independence’ at the end of the month, so we had a happy family dinner on the night of the twelfth — Alec would not be returning to this residence.

On 13 May I reflected on the South African problem with some of my colleagues. There was a strong consensus that the South Africans’ first priority should be to start talking internally with their various races and hammer out something acceptable to the majority. They would be agreeably surprised at the result, we thought, as many of their black people were hoping for peace and a better way of life. A system of meritocracy which removed racial discrimination and preserved decent standards of civilisation would be acceptable to the free world. The longer they procrastinated, the more difficult it would become. The release of Mandela seemed to be a necessary, albeit unpalatable, prerequisite. I had made the point to Vorster that while Mandela was incarcerated, with the passage of every day his martyrdom increased. It served no purpose to point out, as he had done to me, that according to the law of the land Mandela had been sentenced to death, and was therefore lucky to be alive. Against the ‘evil of apartheid’, that one was laughed out of court.

By mid-May there was a bit of in-fighting and juggling for position among the various parties, and I had to devote much time to arbitrating and counselling reason and patience. The last thing we wanted at this stage was any break-up, especially as the main problem was in the UANC, the incoming government — nothing could be more

prejudicial to our hopes for recognition. Sithole was also being petulant:

> 16.05.79 — Heard the incredible story, as yet unconfirmed, that Sithole has sent messages to the UK and US Governments and UN and OAU urging them not to recognise the new Government and remove sanctions, as the election was bogus! If so this is absolutely evil and unforgivable, done in a pique of anger, attempting to seek revenge because of his poor showing in the election.

There were other problems with the new order. Gaylard told me that Muzorewa had suggested in a most considerate manner that, because of his close association with me and the Rhodesian government, it might be undesirable for him to continue as secretary to the cabinet. This, in spite of the fact that he had concurred with me previously on the desirability of retaining Gaylard, even if only for a short period, to enable him to become established in his new position. There was no problem for Gaylard, who had indicated to me his preference for retirement with the advent of the new government. If the Prime Minister wished for a change, that was his prerogative. Gaylard informed him so, indicating that the likely candidates, judging from experience, ability and seniority, were George Smith and Malcolm Thompson. Gaylard undertook to inform the public services board of Muzorewa's wishes, so that they could process his request. On 16 May, Gaylard conveyed to Muzorewa the board's recommendation that the post should go to Smith. He was a bit taken aback when Muzorewa said he wished to have a black man. But Muzorewa must have been even more taken aback when the board chairman informed him that such action would be in violation of the 3 March agreement, and in conflict with what Muzorewa had said in public during the recent election campaign. Fortunately, he accepted this

gracefully. Evidently he had hoped that his brother-in-law could be given the position — a man with absolutely no qualifications or administrative experience. This would have been a gross violation of laid-down procedure for the civil service. We both shook our heads in disbelief. It was a classic example of how easy it would be for our country to degenerate into a banana republic if there were no laws and regulations and rules to control and guide governments, and equally important, no civil service bound by integrity, tradition and experience.

Then good news came from the US Senate where, on 15 May, a resolution in our favour was carried by 75 votes to 19. This was a major victory, giving us a great boost. It seemed that it must pressurise Carter to move in our direction. After a meeting with Antony Duff of the British Foreign Office, Gaylard told me the next day, 16 May, that the British attitude had changed completely since their last discussion. The British were most co-operative and seeking assistance in finding a *modus vivendi* for recognition. This gave us reason to be optimistic about the difference between a Thatcher government and the others! The honeymoon, however, would not last long.

I had a taste of the new British attitude on the morning of 18 May, when Duff came in for a discussion. He appeared relaxed and helpful. He thought an all-party conference was now irrelevant, that Nkomo was a spent force who had missed the boat, and that Sithole was making a fool of himself and would fade into oblivion. He agreed with me that if the US removed sanctions this would solve the problem and end Britain’s predicament. Into the bargain, there would be no conflict with Margaret Thatcher. But, he warned, Britain would still be saddled with selling the packet to the OAU. My counter was to point out that, if it were a *fait accompli*, any problem would endure for a couple of days and then be overtaken by the appearance of a new Bocassa or Idi Amin. He smiled in agreement. I went

on to point out the dangers which would be associated with the impending Commonwealth prime ministers' conference, to be held in Lusaka in August, if our problem were not finalised. This would be an emotion-creating occasion in the middle of Africa, with the spectre of the OAU hovering in the background. The British, I predicted, would be backed into a corner from which it would be difficult to extricate themselves. It seemed to me to be absolute madness to run that risk, when an obvious opportunity for evasion presented itself. Moreover, such an atmosphere would provoke the terrorists, and in return we would be compelled to retaliate, obviously exacerbating the security problems associated with the conference. By grasping the nettle now the problem would be eliminated. I recounted that Kaunda had said to me at one of our meetings in Lusaka that the problem with the British government was that they lacked the guts to implement their own plan! Duff showed no inclination to disagree, and undertook to relate my views to his political masters, indicating that these days his task was much easier.

On 19 May there was a hint of what was to come: Duff had been misleading me. I had a message from Hawkins to say the South Africans were convinced, through a message from their Washington embassy, that the British were planning to do a deal with the US at the coming Vance–Carrington meeting in which they would support the USA on the UN plan for Namibia in return for the Americans agreeing to hold their hand on the lifting of Rhodesian sanctions. I found this unbelievable. Maybe a Labour government would resort to this kind of treachery in an effort to connive with the OAU in their desire to bring down our new government and supplant it with the communist terrorists they were supporting, but not a Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher — such a thought was totally ridiculous and I wondered who could have concocted it. Then I recalled that some of our old and

trusted Tory friends had expressed concern that Peter Carrington was being lined up for the job of Foreign Secretary. He had recently visited Rhodesia in this capacity on a familiarisation tour and had interviewed me. He was certainly smooth, considerate and supportive of what we were doing, but I would not have believed that he could be party to the Machiavellian scheming associated with the cynical plot of which we had been told. However, the fact that his reliability had been questioned by certain of his parliamentary associates gave me cause for concern.

There were other distractions, however. On 20 May, as part of my final duties, we took the early flight to Bulawayo for our annual visit to the national trade fair, which was always a most worthwhile occasion. The usual warm reception awaited us when we arrived at Government House, but we noticed a special feeling associated with this occasion, because everyone knew that this was the end, our last such visit.

Government House in Bulawayo is indeed a special place, full of history, tradition and atmosphere. It was built by Rhodes, and everything about it depicts the British Empire: its greatness, its glory, the beauty of old England, Rhodes's furniture, pictures, treasures. It was one of the most gracious houses we had ever occupied. To the one side stood Rhodes's hut with its thatched roof, his first home in Rhodesia. A short distance away the big tree under which Rhodes and Lobengula talked and made their treaties. In the distance, on a clear day, one can see Thabas Induna, 'the Mountain of the Kings', which was the home of the Matabele Kings, Mzilikazi and Lobengula. The horse stables were magnificent, with ironwork, woodwork, doors and enamel drinking troughs imported from England. When we moved in we found that these outside buildings were not in a good state of repair, but that was quickly remedied with the placement of notices indicating matters of interest to encourage the public to visit and enjoy this lovely part of

their heritage. The big tree was not looking in good health, either, with evidence of the dreadful modern cult of name carving. In quick time a guard rail was erected, and the tree experts brought in for advice. There were approximately 300 acres of estate land, and I was surprised to learn that it was never put to any use — a constant veld fire problem in the dry winter months. We quickly solved that by establishing a herd of pedigree Africander cattle, and a flock of pedigree Persiona sheep — both breeds indigenous to Africa. This was achieved with wonderful co-operation from the nearby Matopos agricultural research station, and kind donations of female stock from certain members of the Rhodesian Africander Breeders' Association. Not only were the magnificent animals a joy to see, but the scheme grew to be economically viable. Moreover, the residents living in the suburbs surrounding Government House not only enjoyed the pleasure of looking out on the beautiful animals on the other side of the fence, but they no longer lived with the anxiety of raging veld fires and the associated unpleasant smoke and fumes.

We had received tremendous enjoyment and satisfaction from our association with this great place, which had the effect of stirring one's thoughts and imagination. We rescued a number of historic items from dust heaps and resurrected them with the assistance of the historical monuments committee, who were thrilled at being given the opportunity to participate. Janet devoted her energies to organising and improving the residence, and beautifying the garden, creating a garden committee of local experts, enthusiastic at having this opportunity to contribute. Our participation and contact with this piece of Rhodesian history had been a rewarding and stirring experience — needless to say, its ending was a nostalgic and traumatic occasion. We hoped that those who followed would continue where we had left off.

The trade fair was a tremendous success, with the spirit of the people at a high peak; it was amazing to me when I knew that deep down in their hearts they must have had serious misgivings as to what the future would hold. But being intelligent people, they would realise the sterility of negative thinking, and that if ever there was a time in our history for faith and belief in the Rhodesians' ability to overcome problems, this was it. On our final night we hosted our traditional dinner to enable us to pay our respects to a band of local people who had served their community with great credit. Indeed, this was an especially memorable event, as all those present realised that it was the last such occasion. We rose and drank a toast to Queen and country — that would never happen again. It would no longer be Rhodesia, and loyalty would be in a different direction.

On 24 May, after an early breakfast, we took our farewell from the place we had grown to love so deeply, and as we drove out of the entrance gates we held hands and, looking back, expressed our prayers and hope for the future. Janet caught the flight to Salisbury to organise our departure from 'Independence', and I headed for 'Gwenoro' for a few days' farming.

The penultimate step in the process of standing down was to go to Parliament on 29 May for the election of the state president and president of the senate. I then set about the task of determining who to bring in as cabinet ministers from my side. I had my quota, which was small, and it was an unpleasant task to determine which of my team to drop, for they all had been wonderful and loyal supporters. For myself, I was to be Minister without Portfolio. Then, finally:

> 31.05.79 — My last day in office — went down this morning, had a cup of tea, and said goodbye to them all. John and Clare were clearing up the last remains. This

afternoon after the last load had departed from ‘Independence’, finally Janet and I took our last walk through the house which had been our home for the past 15 years — we didn’t talk, we just felt. What a wonderful part it had played in the history of our country, meetings with Prime Ministers and many other Ministers of State. It had witnessed glorious moments, tough and stirring negotiations, depressing occasions which one would prefer to forget, but they are there and cannot be eradicated. Our staff were waiting at the back door to bid us farewell — they had become part of the family, so this was another poignant moment. A few of them were departing tomorrow — for reasons best known to themselves they were leaving government service. We drove out the back gate to our new home which was nearby, much smaller, but adequate and very comfortable. We were in bed by 11 p.m. and slept the sleep of the just — our best night for some time.

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The Government of National Unity and the Lancaster House Conference

Bishop Muzorewa took office as Prime Minister on 1 June 1979 as head of the government of national unity. He faced many initial difficulties, including Ndabaningi Sithole refusing to recognise the election result. These issues would resolve themselves, but Muzorewa would enjoy only a couple of months before he was compelled to negotiate with the external nationalists at Lancaster House. This was to be his undoing.

An immediate problem facing me on 1 June was to counsel the veteran nationalist James Chikerema who, over the past few months, had on several occasions expressed to me his deep concern over Muzorewa's lack of firmness, views which he claimed were shared by fifteen MPs, including some of the most competent in their party, the UANC. Their patience and tolerance were being severely tested to the extent that some were talking of breaking away from the party. After listening patiently, I commiserated with him but, as on previous occasions, I counselled patience in the national interest. There was clear evidence that we could justifiably expect recognition and a removal of sanctions from both Britain and the USA, and this would mean a number of other free world countries would do likewise automatically. If any action on their part prejudiced this, then responsible opinion, black and white, would condemn them, and rightly so! He said he could not fault my logic, and would attempt to convince the others who were associated with him. Chikerema also

informed me that six of Sithole's MPs were fed up with his continuing non-acceptance of the election results and the accompanying intrigue, and had indicated their desire to join any faction which broke away from Muzorewa. He hoped we could keep in contact.

Another problem for me was that some of my overseas political enemies were still propagating their lie that my plan was to frustrate a black takeover so that we could preserve white control, and they enjoyed an amazing amount of support from the communications media. Yet the record proved conclusively that from the time we made the agreement with Kissinger in Pretoria in 1976, all our efforts had been in the opposite direction. As we had pointed out on so many occasions, our problem was that some leading world countries had a guilt complex because of the part their ancestors had played in colonialism, and they jumped at every opportunity to use the white man in Africa as a sacrificial offering to salve their consciences. Into the bargain, because of our juxtaposition, Rhodesia's problem was aggravated by South Africa's apartheid policy. This washed off on to us and we had a constant running battle explaining to people that there was no connection and no similarity between our countries' respective political systems. But our communist enemies did a good job of twisting the truth against us, and it was alarming to perceive how easily they succeeded in misleading people, even those who were unbiased and trying to make an honest assessment. And of course their task was facilitated by political leaders who were happy to join in the game of deceit and treachery in order to gain themselves some local political advantage.

The first week of June went reasonably well with the first cabinet and several committee meetings, and our agreement to include a sprinkling of experienced white ministers was clearly facilitating the process of transition for the new government. But we were immediately

confronted with the bombshell of Carter's decision, on Thursday 7 June, against removing sanctions. Our new Prime Minister, Muzorewa, came out with a strong condemnatory statement. Carter's hypocrisy and rank dishonesty was unbelievable and unforgivable. He advanced the reason that the removal of sanctions would be to the prejudice of our country — an absolutely infantile argument which nobody could credit, as the truth was the complete reverse. It was obvious to any thinking person that he had only one objective in mind: winning himself black votes in the coming presidential election. Fortunately our supporters in Congress had reacted strongly against the decision, and even the *Washington Post*, well known for its left-wing leaning, had been critical. Unfortunately, it would have the effect of stimulating the terrorists, and set back our new government in its quest for peace. It was a dreadful example of the tremendous power wielded by leaders of powerful countries, who are prepared to abuse their power for their own selfish ends. Massive damage can be inflicted, sadly on smaller, weaker people, by unscrupulous demagogues who establish themselves in positions where they are able to exercise power without responsibility. Muzorewa, and his church authorities in the USA, had certainly been given to understand from Carter that sanctions were about to be lifted.

The wedding day of our son and his Norwegian bride in Oslo, was celebrated on 9 June. We drank a toast to their health and happiness. It was all we could do, because we had been given the message that our presence in Norway would be unwelcome. To have the 'racist' Smith on Norwegian soil was obviously unthinkable!

On 11 June, an interview with the new British representative in Rhodesia, Derek Day, tended to play down the significance of Carter's action. Day accepted the desirability of recognition and said it was simply a question of tactics, and how to bring it about with the least

provocation to the OAU. He hoped that we would allow time for their new Conservative government to settle down and prepare the ground.

To counter Carter, Muzorewa announced to the cabinet on the morning of 12 June that he had received an invitation to visit Washington in order to put over our case, and he thought it a good idea. I enquired from whom the invitation had come, and as I anticipated, it was from strong conservative supporters. As I explained, we did not have to worry about convincing those people, we had to concentrate on the uncommitted voter, people who would like to help us but needed the relevant information and facts. We could, I argued, actually put the moderate, middle-of-theroader against us by being seen to be too closely associated with the right wing. He smilingly accepted the point. Unfortunately he was a bit naïve, especially for one who had to move in the jungle of international politics.

The sense of urgency was lacking. At our security council meeting the next day, 13 June, the point was again stressed that our black cabinet ministers were not active enough as far as our amnesty plan was concerned: Zindoga was the only one to hold a meeting in the tribal trust lands. The rest were sitting back, enjoying life in their new positions. At my instigation we were to set up an amnesty directorate along the lines of our most successful election directorate in order to facilitate our safe-return policy. This was by far the most important task facing the new government, for if they failed in this, the whole government would fail. Unfortunately it was a field in which white ministers could not contribute. I asked for a weekly update in order to ensure that we kept up the pressure!

The meeting also discussed Muzorewa’s impending visit to South Africa to meet P.W. Botha and some of the South African Homeland leaders — evidently they believed he could assist and encourage in this area. The South Africans

were developing the strategy of their Department of External Affairs of trying to bring our new government under their wing in order that they might control and direct our future policy as they had in the past with our government, by using security and financial assistance as a lever. Those of us with experience amplified the point and gave evidence to substantiate the fact that our current predicament was caused more than anything else by the South African government's failure to abide by their commitments to us. Instead the South Africans further aggravated our position by continuing their flirtation with the front-line states and the British and US governments. We stressed the importance of Muzorewa keeping the ball in their court by reminding them of their obligation to deliver the goods in the security field, and also ascertain what efforts they were making to pressurise the USA and the UK to comply with their promises to remove sanctions and recognise us. What had South Africa done to impress on Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana the justification of our claim for recognition in view of the fact that we had complied with every demand made upon us? If those three independent countries in southern Africa, together with South Africa, presented a case to Britain and the USA of a plan to make a positive move in the interest of bringing peace to the whole region, it could tip the scales in our favour, we argued. A few of our black ministers made the suggestion that I should accompany Muzorewa, to make available to him the benefit of my experience. But that was quickly laughed out of court as I said: 'In the last few years they have attempted to evade me even when I was Prime Minister, so there wouldn't be much hope now!'

The reports from Harold Hawkins consistently emphasised the fact that their Foreign Ministry had openly demonstrated its opposition to, indeed resentment of, our success in including some white content and influence in the new Zimbabwe Rhodesia government. From the

beginning they resented the concept of a national government, because, while it was one thing to have a few whites around the verges, especially good civil servants to ensure sound administration, to have them in ministerial positions where they would be able to make available their experience of past contacts and agreements with the South Africans was a bitter blow. Their first expression of concern was at the inclusion of twenty white seats in the Parliament. But far worse was the agreement to include white ministers in the executive. This led to their frantic attempts to gain support for their plan to force me to stand down. So their dream of being able to work with and manipulate a 'virgin' government, which had no experience of South Africa's shady history of the past five years, was shattered. It was our hope that Muzorewa's meeting with P.W. would be able to expose all of this intrigue and introduce a bit of honesty into our dealings.

On 15 June, after only two weeks of the new order, Chikerema came to tell me that the die was cast — on the morrow, they were making public their break with Muzorewa. They had heeded my advice, but in view of Carter's negative decision their patience had run out. Moreover, they were being branded as weak and leaderless. I hoped that they would act with dignity and avoid recrimination and abuse, and present constructive alternatives. On his recent trip to London Chikerema said that he had met some of Margaret Thatcher's ministers; they had assured him that the principle of our independence had been accepted and their estimate was that by August we would receive recognition. Nkomo, who was in London at the same time, was confronted by a situation where no airline would allow him to travel on their aircraft because of the shooting down of a Rhodesian airliner. Eventually a friend accommodated him with a lift! This friend recounted to Chikerema that Nkomo had confided in him that he was making a plan to break away

from the Russians. He never had been and never could be a communist, and the problem was to find a way out of his jam.

On Wednesday 20 June, Muzorewa sent Gaylard to consult me. Our police had caught three CIA agents spying, and had also discovered that they were operating in South Africa and Kenya. They had confessed and were at present locked up. Flower had been in touch with the CIA and they were pleading for their release. The CIA argued that if we made the arrests public and prosecuted the agents, it would embarrass the USA and lead to a rupture of the favourable conditions which had developed. A retired general, an old associate of Flower and a close friend of Carter, personally assured Flower that Carter had made a deal with our friends in the Senate — Senators Helms, Hayakawa and the others — that Congress was also about to lift sanctions and Carter would not use his veto. This would enable Carter to disentangle himself from his commitment to his black supporters. It was a fortunate stroke of fate, which had played into our hands, providing we did the right thing and turned it to our advantage. Gaylard thought it would be safe for us to release the spies on condition that, if the Americans did not produce the goods, we would publicise the affair. I disagreed because such a course would lose us the initiative. I argued: who in the world would believe our story, if we had no bodies to prove our case? It appeared to me that our best tactic would be for us to initiate a visit by Muzorewa to the States, and thence to Britain, and while there he could show great reasonableness by making an agreement with Carter to solve his predicament. After all, Carter would be making no concession in view of the resolution passed by his Congress, while Muzorewa could magnanimously agree to the release of the spies. The sooner the visit took place the better. Gaylard agreed and went off to put the plan to

Muzorewa. This was indeed manna from Heaven, and should not be frittered away. It would be, however.

Progress was being made. On 26 June, I could record in my diary:

> The first week in Parliament went well with good speeches from some of the new black members. The only thing which raised some interest was Muzorewa's trek by ox-wagon through the city to take up occupation of the Prime Minister's Residence. It was given headline prominence in *The Herald* with a big photograph of the new Prime Minister sitting on his throne, dressed up looking like a colourful rooster, and a bantam at that, sitting on a replica of the ox-wagons used by the Pioneer Column when they occupied the country in 1890. I cringed and closed my eyes. Muzorewa and his ancestors had not even invented a wheel by the time the white man arrived — like most thinking people, I wondered what he was trying to portray. Sadly, his judgement has been so wrong in so many cases, in the eyes of black people as well as whites. It just does not help, especially with all the other problems before us.

On 3 July, Rowan Cronjé reported back to me after a trip to South Africa, where he said there was general concern at the turmoil within the National Party and a growing disillusionment among the public. A new president had to be elected to replace Vorster, compelled to resign because of his implication in the 'Information Scandal'. It was generally expected that Lourens Muller would get the vote until the day before the election when he and P.W. had a difference of opinion which led to a flaring of temper, resulting in P.W. changing course and Marais Viljoen replacing Muller. Cronjé was surprised at the growing strength of feeling and division in the National Party between *verligte* (liberal) and *verkrampte* (conservative)

and at the open discussion of the need for realignment in South African politics.

That day I had to deal with the recognition issue as I also saw Lord Harlech, who was visiting from Britain. He assured me that Thatcher and Carrington were going for recognition, in weeks not months, and that world opinion was moving our way. There was only one snag which worried them: the war did not seem to be ending as decisively as predicted. I pointed out that, if the British had the courage of their convictions, the whole thing would fall into place; the continuing refusal to recognise us was feeding the hopes of the terrorists. There were clear signs, I said, that both Kaunda and Machel were desperate for a settlement. He agreed completely. I pointed out that, if the USA removed sanctions, Britain's problem would virtually be solved — therefore Carrington should be encouraging the Americans. I told Harlech that we had heard a story that Carrington was actually working in the contrary direction, and I hoped that this was some insane figment of the imagination. He was happy to assure me that the Conservatives would be neither so mad nor so devious. Harlech's report to Carrington, however, would simply lead to Britain turning its back on the recognition of Muzorewa's government.

Muzorewa visited the United States, meeting Carter at Camp David on 10 July, and then went on to London. He was back on 14 July and thereafter I had a long and interesting discussion with one of the officials who had accompanied him. I asked if Bob Nicholson was once again in control of their security. The answer was in the negative, as I had been classified as a much higher security risk, and it seemed correct, as there were no demonstrators or other security problems. These had obviously been the result of the United Nations declaring me a 'danger to world peace'! I was told that Muzorewa's performances were reasonable, some better than others. But the Americans' behaviour left

much to be desired, and the State Department were as devious as ever. The day Muzorewa was scheduled for an afternoon appointment with Carter, a lunchtime meeting with the Press Club had been arranged. At mid-morning, however, they sent a message asking him to stand by for a 1 p.m. departure, forcing a cancellation of his meeting. Eventually they took off at 4 p.m., and the crew informed our people that there had never been any doubt all day that the ETD was 4 p.m. So their contact in the State Department had succeeded in frustrating an important meeting at the Press Club and annoying people who had made plans to attend, some coming from considerable distances. When our people requested that a couple of our team from information and the press accompany the Prime Minister, they were informed that there was insufficient accommodation on the helicopter, when in fact there were six spare seats on the flight.

The visit to London was far more friendly (except for Callaghan, by then the leader of the opposition) and successful, and Muzorewa had worthwhile interviews with people from Europe, New Zealand and Australia, the latter strongly critical of their Prime Minister, Fraser, who had deviated from his election promises and was accused by his own party of being a turncoat.

After his return Muzorewa informed us that he had received the necessary undertaking from Carter to release the three American spies. Muzorewa added that Carter was obviously an honest man who would abide by his word, but needed a little time to make his plans. I was deeply distressed that we had thrown away this powerful bargaining counter. Sadly, as history records, Muzorewa’s faith and trust were misplaced. He was out of his depth in the midst of all these international political sharks. Carter reneged on his undertaking to remove sanctions, and never even attempted to explain his reasons to Muzorewa.

The internal situation was demanding attention and on 10 July it was my duty to inform cabinet that, at our last meeting with Nat JOC, the security chiefs had expressed concern over statements by certain black ministers indicating sympathy for the few missionaries who had been deported for supporting terrorism — I hoped it was not necessary for me to point out that the main target of the terrorists was Muzorewa and his cabinet colleagues. Obviously, our white serving men were not prepared to go on risking their lives eliminating terrorists if government was going to roll out the red carpet for their collaborators. Happily there was positive and unanimous endorsement, and a call for a public statement to be made to this effect.

Security matters were taking on a new urgency as the terrorists began to take heart from the failure to secure recognition. On 17 July our security council report to cabinet pulled no punches in stressing the ineffectiveness of this government in dealing with the terrorist threat — their complacency and comfortable confinement to the capital city was attracting much criticism. The amnesty committee had not yet got off the ground — they were waiting for the Prime Minister's broadcast to kick it off. Admittedly, he had only just returned from his visit to the USA, which seemed then to have been successful. But it is so easy to find excuses for not getting things done.

I had a long discussion with Muzorewa on 2 August, stressing the seriousness of our situation, and warning him that we were not gaining ground. If anything, the reverse was true, I said, and the longer we procrastinated the weaker would be our negotiating base at any constitutional conference. Moreover, as a member of the government security council, I was satisfied that he was getting an equally strong message from the security commanders. I was relieved to hear him concede that he had come to the conclusion that a conference in London was our best bet.

He also made the point that it would strengthen his position for a visit he was planning to Britain and the USA.

Four days later, on Monday 6 August, at the Commonwealth conference in Lusaka, Margaret Thatcher reneged on her promise of recognition under pressure from Nigeria and Australia and set another course with a new commitment to an all-party conference in London.

The month of August was devoted to the continuous battle of trying to motivate our Cabinet colleagues. In all honesty, we never ceased to be amazed, not only at the lethargy of our colleagues, but also at their incompetence, with a few exceptions.

I had had a number of encouraging interviews recently with people from different parts of the world, and a delegation from a world forum with representatives from Europe, Britain and America who were full of praise for what Rhodesia had done, and contemptuous of the response from the free world. Rhodesians had proved themselves to be truly great people, indeed an inspiration to those in the world who still believed in decent civilised standards, and qualities such as courage and integrity. As one of them commented, ‘I still have faith that the free world will return to sanity. We detect that the pendulum is swinging back in a number of countries and one day history will record that Rhodesia played a significant role in the battle against communism on the African continent.’ I hoped he was right, because time was running out, and in the end even Rhodesians grew weary and lost faith in the free world — regrettably, there seems to be a limit to human endurance, with maybe a few exceptions. Nevertheless, it was incredible what Rhodesians had endured: the loss of loved ones, the ruination of farms and businesses, and still they continued to resist, in many cases strengthened and enriched because of what they believed in and for which they had been prepared to make a stand.

It was becoming more and more obvious that the new government was not succeeding — principally for one reason: they were unable to contain terrorism. Our black leaders had not been able to deliver the goods, to fulfil their undertaking that once a black government was installed, the terrorists would come on to their side. There were a number of reasons: the black leaders were competing for support amid the various terrorist groups, and this involved running down one's opponents, creating uncertainty and suspicion in people's minds. A united front would have averted this. Moreover, the terrorists were totally successful in intimidating people, using ruthless methods against the poor, innocent rural inhabitants, who had to choose between capitulating or standing their ground with the resultant bullet through the head. The problem was compounded because of the failure of the 1976 Pretoria agreement. Had Vorster complied with the undertakings given in the event of the agreement floundering, the situation would have been contained. The culmination of these events led to the erosion of our security forces, placing us in a position where we had lost half of our effective fighting force, and thus were unable to cover the ground effectively. Because of this, our security forces gradually became less effective, and from a position where they had always been in complete control, with the terrorists constantly on the run, they had to concede that in certain areas their presence was inadequate, and, although the terrorists beat a hasty retreat as soon as the warning was given, for much of the time they were in control.

It was significant that whenever our security forces returned to an area, not only were they given a warm welcome from the local tribesmen, but there was a consistent appeal for them to remain in the area. The locals were on the receiving end of cavalier treatment from the terrorists, who consumed food and used accommodation without any compensation, but most objectionable was

their insistence on sexual favours from their womenfolk. Moreover, there was the constant political indoctrination and accompanying inquisitorial investigations of those considered not to be in line. Needless to say, those who were considered guilty, often on flimsy evidence, received rough justice. I made a note of a particular case brought up in a security council meeting that vividly demonstrated the dreadful injustices associated with rampant terrorism. A young man in one of the tribal villages to our north was accused of collaborating with the security forces, and shot by a group of passing terrorists in front of the locals who had been gathered to witness the occasion in order to impress on them what happened to those who sided with ‘the enemy’. Our security forces who operated in the area were puzzled, as they had no knowledge of the man. Investigations indicated that he had won the attention of a local girl in competition with one of the other contenders, who became so bitter and twisted that he decided to exact his revenge by disclosing his concocted story to the terrorists. It was diabolically effective.

As the whole world knew, the main support for the terrorists had come from the communists, Russia and China, but what I found difficult to stomach was that in recent years they were receiving assistance and particularly moral encouragement from Western countries, notably Britain and the USA. Moreover, there was clear evidence that a few religious organisations were working hand in glove with the terrorists. When certain of these people were deported because of their subversive activities, there were the usual howls of anguish and accusations of infringement of rights. I always gave careful attention to complaints, relating to violations of freedom and justice, and listened to the views of our legal experts. However, when one heard the evidence of the barbaric atrocities inflicted upon our innocent inhabitants by the terrorists, almost exclusively against defenceless black

people, anyone implicated in these dreadful crimes was clearly associated with treason. It is generally accepted throughout the world that the penalty for treason is death, so such people who were deported should have been grateful for the humanitarian consideration which they received.

Regrettably, it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that we were in a no-win situation. Muzorewa had clearly been deceived by Carter, as he, himself, was ready to concede. The Conservative Party in Britain — our friends — were avoiding a positive decision to comply with the undertaking given in the campaign for the recent general election which they had won. However, our staunch supporters in the party assured us that a British government-sponsored conference in London would provide a just and honourable solution. Although there were some doubts about Carrington, Margaret Thatcher would stand her ground. After all, we had complied with everything that had been asked of us: free and fair elections, which nobody had questioned, a black majority government with a black prime minister: what more did they want? We were committed to the free enterprise system, and were on the side of the free world, so how could Britain and the USA and the other leaders of the free world countries do anything other than give us their blessing? They had pledged themselves to do just that.

So while I had previously resisted any thought of an all-party conference, believing that if we persisted we would gain recognition of our honest and straightforward effort, I was reconciling myself to a change of thought, and my close colleagues in the Rhodesian Front agreed. There were the two main reasons I have mentioned. First, the terrorists were gaining support among the indigenous population, not through convincing argument and appeal, but by using the dreadful weapon of intimidation. Second, the Western leaders would not face up to making a decision

which conflicted with the views of the OAU — 90 per cent of whose membership comprised countries governed by communist dictators.

Jack Gaylard informed me that the local British representatives had assured him that their government were supportive of the idea of an all-party conference — they believed the climate was now right for it. To put it bluntly, with Ian Smith now out of the chair, they were satisfied that they could manipulate things their way. And of course, the perfect finale to the Rhodesian problem was for the British government to orchestrate the final act which would enable them to claim the credit for finding the solution to what had hitherto proved to be such an intractable problem.

At first Muzorewa hesitated, and wanted more time for consideration. The two Chiefs Chirau and Ndweni, went along with the idea — they were receiving worrying messages from the tribal areas of the dreadful atrocities perpetrated against the tribesmen by the terrorists. As Chirau said: ‘Intimidation is a terrible thing — they are even killing my supporters.’

On 22 August Muzorewa informed Parliament that he had accepted an invitation from the British government to attend the Zimbabwe Rhodesia constitutional conference in London the next month.

Five days before the Lancaster House conference opened on Monday 10 September, our forces plunged south deep into the Gaza province of Mozambique, demolishing five major bridges, cutting the terrorists’ supply lines and shaking Machel’s nerve.

Lancaster House was a glorious example of British diplomacy at its very best. If one believes that these affairs should be conducted in the same spirit as ‘no-holds-barred all-in wrestling’, then there should be smiles of satisfaction. On the other hand, if one believes in the philosophy of abiding by the rules of the game as exemplified by British

tradition formulated and carefully preserved at Lord's and the Oval, Twickenham and Murrayfield, Wimbledon, St Andrews, Epsom and Bisley and accepted in their respective fields as typifying the hallmark of fair play and decent conduct, then one would turn away with disapproval, indeed revulsion.

There was the usual build-up of British Foreign Office over-indulgence in unnecessarily extravagant and ornate hospitality — a kind of compensation in advance for what was to come later. They seemed unable to comprehend that treacherous behaviour was inexcusable. We had a warm welcome at our hotel from an enthusiastic crowd of supporters, making it clear that they were pro-Rhodesia and anti-British government. With their placards held aloft, they were constantly in evidence, and we made a habit of exchanging greetings and giving them a progress report on the day's proceedings.

On our second evening in London we attended a social get-together to enable delegates to meet. A tall, fine-looking black gentleman approached me and shook my hand warmly, saying: 'For many years one of the things I hoped for was that we could work together in order to build our country, instead of killing one another. This is a happy occasion.'

I asked his name. 'Josiah Tongagara,' he replied. Over the short period of the conference we developed a cordial relationship, and he gave me the impression of being a man with whom one could not only reason, but who could also be trusted. We often spoke together when sessions were held, and at social functions, and I was deeply concerned on one such occasion when he confided in me that he was running into strong opposition over his beliefs that they should work together with Nkomo and Smith in order to ensure a successful implementation of the final agreement. Indeed, he said, 'The position has become so serious that

even here in London I have had to make plans to cover my back.' A desperately alarming situation!

Under the communist system the party is divided into a political wing and a military wing. Tongagara was the head of the latter, known as ZANLA. From what I had heard and read about the man there had been built up in my mind a picture of aggressive ruthlessness. By contrast, I was impressed with his maturity and ability to make reasoned contributions to the problem before us.

The conference dragged on for a month, with the British Foreign Office manoeuvring around the various parties, using their 'diplomacy' to reconcile differences. But it was clear to me that every time there was a shift of ground, this was towards Nkomo and Mugabe, and away from Muzorewa and the others representing our government.

At one stage Carrington went to Washington for more than a week, and during his absence no decisions of consequence could be made. On his return I reminded him that innocent people were being murdered in our country every day, and this would continue until we finalised our work — I hoped he would dedicate more time to our mission. He displayed a pretence to being hurt, but I was simply giving him the views that had been expressed by all of our delegates during his long absence.

I enjoyed a stimulating visit from Douglas Bader, the legless RAF fighter ace, and there was no difference of opinion between us on how best to settle the Rhodesian problem. On departing, he asked me to accompany him to his car, as he wished to leave no doubt in anybody's mind which side he was supporting. His small sports car was parked outside the main entrance, a concession not extended to others — 'These chaps are very kind to me because of my legs,' was his comment. It was good to find that there were still remnants of the British character which were not prepared to overlook history and the part played by their heroes. In keeping with the traditional code

of people who believe in true freedom, this did not stem from any government ordinance, it came from the heart. Douglas mentioned to me that Max Aitken was confined to bed, so I visited him and we reminisced about old times in Cairo and the western desert. Sadly, while his spirit was still there, his body was failing.

Our Conservative Party friends in London were consistent in their support, and I maintained contact with them. As matters seemed to be moving in the wrong direction, however, I decided to speak to Julian Amery, and took David Smith, Chris Andersen and Rowan Cronjé with me. I expressed our growing concern that we had detected that things were moving slowly but surely in the direction of the Patriotic Front, that Muzorewa was incapable of holding his ground and that while Carrington and his minions were happy to listen to our views, it was clear that they regarded us as of no consequence. Scant attention was being paid to the preservation of standards in the civil service, the security services, the judiciary and attorney general's office, and all the other essential services necessary to maintain standards of civilisation for our country, whoever the future government. At the commencement of the conference we had been led to believe that these matters would receive priority in order to preserve the confidence of our white population, thus encouraging them to continue playing their part in building our new nation. Our request was for Julian to convey our deep concern to Margaret Thatcher. He listened attentively, put a few questions and then asked each of my three associates individually if they supported the case which I had made. They all replied affirmatively. He undertook to speak to the Prime Minister.

I had a visit from Hector MacDonald, our Chief Justice, who had flown in from Salisbury. He protested in strong terms that the British government was ignoring him, with Carrington unwilling to interview him. 'After all, I am second in status only to the Prime Minister in our country,

and accordingly I am entitled to recognition.' I have heard that story before, I thought to myself, but as he was expressing strong sentiments, which coincided with my own, I encouraged him to persist in his endeavour to see Carrington. With typical Foreign Office diplomacy, Carrington did see him — he took him in his car to Heathrow on his way to catch an aircraft to the Continent, and in that short space of time he not only had MacDonald eating out of his hand, he had converted him into becoming a disciple of the British cause. That evening MacDonald had a long session with Muzorewa and his colleagues, assuring them of the British government's good intentions of producing an agreement that would ensure a return to power of Muzorewa and his UANC. The undertaking had been given to him personally by Carrington that very day.

I was well aware of Carrington's tactic, because he had tried it on me, without success, when I had warned him that the way things were going we would be landed with a Mugabe government. He replied, 'My dear Mr Smith, I want to assure you that our whole strategy has been formulated to ensure that your prognosis will not eventuate. Quite the reverse. We have no doubt that your next government will be formed by a combination of Muzorewa, Nkomo and Smith. Moreover, should your worst fears materialise with a victory for the external factions, the leader will be Nkomo and not Mugabe. Even Nyerere has confirmed to us that all of them have accepted that Nkomo, as the first leader of African nationalism in Zimbabwe, will be the leader of the first government.'

Firmly but courteously, I pointed out that it was incumbent upon me to inform him that one of the perennial problems we lived with was the agonising fact that the British government in general, and the Foreign Office in particular, were dismally ignorant of African affairs, especially African psychology and their handling of political problems. In my opinion Mugabe, through the use of his

machine of intimidation, which was ready to move into top gear when the command came, would win a majority of seats. Carrington replied, ‘But the agreement states clearly that any party resorting to intimidation will be disqualified.’ Once again I had to point out that the British did not understand Africa — the intimidation was so well organised that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain the necessary evidence. On the question of leadership I had to remind him that Shona-speaking people comprised more than 80 per cent of our population — anybody who believed that they would accept a Matabele as their leader was living in a fool’s paradise.

He had more success, however, in persuading others to his way of thinking. This became clear at the joint meeting of our parties the following morning held under the chairmanship of Muzorewa. I was surprised to see MacDonald sitting at the top table on his right-hand side. We discussed the proposed new constitution, and there was general acceptance, apart from the Rhodesian Front members. Muzorewa raised the question of obtaining the necessary majority in Parliament for the required constitutional change, pointing out that the Rhodesian Front had the necessary members to block such an amendment. Without hesitating, MacDonald intervened, obviously as part of a preconceived plan, saying that he did not believe this created a problem. As everyone knew, our country’s recent history had created a precedent in ignoring our Constitution, and if this government wished to do likewise there was nothing to prevent them. Both Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole were happily nodding their heads in appreciation.

