

evidence in matters that concern them. Mandela always denied being a party member, although he certainly attended top party meetings from 1960 to 1962. Not only the SACP but also the ANC has stated that he was a member of the Communist Party. Many senior communists thought that he was a member, or that he had been ‘recruited’, as one former member of the SACP central committee wrote many years later.

Where, then, is objectivity? E. H. Carr, again, states that an objective historian is one who ‘chooses the right facts, or, in other words ... applies the right standard of significance’ in developing an interpretation that has an enduring power to convince. This requires a capacity to rise above the limited vision of one’s own situation in society and in history. Objectivity requires an ability both to see things as historical actors saw them in times past and to envision a larger narrative that links past and present. Appreciating the SACP’s role as a vanguard party, and its role in securing superpower support for the ANC during the Cold War, has considerable explanatory power up to today.

Finally, Hugh Macmillan suggests that my book contains errors of fact, but he does not say what they are. Alas, most historians seem to make errors. I found a few in Macmillan’s own book *The Lusaka Years*, such as his statement that General Van der Westhuizen was head of South African military intelligence in 1974–75 (p. 117). It was in fact Lieutenant-General Hein du Toit.

Note: all quotations from unpublished documents are drawn from collections of private papers deposited in public repositories by Ronnie Kasrils and Jack Simons.

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HUGH MACMILLAN, *The Lusaka Years: the ANC in exile in Zambia, 1963 to 1994*. Auckland Park: Jacana Media (pb £18.95 – 978 1 4314 0821 4). 2014, 357 pp.

Hugh Macmillan’s *The Lusaka Years* is the first serious study of the ANC in exile in what was possibly its most important host country over a period of more than thirty years: Zambia. It was in Lusaka that the headquarters of the external mission of the ANC were located for most of the exile years and it was to the Zambian capital that a succession of delegations from South Africa travelled to speak to the ANC in the second half of the 1980s – a sign of its by then de facto recognition as the legitimate representative of the majority of South Africans both internally and internationally. Based on extensive research in South African and Zambian archives as well as interviews with key participants and the author’s personal knowledge of the ANC in Zambia and Swaziland, where he lived, this book is also one of the most comprehensive scholarly accounts of the history of the ANC in this period in general.

Its publication comes at a time of growing disaffection with the ruling party, when the ‘malign influence of exile’ (p. 11) is sometimes too easily invoked to explain the ANC’s shortcomings in the present – a tendency that Macmillan

explicitly wants to counter (p. 8). The present climate of hostility towards the ANC has also given new traction to an old thesis around the alleged communist control of the ANC among its critics. The apartheid government used this argument to retain the strategic support of Western powers in the context of the Cold War, and Stephen Ellis has since continued to champion it in his books *Comrades Against Apartheid* (1992) and the more recent and expanded *External Mission* (2012).

While acknowledging many of the problems and weaknesses of the ANC in exile, Macmillan draws a rather more complex picture of the nature of ANC–SACP relations, of the overall significance of exile, and of the Zambian experience in particular. The book seeks to understand the conditions of great difficulty (not just from a strategic and logistical point of view but also in human terms, including the feelings of displacement, pain and trauma that exiles experienced) that exile created and how the ANC sought to overcome these obstacles – and the brutality of the apartheid regime – while remaining focused on the key objective of defeating apartheid and establishing a non-racial, democratic society.

While the first and last chapters serve as an introduction to the key arguments and as a conclusion, the remaining chapters unfold chronologically, beginning with the early 1960s flow of recruits to the north via the ‘pipeline’ (as the route into exile via Botswana and Zambia to reach Tanzania came to be known) following the banning of the ANC and the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) jointly with the SACP. During this period, ‘there was a temporary blurring of the boundaries between the two organisations, which were driven into closer cooperation in conditions of illegality’ (p. 16). The first attempts at finding a way home through the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns are documented, and so is their aftermath, leading to the growing crisis within MK that was one of the catalysts for the Morogoro Conference and the opening of ANC membership to non-Africans in 1969. The book does not claim that the ANC was in any way responsible for the Soweto uprising – or, for that matter, for the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in the next decade. But it does show how, contrary to what have become widely held views in academic circles and elsewhere, by June 1976 (and afterwards) the ANC in exile was ‘reasonably well informed about developments inside South Africa’ (p. 112). All of the major crises that the ANC faced over the exile period are analysed in detail, from the Hani Memorandum, to the ‘Shishita’ crisis (a forerunner of the Angolan mutinies), to the detention and death of Thami Zulu and other human rights abuses committed by the Department of National Intelligence and Security or NAT. One of the greatest strengths of the ANC in overcoming these crises, Macmillan argues, was its culture of internal criticism (of which the Morogoro and Kabwe conferences are examples) and its ability to adapt to internal and international developments. Thanks to these qualities, the ANC was able not only to survive, but also to reconnect with the internal mass democratic movement and to successfully lead South Africa through the democratic transition.

Throughout the book, the ANC’s shifting and increasingly close (if at times difficult) relationship with Zambia intertwines with the broader story of the ANC in this period. The influence of Kenneth Kaunda’s Christian socialism and leadership style on ANC President Oliver Tambo – and vice versa – and Zambia’s increasingly significant role as a centre of activity for the ANC and

the struggle against apartheid also provide an alternative viewpoint to the obsession of many researchers and scholars with the ideological impact of Soviet support on the ANC's strategy and tactics. The Zambian government never allowed the ANC to establish military camps within its borders, and the urban life-style of Lusaka and relative openness of Zambian society are some of the factors that, in Macmillan's view, made the ANC's experience in this country distinctive from that in others. The author argues that ultimately this legacy was on the whole a positive one, as its 'most obvious features ... from Zambia anyway, were not so much secrecy, paranoia or ferocious discipline, as caution, moderation and scepticism about utopian experiments' (p. 291).

One of the key contributions of *The Lusaka Years* is that it problematizes the notion of exile, which has tended to be treated as 'an abstract and timeless space' (p. 8) in much of the literature on the liberation struggle. By locating the story of the ANC in exile in the Zambian context, Macmillan shows that there was no single culture of exile but rather a multiplicity of experiences that need to be understood as specific to both time and place. More situated studies of this kind are needed if we are to understand this period in the history of the ANC in all of its complexity and its present significance.

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IRINA FILATOVA and APOLLON DAVIDSON, *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet era*. Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers (pb £21.50 – 978 1 86842 499 3). 2013, 568 pp.

Every year, dozens of books on the history of South Africa are published worldwide. Many of them are concerned with foreign influence on the origins and development of the country's state structure, politics and culture. Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Portugal and China immediately come to mind. Yet few people know what a huge role one other country – the Soviet Union – played in the events that make up the history of South Africa in the twentieth century. Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson's book *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet era* opens hitherto unknown pages documenting the relations between South Africa and Soviet Russia and offers the reader a fresh look at the recent history of these countries.

Filatova and Davidson have studied the history of South Africa for many years and have produced many books on this subject both in Russian and in English. Among these are the two-volume *South Africa and the Communist International: a documentary history*, and two recently published books in Russian: *Russia and South Africa: three centuries of contacts* (2010) and *Russia and South Africa: building bridges* (2012). Their most recent book is a unique study of the history of ties between South Africa and Russia. It starts in the seventeenth century, with the first mention of 'Moscovy' in the journal of Jan van Riebeeck, the founder of the Cape Colony, and ends in the twenty-first century,