

provided by the capture of the Soviet Ambassador to Zambia. He is brain-washed into supporting ZANLA and withdrawing support from ZPRA. Quite why the Rhodesian war effort should benefit from Cuban soldiers being shipped to Moçambique and a cargo of arms being sent directly to Robert Mugabe is not made clear except in the rather unconvincing observation: "Any confusion in the unholy alliance which is working against us can only be of benefit, even if it only lasts for a few days". It is indicative of the desperateness with which the novelists are forced to view the situation that hope of winning the war should be made to hang on such slender threads. Another sub-plot charts an attempt to assassinate Joshua Nkomo by a man whose girl-friend had been murdered in the Viscount disaster of September 1978, although there is no suggestion that anything would have been achieved had such an attempt succeeded. In the descriptions of Spark's obsessional hatred of Nkomo and his determination to avenge his girl-friend's murder Armstrong seems to be working out a fantasy with which many White Rhodesians would be able to identify.

The main concern of the book is with the Rhodesian raids into Zambia which are described with competent reportage, although how accurate they are in fact it is impossible to know. What is interesting is to speculate why Armstrong felt it necessary to pad out these accounts with his improbable sub-plots.

The raids were, in terms of what they set out to do, successful and must have demanded courage and dedication from those who took part. Despite this even when the book was being written the war continued to escalate. Nothing had changed. Is that not the reason why novelists like Armstrong cannot rest with realistic accounts of the conduct of the war? To the novelists ten years ago the idea that a large-scale war could develop seemed fantastic; to the contemporary novelist the war is only too real. They have to allow their fictions to lapse into fantasy for only in fantasy is there any sort of comfort.

University of Rhodesia

A. J. CHENNELLS

Prominent Rhodesian Personalities 1978 Edited by L. Newitt. Salisbury, Cover Publicity Services, 1978, 238pp., illustrated, no price indicated. This work is a new version of *Prominent African Personalities of Rhodesia* (reviewed, *ante* (1978), VI, 221), expanded by the inclusion of some 60 more Africans and about 140 Europeans. Although of some use in respect of the personalities included, the coverage is too inconsistent and scrappy to make it a valuable work of reference.

R.S.R.