

The unique and the universal in South Africa's development: conventional, radical, and grassroots expectations in past and present

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I would like to start with a few methodological considerations around history writing and society.

What has history to do with expectations for the future? Quite a lot actually. Historical research gives current events and situations perspective. History writing is an important part of a nation-state's collective memory and the nature of historiography is essentially selective and ideological. History is not necessarily a product of the past, but often a product of the needs or requests of the present. Despite trends back to before the fourteenth century, the modern globalization process is actually still in a rather early phase, and even the researcher is often stuck in a tradition of nationalism or localism. The modern nation-state, nationalism and the discipline of history have had an intense, complex relationship.¹ During the nineteenth century, the great wave of European nationalism was accompanied by the rise of history as a professionalised discipline. New nation-states in nineteenth century Europe actively promoted historical research.²

Many of the same mechanisms, although less clear-cut, could be observed in the new decolonised nations in second half of the twentieth century. In the case of the rehabilitated South African state, discursive projects in nation building since 1994 have also been exercises in explaining different combinations of national history, class and race.³

Revealing the theories and interpretations of earlier periods not only gives insight into the society of that time. During segregation and apartheid, and also to some degree under the ongoing transformation process, historical research has been used extensively to seek solutions on problems of current prominence. Most of the great debates on South African history have had hidden agendas mirroring ardent problems of a later day than the ones historically described. The discussion on the frontier theory outlining the self-identification of the Boers on the isolated border, the early liberal formulation of protective segregation, the later liberal critique of dysfunctional elements in the apartheid policy, and the making of workers history by radical historians are illustrating examples of history used for ideological mobilisation.

In the following, I will try to describe different angles and views on the history of South Africa, partly because I think, it might be a good way to show at the same time, how the South African society has been functioning, and in what directions historians, other academic ideologists and policymakers have tried to change it.⁴

Even if many would consider this discussion rather outdated, it is in my opinion still the relationship between the liberal school and the radical school, which most clearly reflects some of the principal

¹ Smith, Anthony, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, University Press of New England, Hanover, Mass., 2000, pp. 28-51, 76-77.

² Tosh, John, *The Pursuit of History*, 2nd edition, Longman, London, 1991, pp. 3-4.

³ Bundy, Colin, "New Nation, New History? Constructing the past in post-apartheid South Africa", In Conference Book Publication: Hans Erik Stolten (ed.), *History-Making and Present Day Politics. The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, Forthcoming, NAI.

⁴ Also Stolten, Hans Erik, "History in the new South Africa: an introduction", in Conference Book Publication: Hans Erik Stolten (ed.), *History-Making and Present Day Politics. The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, Forthcoming, NAI.

social and political problems in South Africa. This debate is very often in the back of ones mind when debating the development of South Africa.

As a starting point, I have an understanding of the divergent historical schools in the South African context as being to some degree history-ideologies, more or less openly reflecting interests and political thinking of the contemporary society. The products of the historians therefore should be appraised with some regard to external influences from the surrounding community. And to follow the trends inside the profession of history is also to follow the most important tendencies in society.

The early history writing of South Africa moved from global imperialism to white nationalism.

The so-called race question has always divided historians in South Africa. The first English-language history writing was actually globalised in the sense that it contained both an official imperial-colonial world view, but also to some degree opposing stories representing anti-slavery views and universal human rights.⁵

Early South African nation building broke away from these conceptions. From late 19th century until the mid-1920s, George McCall Theal's work constituted the central professional historical research. The settler tradition that Theal fathered saw the black South Africans as a primitive, irritating and static element in the development of civilisation, and the national, romanticising work of Theal established several tenacious myths in the historiographical tradition.⁶ In reality, this interpretation of the South African past laid the conceptual foundations for later more or less declared racist histories and sustained the white nationalist ideology of Afrikanerdom.⁷

The liberal historians developed a concept of national unification through market co-operation.

