A strength of this book is Coghe's ability to discuss 'the population problem' and its interpretation and circulation in the round. Having described anxieties about fertility and mortality, in Chapter Six he turns to migration. In a fascinating analysis of provincial reports and correspondence, Coghe builds on a core theme of the book considering Angola as an embattled colony, prone to negative comparison and subversion by neighbouring colonial powers. Anxiety about porous borders leaking workers to neighbouring territories where taxes were lower and jobs were available, led to a series of initiatives in border regions. Officials sought to capture migration flows statistically and to incentivise against them through favourable tax schemes compared with neighbouring countries and by encouraging the establishment of mission stations, which offered educational and medical opportunities to compete with mission communities across the borders. Coghe describes the tensions between provincial officials and the central colonial ministry over migration, and — following another core theme of the book — shows how demographic information was collected, managed, and transformed to suit different agendas.

In his Epilogue, Coghe describes the shift in global population discourse about Africa from a fear of underpopulation in the interwar period, to growing concerns about rapid population growth and its proposed negative consequences for development post-1945. He shows how Angola largely sidestepped this wider 'discursive reversal' (250) right through to independence in 1975, due to the country's continuing relatively high mortality, low population density, demand for labour, and good soil productivity. Meanwhile, ongoing Portuguese pronatalism restricted the influence of population experts and international family planning agencies throughout this period, potentially — as Coghe concludes — with a lasting legacy for Angola's high fertility rate today.

This is a carefully researched monograph, with meticulous detail on how population knowledge and policies are constructed. It reveals important themes and processes in Angolan history and colonial historiography, while also carrying lessons for today when global population anxieties are again on the rise. Coghe shows that such anxieties — and the data on which they are based — need to be analysed to reveal their racialised, gendered, and political underpinnings before policies can be enacted to truly enhance human and planetary health.

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South Africa's Revolutionary Era

Spear: Mandela and the Revolutionaries

By Paul S. Landau. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2022. Pp. 372. $80.00, hardcover (ISBN: 9780821424704); $36.95, paperback (ISBN: 9780821424797); ebook (ISBN: 97808214476970).

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Spear is a fine-grained reconstruction and revision of South Africa's revolutionary moment, a period starting in 1960, when '[m]uch seemed possible' (12), and ending with the 'catastrophe' (263) of the

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Rivonia raid and trial in 1963–4. It is the fruit of twelve years of labour by the author, Paul Landau, who has consulted over 200 oral history interviews and other documentary sources in archives across South Africa, the UK, the US, and Germany, to name the most important. Landau's account places Nelson Mandela at the centre of the creation of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and the dramatic shifts taking place during this brief yet intense historical moment — known as the turn to violence, or, as some prefer to call it, the turn to armed struggle.

The book opens with the 'crisis' of March 1960, when in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre, the leaders of the liberation movement had to decide 'if they would persist in a kind of civil rights movement' (38) or move towards revolution, and how to continue mobilising the masses under the new state of emergency conditions. 'The activists chose their path: they would lead the masses into an insurgency against the state' (39). The narrative then steps back to the years from the Second World War, which saw the African National Congress (ANC) drawing closer to the Communist Party, the Africanists' breakaway into the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and Mandela's ascent to leadership — with the concomitant breakup of his first marriage and family life propelling him into 'a revolutionary framework that entailed other forms of closeness' (55). One of the themes Landau weaves into the book is the intertwining of the personal and the political in the lives of Mandela and his comrades.