I was absolutely appalled. First, to claim that our UDI had created a precedent, and that there was any similarity between the two cases, was a blatant lie, and MacDonald, because of his position as a High Court judge, was well aware of this. Our case hinged on the fact that the British

government had reneged on an agreement which they had made with our Rhodesian government, and accordingly we were satisfied that we were entitled to take matters into our own hands in order to give effect to the contract which had been made. A number of eminent international constitutional lawyers had endorsed this stand, and eventually our case came before and was accepted by the Rhodesian Appellate Division, with MacDonald as one of the judges. We never amended or changed our constitution. MacDonald was recommending something which was totally different. We were now operating under our own new constitution, which we had produced and passed through our Parliament less than a year ago. This was done constitutionally, with the necessary majority for a constitutional amendment. Muzorewa was the Prime Minister, and he had sworn an oath of allegiance to uphold the constitution. MacDonald was the Chief Justice and he had sworn an oath of allegiance, hand on Bible, to uphold the constitution. Moreover, as the Chief Justice of the courts of our nation, more than anyone else he was the guardian of our constitution and our legal system. Now, here he was suggesting that it would be perfectly right and honourable if we violated this very constitution, a classic case of high treason. In any civilised society, this was a crime which attracted the death sentence!

I made a simple statement regretting that our Chief Justice had allowed himself to be dragged into the political arena, and said that I believed he would live to regret it. Without further ado, he rose and departed from the meeting. It was the one and only time he attended any of our sessions. Obviously he was there with one intent: to make the point that, in the opinion of the Chief Justice, if the government of the day wished to violate their country’s constitution, there was no reason why it should not do so. This was an absolutely bizarre situation, and our Minister

of Justice, Chris Andersen, shook his head in disbelief — he could not credit what he had witnessed.

The next item on the scene was the appearance of Pik Botha: he had appointments with Muzorewa and some of our other black leaders, and, as I was subsequently to learn, with David Smith from my delegation. He assured them all that, in the South African assessment, the terms of the agreement were acceptable, and the South African government would give the necessary support to ensure that the election would provide the correct result for our government. Moreover he had been assured of British support for this objective.

I spoke to Rowan Cronjé and asked if he thought the South Africans were trying to avoid me, knowing that I held a different opinion. I believed that, as the leader of our delegation, he should have taken the trouble to consult me, even more so if he knew I held reservations over the proposals. Rowan agreed, and said he would speak to Dawie de Villiers, the South African Ambassador in London. He came back to me shortly after, saying that Pik was returning that evening from the Continent to catch the SAA flight from Heathrow to Jan Smuts. Pik apologised for not meeting me in London, a regrettable oversight. But fortuitously he had a half-hour wait at Heathrow for his connection, and he would reserve that for me. Everything went according to plan, and after giving me a warm welcome we sat down for our discussion. He wasted no time in briefing me on his trip to America, Britain and the Continent. He was at pains to explain how he never ceased to be amazed at how reluctant these countries were to acknowledge that South Africa was changing. Britain, Pik said, was the best of them and was trying to be constructive. But this was because there was reciprocity with South Africa assisting over the Rhodesian problem, and together they were trying to introduce a bit of reason and sanity into the other governments of sub-Saharan

Africa. Why, Pik asked, would they not accept that apartheid was on the way out? And that the South African government required encouragement and credit for what they were doing, not condemnation over past history?

This was nothing new to me; I had heard it before many times. I was keeping an eye on my watch and twenty minutes of my allocated half hour had gone without my managing to get one word in. Slowly and deliberately I leant forward and catching his eye, said: 'I am worried that any minute now you will be called for your flight. Do you mind if I make a few points about this Lancaster House conference?' Reluctantly, he nodded his head in approval and sat back in his chair. Knowing his facility for presenting his case loquaciously and dramatically, he was clearly taken aback at being curbed while in full stride.

I gave him the reasons for my concern over the proposed agreement, pointing out that it would play into the hands of the terrorists, resulting in a Patriotic Front government, with Mugabe replacing Nkomo as leader. The evidence in support of my case was clear and compelling. He appeared somewhat subdued, and methodically expressed his surprise at hearing my views, because they were in conflict with all the other opinions given to him. Even David Smith? I asked. He pondered for a few moments, obviously sensing the gravity of my question, and then replied in the affirmative. He ended up by saying that the South African government had great respect for my experience and knowledge of African affairs, and he assured me that he would report my views to his Prime Minister.

I was not sanguine, however, and the thoughts passing through my mind on the drive back to the hotel were that he was not really interested in my case. The South Africans, with all their power and strength and superior knowledge, had all the answers to Africa's problems; their minds were made up and they had no intention of allowing themselves to be deviated. So with Carrington, and Pik Botha and

Jimmy Carter working together for the same objectives, the dice were obviously loaded. If a small country like Rhodesia had to be sacrificed as a morsel to feed the crocodile, that was an insignificant price to pay in order to buy time and secure some respite.

The day had arrived for our government delegation to make their decision on the draft constitution. I felt a genuine sorrow for Muzorewa because he was out of his depth, not really in the same league as the other players in the 'no-holds-barred' rough and tumble of international politics. Carrington had said to him, in order to persuade him to stand down as Prime Minister during the period of preparation for the general election: 'Of course everyone knows that you are going to be the in-coming Prime Minister, so you may leave your slippers behind in your office to await your return.' In fact, if Carrington had acted in keeping with the Lancaster House agreement concerning parties which resorted to intimidation during the election campaign, as will be recorded later, Muzorewa *would* have been Prime Minister, but for reasons of political expediency he changed his stance.

Our party held the normal after-breakfast meeting before the commencement of other business, and I invited further discussions on the proposed agreement which was to be considered by our all-party meeting. There were no new opinions. We reiterated our belief that there were inadequate safeguards to ensure free and fair elections, and the concession to allow armed terrorists freedom to operate throughout the country intimidating voters would ensure a Patriotic Front victory. It amounted to legalising terrorism.

There were other omissions, less vital but none the less important, such as the guaranteeing and remittability of pensions, and a fund to provide foreign exchange for those who believed they could no longer live in the country if, for instance, communist dictatorship should eventuate. We had

also pressed for stronger safeguards for minorities in order to create the necessary confidence to encourage them to remain in the country and continue providing their professionalism, experience and skills, and there were a number of other beneficial conditions which would have made it more acceptable. I had nominated David Smith as the senior minister to vote with me. My comment was that I believed our two votes (each party was entitled to two voting delegates) would be the only opposition, because the previous day Chief Chirau mentioned to me that their party was having second thoughts about opposing the agreement, as there was great pressure to convince them that such action would be to the detriment of the future of the Chiefs' Council. The Foreign Office had clearly prepared their case meticulously, and resorted to every devious tactic to obtain maximum approval.

I was sad to see their changing course like this, because they had always been dedicated and consistent. They knew that the terrorists were the Chiefs' deadly enemies, dedicated to destroying the tribal structure for the obvious reason that it was an impediment to the communist philosophy of totalitarianism. On more than one occasion I had heard their apt description: 'They are cowards. They bite from behind when your back is turned and then run away like jackals, instead of standing and fighting like men.' Some Chiefs had been murdered because they would not support the terrorists. They assured me, however, that they would stand their ground, even if it meant that they would be killed. That was their fate, they were born into it, and they had to have the courage to face it, like true men.

It gave me much satisfaction to work with these people, renewed my faith in my fellow men, and underlined the fact that courage and strength of character are not confined to one particular class of people. Sadly, treason and corruption are efficient forces, quietly and insidiously penetrating underground. By the time one becomes aware

of the destruction which has taken place, it is too late. The honest, straightforward approach of the Chiefs was incompatible with the underworld of politics in which they were now enmeshed, and they were clearly bemused by all the manoeuvring and pressures to which they were being subjected.

When we entered the lounge which had been allocated for our meeting there was an obvious air of expectancy over the decision to be made, with the buzz of people talking while others were attending to the final plans. Muzorewa was sitting in his chair at the top table, and eventually called the meeting to order, explained the reason for our coming together, and reminded us that each delegation was entitled to two votes. Was there any discussion? Briefly I reiterated the reasons for our opposition, without belabouring the points, as we had made our views clear in previous discussions, and I concluded by giving a warning that if the agreement were accepted, we would live to regret it.

The vote was taken, and there was only one vote against: mine. David Smith, the second vote in our delegation, had cast his vote in favour. The rest of our party members were completely taken aback. The meeting was over and we retired upstairs to the room where we held our discussion. I asked David Smith to account for what he had done and, without hesitation, he replied that for some time he had been having second thoughts, and after giving the question deep consideration his conscience dictated that he should vote in support. Chris Andersen hit the nail on the head when he asked the simple question: ‘Do you not believe you should have given us forewarning?’

There was no reply. He was left in no doubt that the other members of our delegation took exception to the fact that he had breached the trust and team spirit which had been built up, not only at Lancaster House, but over the many years that we had fought and stood together in the battle

for Rhodesia. We were inured to accepting this kind of treatment from our enemies, but from our trusted colleagues and friends? I recalled Cicero's famous words: 'A nation can survive its fools and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within.'

Maybe I should have anticipated this kind of behaviour, because of reports of his meetings with Pik Botha, Carrington and others. I always encouraged such contacts, and welcomed the exchange of ideas and information which emanated from them and was passed on. But when this is carried on behind one's back, obviously suspicions are aroused. Sadly, this was the beginning of a trend of unfortunate incidents which proved that David Smith was hedging his bets to ensure that whatever the final outcome, he would be on the winning side. I was subsequently informed by one of the members of our government team that Muzorewa had promised him a post in his next cabinet. By working in collusion with Carrington, however, he received his reward even when Mugabe was the winner.

Later that afternoon Kayisa Ndweni, the Matabele Chief and one of the doyens of the Chiefs' Council, confided in me his grave doubts over their support for the constitution, but he said: 'I was out-voted. These Shonas do not understand politics — they have not had enough experience.'

Then out of the blue there came a flash of news which raised my hopes and made me feel that the miracle had happened. Mugabe believed that he had not gained sufficient concessions to ensure his victory in the election, and so he decided to register his protest by making a dramatic withdrawal from the conference. He had packed his bags and was making arrangements to fly out to the United States. This was the kind of tactic that these people resorted to, and threats had already been made. Fortunately the British had made it clear that if any party pulled out, the conference would continue without them, and we had been assured that there would be no deviation

from this plan. Our spirits were buoyant and we set about our business in a more sanguine frame of mind.

Sadly, it was not to be. Carrington contacted Samora Machel, and he delivered the goods. Machel despatched his ambassador in London to Heathrow, where he intercepted Mugabe and conveyed a firm message. If Mugabe broke away from the conference, then he must know that he would not be permitted to continue using Mozambique as a base for his operations. Clearly, Mugabe had no option. He returned to his hotel with his tail between his legs. I do not believe he could have been as depressed as I was — my hopes were dashed.

I received a telephone call from Julian Amery telling me of his predicament when Margaret Thatcher informed him that, according to reports she had received, David Smith had disagreed with me. When Julian told her that he had positively agreed in his presence, she advised him to check again. Moreover, Carrington had assured her that he had Chief Justice MacDonald in his pocket as well! Regrettably, I had to confirm both of these facts. ‘So,’ said Julian, ‘methinks we have had the rug pulled from under our feet.’

I was saddened. When one is part of a small band of people trying to make a stand on principle, surrounded by enemies conniving to sabotage your case, one derives satisfaction from the justice of one’s cause and the conviction that history will prove its validity. It is indeed a privilege to be associated with such an occasion, something unknown to those who grovel in the troughs of appeasement and compromise.

But it was all over bar the shouting, and so I started making plans for my return home. Of course a grand celebration party was laid on, but it clashed with a dinner arranged by my 130 Squadron colleagues in the city. There were five of them still around, and we invited Douglas Bader to join us. It was a happy occasion, and we took our time reminiscing about those wonderful days, and the

associated history that enables all true Britishers to hold their heads high.

It gave me a satisfying feeling to have a genuine excuse to send my apologies to the Lancaster House celebration, because in all honesty it would have been a nauseous occasion for me, and to pretend otherwise would have been hypocritical. Even had I attended in mourning garb it would not have rung true, because funerals are occasions when one pays one's respects. My only feeling would have been contempt, and I believe all true Britishers would have joined me in bowing their heads in shame.

Tragically, this is the kind of occasion which plays into the hands of the opportunist who waits to see which way the wind is blowing and then bends with it, regardless of the consequences to others. Over the next few months, during the period of the run-up to the election, there were many such opportunities. It goes without saying that this kind of behaviour earned the disapproval of the great mass of our people who had succeeded in preserving their high standards of integrity and belief in the principles of fair play to one's fellow-men. Obviously, feelings ran high and there was much straight-from-the-shoulder talking.

The comments in my diary reflect this mood, and, while I have always resisted indulging in personal recrimination and character assassination, it is only right that the truth of the occasion be recorded for history.

> 11.11.79 — Arrived back from the London Conference. My comment at the airport: while we have been landed with a bad agreement, we have no option but to make the most of it. Our country will succeed in the future in proportion to the white content of our population. Accordingly, my main task now is to preserve the confidence and morale of our whites in order to convince the maximum number to go on living and working in Rhodesia so that we retain their expertise,

> professionalism, experience, initiative and all those other desirable qualities which have contributed towards making this country one of the success stories of the modern world.

I immediately had a busy day on 12 November, meeting a string of people, black and white, wanting to know what was happening and giving their views on the situation. I received a briefing from one of the senior members of the South African embassy, who spoke in confidence and must therefore remain anonymous. He expressed the unhappiness of many South Africans over the conduct of their external affairs. He referred in particular to a meeting Pik Botha had had with Muzorewa and David Smith to plan assistance for UANC, both financial and material, coupled with instructions to keep me at arm's length in case I disapproved of their actions. If Muzorewa won the election, I was told, he would bring in David Smith to represent the white community. Then there was the disturbing news that David had for some time been scheming behind my back, and this had culminated in a meeting arranged by John Landau with selected MPs — those whom they believed would comply — to seek agreement to move me out and put David Smith in my chair. David had claimed strongly that the South African government were in support of such a move. Unfortunately for David and Landau, they received a hostile reception from the MPs, who told them to do the honest thing and put their plan before our caucus. No more was heard about it. A message from Harold Hawkins informed us that the scheme had been the brainchild of South African Foreign Affairs, and no one else in their government knew about it or would support it.

As my caucus knew, as did the whole party, I was more than ready to step aside and hand over to a successor, but there was a clear message to the effect that I was the only person with the experience and track record to enable me

to handle the situation confronting us, and hold the confidence of our white community. I believe the point was substantiated by the fact that at the ensuing election the Rhodesian Front won all twenty of the seats allocated to the whites.

Preparations were beginning for the coming election, although the Lancaster House deal was not yet formally ratified. At the security council meeting on the morning of 15 November we were informed of the South African move into our southern districts to assist in preparation for the election. There were three of their big Puma helicopters, a DC3 transport aircraft and in excess of 1,000 troops already in — they were certainly keeping to their agreement of backing Muzorewa to the hilt.

At our first caucus meeting since our return from Lancaster House, there was pretty straight talking right across the board, from the hawks on the right to the doves, who were probably more in the middle than to the left. In the end cool heads prevailed, and there was unanimous agreement that we had no option other than to go along with the Lancaster House outcome. After the collapse of the 1976 Pretoria agreement we had gradually been reduced to a position where we were no longer in control of our own affairs, and this had enabled the British government to manipulate the situation to fit in with their plans at Lancaster House. Pik Botha was in the wings, adding his support and encouraging Muzorewa to comply. The promises of both financial and material assistance made at the meetings with Muzorewa and David Smith proved to be a powerful lever. In addition the performance of Hector MacDonald at the conference was a significant factor which caucus found inexcusable. He had made a major contribution towards undermining Rhodesia’s position in London. Chris Andersen, our Minister of Justice, expressed his strong feelings over the inexplicable behaviour of our Chief Justice. He subsequently informed

me that the other judges of the Appellate Division had expressed positive views in opposition to and condemnation of the stand MacDonald had taken at Lancaster House. If people are prepared to make a stand on principle and live with it, that is one thing. But in this case, once the whole sordid affair was in place, and Mugabe and his communist dictatorship installed, MacDonald cashed in his pension and associated benefits and beat a hasty retreat to live in a comfortable home on the coast of South Africa. At the end of our caucus meeting it was agreed reluctantly that a statement would be issued indicating our compliance with the agreement. Alec Moseley's plea was: 'Make it as unenthusiastic as you can.'

The stresses within the government of national unity continued. At the cabinet meeting on the morning of 20 November, Muzorewa lost control of himself and accused Rhodesian Front members of siding with Chikerema and others in order to undermine himself and the Lancaster House agreement. He now found himself in a position of uncertainty as to whether he would have the support in Parliament to pass the necessary legislation to implement the agreement. He exclaimed: 'Everything is in a terrible mess!'

I did not think he was capable of rising to such heights of emotion. His outburst was totally misplaced, indeed destructive, and it was therefore necessary to bring him down to earth. I reminded him that the 'mess' we found ourselves in stemmed back to his entry into politics when he had led the campaign to reject the British government proposals from the Pearce Commission in 1972. Had that plan been accepted, I explained, we would by now have had responsible black majority government. Second, if he had accepted the British and American governments' plan at the Geneva conference in 1976, that would have introduced immediate majority rule. Third, if he had succeeded in keeping his commitment to win over local black support

and prevent further terrorist incursions during his tenure as Prime Minister, everything would have been under control and there would have been no need for a Lancaster House conference. And fourth, the fact that he had allowed Carrington and his accomplices to pull the wool over his eyes at Lancaster House was clearly his responsibility and it would be dishonest to suggest otherwise. The record showed clearly that he had allowed himself to be seduced into endorsing the agreement in conflict with the advice I had offered. I made the point that the kind of exercise we had just been through was totally sterile and could be of benefit only to our opponents. Why did he not put the question to a vote in order to ascertain the true position? He agreed, and found that there was unanimous support from the whole cabinet. After an embarrassing silence, he meekly commented: 'This is a great achievement, a great day; I must thank all of you.' The whole thing had been a dreadful misjudgement on his part, and did nothing to enhance his image among his cabinet colleagues — quite the reverse.

My diary gives the atmosphere of those dark days.

> 23.11.79 — Today's Salisbury *Herald* is something to be remembered: 'British are Great Apes,' says Kaunda, 'they are spineless hyenas.' Previously he had referred to them as toothless bulldogs. Mugabe tells Carrington to go to Hell. The Mob in Lusaka ransacked the British Embassy and destroyed the Union Jack while shouting swine, white pigs and other insulting remarks. The black man in Africa can do whatever he likes, and get away with it, even murder, knowing full well that the British politicians will continue to grovel before them in an attempt to win their support.
>
> Last evening saw Muzorewa's press interview on TV — regrettably inept. My secretary informs me that the media representatives were loud in their criticism. One

said: ‘He sounded as if he had over-indulged,’ but I know he doesn’t touch the stuff! It is sad, because we’re landed with him, for better for worse, and must make the most of it.

I had a good meeting that morning, 23 November, with the Rhodesian Front’s two Salisbury divisions and Mashonaland rural. Although the story which I gave them of the Lancaster House agreement was tough and unpalatable, these wonderful Rhodesian people had a facility to absorb whatever punishment you threw at them without deviating from their course. The next day, 24 November, I went down to Bulawayo for a meeting with the Matabeleland division, and as usual there were no problems — they were strong, resolute and unswerving. On my way to Salisbury Airport I called in at Government House to see President Gumede. He was disillusioned. None of the black politicians seemed to know what was happening as a result of Lancaster House. They had clearly given in to the British and the terrorists, and were now confused and uncertain. We were in the desperate position of having no leadership. Was there nothing I could do? he asked. Apart from agreeing with his sentiments and assuring him of my continuing efforts to guide affairs along the correct channels, it was a fact of life that I was no longer in control. He shook his head and quietly said: ‘That, of course, was the mistake we made.’

At cabinet on the morning of 27 November, I expressed strong concern over the restrictive exchange dealing with the remittability of pensions in the draft constitution from London, and it was agreed that we would send our protest to the British government. But I was not hopeful, as it was clear to me that the British were obsessed with placating the Patriotic Front. Moreover, they would make the assessment that this kind of appeal, while having strong support from our white people, would attract lukewarm

support from our blacks, as their main attention was directed at gaining concessions in those areas which would win them voter support at the impending election.

Two days later, on 29 November, I had separate meetings with the two Chiefs —Chirau and Ndweni — who wished to brief me on their election tactics. I also bumped into Dumbutshena and congratulated him on his contrbution in the House on the previous day when he was strongly critical of Muzorewa's unbelievable statement which made reference to the side-stepping of Parliament. Dumbutshena said this was 'the kind of incomprehensible behaviour that one has grown to expect from him'. There is no doubt that the idea was placed in his mind by Hector MacDonald's irresponsible outburst at Lancaster House. My comment was that it would have been bad enough if he had spoken like that in some back room, but to use the hallowed ground of the despatch box in Parliament was nothing short of sacrilege — akin to the Archbishop of Canterbury using Canterbury Cathedral to preach a sermon against God! — especially when one realised that Muzorewa was one of the chief architects of the constitution passed through Parliament a year ago. In other words, he was contemplating unconstitutional action against himself. Was that not heresy on the part of both a prime minister and a bishop?!

On 30 November, I was taken aback by the news that UANC (Muzorewa) had attacked me publicly, saying that I had made a secret pact with ZAPU (Nkomo). The record is clear: I warned Muzorewa at Lancaster House that the agreement favoured the Patriotic Front (Nkomo and Mugabe), but he knew better. I had not seen or spoken to any PF member since departing from London. Ever since, all of my efforts had been directed at trying to ensure that we, the parties forming the current government (including the UANC), win the election. When I subsequently questioned him, he claimed that the statement was made

without his knowledge! He undertook to make a retraction, but it never came.

Within the Rhodesian Front there was also dissension. On 3 December a small delegation came to say that there was a strong feeling in our caucus that David Smith should not be offered a constituency in the election, as he was suspect. In addition, they said, Paddy Millar had indicated that he was opting out. He was tired of the intrigue of politics. (In fact he had already informed me of his decision personally.) They brought a message from Hilary Squires expressing his concern over the intrigue which had come to his notice and saying, if his services were required, that he would step down from the bench (he had become a High Court judge) and stand for Parliament. Not only had he been one of my most able ministers, but loyalty and courage were obvious qualities in his generally quiet demeanour. I came to the conclusion that he could best serve his country by continuing in his current capacity. Strong and independent judges who have the courage of their convictions are an essential ingredient of our civilisation.

The Lancaster House agreement was becoming a reality. The British Governor, Lord Soames, arrived on 12 December to the strains of ‘God Save the Queen’. When he drove into Government House there was a handful of people with a Union Jack to welcome him — the same old bunch of starry-eyed liberals who had always been petrified at the thought of standing alone in this world. They now heaved a sigh of relief at once more being able to cling on to the mother country’s apron strings. At the same time, they were busy fawning over those whom they believed would be their future masters. It is pertinent to note that over the next few years many of them packed their bags and departed, complaining that they could no longer live in the country — conditions had deteriorated at such an alarming rate!

Muzorewa and his UANC produced a mock coffin as part of their ceremony of burying UDI. The comment came from a number of our black people: ‘Did they not use Smith and his UDI to bring themselves into power?’

They reached an agreement with the architects of UDI, and then used the UDI constitution and Parliament to implement the 1979 constitution which brought them into power, and then went on to use the same UDI base to usher in this latest constitution, which they helped to fabricate at Lancaster House. So this was a belated, and somewhat pathetic effort, to remedy the situation. But they only succeeded in drawing attention to their self-made predicament. In the eyes of the hard-core nationalists, they stood condemned for building their edifice on a UDI foundation. It would have been an intelligent tactic if they had claimed success in turning UDI to their advantage, using it to bring in the majority rule for Zimbabwe that had always been their cherished objective. But this past year had been a sad story of one blunder after another.

For the past two decades the communists had been trying, in vain, to destroy Rhodesia. They had now succeeded. The black political parties who had joined together in forming our current anti-communist government had tragically allowed themselves to be hoodwinked into supporting this devious plan. The name ‘Rhodesia’ would be removed from the statute books, but we would preserve the wonderfully proud Rhodesian spirit. There are many tribes in our country — the Matabele in the west, the Karanga in the midlands, the Zezuru and Manyika in the east, the Venda and Shangaan in the south, and the MakoreKore and Tonga in the north — all composed of black people. There is only one white tribe, the Rhodesians, who are indigenous to this country. Our blacks admire those who are strong and have pride in themselves, their traditions and their history. They would welcome the white tribe as part of our new nation, making their unique

contributions towards building a great, free, democratic, viable and happy country which would continue to be the envy of the rest of Africa.

That week I received a lovely book, *Sigh for a Merlin*, by the great Spitfire test pilot, Alex Henshaw, and he wrote inside: 'There is no dishonour in a lost cause — the shame is with those who betrayed you.'

The Lancaster House agreement was in being but there were still difficulties with the ceasefire arrangements. On 16 December I received a visit from one of my friends in telecommunications; he had a tape of a conversation between Christopher Soames and Carrington. The British were trying to obtain another assembly point for the Patriotic Front (PF) near Que Que, and Antony Duff — as a member of the British team — had persuaded Walls to agree. On the tape there was much back-slapping and smug satisfaction: 'Absolutely fantastic, congratulations Christopher, old boy.' Then the reply: 'Don't mention it Peter, after all it's part of the job and the main credit is due to Duff. He knows these chaps so well and they trust him completely.' Carrington was absolutely thrilled that they had 'done the trick', and the whole Lancaster deal could now be clinched. Soames said he had been on the phone to Cyrus Vance and he was completely satisfied. Carrington assured Soames that he would phone him as soon as he and his Prime Minister got over to Washington. It looked to me as if once again the British Foreign Office had taken our security chaps for a ride. Our intelligence department was still suspicious of these Britishers — rightly so — and were watching every step.

On 17 December I had a happy day, with constructive meetings at Karoi and Sinoia. I was impressed with their strong dedication to the principle of unity among our white people — it was our only hope. Wherever I had been since returning from London, to the four corners of the country, there was that tremendous Rhodesian character,

reconciling itself to the inevitable treachery inflicted upon us, but betraying no sign of retreat from those decent standards and beliefs that had always motivated our way of life. Before taking off from New Sarum, Chris Dixon, one of our air force pilots, brought along the British General, John Acland, and introduced him. Acland said it was a pleasure to be able to tell me of the high regard in which our security forces were held by their British counterparts. He also wished to mention the respect which I personally enjoyed throughout Britain, and his satisfaction that he would be able to inform his own family that he had met me personally.

I visited Soames on the morning of 18 December and we talked for over an hour. He met me with great courtesy and was most reasonable in our discussion. I was impressed by his acceptance of the fact that a daunting task confronted him, and the humility with which he hoped he would be able to cope. He questioned me on a number of points, such as getting the white election out of the way first, and I concurred that this would be a simple, straightforward operation. His main concern was the behaviour of the Patriotic Front and whether they would comply with the terms of the agreement. I told him the problem was that if you give them an inch they will take a yard, but that they understand and respect a firm hand in the administration of justice. When I departed he walked out with me on to the veranda and thanked me for giving him the benefit of my advice, and hoped that we would continue to communicate: 'You have forgotten more about Africa than I will ever know.'

The next day, 19 December, I received a message inviting me to travel to London the following day for the signing ceremony of the agreement — I would be an observer, not a signatory. I could not believe it. I certainly would not have attended as a signatory — to sign my own death warrant — and I was even less keen to go as an observer, watching

others doing the job for me would have been a nauseating experience. My rejection of the invitation was therefore firm and unambiguous.

As a matter of interest, attending the conference were four parties and their leaders representing our government, and two parties and their leaders representing the PF. At the signing ceremony both PF leaders were signatories, while only one of the four government leaders was invited to sign: another classic example of how the British government pandered to the terrorists.

By 22 December, we were going through one of those periods when the media were having an absolute ball building up magnificent pictures and creating heroes out of a situation which occupies a black page in Britain's history. It was orchestrated by political opportunists seeking short-term glory at the expense of sacrificing their own loyal kith and kin. During the Lancaster House talks, whenever the British gave way to the demands of the PF, we would subsequently read reports of how they had resisted these unreasonable requests and won the day. Whenever Muzorewa and his associates collapsed and gave ground, they were commended for having the courage to stand firm on their principles. In our local *Herald* Jimmy Carter hailed the magnificent Rhodesian agreement. In truth he should have lamented the fact that it played into the hands of communist transgression in Africa. Even Margaret Thatcher, obviously prompted by Carrington, thought that the Rhodesian agreement would make an enormous difference to the whole of southern Africa. Then the editorial: 'Carrington deserves the greatest credit for having masterminded the ceasefire agreement.' In fact the plan was worked out by the Rhodesian and British security representatives, not by Carrington.

In order to obtain a true picture of how the original planning commenced, it is necessary to go back to the Commonwealth prime ministers' conference held in Lusaka

in August 1979. Carrington, together with Malcolm Fraser, the Australian Prime Minister, ganged up with the leaders of the front-line states, and together they pressurised Margaret Thatcher to abandon her plan to give recognition to the Zimbabwe Rhodesian government even though it had fulfilled all the conditions laid down by successive British governments. This would have complied with undertakings given by Margaret Thatcher, and indeed the Conservative Party, in their election campaign, followed up by statements made after their election victory.

I received many messages from Australians apologising for the behaviour of their Prime Minister, interfering in the internal affairs of another country. They claimed that he had failed to abide by his election promises in his own country, and calls for his resignation were mounting.

The front-line states were so desperate for a settlement, for both economic and security reasons, that they pressurised the British to deal with the problem and agreed to give Nkomo and Mugabe instructions not to walk out — as they had been wont to do. So they were locked in — a situation which no other British government had enjoyed. The other *sine qua non* was to remove Smith and the Rhodesian Front from the driving seat — something which no other British government had been able to do. With the connivance of John Vorster they succeeded in achieving this at the 1976 Pretoria meeting. Carrington was therefore faced with Muzorewa representing Rhodesia.

One of the stipulations laid down by the front-line states was that there should be no quick election after the agreement. This was vital, since it would enable the PF to infiltrate their terrorist forces into Rhodesia and cache their arms in readiness for their campaign of intimidation during the election. Our security forces knew that the arms handed in at the assembly points were surplus to their requirements; many of them were dilapidated and of no practical use. The front-line states' leaders, with the

support of the OAU, were in constant touch with Carrington and whenever the PF required pressure it was available in abundance. By contrast, Muzorewa had the backing of Pik Botha, who in British eyes was a lightweight. Moreover, as I knew from my dealings with John Vorster, the South Africans were working hand in glove with the front-line states, and there is no reason to believe that these contacts were not in existence during Lancaster House. The South African Foreign Office were losing no time in employing the tactic of hedging their bets!

On the lighter side, the vanguard of the British contingent had been in the country for some time. As I suppose could only be expected, a bunch of them got into a provocative argument with some of our chaps in a local pub, and as a result had to be casevaced to the Andrew Fleming Hospital in Salisbury. It appears from the reports I received that they asked for what they got. Regrettably, I must say that I have met the odd arrogant Englishman on a few occasions, never more so than when they carry with them the stamp of the British Foreign Office.

On 23 December there was much euphoria in the press and broadcasts over the signing of the agreement, with hostilities ceasing from midnight. I contacted the local editors and reminded them of previous similar occasions when a few of our people had dropped their guard and the terrorists had taken advantage of this. Was it necessary to go through this kind of hypocrisy and stage-acting to assist in building up the image of British politicians more concerned about getting themselves off the OAU hook than about the future of Rhodesia?

After the signing ceremony we were subjected to a classic Carrington statement: ‘Any party which systematically breaks the ceasefire, or indulges in widespread intimidation, will be disqualified from the election.’ There was one obvious, simple question: did this imply that breaches of the ceasefire which were *not*

systematic, and intimidation which was *not* widespread, would be in order?

Messages of support from all over the world continued to pile up. One from Wales:

> Speaking on behalf of many, many people, it is ironical that those who would wish to decide the future of your country did not contribute to the sweat and tears it required to hack a civilisation out of the jungle. At least your UDI bought time and showed the rest of the world that your people did not intend to be written off.

I departed for the farm to get away from everything.

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The Election of Mugabe

I returned to Salisbury on the evening of 6 January 1980, having enjoyed the Christmas break at ‘Gwenoro’ — our farm — and so far we had enjoyed a good rainy season. I had time to reminisce over the past and plan for the future. The nation was still in crisis. People were still being killed. The first hurdle was the coming election. What sort of government would it produce?

I had an early meeting on 7 January with Chris Andersen, who reported that he had been in contact with many people, and there was a clear message that the RF was the only party to support.

My next visitor was Rowan Cronjé. He informed me that over Christmas he had had time to reflect and had discussed our situation with a great number of people; he had received a consistent message that my record was exceptional, unequalled in the latter half of this century, and that my composure and dignity over this latest disgraceful episode would be recorded in history. A group of young people had asked him to convey a message to me, saying that I was one of the few constant factors they could find in this world, that I had always stood for what was decent and honest, and that I could be assured of their continuing support. Cronjé wished to stress that, since I was the person responsible for creating this incredible nation, nothing would do more harm than my withdrawal from the political scene at this stage.

Then P.K. van der Byl arrived for a general discussion, something which I always appreciated and enjoyed — there was seldom a dull moment when he was around, and most important of all, I knew that his dedication and loyalty to

Rhodesia was absolute and unswerving. Harold Hawkins had been up on a visit from Pretoria in the previous week and had called in to see him for an assessment on the local state of affairs. P.K. had told him that much of South Africa's effort was being misdirected, as usual, and if they could be encouraged to work more closely with our people, this would be of assistance. Harold replied: 'As you know, you can't tell those chaps anything!'

On 8 January I had a visit from Francis Zindoga, who said that the black ministers in our government were deeply concerned that Soames and those around him were conniving with the Patriotic Front. I reminded him that I had warned them at Lancaster House of this danger but, because of weak leadership, they had landed themselves in this predicament. In all fairness, Zindoga reminded me that he had agreed with my stand, but had been unable to convince the other UANC delegates. He believed the four leaders of our government of national unity should form a delegation to protest to Soames. I agreed, saying that, as soon as the other three leaders were ready, I would join them. He departed, believing he could make the necessary arrangements.

P.K. came with a message just received from London. It said that Tiny Rowland and Lonrho were excited and enthusiastic over a plan to bring the veteran nationalists, James Chikerema and Michael Mawema, into an alliance with Nkomo, as the best means of keeping Mugabe out. Rowland, who was holidaying on the south coast of California, was about to return to London, and suggested a meeting with P.K. somewhere on the Continent. I was neither opposed nor enthusiastic, and suggested we wait a while and let things cool down. P.K. also informed me that one of our Arab friends, at a meeting in London to discuss Russian infiltration into the Middle East, had attended a luncheon with Margaret Thatcher. She had said that, according to her latest information, Mugabe would win the

election — whether we liked it or not, it was a fact of life. It seemed as if the British were coming around to accept the view I gave them at Lancaster House.

One of our informers from the Mtoko and Mrewa district reported that everyone there was pro-Mugabe because the whole area was riddled with terrorists and *mujibas* (collaborators). In other words, those poor, defenceless, confused people had got the message — did they want to remain alive or not?

Our friend from the South African embassy informed us that Pik Botha and his Foreign Affairs Department were still harping on their theme of removing me, but the military chaps disagreed. It was believed that P.W. Botha did not support Pik.

Dennis Walker, our former Minister of Mines, was the next to drop in to tell me that he was taken aback when van Vuuren (South African Ambassador) told him he believed it was time I retired from the political scene, and that it was not important for our white people to stay united. Our best tactic would be to serve as a benign opposition, van Vuuren felt. He received a flea in his ear from Walker. To me this was no new development in South African policy — if they could neutralise us, they believed they would be able to manipulate the black politicians, and if necessary make a plan to procure their compliance. They had often told me how easy it was — witness Vorster's 'I have got them eating out of my hand.' But they overlooked the evidence which proves clearly that they go on eating only as long as it suits them — the same as any other intelligent person in this world.

On 18 January I saw Soames about the massive intimidation and the confirming affidavits which had been produced — over one thousand of them. He was composed, and said he had anticipated this would be the subject of my visit. He was pleased to inform me that they had a plan. He produced a map and indicated the three main provinces

where intimidation was greatest. He said they proposed to disqualify the PF in those provinces: Mashonaland East, Manicaland and Victoria. But, I pointed out, there was intimidation throughout the whole country. 'Yes,' he agreed. However, he then argued that there would be problems selling that to the world and, in particular, to the OAU. His team, he said, were satisfied, nevertheless, that they could get away with disqualifying the PF in those three provinces. After all, he maintained, it would achieve the objective: Muzorewa would secure a majority. I had to agree; it was easy to work out the mathematics. A typical piece of British diplomacy: dishonest but effective.

Within my party, over the past few weeks feelings over the behaviour of David Smith had been strong, with the suggestion that we must have a showdown. I had numerous representations from ministers and backbenchers, expressing themselves most forcibly, convinced that he was working in collusion with Carrington. I had strong feelings, not only because of his behaviour at Lancaster House, but also about his manoeuvring behind my back locally. Yet I adhered to my conviction that the national interest must always receive priority. Particularly at this stage in our history, it was vital to preserve white unity. Nevertheless, at our party executive meeting on 18 January the matter came to a head and David Smith was challenged. His attempt to justify himself was pathetic; something about devoting three days to persuading Muzorewa to include me in the delegation to go to London. But P.K. instantly hit that on the head by reminding him that my inclusion was determined by an open cabinet decision, and that this was recorded in the minutes. Did David Smith not recall that at the same cabinet meeting it had been agreed that Ndabaningi Sithole would be entitled to attend in his capacity as leader of one of the parties forming our government of national unity, although he himself was not a cabinet minister? I then informed the meeting that

Muzorewa had approached me prior to the commencement of the cabinet meeting and asked me to determine the composition of my delegation. David Smith simply collapsed and pleaded that he had nothing further to say. The executive accepted my suggestion, with obvious reluctance from many of them, that the matter be left in the hands of the party chairman and myself. We had much work before us in our planning for the election, and decisions had to be finalised at this meeting.

Certain members of the security forces had maintained contact with me, and Rob Gaunt, one of our Members of Parliament who was a wing commander in our air force, also brought in much useful information. For some time, there had been a growing disenchantment with decisions from our Nat JOC. His report of a meeting at New Sarum told of blunt, critical talk, and a certain high-ranking officer, noted for his straight talking, told Walls that he should concentrate on his military job and leave the politics to Smith — the security forces still regarded me as their leader. Evidently, Walls was floundering, and more often than not his political assessments were proven to be wide of the mark, resulting in acrimonious recriminations.

As I had predicted at Lancaster House, Walls, Flower, Hector MacDonald and David Smith fell into the trap laid by Carrington and the British Foreign Office. It was becoming more and more difficult for them to refute the evidence that Mugabe was heading for a victory, unless they succeeded in preventing intimidation — and so far, they were not succeeding. And most important of all, they convinced Muzorewa to go along with the plan and to turn his back on me. If we had worked together, we could have insisted on a few amendments that would have made all the difference. After all, we had come a long way, creating the transitional government, which in turn led to the election of our current government with Muzorewa as the first black Prime Minister of our country. Sure we had our differences,

all part of healthy democracy. But we were united in our opposition to the dead hand of communism and all its associated evils. There were encouraging reports at Lancaster House that Muzorewa was resisting pressure from Carrington and the British Foreign Office. He had often spoken to me of his distrust of the British government. But it was his own friends and advisers — the four mentioned above — who finally convinced him to co-operate with the British. Then there was Pik Botha representing the South African government, who played a not insignificant part. Into the bargain, as one would expect, the South Africans used the powerful weapon of financial assistance for the election, and this was followed by those covert meetings when Muzorewa and David Smith visited Pretoria to make the necessary plans. Muzorewa distanced himself more and more from me as he came under the influence of his 'friends', who had swallowed hook, line and sinker the theme that: 'poor old Smith, great guy that he may have been, is now over the hill and unable to adapt to the realities which surround him'.