From the 1920s, liberal history writing developed in South Africa as a reaction to the settler tradition. This new school, to some extent, refused Theal's exclusive way of taking white superiority for granted, and at least periodically, it was able to be openly critical to the racist order under continuous development in the country.⁸

The liberal point of view contains ideological implications with a universal message, apparently reaching across social layers, ethnic affiliation, nationality and culture, and this part of it was of course a somewhat frightening message for most white South Africans with their long tradition for formalised exclusivities and privileges. The liberal message, taken for its face value, was an invitation to take part in a long term historical unification process.

The leading personality in the modern liberal school, W.M. Macmillan from University of Witwatersrand, refused Theal's easy assumptions.⁹ Macmillan and his followers postulated that those segregational measures which had been practised in different forms since van Riebeeck's landing in 1652, never had functioned satisfactory and were doomed to disappear. According to their opinion: despite separation and exclusivity, there had actually all the time been a movement towards closer

⁵ Revd., Dr. John Philip, *Researches in South Africa: illustrating the civil, moral and religious condition of the native tribes...*, 2 vols, London, James Duncan, 1828; Livingstone, David, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, 1858; Noble, John, *South Africa Past and Present*, Cape Town, Juta, 1877.

⁶ Schreuder, D.M., "The Imperial Historian as Colonial Nationalist: George McCall Theal and the Making of South African History," From G. Martel (ed.), *Studies in Imperial History*, London, 1986.; Saunders, Christopher C., *The making of the South African past: major historians on race and class*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1988; Theal, G.M., *History of South Africa* (11 vol.), Sonnenschein, London, 1887 – 1919; Theal, George McCall, *Belangrijke historische dokumenten over Zuid-Afrika*, 1-3, Kaapstad, Van de Sant..., 1896-1911; Cory, Sir George E., *The Rise of South Africa*, vol. 1-5, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1910 – 1930.

⁷ Preller, Gustav Schoeman, *Andries Pretorius. Lewensbeskrywing van Voortrekker Kommandant-Generaal*, Johannesburg, Die Afrikanse pers, 1937. Analysed in Hofmeyr, Isabel, "Popularizing history: The case of Gustav Preller", *Journal of African History*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 521-35, Cambridge University Press, 1988; Cronje, G., *'n Tuiste vir die Nageslag - die Blywende Oplossing van Suid-afrika se Rassevraagstukke*, Johannesburg, Auspiciis Universitatis Pretorientis, 1945.

⁸ Saunders, Christopher, "Liberal Historiography Before 1945," in Butler/Elphick/Welsh (eds.), *Democratic Liberalism...*, Middletown, Conn., Wesleyan University Press, 1987.

⁹ Macmillan, W.M., *Bantu, Boer and Britton, The making of the South African native problem*, London, Faber and Gwyer, 1929.

interaction and co-operation between the population groups and towards a shared economic system both internationally and on the South African market place.¹⁰

However, with the passing of the Hertzog Bills in 1936-37, which restricted the remaining African parliamentary rights, the liberals saw the gap between their visions and the South African realities grow wider. Nevertheless, most of them seemed very confident and held on to their hopes from the following deterministic logic:

The growth of the manufacturing industry would create a need for skilled manpower. The limited size of the white workforce would necessitate training of a larger part of the black workers. The migrant labour system would not be able to fulfil this need, and a growing part of the Africans was bound to be permitted permanent settlement in the cities. They also had to be given better wages, some education, a certain level of social security and possibly even some political rights. The new manufacturing industry would blossom in an expanding domestic market and this would call for all South Africans to be integrated into the society, not just as manufacturers, but also as consumers.¹¹

Already in the mid-1930s, many liberals thought, that this line of development was under full realisation and that South Africa would work herself out of racism's obsolete patterns within a comparatively short space of time.¹²

It was Eric Walker, liberal history professor at the University of Cape Town, who from 1930 developed the general thesis on the socio-psychological reasons for the unfolding of race exclusivity and racialism in South Africa - an explanation partly contradicting market universalism.

