

# Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era - A Historic Relationship

In the annals of history, certain relationships between nations stand out for their complexity, impact, and influence on global affairs. One such relationship is that between Russia and South Africa during the Soviet era. This article delves into the multifaceted dynamics that defined their interactions and sheds light on the long-lasting consequences that continue to shape their present-day ties.

## The Historical Context

The Soviet era was marked by the dominance of communist ideologies across Eastern Europe, Asia, and parts of Africa. Russia, as the cornerstone of this ideology, played a crucial role in extending its influence globally. Among its many endeavors, fostering relationships with emerging nations in Africa was deemed crucial to spreading the Soviet model and increasing its sphere of influence.

## Shared Interests and Strategic Alignment

Russia and South Africa found common ground in their shared interests and strategic alignment during the Soviet era. Both nations sought to challenge the existing world order dominated by Western powers, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, and establish alternative systems that prioritized social equality and economic cooperation.

### **The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era** by Takeo Yoshikawa (Kindle Edition)

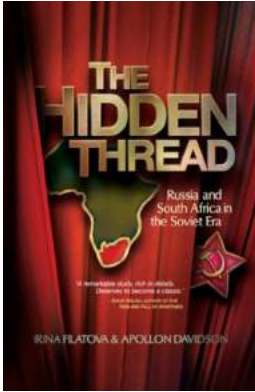
★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported



Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 568 pages



South Africa, often isolated by the international community due to its apartheid policies, sought allies that would support its struggle against racial discrimination. The Soviet Union, embracing anti-imperialist and anti-colonial ideologies, presented an attractive proposition to South Africa. The USSR offered financial, military, and diplomatic support to various African liberation movements, including the African National Congress (ANC), which played a pivotal role in combating apartheid.

## **Economic Cooperation**

The Soviet era was also characterized by substantial economic cooperation between Russia and South Africa. Trade partnerships were established, with Russia providing technological expertise and industrial aid to South Africa. This collaboration allowed both nations to bolster their economies and reduce their dependence on Western markets.

Moreover, Russia's support in building infrastructure projects and developing sectors such as mining and energy played a crucial role in South Africa's economic growth during that period. Joint ventures between Russian and South

African companies created employment opportunities and fostered technological advancement, further deepening their economic ties.

## **Military Collaboration**

The military aspect of the relationship between Russia and South Africa during the Soviet era cannot be understated. The Soviet Union supplied arms, training, and military advisors to South Africa, primarily to aid in its struggles against neighboring African countries supporting anti-apartheid movements. This support enabled South Africa to maintain its military dominance in the region and safeguard its strategic interests.

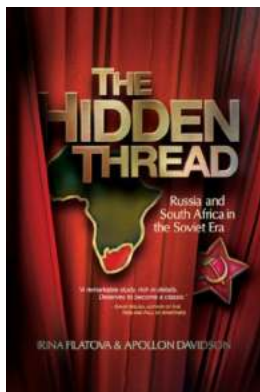
## **Legacy and Present-Day Relations**

The end of the Soviet era and the collapse of the USSR led to a significant transformation in global politics. Both Russia and South Africa underwent significant changes, with new political and economic paradigms taking hold. The collapse of apartheid in South Africa and the subsequent democratic transition fundamentally altered the country's strategic priorities and international alliances.

Present-day relations between Russia and South Africa, though still influenced by their shared history, have taken on new dimensions. While political ties remain intact, the economic cooperation has evolved, with both countries seeking opportunities beyond the confines of their previous ideological alignment. Trade and investment have become the bedrock of their contemporary relationship, with energy, mining, and technology sectors being key areas of focus.

The relationship between Russia and South Africa in the Soviet era was complex, multifaceted, and influenced by geopolitical considerations. Shared interests, strategic alignment, economic cooperation, and military collaboration defined their interactions during this period. Though the Soviet era has ended, the legacy of

their historic relationship can still be discerned in their present-day ties. Both countries continue to navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world, seeking new ways to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.



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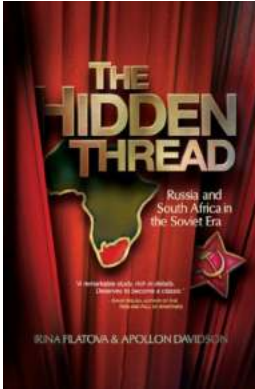
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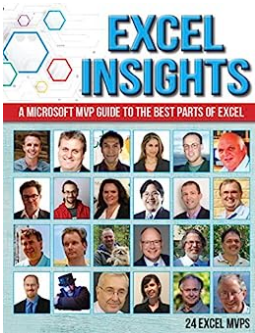
The Hidden Thread is a journey of revelation about the relationship between Soviet Russia and South Africa, hidden for most of its length. The story is told with insight and depth by Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson, who have had a decades long association researching and writing on Russian and South African politics and history. This insightful work follows the often surprising twists and turns of the history of South Africa's relationship with Russia and its people which started in the eighteenth century and is still very much alive today. The story evolves from the Russian volunteers who fought alongside the Boers in the Anglo-Boer War to South Africans who participated in the Russian revolution and civil war; from the Russian Jewish immigration to South Africa to the close involvement of the South African communists in the Communist International; from the Soviet consulates in South Africa and the activities of South Africa's Friends of the Soviet Union Society during the Second World War to the vicissitudes of the Cold War and the 'hot' war in Angola; from the SACP and

ANC's relations with the USSR to the volte-face of perestroika and South Africa's transition and to today's business, political, cultural and sometimes criminal connections between Russians and South Africans.



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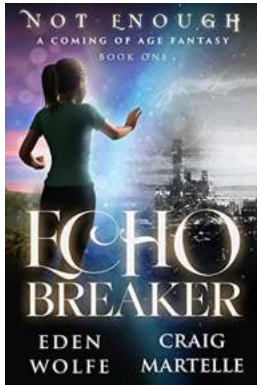
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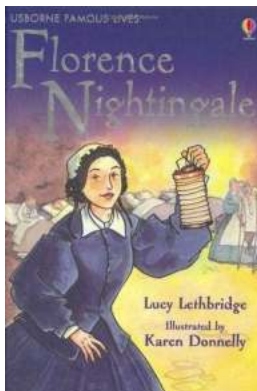
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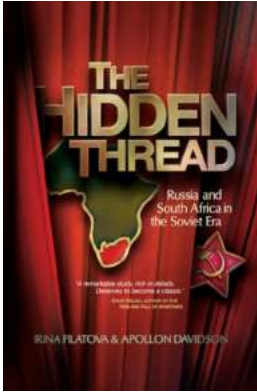
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