Landau argues that 'most likely Mandela followed Sisulu and other colleagues into the Communist Party in 1955 as full members' (54), thus hoping to close a longstanding controversy about Mandela's party membership. Like Stephen Ellis's, his claims are based on an interview with John Pule Motshabi and other evidence presented in appendix B. Yet, as Tom Lodge notes, this evidence remains 'not quite definite' or 'corroborative', and the extent of Mandela's South African Communist Party (SACP) membership continues to depend on the reading of it by different scholars.[1] Mandela was almost certainly co-opted onto the SACP Central Committee and attended some of its meetings in the period after Sharpeville, as illegality blurred the lines between the ANC and the SACP and because of Mandela's role as MK's commander, as Hugh Macmillan suggests.[2] But had Mandela indeed 'organised in the Communist Party' (11), it is difficult to explain how, on his return from his tour of Africa in mid-1962, he could argue to the ANC's national working committee that it should play down its links with — or to use Landau's even stronger term 'derogate' — the party. Repeatedly, Landau calls Mandela a 'Black Marxist' as part of building this argument of Mandela as a communist. But it seems that, even as he became a revolutionary, Mandela's politics and actions remain best understood as first and foremost those of an African nationalist.

The rest of the book unfolds chronologically, starting from the Sharpeville state of emergency when 'Mandela and Sisulu steered the Communist Party … towards the adoption of "armed struggle" at the end of' 1960 (70). While the apartheid regime argued the ANC was manipulated by a small group of white communists, an argument revived by ANC critics such as Ellis, Landau appears to be turning this on its head by suggesting that it was Mandela's group of Black revolutionaries, who in fact took control of the CC of the SACP as part of an 'African Nationalist momentum' that was facilitated by leading white communists (108). One of the important contributions of the book is that it seeks to centre the agency of Mandela and other African leaders in shaping the revolutionary turn of these years, but this appears to take place at the expense of one of MK's early and pioneering characteristics: its non-racial membership, from the high command down to individual operatives (even if units often operated according to apartheid sociospatial categories to increase their chances of survival).

There is some confusion here and over the remaining chapters around what is known as the South African United Front (SAUF). This little-known body refers to an external structure

[1] T. Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom: A History of the South African Communist Party, 1921–2021* (Auckland Park, 2021), 323.

[2] H. Macmillan, 'Book review of Stephen Ellis, *External Mission: the ANC in exile, 1960–1990*', *Africa*, 85:1 (2015), 155–6.

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which lasted from June 1960 to March 1962 and included the ANC, the PAC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC, which Landau omits), and Namibia's SWANU and SWAPO. Tambo could not have been instructed by the ANC executive to form a front with the SACP and the PAC in exile, as Landau writes (39). The SAUF was something that developed out of the international context and specifically pressures from Ghana and other independent African states. The SACP, on the other hand, was never part of the SAUF — although Dr Yusuf Dadoo, the SAIC president and representative, was of course also a leading member of the party. Confusingly, the term United Front and the acronym are also used in the book to discuss attempts at unity that were taking place inside South Africa, which ended when the PAC pulled out of the All In African Conference of March 1961.

Landau argues that coercive picketing adopted during the May 1961 3-day strike signalled a change in tactics that allowed Mandela to 'close a chapter' on nonviolent struggle (82–3), out of which MK was born. The name Umkhonto we Sizwe, similarly to Mandela's later appearance in court in traditional *kaross*, implied 'recognition as indigenous and African, a refusal to translate' (101). According to Landau, Mandela tried but failed to persuade ANC President Chief Albert Lutuli that the ANC should spearhead the adoption of violent methods, but in the end was given 'permission to operate around the ANC' through '[a]greement that the ANC did not have to "agree"' (94). A military high command, based in Johannesburg, was set up with direct lines of command that initially bypassed those of the M-Plan, the clandestine zonal system implemented after the ANC's banning. This separation of ANC and MK structures may have been more theoretical than an actual reflection of the situation on the ground where, as Raymond Suttner argues, there was de facto overlap between the two.[3] Here, as in other passages of the book, Landau is not explicit about his main insights vis-à-vis other interpretations of this moment. The setting up of MK as a small, hierarchical, and highly secret group produced a disconnect from the masses, and particularly the youth, which partly foreshadowed the attempted revolution's failure.

The chronology pauses to look at Mandela's 'bookshelf' in a chapter which analyses the texts on revolutionary warfare that Mandela read and studied at this particular moment in time (c. 1961), ranging from Clausewitz, to Che Guevara, the experiences of the Cuban revolution, the Zionist Irgun in Palestine — from which apparently Mandela adopted the concept of the 'high command' (116), the Philippines, and China. '[C]onspicuously missing from Mandela's notes and bookshelves as from SACP leaders' pens', Landau observes, 'is evidence of a vital connection with Black American civil rights movement, or an evolving Black Atlantic' (123).