According to his Turner-inspired frontier theory, those race prejudices, he saw as the cause of the segregation policy, should be found in that afrikaaner-mentality, which developed in the expanding frontier areas early in the 19th century.¹³ It was in these isolated areas, that the trekboers started a self-identification as whites; superior to the aboriginal population, and this enemy image was intensified during the Boer voortrekkers penetration of the interior. There was a powerful anti-Afrikaner tendency in this liberal explanation. The fact that racial prejudice was just as developed in English dominated Natal was ignored.

In this part of the liberal explanation, ideas and culture were in focus. Racial separation and segregation were seen as descended from security-needs against an old, but now groundless, fear. The segregation policy, aimed at administrative protection of white superiority in all areas of life, was explained as an antiquated mentality originated on the threatened border, later to be implemented by the new trekkers of the day – the poor white Afrikaners moving from land to cities in the beginning of the 20th century.

Therefore, according to these causal explanations, the English-speaking liberals had no responsibility for race discrimination and segregation. However, memory is short. As Martin Legassick and other radical historians have revealed, early “liberal” advocates, in favour of so-called protective segregation, were actually directly involved in policy making in the first part of the 20th century with the aim of promoting segregated capitalist growth, acting more as agents for “social control” than for substantial reforms.¹⁴

¹⁰ Macmillan, William M., *Complex South Africa. An Economic Footnote to History*, London, Faber and Faber, 1930; De Kiewiet, C.W., *A History of South Africa, Social and Economic*, Oxford University Press, London, 1941.

¹¹ Horwitz, Ralph, *Expand or Explode. Apartheids Threat to South African industry*, Cape Town, Business Bookman, 1957.

¹² Frankel, Sally Herbert, "The Position of the Native as a Factor in the Economic Welfare of the European Population in South Africa", *Journal of the Economic Society of South Africa*, 2/1, 1928.

¹³ Walker, Eric A., *The Frontier Tradition in South Africa*, (A lecture delivered before the University of Oxford at Rhodes House on 5th March 1930), London, Clarendon Press, 1930.

¹⁴ Legassick, Martin Chatfield, "The rise of modern South African liberalism, its assumptions and its social base", Seminar on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1973/74; Legassick, Martin, "The making of South African 'Native Policy' 1913-23: The origins of segregation", Institute of Commonwealth Studies postgraduate seminar, 5/2-1972, University of London, 1972; Legassick, Martin, "British hegemony and the origins of segregation, 1901-1914".

Up until Prime Minister Hertzog outlined his Native Bills in 1925, early liberal academics actually helped define the “native question” with the formulation of a reserve based territorial segregation and with delivering the conceptual arsenal of segregation.

The success of segregation as the ruling ideology in South Africa for many years before apartheid can be measured by the backing from most whites and even from many Africans.

It was only seen as an openly fraudulent legitimisation of white supremacy, after the growing belief in modern worldwide democracy had made it obsolete and this happened, also in western conservative and liberal circles, rather late and reluctant.¹⁵

The full meaning of Macmillan’s work as a modern historian on the left side of the liberal spectrum was not totally accepted by the liberal main stream of that time.

Actually, as the first, he pointed at the fundamental inner contradiction of segregation: the segregation ideology was brought to live to dam up the social conflicts made by the industrialisation process, but in reality the process of industrialisation automatically created an economic and labour market integration, which in the long run would render segregation impossible.

However, as history writing Macmillan’s vision also had its own problems. In my eyes the South African liberal way of thinking has contained a market determinism, which deliberately placed the political realisation of a predicted future on the agenda.

The liberals found the development perspectives of South Africa in global modernisation and colour blind industrialism.

In principle, main figures from the liberal school of historians rather early postulated, that race prejudice and race separation in itself were outdated and irrelevant and that they would be gradually weakened due to the global logic of modern economic rationality.

According to the liberal ideologist Herbert Blumer, capitalist market production would change the traditional society in several ways:

⇒ Many traditional, everyday life-expressions would be harmonised because production efficiency would need the active rational participation of the single producer.

