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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

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technical schools rather than college.

Politics is one possible outlet for the ambitious "working middle class": One out of three, as opposed to fewer than 10 percent of other workers, belongs to the Communist Party. But there is little opportunity for such activists beyond the grassroots level. Indeed, notes Pravda, the frustrated hopes of the new "working middle class" lead to discontent. Unofficial opinion surveys, for example, suggest that highly trained technical workers were stronger supporters of Poland's Solidarity trade-union movement than were other Soviet workers. So far, the new blue-collar elites seem more interested in advancing their own interests than in pushing for reform. Even so, concludes Pravda, if "any challenge to the myth of the Soviet 'working class'" ever arises, it will come from this group.

Creating Hunger In Honduras

"The Cattle are Eating the Forest" by Billie R. DeWalt, in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Jan. 1983), 5801 South Kenwood, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

In 1976, Honduras joined a growing list of Third World nations that must import corn, rice, and other basic foods. Many of its people go hungry. Yet, at the same time, the Hondurans have stepped up their production and export of beef.

Between 1961 and 1980, such exports rose more than 500 percent, while domestic beef consumption dropped. In the rich tropical southern highlands, the amount of land in pasture increased from 42 percent of the total in 1952 to 61 percent in 1974. If its population continues to grow at today's high 3.3 percent annual rate, Honduras will have to import 41 percent of its grain by 1990. Even now, perhaps 58 percent of Honduran children under age five suffer from malnutrition.

Behind the change is a peculiar dynamic that encourages the conversion of cropland and forests to pasture, says DeWalt, a University of Kentucky anthropologist. Landowners are shifting into livestock production because corn and rice yield low profits (thanks partly to official price controls), and because the export prices for coffee, bananas, and sugar are highly unpredictable. The Tegucigalpa government, with an eye on the lucrative U.S. markets that absorb 90 percent of Central American beef exports, contributed by offering low-interest loans to cattle producers. (Ironically, DeWalt adds, a modest government land reform program during the early 1970s helped speed the process: Landowners now fear "unused" timberland will be taken from them.)

The nation's tenant farmers also gain, but only in the short run. Landowners give them wooded or fallow land at low annual rents (about \$8 per *manzana* or 1.7 acres), but the peasants must clear it, share any timber, and eventually begin sowing grass between the rows of their grain crops for the owners' cattle to graze on after the harvest.

Even as cattle occupy more of Honduras's farmland and compete with humans for grains, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and other Central