



Red Hills of Africa

by Ronald Radosh

to col rank of a three-star general and all the privileges that go with it, including direct access to the Secretary of Defense. DACOWITS voted last year in favor of putting women in combat and knows how to take advantage of the old double standard even as they are bent on saying it doesn't exist. Last summer, for example, as the legislation to repeal the combat exemption for female aviators was being debated, members of DACOWITS coordinated lobbying efforts with uniformed female officers, who were allowed to violate military rules against such activities.

Like most of those who have propelled the social upheavals of the last twenty-five years, the GI Janes have been successful because they've been smart enough not to put it before the American people all at once in black-and-white. According to Maryland Democrat Beverly Byron of the House Armed Services Committee, lifting the exemption for female pilots is "what America perceives as the next step; totally consistent with the reasonable, acceptable, *incremental* process that I have found so successful over the years."

What should have been a fact-finding commission has turned into one big "gee-aren't-these-gals-great-and-courageous-and-don't-they-have-the-right-to-do-what-the-boys-do" fest. After three months of schmalz and generic praise of women, the commission had not yet gotten the Pentagon to hand over pregnancy rates from the Gulf, or statistics on how many women were sent home, how many were not deployable, and how many were raped. Of course, there were a few red faces when the USS *Acadia*—dubbed "The Love Boat"—returned home with one out of every ten women aboard pregnant.

Stung by the drunken antics of Navy pilots at Tailhook, the Administration proved it can move quickly when it wants to, collecting the scalp of Navy Secretary H. Lawrence Garrett III. But Secretary Cheney, who harbors presidential ambitions, is straddling the fence—and is under strong pressure to appoint a woman as Secretary of the Navy, which would all but clinch combat for women. And the language coming out of the Senate Armed Services Committee would *force* him to put women in "testing" combat roles. Does Cheney want to be remembered for the victory in the Gulf or as the guy who put your daughter in army boots? □

When State President F.W. de Klerk pushed through his referendum on ending apartheid last March, he strengthened his support among the 40 percent of whites who back him, and struck a blow against a resurgent Afrikaner Conservative party. Both de Klerk and Nelson Mandela had to tread a thin line between enraging hardline Afrikaners and alienating the anti-apartheid movement, but it appeared that the African National Congress, in meeting with those it once condemned as racists, had finally recognized the de Klerk government as a legitimate body. Moreover, the ANC seemed to realize that its cadres were hardly ready to govern a country rampant with violence and economic trouble. Far better to share power at first with moderate whites, and thereby avoid blame for a failure to come up with quick solutions. The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), made up of all political parties, now has a mandate to establish a new constitution and create an interim government.

Of course, it was all going too smoothly. In June, after scores of killings of Zulus by ANC sympathizers in townships, Zulu-speaking raiders rampaged through a migrant hostel in Boipatong, shooting and hacking to death forty-two squatters. The practice of "necklacing," favored by ANC "Comrades" and once endorsed by Winnie Mandela, continues unabated.

In the new South Africa, the once-underground Communist party (SACP) has become legal and is in the midst of a re-

cruiting drive. One can find the *African Communist* or *Umsebenzi* at local newsstands, and the latter is now published within the country—not in East Germany. No longer is the party journal printed in a false cover (in 1988 it was called the *Good Food Guide*, in 1989 *Landscape Gardening*). *Business Day*, South Africa's *Wall Street Journal*, regularly prints the views of Communist leaders alongside those of corporate CEOs.

A secret document meant for the SACP's internal leadership, written this past June 20, accuses Nelson Mandela and the ANC leadership of "suffocating" the mass struggle, and of acting as if they were a regular party preparing for an electoral triumph. Calling for a "new terrain of struggle," the SACP leaders accuse the ANC of failing to exploit the "crisis of the regime" that caused de Klerk to move against apartheid, and of accepting unnecessary compromises: "[To gain] a transfer of power to the people, we need to see mass struggle as a permanent feature of South African life."

The SACP views CODESA not as an arena of constitutional negotiation but as a "site of struggle," forthrightly calling for "seizure and control of state power through a series of incremental steps." Their aim is to wage a series of immobilizing and demoralizing strikes until government passes over to the Communists and their allies. Typical is the recent action following the the Boipatong massacre in which SACP chief Chris Hani led 40,000 members of the party-controlled National Union of Metalworkers singing and toy-toting through downtown Johannesburg.

