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# RSA-USA—Beloved, Benighted Countries

By Derek Turner

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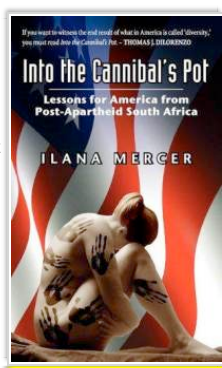


***Into the Cannibal's Pot – Lessons for America from Post-Apartheid South Africa***  
Ilana Mercer, Seattle: Stairway Press, 2011, hb, 319pp

Ilana Mercer is a well-known controversialist on the American right, who writes a deservedly popular *WorldNetDaily* column and somehow finds time to maintain both a website and blog.

Her views are probably best described as paleo-libertarian. The book's provocative title, which probably cost her potential readers, is borrowed from Ayn Rand, but the author tempers capitalist principles with respect for national identities and cultural traditions. Unusually amongst conservatives, she combines Israelophilia and dislike of Islam with trenchant opposition to American military adventurism. Unusually amongst libertarians, she is an outspoken critic of current US immigration policy as subversive of social order as well as fiscal responsibility. She has now turned her sights on her former homeland of South Africa – both for its own sake and because she feels its tenebrous present contains urgent indicators for America.

The author was born in South Africa, the daughter of a rabbi, but the family had to leave in the 1960s because of her father's anti-apartheid outspokenness. They decamped to Israel, before the author moved back to South Africa in the 1980s to start a family. She was (and is) against apartheid; she recalls having tea with Desmond Tutu and being on the Grand Parade in Cape Town in 1990 to witness Mandela's release. From there she went to Canada and eventually the United States.



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Notwithstanding her anti-apartheid views, she feels duty-bound to show that the RSA reality was immeasurably more complex than the simplistic narrative which came to misinform the West's policy towards its final African redoubt. In the old days, there were gross indignities and injustices, and yet in the African context the old SA compared favourably with its neighbours:

“When we departed, South Africa was still a country with a space program...gleaming skyscrapers, and department stores that rivaled Macy's. The Central Business District in Johannesburg bustled. Crime was controlled, or at least confined. When mobs stoned cars en route to D. F. Malan Airport in Cape Town...a tough and competent police sprang into action. An equally impressive Western system of Roman-Dutch law, and a relatively independent judiciary, dished out just desserts.” (1)




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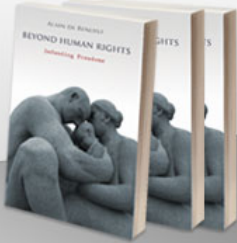
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By contrast, the “Rainbow Nation” so revered by postmodern moralizers is largely dysfunctional and becoming more so, in accordance with what has become a sad post-colonial African tradition. The consequences for South Africans of all races range from the inconvenient to the lethal.



The country which carried on space programmes now suffers regular electricity shortages. Once-reliable government services have become a kind of lottery, with even the wealthiest suburbs experiencing interruptions in basic services like postal delivery, refuse collection and sanitation, while one third of budget-administering municipal councillors are functionally illiterate. There has been an explosion of AIDS, thanks to tribal prejudices against science—to the extent that an estimated 20% of adults have the virus. The overall unemployment rate rose from 19% in 1994, immediately before the end of apartheid and at the end of a long period of economic stagnation, to 31% in 2003. It has subsequently declined to 25%, but this is still very high for a country so well-endowed with natural resources, and with much lower levels of debt than many other countries. Black household income shrank by 19% between 1995 and 2000—although it had started to recover prior to the global financial crisis. This is despite – or because of—Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies which compel firms employing 50 or more staff to have a certain proportion of black employees and/or black investors. BEE has devastated whole industries, such as the mining sector (ironically, as Anglo-American was one of the chief instruments of ending apartheid) and have helped to force 10% of whites out of work and below the poverty line. Comparing past government performance with present, it seems as if the dearest wish of African National Congress MP Mario Rantho has already been realized:

“It is imperative to get rid of merit as the overriding principle in the appointment of public servants.”

There is less scope for wry humour when it comes to violent crime, although the author tries by entitling a section “Crime, The Beloved Country” in an allusion to Alan Paton’s classic anti-apartheid novel of 1948. Over 300,000 have been killed since the arrival of black majority rule as the erstwhile unjust but orderly regime became one which is theoretically just but with scarcely any order. Mercer cites BBC statistics from 2006 showing that on average, 65 people are murdered each day, 195 raped and 300 robbed with violence. Shockingly, she cites 2008 figures suggesting that more than 50,000

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children under three years old are raped each year—10% of total rapes. By comparison:

“Few realize that during the decades of the apartheid regime a few hundred Africans in total perished as a direct and indirect consequence of police brutality. A horrible injustice, indubitably, but nothing approximating the death toll in ‘free’ South Africa where hundreds of Africans, white and black, die weekly” (author’s emphases)