The explosions of December 1961, which formally announced MK's formation, failed to translate into mass support and, according to Landau, 'the routinization of violence in South Africa dampened the reception of MK' (150). The first group of recruits to receive military training abroad had travelled to China in late 1961, and in early January 1962 Mandela left South Africa to organise additional training for MK, including his own. One of the lessons learnt from the Algerian FLN, with whom Mandela stayed in Morocco, was about the primacy of political effect in the use of military action (166), although Landau does not openly engage the work of Allison Drew on the influences of the Algerian war of independence for the launch of the armed struggle in South Africa.[4] Mandela's instructors in Ethiopia, where he received his second brief training, had in turn been recently trained in Israel with the Mossad. It was at this point that Landau argues Mandela's membership of the SACP became 'superfluous' (170), and that the party's 'denigration' started, in the light of the support for the PAC that Mandela encountered during his travels in the continent.

[3]R. Suttner, 'The African National Congress (ANC) underground: from the M-plan to Rivonia', *South African Historical Journal*, 49:1 (2003), 144.

[4]A. Drew, 'Visions of liberation: the Algerian war of independence and its South African reverberations', *Review of African Political Economy,* 42:143 (2015), 22–43.

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MK continued after Mandela's arrest in August 1962, with the ANC eventually embracing it at the Lobatse conference in October, where plans were made to boost recruitment into MK by tapping into the M-Plan membership (197–8). Outside Cape Town, a group of volunteers were taken to Mamre on 'the first serious camp for training future guerrillas as opposed to saboteurs' (201), whose contested meanings have been examined by Stephen Davis, but not compared to this version.[5] MK recruits started to be sent abroad to receive military training — known as the *thutu* or the learning (225). In an interesting note about the linguistics of such concepts, Landau observes the difference between being able to fight, or *go lwa* in Sotho languages, and being schooled in 'armed struggle', a term that was not translated into African languages, as if the concept itself was foreign and needed mastering. As articulated in Operation Mayibuye, trained guerrillas were to be infiltrated back to spark a general uprising (drawing on the Cuban model). For Landau, the essence of this 'aspirational' strategic document 'sprang directly from Mandela's leadership' (238). It was this key document, confiscated by the police during the raid on Liliesleaf farm in July 1963, which led to the catastrophe of the 'revolution displaced'.

The concluding chapter's bleak and generalising remarks about the period after 1964 largely ignore some of the later developments — notably the reinvigoration of the armed struggle after the Soweto uprising and the strategic turn to 'people's war' — and there are some unfortunate exaggerations, such as comparing the fate of MK recruits stationed at Kongwa with that of political prisoners on Robben Island (272). There are also many errors for a book where so much emphasis is placed on the detail. To note a few: white communists who fled South Africa in the aftermath of Rivonia are described as going 'back' or 'back home' to the UK — for example Rica and Jack Hodgson (284) and Hilda and Rusty Bernstein (270). While white activists may have been privileged (compared to their Black comrades) in their ability to access passports and other resources that allowed them to settle in the UK when they left South Africa, of these four only Hilda was born in London, the rest were all born in South Africa. The Bernsteins' travail at the time of Rivonia, Rusty's acquittal — and immediate rearrest — and their final escape by illegal crossing can hardly be described as 'now they headed back home together' to the UK (270).

Jack Simons is credited with contributing to the writing of a history curriculum for MK members in Kongwa (272), but it seems Landau is confusing this with Simons's later role in political education in MK camps in Angola, as the Simons did not settle in Zambia until 1967. Lusaka is denoted as the ANC's external mission headquarters from December 1964, when headquarters were officially in Tanzania, first in Dar es Salaam and, from 1965, in Morogoro (which is why the 1969 Morogoro conference was held there). Only from 1966 did the ANC begin to increase its presence in Zambia in preparation of the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns, and by the early 1970s Lusaka had become the unofficial headquarters. Although Dr Dadoo was a member of the Communist Party, he represented the Transvaal Indian Congress and not the party, as erroneously stated in the book (47), as one of the three signatories of the 1947 Doctors' Pact. Issues such as this may appear like small inaccuracies, but the effect is that the significance of the Indian nationalist struggle and of African-Indian cooperation for understanding the mass campaigns of the 1950s becomes lost.

