

Besprekingsartikel

Review Article

Anthony Butler, *The Idea of the ANC (A Jacana Pocket Book)*

Jacana, Auckland Park, 2012

139 pp

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Stephen Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990*

Jonathan Ball Publishers, Johannesburg, 2012

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Arianna Lissoni, Jon Soske, Natasha Erlank, Noor Nieftagodien and Omar Badsha (eds), *One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Liberation Histories Today*

Wits University Press and South African History Online, Johannesburg and Cape Town, 2012

396 pp

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The ANC's 100 Years: More Recent Work on its History

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In the year in which the African National Congress (ANC) celebrated its centenary I published a review article in this journal on recent work on the one hundred year history of the organisation.¹ That review was written in mid-2012 and the second half of that year saw several new publications on the history of the ANC. Like the previous review, this one is far from comprehensive. I do not include either the seminal volume, edited by Peter Limb, of essays and an anthology of articles from *Abantu Batho*, the newspaper closely allied to the ANC, which existed from 1912 to 1931;² or recent work on the background to the formation of the ANC itself, of which the single most important is unquestionably André Odendaal's *The*

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1. C. Saunders, "The ANC's 100 Years: Some Recent Work on its History in Historiographical Context", *Historia*, 57, 2, November 2012, pp 428–447. That article reviewed P. Limb, *The ANC's Early Years: Nation, Class and Place in South Africa Before 1940* (Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2010); S. Booyse, *The African National Congress and the Regeneration of Political Power: People, Party, Policy* (Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2011); K. Asmal and A. Hadland, with M. Levy, *Politics in My Blood: A Memoir* (Jacana, Auckland Park, 2011).
2. P. Limb (ed.), *The People's Paper: A Centenary History and Anthology of Abantu Batho* (Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2012).

*Founders: the Origins of the ANC and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa.*³ I am mainly concerned here with new work that challenges the triumphalist narrative that often emerged from within the ANC during the centenary year, and that throws up new questions relating to the ANC's one hundred year history.

One might have expected that the centenary year would see the publication of a major new history of the ANC over its entire one hundred years.⁴ The ANC itself planned the publication of a new general history, as well as a set of provincial histories, but in the event the only publication to emerge from the ANC, besides the glossy coffee-table book mentioned in the previous review,⁵ was a popular history from the Eastern Cape aimed at a general readership and mostly consisting merely of brief profiles of 81 individuals.⁶ The only new scholarly monograph published in the centenary year that ranged over the history of the ANC was the short and sketchy but very perceptive one by Anthony Butler, a professor of Political Studies at the University of Cape Town. Let us begin there.

The Idea of the ANC begins with the ANC's centenary celebrations in Bloemfontein on 8 January 2012, before asking the key question, to which there is no simple answer: how did the ANC survive over the century? Butler mentions its capacity to accommodate changes in its methods and goals; the ways in which it was "jolted into action" (p 4) by white oppression; and its capacity for strategic reflection. He also points out that the ANC "has been able to sustain and propagate a fairly coherent and consensual grand narrative – albeit one that is increasingly at odds with the interpretations produced by academic historians" (p 8), a narrative that tends to airbrush out of the story the movement's political rivals and to present the ANC "as a privileged instrument of historical destiny, as the only legitimate champion of the people's freedom and as the unique custodian of South Africa's hopes for the future" (p 14). Butler proceeds to analyse the ANC through a focus on three key aspects of its history. First he tackles the question of its agency, in situations in which salvation often "came from outside" (p 42). He suggests that the ANC might have died in the 1930s but for the new growth of the manufacturing industry, and might have died in the early 1970s had it not been for the revival of worker and trade union action.

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3. A. Odendaal, *The Founders: The Origins of the ANC and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa* (Jacana, Auckland Park, 2012).
 4. Note however the chapter on resistance politics by T. Lodge in R. Ross, A. Kalk Mager and B. Nasson (eds), *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, volume 2 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011), chapter 9.
 5. R. Schoeman and D. Swanepoel (eds.), *Unity in Diversity: 100 Years of ANC Leadership (1912–2012)* (BM Books, Johannesburg, 2012).
 6. *Umbutho Wesizwe: The African National Congress of the Eastern Cape*. The title means "Party for the Nation". It was launched in Port Elizabeth in January 2013: <http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/anc-escape-to-launch-history-book-1.1451388#UgzbXJlwcmM>. Its cover includes a photograph of the historian/activist Marian Lacey between photographs of Tambo and Mandela, presumably to illustrate the non-racial and gendered character of the movement. The text was assembled by Jeff Peires and Luvuyo Wotshela.