But they were changing their tune now, with copious condemnations of the British government's devious plan. In truth they were paying for their own mistakes which, as everyone knows, is part and parcel of the hard school of gaining experience in life, and the price exacted is always greater for those who arrogantly believe that they know all the answers. There were a few exceptions, maintaining their support for the British, albeit discreetly. They were the people who expected to be rewarded for their compliance and who were obviously not prepared to do anything which would prejudice their ill-gotten gains. After all, there is honour even among thieves, and their efforts would be rewarded no matter what the final result.

Moves were being made to prevent Mugabe from taking power. For example, on the evening of 21 January I received a message saying that Tiny Rowland was giving

his backing to a plan to keep Nkomo and Mugabe divided, and eventually bring Nkomo into an alliance with the other parties in order to ensure the defeat of Mugabe and the communists. The ultimate objective was an anti-communist government of national unity, incorporating the whites as well as the majority. In other words, this was the plan which Carrington assured me the British were working on at Lancaster House. Rowland had always supported Nkomo and ZAPU, so this was nothing new. It looked to me as though Rowland, smart tactician that he was, had not been kept informed of the British Foreign Office's change of tactics.

Another message, received on 24 January, came from the local South African military representative to say that one of their top security men close to P.W. Botha was coming to make a personal assessment, as they were not satisfied that they were getting the right message from their Department of External Affairs.

On 25 January I was contacted by some Portuguese chap in Maputo wanting to know how he could get a parcel of prawns to my mother. This gift was an expressed wish of Tongagara before his demise on 25 December 1979 on a road in Mozambique, and his Portuguese friend wished to honour it. Tongagara had stated that he would always remember the kindnesses which he and his friends had received from my mother when they grew up in the Selukwe district. His death was a great tragedy and the announcement that he had been killed in a motor accident rang hollow to me, especially because of his disclosure to me in London that he had to guard his back against those die-hard extremists in his party who took strong exception to his philosophy that the time had come to forget the bitterness of the past, and work together constructively with all other parties to build our country. He had accepted reconciliation. He was one of the few black politicians who gave me hope. I made a point of discussing his death with

our police commissioner and the head of special branch, and both assured me that Tongogara had been assassinated. This was a dreadful act of treachery that would have sad ramifications on the future of our country. If the extremists were so much in control that they could do this kind of thing with impunity, then it boded ill for the future.

There were growing fears about the likely outcome of the election; a visit from three territorial force officers typified this concern. The permanent force officers were going along with Peter Walls's contention that the election was on course and the anti-Mugabe parties would win a majority. The territorials disagreed, believing that they were more in touch with grassroots opinion and were therefore able to make a more accurate assessment. They reiterated the point that Walls was out of his depth in politics.

On Monday afternoon, 28 January, I went to see Soames once again to stress my concern over the mounting intimidation and the importance of getting on top of the problem. I reminded him that the Lancaster House agreement laid down that a party which indulged in intimidation or breached the ceasefire would be disqualified, and asked if we were still on course to disqualify the PF in the three provinces he had indicated to me last week. This clearly upset him, and he claimed that such action would cause alarm and be condemned both internally and externally — Peter (Carrington) had told him the idea would upset the OAU and therefore had to be abandoned. I pointed out that there was already much alarm over the barbaric methods which the PF were using to subjugate the masses into accepting them, as he was well aware from the affidavits he had received. I argued that if the truth about this dreadful intimidation was made public and, in all honesty, we were committed to this, there would not be any objection or condemnation from the free world — quite the reverse. I found him evasive, however,

and it was clear that there would be no answer to my questions. He looked tired and dispirited and one of his comments towards the end was: ‘Every day is a long day.’ He had the unenviable task of trying to make a bad plan work, and it was obvious that the Foreign Office were keeping him on a tight rein in order to ensure that they worked hand in glove with the OAU. On the way out through the front door I ‘accidentally’ bumped into his wife, who introduced herself as Mary Soames. I was happy to meet Winston Churchill’s daughter and talked for a few minutes.

It was clear that things had taken a turn for the worse, that they were drifting out of control with no positive direction. Our salvation lay with Walls and the other members of the Nat JOC, who had made it clear that they would insist on compliance with the terms of the Lancaster House agreement, and that this would mean the disqualification of the PF. But a few of my cabinet colleagues had doubts as to whether, in the event of a showdown, they would have the courage of their convictions. I believed that McLaren would have the necessary strength, but he was number two in the command structure, and it was common knowledge that there were strong differences of opinion, indeed sometimes friction, between him and Walls. I had the opportunity to speak to McLaren on 31 January when I was back in my office after a successful run of meetings through my constituency from Beit Bridge to Bulawayo. I spoke to him about a few points I had picked up on my trip, and he confided in me the serious differences of opinion at the Nat JOC. They were getting into deep water because of their political inexperience. Criticism of Walls was growing because of his hostility towards me personally, and his unwillingness to discuss politics with the politicians. I recommended that he and his friends impress upon Walls the vital need to put the national interest before

personalities, and assured him that van der Byl and I would always be available for consultation.

I spent the following week addressing election meetings all over the country, and our white electorate were strong and united — it was clear that our white opposition, the starry-eyed liberals, were receiving no support. Then on 10 February there was an opportunity to influence the military. I met up with P.K. van der Byl at his residence for a meeting with Walls and McLaren. There was no difference of opinion. The plan was clear and in keeping with what had been the objective at Lancaster House: bringing together the anti-communist parties in order to ensure that Mugabe and his Marxist-Leninists did not win. My fear was that they would win through intimidation, and that was an area in which I could make no contribution, being no longer Prime Minister and thus head of the security forces. This was clearly the responsibility of Nat JOC. Walls believed that the position was being contained, and McLaren, while conceding his concern, agreed that their information from their people on the ground supported what Walls had said. It was agreed that we should maintain contact. According to van der Byl, McLaren and the other members of Nat JOC had pressurised Walls into attending the meeting.

On 11 February, Janet and I flew out to the United States, where I had been offered a platform to address a gathering of influential people, mainly American but with a sprinkling of visitors from other countries. It was a bit unusual for the leader of a political party to depart the scene in the middle of an election campaign, but my assessment was that our white electorate were totally realistic and responsible and even more united than previously. Accordingly I concluded that in the national interest it was important to use the opportunity to put over the case for our country. Our decision was justified when, on 14 February, the Rhodesian Front won all twenty of the reserved white seats.

After our return, and with the common-roll elections a mere two days away, Muzorewa called a meeting of the Lancaster House delegation at his official residence, ‘Independence’, 8 Chancellor Avenue, on 25 February. It was obvious that intimidation was rampant, and that the British, contrary to their word, were not prepared to raise a finger. What could we do? he asked. There were many suggestions, all necessitating action by the Nat JOC, so clearly they had to be brought into the discussion. Not uncharacteristically, Muzorewa wished to go off to a party meeting, but he received a positive message from the rest of the gathering to stay where he was while the security chiefs were called. I had time to sit back and look around the big lounge which Janet had furnished and decorated so tastefully. It was vastly changed and now looked a bit like a barn, with a few gaudy pictures, and dirty brown stains all over the beautiful carpet. I turned my mind away and looked out of the windows — the trees we had planted were growing well. Nature, not man, was attending to that.

The security chiefs arrived and were presented with the picture as we saw it. They were of the firm belief that the proscribing of any party was a non-starter — the OAU would turn against us, and would probably succeed in persuading the free world to do likewise. They also claimed that any such action would earn the disapproval of South Africa, as they had been informed by their counterparts down there that P.W. Botha had made it clear to Machel that if he did not accept the result of a straight election in Rhodesia, Mozambique would be in serious trouble. But, they argued, if we proscribed Mugabe’s party, Machel’s protégé, he would have the necessary excuse. I made the point that we were all prepared to accept the result of a straight election, but that we were considering a doubtfully organised election here. Moreover, how could Britain object to our insistence on the implementation of *their* agreement, which they had signed at Lancaster House? Surely we were

not going to kowtow to the views of the communists in the OAU. I looked for any sign of acknowledgement of my comments, but there was none, apart from McLaren, who was gently nodding his head in agreement.

What about the question of postponement of the election? Walls said that, in their opinion, this would serve no purpose, and in fact we would lose, not gain ground. In any case, they believed that it was now too late. There was some substance in this view, but I made the point that this situation had arisen because we had failed to keep our team together and hold regular meetings of our security council. McLaren openly agreed — I knew that he had been agitating for such meetings. The fault lay with the mixture of the two leaders, Muzorewa and Walls — Muzorewa's indecision had allowed matters to drift, while Walls believed that matters were under control and therefore that there was no need to consult with anyone else. I was appalled at their apparent acquiescence to what was going on around us, their philosophical acceptance of the impending disaster. There was a similarity to my last meeting with Soames — they looked tired and ready to surrender. Since they had rejected all our proposals, I asked how they believed the problem could be solved. Walls replied that by bringing in Nkomo, whom they estimated would win twenty seats, we would secure a majority in Parliament. Ndabaningi Sithole interjected to say that we already had the twenty white seats. It was difficult to believe that the other parties together would not win fifteen to twenty seats, and this would give us a total of between fifty-five and sixty seats while the basic requirement for a majority was fifty-one seats. Muzorewa's comment was that if he and his party could not collect twenty seats, then they were Mickey Mouse. I could not help saying to myself that he had given us a perfect description.

It was a most depressing day, and I was in the exasperating situation of not being able to influence the course of affairs. The problem was that our leaders had bungled the agreement at Lancaster House, and were now floundering. The incompetence they had displayed in London was simply being perpetuated here in Salisbury, with the British Foreign Office outsmarting them all along the line, much to the joy of the OAU and their protégé, Mugabe.

It is important to stress that the British received strong and decisive support from South Africa in their campaign to sidetrack me, and they were maintaining this pressure both politically and financially. Of course it must be conceded that, for a number of years, I had been a thorn in South African flesh, because whenever they attempted to use the Rhodesian problem to their own advantage, I had the temerity to question their motives. When I stood my ground, supported by my cabinet and security chiefs, because I was convinced that the South African recommendations were not in the best interests of Rhodesia, they resorted to the tactic of turning the screws in inconspicuous ways. For example, they held back on the supply of arms or fuel or, as Vorster did at the 1976 Pretoria meeting, told us that his government had come to the conclusion, reluctantly, that their finances were such that they could no longer afford to continue supporting us. Later at the same meeting, however, after we had agreed to accept the proposals, he was happy to assure us that under these circumstances they would give us even greater support. He then went even further in response to our queries by giving a solemn pledge that in the event of the other parties reneging on the agreement, South African support would be even stronger. Moreover, he promised, the rest of the free world would join in condemnation of the defaulting parties. As history records, none of those undertakings was ever fulfilled. And what continued to irk

them in February 1980, was that, while I was no longer Prime Minister, I was still part of the political scene, and the fact that the Rhodesian Front had now won all twenty white parliamentary seats, was a source of great anguish to them.

On 26 February, the eve of the three-day common-roll election, I was asked by van der Byl to come to his residence for a meeting with Walls, McLaren and Flower. There was a more searching discussion than that of the previous day; they felt freer to talk in this confined space. They reiterated their consensus that we would win enough seats to form a government. I asked, what if we did not? They were vague. Any action would not work if it involved only the whites — we all knew that. Unfortunately, Muzorewa was not a strong enough peg, they said — maybe Nkomo would be. But even the South Africans had warned that they would have to be convinced of the validity of our action. I asked if this had come from P.W. or Pik? Walls replied P.W. via a message from Magnus Malan. There was still a big difference of opinion and friction between their military, who were keen to support us, and their Department of External Affairs who were ready to scuttle. I came back to my main point: 'Are we prepared to condone a breach of the Lancaster House agreement in order to permit a communist takeover?'

I was not suggesting any unconstitutional action. Surely, I argued, because of the massive intimidation we would be within our rights to demand a re-election. Even Soames had conceded that there was a mass of affidavits confirming intimidation, including some from British observers. McLaren and Flower concurred, but there was no spark from Walls. He said that he and Flower had visited Maputo over the weekend for a meeting with Machel, who was most reasonable and co-operative, and it might be wrong to do anything which would upset him. I had to say that I could not believe that implementing the Lancaster House

agreement would upset Machel, or the South Africans or the British — they were all party to it. We had, I maintained, no option other than to call their bluff. Surely the time had come for someone to make a stand, and I believed that any man worth his salt would support us. There was no doubt in my mind that this applied to 99 per cent of our Rhodesians. They agreed to go away and think.

While the elections were being held, I had a pleasant few days at 'Gwenoro'. On 2 March, however, I received a message from van der Byl which urged me to return for a meeting with the Nat JOC — Walls, McLaren, Flower, Conolly (of Internal Affairs), MacLean and Mussell. I thought: 'How things have changed, for not only are they now ready to talk to me, but they are sufficiently daring to hold the meeting in my house! 'They somewhat sombrely informed us that the preliminary election reports indicated that my fears were well founded. These indications had come from returning officers who had been requested to mark the X on behalf of those who were illiterate (the majority of our black electorate). The women, who were supposed to be solidly behind Muzorewa, were showing open support for Mugabe, and many farmers had reported that, for the previous two nights, the terrorists had moved into their compounds and that this had done the trick. However, in spite of this, their assessment was that while Mugabe could win forty-five seats, Nkomo would win twenty, Muzorewa between twelve and fifteen and maybe one or two would go to Sithole and the others. Therefore we would still have a majority for a government of national unity. I disagreed and asked for their plan in the event of PF winning more than fifty seats. Walls was reluctant to face up to my question and simply reiterated that they were satisfied this could not happen. I could not let them get away with that. I followed up by saying that, as we all knew, our highly efficient security forces always had contingency plans for every possibility, even the impossible — I was

unable to accept that they did not have a plan for this most likely eventuality. Van der Byl backed me up with his typically eloquent reasoning, and McLaren said that, while he personally had reservations, in his professional capacity he must acknowledge the assessment of their people on the ground. I then asked if the report they had just presented was not at variance with their previous assessments, and looked to Walls for a response. After hesitating for a few moments, eventually he said: 'In the final event we will not allow Mugabe to win.'

For the first time during the meeting he appeared firm and positive. When I queried as to whether he could elaborate on his statement, he said: 'No. 'I did not press the matter any further; I was no longer in a position to do so. Sadly, Muzorewa would not be doing anything about it.

I thought it worthwhile to reiterate what I had said at the meeting with Muzorewa at 8 Chancellor Avenue the previous week that a PF victory would obviously be the result of massive intimidation, with the necessary evidence available for all to witness. The obvious solution was to publicise this and declare the election null and void, and force the British to remain in position with a council of ministers, including Mugabe and Nkomo, until conditions of normalcy had returned and it was possible to hold a free and fair election. Walls did not think there was much hope of the British going along with this; they were too tired now. My response was that if the demand came from the politicians the British would brush it off, but if it came from the Nat JOC they would not dare. As we all knew, the Lancaster House agreement clearly stated that our security forces would remain in control, as indeed they were, until the process had been completed. This was our guarantee that everything would be fair and above board. This was emphasised on a number of occasions by Carrington. How could we contemplate allowing this to go by default? If the Nat JOC confronted Soames with such a case they could

force him to accept it and make a public statement over the air and in the national press. If Soames shirked his responsibility, the Nat JOC must inform him that they would be compelled to do the job on his behalf. What a dreadfully degrading situation this would be for Soames and the British government; surely this was something which they dared not accept.

Walls then said that he had sent just such a message to Margaret Thatcher on the previous day, Saturday 1 March — he had not even cleared it with his colleagues because of the weekend, but would do so on Monday morning, 3 March. He was scathing in his criticism of Soames and the British government, indicating that there was massive evidence, including some from British monitors and policemen, confirming extensive intimidation. That was fine as far as it went, I said, but what about a plan to cope with the British Foreign Office's obvious intentions to bend the rules in order to appease the OAU? Surely we could not condone such blatant treachery, especially when we would be on the receiving end of the ensuing disaster? There was a kind of reluctant acceptance from the meeting of this, but Walls repeated that they would need a black leader, and that Muzorewa was a non-starter.

I reiterated that this strategy was wrong — a political solution was clearly not available. It seemed obvious that the solution lay with the Nat JOC, who were charged with the task of ensuring that the elections were free and fair. They were in possession of all the evidence confirming the widespread intimidation. Indeed, I said, Walls had given the answer earlier in the meeting when he replied: 'We will not allow Mugabe to win.'

They were all deep in thought, and it was agreed that we would meet again, if need be, the next day.

On Monday 3 March, I accordingly met my Rhodesian Front ministerial colleagues and listened to their various assessments. David Smith brought up the question of the

considerable assistance we were receiving from South Africa. He was completely in the picture, as it was part of the plan arranged by him and Muzorewa on their visits to South Africa. He warned that this would be cut off if there was any plan involving Mugabe's participation. They had made clear their very strong feelings on this subject. There were some critical reactions from the other members, and one commented: 'The South Africans would support the devil for their own ends; they have completely prostituted themselves over Rhodesia.' We agreed to meet at 8.30. the next morning, as the results would be coming in all day.

After the meeting, Walls sent his secretary to me with a copy of his message to Margaret Thatcher, sent the previous Saturday. In this, he had reminded her of her commitment to oppose Marxism, her strong recommendation of Soames and her undertaking to support our security forces in their task. Regrettably, Walls stated, Soames had proved weak and incompetent, was ignoring the evidence on intimidation, and clearly had no intention of complying with the British government's commitments. Walls said he believed that the British should continue with their mission until it had been properly completed, and warned that, if they were not prepared to comply with the agreement, he reserved the right to act in the manner he thought best. I liked the last sentence — we now awaited Maggie's reply.

At 4 p.m. I was summoned to a meeting with Nkomo at Derrick Robinson's house. There had been massive intimidation throughout Mashonaland and in areas such as Victoria province. Canvassers from UANC (Muzorewa) and ZAPU (Nkomo) had been killed, some buried alive! Nkomo still believed we could win enough seats to form a government of national unity excluding Mugabe who, Nkomo said, could not be trusted, as was proved by Mugabe's breach of the agreement he had made with him. I expressed my view that because of the massive

intimidation, Mugabe would win a majority, and it was necessary to plan for this contingency, and, if need be, force the British to remain and honour their agreement. Nkomo concurred. I asked: if Mugabe won plus or minus forty seats, should he not be brought into a government of national unity as a means of ending the violence and bringing peace to our country? Nkomo thought for a while and then said, 'Yes' — but would our security chaps accept this? I replied that they would. We decided to meet again tomorrow.

At 6 p.m. van der Byl came to report that the results were in keeping with our worst fears — it looked as if Nkomo would win twenty seats, Muzorewa three or four and Mugabe the rest, not even one would go to Sithole.

At 7 p.m. I received a phone call to ask if I would visit Mugabe at his house in Mount Pleasant. I was welcomed most courteously, and Mugabe ushered me to a seat in his lounge. He said the results now indicated that his party had won a majority and I was the first person he had called in for an exchange of views. They could not get over their good fortune at inheriting this jewel of Africa — this wonderful country with its sophisticated infrastructure, viable economy, broad-based industry, the breadbasket of central Africa. They realised that it was not only the professional men and the primary producers — farmers and miners — who were responsible for this, but also the skilled artisans, those who kept the wheels turning, and he wanted to assure me that it was their intention to preserve all of this. They were sufficiently realistic to accept that it was based on the free enterprise system and, while there would have to be changes and improvements for the people, this must be done gradually in a realistic manner. He said he appreciated the vital need to retain the confidence of the white people so that they would continue to play their part in building the future of our country. Farmers would be encouraged to continue with their wonderful record of

production, but he did not believe that vacant land and absentee landowners could be tolerated, a point on which I readily agreed.

He then asked if I would like to comment. My reply was that his main problem was his image in the eyes of our white people, and indeed the free world in general: a Marxist dictator who was dedicated to replacing our free enterprise system with communism and all the undesirable practices associated with it. His principal task would be to correct this and make it clear that his objective was to do what was best for his country and people in order to promote a better life for all of them. If he would repeat in public what he had just said to me, I believed it might start things moving in the right direction. His appreciation seemed genuine, and as he escorted me to my car he expressed the wish that we would keep in contact. I assured him that I would always do whatever I could in the interest of my country.

When I got back home I said to Janet that I hoped it was not an hallucination. He behaved like a balanced, civilised Westerner, the antithesis of the communist gangster I had expected. If this were a true picture, then there could be hope instead of despair. But it would be wise to resist jumping to conclusions because communists are cunning tacticians, noted for their skills in psychological warfare. My prevailing wish was that his party be disqualified — anything else would be blatant dishonesty, condoning the dreadful intimidation which had been recorded. We were to have the answer the next day.

I had no confidence in British integrity or courage to make a stand on principle, so it hinged on Walls, principally, and his Nat JOC. Tragically, judging from his recent performance, I was not all that sanguine. Their dilemma was complicated because of timing. It should have been nipped in the bud before the announcement of any results — it certainly did not require a genius to work that

out. Tomorrow was their last chance, but my hopes were fading. I could not see the leadership qualities and the necessary courage for action. What a desperate position for our poor Rhodesians! For me it was a sleepless night; my mind never stopped working, but I was unable to find the miracle which would rescue us from what appeared to be the oncoming catastrophe.

In my usual pragmatic way I was planning for the worst contingency. Emotionalism and recrimination invariably proved counter-productive, so if, willy nilly, we were going to be saddled with this, there would be no option but to make the best of it, and I believed that Rhodesians with their characteristic fair-mindedness, balance and practical acceptance of the facts of life would try to make it work.

I met my ministers at 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday 4 March. Van der Byl and Irvine went to the Nat JOC meeting while I remained with the rest for a general discussion. They returned sooner than expected: a damp squib had arrived from Thatcher, who evaded Walls's argument — a typical Foreign Office reply, no doubt dictated by Carrington. MacLean (army) and Mussell (air force) were opposed to unconstitutional action as they might have problems taking all their people along. But, I asked, what about decent, honest, constitutional action? What about insisting that the agreement be complied with? Walls, somewhat lethargically, believed it was too late. None of us concurred, but sadly we were powerless. Muzorewa was the only one who could have forced the issue, but none of us believed there was any hope there. Walls had told them that Peter Allum, the police commissioner, was the weak link, and had indicated his intention to pull out.

I wondered, and sent a message to Flower, asking him to come for a talk. He came and claimed there was no truth in the story about Allum, but said, unfortunately, there was friction between the two of them and that this had promoted extravagant accusations. 'In fact, as you are

probably aware,' he said, 'friction between Walls and those working with him is not uncommon.' This was a sad state of affairs, especially in the current exacting circumstances, when we should have been a closely-knit team. I asked Flower, as the 'old man' of Nat JOC, to use his influence to promote a bit of maturity and team spirit, and questioned if there had been any progress along the lines of our Sunday discussion and Walls's letter to Thatcher. Flower confirmed that the reply had been evasive, and that the single service chiefs (army and air force) were urging caution. The Nat JOC believed that it was up to the politicians to take the initiative, and then maybe they would be able to back that up. I could not credit such illogical reasoning. As we all knew, our politicians had been stripped of all power by the Lancaster House agreement. The only two people with power were Soames, the Governor, and Walls in his capacity as commander of security forces. Flower concurred. Was it not a fact that all our security forces were on standby in anticipation of an order? I asked, as I had heard this from McLaren and certain unit commanders. Again Flower agreed. And what about the last sentence in Walls's letter to Thatcher, where he indicated his intention, if the British failed in their duty, to act in the manner he thought best?

Flower was surprisingly forthcoming, saying that Walls had a reputation for talking and threatening, but little follow-up action. There had been many complaints over the years from unit commanders about the lack of decisions concerning some of their daring cross-border operations. I asked if it were not a fact that, especially during the period when Vorster was obsessed with his policy of 'détente', that Walls was constrained by South African political pressure. Flower conceded the point, but said that there were few such cases, and once I had made it clear to our security council that such interference could not be tolerated, it ceased to be a problem. He went on to point out that the

overall position had been aggravated recently because of Walls's aggressive and abusive behaviour, such as a recent meeting with Duff (Soames's right-hand man) when he was not only insulting, but resorted to the use of four-letter words when referring to Soames.

I stressed that their biggest mistake was lack of communication with us, especially as the various councils and committees had been in place all along. 'Well, as you know,' Flower replied, 'McLaren tells me he kept you informed that Walls was the stumbling block — the rest of us were in favour of meetings.' Was it not possible, I asked, for a joint delegation of Nat JOC and the council of ministers to go right now and confront Soames, and insist that he implement Lancaster House? 'If he refuses, then we make it clear that we will support Walls in making a public statement that the election is null and void, giving the valid reason, and that another election will be planned.'

He replied that McLaren had pressed that idea, with support from others, but Walls was on his high horse, resisting further contact with Soames. Flower said he would support such a last effort, although he had a feeling that we had left it too late. It should have been done on the previous day, or better still the day before. I asked him to contact McLaren and see if it was not possible, even at this late moment, to rescue something.

I went back to join my colleagues, who were still trying to see if there was anything we could do. The final results had been confirmed: Mugabe fifty-seven, Nkomo twenty and Muzorewa three. There had been a few wild ideas from people outside, suggesting military action, saying that some of the unit commanders were ready waiting for a lead to be given. I made it clear that without the support of the Nat JOC any such action would be sheer madness. It would put us in a position where Rhodesians could be fighting Rhodesians and killing one another. It seemed to me that our only hope was along the lines I had discussed with

Flower, and my hope was that he had contacted McLaren — what else could we do but wait? There was a clear consensus that once more we had been betrayed. First it was the British, then the South Africans. Those we managed to resist, but now it was a combination of Britain, South Africa and some of our own Rhodesians. This latter combination, of course, was the most deadly mixture of all: traitors working together with your enemies and undermining your foundations from within. It is important to place on record, however, that there had been previous occasions when Rhodesians turned against us — that is always part and parcel of any democracy — but as long as we were under a strong Rhodesian Front Government we could withstand these. The master stroke was when our so-called friends, using sleight of hand, succeeded in removing us from office. This provided the fertile ground which was exploited by our enemies, enabling them to drive in a wedge, and from then on we were aboard a rudderless ship. Maybe with time we could have repaired the rudder, but when some of your crew mutiny and side with the opposing forces, the odds become insurmountable. The enthusiastic fledgling politician who believes he has all the answers and with puffed up chest and protruding jaw insists on jumping in the deep end, learns all too late that he is out of his depth and surrounded by sharks. Sadly, good people who attempt a rescue operation can also get caught up. We had to tread carefully and watch every step.

At 3.45 p.m. I went to see Soames. He said it was a shock result to all of them, but conceded that it was what I had predicted. I resisted reminding him of the occasion when he indicated the three areas in which they proposed to disqualify Mugabe because of intimidation, thus denying him victory — it must have been a kind of delayed shock! He asked what I thought. I reminded him that he was the one with the power to act, so it was more pertinent to ask what he thought. He replied that Mugabe admitted his

people had no experience in government and felt the British should stay on and train them — what was my reaction? I replied that Britain was under a special obligation to ensure the right solution, in view of the fact that we had been given assurances in London, from Thatcher and Carrington downwards, that under this plan they could guarantee that there was no possibility of the PF coming to power. He claimed that he was unaware of any such undertaking and would not have accepted the job under such circumstances. Once again I resisted pointing out that this did not tie up with the plan he had previously put before me. It was clear to me that any such stressing of past truths would fall on deaf ears and be counter-productive to what we were trying to achieve. I therefore asked if he was satisfied that the election had been free and fair. He paused for a few moments. There had been some intimidation, he conceded, but they believed it had not significantly affected the results. But what about all the security reports and affidavits which, on the contrary, indicated differently? He did not attempt to disagree. It was clear to us, I told him, that the British intended to pull out as soon as the election was over and, according to our sources, this had been well and truly pre-planned. They had made up their minds, come what may, to wash their hands of Rhodesia. Oh no, how could I make such a suggestion — he pretended to be hurt. I assured him that I had not come to indulge in recrimination; my only wish was to safeguard my country's future. However, in reply to my query as to whether the British would be prepared to stay on and assist — after all even Mugabe had requested this — his response was that we must accept that the British government would not wish to become further involved. Did I think it would help if there were some whites in the cabinet? Obviously, I replied, not only would it help to bolster white morale, but it would add experience and proficiency and thereby contribute towards better government. Had I any other

suggestions? Yes, I said, a scheme to underwrite pensions and their remittability in order to encourage people to go on serving the country. He replied that they had looked at this and concluded that it was beyond their means. This came as no surprise, as I had pressed for it at Lancaster House. Nevertheless, I stressed that my plan was different and would apply only to those who continued serving for an extra period, say five years. If it succeeded in boosting confidence and stimulating the economy, then Britain would not be called on to make an extra contribution. Surely other countries in the free world could be incorporated to the extent that it would cover their own countrymen. He was interested, and said they would examine it. Finally, he opined that it might not be as bad as we believed — look at Kenyatta, he said, and how he had changed for the better. My reply was that we lived cheek by jowl with these countries, in contact with a constant stream of emigrants passing through from them, and according to our first-hand information Kenya was riddled with corruption, nepotism, incompetence and fraud, and as a result was bankrupt and in chaos; accordingly, I could not accept his premise. Surprisingly, he agreed. We parted on amicable terms, and he invited me to return if I so wished.

On Wednesday morning, 5 March, I attended party meetings amid a sombre and depressed atmosphere. I did what I could to promote positive thinking, advocating cool heads that would avoid recrimination over the past and concentrate on planning for the future. Some of those attending had been pleasantly surprised at Mugabe’s TV performance on the previous night — it was the complete antithesis of what was expected, and provided it was not a deliberate attempt to deceive his audience, there was still hope.

The next morning, caucus met — only twenty of us now, so there was all the more need to keep a tightly-knit body, but there were rumblings about weak links.

Friday 7 March brought visits from some of our black political colleagues; they still believed that something must be done to overturn the result. I had to tell them that they had left it a bit late. However, I said, the only hope was if they could arouse Muzorewa, Nkomo and Sithole and, with all their parties united, gain the support of Nat JOC to confront Soames. I wished them well, and said they knew they could rely on our support.

I talked to McLaren to see if there had been any development on that side. He explained how things had gone wrong. The Nat JOC had three options. The first was to eliminate intimidation, but that had not succeeded. The second was to proscribe certain areas, as Soames had indicated to me. At first the British had gone along with this idea, but gradually changed their minds, and in the end resisted it. Why were they allowed to get away with that? Our leadership was weak, he replied. Finally, they were faced with the last alternative: disclosing the truth about the intimidation and declaring the election null and void. What happened? The same answer as to your last question, he replied. I acknowledged that I was aware of that, from the meetings I had attended when I had attempted to force the issue. Was it now too late? If we all stood together and confronted Soames, he said, ‘I don’t believe he would have any option. Some of us have been trying to get this moving over the past week, but it’s a case of flogging a dead horse.’

I mentioned the advice which I had given to some of the black leaders at my earlier meeting, and repeated that we would be available if need be. When we parted company I think it fair to say that neither of us was sanguine about any positive action. In truth, it was almost too late, unless there was some dynamic lead. But from where would that come?

At 7 p.m. a message arrived requesting me to visit Mugabe. We had a pleasant talk, just to keep me in the

picture. He had spoken to Nkomo about cabinet positions, but these had not been finalised. In keeping with our previous discussion, he said he was planning to bring in some white ministers, and that he would keep me in the picture. I advised him to continue on his path of moderation as, so far, he had created a favourable impression. Consistency and honesty on his part would gain white respect. I promised I would continue to make myself available for discussion if required, and he could rest assured that I would give him the truth, whether palatable or not. I took the opportunity to explain how the truth had been twisted against us over the question of our UDI. This had been brought about by one single factor: the British government's failure to honour the agreement made with us at the Victoria Falls conference in 1963. British government diplomacy skilfully twisted this and succeeded in convincing the rest of the world that our action was promoted by a desire to maintain white control. In fact this question had never been touched on in our discussions with them. Mugabe commented that this was typical of the two-faced British. Muzenda was present during the discussion. I thought it important that we should eliminate recriminations over past history. I hoped they agreed with me that our objective should be to harness the efforts of all our people in order to build a great future in our wonderful country, and that the provoking of racial antagonism should be regarded as a crime. They nodded their approval. I recalled my first meeting with Tongagara at Lancaster House, where he had expressed views akin to those I had given, but I resisted mentioning this, because there was no doubt in my mind that Mugabe, while not actually a participant, had no objection to his assassination.

On Saturday 8 March, our friend at the South African mission sent a message to say that when Magnus Malan had visited the other day he had expressed horror at the manner in which our security chiefs had thrown in the

towel when it would have been a relatively easy matter for them to have made a stand. My simple comment was that I did not think he could get Pik Botha to agree on that one!

I was told also that day the latest story from the various messes through the country was that 'On Tuesday Rhodesia had its Walls' Street Crash!' As is well-known, one of the most admirable characteristics of the Britisher — and the Rhodesian — is that no matter how dark the moment, he retains his sense of humour.

Sunday 9 March was a quiet day, with everybody awaiting developments. There were a few suggestions from different people that I should take the initiative in forcing some action, as it seemed our only hope. I made it clear that was a non-starter. If a lead were to be given by those who had the necessary authority and power to initiate what was their constitutional right, they would have my support. But under no circumstances was I prepared to embark on a gamble which, if it failed, would redound to the detriment of our white people in particular, and indeed prove disastrous for the whole nation.

David Smith came in mid-morning, Monday 10 March, to say that Mugabe had offered him a cabinet post — he was planning for three white ministers. The offer was made to him personally, nothing to do with the Rhodesian Front, he explained. I asked if this meant he intended to resign from the party? 'No,' he replied, having been elected on a RF ticket, he could not. Mugabe was hoping, he said, that we would both visit him later in the day. I agreed. I believed it was incumbent upon me to remind David Smith, however, that, as far as the party was concerned, he was under a cloud, as he well knew, and this would create further suspicion and distrust — but the decision was entirely his own. He replied that it was his wish to accept, but he was hoping for my endorsement, as this would then have the blessing of the RF and *ipso facto* the white people. I

undertook to await a message from him on the visit to Mugabe.

I was concerned that such a move might compromise Nkomo's negotiating strength, with Mugabe claiming that this indicated the support of the RF, and I wished to avoid a situation where we were taking sides between Shona and Ndebele. It was also my assessment that any suggestion that the RF was divided, with one faction working in cahoots with Mugabe, would have an adverse effect on the already battered white morale, and I was determined to do all in my power to avoid this. It was patently obvious that the future success of our country hinged on retaining the confidence and participation of those who had the professionalism, skills, experience, initiative and capital which sustained the economy. We sacrificed these at our peril.

For some time I had been in the invidious position of having to decide between Nkomo and Mugabe. The thought of siding with Nkomo was particularly repulsive. On the evidence before us, however, he seemed to be the lesser of the two evils. The record indicated that he supported the free enterprise philosophy, while Mugabe was a dedicated communist. Moreover, there was the important question of trying to maintain a balance, to encourage all parties to work together in order to promote national unity, thus preventing a one-party dictatorship, that bane of Africa. Accordingly, one had to resist dealing with personalities and concentrate on the national interest.

At 7 p.m. David Smith and I set off to see Mugabe. He told me that he had settled with Nkomo, who was satisfied to be given the Ministry of Home Affairs. I thought this was fair and just, as the police came under Home Affairs, so this would give the Matabeles some say in the field of security. The only thing remaining, Mugabe said, was the appointment of whites, and it was his intention to have two. He wished to have David Smith as one of them. The other

was not from the political scene. It was important for me to give him the truth and point out that David Smith was still under the Lancaster House cloud, and that this appointment would aggravate this position. The personality aspect was not important, I said, it was the question of white confidence and morale that should guide him in his choice. After all, this was the object of the exercise, and there was no doubt that the choice of David Smith would have a negative effect. Mugabe, sitting beside me on the couch, leant towards me and said in a quiet confidential voice that he had given the matter great thought and, in fact, in the choice of both the white ministers, he had accepted the advice of Soames. They were both of the opinion that if the appointment received my blessing this would confirm white support. He added: 'You won't let me down, will you?' Soames's suggestion of accommodating David Smith obviously smacked of collusion, I replied, and he would be well advised to resist this. There were a number of able people not associated with the RF able to fill cabinet positions. I said I had given him my honest feelings, but the decision was his and he could rest assured that in the interest of preserving the confidence of our white people and promoting a spirit of co-operation I would resist provocation. He seemed genuinely relieved and grateful.

As we drove away, David said that, while he was a reluctant participant, he believed that it was in the national interest for him to accept the appointment. He hoped that I would assist in supporting him before our party colleagues. I resisted the comment that it was abundantly clear that this was part of the plan made at Lancaster House and that inadvertently Mugabe had let the cat out of the bag through his comment that his decision was made on the advice of Soames. The British government kept their word, no matter what the election result — expediency prevailed over principle. Nevertheless, I decided that I would abide

by my decision to support Mugabe's choice and in the national interest I would suppress my inner feelings.

At 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday 11 March I had an interview with Australian TV followed by a meeting with my ministers. I gave them a briefing on the previous day's happenings, and there ensued some strongly worded critical and sarcastic comments: there was a feeling that if we did not give the public the 'brutal truth' we would be guilty of deception. But finally they accepted my view that personal feelings must be suppressed in the interests of the unity and morale of our white community.

In the afternoon, I received the news that Dennis Norman (who had headed the Rhodesia National Farmers' Union) had been called to Government House, where Soames informed him that Mugabe would offer him the Ministry of Agriculture. When he was interviewed by Mugabe, however, he was offered the Ministry of Mines, which he declined on the basis that he knew nothing about mines. He was then offered Deputy Minister of Agriculture, and this he turned down. He went back to Soames, who said he would get the matter straightened out. This he did! The announcement of the cabinet was made at 7 p.m. with Smith and Norman in place. I admired Norman for having the courage to stand his ground.

That afternoon I also saw a pretty depressed Mick McLaren. He was collecting much flak because the Nat JOC had failed to deliver the goods they had promised to all and sundry, including their own security forces. He had his time cut out explaining that the decision had not been his and, if it had been, things might have been very different.

Wednesday 12 March was my last day in my office, clearing up my papers. A few people dropped in to pay their respects, including Sandy MacLean (army) and Frank Mussell (air force), and I impressed on them the continuing responsibility on their shoulders of ensuring the safety of our civilian population. MacLean said that the army units

were totally disenchanted and not interested in listening to anyone any more — they were tired of being deceived and taken for a ride. I could understand that, but according to my information their grudge was not against him personally, it was through him to the Nat JOC. He accepted this and said he would go on trying. Mussell believed he still enjoyed some respect from his chaps, but they made it clear that Nat JOC had lost all credibility. He said that it had been a great privilege working with me, and he had been asked to convey to me that this was the view of the whole air force. George Smith came in to say — in his typically quiet, responsible, deliberate manner — that he had offered to continue as secretary to the cabinet in order to assist the new government in settling in. These were the kind of dedicated people, many of them, who had been the backbone of our civil service, which had often been described by knowledgeable visitors from different parts of the world as one of the finest to be found anywhere. We reminisced for a few minutes on the fleet-footedness, indeed sleight of hand, of British politicians at Lancaster House. As I walked out of the office it was with a strange sense of relief and freedom, getting away from it all — a breath of fresh air.