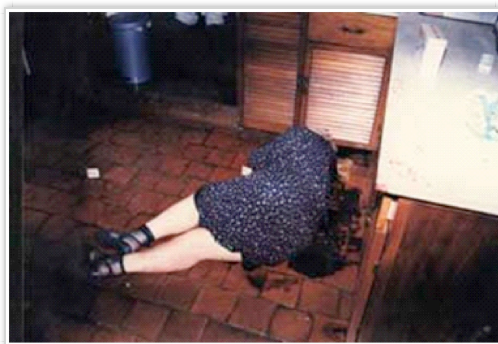


So ungovernable are some places that private security firms have actually been hired by the police to protect...police stations. The South African Police Service’s acronym of SAPS seems highly appropriate. Even high-profile liberals, like writer Nadine Gordimer, historian David Rattray and former First Lady Marike de Klerk, are not immune from murderous assaults. Arguably more

deserving of sympathy are poorer, apolitical Afrikaners, singled out for attack because some among them once oppressed and dispossessed blacks. Now all Afrikaners are being oppressed and dispossessed – except more rapidly and much more finally.



An economically and culturally significant subset, Afrikaner farmers (Boer of course means farmer), almost seems to be targeted for obliteration, with one tenth of them – over 3,000 – murdered since the end of apartheid, without anyone appearing to notice, let alone care. The author notes ruefully that “seals being clubbed to death on ice floes have garnered more attention” than what is widely accepted to be the actual genocide of these agriculturalists, often in circumstances of the most frightful cruelty. Statistically, farming in South Africa is more dangerous than mining. When Pretoria attorney Philip du Toit gallantly raised the unpleasant, unfashionable subject in his 2004 book *The Great South African Land Scandal*, he was brushed aside or condemned as the most verkrampte variety of bigot. The government, the semi-divine Mandela and the self-appointed “international community” all seem indifferent.







Many of the farmers who have survived thus far are quitting both the countryside and the country, defeated by physical assault, theft, sabotage and killing of livestock, incompetent police, corrupt officials and unjust land confiscations. By 2015, one third of farmers' land will have been redistributed, and much of this acreage is already lying fallow or reverting to bush, because the new proprietors (often local tribal leaders or ANC party bosses) lack the interest or the skills to farm it. In 2009, South Africa became a net food importer for the first time. If or when famine strikes it will presumably be ascribed to the legacy of apartheid rather than the inadequacies of the nouvelle regime.

The white population decreased by 20% between 1995 and 2005, giving rise to the colloquialism of "packing for Perth" and causing even Mandela to snarl that they are "traitors". Mandela's Western worshippers may be surprised to learn that their demi-god would resort to such brusquerie, but after all he did lead the ANC's terrorist wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) whose anthem contains the following un-neighbourly sentiment:

"We the members of the Umkhonto have pledged ourselves to kill them—kill the whites"

Even terrorists deserve a chance of redemption, but it is salutary to recall that Amnesty International—not generally considered a diehard conservative organisation—refused to recognize Mandela as a prisoner of conscience because of his continued commitment to violence, and that the country over which he hovers like some angelic presence early forged cordial links with the likes of Gaddafi, Castro and assorted Palestinian hardliners.

White flight has further skewed the imbalance between provider and provided for—today for every (disproportionately white) taxpayer there are no fewer than eleven (disproportionately black) voters. To add to this vast potential for class envy, many of these voters have been schooled to resent the whites on whom they depend. It is a volatile blend, fuelling radical redistribution policies and a sporadic ethnic intifada against whites—especially those who live on isolated farms far from police who might not come even if they knew what was happening, and would probably never catch the killers even if they did come.

I have used the word intifada because the Afrikaners always had an unusually intimate relationship with Israel. The author says of the Dutch Reformed Church to which most Afrikaners owe (or owed) allegiance—

"In their community they saw an extension of the covenant God formed with the Israelites."

The material effects of this mysticism were decades of strategic co-operation between the two pariah-states, both hated for real or alleged racism, and both the objects of innumerable angry denunciations, UN resolutions and anguished editorials. Many in both condemned countries saw the situation as Mrs. Mercer describes it:

"It was SA and Israel against the world and against the forces of nihilistic liberalism intent on snuffing out civilized outposts at the tip of Africa and in the Middle East."

Calvinist eschatological logic played a paradoxical part in South Africa's trajectory—originally inspiring the Afrikaner expansion into the intoxicating-horrifying wilderness, then being used to justify and bolster apartheid before eventually turning in on itself, as the Afrikaners realized they

"...had become something they detested...the biblically blessed country became an Ishmael, an outcast."