Secondly, he considers the ANC's search for unity, and how this relates to the fact that the organisation was so often riddled with factionalism. "Unity has sustained us in the past, and unity will be the key to the future", is how the editors of the volume on the ANC in the Eastern Cape end their historical introduction.⁷ Butler wisely cautions against thinking that present conflicts within the organisation "merely represent a continuation or resurgence of longstanding and familiar historical divisions" (p 5). Thirdly, Butler explores the ANC as a movement for "liberation", the meaning of which has, as he shows, always been contested. This theme in particular is one that deserves much fuller elaboration than Butler gives it in his "pocket history". Most will agree with him that "the real testing of ANC activists' commitment to liberal institutions will come only when the ruling party finally faces a genuine electoral challenge" (p 117). He is critical of what he detects as "a resurgence of interest" in the ANC in tradition and "authenticity" in recent years, and suggests that the liberation that the ANC has historically championed can only come through modernisation (pp 129–130). Butler's pithy book is a highly stimulating read and provides historians and others with much food for thought.

In contrast to Butler, Stephen Ellis, Desmond Tutu Professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, is only concerned in his substantial monograph with the three decades in which the ANC was in exile. A former journalist, who edited the newssheet *Africa Confidential*, he writes in a very clear and readable style. To pick out just one of his many striking phrases, he writes that the ANC "was remarkably successful in keeping the laundry door closed when it was washing its dirty underwear" (p 288). He often, however, employs a polemical thrust more appropriate for journalism than professional history-writing. In 1992, with a co-author, a South African Communist Party (SACP) and ANC member who used the pen-name Tsepo Sechaba (real name: Oyama Mabandla), Ellis published *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile*.⁸ This time, writing on his own, he has produced a substantially revised and extended version of that book, and one that is much better referenced. Though he says he has corrected errors in the earlier book (p 311), he does not tell us what they were. He acknowledges that "the story of the ANC in government since 1994" – he is clearly very disillusioned with the trajectory taken by the ANC since it came into office – has led him to ask new questions of its past (p 306). His highly critical

7. J. Peires and L. Wotschela, "Historical Introduction", *Umbutho Wesizwe*, p xxiv.

8. S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (James Currey and David Philip, London and Cape Town, 1992). Mabandla went on to become a lawyer and director of companies. Jeremy Cronin criticised *Comrades* for suggesting a communist conspiracy: J. Cronin, "What Happened in Exile?", *Work in Progress*, 81, 1992, p 36. Compare also G. Strachan, "Indecent Obsession", *African Communist*, 129, 1992, pp 47–49.

account of the ANC in exile is also a reaction against the triumphalism in so much of the literature emanating from within the ANC itself, and to what he calls the ANC's own "dogmatic and highly ideological reading of history" (p 308). In the "Note on Method" with which he concludes his book, he returns to his rejection of the emphasis the ANC often places on the armed struggle, and of the view that Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) played the major role in bringing about the end of apartheid.

Though we are now in a very different historical context, twenty years after the publication of *Comrades, External Mission* makes the same overall argument as that book: that in its years of exile the ANC came under the effective control of the SACP, and that this had a profound and negative effect on the ANC. The SACP not only, according to Ellis, initiated the turn to the armed struggle in 1960, but SACP influence, especially after the Morogoro conference in 1969 and the establishment of the ANC's Revolutionary Council, was decisive, he claims, in emphasising and promoting the idea of revolutionary military struggle. The SACP's Stalinist attitudes, Ellis argues, suppressed internal debate in the ANC and helped create a culture of fear and intolerance. In particular, Ellis blames the brutalities inflicted on cadres in the MK camps in Angola, which provoked the 1984 mutiny there, on the SACP's domination of the movement.⁹

The argument that the ANC was effectively controlled by the SACP was of course made by the apartheid government, especially in the 1980s (Ellis gives some examples of this on p 219), and it was an argument that those concerned to see apartheid defeated naturally rejected. Now, more than twenty years after the end of the Cold War, the question of the relationship between the ANC and the SACP unfortunately seems still to be a question that is difficult to consider without at least a trace of Cold War ideology still muddying the waters.¹⁰ Part of the problem is that much of this history remains murky, with people operating in conditions that did not permit openness. The publishers of Ellis's book have made the exaggerated claim that it "aims for the first time to provide a full account of the ANC's years in exile, penetrating the secrecy that the organisation erected around

