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**ARTS & LETTERS**


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introduced many new works by Stravinsky, Debussy, and Ravel.

Most conductors included no works from the past in their musical programs. Felix Mendelssohn's controversial 1829 revival of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* was a turning point. Gradually, older works came to dominate conductors' repertoires, and became "classics."

In Europe and America, composers themselves contributed to the change, Henahan concedes, by turning increasingly after World War I to atonality and dissonance "that audiences simply could not bring themselves to love." But he puts most of the blame for today's rift between conductors and composers on the maestros themselves.

The proliferation of orchestras in U.S. cities since the 1960s and the doubling of the number of concerts they play each season mean that even ordinary conductors seldom have trouble finding jobs. Lucrative recording contracts discourage all from straying from the classics. Some—André Previn, Eugene Ormandy, Seiji Ozawa—occasionally perform works by Dmitri Shostakovich, John Cage, and others; a few "throwbacks," notably Leonard Bernstein, compose their own works. But few avant-garde composers can claim any champions.

Most maestros, Henahan concludes, are now little more than museum curators. If they do not open their doors to new music, he warns, they will become museum pieces themselves.

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**OTHER NATIONS**


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### *Zimbabwe's Fading Star*

"The Cracks in Zimbabwe" by Xan Smiley, in *The New Republic* (Jan. 31, 1983), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Four years after the end of white minority rule in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), Africa's newest nation has experienced neither the bloody racial strife nor the socialist revolution that many predicted.

Instead, writes Smiley, a London *Times* editorial writer, Zimbabwe under Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, a Marxist and former guerrilla leader, appears to be evolving into the kind of semicapitalist, one-party state now typical of Africa.

The nation's 7.5 million blacks are better off today than they were in 1979. The minimum wage has doubled to \$62.50 monthly. Primary school enrollment has nearly doubled since tuition fees were dropped. Hospital care is now free for the poor. Workers' committees give blacks a voice in running farms and factories, still largely white-owned.

While private enterprise survives, whites continue to flee Zimbabwe, although the exodus is not as great as some had feared. The white population is down from a pre-1979 peak of 278,000 to some 150,000 and is expected to fall to 80,000 eventually.

Tribal loyalties, meanwhile, are coming to the fore in domestic

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politics. The Shona, accounting for 75 percent of the population, overwhelmingly back Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front Party (ZANU-PF), which has already absorbed several smaller political groupings. The Ndebele and Kalanga, about 20 percent of the population, support Joshua Nkomo's rival Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). But in February 1982, Nkomo, himself a former guerrilla leader, was fired from his cabinet post when Mugabe decided to make an issue of the arms caches maintained by his rival's supporters. Dissidents have been imprisoned; the press has begun to suffer government harassment. [In February 1983, Mugabe widened the campaign; thousands of ZAPU sympathizers and former guerrillas were killed by government troops.]

Mugabe placates other potential rivals with patronage. Of the 80 black members of Parliament, he has appointed 54 as cabinet ministers or deputy ministers with salaries of up to \$35,000. Such dubious appointments, along with the departure of white civil servants, are undermining government performance. The mail and telephone services already show signs of increasing inefficiency.

Contrary to most earlier forecasts, gradual decay, not civil war or racial turmoil, is Zimbabwe's chief problem today. While the new nation has been Black Africa's "shining star," Smiley concludes, it seems destined to become just another lackluster African dictatorship.

### *Some are More Equal than Others*

"Is There a Soviet Working Class?" by Alex Pravda, in *Problems of Communism* (Nov.-Dec. 1982), U.S. Information Agency, 400 C St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

The Soviet Union is officially a classless "workers' state." However, even Soviet academics are now documenting wide socioeconomic disparities among Russia's workers.

By Western standards, the Soviet working class is unusually large (half the population) and unskilled, writes Pravda, a University of Reading, England, political scientist.

But the recent emergence of a small new "working middle class" of craftsmen and highly skilled workers has shattered old notions of a unified proletariat. Metal workers, coal miners, and other members of the new blue-collar elite, 10 percent of the working class, are paid up to three times more than factory janitors and other manual laborers. Their salaries are on a par with those of doctors or mid-level engineers.

But Soviet workers in general are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to educational opportunities: Children from white-collar families are three times as likely to attend universities as are their blue-collar counterparts. One reason is that white-collar families spend so much on private tutoring—1.5 billion rubles yearly, equal to 20 percent of the nation's budget for secondary schools. The sluggish economy has also led some working-class children to lower their sights and go to