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Winnie Mandela: Part of My Soul Went With Him

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Author

Ngau, Margaret M.

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Sea Route and strategic minerals. The argument is that, should Africans attain control of their country, a leftist regime would assume power ipso facto collaborate with the Soviet Union in restricting western shipping around the Cape. Danaher argues that no empirical evidence in the history of past and present African liberation struggle supports this speculation. Furthermore, strategic minerals which are imported in substantial quantities from South Africa, though essential, can be acquired from other sources. Four minerals (chromium, manganese, platinum-group metals, and vanadium) which head the list can be imported from other sources, for example Zimbabwe, has the highest grade of chrome followed by Turkey, Albania, the Phillipines, New Caledonia, Madagascar, Yugoslavia, and Greece. Regarding manganese, Gabon, Australia, India, and Brazil are viable alternatives. For platinum, there are Zimbabwe and Canada, the latter which also has a ready reserve of vanadium. Yet, in Danaher's view, U.S. policy makers deliberately focus upon the specious argument of mineral dependence and questions of physical supply, to divert attention from the central reason U.S. mineral corporations are in South Africa: high profits (p.89).

Where does Danaher's conclusion lead us? Implicit in Danaher's analysis is a strongly sanctioned, pro-divestment imperative rooted in an international condemnation of South Africa. Cut off from U.S. and Western ally political and economical support-South Africa would be obliged to dismantle apartheid. Ultimately, according to Danaher, this would be in the U.S. long term interests. Contending with South Africa's arrogant recalcitrance, and the continued repression and exploitation of Africans is an area in which the U.S. should take the initiative and exercise leadership. South Africa cannot go it alone, they know it, we know it and the world knows it.

Sandra Jackson
Ph.D. candidate
School of Education
University of California
Berkeley

Benjamin, Anne (ed.): Winnie Mandela: Part of My Soul Went With Him, New York: W.W. Norton and company, 1984. pp. 163 paperback, \$5.95.

The book is a biography of Winnie Mandela. It is a vivid account of Winnie's personal involvement in the African liberation struggle in South Africa. It is based on direct interviews with Winnie Mandela, letters of correspondence of

the Mandela family, and extracts of official documents related to the liberation struggle in South Africa. Winnie is the wife of the internationally renowned South African nationalist leader, Nelson Mandela who is currently serving a life imprisonment term for his progressive political activities aimed at liberating South Africa. She has been the subject of political harassment since 1958 when she married him.

In the introductory chapter, Bishop Manas Buthelezi presents Winnie as the representative of all those freedom fighters, who under the white minority government have like her been imprisoned and/or tortured and sometimes bannished from their homeland. The Bishop says, "through the story of her own life, we are able to read the story of many others. Winnie is therefore a role model/heroine whom many people have emulated in their perseverance in the struggle for liberation. She has been the inspiring spirit of her people" (p.21).

In addition to providing a clear picture of the role Winnie Mandela has played in the liberation movement, the biography pays a glowing tribute to many other freedom fighters--African as well as white colleagues. Most of those mentioned here have been in very close contact with the Mandela family but also quite directly involved in the struggle in diverse ways in their own right. They all have one common mission: fighting the minority white oppressive government of South Africa. As Winnie says about herself, "it is not she who is important, but the struggle" (p.7).

The body of the text provides a detailed account of Winnie's personal encounter with the oppressive apartheid laws of South Africa: her frequent arrests and police harassment, banning orders, and imprisonments. It is in this section that the social and political backgrounds of Winnie's life are told. But the story also represents the whole complex of the peoples' struggle, and their concerted efforts to continue until the bitter end. As the African National Congress (ANC) Freedom Charter states, the struggle is not against any one single race, but the humiliating, derogatory and inhuman laws of apartheid (p. 152). Because of Winnie's frequent encounter with law enforcement officers, she has become a living symbol of the peoples' strength and encouragement. Ironically, Winnie is not only an inspiration for her people, but also a symbol of fear for the white minority government. In their efforts to contain her burning political and social influence with the people, tight security is provided to separate her from the people. However, as Bishop Buthelezi said, it is not her presence with the people that matters but that "her life is communicated to the people more than all the speeches she could ever make if she had never been banned" (pp. 21-22).

She is a true power, with which the white minority government has to reckon.

In the concluding chapters, there are several extracts of communication letters of Nelson Mandela, members of his family (wife and daughters), as well as close associates and other members of the ANC. Mandela's prison life has been made bearable by the relentless support of his wife Winnie. She, like many other African women of South Africa whose husbands have either been imprisoned or killed in the struggle, has raised their two daughters alone. Winnie's life as a mother and wife of an imprisoned freedom fighter clearly reveals the suffering of most African families in South Africa under the apartheid government. Though solely responsible for the upbringing of their children, Winnie has never held a steady job even though she is a trained social worker. The childhood life of Mandela's children vividly confirms the life of all other African children in South Africa: second rate education or none at all, police harassment due to their parents' political ideologies, early separation from their parents; and lack of a place that they could call their home.

Readers will appreciate the editor's clarity of expression and presentation. Some might expect a greater sense of passion in the discussion of family issues and police harassment. To the contrary, those hardships have changed Winnie's perception of the police, and in her own words she says, "No policeman can come to me today at my age, and think he can still interrogate me.... We would just end up insulting each other..." The continuous police harassment has made Winnie a hardened freedom fighter. Instead of breaking down during those most trying periods of her life, she holds herself together just to prove to the white racist regime that nothing other than the freedom of the people is capable of breaking the struggle. For example, when Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964, a journalist at the scene reported, "I fully expected to see a shaken Mrs. Mandela.... But no. She appeared on the steps and she flashed a smile that dazzled" (p.79). And so it was the same with her daughters. When Zeni and Zindzi were attending school in Swaziland, Zeni said; "If I get a phone call ... telling us mummy has been arrested, I say; so what" (p.92).

In conclusion, the book succeeds in introducing Winnie Mandela both as a mother/wife and the politician whom the apartheid government has made of her. The book captures the reader's attention so well that by the end of it, one is able to understand and know Winnie better as well as the political ideologies she and other ANC freedom fighters stand for.

Margaret M. Ngau
Graduate School of Education