

NEWS SUMMARY ON RHODESIA

National Student Christian Federation Committee on Southern Africa
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NOVEMBER 28:Roman Catholic Church speaks out:

The strongest church attack on the Smith regime was issued by the Roman Catholic church in a pastoral letter distributed after the services today. It called attention to the dangers of placing nationalism, race, or economics above a basic concern for man. It refuted the idea that white silence has meant consent. Rather the silence is a silence of "fear, disappointment, and hopelessness". It condemned Smith for declaring independence and said that the country's racial policies were just asking for trouble. There are 23,000 white Catholics, 304,000 black Catholics and 4,000 of mixed blood. Other churchmen have also spoken out. However, in spite of the strong opposition expressed by the Anglican Archbishop of Salisbury, the Anglican church is very divided in its response to U.D.I.

British Troops for Zambia:

Zambia has asked Britain for troops to protect the Kariba dam and is preparing a course of action if Britain refuses. Kaunda called a special cabinet meeting to lay out such plans. However, they will probably not be necessary.

Malcolm MacDonald is back in Britain and met with Wilson. MacDonald was expected to analyse the reality of Zambia's statement that it would seek aid elsewhere if Britain refused to act. MacDonald also has influence in Conservative circles which could be extremely important in getting their support for a British force in Zambia. Most likely a token force will be sent. Kaunda is highly respected in Britain and the prospects of other nation's forces in Zambia is not a happy one to Britain. Britain has real reason to want to protect Zambia as most of Britain's copper comes from Zambia. Some in Britain fear sending in any troops as this appears to them to be an encouragement to sabotage. Attempts would be made to force Britain to increase her commitment. From the point of view of some in Zambia, this is a highly positive prospect, a way of getting Britain to intervene directly in Rhodesia.

Railway Strike Ends:

The white railwaymen who went on strike in Zambia, protesting attacks on their families have returned to work. President Kaunda has given assurances that they will be protected.

Interview with Ian Smith:

Emery Barcs had an interview with Ian Smith on November 27, which was copyrighted by the Australian Consolidated Press and printed in the London Observer, November 28. Portions of the interview appear below:

"Things have gone better than anticipated since his declaration of independence according to Mr. Ian Smith, the rebel Rhodesian Prime Minister...

"We have had a large number of indications of friendship from many different countries in the world. I would rather not, of course, mention them specifically because I think you will accept this would put these countries in an embarrassing position..." Smith said.

"People have not only written to us, but have come here to offer their advice and tell us how we can overcome our problems. Certainly one or two of them have been commercial ventures with people who want to make a little bit for themselves, but there is nothing wrong with this. There have been some people who have no intention of making money. They have come here because in principle, they believe this is a country that must be helped. They have paid their own expenses and have gone away at their own expense."

"Next I asked what Mr. Smith thought about the threats of war against Rhodesia.

"'You mean threats from pan-Africanists and African nationalists to the north of us? Well, I don't want to appear to treat this too lightheartedly, but I must be honest and I can only tell you that we don't regard this as anything serious. It is not a practical suggestion. There is no country in Africa to the north of us that can in any way compare its military strength with our own efficient war machinery.'

"I asked: 'Have you any concrete plans about African advancement?'

"Mr. Smith replied: 'Certainly, and in fact, I am hoping to announce something about our plans which are being worked out now.'

"I asked what proportion of Africans back Mr. Smith.

"He answered: 'My view is that the majority of Africans can't understand what has happened and in the circumstances it is very difficult for them to express any opinion as to whether they support the change or don't. However, I believe that the majority of that section of African opinion which has some idea of what is happening supports the action we have taken.' I asked: 'You mean the articulate African opinion?' Mr. Smith replied: 'Yes, those who are opposed to us I think are political opportunists who are being used as a tool of Communism and, of course, I have concrete evidence that these Africans are being paid by the Communists.'

"Next we discussed what I called 'the family quarrel' between Britain and Rhodesia.

"'I am always an optimist,' he said, 'and I think these difficulties can be overcome and the family can be reunited. This quarrel which is taking place now is between ourselves and the British politicians, not the people of Britain. I don't think there has ever been greater sympathy among the people of Britain for Rhodesia than there is today.'

"Did he think America was in the same position.

"'Yes, I do. I think the American Government has made it clear that what actions are made against us are made in keeping with the lead the British Government has given,' Mr. Smith said."

SOURCES: The New York Times, November 29.
The Observer, November 28.
The Economist, November 27.