Landau's use of interviews, while impressive in scope, is also at times problematic (and may in part be a consequence of the author's reliance on transcripts of interviews done by others), despite the words of caution in the Preface. Direct quotes from interviews are often incorporated into the text while it is not immediately clear whose words are being cited, or the context of the interview. In some places, what one may call gossip is adopted as argument. In explaining the decision for Dr Dadoo to leave the country, for example, Landau writes that this was because 'apparently Kotane felt Dadoo was temperamentally unsuited to the expected, coming escalations' (61). The reference for this odd statement, however, is not to Kotane, but to an interview with Ben Turok, who was later

[5] S. R. Davis, *The ANC's War against Apartheid: Umokhonto we Sizwe and the Liberation of South Africa* (Bloomington, IN, 2018), 26–57.

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expelled from the party when Dadoo was its chairman. This broader context is not mentioned, and there is no mention either that it had been a central committee decision that Dadoo should leave the country to mobilise international solidarity and consolidate the external structures of the party,[6] so Turok's snide remark is the only reason given as to why Dadoo was sent abroad.

These caveats aside, the book is a welcome addition to the scholarship on South Africa's revolutionary turn. The attempt to bring about a revolution in South Africa was ultimately defeated by the apartheid state's brutal repression, mass arrests, and imprisonments, including that of Mandela, or, for those who managed to escape, political exile, and apartheid was to remain in place for the next thirty years. While the strategic shift from nonviolence to armed insurrection is often blamed for the apartheid state's ensuing retaliation, Landau importantly reminds us that 'Mandela and his comrades could not see the future' but, in a Marxist sense, '[t]hey tried to make it' (292).

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The Party of the Century

Red Road to Freedom: A History of the South African Communist Party, 1921–2021

By Tom Lodge. Auckland Park: Jacana, 2021, and Suffolk: James Currey, 2022. Pp. 626. R380.00, Jacana paperback (ISBN: 9781431421342); £70, James Currey hardcover (ISBN: 9781847013217); £24.00, e-book (ISBN: 9781800105102).

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Since the ending of apartheid, a fair amount has been published on the previously hidden history of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA)/South African Communist Party (SACP). This work has tended to focus on specific (usually limited) periods or consisted of biographies and autobiographies of its leaders and more public personalities. Much of it has been published as journal articles. Until now, there has been no comprehensive overview of the party from its early beginnings until the present.[1] This has been a serious omission from South African historiography. Given

[6]See B. Bunting, *Moses Kotane: South African Revolutionary* (3rd edn, Belville, 1998), 262.

[1]See, for example, C. Bundy (ed.), *The History of the South African Communist Party* (Cape Town, 1991); L. Callinicos, 'The Communist Party during the war years: the beginnings of grass-roots politics', *South African Labour Bulletin*, 15:3 (1990), 101–7; L. Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow: The Life and Times of Fred and Sarah Carneson* (Cape Town, 2010); S. Clingman, *Bram Fischer: Afrikaner revolutionary* (Cape Town, 1998); A. Drew, 'Events were breaking above their heads: socialism in South Africa, 1921-1950', *Social Dynamics*, 17:1 (1991), 49–77; A. Drew, 'Writing South African communist history', *Science & Society*, 61:1 (1997), 107–13; A. Drew, *Discordant Comrades: identities and loyalties on the South African left* (Pretoria, 2002); D. Everatt, 'Alliance politics of a special type: the roots of the ANC/SACP alliance, 1950-1954', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18:1 (1991), 19–39; G. Frankel, *Rivonia's Children: Three Families and*

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