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9. Compare S. Ellis, "Politics and Crime: Reviewing the ANC's Exile History", *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 3, September 2012, pp 622–636. This was one of the papers delivered at a Stellenbosch University colloquium on the history of the ANC held in October 2011. Chris Hani claimed that he and others in the SACP had been critical of the excesses in the ANC camps in exile: H. Marais, "Hani Opens Up", *Work in Progress*, 82, 1992. See also the review of *External Mission* by Anthony Butler, *Business Day*, 9 November 2012, and, on what happened in the ANC camps, P. Trewhela, *Inside Quattro: Uncovering the Exile History of the ANC and SWAPO* (Jacana, Auckland Park, 2009).
10. For a recent extreme view of the alleged takeover of the ANC by the SACP, see the anecdotal book by G. Ludi with the extraordinary title: *The Communistisation of the ANC* (Galago, Alberton, 2011). While a student at Wits University Ludi became friendly with a communist, Lionel Morrison, then offered his services to the South African Police immediately after Sharpeville, and became a double agent, rising to be a leader in the SACP on the Witwatersrand until he gave evidence for the state in the trial of Bram Fischer.

itself and testing the myths that emerged from that period".¹¹ While *External Mission* presents much new information, it does not provide anything like a full account of the ANC's years in exile. Focusing mainly on the ANC in Tanzania, Zambia and Angola, Ellis emphasises corruption and excesses of power and the use of repressive methods imported, he claims, largely from the Stasi of the German Democratic Republic. But his argument is, in my view, overstated.

For one thing, the ANC's historic liberalism, rooted primarily in Christianity, was by no means entirely suppressed by the Stalinism of the SACP: religious life continued in exile and the ANC did adopt what were essentially liberal Constitutional Guidelines in 1988.¹² Memoirs by leading SACP figures are admittedly usually self-justificatory and biographies are often insufficiently critical, but both reveal extensive debate in the movement in exile, suggesting that Ellis's emphasis on pressures to toe the party line is overdrawn.¹³ Given the context of the liberation struggle then being waged, it is not surprising that the ANC wished to try to sweep under the carpet both the factionalism that existed in its ranks and the ways it dealt with dissent. The relationship between the ANC and the SACP was undoubtedly extremely close, with overlapping membership of the two organisations, but they retained separate identities. The SACP had indeed a great influence on the ANC, but the ANC, which sought to ensure that "it remained independent as a nationalist movement",¹⁴ also influenced the SACP. This is the view of the historian who has now produced the first major account of the SACP in exile and after.¹⁵ While the SACP provided the ANC with links to the Soviet Union and other countries in the Soviet bloc, and revolutionary theory, that theory held that the SACP should, as the ANC's Strategy and Tactics document stated, work for "the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group – the African people".¹⁶ So, while the SACP's ultimate goal was a socialist South Africa, its immediate one was the same as that of the ANC in these decades. If the SACP affected the ANC as deeply as Ellis claims that it did in the years of exile, one may well ask why the SACP has, to quote Ellis, "had little influence within the alliance for the last two decades" (p 299).

Moreover, if one shifts focus to the role of the ANC in exile outside Africa, a very different picture from the one Ellis paints emerges, one of

11. See the publisher's notice advertising the launch of *External Mission* in 2012.

12. For the 1989 version of these, see <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=294>.

13. Compare, for example, R. Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: From Undercover Struggle to Freedom* (updated edition, Jacana, Auckland Park, 2013) and A. Wieder, *Ruth First and Joe Slovo in the War against Apartheid* (Jacana, Auckland Park, 2013).

14. E. Maloka, *The South African Communist Party: Exile and after Apartheid* (Jacana, Auckland Park, 2013), p 175.

15. Maloka, *South African Communist Party*, p 175.

16. *Strategy and Tactics of the African National Congress* (n.p., 1969), adopted at the Morogoro conference. Available at:
http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_display&recordID=boo1969000.026.021.000.