⇒ Positions of status in productive life would be replaced by contracts or agreements. Positions gained through personal, tribe or family relations would be replaced by impersonal conditions of appointment. The employees would be transformed into anonymous units, with positions determined only by their contribution to the production process.

⇒ Financial mobility would be maximised together with a growing social mobility. Social climbing would in the future only be decided by personal initiative, individual skills and market situation.

In this way the modernisation process, first of all the industrialisation, would destroy “ties of blood and land” and replace it with a functional and universal new order.¹⁶

This now rather conventional view on the modernisation process as destroyer of the pre-industrial order could, according to Blumer, in the case of South Africa, be extended to an almost self-evident explanatory model for developments in race relations.

Seminar on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19/20 Centuries, University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1974; Dubow, Saul, “Liberalism and Segregation Revisited”, *Collected Seminar Papers*, No. 38, Series; Societies of Southern Africa... Vol. 15, ICS, London, pp. 1-13, 1990.

¹⁵ Jones, Rheinallt J.D., “The Need of a Scientific Basis for South African Native Policy”, *South African Journal of Science*, 23, 1926; Keppel-Jones, Arthur, *Friends or Foes?*, Pietermaritzburg, Shooter and Shooter, 1950; Horton, J.W., “South Africa’s Joint Councils: black-white cooperation between the two world wars”, *South African Historical Journal*, No. 4, 1972.

¹⁶ Blumer, H., “Industrialisation and Race Relations”, in Hunter, G. (ed.), *Industrialisation and Race Relations*, OUP, 1967; See also Greenberg, S., *Race and State in Capitalist Development*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1980.

Race discrimination in this view had its origins in a pre-industrial order, where contacts between people from different social or race groups were difficult. Due to entirely new group relations, race groupings would soon be seen as anachronistic and unimportant.

As we all know, the South African reality developed a little different. A distinct characteristic during the last 100 years and until very recently has been an increasingly extensive legislation after race lines, accompanied by growing social divisions, racial prejudgements and antagonisms. And still today, the importance of race remains.

One of the most dramatic liberal works from the 1960s was Michael O'Dowd's "The Stages of Economic Growth and the Future of South Africa".¹⁷ O'Dowd tried to prove that conditions for development in South Africa did not differ much from other late industrialised countries. His point of departure was Rostow's general phase-theory for political and economic development.¹⁸

The interesting in his interpretation is of course, the lucky perspective for the rest of the 20th century, it foresaw. Through comparative analyses, O'Dowd predicted in 1966 that South Africa around 1980 would have reached a stage, where government initiated reforms would bring democracy and neutralise discrimination. O'Dowd's thesis expressed a cornerstone in liberal development optimism. The free market was colour-blind and would liberate suppressed race groups, so that the close connection between race and class affiliation would be broken.

Even if it can be argued, that in the end history to some degree proved O'Dowd right, his unambiguous connection between economic growth and liberal reforms showed highly problematic. Throughout the 1960s, economic growth was very high indeed – and coupled with extreme suppression. Moreover, at the political level, the thesis in practice was used as a tool to pacify the freedom movements. Their activities were unnecessary, if just the market were allowed to do the job.

The liberal belief in the dysfunctionality of apartheid nevertheless embodied a dilemma.

Since the liberal South African historians agreed, that economic development reduces race barriers, the explanation of continued race discrimination had to be found outside the economic sphere.

So, the reasons were found in anti-liberal and restrictive state interference caused by harmful nationalist political decisions. An irrational ideology of exclusivity had been put at the throne as a result of the growing influences of the Afrikaner community and later by its total assumption of power. Political decisions were made by the Boers in unproductive contradiction to the needs of the new expanding industrial economy.¹⁹

The most obvious objection against the liberal argumentation is of course the fact, that South Africa, in spite of the rigid race policy measures, had a very satisfying growth rate most of last century, also during the relatively developed industrial period. After 1948, the apartheid government extended racial discrimination to all areas of society. But at least for the first two and a half decade, apartheid did not slow down growth at all! However, the realities of the moment did not deter the liberal history-ideologists and as times went by, it became clear that there were some truth in their beliefs.²⁰

Some tensions between cause and effect in the liberal understanding of South Africa history can be exposed though.

