Zimbabwe at Five — Part II

Zimbabwe Today

By Ethel Payne

At a time when virtually the entire continent of Africa is in turmoil either through drought and famine, coups and political upheavals, Zimbabwe is fighting to maintain its stability. Prime Minister Mugabe is finding that the pangs of independence are nearly as exhausting as the struggle for freedom was.

The 14 years of guerilla warfare took their toll in the lives of 6,000 lost, social disruption and the trauma of instituting a whole new system and a lifestyle completely foreign to the previous 88 years of white rule.

He has had to grapple with dissension from blocks and whites alike. Nearly half of the white population has left; yet some are returning because they are finding that it is not easy to adjust to new surroundings or to meld into other cultures.

Those who fled to South Africa because philosophically and ideologically, the apartheid society was best suited to their own previous life surroundings are realizing that that country is going through almost identically the same kinds of trauma that will inevitably lead to a change there.

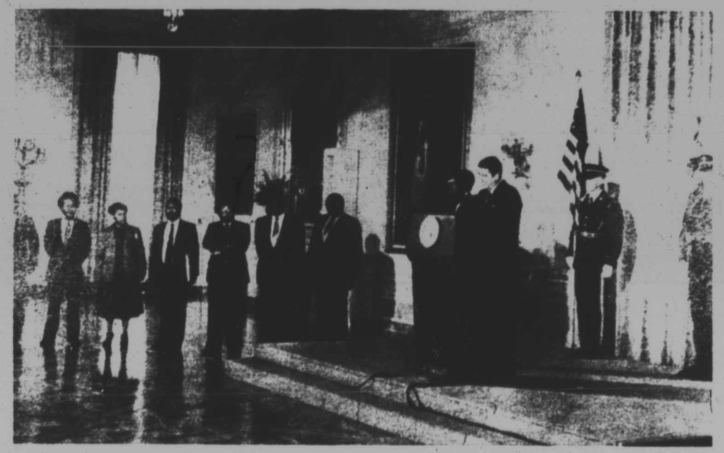
So, there is little comfort for hope in a future that will be free of the issue of race. White supremacy may be a long time dying, but surely it is terminal.

Joshua Nkamo and Abel Muzorewa continue to nurse grudges as sore losers. Last October, Nkamo held a rally in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, ostensibly to call for a united front. Instead, he hurled charges of fascism against Mugabe and the Shona majority.

Nkomo hoped to pick up more seats in Parliament during the March elections this year, but he is given very little chance of unseating Mugabe. Mugabe is accused of trying to impose a one-party rule of what is termed "Christian Socialism." He is still a devout Catholic. He lives modestly and even his detractors acknowledge that he is personally incorruptible.

Muzorewa was detained for a period on charges of plotting to overthrow the government. He has been released, but the dream of power continues to elude his grasp. Ian Smith, now a member of the back bench minority in Parliament, raises his voice in criticism periodically, and is publicly rebuked by Mugabe and his supporters. But Smith is a lonely man, isolated in lost dreams of power and glory that are doomed never to come back.

The five years since independence have had some accomplishments and triumphs.



Robert Mugabe with President Reagan at the White House.

Mugabe, the former teacher, places a high premium on education. When he took office there was a literacy rate of only 27 percent.

Total school enrollment was 800,000 with 66,000 in 170 secondary schools. Education was heavily weighed in favor of the white minnority . . A four-year report lists these improvements: total enrollment, 2.4 million in primary schools, 313,000 in 853 secondary schools.

The University of Zimbabwe has increased its enrollment from 2,000 at indenpence to 4,130 in 1984.

At a World Bank conference held in Nairobi in July, 1983, Zimbabwe was commended for being one of the few countries in the world which spends more on education than it does for defense. It has not tapped the bank for building and construction materials, choosing instead to rely on its own resources in manpower.

One monstrous problem facing the new nation was the resettlement of the thousands of refugees from Zambia and other countries who had been away from their homeland, some for as long as 15 years.

The Un High Commission for Refugees set up offices in Lusaka, Zambia and in Harare the capital of Zimbabwe, to coordinate the resettlement efforts. Land, housing, schooling, and health facilities were immediate necessities. Prime Minister Mugabe established a priority for agricultural development and education.

War damaged schools had to be reconstructed, and where there were no buildings, classes were conducted in the open air. Former farmers who had been the backbone of the liberation struggle contributed their meager funds and their labour to help provide education for their children.

The serious problem of teacher shortage had to be addressed. The Zimbabwe Teachers' Education Course (ZINTEC) has produced more than 12,000 teachers. The recruitment of expatriates has also helped to reduce the shortage of trained personnel especially in science subjects and other advanced courses.

The number of trained teachers has increased from 32,000 in 1980 to more than 61,000 in 1983 and those in conventional teacher training colleges from 2,000 to 6,000. There are a number of private schools in the country, partially supported with government funds.

The greatest challenge is in developing, a diversified, strong farm economy. The most prosperous farms are still held by whites had the advantages of a paternalistic system based on cheap labor, Modern equipment and year's know-how in crop production methods.