diplomatic success and an increasingly high international profile. As has now been well-documented,¹⁷ the external mission that Oliver Tambo set up won large-scale recognition and support. As the Cold War began to wind down in the late 1980s and the ANC began to be recognised as a potential government-in-waiting, it had more offices in more countries than the South African government had embassies. No-one who has seen Connie Field's seven-part documentary series, "Have you Heard from Johannesburg", can doubt the role of Tambo and others in the ANC in promoting the growth of the global anti-apartheid movement, which was overwhelmingly sympathetic to the ANC. While it seems that Ellis accepts that the ANC's success in helping to isolate the apartheid regime was more important than its armed struggle in bringing about an end to apartheid – at one point he admits that the international arena was the one in which the ANC was "most effective" (p 287) – he does not elaborate the point at all. Not only is the diplomacy of Tambo and others virtually ignored, but Tambo is presented in caricatured terms as "the perfect frontman", who "could generally be relied upon to deliver whatever speech was put in front of him by his aides" (p 219). In a more nuanced account, Luli Callinicos, the biographer of Tambo, has examined his dilemmas in the early 1980s and the ways in which he sought to reconcile his commitment to human rights with the need to deal with the situation in the MK camps in Angola.¹⁸

Though Ellis tries to make much of the significance of Nelson Mandela's membership of the SACP, and towards the end of his book writes of how Mandela decided to "throw in his lot" with the SACP (p 279) and of his "double-speak and evasions" (p 280), he earlier concedes that Mandela's membership was not only brief but was "motivated by pragmatism rather than ideological commitment" (pp 33–34). While Ellis has added to our knowledge by finding new material, relating in particular to the ANC's Department of Security and Intelligence (known in the ANC as NAT and to its victims in Angola as Mbokodo, the grinding stone),¹⁹ he has not adequately taken into account evidence that runs counter to his overall argument. While we need to move from myth to critical history, that history should be balanced, and Ellis's account over-emphasises the negative aspects of the ANC in exile. While it is important to recover evidence of the brutality and ruthlessness the ANC displayed in Angola, for example, that is by no means the whole story: other aspects of exile life are vividly portrayed, for example, in the memoirs by Ronnie Kasrils and Barry Gilder.²⁰ While

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- 17. S. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation: The Foreign Relations of the ANC since 1960* (Tauris, London, 1996); South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 3, International Solidarity*, parts 1 and 2 (Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2008).
 - 18. L. Callinicos, "Oliver Tambo and the Dilemma of the Camp Mutinees in Angola in the Eighties", *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 3, September 2012, pp 587–621.
 - 19. *External Mission*, chapter 5. Strangely, Mbokodo does not appear in the book's index.
 - 20. Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous*; and B. Gilder, *Songs and Secrets: South Africa from Liberation to Governance* (Jacana, Auckland Park, 2012).

Kasrils and Gilder at times undoubtedly put a romantic gloss on their experiences, such accounts should not be ignored but used critically.

A conference on “One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Liberation Histories and Democracy Today”, held in September 2011 at the University of the Witwatersrand, has given rise to the volume edited by Arianna Lissoni and others. As the volume consists mostly of revised versions of papers presented at that conference, it is not surprising to find that it is a highly disparate collection. It ranges from a biographical sketch of the little-known Charlotte Maxeke, who is called “one of the most misunderstood figures in South African nationalist narratives about the struggle for liberation” (p 97),²¹ to chapters on the idea of “decent work” in the political discourse of the ANC and on the language used at the funeral of Chief Albert Luthuli in 1967.²²

The single most important chapter in raising new general questions is the keynote address by Philip Bonner, who is concerned with the ANC’s history to 1960. Exploring what held the ANC together, given that it was often eclipsed by rivals (in the 1920s by the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union; in the 1930s by the All African Convention), and why the ANC was so riven by factionalism, he finds the answers mainly to lie in patronage and in the ability of the ANC to draw upon its long history of struggle. He also points out how the ANC’s cohesion was aided by the repressive measures often adopted by the state, even if there were times when other groups and organisations made the running in opposing these measures. He stresses the importance of the ANC’s re-establishment of central control over its provincial congresses in the 1950s, and of the role of the Communist Party of South Africa in entrenching multi-racialism in the ANC, even if what became known as non-racialism was to be contested in exile and remains, he says, deeply ambiguous “among ordinary South Africans” (p 11).