But with Communism fallen and apartheid falling, why should we care that a powerful Communist party still holds forth in South Africa? The answer is put

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succinctly by the leading Western scholar of South African Communism, Heribert Adam of Simon Fraser University: "Because SACP members are the major force that dominates the theoretical debates and strategies within the broad apartheid opposition, its own practice of [or lack of] internal democracy influences the style of the entire movement." Americans sympathetic to Mandela prefer to ignore that the SACP has cemented its "people's alliance" with the ANC. Indeed, according to Thomas Lodge of the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, by the end of the eighties, the party had recruited scores of top trade union leaders. Party membership has quintupled since 1989 to 25,000, and most of the new members are 25-to-30-year old militants from the township underclass—"street Jacobins of the 1970s ghetto revolts," to use Lodge's phrase. The respected British newsletter *Africa Confidential* said two years back that the SACP's "popularity is at an all-time high in the South African townships," and called the SACP and the ANC "one body with two heads."

A self-styled elitist group with secret membership, the SACP has maneuvered for control of the ANC for years. All SACP members are members of the ANC. The Communists control three-quarters of the ANC's 35-man National Executive Committee, and the party controls major posts in the ANC's policy-making divisions, including the offices of the president general, the secretary-general, and the treasurer-general.

For decades, the SACP—perhaps with only the French and American Communists as competition—was the most Stalinist of all the European Communist parties. It supported the crushing of Solidarity, the war in Afghanistan, and the complete suppression of Soviet dissidents.

The first hints at a revisionism came from Joe Slovo, long considered the "voice of South African Communism." Having sacrificed much of his life for the movement—along with his wife, who was killed in exile by a letter-bomb—Slovo enjoys considerable prestige. He was until 1990 the party's secretary-general, and once led Spear of the Nation (MK), its military-wing-in-exile. Slovo created a storm with his 1990 essay, "Has Socialism Failed?" in which he admitted that what destroyed East European socialism (the

USSR was still intact) was the revolt of the population against regimes whose anti-democratic legacy had destroyed socialism's appeal.

Slovo nonetheless reaffirmed his belief in "the future of socialism," holding that an "ideological offensive" by capitalists against socialism had to be challenged, and condemning "unilateral ideological disarmament," by which he meant the conclusion of American economist Robert Heilbroner and others on the left that democratic capitalism in practice had proved itself superior to all socialism. Indeed, Slovo claimed that "the theory of Marxism . . . remains valid," as did the Leninist concept of "dictatorship of the proletariat." But he also cited the Marxist heretic Rosa Luxemburg's polemic against Lenin: that freedom had to mean freedom for those against the government and for those who thought differently. At the time of civil war in 1918, he argued, Lenin was correct to oppose Luxemburg. But in the modern world, socialism could not be built if it opposed democracy. Without democracy, he warned, Communists could institute "a political tyranny over the whole of society."

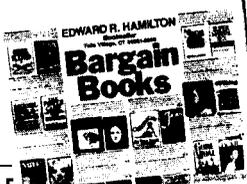
Under Slovo's helm, the SACP proclaimed a new banner—towards "democratic socialism." Militants appeared wearing new T-shirts: "SACP Demands an Elected Non-Racial Constituent Assembly . . . Forward to Democratic Socialism." Their literature seemed inspired less by Karl Marx than by Michael Harrington, and they seemed to have forgotten what the Bolsheviks' view of a Constituent Assembly was in 1918. Slovo admitted that their own policies had "discredited the cause of socialism," and that the only way forward was "thoroughgoing democratic socialism."

But Slovo quickly backtracked. "There may be moments in the life of a revolution," he wrote, "which justify postponement of full democratic processes." When, precisely, critics asked, and who decides when that moment has arrived? The answer, of course, is the SACP, still proclaimed the "vanguard" of social change in South Africa—although Slovo says the party must "earn" the credit of vanguard, not merely proclaim it. Slovo was stacking his deck: the ANC has consistently stated that the SACP's vanguard status has been truly earned in struggle; hence their invincible alliance.

And since the ANC is controlled by the SACP, one cannot imagine a situation in which they would suddenly take away their endorsement. In case there is confusion, Slovo explains that the SACP has already won its place "as a vanguard force by superior efforts of leadership and devotion to the cause of liberation." To read their internal debates was to be swirled back to the 1930s and '40s.

Central Committee members such as Brian Bunting, Govan Mbeki, Harry Gwala, and Mac Maharaj realized that it was impossible to defend Leninism while calling for programs that would undermine it. Gwala, a party chief in Natal, declared that Lenin had answered all basic political questions almost ninety years ago—and he warned his comrades of the dangers of Browderism, Menshevism, and Titoism. Socialism, he says, "does not become less [scientific] because of some malpractices."

Opposing these hardliners are middle-aged Marxist-Leninists who believe Stalinism and bureaucracy destroyed "true socialism." *Humanitarian Communists,*



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they say, would not make the same mistakes. Leading this group is Jeremy Cronin, whom *Business Day* wrote was “fast becoming the most prolific party theorist in town.” According to Cronin, the models for South Africa’s future are Cuba and Vietnam—whose revolutions, he says, were indigenous revolts in which these nations moved from campaigns for national liberation to a second stage of social revolution.