The party executive and MPs met on 13 March to discuss our candidates for the Senate. There was much critical comment on the cabinet appointments, but I steered them away from this, saying that the time had come for us to plan for the future, as there was much work to be done. Striking a lighter note, I suggested that we should have sympathy for these two whites in the cabinet, both dyed-in-the-wool capitalists, who were about to be closeted in a room where they would be heavily outnumbered by Marxist-Leninist terrorists. I ask the MPs: ‘Would any of you take on such a job?’ There was much laughter and agreement.

My old Spitfire colleague, Jack Malloch, our sanctions-buster supreme, dropped in with a few of his SAS friends on 14 March. He had worked closely with them over many years, dropping them by parachute at night over Zambia and Mozambique when they were blowing up bridges and attacking terrorist camps. They had come to tell me that their whole unit believed they had been betrayed by their leaders. They would still follow me, and they were ready to stand and fight if need be. I thanked them and said I would bear their message in mind — there was nothing more I could do. I made it clear that we were running out of time.

On Saturday 15 March, McLaren brought in the latest news. Walls had come into his office deeply distressed — the commanders of RLI and Selous Scouts (Lieutenant Colonels Charles Aust and Patrick Armstrong) sought an interview with him and when asked to sit down they replied that it was not necessary. They had come to inform him that in the eyes of Rhodesians he had lost all credibility, and accordingly he had no further part to play. They saluted and departed.

I met Walls, MacLaren, McLean and Mussell on 17 March. Was there any hope of a last minute rescue operation by getting Soames, and thus the British government, to accept that the election had been highly suspect? There was more than adequate evidence to back up the claim, and if this treachery were condoned it could lead to serious trouble, even bloodshed. Strong representation was continually coming forward from soldiers, airmen, policemen, and farmers, industrialists, even clergymen, all asking if we were facing a betrayal. Some UANC ex-ministers had reported to me that Mugabe’s thugs were continuing their campaign of intimidation, exacting not only political support but also financial contributions. We agreed that such an appeal would be in keeping with the Lancaster House agreement, as it sought a peaceful solution, and that it should be

processed. The Nat JOC was in possession of all the evidence confirming massive intimidation, and Walls's letter to Margaret Thatcher had given chapter and verse. But to carry conviction, we knew the appeal needed black support, and it was obvious that Nkomo with his twenty seats in Parliament was the leader who would carry the necessary support. A plan had already been made for Nkomo to visit me at 7 p.m., but he had just returned from a tiring day and we agreed to meet at 8.30 p.m. the next day, 18 March.

Comments from the South African media made it clear that they believed they must now wash their hands of us. *Die Transvaaler* said: 'The Government's calm directive is well advised: "The election result in Rhodesia is the decision of the people of Rhodesia and they will have to live with it".' But the local South African Ambassador knew full well that it was not the true decision of the people of Rhodesia, and that there was a plan to have the result annulled. So that kind of statement was negative. In fact, it clearly sabotaged the case. We were being confronted with a repetition of what happened after the 1976 Pretoria agreement, when Rhodesia was forced to accept a plan which was in conflict with its own better judgement. In spite of all the generous promises of assistance, when eventually the agreement landed on the rocks — a total disaster — we were dropped like a hot brick. We were now witnessing a classic repetition of this.

At 8.30 p.m. on 18 March, Nkomo arrived. He was deeply concerned at the way things had turned out. Apart from the fact that the election had obviously been rigged, intimidation and thuggery were continuing and Muzorewa's and his supporters were getting their heads bashed in every day. The British, Nkomo noted, were condoning this, as they had with the election result. He revealed that, when Mugabe visited Mozambique and Tanzania shortly before the election, he had carried a message with him from the

local British team to Machel and Nyerere, assuring them that the election would go the right way, and from then onwards there had been no criticism from those quarters — a complete *volte face*. But what now could be done? I told him of the plan worked out by the Nat JOC, saying it was the only hope, in fact our last chance, and was to be done peacefully, in keeping with the agreement. Moreover, as it had the backing of our security chiefs, I said, it would definitely succeed. He was clearly uneasy and started producing all the counter arguments. The British obviously would not accept it, and he would be accused of 'crying foul' simply because he had lost out. There would be an explosion from the OAU, led by Nyerere and Machel, and no one would dare stand up to that. But, I pointed out, in his own words the election had been rigged and therefore the result was fraudulent, and the necessary evidence to support this would be produced and made public — what was wrong with putting the facts, the truth, before the world? The alternative was to condone the evil. Would he not receive some support from Kaunda, his mentor? After all, he had openly and unequivocally sponsored Nkomo and ZAPU, not only with words, but also deeds. He had supplied their headquarters and bases in Zambia. Kaunda had arranged for the Russians to supply them with the necessary wherewithal to prosecute their war. He had persuaded Vorster to acknowledge Nkomo's ZAPU as the principal contenders on the Rhodesian scene. He had encouraged me to negotiate with the two of them. And finally, I said, at Lancaster House Carrington had assured me that both Kaunda and Nyerere had given him a personal undertaking that they would support Nkomo as the first leader of Zimbabwe. It seemed to me that he had a cast-iron case, and Kaunda would have no option but to support him, and encourage others to stand by their undertakings.

I paused for his comment, and eventually he shook his head negatively and said: 'He will not do that — the forces

against him are too strong.’ But what about principle, I thought to myself, and then quickly realised that such things were of little consequence in the new climate. He went on to add that the only course was to ride it and gradually get ourselves better organised, even if it took five years. He hoped the Rhodesian Front would help him with party organisation. He did not think that Mugabe would get away with continuing intimidation, and they would not be able to avoid another election. I had to tell him that to me his reasoning was illogical and out of keeping with fact. Could he indicate one country in Africa to our north that was not a one-party state, and where there had ever been a change of government other than through a coup? There was no comeback.

In the end he gathered himself to leave, and said he would discuss my suggestion with Robin Renwick, one of Soames’s top advisers, but that he did not believe it would receive any sympathy! I was totally flummoxed at his ridiculous idea. As he had pointed out earlier, the British had sold themselves to a Mugabe victory, and were now publicly committed to the result. I recounted to him my meeting with Soames, when he had told me that the British government dared not do anything which would be in conflict with the wishes of the OAU. Accordingly, it was important to point out that any such attempt on his part would be rejected by the British and, into the bargain, the story would get out, obviously to his embarrassment. Thus he would lose on both counts. He assured me that he had got the message.

I sat back in my chair and pondered to myself. In the first case we had lost out because the Nat JOC had shirked their responsibility to confront Soames with the clear evidence that the Lancaster House agreement had been breached a thousand times, and with the demand that new elections should be held once intimidation had been eliminated. We had failed because of weak leadership and the resultant

indecision. And now we were confronted with this belated effort at a rescue operation, and once again, obviously, it was not going to work. Clearly, Nkomo did not have the stomach for the kind of plan we had in mind. History seemed to prove that he was a born loser — on a number of occasions when opportunities had presented themselves, he had hesitated and lost out, lacking the leadership qualities to make a positive decision. Into the bargain he had become over-confident and complacent, as two events in particular clearly demonstrated. During the meeting in Lusaka with Kaunda and Gaba (the Nigerian), I had pointed out that our security information indicated that the ZANLA forces of Mugabe had penetrated deep into Matabeleland territory, and I questioned why he did not insist on maintaining the line of demarcation between Matabeleland and Mashonaland which they had agreed among themselves. He replied that as they were fighting for the same cause, there was no problem. But, I asked, was he not aware that ZANLA troops were killing Matabele men and raping their women? He assured me that there was no truth in these rumours. History, however, proved that he was wrong. Second, at Lancaster House I urged him to support my plan for a confederation which would decentralise power and enable the Matabeles to control those affairs that had special relevance to their history, culture, traditions and language. There were many precedents in the world proving the success of the system, especially in protecting the rights of minorities. To my astonishment he replied that it was quite unnecessary — people should understand and accept that he was not only the leader of the Matabeles, but of all the black people in our country. Once again, history proved him to be wrong.

In any case, the desirability of decentralisation of government in a country where there are so many different peoples, tribes with different languages, even nations, is so obvious that it was difficult to credit that any intelligent

assessment could oppose the concept, unless, of course, the intention was to concentrate power in the hands of a dictator. Perhaps I should reconcile myself to the fact that I lived in Africa, the continent of one-party states, where once you become the government you remain the government for ever — unless you are stupid enough to permit people to remove you through the ballot box!

After dinner one of my South African friends dropped in to brief me on their latest situation where their government was going through a period of indecision. In order to counter the right-wing Transvaalers, Mulder, Treunicht and Vorster, who were busy planning to recover power, P.W. Botha's best bet, I thought, was to produce a good budget and then call an election, thus catching them on the wrong foot.

On Wednesday 19 March, I went to spend the evening with the SAS troopies in their mess, and was given a warm reception there. They certainly were a dedicated band of no-nonsense chaps, albeit frustrated over the current situation. They were deeply suspicious of the security chiefs, whom they would never trust again, claiming that they had been betrayed by unfulfilled promises. This is a common complaint from all branches of the security forces.

The next day brought a heart-warming moment. After an interview with a Nigerian journalist at our party HQ, I visited a local building society to fill in a form. Once I was recognised, some of the girls came and asked for my signature, and in no time there was a queue. The head of the department, with a broad smile, said: 'What are you doing, Mr Smith; the whole place has come to a standstill!' So I made a plan to sign fifty of their forms and have them delivered to the leader of their 'gang'. A middle-aged woman with a face of strong character then came up and said: 'Well done, Mr Smith, we nearly pulled it off. I want to thank you for a fabulous fifteen years and say that we Rhodesians think you are a tremendous man. Like you, I am

going to stay and help to make it work. I wish you all the best, and happiness to you and Mrs Smith.'

Then I walked into Kingston's bookshop to receive much the same reception, and in the middle of it, suddenly loud and clear over their amplifiers, came that great song 'Rhodesians Never Die'. It was my first encounter with getting back to normal life, and I came to the conclusion that if I wanted peace and quiet I had best stay at home!

My office staff and security chaps, plus Frank (my faithful driver) and Gladys Abrahams came for sundowners and snacks on 21 March, and we enjoyed hosting them to a happy farewell party. It gave me a better appreciation of the difference between the private sector and the public service in our current dilemma — the former continued to work for themselves as in the past, but the latter had to work for the new government, the terrorists, whom they had been fighting against for the past decade. Has such a situation ever happened before in history?

At lunch on 22 March with a number of people, some of whom were associated with the election process, I heard a repeat of what I had been told previously. The poor, gullible tribesman, already bemused by an election which he was unable to comprehend, extending over three days with intimidation rampant, was instructed by ZANU(PF), prior to the election, that the first day was for Mugabe, the second for Muzorewa and the third for Nkomo. Then the day and evening preceding the election, the messages went out through the ZANU(PF) party machine, that everybody *must* vote tomorrow, i.e. the first day, which they had previously been instructed was for Mugabe. The vast majority voted that day — they had been warned of the consequences if they did not. One of those present at the lunch, an eminent local lawyer, recalled that at the end of Lancaster House he had witnessed Walls on British TV saying that he liked the agreement and was sure Rhodesians would do likewise —

he now wished to ask him exactly what it was that he had liked!

Soames had just returned from a visit to London, enthusiastic over the results, claiming in a statement made the previous day that their principal fear of an indecisive election had not materialised, and thus fortunately they had no problem. In fact they were basking in the glory of all the compliments pouring in from the OAU, the Third World, not to mention their own communist supporters and fellow-travellers. And so, instead of returning home as soon as the election was completed, as Soames had indicated to me they would, they had altered their tactics in order to permit them to linger on and bask in the joy of their fantastic victory, which had 'exceeded their most optimistic expectations'!

On 2 April, travelling between Gatooma and Hartley, we noticed aircraft taking off from the massive new aerodrome that had been built in the middle of the bush at Flyde, with South African finance. It had been explained to me that this had been strategically sited in the best position to intercept invading aircraft from the north. Ironically, it was now proving useful in assisting the South Africans in their withdrawal exercise in view of the fact that the election had gone the wrong way for them. It was an expensive investment that they were now forced to abandon because of their misjudgement and bungling. And when, in the end, their vision and predictions proved to be ill-conceived, ending in disaster, they took the quickest and shortest route out; in diplomatic language this is termed a strategic withdrawal.

And now, I thought, all eyes were turned to South West Africa, and one could only hope that the South Africans would learn from their mistakes and ensure an agreement equitable to all sections of the community. And one also had to hope that they would get their heads out of the sand and face up to the fact that they were next on the list. I thought

of the number of times I had warned them of the communists' domino tactic, which had brought them down the continent of Africa. When the communists had obtained control of Angola and South West Africa on their western flank and Rhodesia and Mozambique to their north and east, the pincer movement would be complete. The communists could then concentrate on the last remaining target in Africa and marshal all their forces against South Africa. I could still see Vorster looking at me with disdain, from his reclining position of smug complacency reminding me that there was no possibility of that happening because South Africa was different — the white people controlled their area, and in return they were happy to accommodate the black people and assist them to control their areas. Moreover, apart from the starry-eyed liberals with their one-track minds, immune to any other thinking, the major Western countries were prepared to accept that this was an internal problem and should be left to the South Africans to settle among themselves. It all sounded so neat and plausible, but even if one supported the overall philosophy of apartheid, to me the practicalities were insurmountable. And within a few years Vorster was conceding this of his own volition, and explaining away to me the need to change tactics.

One never ceased to be amazed at the South African Information Ministry's wondrous facility for provoking those who were ready to offer a helping hand. If they succeeded in a new trade deal, or in some diplomatic approach, this was shouted from the rooftops, when the other party, for obvious reasons, would have hoped for some discretion. Maybe this was a natural reaction from people who found themselves the pariah of the world, and were therefore obsessed with the desire to find someone to love them.

On 3 April, Hector MacDonald announced his resignation as Chief Justice. Having supported the British at Lancaster

House, he was now about to retire to South Africa because things had gone wrong. Some of his colleagues in the Appellate Division told me he was wasting a lot of their time trying to explain away his decision to ‘take the gap’. They hoped his departure would not be delayed because they were reluctant to have to remind him that they had work to do. According to reports we received during the Lancaster House conference, MacDonald had openly made the point that if the Patriotic Front won the election he would obviously be *persona non grata*, and would therefore resign and depart the country. Later, I was shown a letter written in Knysna, South Africa, on 1 June 1980 to a friend of ours in Salisbury. The letter told of a visit from Hector MacDonald to his sister in Plettenberg Bay. The writer of the letter was a personal friend, and MacDonald had informed him that he had been invited to accompany the delegation to Lancaster House as a legal adviser. The reason they had all agreed to the Muzorewa government resigning to make way for a new election, MacDonald explained, was that Britain, in the form of Lord Carrington, had given an undertaking that the whole object was to make sure that Muzorewa would win the election. This was the guarantee offered to the Rhodesian delegates by Carrington in order to gain their agreement. It was therefore in good faith that the Rhodesians gave their agreement, though MacDonald understood Ian Smith opposed it, presumably because his experience was that the word of the British negotiators was unreliable. During the run-up to the election, MacDonald said Mugabe provided innumerable reasons why he and his party should be proscribed from running for election, but Soames did absolutely nothing about it. When the election was over, Walls asked Soames for an explanation; Soames’s reply was that he knew nothing about it. MacDonald had met Ken Flower in Salisbury and asked him what would happen to RENAMO (the anti-FRELIMO rebels in Mozambique, which

Flower and others had sponsored) if Mugabe got in, and his reply was definite: ‘We will not let Mugabe win.’ Hector MacDonald was thoroughly disillusioned by all his dealings with Carrington and the British government. The writer asked whether he objected to his passing on what he told him. ‘Not at all. In fact the more that is known about what happened, the better,’ he replied.

On 4 April I had a visit from my friend in telecommunications to say that the British were rapidly learning that things were not going to be as easy as they believed, and everywhere there was chaos. He had a tape of Robert Renwick of the Foreign Office speaking to his colleague Miller in London saying: ‘They are just a bunch of nitwits.’ Both were laughing their heads off. Then another one of Nicholas Brown, also of the British mission, speaking about the new order to someone in the Foreign Office, said: ‘Their incompetence has to be seen to be believed — I don’t see how it can work.’ There was another of Tiny Rowland telling his top man on the local scene that he did not want any more truck with ‘Josh and Ndaba’, as he was tired of backing losers.

I went to see Soames on the morning of 8 April. He was ebullient, having just returned from a weekend at Kariba — he had nearly got a buffalo but bad luck had robbed him of it. He did not want to shoot an elephant as they seemed so harmless, but a buffalo was different; they are aggressive. He enthused over the lake and the Zambezi Valley. I got down to business and reiterated my case for underwriting pensions, as I was deeply concerned at reports of the increasing numbers of resignations from the security forces. He assured me that I was preaching to the converted, not pushing against a closed door, but the problem was with the British Treasury, ‘and you know what these financial people are!’ I stressed the great importance of maintaining security, and the need for law and order if we were to preserve confidence in the future. He admitted

that people were worried, especially the young over their children's education and generally settling in to the new environment, because it must be conceded that there did not seem much future under a black government, not when one looked at the rest of Africa. I commented that it was a bit late in the day to start facing up to that problem; were we not attempting to close the door after the horse had bolted? He did not appear to disagree.

I came back to the most important immediate problem: maintaining the confidence of our white people; without security there would not be much hope. He then sent for Renwick and we went through it again, and I added the desirability of including other countries, especially those which all along had indicated their support. He said the South Africans had changed their tune and were no longer interested — I made the point that this was because their plan had failed, and he agreed. Soames was critical of the South Africans for enticing, actually recruiting, our security forces to their ranks. He said: 'As you know from your own experience, the record proves that they are fair-weather friends, ready to change course to suit their own convenience.' The Americans, he added, had too many problems of their own, and had made it clear that it was our business — 'Will you be prepared to help us in Nicaragua?' they asked. Soames recalled that, while he was Britain's representative in France in 1972, during a discussion with President Nixon concerning the changing scene in Africa, he had suggested greater participation on the part of the USA. Nixon had been horrified. He told him that they were not interested in Africa; Britain could keep it all! When he had met Nixon in Britain the previous year he had reminded him of this and said: 'I hope that is one of the tapes you have not destroyed!' Soames had quite a twinkle in his eye, and was obviously in good form — maybe reinvigorated by his break in the valley.

Once again I stressed that the British government was under an obligation to make a special effort, especially because of the promises it had made to us at Lancaster House that we would not be landed with a PF government. I suggested that he might discuss this matter with David Smith, who had been close to their Foreign Office and had assured us in London that Carrington in person had reassured him on this point. Soames repeated what he had previously said, however, that he was unaware of any such undertaking. He also made the point that, as David Smith had accepted a cabinet post under Mugabe, he would probably be reluctant to comment — I had to agree.

It was clear to me, as it had been all along that, in typical Foreign Office fashion, they had played their cards in such a way that it was impossible to pin them down to anything definite, and their strategy was absolutely clear: 'Let's wash our hands of Rhodesia, the sooner the better; it has been a thorn in our side for far too long.' Into the bargain, anything they could do to placate the OAU would be a bonus.

I then asked about Michael Borlace, one of our pilots who had fallen into Zambian hands. We had requested British assistance to secure his release. He had been badly handled, tortured in barbaric fashion. Soames assured me that they were doing their best, but conditions in Zambia were so chaotic that it was almost impossible to get any sense out of the place! They would take it up personally with Kaunda when he came to the independence celebrations. As for a number of our whites whom we were trying to extricate from Mozambique, the response was negative — Machel had said they did not know where they were. My response was that our SAS or Selous Scouts could provide the answer to this.

As I departed, Soames mentioned that they were sorry that I would be out of the country and thus unable to attend the independence celebrations, as they had been hoping I

would meet Prince Charles. In order to avoid leaving on an unpleasant note, I refrained from making what was to me the obvious reply. My decision to be well out of the way was deliberate. Although one had become inured to the facility with which British politicians resorted to appeasement as part and parcel of implementing their ‘diplomacy’, we were now confronted by something which exceeded all their previous nefarious escapades. The thought of being confronted by a scene where they would be wringing their hands in apparent pleasure, and fawning around a bunch of communist terrorists who had come into their position through intimidation, corruption and a blatantly dishonest election, was a situation against which my whole system would revolt. It would be a monstrous travesty of everything I had been brought up to accept as part of British history, tradition, culture and standards of honesty and decency. Then to add insult to injury, they planned to compound the felony by using the Queen’s young son to crown the glorious proceedings by pulling down the Union Jack, thence to be confined to the rubbish heap. This was a contradiction of everything that Charles’s predecessors had believed in, and put into practice: raising the Union Jack in order to translocate Western Christian democracy, with its freedom, justice, law and order and development of decent standards of living, to so many distant parts of the world. As Winston Churchill once commented: ‘If there are those who believe that I will be party to the dismemberment of the British Empire, they make a grave mistake.’

Obviously, if there are countries that wish to break their ties with the Commonwealth and transpose themselves into one-party dictatorships, that is their right, but it should not be consecrated by freedom-loving people. Let them do their own dubious work, without the blessing and support of good people.

I had a visit from my South African diplomatic friend that evening, 8 April, and he told me their government were

angry because they had not been invited to the independence celebrations. It was difficult to believe that they were unable to comprehend the world's — and especially Africa's — strong antagonism towards them. If they had insisted on attending, 90 per cent of the other guests would have walked out, highlighting the reality of their unacceptability. It was not so long ago that Vorster, on his return from a visit to Europe, had told me how he had been taken aback by the hostility towards him from those who previously had been South Africa's strongest supporters. He had said: 'They told me that we were the greatest evil on earth, even worse than communists!' Why not, I thought, simply accept the truth gracefully, and tactfully get on with their own affairs, ignoring the happenings north of the Limpopo. If, by chance, they were questioned over their non-attendance, how simple the reply: 'We are happy not to be associated with the establishment of a one-party dictatorship.'

The next morning, 9 April, brought a visit from one of the senior and most respected pilots of the police air wing, to tell me they were all deeply concerned at the lack of positive thinking and leadership from the security chiefs, leading to the prevailing air of pessimism. To say that feelings were strong was putting it mildly. They now referred to the current depressing feeling as 'Comops'! I asked him to use his influence to attempt to get our people to stand their ground, in spite of personality problems, as this would best serve the national interest, and thus the interests of everyone.

This was followed by an interesting discussion with McLaren, who came to inform me the next day that he had handed in his resignation, not only because of his belief that Comops had served its purpose but, into the bargain, was completely discredited. He wished to disassociate himself from the duplicity associated with Comops and the resultant total contempt in which it was held by every

serviceman. McLaren revealed that when details of the Lancaster House agreement were made available to our Nat JOC it had caused great concern, indeed alarm, until Walls had returned from London and assured them that the British were on the same network and working in total collusion with us. Under no circumstances, Walls had declared, would Mugabe be allowed even to get to the starting post — both Margaret Thatcher and Carrington had assured him on that point. Moreover, in the run-up to the election he had consistently reported that Soames was in agreement with the plan to disqualify Mugabe's ZANU(PF) in certain provinces, but when the time came, Walls was found to be wanting, and all his supporters were left hanging in mid-air. No wonder that at this moment he was the most discredited man in the country.

Don Hollingsworth, a police weapons expert and one of our great Bisley shots who has represented Rhodesia on many occasions, kindly dropped in to look at a couple of my antique guns. He could not get over the election — the biggest confidence trick ever pulled. I informed him that up to the day before the election results came out I had been assured by our Comops that Mugabe could not win, so who was the true culprit? His response was that they had all been given the same message. He felt that 'Feelings are so strong that it's surprising they [Comops] are still alive and walking around!'

I received a message that day, 10 April, asking me to see the new Prime Minister, so after lunch I walked into my old office in Milton Building, received a courteous reception and was accompanied upstairs by his secretary. We discussed the settling-in process and the tremendous pressure of work. I said I believed that once the initial period was over the pressure would gradually slacken, with cabinet ministers who were new to the game taking time to slot into their positions. As always, there would be a long line of opportunists attempting to climb on the bandwagon,

and one should be on guard against accommodating impostors. I then turned to some matters deserving of his attention. The wonderful development in our Lowveld centred on the sugar industry, which for some time had indicated growing concern over insufficient water supplies. The record had proved that the Kyle Dam catchment area was inadequate. It was clear that the proposed dam on the Tokwe River would solve the problem and, in addition, provide for extended development. Had finance been available we would have commenced the scheme. Next was my concern over reports that his ZANLA troops, under the influence of alcohol and with guns over their shoulders, were provoking hostility in certain farming areas. This could lead to someone getting killed, I warned. He expressed concern and undertook to give it his immediate attention. My third point was that it appeared to me that Comops had served its purpose and could be wound down. Into the bargain it could be a good political move. Mugabe was clearly interested and said that Walls had complained to him that he had never been given the necessary elevation in rank to do his job properly, and hoped that this would be attended to. I replied that this was an old chestnut and, on all the evidence given to me, it would clearly compound problems. I then informed him of my decision to be out of the country for the independence celebration, as I believed this would be the tactful thing to do. He replied that he could not see any problem, but the decision was a personal one for me. My intention was to maintain a low profile, co-operate with the new government, but maintain a balance and where necessary produce constructive criticism, otherwise the white people would think I had emigrated — he laughed and said: ‘Bought a farm in South Africa and moved your cattle there!’ My main function was to boost white morale, and to encourage them to stay and contribute. He agreed completely.

I took my leave, stressing that I had spoken frankly, and that he would find that, although we might not always agree, there would never be any doubt in his mind as to where I stood. He expressed his appreciation for my giving him the benefit of my views and, importantly, letting him know what our white people were thinking. He hoped we would continue the communication.

It seemed clear that the situation had progressed to a stage where any thought of declaring the election null and void, and removing Mugabe and his government from office, was now a pipe-dream. Many responsible, clear-thinking people, however, were still living in hope for some plan which would restore honesty and legal constitutionality to our country. There was still much open talk of British treachery and betrayal. I had made it clear that any unco-ordinated action, not directed at restoring legality and without the support of Comops, would not receive my blessing. There was no doubt in my mind that, if anything happened, fingers would be pointed in my direction. So for a number of reasons, I felt the sooner I got out of the country the better. Janet and I departed for the South African coast in the hope that at least some of our anxieties would be left behind.

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The Aftermath of the Election

We returned to the new Zimbabwe; that the old Rhodesia had gone was driven home by the opening of Parliament on the morning of 15 May 1980. It was carried out with the usual pomp and dignity. The only difference for me was that as we entered the chamber, Mugabe was on the side occupied by the Prime Minister while I walked at the head of the column as leader of the opposition.

I had an interview with Mugabe that afternoon and informed him of my concern that on my return from South Africa I had detected a definite drop in white morale, occasioned by wild statements from certain of his ministers. For example, one of his colleagues had stated that government was giving consideration to the elimination of the twenty white seats in Parliament. He replied that, unfortunately, some people occasionally had a rush of blood to the head and made irrational statements. He assured me that government had no such intention. In fact, the President's speech that morning made it clear that there was no plan to interfere with the constitution. I then turned to the deteriorating situation of general lawlessness and the marked increase in stock-theft, with the accompanying danger of people taking the law into their own hands. He made notes and undertook to investigate. Next I turned to the disintegration of our security forces and the adverse effect this was having on white confidence. He conceded that the Selous Scouts would have to go, for political reasons, but that there was no plan for any action with the other regiments. I impressed on him that the whites were professional soldiers, and as such would be his most loyal troops — I hoped he realised that he lived in

Africa, and was aware of the record of Africa in this regard. He smiled and said, ‘Yes, they have had a few coups recently!’ Moreover, I assured him that if he continued with his policy of reconciliation, and support for the free enterprise system, the white population would give him their political support. He expressed his gratitude.

Finally, I informed him of my recent discussion with P.W. Botha, who was pleased to hear my positive attitude and belief that things could turn out better than we had originally thought — at least there seemed to be some hope. I was satisfied that the South Africans had made up their minds that they would have to live with the decision that had been made, and as long as our government behaved responsibly there would be reciprocity from their side. So all around it did seem to me that Zimbabwe had much going its way and that we were heading for fair weather, but it did depend on a firm, responsible hand on the rudder.

On the evening of 22 May 1980, I visited the RLI (the Rhodesian Light Infantry) briefly to pay my respects to the corporals’ mess, and then on to the sergeants’ mess, with a number of officers present, for what was termed a massive ‘prayer meeting’. I had a tremendous reception and it was an emotionally charged occasion, because there did not seem to be much doubt that this was a kind of farewell visit from me. They gave me a full voiced rendering of ‘The Saints’ — their regimental song — and it is difficult to explain adequately the ‘welling-up’ sensation that one experiences on such an occasion. There was a clear message that they would be prepared to follow me, if need be, to the end of the earth, but they would not permit mention of the security chiefs. Although there was deep concern about the impending scene, the majority were willing to give it a fair trial, in the belief that this was the best way to serve their country, and I encouraged them in this line of thinking. Tough and merciless in their

profession as soldiers, they nevertheless displayed great maturity and sound logic when assessing the problems which confronted them. It was a combination of these qualities which made the Rhodesian army one of the most efficient in the world — they were always resolute and competent in performing their task.

I was up at 5 a.m. on 23 May to fly down to the Lowveld. There, I spent a happy day, stimulated by the people and that glorious country where everything grows so magnificently. I returned in time for a quick change before attending the final SAS dining-in night. Apart from the regular officers, there were only three others: Hilary Squires, who had been their highly regarded Minister of Defence during the latter part of my government; Jack Malloch, who had been one of our principal sanctions busters with his local airline and who had carried out more SAS paradrops over enemy territory than any other pilot; and myself. As with the previous night's function with the RLI, it was a moving occasion, all the more so because the regiment was breaking up the following week, one-half going to South Africa and the other half remaining in the hope that they would be able to make a contribution. The feeling against their security chiefs was overwhelming: 'They betrayed us, and know that they dare not set foot in this place.' Their CO presented me with their regimental plaque and SAS tie, saying that to his knowledge it was the first time this had been done to a non-member of the SAS. He vowed: 'We will go all the way with you, but not those other blokes, our so-called leaders.'

On 26 May, Jack Malloch dropped in during the evening, and we covered a lot of ground, from the Spitfire he was restoring, to world politics. He had received attractive offers to take his services to other parts of the world, but he was too dedicated a Rhodesian to desert the ship.

I saw Mugabe again on Wednesday morning, 28 May, to compliment him on his press interview the previous

Saturday, when he had corrected a number of mis-statements made by some of his ministers. While this was obviously of assistance, the original damage could never be entirely remedied, I said. He hoped we were getting to the end of wild statements from ministers. I then mentioned the community schools, which we were told had been accepted in principle, but there seemed to be some hold-up. He claimed this was news to him, and that he would ask for details. I stressed the point that the concept behind the plan was to preserve high standards of education, and not racial privilege, and that this was something which should be constantly monitored. Moreover, education was one of the largest items in the government budget, and the parents at these schools were happy to make a siseable contribution towards their children's education, thus relieving the burden on the fiscus.

The next problem was rugby — he laughed and said: 'We all know you are a rugby fan.' The game against the visiting British Lions in Salisbury was being threatened because, first, the South Africans were guilty of apartheid, and second, because the British had defied the Gleneagles agreement (which banned sporting links with South Africa) and were touring South Africa. Because of these so-called crimes, Zimbabwe, the innocent party, was to be penalised. He conceded the justification of my case, but said he had been under great pressure, with a phone call from the head of OAU, and also from the local British representative. I suggested a possible solution, with a plan for some French players to meet the returning Lions at Nairobi, and then an informal combination team to visit us. He assured me that he would try to help.

I made no apology for returning to the question of security. His greatest strength in the fields of law and order and constitutional integrity rested on professionals who through training, tradition, ingrained integrity and loyalty would not allow themselves to be corrupted. In all fairness,

his black troops had not reached such a position, and he was well aware of the tribal divisions in our country with the resultant pressure groups. If one looked to our north, in those countries where the previous metropolitan power had been retained in a security role, there had never been a coup, but where local security troops had taken over there was a marked reversal of this trend! The fact that he was attempting to implement the proclaimed policy of reconciliation, with its accompanying balance and fairness to all parties, would be provocative to those who were anticipating the reward of favoured treatment, and I hoped he would mark the words of one who spoke from experience. He was obviously thinking deeply, and replied that he hoped the right information was coming through to him, but that he wished to express his gratitude for the concern which I was showing, and he would certainly give my thoughts serious consideration.

Once again I pondered to myself over the man's maturity, reasonableness and sense of fair play. Was I about to find myself in a situation where our erstwhile friends and allies, the British and South Africans, had treacherously deceived and betrayed us, while our deadly enemy of recent years was going to prove himself an honest and trusted person working in the mutual best interests of our country?

I had another talk with Mugabe in Parliament on the afternoon of 3 June. He apologised for having done nothing over the community schools, but assured me he would get to it within the next few days. The continuing trend of attacks and insults hurled at the white community was in total conflict with his proclaimed policy of reconciliation and was having an adverse effect on morale and further aggravating emigration. He expressed complete support for my sentiments, deplored what was taking place and assured me that he was interviewing the ministers concerned the next day and would deal with the problem then. I then mentioned that one of the local Lonrho chiefs

had approached me, saying that Tiny Rowland was eager to reinvolve himself in local affairs, but was concerned that he might be *persona non grata* with Mugabe. He quipped: 'Wasn't it the same with you?' And we laughed. I commented that when I had been in his position, the national interest had taken precedence over personalities, and that I was sure the same applied to him. For that reason I said I had agreed that Rowland should arrange those meetings with Kaunda and Nkomo. I believed his international connections could be of benefit to Zimbabwe. He replied that if Rowland had interests in this country, then of course he should be entitled to attend to them. There was the important question of the Beira — Umtali oil pipeline and he had heard that there were problems associated with getting it back into operation — anything I could do to assist would be appreciated. So please inform Rowland, Mugabe said, that he was welcome to return and get on with things. Again he showed remarkable maturity and no sign of bitterness.

On 12 June David Smith came for a consultation before his departure for Europe. He said that there were big problems and many pressures within cabinet, but Mugabe and the majority of his ministers, including Nkomo and the other four Matabeles, were balanced and responsible. But there were a number of wild men who never lost an opportunity to provoke, and they needed constant watching. The position with the South African government was not good. On his recent visit they had given him a tough time, especially P.W. Botha, who had thumped the table and threatened him. I asked him if he had reminded them that we had complied with their every request at and after Lancaster House, and how, given this, had they any justification for complaining? 'Well,' he replied, 'you know better than any of us that they believe they have the answer to every problem in Africa, and when it doesn't work it's always the other person's fault.' A couple of them

had been most helpful — van der Merwe and Jansen — and suggested to David that he try the tactic of getting South African leaders of commerce and industry on his side and use them to influence the two Bothas.

'What about the British,' I asked, 'are they doing anything meaningful?' David Smith replied that they had made a lot of promises. 'But it remains to be seen if their words are backed up by deeds. As long as it is not too great an effort, they will try, but in truth they are more concerned with their own problems.'

I found his comments refreshingly frank, especially in view of the fact that he had worked so closely with both the British and South Africans to bring about the present situation. I sensed a growing cynicism on his part — maybe, after all, things were not going the way he thought they would.

The South Africans were learning from experience, and because they knew so little about the psychology of their black counterparts, they were learning the hard way. When I had warned Vorster of the fallacy in his détente policy, he had replied that I was out of touch with the world around me. History has proved that he was wrong. When I told Pik Botha in London during our Lancaster House conference that by supporting Carrington's plan, they were playing into Mugabe's hands, he told me that was not in keeping with their assessment. History proved that he was wrong. One hoped that they were making a more realistic assessment of the South West Africa problem. And even more important, that they were beginning to take a realistic look at their own situation, and how they intended to deal with that. Because, as I had warned them on a number of occasions, it was going to arrive on their doorstep sooner than they anticipated, and they would not be able to pass the buck on that one.

The British government, as is their custom, were busy handing out honours to the most efficient and dedicated

politicians, and the bravest soldiers associated with this nefarious operation. Pride of place, of course, went to Carrington, who was the brains and driving force, indeed instigator, from the very outset. He played his role magnificently, in keeping with those well-known traditions associated with Foreign Office diplomacy. During my years in the world of politics I have come into contact with my fair share of devious characters, but I regard Carrington as the most two-faced of them all.

I had a meeting with Mugabe on Tuesday afternoon, 17 June. On the question of community schools he apologised that he had not yet managed to see his Minister of Education. On the question of the provocative stance of the broadcasting media, he had spoken to the minister concerned and was therefore surprised to hear that the matter had not been rectified. I stressed the case forcibly, warning that irreparable damage was being done, and that even if it were to be corrected, although the wounds might heal, scars would remain. There was ample evidence to indicate that this was an aggravating factor in the escalation of emigration. More and more people were claiming that this was deliberate government policy in order to reduce the white population. At the same time news broadcasts were strongly critical of, indeed provocative in their attacks against, the USA, while supporting and praising the stance of Cuba. Their programmes were blatantly biased in support of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, in opposition to the free world stance, which was promoting a Soviet withdrawal. All of this made a mockery of our claim to be neutral and was damaging our standing among the leading countries of western Europe and North America, which were our main supporters and principal providers of finance. One was compelled to question whether this was a deliberate attempt to sabotage our country. He said that one of his problems was insufficient time to monitor the news

broadcasts, but that he was concerned at my report, and would look into the matter. I found it difficult to believe that the leader of any country did not keep abreast of what the media were saying. Moreover, I had heard from some of my old contacts that he had retained the system of a briefing from the Minister of Information each morning — all a bit perplexing.

I hoped he was not resorting to the tactic of feigning ignorance, and passing the buck to his various ministers when in fact they were following his instructions. Recently I had experienced a growing uneasy feeling that he was gradually reverting to his true colours as a dedicated communist. Since winning the election, he had been a model of reason and fairness, accepting the principle of free enterprise, and implementing the philosophy of reconciliation as laid down in the Lancaster House agreement. Of course, failure to comply would have resulted in serious penal consequences — an assurance constantly reiterated to us in London. Accordingly, it was imperative for the new government to adhere to the agreement, at least for as long as they believed necessary to secure themselves firmly in the saddle.

The obvious question: had the time arrived to end their pretence of being on the side of the free world, as opposed to communism — to reveal themselves in their true colours? There were two vital ingredients necessary to provide an affirmative answer. First, was their track record adequate to present a favourable façade to the Western world? Second, was there an adequate infiltration of their ‘comrades’ into the security forces to ensure that any incipient, covert undercurrent of opposition to the government would be revealed, and thus nipped in the bud?

In my opinion they had not adequately prepared the ground; when embarking on this kind of exercise it was elementary tactics to be over-prepared, rather than under-

prepared. My assessment proved correct. They did take more time, and resorted to a policy of gradualism and finesse.