Despite, and partly contradictory to, the mentioned economic determinism, most liberals believed that the roots of South Africa's deviation from "normal" global evolution should not be found in the

¹⁷ O'Dowd, Michael, "South Africa in the light of the stages of economic growth" in Adrian Leftwich (ed.), *South African Economic Growth and Political Change*, Allison & Busby, London, 1974, pp. 29-43. Also in Schlemmer, Lawrence / Webster, Eddie, *Chance, Reform, and Economic Growth in South Africa*, Centre for Applied Social Sciences / Ravan Press, 1978.

¹⁸ Rostow, W.W., *The Stages of Economic Growth. A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Cambridge, CUP, 1960.

¹⁹ De Kiewiet, C.W., *The Anatomy of the South African Misery*, (The Whidden Lectures), OUP, 1956; Houghton, Hobart, D., "Apartheid Idealism versus Economic Reality" in Rhodie, N. (ed.), *South African Dialogue*, Johannesburg, McGraw-Hill, 1972; Also Houghton, Hobart D., *The South African economy*, London, Oxford University Press, 1976.

²⁰ Van den Berghe, P., *South Africa: a study in conflict*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1965; Hutt, W.H., *The economics of the colour bar*, London, A. Deutsch, 1964; Keppel-Jones, A.M., *South Africa: a short history*, London, Hutchinson, 1975.

economy, but in politics and mentality. The decisive conflict were localised to the misuse of state power by a perverted political culture and its responsible leaders. An explanation, whereby capital interest are freed for responsibility.²¹

Human social psychology has been a related area for basic explanations. For most liberal historians, the encounter between different ethnic groups has been the most important single factor in South African history. For them South African history is about race relations. There is lots of universality in this too. It is about interaction between race groups and different cultures.

It is the ideological, political and administrative order, which create conflicts, while causal explanations with departure in the economic basis are ignored from the point of view, that a growth progressive economy on the contrary automatically will balance social tensions.

At least for a while the emergence of a new radical historiography changed the picture.

The liberal historiographical concept was not allowed to stand unchallenged. Apparently, reformism could not give answer to the questions that the present had to ask history. Moreover, the liberals could at this stage show an impressive list of defeats and political miscalculations. Their model could not fulfil the expectations of the underprivileged black majority and new historical models had to be found.

The liberal doctrine, that capitalism played a progressive role in the undermining of apartheid, seemed almost shameless in the light of the total suppression of the 1960s, where rapid economic growth occurred simultaneously with the implementation of an all-embracing policy of racial segregation, from the perfection of petty apartheid in its most humiliating forms to grand apartheid's forced removals of three million people.

Thus, radical Marxist oriented historians attacked the liberal historians because of their uncritical belief in the liberalising effects of the market economy. At the same time many academics also felt it necessary to distance themselves from the liberals' relaxed evolutionary beliefs and more or less collaborative attitude towards the police state.

In this radical discourse - which also had a global background in anti-colonial victories, international solidarity, and growing strength of the socialist bloc - capitalist economic development and racial discrimination were seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing elements.

The Canadian Frederick R. Johnstone was the first to develop an explanatory model for the actual and demonstrable harmony between the racial exclusionist system and the concurrent high degree of economic vitality in South Africa.

Johnstone saw apartheid as a rational policy, whose main purpose was to prevent social mobility among blacks. By keeping the educational level of the blacks down, by preventing blacks from handling their own interests on the labour market and by obstructing blacks in the accumulation of capital, the racist system secured distribution and reproduction of the cheapest possible manpower.²²

The new radical school turned the liberal viewpoint upside down. The foundation for South Africa's economic growth was precisely the cheap labour system and its mechanism of extra-exploitation. Race system and economic growth depended on, and supported each other.²³

²¹ Lipton, Merle, *Capitalism and Apartheid. South Africa, 1910 - 1984*, London, Gower/Temple Smith, 1985/86.