A third group—the *soi-disant* “democratic socialists”—supports Slovo, but goes even further. Coming to the party from the COSATU trade union movement, whose former head Cyril Ramaphosa recently took over leadership of the ANC, this group would subordinate the party to workers’ interests. Joining them is a small group of New Leftists, like student leader Jonny Steinberg, who favors multi-party democracy and pluralism. If Lenin’s approach is affirmed, Steinberg argues, the SACP will end up “reproducing the Stalinist legacy.”

The toughest campaign waged against the SACP comes from within the ANC leadership, in the form of a determined attack waged by the ANC’s dynamic minister of communications, Pallo Jordan, who lived for decades in exile in London and other Western capitals. Jordan is obviously highly influenced by libertarian elements of the British New Left, as well as by his time in the early 1960s at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he first made contact with Communists, Marxists, and independent leftists.

In a long article published in the South African magazine *Transformation*, Jordan proclaimed that Slovo had given no coherent explanation for what had gone wrong with socialism: he had merely “identified the symptoms of the illness but not its basic cause.” In all Communist parties, Jordan noted, those who sought to explore reality had been branded traitors and spies, and then framed up and executed. His answer was to look anew at Bukharin and particularly Trotsky for Marxist alternatives to Stalinism, in order “to rediscover the true meaning of [Communism].” Jordan held out the gauntlet: the SACP’s Stalinist credentials are too well known for anyone to think that it has changed. “Any regular reader of SACP publications,” Jordan wrote, “can point to a persistent pattern of praise and support

for every violation of freedom perpetrated by the Soviet leadership, both before and after the death of Stalin.” The SACP’s political culture has “produced a spirit of intolerance, petty intellectual thuggery and political dissembling.”

Jordan followed up with a short piece in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*. He had not asked Slovo to “leave the Marxist tradition,” he wrote, but he *had* confronted him with “a long tradition of Marxist opposition to Stalinism.” Yet Slovo had not adequately responded, since, as Jordan put it, “it is not sufficient for the SACP to say ‘terrible things happened.’” Socialism could be democratic but it had developed “in an authoritarian and totalitarian fashion.” By identifying that system with socialism, the Communists had in fact discredited socialism. In particular, the SACP didn’t have to applaud the Prague Spring of 1968 or the Jaruzelski coup against Solidarity in 1981. Slovo finally responded this past February by pointing out that the opponents of Stalinism cited by Jordan had themselves helped lay the foundations of totalitarianism: Trotsky, for example favored trade unions’ becoming little more than a wing of the state apparatus, and in the 1920s attacked the Worker’s Opposition for making “a fetish of democratic principles.”

These debates go beyond internecine quarreling: the future society envisioned by the ANC leaders depends on their outcome. And on the two central issues facing the new South Africa—the economy and the political system—the recent SACP Congress gives little ground for hope. Slovo has downplayed talk of nationalization, and had stated publicly that only a mixed economy can guarantee economic growth. Rejecting bureaucratic state control along Soviet lines, Slovo favors public control through participation by producers at all levels—what the German social democrats call co-determination. Such a program amounts essentially to a social-democratic welfare state with a strong private sector, but those who saw some hope in it were to be disappointed. At the recent SACP Congress, Slovo and his moderates found themselves out of power.

Taking over the top office was Chris Hani, a hardline militant whose base was in the MK. While the Slovo center of the SACP sees an interim government as the only way forward, the hardliners do not. In their lexicon, interim

government is a Popular Front phase in which party control is cemented, and after which the dictatorship of the proletariat begins. Party propaganda still calls the de Klerk government an “illegitimate regime,” and the SACP accuses the State President of trying to protect “the accumulated privileges of whites.” Thus, they call for an interim government with “real powers”—e.g., “a new people’s army and people’s police force,” along with a state-controlled press. This interim government will be one in which “the ANC must have real authority . . . part of the process of transfer of power to the people.”

The party and the ANC still talk about the necessity of exploring moves towards nationalization when the new government assumes power. Mandela has stated that the ANC favors a mixed economy, and that the new government will honor foreign debts incurred by the de Klerk regime, but the new ANC secretary-general, Cyril Ramaphosa—who refused to allow party leaders within the ANC to proclaim their identities—has repudiated Mandela on the debt repayment issue; the ANC and the SACP still espouse nationalization, and take every opportunity to point out that Mandela speaks only for himself. Cronin condemns the idea of a mix as “reformist” and “social democratic.”

At the January 1991 SACP Party Congress, the first held openly in South Africa, the comrades deleted all Slovo’s references to “democratic socialism” from the party’s program; according to the SACP majority, socialism is *inherently* democratic. (So much for the experience of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.) Hani recently praised the PLO for leading the way via the Intifada, even though it had not succeeded in gaining territory or capturing power, like Castro in Cuba or the North Vietnamese in Saigon. The PLO’s example, he said, was the one he hoped the SACP would emulate.