The sub-title of *One Hundred Years of the ANC* suggests that the volume will focus on debating “liberation histories” so readers may be disappointed not to find more on those debates and their significance in the various chapters, other than the introductory one by three of the editors. Jon Soske, Arianna Lissoni and Natasha Erlank stress “the significant discontinuities and ruptures” that mark the ANC’s long history (p 30) and the wide diversity of approaches now to be found in scholarship on the ANC. What they do not do is to contrast the scholarly work done on the history of the ANC with popular versions of its history, or explore whether there is now

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21. The first biography of Maxeke is promised by Zubeida Jaffer.
22. T. April, “Charlotte Maxeke: A Celebrated and Neglected Figure in History”; F. Barchiesi, “Imagining the Patriotic Worker: The Idea of ‘Decent Work’ in the ANC’s Political Discourse”; and L. Gunner, “The Politics of Language and Chief Albert Luthuli’s Funeral, 30 July 1967”, in Lissoni et al. (eds), *One Hundred Years*, chapters 4, 5 and 8. I examine other aspects of this book in a review of it in the *South African Historical Journal*, forthcoming.

greater divergence between the two than ever. Popular accounts are often over-simplistic and tend to fit in with the nationalist, positive view of the ANC presented by politicians or in newspaper articles, a nationalist view rarely advanced seriously any more in book form. There are signs of a coming together of at least the semi-popular and the more scholarly, as seen for example in the Jacana Pocket History series, which is presumably aimed at a fairly general readership yet retains the critical approach of more significant scholarly work.

While some may regard the very diversity of *One Hundred Years of the ANC* as one of its merits, in that it illustrates the fact that no single, unifying narrative can do the ANC's long history justice, others will still look for synthesis. This remains very challenging, especially given that the ANC's history is a large mosaic of so many different parts. For most of its first four decades, after all, it was a small movement, with very limited resources, engaged in very modest protest, though with a radical thrust within it from time to time. Peter Limb has done more than anyone to show, from detailed archival research, how ambiguous and nuanced it was in those years.²³ Then followed a decade, the 1950s, in which the ANC became more of a mass movement, one that attempted, with limited success, to use civil disobedience. After it adopted the armed struggle, the ANC was for three decades headquartered in exile and able to operate in South Africa only as an underground movement. Then there was a short but tumultuous period of less than half a decade in which it emerged from exile and became a political party in the years leading to the first democratic election. How then are we to take so complicated a history forward?

It is important to notice that alongside the publications reviewed above, 2012 also saw the publication of a large special issue of the *South African Historical Journal*, on "The ANC at 100".²⁴ Like the *One Hundred Years* volume, this too was very diverse and in places only peripherally focused on the ANC as an organisation.²⁵ Its articles, which range over such topics as Luthuli's stance on violence and the relationship between the ANC and the development of HIV/AIDS, include a number that challenge aspects of Ellis's interpretation of the ANC in exile and suggest a more "messy and heavily contingent" picture than the one he paints, to quote Paul Landau in his detailed discussion of the "turn to violence" in the early 1960s.²⁶ It must

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23. Limb, *The ANC's Early Years*. See especially the very perceptive review by R. Southall, *H-S Africa*, July 2013: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=36461>
 24. *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 3, September 2012, Special Issue: "The ANC at 100."
 25. For example, the chapter by Norman Etherington concerns "Religion and Resistance in Natal" before the ANC was born; the chapter by Crain Soudien on "Robben Island University Revisited" is not focused primarily on the ANC political prisoners on the Island; Lissoni et al. (eds), *One Hundred Years*, chapters 2 and 9.
 26. P.S. Landau, "The ANC, MK and 'The Turn to Violence' (1960–1962)", *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 3, September 2012, p 562. See the articles by Luli

also not be forgotten that for the period from 1960 the most substantial work on the ANC is now to be found in the large volumes of the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) on *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, though in scattered form, for those volumes do not focus exclusively on the ANC and many of their chapters have a regional or other topical focus.²⁷ One of the fullest studies of how the ANC moved into office and of what it has done since becoming the governing party, is now to be found in the pages of Southall's *Liberation Movements in Power*, but the way his book is organised, by topics rather than by countries, means that only when he comes to the presidency of Jacob Zuma does he devote a chapter exclusively to the ANC.²⁸ It will be for others to build on his work and discuss the history of the ANC in power in the context of its previous history of more than eight decades.

Along with the chapters in the SADET volumes, the article in the special issue of the *South African Historical Journal* by Andrew Manson and Bernard Mbenga that examines the ANC in the Western Transvaal/Northern Cape Platteland over more than five decades shows the kind of detailed regional approach that will help fill out our knowledge of the ANC over time. We also need much more work on the ANC in relation to other liberation movements. Roger Southall has recently compared the ANC with SWAPO and ZANU-PF as liberation movements that have come to power, but he does not bring out the connections between the movements during the various liberation struggles in the region.²⁹ The story of what happened in the ANC camps in Angola cannot be isolated from that of the SWAPO camps in the same country, yet no-one has examined the connections.³⁰ The various ways in which the different liberation movements interacted with each other in exile are only now beginning to be explored.³¹ There is much more work to be done on the links between the "external mission" and the

Callinicos, cited above; by Ellis himself, also cited above; those by Scott Couper and Carla Tsampiras, and the Introduction by Thula Simpson. See also H. Macmillan, "The African National Congress of South Africa in Zambia: The Culture of Exile and the Changing Relationship with Home, 1964–90", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 2, 2009, pp 303–331; H. Macmillan, "Shishita: A Crisis in the ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1980–1981", in Lissoni et al (eds), *One Hundred Years*, chapter 10. Macmillan's major monograph on the ANC in Zambia is to be published by Jacana in late 2013.