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Life under Mugabe

Life continued in the same vein. I continued to do what I could for the country. On the afternoon of 19 June 1980 I had a meeting with Tiny Rowland. My erstwhile opponent greeted me warmly, saying how happy he was to be back on Rhodesian soil. He related how he had hardly touched ground over the past week — Mexico, Washington, Morocco, a meeting with Jonas Savimbi who was, he said, one of the greatest leaders in the world at that time. Rowland believed that the fate of southern Africa would be profoundly influenced by what happened in Angola. I was pleased to hear his optimism. To me there were two vital factors: a victory for Reagan in the US presidential election at the end of the year, which would be our best hope of getting the Cubans out of Angola; and second, the determination of the South Africans. On this latter point he assured me that P.W. Botha was strong and in total support of Savimbi, and his new security chief, van der Westhuizen, was first-class and working closely with Kaunda. They were a different kettle of fish from Vorster and van den Berg who, among many other strange decisions, were responsible for the débâcle of withdrawing the South African troops from Angola in December 1975 when they were within one day of total victory. Where, I asked, does Kaunda stand? Rowland replied that he supported Savimbi, but obviously with discretion. Nyerere was the principal obstructionist, as usual. This reminded me of how he had derailed the agreement which Kaunda and Garba (the Nigerian) had made with me to bring Nkomo into the Rhodesian government in 1977. Rowland said that a Mexican friend of his who had strong business contacts

with Castro's brother, Raul, claimed the Cubans had become disenchanted and were looking for a way out of Angola. I asked if they would not be replaced by East Germans. No, Rowland replied, because in a short time they would find their way into South Africa as defectors. Rowland said that he had made it clear to the South Africans that they must hold on to their present course, as the alternative was another Vietnam, with the resultant disaster. Finally, I briefed him on my talks with Mugabe about him on 3 June, as they were meeting the next day.

I was able to discuss Rowland with Mugabe at a meeting with him on the morning of 9 July. As usual it was a cordial meeting. He said that he had had a fruitful meeting with Rowland, who had devoted too much time to apologising for the past. Mugabe felt this was unnecessary, because he had made it clear on a number of occasions that the past was finished and we were now looking forward. He wanted news of future investment and development. Why was it going to take so long to get the Beira pipeline working again? Rowland had explained that the damage was more serious than they had first thought, and he suggested that the local fuel companies, which had made their profits during sanctions, should make a contribution. Mugabe asked me if there was anything I could do to assist in that direction. That was not an easy one for me to accept, as these companies had been loyal Rhodesian supporters and assisted in breaking the fuel embargo. On the other hand, I had my obligation to support the new philosophy of reconciliation and assist in the building of our new country, and so I promised to do what I could.

I then went on to the main point of my visit, the continuing deterioration of white morale, with resultant emigration and loss of skills and professionalism. The main causes were the breakdown of law and order, the increase in crime in the rural and urban areas and the threatening and aggressive attitude of certain of his ministers towards

the white community. He expressed surprise and said he would make investigations. I told him that I had met a few white Zambians down here, at the instigation of their government, trying to entice a few hundred of our commercial farmers to Zambia in order to solve their food crisis. They would be offered leased land free, soft loans and labour at less than half the cost in our country. It would be criminal if Zimbabwe was to land itself in the same boat because of our government's provocative actions. He nodded in agreement.

I then turned to the growing friction between ZANU (Mugabe and the Shonas) and ZAPU (Nkomo and the Matabeles) with its resulting destabilising effect, not only internally, but also to the prejudicing of external investment. In reply, Mugabe hoped the friction could be brought to an end so that we could get on together and build our country, but he was doubtful whether Nkomo wanted to end it. But, of course, the problem went far deeper. The Matabele were a minority tribe, or nation as they called themselves, living in the west of the country. There was a clear policy of encroachment into both central and local government, placing Shona comrades in positions of authority, at the expense of Matabeles. Obviously there was resentment and the Matabeles were beginning to give vent to their views. This was the beginning of Mugabe's plan to neutralise any opposition, in order to pave the way for the creation of his one-party state.

I asked next if there had been any progress on the question of community schools. He replied that he was still awaiting a report from the Minister of Education. This worried me, as members of our caucus education committee had been assured by the Minister of Education that he supported the concept because it was obvious that it would assist in maintaining standards of education and also relieve the financial burden on government. This was another example — and a number had been brought to our

attention — of Mugabe making a decision on a controversial problem, and thereafter feigning ignorance and passing the buck to one of his ministers.

On 13 July I had a discussion with some of my ex-cabinet ministers, during which the question of South Africa's ability to squeeze us economically was brought up. We recalled how often Vorster had pressurised us by means of slowing down transport deliveries whenever we questioned his détente philosophy. We also recalled that when we first started importing fuel through Lourenço Marques, the South Africans forced us to pay their excise duty, which is never paid on goods in transit. We believed that Pik Botha would renew this pressure, while saying South Africa did not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. However, we noted, our government constantly went out of their way to provoke South Africa, even to the extent of leading the pack in the attacks against the South African government. The fact that this would probably invite reciprocal action detrimental to their country seemed to be of no concern to them. They arrogantly believed that the rest of the world had to line up on their side, whether they liked it or not.

Tiny Rowland dropped in on 26 July to inform me of his successful and cordial meeting with Mugabe. Rowland's fertile mind was planning to get Beira — Rhodesia's port — organised, and the obvious way, he had told Mugabe, to create the wealth for its development was to give Lonrho a concession to mine the coal fields at Tete. Mugabe was impressed and undertook to pass the message on to Samora Machel.

On 14 August I had a long discussion with Mugabe. Once again I questioned the reason for the continuing hurling of abuse at South Africa by certain of his ministers. I noted that Kaunda and Machel had intelligently accepted the need to live in peace with South Africa, not because they agreed with its political philosophy, but because of the

benefits which would thereby accrue to their countries. Mugabe readily agreed, and said he would urge his ministers to show restraint. I asked if he was kept informed of the actions of his ministers; Dr Herbert Ushewokunze, his Minister of Health, for instance, had arrived at Harare Hospital at 3 a.m. drunk and, much to the embarrassment of the staff, carried out an inspection, discrediting himself and his government in the eyes of influential blacks. Mugabe confessed that this was not the first time he had heard this kind of story about Ushewokunze. But why, I wondered, was he prepared to condone such vulgar arrogance from a member of his team? I warned of falling support for his party from a cross-section of people in many parts of the country.

Once again I had to remind Mugabe of the ongoing campaign of recrimination against our white community, which received great prominence on the broadcasting media, with many people believing that this was part of a campaign to drive whites out of the country. Somewhat naïvely, he said he could not understand why people did not accept his word and ignore wild statements. In reply, I informed him that the wild statements received publicity every day, while his word was never heard by the general public.

I told him that my contacts in the security forces had expressed their concern at the constant political pressure for the premature promotion of military personnel who lacked training and were unqualified for the posts they were assuming. Once again I reminded him that true professional soldiers were his greatest protection, especially on a continent notorious for coups. He appeared genuinely grateful for my concern.

We then returned to the problem of lack of finality on the community school problem and, without hesitation, he said there was to be no change and advised me to consult the Minister of Education, Dzingai Mutumbuka.

Finally, I informed him of my impending visit to Britain and the United States, and of my intention to put over a positive report of the new government settling in and dealing with the many difficult problems which confronted them.

I pursued the community schools issue. The following week, before departing on my overseas trip, accompanied by my party's education committee, I duly had the meeting with Mutumbuka, who said he was pleased to meet me because he was also born in Selukwe. I was impressed with his straightforward approach and he assured me, as he had previously done to my education committee, that he supported the community school concept and was preparing a statement to that effect.

I travelled overseas to Britain and the United States and, on 8 November 1980, reported to Mugabe on a successful mission. In both countries, I told him, I had contact with top members of government and had assured them that in Zimbabwe things were going better than we had expected. I had stressed how important it was for the free world to lend their support in order to ensure that this strategically rich area did not succumb to communist subversion. I was encouraged by their positive response and, although the Conservatives and Republicans had not previously been his friends and supporters, I felt that Mugabe was now in a position where he could utilise their tremendous economic influence to the advantage of Zimbabwe. He readily agreed.

I expressed my disappointment that, in spite of promises from the Minister of Education, there had been no announcement on the question of community schools. Mugabe undertook to give the matter his attention.

Thereafter I had a number of meetings during the latter half of November and first half of December, mainly with Matabeles, but by Christmas Eve there was growing concern over the provocative attitude of ZANU(PF) politicians and ZANLA military personnel who seemed to be

spoiling for a fight with Nkomo's party and forces. The tragedy was that Tongagara had been assassinated — he was the one man who commanded the respect of all the fighters. Some of Mugabe's ministers were now openly conceding this point.

Nothing much happened over the following few weeks, however, as people went home for the Christmas break. Then by 22 January 1981, Mugabe had carried out a cabinet reshuffle and demoted Nkomo, which on the surface seemed incomprehensible in view of the pressures and friction with the Matabeles. But the reason soon became obvious: Mugabe had simultaneously detained about a dozen of the ZAPU (Matabele) hierarchy. As the authority for detention rested with Nkomo's ministry, he had to be removed. It appeared as if Mugabe now believed he was strong enough to confront the Matabele — one more step, admittedly a big and important one, in his march towards a one-party state.

Some of my colleagues believed Mugabe could be heading for trouble, as the ZANLA (Mugabe) and ZIPRA (Nkomo) forces were evenly matched in numbers, with ZIPRA better trained and better disciplined. But — and it was a very big but — my colleagues were overlooking the important, well-thought-out strategic changes recently instituted. Lookout Masuku, the ZIPRA commander, and Dumiso Dabengwa, the head of the ZIPRA executive, had been detained. Dabengwa was the ZIPRA counterpart to Tongagara in ZANLA, who was assassinated by his own people. This meant that Nhongo, the ZANLA commander, was now overall army commander. Moreover, all the previous Rhodesian units, armoured cars, artillery and the crack regiments, were still under the control of white professionals, and they would comply with the commands given to them. It was absolutely clear to me that this meant there could now be no organised and effective opposition. If there were people scheming about this, they had left it too

late. Nevertheless, I think Mugabe should have taken more time to arrive at an amicable solution, because these strong-arm tactics would provoke Matabele resentment.

I had a meeting with Mugabe in Parliament on the afternoon of 12 February to discuss the Matabeleland scene, and my concern at the manner in which Nkomo had been provoked — his Bulawayo house searched, his top men detained, his demotion in cabinet, all things which had humiliated the Matabele and widened the rifts. Mugabe replied nonchalantly that he had discussed the issue fully with Nkomo, explaining that the action was necessary because of Nkomo's health. When I asked if Nkomo had agreed to the change, Mugabe replied in the negative. The reasons he gave lacked conviction because of the simultaneous detention of Nkomo's top men and the search of the premises. Once again I warned that the Matabele were suspicious of his government's intentions to create a one-party state that would eliminate the Matabele nation. He replied that their suspicions were unwarranted. I pointed out that their fears were real, and his actions were fanning the flames of their resentment but I detected indifference on his part.

Once again I had to refer to the continuing attacks on and hurling of abuse at our white people, and worrying reports that this trend was developing among our schoolchildren — not surprising when one noted the lead given by certain cabinet ministers, and the constant propagation of the policy through the media. Finally, I said I regretted to have to remind him that we had not yet received a decision on community schools. He replied he thought it would not be long now.

A few days later my suspicions were confirmed. Walking out of the chamber I bumped into the Minister of Education, Mutumbuka. 'What has happened to our community schools?' I asked. 'You will have to ask the Prime Minister,' he replied. 'It has been taken out of my

hands, and he is dealing with it personally.' He shrugged with an air of desperation and walked away. Obviously, this indicated a change of direction from Mutumbuka's acceptance of the community school concept. Unfortunately this would detract from the parents' contribution to the school, and the associated financial benefits. But what I found particularly disturbing, indeed reprehensible, was Mugabe's evasion in the replies he had given me.

In late March 1981, Soames arrived, leading the British team to the donors' conference. He asked to see me on 25 March and I was pleasantly surprised to find that he was seeking my views and not giving me his. Soames assured me that Britain, indeed all the donor countries, were aware that funds were being misappropriated and used inefficiently. Now, he said, they insisted on vetting all such projects. We talked at length and he expressed his gratitude for the time I had taken to give him my views. On my departure, he insisted on accompanying me to the lift. I sensed that the British were beginning to understand the magnitude of the problem, and that it was not so simple and easy as it appeared a year previously.

The veil of pretence, the government's anti-communist stance and support of reconciliation, had been gradually disintegrating. Mugabe had obviously come to the conclusion by early 1981 that he was sufficiently secure to take the bull by the horns. In his latest move he had made a public announcement confirming government's intention to fulfil their policy of creating a one-party communist state. Over the past year, 1980, I had been agreeably impressed by the confidence shown by potential investors over our country's future. There had now been an immediate and dramatic change, however, as a result of this unbelievable change of course. I received a stream of representations from people expressing alarm and disenchantment.

Accordingly, I arranged an urgent meeting with Mugabe and was greeted with the usual courtesy. I came straight to the point and expressed my deep concern at his statement and the change of course which he had announced. I asked: was he aware of the damage this would do to confidence and investment in our country? In view of the fact that it was impossible to make the necessary constitutional changes during the initial seven-year period, what was the purpose of making such a provocative statement, which could only be to the detriment of Zimbabwe?

Mugabe nonchalantly said that he thought I was overreacting. I assured him that his assessment was wrong — the evidence was overwhelming. As he was well aware, I continued, our Rhodesian Front had committed themselves to working constructively to assist his government, and accordingly I had never criticised him in public. I had to make it clear, however, that if he persisted in following this new course, clearly so damaging to our nation, I would be compelled to voice my objection publicly. I urged him with the utmost earnestness and sincerity to reconsider his position. He was obviously displeased, and our parting, unlike on previous occasions, was cool. He stood his distance. From that day onwards, he has refused to meet me.

On 19 July 1981 I took time to reflect on the two recent by-elections that we had won convincingly, one in a rural area, the other in a Salisbury suburb. I was deeply grateful that in both cases our white Rhodesian tribe was firm and constant. At Virginia, a place that had a tough time during our war, sandwiched between two tribal trust lands, every farmer was present at the meeting, including a widow who had lost her husband, and a man with a leg buckled by a landmine. In spite of all the pressures to which they were being subjected, their support for our cause was still firm and positive — I was proud to be among them. At the eve-of-poll meeting at Borrowdale, there was a packed house

with people on the roof, and crowding the veranda and doors. That wonderful Rhodesian spirit was still very much in evidence. I was surprised that Mugabe, admittedly with support and pressure from certain white dissident elements, had so misjudged the situation and opted to back the losing side, in contrast to his previous stance of remaining neutral in the field of white politics. The government certainly pulled out all the stops, using to the full their control of the media, even to the extent of editorials which resorted to blatant intimidation, even blackmail, against our white community. One of their ministers threatened publicly that I was to be either deported or detained. All of this had a contrary effect, however, making Rhodesians all the more determined to stand their ground on principle. What I found particularly pleasing was the number of young people coming forward and not only offering their support, but expressing gratitude for our past efforts to save our country.

On 1 August I went to Bulawayo for a Rhodesian Front executive meeting, followed by a meeting with Nkomo. He told me that Matabele frustration was boiling over, and that we were heading for an internal explosion. Mugabe's plan to subjugate the Matabele nation was doomed, Nkomo declared. I made it clear that I believed time was running out, and that there was a need for less talk and more action. He protested to the contrary, and appealed for patience and continuing support.

A week later, on 8 August, the BBC news quoted Mugabe as attacking our white community for not supporting his party. He told the black people that they were within their rights to seek retribution and hit the whites in return! His speech in the previous month, July, when he had received the Freedom of the City of Gwelo, was similarly dedicated to an attack on the 'evils of the previous colonial racist regime'. It was difficult to tie this up with ZANU(PF)'s declared policy of reconciliation. It was becoming more and

more obvious that they believed it was no longer necessary to continue to influence the rest of the world. Every country in Africa to their north operated openly under a one-party dictatorship, and the free world had raised no objection; why should Zimbabwe not join the club? I received a phone call from a British journalist asking for a comment on the threat to jail me. This stemmed from one thing: my refusal to accept a one-party dictatorship. If the penalty for that was imprisonment, I said, then let him get on with it. If there were any other complaints about me, then the law should take its course. Because ZANU(PF) was unable to achieve its objective *de jure*, it was seeking the next best, *de facto*. This necessitated the use of various pressures and, if need be, intimidation, and in the end, even elimination; history had proved its effectiveness in this field.

I had spent a week in my constituency, holding meetings from Beit Bridge to Bulawayo, and, on my return on 12 December 1981, I was taken aback at receiving the dreadful news that one of our Members of Parliament, Wally Stuttaford, had been arrested and thrown into Chikurubi High Security Prison. The authorities claimed that he was planning a coup to overthrow the government. Anything more fatuous and devious it was difficult to contemplate. He was a retired pensioner, under medication for high blood pressure, and had expressed a desire to retire from politics. If he were a dark horse and had been up to malpractice of which we were unaware, they should have brought him to court and disclosed their evidence. But to keep him in solitary confinement, and deny him access to his lawyer, family and friends, was barbaric. Admittedly Stuttaford lived in Bulawayo, Matabeleland and, like all Matabeles, was concerned over Mugabe’s plan to eliminate Matabele history, culture, tradition and pride in their nation. So this was just one more act in the policy of

destabilising our white community, because of their reluctance to join the crusade for a one-party state.

In the previous month, November 1981, Mugabe made a speech in Lomagundi attacking white farmers and generally preaching racial hatred. After a long period of peace and quiet in the area, in the month since the speech there had been a marked deterioration of the situation, with two whites killed and a few others assaulted by Mugabe's comrades. As a result of government's policy of destabilising our white community, there had been a definite increase in emigration; it was now reaching ten thousand per month. And if anyone thought that the British government, which had landed us in this pickle, would lift a finger to protest, they were wrong!

By 26 December there was much speculation on the explosion which had ripped through ZANU(PF) headquarters in Salisbury during the previous week. The government was blaming the South Africans and the Rhodesian Front. But the government also blamed us for Sadat's assassination! Most thinking people believed it was an inside job by their own dissidents — the ZANU(PF) headquarters was the most closely guarded point in Salisbury, and no white man was permitted entrance. It might be a clever decoy to arouse sympathy for the party and provide an additional excuse to attack our white community.

Parliament re-opened on Tuesday 19 January 1982, and on Wednesday 20, they renewed the state of emergency, which enabled them to circumvent the constitution and ride rough-shod over people's rights. I spoke against it and in particular mentioned the Stuttaford case and the medical evidence confirming that he had been tortured. I continued to hope that this kind of inhuman behaviour would arouse world opinion, but I was not sanguine as far as the free world was concerned. The communists were always ready to rush in and support their friends, but the Western world,

with their guilt complex, always fell into the trap of sitting on the fence, thus allowing the communists to steal a march on them. I thought, ‘Maybe Reagan will be different — that’s our hope.’ But with problems such as Poland, Israel, Afghanistan, Cuba, Angola and South West Africa on his plate, Zimbabwe was probably no more than a blip on his horizon. One would have thought, however, that his advisers would constantly warn him of the communist plan to gain control of southern Africa, the ‘Persian Gulf’ of strategic minerals of the world. South Africa, the industrial giant of Africa, in control of the vital strategic sea route to the east, the only First World country on the continent, was the ultimate objective. I could understand the disenchantment of the United States and western Europe with Africa and its incompetence, corruption and chaos. But, of course, this was fertile ground for communism. Moreover, they must never forget that Africa was part of their world, and the greater the deterioration the greater would be the ultimate rescue operation in which, because of their wealth and power, they would not be able to escape their responsibility as major participants.

Lord Carrington visited the country early in 1982, and after contacting the British High Commission on Thursday 25 February, our party chairman received a phone call to say that Carrington would be prepared to meet him at 8.30 a.m. on the Friday. Who would be accompanying him? A delegation of five, he replied, including the party president. He was taken aback to be asked who was the president. ‘Ian Smith,’ he replied. ‘That changes the picture; I will have to come back to you,’ he was informed. Mid-morning there was a second call to say that regrettably Carrington’s schedule was so tight they were unable to fit us in. So much for the accepted tradition in Britain, where the leader of the opposition is permitted access to the Prime Minister, or the appropriate representative! Carrington was

emulating Mugabe: ‘If you do not agree with me and my plans, then I refuse to talk to you.’

On 15 March I flew back from Durban after a happy ten-day break with friends. I saw some great cricket on TV, with the Springboks playing the English rebels — Graham Gooch and Co. When we arrived at the airport in Durban for our return flight, one of our local friends was there with a message he had just received from Salisbury saying that it would be advisable for me to extend my stay for a few days until the air had cleared. But I had no hesitation in making up my mind to carry on; once you start running away, it never stops. Our return was normal and uneventful; in fact we received a warm welcome from the immigration officer who attended to us.

We had dinner with friends of ours visiting from England on 19 March, and they showed us an article in an American magazine quoting Alexander Haig, the US Secretary of State, referring to Carrington as ‘that duplicitous bastard’. Then on 18 April, I wrote in my diary:

> … Argentina was in the wrong when they invaded the Falkland Islands, no different from the Russians in Afghanistan, and it can in no way be condoned. However, there was great jubilation here over Carrington’s resignation. That night we drank a toast to Argentina — it’s an ill-wind that blows nobody any good! It was obvious that Carrington was not up to the job, but sad that his deputy Luce also resigned, as he was far more competent. Carrington should have been man enough to have accepted full responsibility and insisted that Luce remain in office.

By 30 May 1982 I had noticed that the cry from the Third World was that they had to break away from the shackles of capitalism, otherwise they would have no ‘true freedom’. Previously it had been the shackles of colonialism holding

them back. But this was simply another smokescreen to cover up the failure of communism, with its associated corruption and incompetence. It was necessary to make it absolutely clear to these people that what was required was economic freedom, associated with the free enterprise system that has proved itself to be the most efficient one in the world. So-called ‘independence’, which brought with it corruption and chaos, necessitating the use of the begging bowl, was a false independence. There could be no true independence for a country unable to stand on its own feet — he who pays the piper, calls the tune. We Rhodesians speak from our own experience, because we fought against British colonialism, and finally had to resort to UDI in order to break the shackles — a replica of what had happened a few centuries previously in the USA. The communists had successfully misrepresented the situation by depicting white Rhodesians as colonial oppressors and our black Rhodesians as the oppressed. But the truth was that our black people were better off than the blacks anywhere else in Africa, with more freedom, better justice and a higher standard of living.

On 13 June, I went down to Bulawayo for a Matabeleland division meeting. There was deep concern about Wally Stuttaford, still in prison in violation of our declaration of rights. Our lawyers were doing what they could, but this government was immune to the normal process of law. I told them that on Friday 11 June I had interviewed the British High Commissioner in Salisbury and made a strong representation for a message to be sent direct to Margaret Thatcher concerning our government’s abuse of power and violation of our declaration of rights. I was assured that the message would be despatched immediately. The other major problem was the continuing dissident ZIPRA activity directed against white Matabeles. Some of ZIPRA were by now in open rebellion against Mugabe. Latest information was that this was not the work of locals but of specialist

members of the security forces who plied this trade by night, and then donned their uniforms to hunt dissidents by day. The plan was to divide Matabeles — white against black; diabolically evil!

Mugabe made his speech in Parliament on the afternoon of 29 July, winding up the debate on the President's address. He produced a vitriolic diatribe against the Rhodesian Front, hurling abuse and insults at our white community. Yet ZANU(PF) continued to proclaim their policy of reconciliation. Worse still, he spelt out in no uncertain terms that the government reserved the right to reject any decisions from the courts of law in conflict with their philosophy. Clearly, this was one more deliberate attempt to destabilise our whites.

On 3 September 1982, I met Henry Kissinger, who was on a one-day flying visit. He said that once again he wished to pay tribute to me for the integrity and honour I had displayed during the negotiations in which he had participated, and for the great dignity with which I had accepted the intrigue and deviousness loaded against me, with its resultant failures and disappointments. I told him of my concern over the deteriorating scene, with our government well advanced in its plan for creating a one-party communist dictatorship. Already the communications media had been taken over and subverted, and government did not hesitate to override the constitution and declaration of rights. They had already rejected certain High Court decisions. All of this had promoted high emigration of our skilled, experienced, professionals. The most recent development was the rift between Mugabe and Nkomo, with a resultant deep suspicion and resentment among Matabeles. The government was bragging about pouring more troops into Matabeleland, but this was only aggravating the situation. The answer lay in communication and giving consideration to the Matabele

complaints. But then, dictators do not accept any questions over their philosophy.

I asked Kissinger why the free world continued to support the establishment of a communist dictatorship in our country. Apart from the violation of basic freedom and justice, our economy was also degenerating at an alarming rate because socialism and nepotism were supplanting the efficiency of free enterprise. Into the bargain, our government had adopted a provocative stance against the free world, in particular the USA and the UK, and had consistently sided with the communist dictatorships whenever there were differences of opinion.

Kissinger believed it would be possible to arouse world interest on the Matabele scene, but he was not sanguine about the overall situation in our country. This kind of issue came under the purview of the OAU and the rest of the world was not prepared to court a confrontation with them. But, I pointed out, they were all communist dictators. He replied: 'The politics of convenience has little to do with truth and logic!' He conceded the justice of my case, and assured me of his continuing wish to help. On parting he once again paid tribute to the manner in which I had conducted myself and said this would be recorded in his memoirs.

On 19 November 1982, I noted that, no matter how much we tried to overlook and combat the campaign of intimidation against us, there was a telling example during the previous month's by-election of its effectiveness. We had an excellent young candidate who believed that he could now take time from his business commitments to stand for the party. He would discuss it with his wife and let me know in the morning. Regrettably, however, he had to decline — his wife had broken down and pleaded: 'What happens to me and the children when they lock you up like Wally Stuttaford?'

In spite of that setback, we still beat the government candidate, who had the total support of the mass communications media and large financial backing. I suppose it was not surprising that the following day the editorial in the *Herald*, the country's leading paper, recommended that Ian Smith be imprisoned. This went a bit further than their normal campaign against Smith and the Rhodesian Front — not surprising, though, as we were the only impediment to their plan for a one-party state, and must therefore be eliminated.

Then in late November Janet and I went to the opening of an art exhibition by an up and coming artist whom we had never previously met. We arrived at 5.30 p.m. We were introduced and were looking around at about 5.45 p.m. when we were informed that the place was surrounded by police and that nobody was to leave. The invitation stated that I was to be the guest of honour, so clearly this was just another chapter in the campaign of intimidation. I went to the main entrance and questioned the police. 'We know nothing, we are acting on orders from above,' was the courteous reply. We decided simply to get on and view the paintings. However, by 7 p.m. there were a few people who wished to leave, so I went to the door and called for the policeman in charge. I told him that I had an appointment — was he telling me that I could not depart?

'No, Mr Smith, you may leave if you wish.'

'What about the others?' I asked.

'They may not leave.'

I made it clear that I would be the last to depart. After a long discussion with those in charge of the operation, some in uniform, some in plain clothes, it was openly conceded that they were taking their instructions direct from the minister! Soon afterwards we were told we were to be taken to police headquarters for sworn statements. We were taken underground where all the drunks and prostitutes congregated. I was the first one in for interview

and asked the man behind the desk what he wanted. He replied that while we were supposed to be attending an exhibition of art, the police had received information that we were actually talking politics. I told him the time scale proved his story was impossible. Our function started at 5.30 p.m., so if someone had started talking politics, by the time the message had got out, reached the police, had been referred to higher authority for a decision, and the operation planned, even with an efficient organisation it would have taken a couple of hours. Did he seriously expect me to believe that they could have done all this in fifteen minutes? He did not know where to look or what to say, and after a long pause gave me the truth: 'We were acting on instruction from above.'

I thanked him for giving me the facts, of which I had already been well aware, and then gave him the true story. My presence at the function was well known because of the invitation, and this was the sole cause of their action. Moreover, everyone knew I was a politician; I spoke politics every day. Could he give me chapter and verse of the law which made it a crime in our country for a politician to talk politics? It would have been unfair of me to continue rubbing it in. He quietly said: 'I do not think it is necessary for me to detain you any more.' I asked if that implied that the rest of our party could also go. 'No,' he replied, 'our instructions are to take statements from everyone.' It was 2 a.m. before the operation was completed.

It was on the farm just before 6 a.m. on Saturday 4 December 1982, and I was outside talking to the manager about the day's work, when three cars pulled in and a bunch of people got out, one man and two women in police uniform and the rest in plain clothes, twelve in all. The policeman said they had come to search my premises — I told him to get on with it. He said the two women would deal with my wife — I handed them over to Janet. They went through everything with a fine toothcomb, through

drawers and wardrobes, under mattresses, under the floor, under pots and pans, through outside storerooms and barns. They even asked our old vegetable gardener if I had ever dug a hole and buried something and then asked him to plant vegetables on top! Anything more childishly vindictive it would be difficult to imagine. After about five hours they departed, and no matter how careful and considerate they had been, they left a disorganised mess behind. It was an unpleasant feeling, watching them fingering through our personal possessions and correspondence. As they left I asked if they were happy with what they had done. Once again the reply was simple and honest: 'We just carry out instructions.'

Mid-morning on Monday 6 December, two police cars arrived and the senior plain clothes man who was here for the previous event on the Saturday said they had come to take us to Salisbury for a search of our house there. I indicated that this was inconvenient, as I had my annual stud-bull sale in Gwelo the next day and therefore requested a delay until the following day. He went to his vehicle and radioed Salisbury — the answer was negative, as they wanted me there 'today'. He gave an undertaking to have me back in good time for the next morning. We made our plans, had a snack lunch and briefed a few of our friends on what was taking place. The trip to Salisbury was uneventful until we drove into the centre of the city, when a car with TV camera drew up alongside us. This caused great consternation. They tried to wave the driver away, shielded us with a newspaper, reported the car number over the radio. Instead of going straight to our house, they made a bee-line to the main police camp. After a few minutes the driver returned with instructions to go to the house. Because of their panic action, the press had time to get there first and when we arrived there were about a dozen cars and forty press men waiting. Our driver did an immediate U-turn and roared back to the police station,

where we remained until a detachment was sent to clear the ‘mob’ away from our house! When we eventually returned, there were still a few press men there arguing with the police. I went out and talked to them, and one commented that, if they had simply driven into our house the first time, the story would have been one inch on an inside page, but because of their circus it would now become front page with yards of TV coverage. The search was much the same as at the farm, and took about four hours. In addition, they took away all my diaries and private writing. But knowing where I lived these days, it was better not to get worked up over these things. After the police left, the media people were on the spot and about a dozen of them came in for a chat and a few photographs. It was after midnight by the time they left, and we were due to rise at 5 a.m.

The next day, 7 December, we arrived back in Gwelo in good time and the press and TV were at the sale yards. We spent a happy morning among friends and had a successful bull sale. We went back to the farm for a late lunch and we were looking forward to some peace and rest after a few hectic days. But the OC Selukwe police arrived with one of his men to collect my guns. They took the two shotguns we used for crop protection and snakes, a .303 rifle used occasionally to frighten leopards, which killed our calves, and my old air force revolver, a Smith and Wesson, which was easy to carry when I was riding or walking through the bush. Having explained to the policeman that they were necessary for my farming operations, I asked whether they were trying to drive me off the land. He replied: ‘These are my instructions direct from Salisbury.’

‘Do they think I am planning a coup?’ He just looked the other way. I felt sorry for him. They were now under the control of a Minister of Home Affairs, by the name of Ushewokunze. His first portfolio had been Health, and he had succeeded in destroying that by driving out doctors

and nursing sisters through his arrogant and insulting behaviour. In this new position he found himself restrained by a well-trained disciplined police force which acted within the law. To overcome this problem, he had assumed the duties of Commissioner of Police, with the main objective of eliminating opposition to the government. As a result many members of the police force were resigning. This, however, played into his hands as their positions were filled by ‘loyal comrades’.

At a party executive meeting on 6 February 1983 in Bulawayo, I found growing concern over the government’s increasingly ruthless methods of intimidation. Because there were clear indications that they were losing their support from the people, they were blatantly embarking on a campaign to subjugate all opposition. A number of white men, and sometimes their wives as well, had been arrested and thrown into prison for a night and day, and sometimes a weekend, before being interrogated on totally fictitious grounds — having been seen, for instance, in conversation with Matabele politicians who were not government supporters!

I continued to be one of their main targets, and one morning the head of the division dealing with passports, one of our old civil servants, arrived at the front door and, obviously embarrassed, said he had the unpleasant task of asking me to surrender my passport. I smiled and asked him to wait for a minute while I collected it. They were acting in conflict with our declaration of rights and constitution, and against internationally accepted convention, but they knew they could get away with these things.

A year previously, in August 1982, there had been an attack on our air force base at Gwelo, in the Midlands Province, and a number of aircraft damaged. It was a tragic and senseless action, not in the interests of our country or its people, especially the white community and the air force

in particular. The officer commanding, his deputy and four senior officers, were immediately arrested, tortured and incarcerated in our high-security prison. Eventually they were brought to trial and when the High Court acquitted all six, they were immediately re-arrested and imprisoned. The judgment was a dreadful indictment on the police and lower courts. Their barbaric torture, deceit, falsification, incompetence and general inhuman behaviour were all spelt out and underlined. These poor officers were clearly and obviously innocent. Not only were they 300 kilometres distant from the scene of the crime, but no pilot will deliberately destroy the aircraft he loves and lives with. They had been imprisoned for a year and subjected to the most savage cruelty, and then this! The hopes and joys and then anguish of their wives and families! But not one of our free world 'friends' raised a finger in protest.

It would involve tedious repetition if I were to continue quoting cases of the government's ongoing campaign of intimidation against their political opponents. The economy continued to run down, with the sad result that unemployment was mounting, for the obvious reason that no one was going to invest in a country where the government was openly committed to communism.

The next item on the top of the government's agenda was to tighten up the Electoral Act. It remained to be seen how far they would go with legislation which would allow them to rig the election. There seemed little doubt that if the election were free and fair ZANU(PF) (Mugabe) would be out. But — I remember, going back a few years now, speaking to one of the government ministers who had a university degree and clearly was no fool. 'You are an intelligent person,' I said. 'How can you support a failed policy like communism?' After thinking for a few moments he replied: 'It has nothing to do with the philosophy of communism, which is foreign to us black people. What appealed to us most over our induction into communism

was the firm instruction that: “Once you become the government, you remain the government for ever”.’ I had often been surprised at his forthcoming frankness, but he was at his best with this admission.

The position was made absolutely clear in the final sitting of Parliament before the general election, which it had been proclaimed would take place on 27 June 1985. The legislation passed was a complete travesty of justice, fair play and the concept of democracy. Finally, in order to ensure absolute power to manipulate anything and everything, the President was given the right to ‘declare anything done illegally to be legal, and anything done legally to be illegal, and if he thinks any election result to be wrong he may declare it null and void’.

Unfortunately, we had two withdrawals from our candidates’ panel, both for the same reason. They were involved in trade and industry and had received a positive message that if they continued their support for our party they would suffer adverse economic consequences. As the government was nationalising more and more industry and commerce and assuming greater control of the economy, this facilitated its ability to pressurise people. Increasingly we were being confronted by the fact that, in addition to physical intimidation, there was a new force available to totalitarian governments: economic intimidation.

I had recently heard Bishop Muzorewa in a BBC broadcast complaining that his party was being denied permission to hold meetings and that ZANU(PF) thugs were beating up his supporters. He said Zimbabwe in 1985 was like Uganda under Idi Amin!

I started campaign meetings on 13 June, and there was no respite until after election day on the 27th. The final results were out by the afternoon of the 28th and we won fifteen of the twenty white reserved seats. It was a great victory and even attracted coverage in the overseas media because the local press had predicted that we would be

totally eliminated. Not only were they vicious in their criticism against us, both press and broadcasting, but they refused to accept any advertisement from us. If the election had been truly free and fair, I believe we would have won all twenty seats.

Mugabe's rage was violent and unconcealed. His appearance on TV was predictable; he rebuked the white community for supporting our party and threatened them with dire consequences. This, in spite of the fact that there were many government advertisements urging the electorate to vote and ensuring them that the vote was free. Now that they had done precisely what was requested, they were faced with a barrage of insults and condemnation. He referred to the Lancaster House constitution as a 'dirty little piece of paper', which he had no intention of observing. This was a different story from five years previously — in 1980 — when he had supported it as the vehicle which was to bring him into power.

The election of black members took place a week later, and as the results came in ZANU(PF) were not doing as well as expected. On the morning of 6 July P.K. van der Byl arrived with a message from the governing party. They were concerned that they might not win as many seats as anticipated, and that this would reduce the number of their appointees to the Senate. Would we co-operate, they asked, by appointing three of their candidates — Dennis Norman and two others. Because of our majority of the white seats in the Lower House, we controlled the appointment of a certain number of senators. I agreed to Norman but said we should be given details of the other two, and P.K. concurred. Norman had served as an able Minister of Agriculture in the previous government.

By the following day, with all the results declared, however, they obtained the necessary number of seats and the request for our assistance was withdrawn. P.K.'s contact commented that they were relieved to be spared

the embarrassment of putting themselves in a position where they would be seen to be talking to us. Politically this would be worse than death! They were soon back to their tactics of hurling abuse at our white community because they had the temerity to do what they had been urged to do: use their free vote! Clearly, their intention was to eliminate our party, and they resorted to the most unscrupulous means to achieve their objective.

In order to avoid provocation — and this was always our policy — some time ago we decided to abandon our party name, the Rhodesian Front, and contested the recent election as Conservative Alliance Zimbabwe (CAZ). However, this in no way altered the government's attitude — all opposition had to be eliminated. Moreover, this applied to blacks as well as whites. Nkomo and the Matabeles were Mugabe's main target, for obvious reasons. The political influence of our white community could be eliminated constitutionally in 1990, in keeping with the Lancaster House agreement, but the Matabeles, approximately 20 per cent of the population, would remain for ever.

The problem erupted in the latter half of 1982, when the Matabeles started complaining that their part of the country was being infiltrated by, and their top jobs given to, Mashonas — Mugabe's people. In certain areas there was open unrest, resulting in the ejection of Nkomo from the cabinet and the arrest of about sixty of his supporters, including his two top military leaders, Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku. This was followed by the invasion of Matabeleland by Mugabe's notorious North Korean-trained soldiers, who ran amok and killed an estimated 30,000 Matabeles. Vast areas of the country were placed under curfew, with no admittance to visitors or the press. Because of world interest and reaction, which continued only for a brief period, the campaign became more insidious, with transport and food being denied to selected rural areas.

There were numerous reports of children and pregnant women suffering from malnutrition and, in some cases, starving to death. Those Matabeles who continued their open support for ZAPU and Nkomo were picked up after dark and never seen again — as one report stated: 'The political slogan in Zimbabwe these days is "Dead men tell no tales".'

In the run-up to the 1985 election there were many attacks on ZAPU pockets of support in Harare (formerly Salisbury) and Gweru (formerly Gwelo). It was not surprising that some of the constituencies around Gweru, an area dividing Matabeleland and Mashonaland, which were held by ZAPU in the last Parliament, had been won over to ZANU(PF). The campaign of intimidation to eliminate all opposition, however, continued and a report published 9 July 1985 stated:

> Spurred on by last week's election victory, thousands of Mugabe supporters yesterday continued a rampage against opposition party supporters. In Mufakose township more than 500 ZANU(PF) women's league members attacked the homes of opposition supporters, throwing their furniture and belongings into the street. Many homes had their doors and windows smashed and many families were forced to spend the night in the street because their attackers had locked the doors and taken the keys. It was reported that three people had died in the violence. The police appeared powerless to intervene. One policeman admitted that he had no powers to act against the demonstrators. Joshua Nkomo, the main opposition leader, condemned the violence, saying he believed it was the start of a campaign for a one-party state.

It was quite clear that there was to be no let-up until they had achieved their objective. In a report dated 15 July

1985, Mugabe warned of a ‘clean-up operation so that we only remain with those whites who want to work with the government. White opponents will have to leave the country.’