Now, the task is to train the small, indigenous farmers in methods that will bring the greatest yields. The government can claim some modest successes thus far Land reform has induced higher wages for farm workers.

One of the interesting developments has

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—Celebrity Roundup

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night. His first hit in 1976 was "Love Really Hurts Without You."

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Q. — Please settle a bet for us. How old is Pearl Bailey? We heard she went back to college. Did she ever graduate?

VERONICA MOORE
Columbus, Ohio

A. — Pearl Mae Bailey was born March 29, 1918 in Newport News, Va. She is 67 and gets her degree in Theology from Georgetown University this Spring.

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Q. — I loved Ray Charles on "We Are The World." What is his real name and how old is he?

SHIRLEY LANE
Chicago, IL

A. — Ray Charles was born Sept. 23, 1930 in Albany, Ga. His real name is Ray Charles Robinson and he's 54.

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Q. — So many comedians make fun of people on TV and in the movies People like Stevie Wonder laugh when people like Eddie Murphy make fun of them. Whatever happened to that suit brought by that black lawyer against Richard Pryor?

ANGELA ANDREWS
New York, N.Y.

A. — An Alameda County jury in Okland, Calif. ruled that Richard Pryor libeled an Okland attorney in his movie "Richard Pryor Live on Sunset Strip" by saying he once had a "black lawyer who took him" for "hook, line and sinker." The jury ordered Rastar Films, the movie's producer and Columbia Pictures, the distributor, to pay attorney Michael Ashburne $500,000 for the statement made in the film three years ago. Ashburne, who was Pryor's attorney from 1975 to 1980 settled out of court with the entertainer. Ashburne's attorney, Sheldon Otis said Columbia and Rastar both neglected to use standard procedures for keeping potentially damaging material out of films.

— Record Review

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Star than from any '60s or '50s group. For a change of pace, the album's last three cuts are non-Rick James compositions. We find Marvin Gaye's "The Bells," done in a nice mellow style, and competent acapella renditions of "Daddy's Home" (Shep & The Limelites) and "Thin Line Between Love And Hate" (an oldie by The Persuaders).

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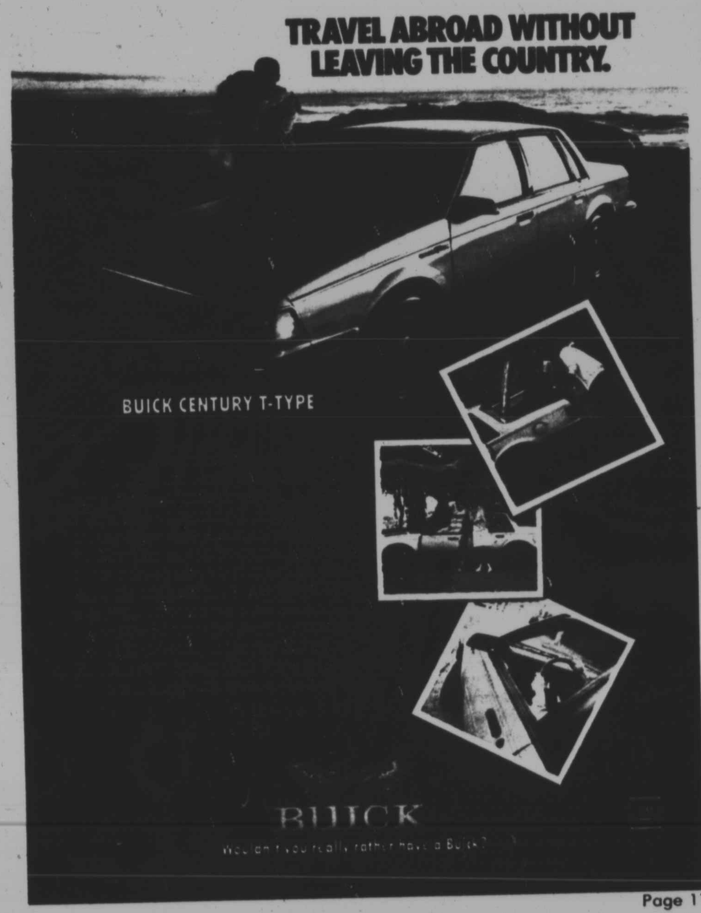
been the rise of farmer lobbies among the villages. Combined with the commercial farmers, they have become quite effective in making their views known. Farmers have been given credit for seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and tools.

Thus far, Zimbabwe has survived the serious drought situation that has hit the rest of Africa. If Mugabe has not fully succeeded in achieving all his ambitious plan for improving the equality of life for all of the people, it is not for want of trying.

There are those who wish to see him fail, but, there are many more who want to have him succeed. He remains a strong figure on the continent, an enigma, but one with vision. The land is beautiful, the weather is advantageous.

It is a good place for tourism. The lure of magnificent Victoria Falls, the game parks and the scenery are overwhelming. The job of nation-building is an awesome responsibility.

There is a peaceful grove outside of Harare. During the long liberation struggle, many of the freedom fighters fell here, and it was renamed "Heroes Acre." Robert Mugabe, the boy who grew up to become Prime Minister and lead his country into independence wishes to be buried in Heroes Acre when his task is finished.