Mandela has not yet commented on Hani’s vision, although even he hails Castro as an ally. Last year he appeared at Castro’s side in Havana, yelling: “Long live Fidel Castro! Long live the Cuban Revolution!” Indeed, the current American left campaign to end the embargo on Cuba and to promote sympathy for Castro stems from a little known alliance forged between the American Communists and the SACP hardliners. Hani toured the U.S. under CPUSA auspices in May 1991, and in August, CPUSA National

Committee members Angela Davis and Charlene Mitchell visited South Africa as the SACP's guests. "You are our demonstration that Communist parties and socialism are historically relevant," Davis told them. "You cannot let us down."

Upon taking power, the SACP hopes to lay the foundation for a revived Communist International, in which a wealthy South Africa could provide the aid to save Castro's revolution. At a November 1991 press conference, Hani announced a campaign of support for Cuba, a campaign that originated with the effort begun by their American Communist allies.

Does the SACP have a future? A respected political scientist at the University of Cape Town, David Welsh, notes its strong support in the unions, among radicalized black youth in the townships, and in intellectual circles. But he stresses that its viability rests, ultimately, on its close ties with the ANC, and he thinks that these will wither as the ANC grows in strength. He argues that the pressure of events will push the SACP towards social democracy, that it will evolve into merely another contender for political influence in a functioning democracy.

That may have been true at one point, but as Richard L. Sklar, former president of the African Studies Association, writes in *Dissent*, the party has rejected "a fundamental ideological shift from Leninism to democratic socialism," and as a result, virtually no left force in South Africa "upholds [democratic] socialism as an ideal." At present, the SACP is hanging on, and there is no clue that its influence or control of the ANC is waning. On the contrary, the ties with the unions have increased with the election of scores of COSATU activists to party leadership. And public opinion polls among blacks indicate most are ready to support the SACP program of full nationalization. Indeed, the hardline Stalinist Harry Gwala, an ANC official in Natal, recently told the press, "We will kill Inkatha warlords," hardly a prescription for peace and order in the townships.

The SACP would plant "the first building blocks" of socialism during the first free government, Chris Hani assures us. The SACP would not want to run agriculture and education; rather, they would "be looking at areas like policing, broadcasting." Hani stresses that any new parliament and government "must reflect

the input of COSATU and the party." ANC candidates would have to guarantee party members a percentage of spots.

The problem, according to Pallo Jordan, is that the tensions within his country "could cause us to move in a Stalinist one-party direction." How ironic that as

Communism collapses everywhere, the former liberation movement of that nation's blacks is poised to implement a Marxist economic system within their nation, threatening to erode the basis of freedom and prosperity on which a new South Africa could be built. □

BEN STEIN'S DIARY



Mind Games

by Benjamin J. Stein

Friday

Graduation day. A big day in the life of Tommy Stein, age four years and ten months. He's graduating from pre-school at Temple Israel on Hollywood Boulevard. The school is throwing a bash for the kids and the parents at 10:30 this morning.

I called Alex, my fugitive, once and future wife, to remind her to bring her camera because I had forgotten mine at the beach. "Oh, no problem," she said in her beautiful voice. "I hired a video camera man to make a video of the ceremony. It'll save us from having to worry about it while we're watching Tommy graduate."

"How much does this cost?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't know. About \$400, I think."

Wow. Wow and double wow. I guess Alex hasn't heard about the recession. More power to her. We've always divided our worries this way. I worry about money and Alex worries about my criticizing her about money. There we are. I guess that about covers it.

The ceremony was cute. The boys and girls sang and pretended to be elephants and snakes. The rabbi told us how lucky we all were to have

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such great pre-K teachers, and we are.

All around us in the auditorium, parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters and nannies aplenty laughed and beamed as the ceremony went on interminably, with bouquets for everyone in Hollywood from everyone in Hollywood. Behind me, a family spoke Russian. Another row back, a family spoke animated Hebrew.

The rabbi went on about how we should thank our parents and teachers and our nannies, and we should. In my little mind, I also thought we should give a great big thanks and a tip of the yarmulke to the millions of American men and women who fought against Hitler and Tojo and their many minions. Without these guys, a great many of whom are dead, and a helluva lot more are still wounded and maimed, we Jews would be ashes floating around eternity. Thank you.

Back at my condo, I met J., my former assistant, former full-on Val, now a saleswoman in the *schmatte* business. She went into her rap about life in Los Angeles for a single girl. She's broke all the time. She can't pay her bills. She has one boyfriend who loves her but she doesn't like him because he's too nice to her. She has another one who's really mean to her but she sort of likes him. She's been noticing that all the tough, mean young people she knows are mak-