Reconciliation meant ‘accepting’ the government and their philosophy — i.e. a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship. To those who objected, if they were whites they had to leave the country, if they were black Matabeles, there were many ways of subjugating them, as we have witnessed over the past few years.

In the latter half of the 1970s Mugabe claimed that his followers were not prepared to negotiate with the Rhodesian government and that it was their intention to take the country through the barrel of the gun. They failed — in fact the war was going so strongly against them in 1979 that they were forced to seek the assistance of John Vorster, their dreaded apartheid enemy, and then Lord Carrington of ‘toothless British Bulldog’ fame to promote the platform for negotiation which culminated in the Lancaster House conference, resulting in the constitution which brought Mugabe and his ZANU(PF) into power. But although they failed in their threat to come into power through the barrel of the gun, ever since the first election in 1980, they have kept themselves in power by that lethal means.

There were two main problems standing in the way of Mugabe’s dream of general consensus for his one-party state: the Matabele and the white man. Masuku, the general of the ZAPU army, had died while in prison, so that was obviously a plus factor. Striking a bargain with Nkomo and ZAPU also turned out to be comparatively simple: the position of a second deputy President was created for Nkomo, half a dozen government ministers (no problem for a government which operated between fifty and sixty ministers) and the ZAPU members in prison released. As

they say: ‘Every man has his price.’ I would like to think that there are a few to whom this does not apply.

As for the white man, even if the government had to ride the problem out until 1990, they would have to grin and bear it, but anything which would help to relieve the aggravating thorn in their flesh would be most welcome. Clearly, as the last election had demonstrated, there was no hope that the white community would abjectly surrender to the malignant growth attempting to spread its tentacles throughout the body politic.

The *Herald* of 12 September 1986 had a headline: ‘SMITH ORDERED OUR OF ASSEMBLY’. A Bill was introduced for its first reading, and the responsible Minister asked if he could proceed immediately with the second reading. This was contrary to the rules of procedure and, in view of the fact that we had not even seen the Bill, the introduction was out of order. I followed the normal practice of objecting to the attempt to rush legislation and thus bring the House into disrepute. The Speaker, Didymus Mutasa, ‘took strong exception’ to my intervention, and ordered me to leave the chamber. However, a number of other members subsequently objected, and accordingly the House resolved that the Bill should be printed before proceeding with the second reading. It had become obvious that there was a renewed attempt at character assassination against me personally, presumably in the belief that if you manage to decapitate the ‘monster’, the rest of the body will wither away. However, their plan backfired. If the public believe that a person is being treated unjustly, there is a natural inclination to sympathise with him, and I received a groundswell of support. A cutting of a letter in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* illustrates the point:

> Thank you for at least part of your leader on Mr Ian Smith. Patronising though it was in general tone, to your credit you did pay tribute to his courage and humility.

These are rare qualities indeed in the political sphere, especially in Africa.

You might also have mentioned his honesty, his probity, blameless private life and high moral standards, his iron self-discipline and humanity.

All these traits in a politician are rare as rubies and stamp the possessor as one of the great of our time, not as you say, merely as an ‘unsophisticated man from an unsophisticated country’.

Rhodesia is rather more than this. It is a land of courage in the face of overwhelming odds, of enterprise that has built a civilisation second to none in this harsh continent and of standards of behaviour that should be the envy of the world.

These virtues are epitomised in the person of Ian Douglas Smith, a man whom I opposed politically, but grew to admire and respect as I have no other.

What was particularly disturbing was that the continuing sniping at the white community did have a destabilising effect which promoted the exodus of those with expertise, professionalism, experience and capital. At the same time it prejudiced external confidence and investment.

There was, in the next few years, no let-up in the campaign to establish a one-party state. As it was already in existence *de facto*, I thought it would be madness to attempt to resort to legislation. This would invite the wrath of the free world and there could be serious adverse repercussions on the country. However, Mugabe had suddenly been challenged by Edgar Tekere, one of his oldest and loyalest supporters in the formation of ZANU(PF), who was quoted in a magazine in September 1988 saying: ‘A one-party state was never one of the founding principles of ZANU(PF) and experience in Africa has shown that it brought the evils of nepotism, corruption and inefficiency.’

Needless to say, there was no word of this in the government-controlled national press. As far back as July 1985, Mr Willie Musarurwa, the editor of the *Sunday Mail*, the most widely read paper in the country, was fired because he was not prepared to withhold information on government corruption that had been exposed. This was followed by the removal of Mr Muradzikwa for an editorial which was critical of certain government action, and then the editor of the *Bulawayo Chronicle* was removed for disclosing the corruption associated with the Willowvale scandal in 1988.

The pressure was broad-based and continuous. On 24 June 1988 the ZANU(PF) political commissar, Nelson Mawema, stated: 'All appointments to senior posts in the civil service will in future be based on a candidate's political background. This is part of the new era of creating a unified party.' It was simply an open acknowledgement of a system already in operation. It was open talk among members of the civil service that unless you were a card-carrying member of the party, there was no hope of promotion.

As can only be expected, the value of our dollar took a pounding, in keeping with all the talk about a one-party state and implementation of their communist philosophy. A merchant bank quarterly review in April 1989 said, 'The Zimbabwe dollar has shrunk in value by 65% since 1980. A person earning four times the amount earned in 1980 would not be as well off.' And on 27 October 1989 a financial report stated: 'During the nine months up to September 30th this year the Zimbabwe dollar has devalued 15–12%.' Almost daily there were reports of a crippling shortage of spare parts, plant and equipment threatening industry. There is insufficient foreign exchange to satisfy replacement programmes. In the gold mining industry alone, lack of foreign exchange for spares will deprive the country of $12.5 million this year.' Perhaps

even more important, around the middle of 1988 there was a critical shortage of essential drugs for our health services caused by shortage of foreign exchange, with one report stating that: ‘most outlying clinics and hospitals have bare shelves’.

To be truthful, the cause was the inability of government to get their priorities right. We have more government ministers than any other government in the world, travelling to the four corners of the earth, attending more conferences than any other government in the world, taking larger delegations than any other government in the world. A local medical practitioner estimated that the expenses involved in attending one conference would cover our immediate medical needs.

On 5 July 1989, the Minister of Finance, Dr Chidzero, speaking at the Institute of Bankers’ annual dinner, warned that if the nation’s bankers did not find a means of providing credit to new businesses unable to afford collateral, the government would force them to do so. Bearing in mind that banks have a legal obligation to hold deposits in trust for their customers, this was unbelievably irresponsible. In some communist countries this kind of service was provided by governments for their comrades. Unfortunately our Zimbabwe government was bankrupt, and unable to provide the service. So we were confronted with this blatant attempt to force our reputable banking system to join our government in the gutter of bankruptcy.

At the Masvingo (formerly Fort Victoria) Agricultural Show, Joshua Nkomo, Vice-President, threatened commercial farmers that if more land were not made available to the government for its resettlement schemes, compulsory acquisitions would be effected. This was absolutely evil. It was well known that the government had more land on its hands than it was able to handle and large additional areas were also available from willing sellers. But that was the last thing that would be told to the people,

the *povo* — not when one is thinking of winning votes at an impending election. Provoking racial friction, damaging the morale of commercial farmers who produced the food to feed the nation, and grew cash crops which made the greatest contribution to our foreign exchange earnings, were of little consequence when measured alongside the government's determination to retain power whatever the cost.

For some time past there had been an investigation into a racket involving senior ZANU(PF) comrades, including cabinet ministers, acquiring automobiles from the factory and selling them to the public at a profit of around $100,000. Because vehicles were in short supply, due to lack of foreign exchange, this was easy money, but illegal. A number of culprits were brought to book, and paid heavy fines. One cabinet minister, however, Frederick Shava, was caught twisting the truth while under oath. Perjury, because of its effect in undermining the whole system of justice, has always been regarded with the utmost gravity. Accordingly, he was sentenced by the High Court to imprisonment in July 1989, but, Mugabe immediately intervened and granted Shava a presidential pardon, stating clearly that as a comrade and a friend, he would not go to prison.

Obviously, there were serious consequences. The High Court, and indeed the whole system of justice in our country, had received a devastating blow. From then on there were going to be two sets of laws, one for the ZANU(PF) government and their comrades, and one for the rest of us. Moreover, the Attorney General was in a dreadful predicament. There were a number of other comrades in line to come before the High Court because they too had failed to tell the truth under oath. In the end the Attorney General solved the problem by taking unto himself the presidential power of pardon, and he cancelled the prosecution of the guilty parties. By this prompt action,

he obviously earned for himself the eternal gratitude of Mugabe and ZANU(PF), and also assured for himself not only the security of his position, but continuous and rapid promotion.

So Shava was a free man, faced with a fine of $150,000 — obviously no problem! But that was not the end of the sad affair. Maurice Nyagumbo, number three in the ZANU(PF) politburo and a government minister, was also implicated. He apparently committed suicide, and amid great ceremony and shedding of tears was buried at Heroes' Acre, west of Harare. There was clear evidence, however, which pointed in a different direction. It was well known that others were involved and Nyagumbo had made it clear that they too should be exposed, as he had been. The problem was that they were the comrades at the very top. This was obviously an emergency that had to be dealt with rapidly and mercilessly. Who were above him in the party? The two Vice-Presidents, Nkomo and Muzenda, President Mugabe and his wife, Sally, who always worked very closely with him! The idea that Nyagumbo had committed suicide was laughed out of court by all those in the picture. Nyagumbo was a reserved, elderly man, noted for his strength of conviction and his dedication to the party he served. He had openly stated to his friends: 'Let there be justice for everyone. The truth must be exposed.' Moreover, we had been presented with the first report of the commission of inquiry, and the chairman had stated that there was to be a follow-up investigation and a second report. This never eventuated, however, and no explanation was ever produced. In a one-party state most people avoid asking provocative questions!

There is a clear lesson to be learned by all Zimbabweans: if you want to live comfortably and, if need be, receive the presidential pardon, simply become a strong, loyal supporter of ZANU(PF).

Friction had been mounting between the government and the university, brought about by ZANU(PF) overreacting to views which did not coincide with their own. Towards the end of June 1989, the Association of University Teachers of Zimbabwe came out in strong criticism of government's continuing intimidation of both staff and students in an attempt to suppress freedom of thought and speech. In order to substantiate their case they pointed to the deportation of a lecturer who was denied the opportunity to hear the case against him in October 1988. Four other lecturers were also detained and interrogated without any charge being made against them. In January 1989 grants and loans to members of the students' representative council were withdrawn. In March the university's application for renewal of a lecturer's employment permit was refused, and in June a lecturer was arrested and held for seven days before release. The association, therefore, stated that it was 'deeply concerned about this abuse of power by government … these cases constitute an attack on academic freedom'.

The confrontation continued, and there were protests on the University campus against the government's dictatorial policies. Opposition views were appearing more frequently in a number of sectors and accordingly government, in keeping with their one-party state philosophy, decided to nip this in the bud. At the beginning of the month of October they summarily closed the university and arrested all members of the students' representative council. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions criticised the action and their Secretary-General, Morgan Tsvangivai, was immediately arrested. At the same time eleven members of Edgar Tekere's ZUM party — campaigning in a by-election in the north of the country — were also arrested and detained.

Clearly, an air of panic reigned in upper echelons of government. Criticism of and opposition to a government

are things unheard of in the corridors of communist dictatorships. Accordingly, they were going to deal with them, suppress them. After all, the politburo existed to tackle all these problems.

The official ‘marriage’ of ZANU (Mugabe) and ZAPU (Nkomo) was consummated under the name ZANU(PF) at a joint congress of the two parties on 22 December 1989. There seemed to be only one contentious matter in the pre-conference discussions and Dumiso Dabengwa, who many think will succeed Nkomo as the Matabele leader, took the initiative by informing the congress that the delegates from Matabeleland were opposed to the inclusion in the new constitution of belief in a Marxist-Leninist one-party state. According to media reports there was obvious concern at the top table and Mugabe in his contribution stated that: ‘the rejection of Marxism-Leninism by certain delegates shows that there is an obvious need for ideological training.’ He went on to argue that he found it ironic that the same people who rejected Marx and Lenin were prepared to embrace another foreigner, Jesus Christ. By the end of the congress there was no change to the party’s pledge to establish a Marxist-Leninist one-party state in Zimbabwe.

I commented in my diary:

> The thought is, of course, abhorrent to anyone who believes in democracy with its inherent freedom. Let us hope that the majority of our people will stand firm in their determination to preserve our freedom. This is all the more vital, knowing where we live — every country in Africa to our north is a military, or one-party, dictatorship.

Because of criticism of the government’s control of the mass communications media, the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) had been established. In terms of the deed of trust, MPs, the civil service, the security forces and those

with active party affiliations were disqualified from its membership. It was obvious from its inception, however, that it was a typical hoax to deceive the public, with the appointees being friends of ZANU(PF). A number of recent appointments had caused queries: Mrs Kachingwe (Secretary for Information), Mr Zamuchiya (government-appointed senator), Mr Mutambirwia (Postmaster General), Mr Muvuti (ZANU[PF]). However, the chairman of ZMMT, Dr Sadza, 'angrily refused to discuss the matter'.

As expected, ZANU(PF) won a convincing victory in the general election in early April 1990. The main opposition in the previous Parliament, ZAPU from Matabeleland, had merged with the government, so Edgar Tekere's Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) was the only opposition. They did surprisingly well to obtain approximately 20 per cent of the votes, but because of government gerrymandering they ended up with only two of the 120 elected seats in Parliament. Moreover, the whole system had been so effectively rigged in favour of ZANU(PF) that it was amazing that there was any opposition support at all.

There was in existence a Ministry of Political Affairs, created specifically to support the party of the government in power. At provincial and district level the ministry occupied government offices, was staffed by civil servants and was provided with government transport. This was a blatant violation of the country's constitution and as has been pointed out on a number of occasions there is no Act of Parliament which permits taxpayers' money to be so used. Under a one-party dictatorship, however, such trivialities are simply pushed aside, and there were many such cases during the run-up to the election. At the Nomination Court, for example, it was pointed out by ZUM officials that Mugabe's nomination form was out of order as a number of his nominators were not on the voters' roll. The court was instructed by the government to accept the nomination and was informed that the discrepancies would

be rectified later. The chairman of the election supervisory commission, a lawyer, Mr Anthony Eastwood, conceded that the commission had no powers to reverse the decisions of any administrative officer. By contrast, five ZUM nomination papers were rejected because the numbers did not correspond with those on the voters' roll. Twenty-four nominations from Matabeleland were rejected because their $500 deposits were inadequate — $600 was required. Had they been notified, they would have produced the extra amount. The same applied to four ZUM candidates in Masvingo who had been informed that $500 was the necessary deposit.

Even more serious was the physical intimidation of ZUM candidates. A number of their candidates were severely assaulted and one report claimed that the mayor of Chinhoyi was inciting the ZANU(PF) youth to 'beat them up'. One ZUM supporter was crippled for life and produced a medical report to that effect. Four ZUM candidates simply disappeared into the background until after the election — for fear of their lives. The supervisory commission expressed their concern over the many incidents brought to their attention, but regretted their inability to take any action. A few weeks prior to election day the local national papers reported: 'Six ZUM candidates stand down — claim they have seen the light.'

I subsequently met one and enquired about 'the light'. He replied: 'We were visited by the CIO and given the message that if we continued with our campaign against the government, our families (wives and children) would get the message!'

In Gweru, the capital of the midlands province, Vice-President Simon Muzenda was opposed by a strong rival, Patrick Kombayi, a local businessman and one-time mayor of Gweru. Kombayi showed commendable courage in challenging a top ZANU(PF) leader, and there was much evidence indicating that he could unseat Muzenda — a

flagrant affront in the eyes of the communist system. Returning home one evening before the election, Kombayi heard a car, and then automatic weapons opening fire. Kombayi was lucky to survive but was seriously wounded. Two people were implicated and identified: a senior CIO officer and a ZANU(PF) youth leader. At the first trial the magistrate found them guilty and they were convicted. At the subsequent High Court appeal, the sentence was upheld, and finally the Supreme Court had no hesitation in confirming the seven-year jail term for attempted murder. Had they been more accurate marksmen, the case would have been for murder. Mugabe, however, immediately conferred his pardon on the two gangsters. Not for the first time, he had openly opted to condone thuggery, physical assault and even murder against his political opponents. But what a desperately sorry situation it is for our judges and all the other arms of law and order in our country, when the President, with a snap of his finger, can make a mockery of all the painstaking work produced by these dedicated servants of the state.

As 1990 progressed, in spite of ZANU(PF)'s success in virtually eliminating the opposition in the recent election, there was no let-up in the campaign to consolidate their power base further. When there was a ministry specifically charged with promoting the interests of their political party, obviously they would be foolhardy not to ensure that they earned their keep.

In June Minister Mutasa made a public statement that 'Civil servants who do not support the principles of the ruling ZANU(PF) party should not continue to work for government.' The following month five ZANU(PF) youth members were charged and convicted for assaulting a member of the public. At a public meeting in the area, Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira denigrated the magistrate dealing with the case and stated that the party would pay the fines imposed. However, the problem was

solved by Mugabe using his prerogative of mercy to pardon the youths, another absolutely dreadful exhibition on the part of a political dictator publicly ridiculing our judicial system and then taking the law into his own hands to condone — indeed promote — ZANU(PF) gangsterism. It is a sad reflection on the government's claim that they enjoy the support of the people.

By December 1990, ZANU(PF) had still not forgiven our university — both staff and students — for having the audacity to criticise certain actions of government. This came to a head in 1988, as I mentioned, with the arrest of members of the students representative council, the closure of the university, and the cancellation of end-of-year examinations. The government now went even further: in the latter half of December, when the university was in recess and most people away on Christmas vacation, they produced a University Amendment Bill, recalled Parliament, and within two days passed the necessary legislation. The accepted procedure of allowing time for consideration and receiving representation from interested parties was, for obvious reasons, sidestepped. The whole affair was a covert, sinister operation to deceive the public and timed to coincide with the festive season in order to minimise public reaction. The effect of the amendment was to abrogate the university's academic freedom. The appointment of the Vice-Chancellor and other key officials now became the prerogative of government, and the Vice-Chancellor, clearly under the control of the Minister of Education, was given power to remove any lecturer or student without providing justification. Moreover, the university council, the policy-making body, was now loaded with government appointees at the expense of appointees from national bodies.

Over the decades our university had built up a reputation for high academic standards and enjoyed international respect because of the freedom associated with its charter.

This had attracted highly respected educationalists from many parts of the world, willing to contribute the benefits of their professionalism and expertise and, at the same time, gain experience of Africa. Already there was evidence coming in that the respect which had been earned by our university through the efforts of dedicated educationalists over many years had been damaged by this retrogressive legislation. This was the price exacted from us by a government determined to remain in power no matter what the cost to the country.

The year 1991 saw the government avoiding provocative action in view of the Commonwealth heads of government conference, due to be held in Harare in the latter part of the year. They backtracked on the Land Acquisition Bill, which would have allowed land and improvements to be expropriated at sub-economic prices for subsequent allocation to selected comrades. At the same time, however, they continued, as unobtrusively as possible, to entrench their establishment with consummate expertise. Meanwhile, the economy continued to grind down — but this, of course, was not a uniquely Zimbabwean problem; it applied to most of Africa, and had been the pattern for many decades, with the result that Africans generally are among the poorest people in the world, while their politicians are among the richest. They use the plight of the poor masses as a lever to pressurise the rest of the world to support their plea for cancellation of Third World debt. The majority of humane people wish to assist, but how does one overcome the corruption of those in control plundering their countries' foreign exchange and lining their own pockets? And there is ample evidence to indicate that billions are involved. Would it not be fair and honest to insist, as a prelude to international financial agreements, that the politicians of the countries concerned, and their close associates, declare their bank accounts, both foreign and local. I believe the resultant revelations would be

staggering — in some cases they might even solve their countries' financial problems!

I was encouraged by a speech made in the first week of May 1991 by Mr Barber Conable, World Bank President, who acknowledged the difficulties facing Africa, but stressed: 'With the right kinds of policies and the right kinds of leadership these problems can be overcome. But all will be to no avail unless the quality of governance in Africa improves.' I hoped that the words would be backed up by action. This would indeed be a rare occasion in our world, riddled as it is by convenient diplomacy and appeasement.

By September 1991 inflation continued to spiral out of control and the latest estimate was that it had reached 35 per cent. Financial and economic opinion laid the blame firmly on the government's excessive spending, claiming that this was the major contribution to fuelling inflation. Zimbabwe had just been subjected to one of those agonising orchestrated gatherings which provided Mugabe with a platform to address the people. Schoolteachers regularly complained of receiving instructions to load their pupils on to transport, which then conveyed them to the meeting. In addition, township residents who stayed at home were subjected to provocative taunts from youth-wing gangs. On this particular occasion one of those attending, a black man, interrupted Mugabe's speech and shouted: 'Ian Smith was better.' The report indicated that there was strong applause from a large section in the vicinity. However, security personnel, ever present in force, immediately arrested the heckler, and he was unceremoniously removed.

On 16 October 1991, the Commonwealth heads of government meeting opened in Harare. From all accounts it was well organised, with the usual pomp and ceremony, and the high lifestyle associated with such occasions. The principle on which the organisation was founded stated

that the Commonwealth is (and I quote from the official journal of *The Parliaments of the Commonwealth*): 'united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and human rights and freedoms, and pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy'. The majority of countries attending, however, were one-party dictatorships, or military dictatorships. Did this not mean, in all honesty, that the whole thing was a gigantic fraud? These countries use their membership of this once venerable association to bluff the world that they believe in democracy. Moreover, they use it as the foundation for their appeals for assistance to enable them 'to continue serving the interests of their people'. In fact, the Commonwealth effectively props up the dictatorships' corrupt regimes and assists them in their principal preoccupation of the preservation in power and wealth of themselves and their comrades.

It is important to note that this is not a recent innovation. It started in the early 1960s, and ever since it has continued to expand. One never ceases to wonder how much longer the principled members of the Commonwealth will continue to turn a blind eye to such blatant dishonesty!

However, as I commented over the 1991 speech by the World Bank President, maybe there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The current Prime Ministers of Britain and Canada, John Major and Brian Mulroney, made it absolutely clear that henceforth it was their intention to link aid to the recipient countries' records of human rights and democratic government. Perhaps this would materialise into more than vote-gaining diplomacy! Otherwise the public would once again rightly come to the conclusion that the Commonwealth is no more than a talking shop, used by its many less scrupulous members as a cover-up for an exclusive retreat financed by the taxpayer.

In February 1992 the land issue confronted us again. On a few occasions in 1991 there were rumblings about the aforementioned Land Acquisition Bill, but it was kept on

the back-burner for certain reasons. Probably the most important of these was the need to get the Commonwealth leaders' conference over and out of the way. The Bill was thus introduced to Parliament in the last week in February. There had been many meetings and much talking. The principle of obtaining land on which to settle peasant farmers was readily accepted; the controversy centred on the manner of expropriation and the subsequent compensation. Under the Bill the minister had power to designate land, not only agricultural, but also commercial and urban. The land could be taken over immediately, or the final decision delayed for up to ten years. During this period the owner could utilise the land, but construct no more improvements. This meant he would no longer be able to use it as security in order to obtain credit facilities. If, after ten years, the land was taken over and the owner was dissatisfied with the price offered, no longer would he have an appeal to our courts of law, as had been the procedure in the past and is accepted in all civilised countries, but arbitration would be handled by a government-appointed body. As we knew only too well from past experience, there would be collusion and corruption involved at this point. Once a decision on the compensation was given — and there was no knowing as to how long this would be delayed — the procedure for payments was vague and could be extended over a period of five years. I noted in my diary: 'In plain language, Government takes unto itself the right to arbitrarily expropriate any land and property, and then set its own price and method of compensation. There is no appeal.'

The government appeared oblivious to the numerous warnings and appeals from investors, both external and internal, of the resultant devastating effect on the national economy. They were concerned only with the short term, the regaining of voter confidence. The long-term future of the country could take care of itself.

By December 1992, I concluded that the year would be remembered by Zimbabweans, unhappily, for shortages of essential requirements and massive inflation. We had been through a drought with its associated problems. The drought, however, had in many ways assisted the government by enabling them to use it as an excuse for their own shortcomings. Over the last five to six years, government-controlled prices for many commodities such as maize (the staple food of the bulk of our people), meats, wheat, groundnuts and dairy products had been suppressed in order to ensure cheap food. Farmers had enough common-sense to understand that growing crops that were sub-economic was a road to certain insolvency. In 1991 the acreage planted to maize was less than 50 per cent of 1980's and it was much the same with other crops. For this reason — not because of the drought — we were faced with a massive import of maize. In January 1992 the Commercial Farmers' Union foresaw the problem and urged the government to import maize from South Africa, where stocks were available at reasonable prices. But those at the top knew better and boasted that there would be no shortage. We live with the perennial problem that ZANU(PF) always knows better than everyone else, including the professionals and those with many decades of experience.

Suddenly, in April 1992, the government was confronted with the facts: a shortage of meal and long queues. But by then, external stocks had been depleted and the price of imports had escalated. In the local townships, families were going to bed hungry, and on the black market the price of mealie-meal had more than doubled. An aggravating factor was the continuing devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar and the associated inflation. In fact, in 1992 the escalation in the cost of living had been alarming and the resultant hardships on the lower-income groups had been a source of great concern. Furthermore, as always happens in such

circumstances, there had been an unwelcome increase in crime. I wrote in my diary: ‘A hungry man is a dangerous man. In 1990 inflation reached 16 per cent, in 1991 it was 29 per cent, and the prediction is that it will be around 40 per cent for 1992.’ The interest rate on loan money exceeded 40 per cent in the latter part of 1992. For a number of years now, the government had acknowledged the problems facing the country, and year after year they repeated, parrot-fashion, their solutions. ‘The massive national debt was to be reduced, deficit financing would be curbed and kept at an acceptable level, the size of the civil service and number of ministries (proportional to population, the largest in the world) would be cut back, the rampant corruption endemic throughout the country would be dealt with.’ However, the Ministry of Defence vote in 1992’s budget was increased by $115 million to a total of $1.3 billion — for a country at peace with the world around it, with no internal security problems. Minister of Finance Dr Bernard Chidzero stated in Parliament: ‘We have increased the Ministry of Defence’s salary bill to keep the boys content so that they do not turn against us.’ This came from the man who was supposed to be the main architect in formulating the future economic policy for our country, encouraging investment in order to create jobs for the millions of unemployed, and promoting exports which would earn the foreign exchange to reduce our national debt and finance our essential imports.

The President of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, in his end-of-year analysis, called for: ‘the abolition of provincial governors and resident ministers and a 50 per cent reduction in cabinet ministers in order to check government’s bloated recurrent expenditure.’ He added: ‘The government’s fiscal policy for the year has been a total disaster with taxes among the highest in the world — personal tax at 55 per cent and corporate tax at 42.5 per cent.’ What an asset it is when people continue to

retain their sense of humour. A correspondent from Bulawayo commented: ‘It is rumoured that Ian Smith has sent a telegram to Harold Wilson — “Congratulations, sanctions imposed in 1965 are at last beginning to take effect!”.’

Throughout the whole of 1993, Mugabe was confronted with the problem of trying to reconcile two opposing forces. On the one hand there was the need to placate voters disenchanted by constant shortages and the alarming increase in the costs of their basic requirements. The answer, in the eyes of ZANU(PF), was to produce more land on which to settle comrades. On the other hand, there were convincing opinions, both internal and external, warning against using land — that precious and limited commodity — as a tool to gain short-term political support at the expense of the long-term future of the country. To date, the government’s land settlement policy had been a total disaster. Even their own appointed agricultural extension officers held up their hands in horror and cried for a halt. People who wished to have the privilege of owning a piece of land, but had no farming experience or training, could within one year destroy natural resources which would take a hundred years or more to replenish. Moreover, it was nonsensical to take land away from efficient and productive farmers who were not only providing food for the nation, but a surplus for export that earned much-needed foreign currency, and to hand it over to those who were incapable of even supporting themselves. This was communism at its absolute worst: deliberately sabotaging the future of your country and your people in order to ensure your retention of power.

Moreover, government had available in excess of two million acres of farmland but, because of the above problem, they were in a quandary, not knowing what to do. They could obtain another million acres tomorrow through willing-seller, willing-buyer deals, but this was the last

thing to be drawn to the attention of the people. It would demolish their vote-winning strategy of portraying the white man as a colonial racist obstinately clinging on to his land while ZANU(PF) threatened to expropriate it in order to distribute it to the poor deprived people!

It is important to place on record that our commercial farming community is one of the success stories of Africa. They have consistently out-produced other farmers in this part of the world, and succeeded in breaking the world record for corn or maize yield — the staple food of Africa. The average farmer is not concerned with politics or racism — he concentrates on maintaining viability in a part of the world notorious for the hazards of nature. Our farming industry not only produces the lion's share of our foreign exchange earnings, but is also the country's major employer of labour, the dynamo which motivates the national economy. Who in his right senses would be party to deliberately inflicting damage on this invaluable asset?

In February 1993 the Minister of Agriculture gave an assurance to the Farmers' Union that government had no intention of interfering with productive farms — only under-utilised farms would be expropriated and then only after consultation with the Farmers' Union. In May, however, several highly productive farms were summarily expropriated, no consultation having taken place. Obviously there were complaints not only from the farming community but generally from those concerned about the adverse effect on confidence and investment. This was too much for ZANU(PF), who were outraged that people had the effrontery publicly to criticise their right to take over land, as and when they wished, in order to satisfy the demands of their comrades. In order to create the right ground for their attack there had been a series of accusations against farmers for their obstructionist attitude to the land acquisition question. This was a deliberate misrepresentation of the publicly stated position of the

Commercial Farmers' Union that they agreed with the need for land distribution and offered their co-operation. Let me reiterate that, to date, the government's exercise at land settlement has been a complete disaster, occasioned by their own gross ineptitude. However, the commercial farmers were being blamed for causing the predicament and through their control of the mass communication media the government would ensure that their version prevailed.

Mugabe was given the necessary platform at a meeting of his party's central committee in September 1993. He used extravagantly provocative racial terminology, but let there be no doubt that the vote-winning objective was well executed. He referred to our commercial farmers as a 'greedy bunch of racist usurpers who are determined to challenge the popular will of the people'. He ended his diatribe with the emphatic statement that he would 'brook no opposition from the courts on the issue of land expropriation and redistribution'.

In spite of all these accusations and threats, action has been limited. About half a dozen farms have been designated and, in response to the complaints, the minister emphasised that any owner who objected has the right of appeal — to the Minister, not to an impartial arbitrator. Mugabe was constantly trying to do a balancing act with one foot in both camps. First and most important was the need to keep his voters on side. Second, and absolutely vital, was the necessity to avoid provocation of those countries who were his major donors. There had already been a few shots across Mugabe's bow warning against violations of the declaration of rights and attempts to undermine the course of justice. With the economy virtually on the rocks, any action which would prejudice the availability of finance to the national exchequer would be insane.

The principal economic problem resulted from the government's inability to curb its reckless spending spree. The civil service continued to expand, the security forces were thriving and government ministers lived in opulence. They asked: 'Why are people concerned; after all, the government provides the money?'

But at what price — the poor taxpayer received the message every day. Inflation had reached 50 per cent, interest rates peaked at 55 per cent and unemployment continued to increase — as it had done for the past twelve years since the coming to power of ZANU(PF). Headlines in March 1993 told us that the Minister of Defence was planning a 40 per cent reduction in the size of the army — proportional to population the largest in Africa. However, in the national budget produced in Parliament at the end of July there was an increase of 14 per cent in the defence vote! The largest increases went to those ministries which helped to prop up the government, such as Information, which was a massive propaganda machine dedicated to brainwashing the public into accepting the 'miracles' performed by ZANU(PF).

Headlines in May were that: 'DEBT SERVICE RATIO EXCEEDS 70%'. The development of primary and secondary industry was being stifled because the much needed foreign exchange was directed to subsidise government's reckless extravagance in pursuit of their communist ideology. While government expenditure increased, revenue decreased in real terms, first because of massive inflation, and second because the depressed economy led to reduction in revenue from traditional taxpayers. The government found no problem in bridging the gap through increasing taxation and floating more and bigger loans, as witnessed in the year's budget.

When leaders in commerce and industry pointed out to the government that they were killing the goose that lays the golden eggs, their reply was simple and to the point:

‘We are getting along very well without your golden eggs!’ The realities, however, did not tie up with such wishful thinking. Towards the end of the year, in October and November, there were two reports in particular which caused alarm. British, German and Swiss bankers conducted a survey and concluded that they found that Zimbabwe was not sufficiently competitive and, accordingly, unworthy of investment. The headline read: ‘THE CITY OF LONDON HAS LOST ALL CONFIDENCE IN ZIMBABWE’. This opinion was endorsed by the American chapter of the Zimbabwe–United States Business Council, which stated that it was suspending its activities, quoting a number of negative factors contributing to their fall in confidence.

So 1993 ended on a depressed note. Although people put on a brave face, the Christmas atmosphere was subdued and the business sector in general indicated a lower turnover, and 1994 was a repeat performance of 1993. The economy continued to disintegrate, the propaganda machine burgeoned and subtle intimidation increased. With the general election looming in the first half of 1995, everything else was relegated to the background.

In the first week of January 1994 the Minister of Health complained that the health services were falling apart:

> The Government has become so mean that the country is facing serious manpower and drug shortages. Our own experienced doctors are leaving the country because of unacceptable conditions, and their positions are being taken up by expatriates who are rejects from their own countries. We are heading for a position where we will be looking for more money to build mortuaries.

In reply, government’s excuse was that times were tough, that they were short of money. In the same week, however, Mugabe gave himself a 64 per cent salary hike, with his ministers following closely on his heels. They had been

grossly overpaid before, but the all-powerful government propaganda machine and the sycophantic hangers-on were working overtime singing the praises of our inspired leaders.

There were many lessons not to be forgotten as the government prepared for the election in 1995. There was, for example, the aforementioned wounding of Patrick Kombayi, the former mayor of Gweru, who had the effrontery to stand against Simon Muzenda, our Vice-President. As I have related, Mugabe then contemptuously overturned the sentences of the courts and pardoned Kombayi's attackers. There was the issue of the compulsory acquisition of land about which, as I have said, the government had been talking for years, and actually acquiring land in order to settle peasant farmers. As the plan turned out to be a disaster they had been at their wits'end, wondering what to do with all the available land. In characteristic fashion they conjured up a devious plan to accommodate their friends. One would have thought that they would have learned by now that this kind of scandal eventually surfaced. A local Member of Parliament received the message from his constituents and was forced to raise the matter in Parliament. The first disclosure came early in March 1994 when the Minister of Agriculture, Kumbirai Kangai, admitted that a farm of three thousand acres had been allocated to Minister Mangwende, his predecessor. To begin with, Kangai attempted to shelter behind a claim that the relevant information was classified, but because the question of land allocation was such an emotive subject, with so many promises having been made and so many comrades anticipating land, he had no option but to come clean. Some seventy farms were allocated to ministers, MPs, senior civil servants, members of the security forces, and influential friends. To refer to it as a national disgrace is to put it mildly. It was a classic example of communist treachery. It was patently obvious that the decision did not

come from one man — it came from the politburo, with Mugabe in the chair. In any normal country, the government would be honour-bound to resign — but not in a one-party dictatorship!

The cult of protecting and supporting Mugabe, no matter what the mistakes or indiscretions of ministers or office bearers of ZANU(PF), was conscientiously preserved. Mugabe feigned ignorance of what had taken place, and then graciously intervened to offer a helping hand and restore justice to the injured party. The ZANU(PF) brainwashing machine was quick to concede the wrong — after all, human beings are not infallible — but there is one man, the saviour, always available to administer mercy. As long as his followers stood by him all would come right in the end.

The two-pronged attack continued. First, water-tight legislation was passed to preclude any other political party from meaningful opposition. Second, any criticism against Mugabe and ZANU(PF) was branded as an attack from white colonial racists against the black community.

We had been presented with a perfect example. Mugabe had recently made a trip to Marondera (formerly Marandellas), about eighty kilometres east of Harare, and publicly denounced the white community for their hostile attitude towards a local farmer, a recent immigrant from Ghana — the home of Mugabe's late wife. He said: 'I am disturbed that there have been acts of sabotage to undermine your farming here. Unless they desist we will take action to deprive these whites of their land. They must accept the reality of a black government here and the reality of defeat.'

The true story subsequently came out in our farming magazine. There was a report from the local intensive conservation area committee to the natural resources board indicating the land abuse and subsequent environmental degradation on the farm in question. The

report was endorsed by the local Agritex conservation officer, incidentally a black man and an appointee of Mugabe's government. Mugabe had rushed in, without ascertaining the true facts, to use this opportunity to reinforce political support from the rabble of ZANU(PF). The fact that he further aggravated race relations in our country and prejudiced investor confidence, both internally and externally, was of no concern to a power-hungry politician.

Moreover, there was ever present the continuous campaign of intimidation, sometimes blatant, sometimes subtle. In June 1994 Mugabe launched a campaign which was a mixture of both. It was announced that: 'President Mugabe calls on ZANU(PF) Youth League to undertake house-to-house action'. The residents of the high-density townships had been through this before and many still retained memories of the petrol-bombing era of the 1960s. The party youths would be given tremendous power to invade private lives, and, because of the high rate of unemployment, there would be no shortage of volunteers for the daily payment. From past experience everybody knew that the police would have their hands tied — in other words, mob rule would be condoned.

In August 1994, Mugabe visited South Africa and addressed their Parliament. With breathtaking arrogance, he advised their government to follow the course implemented in Zimbabwe. He then called on all southern African states to gang up together and force the World Bank and IMF to give them more hand-outs — more money to top up their overseas personal bank accounts, and subsidise the inefficiency inherent in their one-party states! He was brilliantly successful in provoking South Africans in general. One of their Members of Parliament said: 'If South Africa does exactly the opposite of what Mugabe preaches, we will not go wrong. His socialist approach has given his country a bad name and his advice should be ignored.'

Another Member of Parliament commented: ‘The IMF’s pre-conditions were the only hope for African countries to rid themselves of the after-effects of socialist experiments.’

One would have thought that Mugabe would have been mindful of Mandela’s profound comment at the recent OAU heads of state meeting, at which Mugabe was present: ‘We surely must face the matter squarely that where there is something wrong in the manner in which we govern ourselves, it must be said that the fault is not in our stars but in ourselves that we are ill-governed.’ How refreshing to find a leader in this modern world who had the courage to speak the truth, no matter how unpalatable it might be.

A recent article told us of a report from a specialist in the US Agency for International Development that: ‘The bulk of Africa’s economic woes in agriculture are a product of the interference and mismanagement of the continent’s governments, and are not, as these governments claim, a result of North–South economic conspiracy or pressure from international organisations.’

The year ended on what I suppose can only be regarded as a not unfamiliar note. There is honour, so they say, even among thieves and gangsters! During the month of December we had been reading much about Mengistu, the Ethiopian leader who fled from his country in 1991 and had been living in Zimbabwe ever since, under the generous hospitality of his friend and comrade Robert Mugabe. At this time he was on trial in his homeland for crimes against humanity, accused of massacring thousands of his own innocent subjects. The Ethiopian government had requested his extradition, but this had been turned down by the Zimbabwe government. The matter had recently resurfaced because of a complaint from one of the government’s ministries that in one month Mengistu’s telephone bill had exceeded $60,000. He resided in a large, luxurious mansion, with all expenses, including security guards, paid for by the Zimbabwe taxpayer. The cost was

estimated to exceed a couple of million dollars per annum. It had been stated in his own country that, in addition to his evil record as a murderer, he had also been guilty of misappropriating large amounts of public funds. The fact that he was simply doing what some other African leaders do in no way excuses him. It was nauseating for the average decent Zimbabwean to accept that we should be subjected to such an imposition. But being forced, into the bargain, to pay for the insult, made it all the more repugnant. If Mugabe and ZANU(PF) believed they were under an obligation to protect their friend, at least they should accept the responsibility to honour their own debt. It was totally indefensible and inexcusable that they should use their dictatorial powers to compel the poor Zimbabwean taxpayer, who was already suffering extreme hardship in attempting to feed, clothe and educate his family, to pay for accommodating such a monster.