There was a consequent collapse of will in Afrikanerdom's upper echelons. Big business always hated apartheid, there was little or no academic or artistic support, and when the church gave up in puzzled despair there was no more reason to resist—even though Afrikaners knew well that their quality of life would suffer. There is a revealing anecdote from the fraught final days of apartheid, when there were constant rumours of a military coup to forestall power-sharing. When General Constand Viljoen told General George Meiring that the army could take over the country in a single night, Meiring reportedly replied:

"Yes, that is so, but what do we do the morning after the coup?"

The author is particularly insightful on this subject, and en passant tells the little-known story of the slamme gevaar “(the Islamic threat)” in South Africa, as represented by the pro-Iranian revolution group known as People Against Gangsterism and Drugs, which almost unhindered carried out 80 bombings against civilians in 1999-2000 while the state security apparatus focused on a non-existent threat from white separatists.

The author’s father was against apartheid not out of Marxism or sentimentality but simply because he found the system to be inconsistent with the moral tenets he had imbibed from the Torah. Mrs. Mercer is at pains to explain his motivations, because it is her difficult duty to demonstrate that the country he and so many other well-meaning people helped create is in many ways inferior to the reviled Republic. Between the lines of the polemic there therefore crackles much unresolved tension, reflecting this balancing act between her loyalty to her father and her compulsion to attest to truths which will pain him. There is also a palpable sense of guilt—at fleeing from a once-beloved country, and leaving behind them fine people, black as well as white, who had not the Mercers’ good fortune of possessing a second passport and remittable funds.

“If only...” is her underlying refrain—if only the whites had insisted on minority safeguards—if only international opinion had supported the pro-Western Zulus rather than the pro-Third World “Xhosa Nostra”—if only the new reigning ideology had been capitalism rather than racial socialism—if only reform could have been achieved without this kind of miserable meltdown. She does not offer any SA solutions, although she quotes severally from the remarkable Afrikaner cultural activist Dan Roodt. She scarcely mentions contemporary Afrikaner parties like the Freedom Front Plus, or initiatives like the Afrikaner-only settlement of Orania in the Western Cape (which the new SA Constitution permits, and which Jacob Zuma visited last year).

Yet *Cannibal* is a klaxon of a kind—leaping frequently, if not always seamlessly, between the RSA and the USA. Mrs. Mercer seeks urgently to show how the perils of South Africa are being replicated in her new country of domicile. Both countries are roughly the same age, and both have frontier-taming, republican and Low Church traditions which are metastasizing into anxiety-utopian complexes. They also have large and mutually distrustful racial groups, a factor which militates against social cohesion and democracy because,

“A prerequisite for a classical liberal democracy is that majority and minority status should be interchangeable and fluid.”

In America, as in South Africa, perplexed policymakers strive to address distrust through multiculturalism and affirmative action—perversely, because such policies all too evidently entrench rather than efface divisions. Both countries are wedded to what the author calls the “diversity doxology” and to globalisation; both are experiencing PC policy creep on social keystones like freedom of association (and dissociation), freedom of speech, strong families, self-reliance, fiscal rectitude, property rights and enforceable contracts. She feels that as some small recompense for America’s part in toppling the old balance of power, Washington should offer sanctuary to some of those whose livelihoods (and lives) they have ruined—one of her very few proposals, and one unlikely ever to make it into the US statute book.

The two countries’ situations are very different, and their destinies will therefore diverge—but there are strong similarities too, and she raises the powerful possibility what is happening now in South Africa is happening no less surely in her new beloved country.

#### NOTE

1. A rare and interesting cinematic idea of what the Cape Town of the 1960s looked and felt like may be found in the 1967 film *The Cape Town Affair*, starring Jacqueline Bisset and James Brolin

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A recent documentary titled Tell Me and I Will Forget... provides a horrifying look into the state of South Africa, via EMS workers, public and private. The nation is lost; it's only a matter of time before Whites divest .

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**RobRoySimmons** 52 minutes ago

I'm sure a biblical scholar can find a small link between the OT and Enlightenment, but I'm not that smart.

But let us have a little empathy for our Jewish cousins, always a minority tribe always at odds in what was a brutish world. I can understand the appeal of raceless ideology where the Jews exist (not really anymore) and everyone else is just a regular human.

But to get to that utopian end we whites must be genocided and that my friends is a crime.

Like Reply



**tadzio308** 7 hours ago

"In her new beloved country." It is her fourth country and she is not old yet. She is a Wandering Jew or rootless cosmopolitan as Stalin was wont to say. No nation is her beloved, this is especially true of the natives of wherever she is nesting at the moment.

If World Net Daily hosts her then she places any racist Israeli interest over American lives. Mercer is the wheedling, conniving face of the enemy. Vultures feed off of whatever carrion nature offers. In this case it is the Boers of South Africa.

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## Derek Turner

Derek Turner is the editor of the UK-based *Quarterly Review*. His articles have appeared in the *Times*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Literary Review*, *Chronicles*, *This England* and many other journals, and have been translated into 12 languages.

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