27. Volumes 5, *African Solidarity*, part 1 (part 2 is forthcoming) and 6 (on 1990–1996, in two parts) in SADET's *Road to Democracy* series were launched at the University of South Africa in Pretoria/Tshwane in April 2013.
28. Southall, *Liberation Movements*, chapter 11: "Reaching the Limits? The ANC under Jacob Zuma".
29. R. Southall, *Liberation Movements in Power: Party and State in Southern Africa* (James Curry and University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Woodbridge and Pietermaritzburg, 2013). Compare also C. Clapham, *From Liberation Movement to Government: Past Legacies and the Challenge of Transition in Africa* (Brenthurst Foundation, Johannesburg, 2012).
30. Though Trewhela's *Inside Quatro* is concerned with both the ANC in exile and SWAPO, it does not treat the links between the two organisations in any depth.
31. H. Sapire and C. Saunders (eds), *Southern African Liberation Struggles: New Local, Regional and Global Perspectives* (UCT Press, Cape Town, 2013) points in this direction.

underground in South Africa, links that Ellis, following others, only touches upon.³² Soske, Lissoni and Erlank in *One Hundred Years* call for more work on gender in the history of the ANC and more on the meaning of non-racialism and how it has been interpreted differently over time.³³ In my view, there is also scope for a history of the ANC that will show in detail how, in turn, younger generations took on their elders and then themselves became the veterans of the movement. There is, in short, much more to do. Future reviews of new work on the history of the ANC will doubtless discuss yet other new approaches and perspectives.

Abstract

Last year was the centenary of the ANC; next year will mark twenty years since it came into office as the majority party in the Government of National Unity. Today much criticism of the ANC in government explains its failures by referring to its retention of an identity as a “liberation movement” and its inability to shed its struggle mindset. This makes it all the more important to know what the ANC did in the struggle and how attitudes dating from that struggle may still be current, such as the belief in the rightness of the cause, which usually means condemning those who did not work with it in the struggle, and in the responsibility of the “movement” to continue to exercise power, in order to pursue the goals of the struggle. This article considers three important contributions to the history of the ANC that appeared in the centenary years and places them in the context of other recent writing on the ANC.

Keywords: African National Congress; exile; historiography; liberation; South African Communist Party.

Opsomming

Verlede jaar was die eeufees-herdenking van die ANC en volgende jaar sal dit twintig jaar wees sedert die organisasie as die meerderheidsparty in die Regering van Nasionale Eenheid aan bewind gekom het. Huidiglik word baie kritiek op die ANC in regering gehoop deur na die mislukkings te verwys en die te koppel aan die behoud van 'n "bevrydingsbeweging" identiteit en die onvermoë om die struggle mind-set af te skud. Dit maak dit des te meer belangrik om te weet wat die ANC in die struggle gedoen het en hoe ingesteldhede wat uit die tyd dateer nog steeds water hou, soos die geloof in die regverdigheid van die saak, wat gewoonlik beteken dat die diegene wat nie deel van die struggle was nie veroordeel word en die voortgesette verantwoordelikheid van die ANC om mag uit te oefen in die nastrewse van die doelwitte van die struggle. Hierdie artikel oorweeg drie belangrike bydraes tot die geskiedenis van die ANC wat tydens die

32. Ellis does not do much more than admit, for example, that the United Democratic Front did not take detailed directions from the ANC; see *External Mission*, p 291.

33. J. Soske, A. Lissoni and N. Erlank, “One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Struggle History After Apartheid”, in Lissoni et al (eds), *One Hundred Years*, chapter 1.

Review essay / Besprekingsartikel

eeufeesjaar verskyn het en plaas dit in die konteks van ander onlangse werke oor die organisasie.

Sleutelwoorde: African National Congress; ballingskap; geskiedskrywing; bevryding; Suid-Afrikaanse Kommunistiese Party.