And so we moved on to 1995. Rumour had it that the general election would be held in April. This meant we were heading for a traumatic period where our people would be subject to intimidation, corruption, campaigns of misinformation, bribery and the use of public funds to promote ZANU(PF). For fifteen years now our voters have been brainwashed into believing that this is how democracy works. Ninety per cent of them previously lived under the traditional tribal system and hence have no means of comparison with the genuine article. They are now experiencing the ‘freedom’ promised by ZANU(PF).

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Elections — 1995–6

After sixteen years of Mugabe's Zimbabwe, our fight to prevent the advent of Marxist-Leninist *de facto*, if not *de jure* rule has been vindicated. Instead of entrenching multi-party Western-style democracy, as was the intention of the settlement, our ruler and his collaborators brought in a dictatorship, characterised by high living for Mugabe's ZANU(PF) hierarchy and creeping impoverishment for the nation. Bureaucracy is rampant — there is double the number of cabinet ministers necessary, four times the number of civil servants, and a bloated army. The government has preached the necessity to cut back on their high living and introduce some control of their extravagant misuse of taxpayers' money. To do anything, however, which would take jobs away from comrades or introduce measures aimed at encouraging a day's work in exchange for a day's pay, would court unpopularity. And any increase in taxation runs contrary to the government's constant pledges to promote conditions that will attract the investment necessary to create jobs for the masses of the unemployed. International investors, industrialists and bankers have made it clear that the present rates of taxation are a disincentive. The ZANU(PF) propaganda machine, however, will have no difficulty in convincing the electorate of government's good intentions. The fact that any benefits that might accrue — and in the hands of government bureaucracy these are highly problematical — will be short-term and at the expense of the long-term interests of the country, will be kept under cover.

A measure of the importance of accepting party loyalty was made absolutely clear in January 1995. During the

general election campaign, Minister Kumbirai Kangai, at a meeting in his constituency, said: ‘If any civil servant says that, “I work for the government and not the party in this area,” please let me know and I will see that he is removed from Manicaland.’ A week later, Minister Didymus Mutasa went even further when he countermanded a decision of the courts. At a public meeting in Mutare he boasted that he had prevented the messenger of court from presenting an attachment order to a local businessman because of failure to pay a debt. ‘When they told me that they were only acting on instructions, I told them that there is nobody who can challenge my authority.’ It was not surprising that responsible opinion and in particular, the legal fraternity in Mutare, were strong in their condemnation and accused Mutasa of setting a dangerous precedent.

There is a human rights organisation in Zimbabwe which operates under the name of ZimRights. In the past they have criticised the government for elections which were not free and fair, and generally for violations of human rights, which have been rampant and continuous. They organised a meeting for the weekend of 18 February to discuss the question of political violence and the need to ensure that the coming election would be free of intimidation and the other irregularities of the past. All political parties were invited to attend, and in particular the recently appointed chairman of the electoral supervisory commission was asked to address the meeting.

His office regretted his inability to attend. One would have thought that there could be no more important meeting for commissioners to attend if they genuinely believed in prosecuting their mandate. In fact they recently publicised a report they presented to Mugabe:

> If the government is perceived as one that will not take firm measures to prevent election violence and punish those guilty of it, the whole election process is

> undermined, the belief of the people of this country in the fairness and freeness of the election process and the legitimacy of the election process is undermined, and in the end confidence in the government of the day is undermined.

These are fine, high-sounding words, but one can only be left with the uneasy feeling that, given government's record over the years, they bear little relation to its current actions.

The meeting, which was well attended, despite being boycotted by the electoral supervisory commission and ZANU(PF), accused the commission of conniving with government in their cover-up operations, and called for the establishment of an independent electoral supervisory commission. They also stressed the importance of impartial security during the election, and the disbandment of the special constabulary unit, which was well known to be a partisan unit of ZANU(PF).

Needless to say, there was no response from the government, other than to declare the general election for the first week in April.

The main opposition parties, after many meetings and great deliberation, had decided to boycott the election. Their reason was clear and logical. Apart from the fact that the whole system was loaded in favour of ZANU(PF), in addition to the 120 elected seats to Parliament, Mugabe controls the appointment of an additional thirty seats. The President appoints twelve members, and the eight Provincial Governors, nominated by the President, automatically become members, and the Chiefs' Council nominate ten members. Chiefs have had a clear message on a number of occasions, that if they attempt confrontation with ZANU(PF) their powers and financial assistance will be curbed. Accordingly if ZANU(PF) win forty-five of the 120 elected seats, they remain in power, in

spite of being defeated in seventy-five of the constituencies. And they continue to boast about their democracy and the inherent freedom of one man, one vote. Sadly, a few of the smaller opposition parties had decided not to join the protest, and were supporting ZANU(PF) in condemning the boycott. Lack of unity among the opponents of government detracted from the impact it was hoped to make on the rest of the world.

Early in March a report leaked out that the Zimbabwe Air Force had received a Super Puma helicopter to be used by Mugabe in the election campaign. The cost was Z$200 million, and it was fitted with every luxury and the most modern fax and telephone facilities for contact with those on the ground. Not surprisingly, the government was embarrassed and tried to cover it up. After all, the Ministry of Health would dearly have loved to have a million dollars for urgently needed medical supplies. And a couple of million for the Ministry of Social Welfare would have assisted in covering the desperate needs of children and the elderly. Moreover, to use taxpayers' money to assist a political party, ZANU(PF), in a general election was unconstitutional.

Nomination Day came in the middle of March, and ZANU(PF) were unopposed in fifty-three constituencies. In other words, they had already secured the necessary majority to form the next government before a single vote had been cast!

The final election results were known by 10 April. ZANU(PF) won 118 of the 120 electoral seats. In the south-eastern border area of Manicaland province, remote and adjoining Mozambique, where there has always been much border crossing and family links, the voters remained loyal to their own community, as they did in the previous election, and returned two opposition candidates.

A post-mortem analysis reveals different tactics from the previous election, where open intimidation, thuggery, and

even elimination of opposition candidates were carried out with impunity. These actions evoked much criticism, not only locally, but from reputable, external sources, so ZANU(PF) changed their tactics. From 1980 onwards, after winning their first election, they had gradually assumed more and more control of the mass communications media and developed an intimidatory machine, with the advice and assistance of Moscow and North Korea in particular, which was becoming effective in the latter half of the 1980s. Perhaps their methods were rough and crude, but nevertheless they achieved the necessary results. Accordingly, from 1990 onwards these two areas received concentrated attention in order to ensure that their operations became more subtle, and hence less obvious to the casual observer. In addition, easy finance was a necessary ingredient. The first step was to create a Ministry of Political Affairs, with the stated objective of explaining the workings of government and informing the people of the services available to them. This was a novel idea, and one for which there did not seem to be a precedent anywhere else in the world. Offices were opened in the main centres throughout the country, staffed by civil servants, provided with transport and any other necessary equipment. The true intention, however, soon became obvious: it was a gigantic operation to brainwash the masses into believing that everything they enjoyed in life, including handouts from donor countries, came from Mugabe and his ministers. If there were shortcomings, these were a ‘result of the legacy inherited from the previous colonial regime, and were taking time for the government to correct’!

Next came a direct vote in Parliament of taxpayers’ money to the party in power — ZANU(PF). This was something previously unknown in this country. Not surprisingly, there was a ready answer: namely, there are other governments in the world which provide grants to

political parties in order to enable them to participate in the democratic system. I believe this is so. But there is no precedent for a government making a donation of taxpayers' money to themselves, their own political party, with not one cent going to any other party.

In spite of all of this, stories came in of blatant misuse of government power during the election campaign. Mugabe used the new air force helicopter, purchased with taxpayers' money for the defence of the country, to travel far and wide in support of his party candidates. He called on the people to 'come out and vote in force in order that we can eliminate the opposition'. At a meeting in Highfield (a large populous area of Harare) the audience was warned that if they did not come out and vote in full force they could be mistaken for opposition supporters boycotting the poll. There was a distinct element of threat. In the eastern border district, which had previously returned opposition MPs, the people were told that the reason for the poor development in their area was that they had supported the opposition. In Matabeleland, where voters had been sitting in a queue all day, the polling officers having failed to arrive on the scene, people openly expressed fear that they would be punished if they did not vote — drought relief would be withheld in their area! These poor people were already suffering from inadequate food and water supplies. I could go on quoting cases of how certain candidates were prevented from visiting parts of their constituency, and others were publicly threatened and humiliated. Reports to the election supervisory commission were ignored. Moreover, the mass communications media were blind to any public criticism.

In January 1995, even before the election campaign had commenced, an Amnesty International report accused the Zimbabwe government of harassing its political opponents and resorting to serious violation of internationally accepted human rights standards. The report states that:

‘Journalists investigating government corruption scandals have been threatened with prosecution, and journalist Basildon Peta was detained for writing a story alleging a tax evasion racket by three companies owned by ZANU(PF).’

In the same month, we received a report of a speech made in France by Nigerian Nobel Prize Laureate Wole Soyinka. Noted for his straight talking, he said:

> African dreams of peace and prosperity have been shattered by the greedy, corrupt and unscrupulous rule of African strongmen. The dream has evaporated because of the treachery and betrayal of leaders with their pursuit of power and wealth. One would be content with just a modest cleaning up of the environment, development of opportunities, health services, education, eradication of poverty. But unfortunately even these modest goals are thwarted by a power crazed and rapacious leadership who can only obtain their egotistical goals by oppressing the rest of us.

He has certainly produced a very accurate portrait of the history of Zimbabwe over the last fifteen years. And yet ZANU(PF) get away with it, with a minimum of criticism from the leading free world countries. I would say that there is less freedom and justice in Zimbabwe today than in countries such as Nigeria, Nicaragua or North Korea, where one-party states have been established and the reasons for them openly declared. Whether you agree with them or not, at least they are honest. In Zimbabwe, in theory, we have a democracy and a voters’ roll, but in practice, as I have recorded in this book, to attempt meaningful opposition to ZANU(PF) is to court disaster. Superficial opposition, which clearly is of no concern, is welcomed, as it enables ZANU(PF) to point to this as proof that the democratic process is operating. But the facts will

prove that, proportional to population, more people have been murdered in Zimbabwe because of their opposition to our government than in the countries I have mentioned above.

So the election was an 'overwhelming victory' for ZANU(PF), and the government, with the endorsement of the election supervisory commission, which acclaimed the election to be 'free and fair'. The truth, however, is in total contradiction of this, and there are a number of telling facts which will substantiate this claim: for the past five years, indeed fourteen years, the government has owned and controlled the only national daily newspaper, and the only radio and TV service in the country. These have been used exclusively to propagate the cause of ZANU(PF).

In the 1985 election the national media denied my political party, the Conservative Alliance Zimbabwe — at that time the official opposition in Parliament — any advertising space. There are employees of the Broadcasting Corporation who will concede, obviously in confidence, that they operate under an instruction that every newscast, unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise, should commence with the words: 'The President Comrade Mugabe says, or has done …' Mention of any opposition political party is *verboten* unless done in such a manner as to discredit or ridicule.

Next we have the CIO (Criminal Investigation Organisation), which works unremittingly to seek out criticism and opposition to government, and thereafter obtain a political verdict on how to solve the problem. The Mafia could learn a few tricks from these people.

Then the entire electoral mechanism comes under the jurisdiction of Mugabe, and hence the politburo and ZANU(PF). The President appoints the delimitation commission, and the complaints about gerrymandering are legion and have seldom succeeded in causing any change. The Registrar General is Mugabe's appointee. The election

supervisory commission is appointed by Mugabe, and the chairman is one of his appointees to Parliament. And in the end if all of this does not deliver the goods, Mugabe has the power to overrule the courts and declare any illegal election result legal, and any legal result illegal!

The final cherry on the cake is finance. Over the past five years ZANU(PF) have voted themselves, from taxpayers' money, over one hundred million dollars per annum. Not one cent had been voted for any other party. And into the bargain, as mentioned previously, Mugabe controls the appointment of thirty Members of Parliament whatever the election result.

Under these circumstances the party in power in Zimbabwe must win every election — unless they are a bunch of half-wits, or in a permanent state of intoxication. ZANU(PF) derive a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure from complying with the communist creed that 'once in power, you stay in power for ever'. Does anyone know where in this world so-called 'free and fair' elections are rigged more efficiently than in Zimbabwe?

Sadly, although the general election was over, there was no chance of a period of political freedom and justice, and straightforward, decent honesty, because the following year, in March 1996, the presidential election took place.

It was held over 16 and 17 March, and true to my prediction, for the two months prior to the election the ZANU(PF) propaganda machine reached a crescendo. Every day the main news bulletins on both television and radio were used exclusively for the government party to extol the virtues of President Mugabe and his ZANU(PF) government, and to advertise the times and places of their campaign meetings. The same performance was repeated in the one and only national daily newspaper. And it is important to point out that all of these services are at no cost to ZANU(PF). The Mugabe government, using taxpayers' money, took over and enjoyed a monopolistic

control of the telecommunications media and the national press. Opposition parties were compelled to pay for the space and time they used, and there were occasions when their submissions were rejected because of the criticism directed at government.

The greatest tragedy was the insensitivity of ZANU(PF) leaders to their own much-publicised policy of reconciliation and the promotion of racial harmony. The resultant damage to international confidence and much-needed investment was of no concern to them. There was only one issue: the retention of power. Whatever their failings, and these are legion, it stands to their credit that they never deviate from the principles and philosophy which brought them to power. The politburo remains the supreme body in Zimbabwe. Cabinet, Parliament, government are all subsidiary. The guiding motivation is to support their party, with its top-heavy infrastructure of comrades, always acknowledging the one overriding objective of totalitarian governments: retention of power.

Their analysis of what must be done in order to retain the necessary support and votes is meticulous. The greatest desire among our indigenous people is for a piece of land. Only 100 years ago they were all peasant farmers, and ownership of land is still part of their culture, tradition, history. After coming to power, ZANU(PF) leaders embarked on a policy of acquiring land and settling comrades. There was no problem with land, and on the ‘willing seller, willing buyer’ basis they obtained approximately 4 million hectares and when more is required it is readily available. However, their settlement plan turned out to be a disaster, and their own appointed black conservation officers called for a stop to the indiscriminate settlement which was resulting in the destruction of our natural resources. This forced the government to change its plan and declare that in future only qualified farmers would be allocated land. The result is

that over a million hectares of productive land which was taken over is lying unoccupied and derelict. Of course it would detract from the vote-winning campaign if this blatant incompetence and mismanagement were to be made public. Instead, its main theme has been to sympathise with the general desire to obtain a piece of land, but the problem, so the people are told, is that the white man is unwilling to part with his land. However, the masses are assured that their government is formulating a plan that will enable it to take over land in the face of the white man's intransigence. Not only is it a blatant distortion of the truth, but internally it provokes racial antagonism, and externally it prejudices confidence and investment.

Second on the list of the government's priorities, especially for our urbanised black people, is finance to enable them to start a business, or procure the necessary capital equipment. There are already in existence special banks and other financial institutions specifically charged with financing indigenous businesspeople with concessionary loans. But even these banks look for some kind of security. What does one do with people who have no security, and those who lack the experience and skills necessary to gain the confidence of the lender? This is a problem which does not only affect black Zimbabweans, it applies to all kinds of people all over the world.

However, Mugabe has been telling the voters that our banks and other lending institutions have a racial slant and give preference to their white customers, and secondly, that historically the economy has been controlled by the white community, and it is their intention to maintain it that way. Once again this is a slant which stirs the cauldron of racial hostility and sets back efforts to promote confidence. In fact all evidence is to the contrary, with a rapid growth of black participation in the economy, the occupation of top positions in commerce, industry and the professions, and

the acquisition of high-class residential properties in all the suburbs. There are reputable economists who say that today our black people are in control of 50 per cent of the nation's economy and this figure grows by the day. But of course there is no mention of these truths from the election platforms!

It so happened that both of Mugabe's opponents withdrew from the election, unfortunately too late to make any significant impact. If they had made it clear from the outset that they were not prepared to participate in a bogus election, because the whole affair had been so blatantly rigged, and accordingly it was the intention of all the opposition parties to bring a case of appeal before the courts, this would have been a cause of great concern worldwide. Instead ZANU(PF) was given free rein to carry on with its bizarre campaign, squandering millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, coupled with exclusive use of the government-controlled propaganda machine to brainwash the poor unsuspecting electorate with eulogies about its heaven-sent leader and his dedicated government.

In spite of the fact that there was no contest, because of the withdrawal of Muzorewa and Sithole, Mugabe decided that the election must go ahead, come what may. The fact that a few additional millions of dollars of taxpayers' money would be squandered, was of no concern. What was of importance was that he could demonstrate to the world the mass support which he enjoyed from the electorate. In his eve-of-poll TV address to the nation he was visibly angered by his opponents' withdrawal, and resorted to the use of abusive language. Needless to say, no opportunity was permitted for any response. Many employers in industry, commerce, farming and mining encouraged their employees to vote, and provided the necessary transport. In addition there was the usual insidious pressure from party workers, and the youth wing using its subtle means of intimidation.

The final result shows that one-and-a-half million voted out of a potential five million, A mere 30 per cent when they had worked for, and expected, a minimum of 50 per cent. So there is much disillusionment, and they are busy trying to find a scapegoat. The field is wide open for them, especially as they are aware that no one will be given the opportunity to challenge their claims.

However, the principal objective has been achieved. For the next six years Mugabe will be in the same commanding position, and this means that five years hence he will be able to ensure that ZANU(PF) win the general election, thus ensconcing themselves in power for a further five years, with their comrades and fawning sycophants retaining their position of privilege.

I probably will not be around to suffer the indignity, but my heart goes out to the people of Zimbabwe, confronted by such a desperate and degrading situation.

Let us analyse some of the misconceptions about the history of the country now having to live under such a regime. A constant misrepresentation is that our black people were previously denied access to the franchise, and therefore had no say in government. Because of our proximity to South Africa, with their apartheid system, which did deny their blacks the vote, a surprisingly large number of people from the outside world fell for this canard. The truth is that there has never ever been a race classification for our voters' roll. We are not informed, obviously, that when our black people emerged from the tribal culture to become politically aware in the 1960s, they were warned by the African nationalists not to register for the vote if they wished to avoid attracting the displeasure of the party. Otherwise they would be on the receiving end of a midnight petrol bomb in their house, or some other similar disincentive.

When one is confronted with accusations that large numbers of our indigenous people did not receive adequate

education, the true reasons for this are never disclosed. The fact that when the pioneers arrived in the country, as recently as 100 years ago, there was no written language and no schools. The process of bringing our black people into the education system was long and tedious. For the first half century they were reluctant participants. As has already been mentioned, at the break-up of the Federation in 1963 our black people enjoyed the best educational facilities on the African continent. The tremendous impetus to education by the present government since 1980 was made possible because of the foundation and infrastructure they inherited. Moreover, let us not overlook the aggravating factor that after the Pretoria agreement of 1976 the terrorists initiated a new campaign of destroying schools in the tribal areas — educational institutions, used exclusively for our indigenous tribespeople. Books, desks, tables, chairs and all equipment were piled in the centre of the classroom and set alight. Everything associated with the white man and his civilisation had to be eliminated — hundreds of schools were burnt to the ground. I met the headmaster of one such school, who informed me that when he pleaded with the terrorists that they were destroying an asset which was being used for the welfare of their children, the reply was the butt of a rifle on the side of his head. He pointed to an ugly scar. Many thousands of our children were thus denied the opportunity of education they had previously enjoyed — hardly the fault of the ‘previous white racists’.

When the people complain that they lack the necessary finance to purchase their basic requirements, they are informed that this has been brought about because the white man cornered the economy, to the exclusion of our black people. They are not told that there are more black millionaires than white millionaires in Zimbabwe, with government ministers and their comrades living at a lavishly high level, enjoying five-star treatment in their

constant world travels. There is no mention of the fact that government's communist philosophy has frightened away investment, resulting in massive unemployment that has escalated over the past fifteen years. Moreover, in keeping with the incompetence and corruption associated with communism, the economy has collapsed. Inflation and interest rates, which were below 3 per cent in the days of the previous 'racist regime', rose to a peak in excess of 40 per cent last year. The Rhodesian dollar was on a par with sterling, worth 100 pence, while today the Zimbabwe dollar is worth five pence. It is difficult to find a black Zimbabwean these days who will not tell you that his standard of living has deteriorated since the advent of 'freedom' fifteen years ago. There are frequent reports of starving people roaming the countryside in search of wild fruits and seeds to eat in order to maintain life.

When the peasant farmer complains about the unavailability of land, he is told, indeed the whole world is told through ZANU(PF)'s ongoing campaign of misinformation, that his government is having problems with white racist farmers reluctant to part with their land. The truth, of course, is the very opposite. I can take you to a farm which was productive and earning foreign exchange, taken over by government a few years ago, which is now lying unoccupied with derelict and ransacked buildings. There are many such cases, involving more than a million acres. The problem is that our government lacks the ability to process their plan. They openly admit this, and our Farmers' Union have offered assistance and are co-operating in order to deal with the problem, as are individual members of the white farming community. It is totally evil, indeed sinister, that ZANU(PF) is happy to twist the truth in order to gain political support and win votes. The fact that they are provoking racial hatred, and damaging investor confidence, is of no concern to them.

One thing above everything else is uppermost in their mind: power, and the need to preserve it at all costs.

After all, they fought a war for ‘freedom’, so they say. Are they not now entitled to reap the rewards, the fruits of their struggle? They called themselves ‘freedom fighters’. We referred to them as ‘terrorists’ because they deliberately used terror to intimidate the people. The record shows, without any shadow of doubt, that our terminology was correct. Let me give a few examples.

British missionaries were operating a hospital and casualty services at a place called Elim in the eastern districts near Umtali. Most of their patients were black people who lived in the area. It was well known that they had no political affiliation — their work was humanitarian. One night Friday 23 June 1978, a gang of terrorists arrived at the mission, and murdered them all — mostly women and children — freedom fighters!

With the passage of time both terrorist organisations obtained heat-seeking missiles from their communist allies, and were given the necessary instruction. On two occasions in 1978 and 1979, as I have related, they succeeded in shooting down civilian aircraft flying from Kariba to Salisbury. The second crashed, killing everyone. The first crash-landed in a remote part of the country, and some passengers and crew survived. Before our security forces could arrive the terrorists were on the scene and murdered everyone they could find, including women and children — freedom fighters!

The third case I will mention took place towards the end of 1978 when we were busy working with the internal black political leaders bringing in the new constitution that would ensure a black majority government. It was well known that we were succeeding in our objective. One night terrorists came in to a village north of Salisbury, where it was common knowledge that the residents supported one of the leaders engaged in the negotiations with us. They lined up

all the men, in the presence of their wives and children, and shot them in cold blood. They then ordered the families back into their houses, and warned them to leave the bodies where they were until the dogs had devoured them — freedom fighters! Fortunately, our security people arrived early in the morning and restored law and order. One could go on giving a multitude of examples of how they murdered and mutilated, in a most barbaric way, black Zimbabweans who were not their supporters.

The tragedy of Rhodesia hinged to a large extent on timing. As Sir Godfrey Huggins, the then Rhodesian Prime Minister, told us at the end of the Second World War: 'We can have our independence tomorrow if we want it — it is there for the asking.' But he opted for Federation in preference. Then, when the British government decided in 1962, unconstitutionally, to break up the Federation, if Sir Roy Welensky had made it clear that the Federal Government would not agree until Rhodesia's independence had been finalised, there would have been no argument. He was Prime Minister of the whole Federation, all three territories, with the Federal army and air force under his control. Once that opportunity slipped, and the Federation was dissolved, our bargaining power was obviously reduced. And the situation deteriorated even further when the Labour Party won the British general election in 1964.

We believed that our system was correct — evolution as opposed to revolution. And there is no doubt that the majority of our black people agreed with us. Sadly, the free world, which concurred at first, subsequently changed their minds and by so doing denied us the opportunity to put our belief to the test. Once again referring to Sir Godfrey Huggins, he informed us that the British government had told him that Rhodesia was the success story of the Commonwealth. We had succeeded in Africa where they had failed. History proved the veracity of this belief. Africa

to our north was in chaos, and with the passage of time degenerated into disaster. Africa is the continent of coups, assassination of political leaders, governments mesmerised by their communist mentors and thus riddled with corruption, incompetence, nepotism and top jobs for comrades irrespective of ability, experience, training or professionalism.

By contrast, Rhodesia was an oasis of peace and contentment. Visitors to our country invariably commented on ‘the happiest black faces we have ever seen’. In the committee meetings dealing with the dissolution of the Federation it was the British civil servants who pointed out how much more we had done to promote the interest of our black people than Britain had done in their two territories of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Proportional to population we had provided double the amount of facilities in the fields of education, health, housing, recreation and culture than Britain had to our north.

The commissioner of police in his annual report consistently referred to the fact that Rhodesia was the only country in the world, from which statistics were available, where the crime rate was decreasing. Moreover, proportional to population we had a smaller police force than any other known country. However, I am simply emphasising and reiterating the dreadful injustice to which Rhodesia had been subjected.

But all of these truths were of no concern to international politicians preoccupied with appeasement. As Harold Wilson said to me in one of the discussions we were having together here in Salisbury at ‘Independence’, the official residence: ‘For you and me to come to an agreement is no problem. What we have to do is produce an agreement which I can sell to the rest of the world, and in particular to the OAU.’ When I commented: ‘That bunch of communist dictators!’ his reply was straightforward: ‘You cannot divorce yourself from the world we live in.’ I thought aloud

to him: ‘Perhaps it’s the politicians we have to deal with, rather than the world we live in!’

As he departed, he said he hoped we would go on trying to reach agreement, as it would give him much satisfaction to solve the Rhodesian problem. It was not the only occasion I felt a certain amount of warmth towards Harold Wilson. He was not one of those dedicated to socialism ‘at whatever the price’!

Both Alec Home and Duncan Sandys stressed the importance of taking into consideration world opinion. Alec thought that, if we reached agreement along the lines we were discussing, the OAU would react violently, but if the timing was right we could do it. If the Conservatives won the coming election in 1964, within a matter of six months, it could be finalised. Sadly, the Labour Party won. So Rhodesia’s future and history was determined, not on the merits and validity of our case, but on the whims of the British voter, considering their own internal likes and dislikes.

Finally, let me once again refer to what must go down in history as one of the most devious and blatantly dishonest actions of a British government: the failure to abide by the terms of the Lancaster House agreement concerning the 1980 general election. Lord Soames conceded that he had received over one thousand affidavits, many of them endorsed by British observers, confirming massive intimidation by ZANU comrades canvassing while pointing their guns at voters. The agreement specifically stated that any such party would be disqualified. Soames was at pains to describe to us his plan to disqualify ZANU in the worst affected areas. When the time arrived, however, he informed us that he had been forced to change his mind: ‘I have had a message from Peter [Carrington] telling me that any such plan would be unacceptable to the OAU, and therefore it is out.’ When I reminded him that this was blatant dishonesty, and in breach of the agreement, he said,

with a clear tone of sadness: ‘I am afraid, Mr Smith, that the principles and standards on which you and I were brought up to believe in, are no longer part of this world.’ I felt it incumbent upon me to warn him that there could be problems with our security chiefs who were given the responsibility to ensure that the agreement was observed and carried out. He simply replied that he would have to wait for that eventuality.

And in all honesty, what had Rhodesia done to deserve all of this treachery? Our opponents had great success in twisting the truth against us. They accused us of being racist, when in fact we were being realists, constantly planning ways and means to improve the lot of all of our people, black and white. The evidence mentioned above demonstrates so clearly how much more we did for our indigenous peoples than did the British government in the territories they controlled. It also points to the comparative peace and happiness of our law abiding people. We are accused of not having done enough to bring our people into our political system. Again, this is not in keeping with the facts. Not only has our voters’ roll been open to all our people, whatever their race, colour or creed, since 1923 when we were granted our first constitution by Britain, but specific campaigns were launched by our government aimed at encouraging our black people to register as voters. It was unsuccessful for a number of reasons. First, the black nationalist campaign of intimidation warned people not to register, or else! Probably even more important, though, was the fact that our tribesman did not understand what we were trying to talk him into, and he just was not interested. Often I was given the reply: ‘Maybe this thing you call the “vote” is good for the white man, but we have our own system which we have lived with all our lives, and our fathers before us, and we see no reason to change. We cannot have two systems, and we prefer ours.’

Many of our senior black citizens will tell you the same today. And I seriously question whether they should be pressed to change, unless there is conclusive evidence that they would enjoy a better life under our system. Surely, it is indisputable that in sub-Saharan Africa today the antithesis is the case: one-party dictatorships riddled with corruption where the rich get richer and the poor poorer. As I mentioned earlier, the Nigerian Nobel Prize Laureate Wole Soyinka gives us the dreadful truth about Africa.

Our Western civilisation evolved over thousands of years, with many trials and tribulations, triumphs and disasters — an evolutionary process which you attempt to revolutionise at your peril. I wonder why the free world is so reluctant to take note of, and learn from the facts before it! With the passing of Rhodesia we were denied the opportunity of putting our philosophy to the test. We must accept that there is no going back now. What we cannot accept is that we should allow people, indeed nations, to succeed in twisting the truth against Rhodesia in order to support and preserve malignant dictatorships. The vast mass of Rhodesians have always been moderate, middle-of-the road conservatives. Extremists, whether to the left or right, never succeeded in gaining support in our politics. When it became clear in the early 1960s that Britain intended to breach the agreement made with our government, we continued steadfast on the same course. Even the British refusal to honour the Victoria Falls agreement on the break-up of the Federation failed to provoke us into recriminatory action. However, the continuing devious manoeuvring of the British government, including their rejection of the settlement agreement signed by Sir Alec Home and myself, influenced some people, including certain Members of Parliament, to advocate the adoption of a reactionary course. They were ejected from our Rhodesian Front Party, and when they opposed us at an ensuing general election, all were subjected to an

ignominious defeat by the electorate. All of these actions, which clearly indicate Rhodesian moderation, reason, and fair play to all our people, black and white, are assiduously ignored while the rabble-rousers succeed in branding us as white racists, oblivious of the interest of our black community. In fact, *they* are the racists, fabricating their case against us for the reason that we are white people living in Africa. Sadly, the broad mass of reasonable people in the world, who, once the position is made clear to them, sympathise with the injustice of the case against us, seem to be reluctant, or are otherwise too occupied, to resort to positive action. The problem is obvious — the extremist, because of his nature, is obsessed with his cause and never tires of working for it. On the other hand, the reasonable man, because of his nature, is moderate in his outlook and approach to life. We must constantly remind ourselves and our friends, and continue to repeat those significant words: 'All that is necessary for the triumph of evil, is that good men do nothing.'

To look for a moment at sub-Saharan Africa: now that South Africa is a participating partner, there is a completely new perspective. With South Africa, as the industrial giant of Africa, the only First World country in Africa, the other countries in southern Africa have all done an about-turn, and instead of looking north are looking south. The obvious objective must be towards the creation of a Southern African Common Market. Logically, South Africa will be expected to make favourable concessions towards the younger and less developed countries, but I do not anticipate that this will create problems. Healthy, viable neighbours can only be of benefit to South Africa. And a Common Market which is a going concern, with participants gradually lessening demands for assistance from world financial institutions, will be a cause of great relief. It will be important at the outset for the Common Market to avoid overreaching itself. The principle of

establishing a sound operational base is vital. The OAU is a proven disaster — bankrupt, corrupt and dishonest — and a repetition of such a fiasco must be avoided at all costs. One of the contributing causes is that it incorporates countries which are not of Africa. Agypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco have always been orientated northwards towards the Mediterranean and southern Europe. Historically, they derive from the East, not the South. Ask people from any of those countries, as I have, what is their culture, religion, language, history, race, and they will reply: Arab. Their history goes back thousands of years, to civilisations which preceded those of western Europe, long before cartographers commenced producing maps of an imaginary landmass to their south and calling it Africa. In fact the true Africa can only be sub-Saharan. Any attempt to include countries bordering the southern Mediterranean as part of Africa is convenient pretence and has nothing to do with reality. These countries in fact constitute western Arabia.

As a result of this make-believe we now find ourselves in the ludicrous position where the present chairman of the Organisation of African Unity is not an African, but an Arab. He was in attendance, with all the other Arab leaders, at the Arab summit held in Morocco earlier this year to deal with affairs of the Arab world. There were no African leaders present, and rightly so. People should make up their minds what they are and where they stand. The time has come for sub-Saharan Africa to cease dreaming about the miracle of an economic rescue operation from rich oil-producing relatives to our north. It is based on a false premise — these countries are not part of Africa, they are of Arabia. So — let us introduce urgency to our task of creating a sub-Saharan African Common Market, one of the most exciting projects facing our world today. A continent endowed with rich natural resources, the ‘Persian Gulf’ of strategic minerals of our earth, combined with the economic strength and advanced technology and

industrialisation of South Africa. Moreover, we have in Nelson Mandela a leader with the maturity, wisdom, compassion and courage that derives from great experience.

These qualities will be of inestimable value in keeping the ship of state on a true course in face of the rough seas which clearly lie ahead. Courage is the most important ingredient. Courage to face up to tough decisions which, although unpopular with the masses, are in the best long-term interests of the people, and especially their children. It is a sad fact that we live in a world riddled with appeasement and compromise in order to ensure that politicians win votes and stay in power. It is proven beyond doubt that future generations pay the price for such duplicity.

So let us count our blessings. There is ample justification for us to plan and work for a better future. All the necessary essentials are in place. It is clear that as things stand at present, history will record Nelson Mandela as the first black statesman*, as opposed to politician, to be produced by Africa. It is patently obvious that he has to face up to many crucial decisions in order to bring peace to his country. The most important is the delegation of authority in order to accommodate all the diverse peoples who form part of the nation. The record from other parts of the world indicates that this promotes greater community interest among local inhabitants, leading to a more rewarding life, and assisting in the battle to combat crime and violence. Let us give him our support to fulfil the necessary objectives.

Footnote

*A statesman thinks of the next generation — a politician thinks of the next election.

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Janet

'Janet Margaret Smith. My ever-loving wife. Her constant interest in and compassion for her fellow-man, her moral courage, loyalty and integrity were outstanding. These qualities will continue to be an inspiration to me for the rest of my life. May God be with her. Ian. Passed away peacefully on 1st December 1994.'

Although we are all aware of the fact that life is terminal, when the end comes to your life-long partner, even though one may appear calm on the surface, the wound goes deep into the heart and mind. But I knew that any state of depression would be in conflict with Janet's philosophy and wishes. So I gradually succeeded in convincing myself to think positively, going back to the time which brought us together at the beginning, and then all the wonderful things we did, building our home and developing 'Gwenoro' Farm, bringing up our children, and the true friendships we made. Then on to our country Rhodesia which we loved and cherished, our efforts to make it even more wonderful and create better lives for all our people. Then there were our unfulfilled dreams of going further. Even if one never reaches paradise, the stimulation of the challenge has a cleansing effect on the soul. I am in the fortunate position that I have succeeded in recreating the situation where, in spirit, we are still working together, and it goes on every day. I thank God.

From the countless number of touching messages we received I have selected one:

‘This is a simple letter. Simple in its message, but sincere in its tone. My wife shares with me the immense sadness and grief that must be with you and your family. Nobody can truly “feel” what you must be feeling right now, but we really want to take some of the pain away from you, as you and Mrs Smith took some of the pain away from all of us by making us so proud of being Rhodesians, by making us believe in everything we were trying to do, by making us all a united and proud family. Through all those years Mrs. Smith was a beacon of graciousness, of sincerity, of warmth and kindness! It was her mirror of humanness that made us all love her so.

A wonderful lady. A lady who fought so much pressure and so many tribulations, and yet always had a shy, warm smile, and a kindness and a strength to give a glow to all of us.

A little bit of all of us has passed on with her, and yet, conversely, we are all stronger for having known her and loved her.

Thank you Janet Smith, and may God be with you.’

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Glossary

ANC	African National Council
BSAP	British South African Police
CAZ	Conservative Alliance Zimbabwe
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
FRELIMO	Frente de Libercicao de Mozambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NatJOC	National Joint Operational Centre
NIBMAR	No Independence before African Majority Rule
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PF	Patriotic Front
UANC	United African National Council
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UFP	United Federal Party
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZMMT	Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement

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POSTSCRIPT

Two years have passed since I finished writing *The Great Betrayal*. I think I can correctly comment: I told you so. History records that my predictions have materialised. Let me make a few observations.

Because I had the temerity to disagree with Mugabe over his plan to create a one-party Communist dictatorship in 1981, 1 was branded ‘public enemy number one’ and his propaganda machine was directed to dedicate their efforts in pursuit of this objective. Not only were they successful in brainwashing local opinion, but much of the rest of the world was misled into accepting that I was an undesirable character, a racialist who was opposed to black government. Because of this ruse, attention was distracted away from the insidious and evil machinations of ZANUPF (of course, no mention was made of the fact that history records that I was the first white man in Africa to hand over power to a black man, in 1979).

However, particularly in recent years, the situation has deteriorated at such an alarming rate that all thinking people are now deeply concerned about the impending disaster. Most importantly, Mugabe and his comrades are no longer able to cover up their blatant corruption, massive nepotism with special favours for relatives and friends, misappropriation of public funds for their own interests, and persistent attempts to intimidate their opponents.

Never did I think that I would ever be able to claim that Mugabe had helped me. I was wrong. He has proved my case conclusively. It is public knowledge that he and his close relatives and friends have succeeded in making themselves instant multi-millionaires. They own the biggest and best houses in the capital city. They have secured a controlling interest in many of the country's largest and most important industrial and commercial enterprises, and purchased a number of the most exclusive farms and ranches in the country. At the same time, the standard of living of the great mass of the people has deteriorated alarmingly. There are frequent complaints from parents that their greatest problem is that their children go to bed hungry at night — something which never happened before Mugabe came to power.

The young professionals who are making a success of their lives are deeply disturbed over the fact that the first black government in Zimbabwe has brought disgrace upon our black community — and they are part of that community.

Mugabe has been a *de facto* dictator for the past 18 years, ever since coming to power. However, a few years ago, no doubt because people were beginning to question the legality of his actions, he persuaded Parliament to enact legislation conferring upon him the power of a *de jure* dictator. For example, if in any Government election a candidate is declared to have won, Mugabe has the power to decree that he did not win. And vice versa, if a candidate is declared to have lost the election, Mugabe has the power to decree that he has won. His decision cannot be challenged in any court of the land. It is certainly a very neat and convenient means of ensuring the loyal support of one's friends. Surprisingly, the Free World turns a blind eye to this kind of thing. And the Organisation of African Unity, of course, endorses any such action by one of its members. Whether you agree with them or not, it stands to their

credit that they are united and do not look kindly on division within their ranks — the reverse of the Free World.

Ever since coming to power in 1980, Mugabe has used his ‘one-party state’ to secure for himself, his party (ZANUPF), and their relatives and friends preferential conditions which have allowed them to prosper at an alarming rate. The fact that they are doing this at the expense of the remainder of the population is of no concern to them. Through their control of the mass communications media they succeeded in pulling the wool over the eyes of the masses. After a very successful run which lasted for 16 years, things started going wrong for them. The basic reason was that the deterioration of the living conditions of the average citizen and associated suffering had reached an unacceptable stage with a resultant crisis situation. It was triggered off in 1996 when the Civil Service requested increases in salaries to compensate for inflation which was at an all time high of around 40%. A most reasonable request. This was rejected by Government on the grounds that finance was not available. However, in a matter of weeks Government Ministers were awarded a 100% increase in their salaries and the President (Mugabe), *150%*. Not surprisingly, it wasn’t long before there were peaceful demonstrations. These were broken up by police using dogs and batons. Clearly, this was brutal and uncalled for.

The nation was then faced with the very serious situation of a strike by junior doctors and the nursing profession. They complained that they were unable to live on their salaries. Moreover, they wished to publicise the desperate position in hospitals where essential medicines were nonexistent, and protective requirements such as syringes and rubber gloves unavailable. Doctors and nursing sisters are essentially responsible people dedicated to their service. The Government’s answer was to issue an order firing them on the spot. Most of the hospitals throughout

the country were forced to close their doors. What happened to patients, including those in emergency situations, was of little to concern to the nation's leaders. In the middle of the strike, Mugabe flew out to attend a conference in Europe — why should he be concerned with the desperate crisis in his own country? It transpired that the conference was of no consequence and produced absolutely nothing — typical of 99% of all political conferences he attends. Of course, there are advantages for the participants — they live in the most luxurious hotels, enjoy the most expensive food and drink, and award themselves excessive additional allowances, all at the expense of the tax-payer at home, most of whom are living below the poverty line and struggling to survive, and feed and clothe their children.

Obviously, in the final analysis the Government was forced to climb down and re-instate the dismissed workers and offer token improvement to their conditions of service.

I have given a few examples o the government's greed and arrogance, but it was never-ending, with corruption and nepotism and conversion of benefits to their own account on a daily basis.

Accordingly, there was no let up in the difficulties constantly confronting the average citizen.

The headlines in early January 1997 proclaimed massive across-the-board increases in basic consumer goods, some above 40%. Understandably, demands for increased salaries and wages became more persistent, with employers and employees constantly at the negotiating table. By July, we had reached a situation where there were placard carrying processions, go-slows or full-scale industrial action. The principle Trade Union Organisation (ZCTU) had been in protracted negotiations with the Ministry of Labour, with no progress, so clearly we were heading for a clash.

The third week in January of 1998 saw food riots in Harare, which rapidly spread throughout the whole country. The police resorted to strong-arm tactics which resulted in eight deaths and the arrests of many hundreds of demonstrators.

Shortly after this, the Secretary General of the Congress of Trade Unions was working at his desk when a gang of thugs entered and beat him up, smashing a chair across his head. He was taken to hospital and was lucky to escape alive. Of course, the Government disclaimed any implication, but no one has been able to point a finger in any other direction.

In order to avoid a repetition of the rioting and murder associated with the January strikes, the Trade Unions staged a two-day stay-away from work on the first Monday and Tuesday of March. In spite of a massive Government campaign warning against this action, accompanied by a certain amount of intimidation, the result was a great success throughout the country with figures ranging from between 90% and 99%. Trade Union leaders have warned of more mass action unless there is some response from Government. However, the Minister concerned has indicated that they have no intention of changing their stand.

With the passage of each day the national economy becomes more depressed. Towards the end of last year, the War Veterans decided to climb on the band wagon and demand compensation for their members. It has never been explained why 17 years passed before this became an issue. However, they succeeded in cornering Mugabe by demanding an exclusive audience in State House. The thought of a confrontation with his own comrades had to be avoided at all costs. Accordingly, in a panic move, he agreed that each would receive an award of ZD50,000, followed by special additional consideration for hardship

cases. The cost of the fiscus runs into billions of dollars and continues to escalate by the day.

Government has appointed a Judicial Commission to investigate the allocation of all this money. There have been a number of disclosures which are clearly fraudulent. There has been a recent case of a person who was awarded compensation of ZD822,668 for no valid reason that could be determined. He enjoys a high-powered diplomatic post with its generous salary and other desirable perks. The other obvious question is: how can one tie this together? The answer: he is Mrs Mugabe's brother!

Some time ago, the Government established a Housing Fund to provide loans to the lower-income group to enable them to build their own homes. It has now been established that the lion's share of the money has gone to Cabinet Ministers, senior civil servants, and 'friends and relatives'. All these houses are in the million-dollar bracket. The most recent disclosure is that Mugabe's wife was allocated approximately ZD7 million to build her own house. The newsflash last week is that it is now on the market for ZD25 million.

When Mengistu, one time dictator and tyrant of Ethiopia, who was responsible for the worst genocide the African continent has ever known, was forced to flee from his own country, he was granted asylum by his trusted friend and accomplice Mugabe. He was given accommodation in an exclusive residence, high security and all the services provided by the Zimbabwean tax-payer. An appeal for extradition by the Ethiopian Government was rejected by Mugabe. It is said that there is 'honour even amongst thieves' — clearly this applies equally to gangsters.

Of course, many of our own Zimbabweans are still living without roofs over their heads, while Mugabe and his friends continue to wallow in the lap of luxury.

A recent report from the United Nations Human Rights Committee slams the Zimbabwean Government for its

record of human rights abuses. The report states that ‘Zimbabwe is a country with a serious democratic deficit, which continues to perpetrate one-party dictatorship, excessive use of force, and gender discrimination.’ It provides many examples to substantiate its case.

The latest debacle is the collapse of one of the big Merchant Banks in Harare. This was under the control of a flamboyant and ruthless black businessman who used his power and influence to build a sizeable industrial empire. He failed to comply with the requirements of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, and failed to recognise the necessary legal conditions as laid down by the City of Harare. He simply walked on to municipal land and erected massive buildings in contravention of repeated objections from the Municipal Authorities. The obvious question is: how did he get away with all this? The answer: because of his personal friendship with Mugabe, reinforced by numerous financial contributions. Billions of dollars are at stake, and it would appear that not only could certain other financial institutions be destroyed, but private individuals could lose their investments.

Sadly, in the final analysis, the nation of Zimbabwe, and hence all Zimbabweans, are forced to pay the price, through the depreciation of their currency.

The Rhodesian dollar used to be worth £1 sterling, but from 1980 the Zimbabwe dollar continued its decline, at first gradually, but increasing in tempo as the Government’s performance deteriorated. The last six months has witnessed a disastrous *50%* collapse, and today ZD3O are required to purchase £1 sterling.

I believe I have given sufficient evidence to confirm the impending disaster confronting our country. Sadly, the problem is compounded by Mugabe’s unwillingness to accept that his philosophy of Communism is a proven failure. The fact that the masses of Zimbabweans are compelled to carry the burden and endure increasing

hardship and suffering is of no concern to him, so long as he is able to continue using his total power to amass ever greater ill-gotten gain for himself and his henchmen. He will go down in history as an African leader who bequeathed to his people a dreadful legacy which will haunt him for the rest of his days.

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AFTERWORD

Just over two years have passed since I wrote a postscript to the second printing of *The Greaterayal* in June 1998. I pointed out that over the years since ZANU(PF) came to power in 1980 there had been a deterioration in the country's affairs, at first gradual, but increasing in tempo until there was a dramatic deterioration in 1996, and a year later a situation which was generally described as being chaotic. While the Rhodesian dollar had been on a par with the pound sterling, we were now in a situation where we required thirty of our dollars to purchase one pound. This had been occasioned, not only by our government's obsession with pursuing the bankrupt philosophy of Marxism, but above all by their inability to resist indulging in corruption, nepotism, lining their pockets with tax payers' money, while the giant mass of the people were living below the poverty datum line with their children suffering from malnutrition. As at the end of September, the exchange rate is seventy Zimbabwe dollars to one pound sterling.

Clearly, there was an impending disaster. But most important of all, we had reached a stage where our people had decided that they were not prepared to accept this lying down. Fortunately, there were no signs of panic and associated irresponsible action. The opposition was widespread throughout the whole country, and there was a mounting wave which was growing by the day, with a

general determination that this would not cease until the disreputable government was swept out of office.

The last two years have seen the same trend continuing, indeed escalating, with the chaos degenerating into anarchy. Mugabe is likened to a wounded animal which has been cornered, presenting a situation which is unpredictable and dangerous. A recent development is that some of his own people have turned against him, issuing an ultimatum that he should vacate his office immediately. There is also clear evidence that the Cabinet is divided, with the majority urging him to retire, but in keeping with local custom they are reluctant to force the issue, hoping that he will get the message. How long they are prepared to wait is a matter of conjecture. However, as it is becoming more and more obvious that their survival hinges on this fact, one would think that they have sufficient intelligence to make a plan.

The net certainly seems to be closing, with both the United States and Britain insisting on a restoration of law and order and a just and equitable solution to the land problem before financial assistance can be restored. South Africa, the most important power in this part of Africa, has also made it clear that our problems must be solved in keeping with accepted standards. In the latest development, which occurred a week before I wrote these words, a statement from Kofi Annan's office states that the United Nations has abandoned plans to raise money from the international donor community for Zimbabwe's land reform, because their controversial programme is unacceptable.

When I analyse the events which have taken place over the past year, there is a formidable list covering corruption and Abuse of Power. No shorter is the list dealing with Violation of Freedom and Justice. Destruction of the Economy is equally formidable. Mob Rule and Police Harassment are constantly hovering in the background

awaiting a call to action. Every day we are reminded of the need to support the Democratic Republic of Congo and the drain which this is causing to our economy. And when our people (middle and lower income groups) complain about the dramatic fall in standards of health, education, local government and housing, load maintenance and numerous other public services, the government propaganda machine brainwashes the population into believing that all of this is brought about because the major Western countries are deliberately penalising Zimbabwe, denying them financial assistance, because they are unwilling to accept Free World Standards, which they claim are in conflict with African beliefs and custom. In truth, African custom has always been opposed to corruption, theft of other people's money or property and denial of equitable distribution to all of the community.

It is worth repeating that when one lives under a one-party dictatorship where the government controls the principal arms of the mass communication media, the opposition is working under an almost insurmountable handicap.

Let me now turn to my analysis of the continuing abuses and violations which occur on a daily basis. I am concentrating on the period commencing with the last quarter of 1999, leading on to the dramatic developments of the referendum and general election in 2000.

I am reminded of a recent newspaper article:

> CIO TORTURORS DEFY DISMISSAL. An independent disciplinary committee's recommendation that four Central Intelligence officers be dismissed for kidnapping and torturing a member of their organisation has been ignored. They continue to serve in their previous capacity.

It was earlier in the year, January 1999, that two journalists were abducted and tortured by members of the army, working in collusion with the police. The journalists' crime was that they had referred to rumours of a proposed coup by certain junior army officers. Medical evidence substantiated the allegations of torture. World opinion was aroused by this disgraceful case of the government subverting their own law and violating the constitutionally enshrined rights of their own Zimbabwean citizens. A number of government ministers attempted, in vain, to condone the action; even Mugabe felt compelled to join them and make a contribution to the sterile attempts. He succeeded in further antagonizing world opinion by attempting to justify his government's actions regarding independent newspapers' continuing attempts to expose the wrong-doings of government.

At the beginning of November 1999, inflation and interest rates are 70%, and it is predicted that they will increase. The situation has been allowed to deteriorate because of government incompetence. There are a host of contributory factors, but it is generally agreed by those with an understanding of economics and finance that two vital factors require urgent attention. The first is a reduction in interest rates, which would stimulate investment and provide jobs for our mass of unemployed. Our unemployment level is rated as one of the highest in the world. Secondly, the national debt must be reduced. It is far in excess of the nation's requirements, with prohibitive servicing costs. The civil service and national security services are four times the size of the necessary requirements, with government participation in commercial and industrial enterprises subsidising nepotism and blatant incompetence, a massive drain on the national economy. The standard of living of members of the government executive and their comrades is at an excessive level by comparison with other countries. The list is endless.

As the year comes to an end there are more revelations of corruption and incompetence thrown up by investigations covering 1997 and 1998. The headline states: CUSTOM AND EXCISE LOSE 3 BILLION DOLLARS THROUGH SHORTFALLS IN DUTY COLLECTED. The permanent secretary to the Minister of Finance was unavailable for comment – and has remained so ever since. At the same time the *Guardian* newspaper of Tanzania reports that Zimbabwean army troops are training armed militias for fighting against the Congo. An organisation known as Transparency International identified, in a report dated 1 December 1999, corruption and fraud by public institutions involving senior government officials. It pointed out that the corruption was rampant in government, and identified 4.7 million dollars that had been embezzled from external funds which had been donated to provide water resources for people in rural areas. Another chapter of the report indicated that five senior managers of the National Oil Company (government appointed) engaged in fraudulent activities in collusion with the Ministry of Transport to sell oil to friends at 4 billion dollars below the normally accepted prices, A response from Government is still awaited.

Another section refers to the agreement made by the government-appointed electricity supply commission (ZESA) to dispose of the Hwange Power Station, the largest supplier of electric power in the country, to YTL of Malaysia on an instruction from Mugabe, for a price of 10.2 billion dollars, which was considerably below the estimated value. In addition the ZESA Board of Governors protested that the deal was not carried out in keeping with the laid-down legal tender procedure. There was no response from Government.

The Constitutional Commission appointed by Mugabe to draw up a draft constitution to be submitted to a referendum next year has completed its task and presented

its report to the President on 7 December 1999. Evidence to the commission was submitted freely and fairly and the public were led to believe that there would be meaningful and dramatic changes ensuring true democracy and freedom. Sadly, the report bears little resemblance to the evidence presented, and the analyses from all the constitutional experts are claiming massive fraud. There was universal demand for an independent, impartial, professional electoral commission to supervise elections, as opposed to the existing system which is under the control of government, with its notorious record for rigging elections. This has conveniently been side-stepped.

It is common cause that the vast majority of those giving evidence believed that members of parliament should be elected on the proportional representation system as opposed to the first past the post system. This is particularly important in a country where opposition parties were intimidated out of existence until recently, and therefore we are faced with a plethora of emerging parties attempting to establish themselves. For example, under the present system, if the strongest party wins 40% of the votes, the two other parties each 30%, then the first party will have secured a member in parliament while the other two together after winning 60% of the votes will have no representation. Under proportional representation, with a parliament of 200 seats the party winning 40% of the votes would secure 80 members, while the other two winning 60% of the seats would secure 120 seats – 60 seats for each party. If the example given above were repeated in all constituencies, under the present system the first party which had won 40% of the votes would secure all the seats in parliament, while the other two with a combined 60% would have no representation. Accordingly, it is not surprising that in many third world countries proportional representation is favoured – indeed it is practiced in some first-world countries.

One other very important principle which was stressed was the necessity for a non-executive President – in other words, we do not want the perpetuation of a dictator. Even ZANU(PF), Mugabe's party, agreed. Mugabe rejected it.

Headlines one week before Christmas: DIESEL RUNS DRY. BUSSES STRANDED. RIOT POLICE CALLED IN. Angry minibus drivers, who had been in a queue for up to eight hours at the only filling station in Harare with diesel, were eventually rationed to 20 litres per vehicle. For some of them this was insufficient to cover their journey to the fuel pump. The riot police remained on duty until all the busses had departed. As the filling station manager pointed out, it was not his responsibility to supply the diesel: the government were the guilty party. The fuel shortage has been caused because the government has not got the money to pay for it. But every day we observe fuel tankers loaded with diesel from our country making the long, hazardous trip to the Congo. Moreover, there is never a shortage of money to enable Zimbabwe to wage a full-scale war in the Congo, a foreign country which is under an illegal government which was never voted into power. Reliable estimates indicate that many billions of our scarce foreign currency have been frittered away on this war. Add to this the cost in our local currency of maintaining approximately 13,000 soldiers in the Congo and supplying them with all their requirements, hardware and provisions. This runs into millions of dollars every day. Meanwhile, many Zimbabwean families are finding it difficult to feed their children adequately, provide basic clothes, education, medicines, and a roof over their heads. However, Mugabe is having one of his bouts of paranoia, all too frequent these days, claiming that there is a conspiracy against his government which is being orchestrated by Britain and white Zimbabweans working in collusion with local banks, commerce, industry, insurance and other evil forces to deny

the country its legitimate foreign currency. More headlines followed:

14.12.1999	*HOSPITALS GO WITHOUT EMERGENCY LABORATORY SERVICES. The two largest hospitals in the country, Harare and Parirenyatwa, have been without emergency laboratory services for the past three weeks. CIMAS, which operates the largest private laboratories in the country, cancelled their services when the government's outstanding account exceeded $500,000. This was in spite of the fact that CIMAS was charging concessionary tariffs in order to assist a crisis situation. The story doing the rounds is that if you require emergency medical treatment, make a trip to the Congo!*
31.12.1999	*FUEL PRICE INCREASES BY TEN PERCENT. A most unwelcome new year's gift, especially when it comes three weeks after a similar increase.*
	FOREX CRISIS HITS TROOPS. The Government is facing such a critical shortage of foreign currency that they are unable to pay allowances to their troops in the Congo fighting alongside Angolan and Namibian soldiers, both of which are receiving their allowances.
01.01.2000	*ZIMBABWE CONFRONTED BY HARSH ECONOMIC FACTS. An IMF mission last October discovered that Government had failed to meet the agreed targets for economic reform. As a result the World Bank withheld 13 billion dollars aid. A new target was set for the end of the year, taking into account the*

	government's economic difficulties. Once again the government has failed to comply. Moreover, it is refusing to accept any commitment to financial discipline, as this would prejudice its ability to buy votes in the coming election.
07.01.2000	*MASSIVE CIVIL SERVANTS' SALARY HIKES SPELL DISASTER FOR ECONOMY. The year 2000 budget projected an increase in civil servants' salaries by 20%, but the government has announced increases of between 70% and 90%. Government ministers have awarded themselves increments of 182%. They seem to be oblivious of the fact that the country is heading for a serious recession, but they are determined to indulge in a spending spree in order to win votes ahead of the general election.*
14.01.2000	*SOUTH AFRICAN BANKS FREEZE CREDIT LINES. In another crippling blow to Zimbabwe's struggling economy, South African bankers are refusing to confirm letters of credit from local banks. The decision is based on the local shortage of forex and the uncertainty about government's ability to obtain support from the international community.*
20.01.2000	*MUGABE'S FOREIGN TRIPS GOBBLE $10 BILLION. Mugabe, billed as the most travelled president on the continent, has visited 151 countries, spending over 310 days out of the country over the past 10 years, at a cost of over $10 billion in fuel alone. He is notorious for taking with him large delegations of ministers and hangers-on, all*

receiving generous expense allowances, and occupying the most luxurious accommodation available – while the great mass of Zimbabweans are living in abject poverty!

LAY-OFFS LOOM AS FUEL CRISIS WORSENS. The troubled fuel-selling industry claim they are losing more than 50% of their normal revenue, and accordingly are being forced to consider closing some filling stations and retrenching workers.

04.02.2000 *ZIMBABWE EXPORTING DIESEL TO CONGO. 1.5 million litres of fuel is leaving the country every week for the Congo. Reliable evidence indicates that while some of the fuel is used to support army operations, much of it is being sold on the black market by DRC military.*

04.02.2000 *SERIOUS DECLINE IN STANDARDS OF LITERACY BECAUSE OF GOVERNMENT WITHDRAWAL OF GRANTS TO SCHOOLS. The problem commenced in 1992 and the deterioration has continued every year and in certain sections has now reached a stage where there has been a 60% dropout rate. This means that many students are denied education because their parents can no longer afford to pay the extra fees required. Loss of jobs and increases in cost of living occasioned by the deteriorating state of the national economy is seriously prejudicing standards of living. REFERENDUM TO TAKE PLACE THIS WEEKEND, IN SPITE OF COMPLAINTS FROM CERTAIN COMMISSIONERS THAT THE DRAFT PROPOSAL HAD NOT BEEN CORRECTLY ADOPTED. The High Court Judge stated: 'The people expected the*

referendum would be organised honestly and with an acceptable degree of efficiency. I, as one of the people, can only hope and pray that the people collectively, for the sake of a suffering Zimbabwe, make the correct choice.'

All the main opposition parties in the country have united to reject the proposed constitution – to vote 'NO'. This has caused alarm and panic in government ranks. They have resorted to taking the law into their own hands, with ZANU(PF) youth gangs attacking their opponents and disrupting their meetings. The police are under instructions to remain neutral, or turn a blind eye. The united opposition have only been in existence or a few weeks, and so have no organisation to counter the government's intimidatory gangs which have been in existence for the past twenty years. Added to this the government propaganda machine is in full swing, brainwashing the people and using intimidatory tactics in an attempt to subdue the opposition. At recent meetings Mugabe has been resorting to violent attacks against the opposition, accusing them of siding with the white community in order to frustrate the aspirations of black Zimbabweans. Sad that the leader of our country should resort to stirring up racial hatred in order to achieve his dreadful objective.

MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND ENERGY, ENOS CHIKOWORE, HAS BEEN GIVEN A DECREE OF CIVIL IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX WEEKS BY A HIGH COURT JUDGE. In July 1999 judgement was awarded against him for

failing to honour a Zimbabwe Banking Corporation debt of $24,268.30. In addition he was ordered to pay taxed costs of $3,513.00. He paid the debt, but not the costs – hence the civil imprisonment.

18.02.2000

MUZENDA SUED OVER DEBT. Vice President Simon Muzenda has been ordered by a High Court Judge to pay Central African Building Society $912,798.89 with interest from 01.01.2000. In addition he received an order for the execution of his property stand in Gutu town.

In any country believing in proper standards of justice and fair play, people guilty of the crimes mentioned in the above two cases would offer their resignation from office. But under a communist dictatorship all comrades receive presidential pardon.

The referendum was positively rejected. More than 60% of the electorate gave a resounding 'NO' vote. ZANU(PF) SHOWS MUGABE A RED CARD. At their Central Committee meeting at the end of February there was unprecedented criticism of their leader, calling for his resignation in order to save the battered ruling party from further humiliation.

08.03.2000

PARLIAMENTARY POLL DELAYED. Mugabe says the election must be held early in April even if the authorities have to work 48 hours a day to meet the deadline. But the minister responsible says the necessary preparations cannot be completed before the middle of June. Panic reigns, as every day of delay means an extra day of preparation for the newly formed opposition.

17.03.2000 *CHARGE WAR-MONGERS WITH TREASON. War veterans have threatened to stage a coup or return the country to civil war if ZANU(PF) lose the coming parliamentary elections. In reality, they are endorsing what Mugabe himself has said and done. He has made it clear that he will not allow the courts to frustrate the wishes of the people – and he claims to represent the people. He has power, confirmed by Parliament, to allow him to fiddle with election results. And ZANU(PF) are notorious for intimidating voters at election time, and in the final analysis, if needs be, rigging the results. However, the war veterans' statement does have the effect, through the wide publicity it receives in the government controlled media, of destabilizing local public opinion and adversely affecting the confidence of external investors and our friends who are trying to assist us. Moreover, this is just one more message to our police force to turn a blind eye to those who are committing illegal acts in order to assist ZANU(PF).*

24.03.2000 *INVASIONS WORRY SOUTH AFRICA. South African Defence Minister Moslua Lekota speaking at the annual Renaissance Festival in Durban said he was worried by the illegal occupation of white-owned farms by squatters in Zimbabwe, which was creating a very dangerous situation. One of the critical elements in a new Africa, he said, must be observing the law. The Festival aims at exploring ways and means to promote peace and stability on the continent.*

06.04.2000 *VIOLENCE INTENSIFIES ON FARMS. There has been a wave of violent attacks on white farmers and their workers by people claiming to be war veterans. The Commercial Farmers' Union reported 50 cases by mid-week. Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC President) and a friend were threatened with death if they did not stop their political activities. The police have stated that they are unable to comply with a court order to stop the farm invasions because they simply have not got the necessary resources to mount the exercise. In the latest development, leaders of the Commercial Farmers Union have received a warning from the Central Intelligence Organisation and senior military personnel to desist from supporting opposition parties or be faced with increasing invasions.*

14.04.2000 *GOVERNMENT DEPLOYS ARMY TO DIRECT FARM INVASIONS. National Army officers openly concede that they have been deployed to co-ordinate supplies and other logistical essentials to war veterans invading farms. Plain-clothed army officers boast of the part they have played in supporting the invaders.*

We were then subjected, within the space of one week, to the dreadful, coldblooded murders of two of our well-known and highly respected farmers, carried out with the connivance of our security forces. David Stevens was having problems on his farm situated southeast of Harare alongside the main road to Mutare, the capital city of Manicaland. He went with a group of neighbouring farmers to discuss problems, which many of them were experiencing, with police at a nearby town. In the middle of

the meeting a bunch of gangsters stormed in, pushed the policemen aside, dragged Stevens outside and murdered him. There have been no arrests. A few days later they attacked Martin Olds on his farm, a short distance out from Bulawayo. Olds was a leading member of the local security organisation, highly respected for his organising ability and courage. He had recently received a prestigious decoration from Mugabe (the Bronze Cross) for his bravery in rescuing a man who was being attacked by a crocodile in the Zambezi valley. The police placed a barrier outside the entrance to his house once the terrorists had entered, and prevented entry to local farmers, or the local ambulance. Olds fought them off for a number of hours, until he ran out of ammunition. They then burnt him out, and when eventually he escaped via the back door, they shot and killed him.

The CFLJ executive ordered all Matabeleland farmers to vacate their farms, and move into Bulawayo until the crisis was over:

Vice President Msika, who had the responsibility of dealing with the farm invasions, reaffirmed his statement that war veterans were to be removed from the farms, and that a plan of gradual evacuation was to commence. However Mugabe, on his return from a visit to Cuba, countermanded the decision and insisted that they remain on the farms.

22.04.2000 *RAPE TERROR SPARKS WHITE FLIGHT. The CFU have advised families living on farms in Matabeleland, Manicaland and Midlands provinces to move into towns after a brutal cycle of attacks and rapes unleashed by Mugabe's mobs of war veterans.*

26.04.2000 *The Presbyterian Church minister speaking at the memorial service for Martin Olds in*

Bulawayo blamed President Mugabe for the current bloody mayhem on commercial farms. 'By condoning criminal action, by disregarding the courts, he puts himself alongside the criminals. He indeed is a criminal, he is the enemy of the state.' Zimbabweans must draw world attention to the political and economic crisis in their country before current violence claims more victims. 'Do not keep quiet, speak out, the truth shall set you free.' Former Zimbabwe Education Minister Fay Chung, currently working for the United Nations in New York, condemned Olds' murder. She had worked with him in his area and said that he went out of his way to help ex-combatants establish themselves as farmers, giving generously of his time and experience. She was shocked to learn that Martin Olds had been murdered in a racist attack. 'I would like to place on record that this murder of one of the strongest supporters of ex-combatants not only in words but in deeds must be condemned without reservation.'

There was a memorial service in Harare for David Stevens attended by some 600 friends. Maria Stevens was sitting with her son Marc (16), daughter Brenda (13) and two-year-old twins Sebastian and Warren. The clergyman taking the service said: 'It is becoming more and more clear that this is black against black violence.' The terrorists abducted David's foreman, Andoche, beat him and killed him and deposited his body in the bush. He was found a week later. The five friends who tried to rescue David at the police station were savagely beaten, with three of them landing up in hospital. The clergyman went on: 'Marc and

Brenda, your father dreamed and worked for a better world, a better relation between all people. When you are growing up you must continue his dream and his work.' There have been no arrests. Maria is continuing to live in her home. She is a person of great courage and integrity, much admired and loved by all her friends.

Other recent headlines include: POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION ESCALATE. ZANU(PF) AND NAZI PARTY. WAR VETERANS REIGN OF TERROR ON FARMS. ZANU(PF) YOUTHS USE TERROR TACTICS TO SILENCE MDC. Armed war veterans moved into a compound on a farm about 40 miles east of Harare and started burning down the houses and contents. The owner, a known supporter of the opposition party MDC, had gone to town on business. The poor workers were trying to salvage their property and clothes. 'Why are they treating us like this? We are just farm workers struggling to make a living and feed our children,' said one woman with tears in her eyes.

ELECTION DATE ANNOUNCED – 24th and 25th June. Mugabe rallies flop in both Harare and Bulawayo. The first few weeks in June have proved disastrous for Mugabe. His supporters are blaming the fuel crisis for the poor attendance.

ZANU(PF) supporters and war veterans started forcibly taking school children from schools and homes and terrorising them into attending all-night rallies. War veterans erected road blocks and MDC supporters are having their identification documents confiscated, thus denying them their vote. The police are ineffective and openly claim they have been ordered to take no actions against war veterans. Guruve District Council evicted a wildlife conservation organisation from offices they were renting, to make way for war veterans who are given free accommodation, free electricity and free water. The reason

– the ZANU(PF) candidate in the coming election was a government minister requiring assistance through voter intimidation. The election result was truly a mixed bag of the 120 elected seats, with ZANU(PF) winning 62 seats while MDC secured 58. MDC gained control in the cities, while ZANU(PF) managed to scrape in, albeit with narrow majorities, in the rural constituencies. There was overwhelming evidence that voter intimidation carried the day. In any case, with the President's right to appoint twenty members to Parliament and the Chiefs' Council to elect ten members, it was generally believed that Mugabe had a built-in majority. However, it was significant that MDC secured 55% of the common roll votes. It is common practice that the cabinet is appointed soon after the election – normally within days. But Mugabe was faced with a delicate tactical act in order to secure his position in ZANU(PF). Some of his old loyal supporters were defeated in the election, and some of his new members of parliament, the young Turks, were openly saying that it is time for him to retire.

The new cabinet was eventually published in the press of Sunday, 16 July. Much of the old dead wood had been culled, and amongst the new appointments were a number of capable people with reputable records of public performance. Of particular note are Dr Simba Makoni to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and Dr Nkosana Moyo to Industry and International Trade. These are the two most important portfolios if we are to succeed in restoring the bankrupt economy. But will they have freedom of decision, bearing in mind that the presidential election is in two years time and Mugabe has made it clear that it is his intention to cling on to power? He is doing well and prospering, cashing in on his position, not only in Zimbabwe, but also in the Congo. And he has a young ambitious wife who never misses an opportunity to increase her wealth through local property deals. Moreover, she is

well known for her shopping excursions to Harrods in London, and on occasions has been mentioned as one of their favourite and most rewarding customers.

17.07.2000	*PRE-POLL KILLINGS TO BE BROUGHT UP IN PARLIAMENT BY MDC. Thirty-two people, all opponents of ZANU(PF), were murdered during the election campaign. The police have not made one arrest in spite of the fact that all were committed in broad daylight.*
21.07.2000	*MDC PRESS FOR VIP FARM LEASES TO BE TERMINATED.Ten years ago Government acquired, paid for with tax payers' money, nine million acres of good land for settlement of small-scale farmers. There is a long, sad story of incompetence and corruption associated with the ensuing disaster. But one section of the community were quick to exploit the glaring opportunities and moved on to a number of the best farms. Cabinet ministers and senior comrades of ZANU(PF) simply ensconced themselves on the properties and made an agreement with the authorities to pay a ridiculously low rental. I am stating the obvious when I point out that there are no signs of war vets invading these farms!*
07.08.2000	*LOPES MOURNS ZIMBABWE'S LOST OPPORTUNITIES*

Finally, I close my analysis in order to meet the printer's deadline, with a reference to comments by Dr Carlos Lopes, the United Nations Development representative, speaking at his farewell after six years in Zimbabwe. 'I leave Zimbabwe with a sense of sadness because the

country was in a better shape when I arrived than it is now. One must go back in history and recall that the implementation of the recommended plan was not consistent. While there were natural problems, most were self-inflicted. The results were devastating.' He quoted facts to substantiate the case he had made. Poverty was increasing at 10% per annum, which is totally unacceptable. 75% of all Zimbabweans are classified as poor, and 47% as very poor. This comes from a man who has dedicated his life to improving the standard of living of the underprivileged, The crime, of course, becomes grossly enlarged when one realises the dreadful truth that we live in a country where, while the poor get poorer every day, the rich get richer and are amassing unto themselves unheard-of wealth. This is a situation which can verily be described as criminal and totally indefensible.

In conclusion let me place on record some facts of history that prove conclusively how the truth has been distorted in order to besmirch the white man in Africa.

Mugabe and his ZANU(PF) comrades claim, with tedious repetition, that the white people in Zimbabwe are colonialists who stole the land from the black people, the owners, and therefore the whites have no right of objection if the blacks reclaim their land. Let's get the facts, the true position. The original inhabitants of this country were the Bushmen, those peaceful little people with their bows and arrows which they used for obtaining food. There are Bushman paintings throughout the length and breadth of the country which substantiate this. The first colonialists to immigrate into the country were the Shona-speaking people who came from the northeast. As and when they wanted more land they pushed the Bushmen westwards until they reached Betchuanaland. There they received an abrupt message from the Khamas, traditional rulers of that

part of the world and forbearers of Sir Seretse Khama, and this caused them to beat a hasty retreat.

According to the record, it was some twenty years later that the next wave of colonialists immigrated: the Matabeles led by Umsilikazi came from the northern Transvaal. This was a regiment of Zulus from Natal. They had a problem with the Zulu King Shaka, and very wisely decided to go north. This caused a further retreat eastwards by the Shonas. Approximately twenty years ensued before the next wave of colonialists immigrated, the Shangans from the eastern Transvaal. This caused a retreat northwards by the Shonas. I do not believe that anybody would argue with me when I say that in none of the three cases to which I have referred did the immigrants pay compensation for the land which they took over. Fair enough – this has been the pattern of world history going back over thousands of years of colonialist expansion.

Our fourth case of colonialist immigration, again after a lapse of another twenty years, was Cecil Rhodes' Pioneer column which came from Kimberley in 1890. This was part of the Rhodes' dream of extending British influence, raising the Union Jack from Cape to Cairo. The column took the sensible precaution of steering their course away from the western areas inhabited by the Matabele who were noted for their aggressive stance towards those trespassing on their land. There were no problems with the Shonas and Shangans, who displayed a curious interest in the new arrivals and were ready to accept the opportunities and rewards offered by the new system.

A site was chosen by the column, which was free of habitation and where water was available, to raise the Union Jack and name it Salisbury after the Prime Minister of Britain. Things ran smoothly until there was an incident in 1893 at Fort Victoria. The Matabeles carried out frequent raids into Shona territory in search of cattle and maidens. They had brought very few women with them in

their original conquest. In the incident referred to above, they transgressed further into Shona territory than had previously been recorded. In addition to the booty which they obtained as a result of their raids, they were gradually pushing the Shonas eastwards out of the country which they inhabited, making available more land for Matabele occupation. However, on this occasion at Fort Victoria they were confronted by the local establishment and ordered to return to their own territory, in keeping with the agreement which had been made between Rhodes and Lobengula. But for some time there had been clear signs that Lobengula was encouraging his people to expand their territory and it appeared as if confrontation was inevitable. It is interesting to speculate on what would have happened if the white man, the so-called colonialist, had not come to the country. Clearly the Shonas would eventually have been pushed over the border into Mozambique. This, of course, is seldom acknowledged. Moreover, the Matabele have always had a closer relationship with our white community, probably because of their belief in a system which believed in discipline and honouring obligations, similar to our own.

In spite of various setbacks caused by conflicts occasioned by history, there was a preservation of the underlying belief that we had more in common with one another than with others, and this continued over the decades, indeed was strengthened over the Gukurahundi era when Mugabe used the strength which he had inherited from the Rhodesian security forces to massacre the Matabele. This ended, however, when Mugabe seduced Joshua Nkomo with very attractive bribes of high office, power, and financial reward, accompanied by an invitation to bring with him a number of his Matabele comrades. It stands to their credit that there were a number of Matabeles who resisted the temptation.

However, in the final analysis, the power of a totalitarian dictatorship prevailed, with the country being dragged

down into a quagmire of corruption, nepotism, fraud, amassing of wealth and buildup of foreign accounts – but I am repeating myself.

I have been shown a statement made by Mugabe in New York in September 2000: 'I could have beheaded Ian Smith, but because of my kindness I did not.' Let me remind Mugabe, and the world, that as part of the Lancaster House plan, we signed an agreement that there would be no retribution for the past, no looking back, but concentrating on looking forward and building for the future. Mugabe has a short memory when it is convenient, or is this senile decay creeping in? He had a very real reason for supporting the 'no retribution' clause because of the barbaric acts of murder and mutilation committed by the ZANU terrorists against their own black people during the war. Our record was clear: we only fought against the enemy who were attacking the constitutional Government of our country. Let us simply abide by the truth.

I recommend that we appoint a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, similar to what they had in South Africa, in order to divulge the evil doings of Zimbabweans. Mugabe would have to resort to hectic evasive action in order to avoid any such thing.

Let me lay down a few facts in order to bring our land problem into true perspective. Mugabe has at his disposal 4 million acres, and there is more available when required. Why has he not used this? Because if he did, he would ridicule himself in the eyes of his war veterans whom he is using to intimidate voters. How can he possibly tell them that the availability of land has never been a problem, but that he has been using it in order to mislead them, and indeed the whole world? For some time now a high-powered committee with representatives of commerce, industry and the Farmer's Union have been working on a plan to analyse the availability of land for settlement. They

concluded that the necessary land was available and produced a report to which the government had access. Could anything prove more clearly Mugabe's duplicity when he refuses to acknowledge this? There are many good, responsible people worldwide who are not aware of these facts. Even that great old man Nelson Mandela has not had this adequately explained to him.

There is much talk these days about a United States of Africa – in all honesty a nonsensical pipe dream. It is time for the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa to face up to the realities of life and accept the need for them to stand on their own feet and forget their dreams of generous handouts from their oil-rich friends to their north. Those days have gone. Moreover, all those countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, powerful and influential with their ancient civilisations, have always been oriented northwards towards southern Europe. In fact they are not part of Africa; the correct terminology is that together they form Western Arabia. It is easy to prove the point by simply asking representatives from any of those countries, as I have done, what is their culture, language, religion, tradition and history: you will receive a simple, consistent reply – Arab. Not long ago there took place in Morocco a much-publicised meeting of Arab leaders to discuss one of those burning problems so often associated these days with Middle-East politics. There were representatives from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan and all the others – not one from an African country. There is reason for certain of those countries wishing to be associated with the Organisation of African Unity, because it constitutes a large number of countries, all of which enjoy a full vote at the United Nations. This is obviously very convenient if one is attempting to buy votes in support of a particular resolution. This enables them to operate with a foot in both camps, something which, in all honesty, should not be condoned.

To conclude on a positive note: fortunately we still have people with the courage of their convictions, who are dedicated to make a stand on principle, and who still have faith in the future of our wonderful country. Let me reiterate a few lines which have always had a special relevance to Rhodesia's history: 'There are only a few nations and a few generations which have had the honour of defending Freedom in its hour of need. For those concerned, this is a privilege for all time; an enrichment of the soul which can never be erased.'

Recently there was published a prayer for our country by concerned citizens:

> LORD GOD, Please bless this our land Zimbabwe with the grace of a Grand Miracle, through ways that are not visible to our finite minds. May all her peoples be inspired to bring about peace, harmony and balance, and resolution of all the many problems which are currently present. May we all find it in our hearts to honour, respect and assist one another in our daily lives: that reconciliation may become a living reality, and our country a shining example of prosperity and co-operation in tune with Divine Will.
>
> May we make a peaceful transmission to a state of integrity, accountability and responsibility, and may all those in need receive all that is required through the love of each man's heart.
>
> We give thanks,
>
> Amen

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