²² Johnstone, F.R., "White Supremacy and White Prosperity in South Africa Today", *African Affairs* 69/275, 1970, pp. 124-140.

²³ Trapido, Stanley, "South Africa in a Comparative Study of Industrialisation", *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1971; Wolpe, Harold, "Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid", *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1/4, pp. 425-56, London, 1972; Magubane, Bernard M.: *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1979; Bundy, Colin, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, Berkeley, UCP / London, Heinemann, 1979; Beinart, William., *The Political Economy of Pondoland 1860-1930*, Cambridge University Press, 1982; Murray, Martin / Post, Charles, "The Agrarian Question: Class Struggle and the Capitalist State in the United States and South Africa", *Insurgent Sociologist*, XI/4; Keegan, Tim., *Rural Transformations in Industrialising South Africa*, London, 1987; Morris, Michael Leon, "The development of capitalism in South African agriculture: Class struggle in the countryside", *Economy and Society*, 5/3.

Part of this was the unique white class alliance.

According to the radical universe of history, the poor white workers objective interest, and thereby their consciousness, became racist. The white workers resistance against the mine owners' use of even cheaper black labour led to the Rand Revolt, which separated white workers from black workers. At the same time, the small Afrikaans-speaking middle and upper class were too weak to gain power by itself. The logical solution was the Pact-government of 1924: an alliance between the upcoming national bourgeoisie and a privileged white working class with an extensive consideration to the English mining capital.

According to the radical historians, this strategic alliance is the key to an understanding of the South African society. Through the segregation and the apartheid periods, until very recently, it was this constellation, which constituted the basis for state power in South Africa.

In the view of the radical structuralists, the white working class developed into more of a workers aristocracy, which were actually not exploited, but on the contrary was part of the exploitation of the majority of black workers. Robert Davis tried to prove this through rentability studies. If all workers have had white salaries, most gold mines would have been unprofitable.

The working class as a whole was split, and stability was secured by paying off the white workers by the Civilized Labour Policy and other kinds of labour market legislation. Another factor was the development of white jobs in a state monopoly production sector through the creation of korporasies.²⁴

Black resistance gave meaning to the radical views opposing apartheid.

A significant condition for the new wave of radical and Marxist historical investigation was the recurrence of popular trade union activity and political struggle, which characterised South Africa from the beginning of the 1970s.

After the Soweto Uprising in 1976, historians were influenced by a growing respect for the militant black resistance. From the last half of 1984 the situation in South Africa was characterised by repeated waves of widespread popular resistance and by the brutal attempts to suppress them. At the same time, the economy moved into a real crisis. This situation also affected the choice of subject matter researched by progressive historians so that new themes were brought into focus.²⁵

The internal black freedom movement, the trade union movement, the ANC and the Communist Party, were now seen as important agents of radical change and their historical achievements simultaneously grew in importance to the identity of black South Africans.

Studies of popular movements also improved the actual potential of the freedom movement.²⁶

The radical historians also improved the understanding of the Afrikaner society.

The rise of ideological afrikanerdom and its influence played an important part also of radical historical studies. Dan O'Meara's book, *Volkskapitalisme* among others, contributed to the dismantling of half a century of idealising and romanticising Afrikaner historiography and struck a blow against the apartheid ideology.²⁷

O'Meara's investigation persuasively challenged the Boer claim of Afrikanerdom as an undifferentiated, timeless, ethnic-cultural volks-unity. O'Meara asserted that economic and social processes, not ethnic conflicts, formed the historical basis of Afrikaner nationalism.

Radical historians argued that it was an alliance of corporate Boer capital, lower middle class farmers with labour recruitment problems, white English-speaking labour aristocracy and Afrikaans-speaking poor whites with unemployment problems, which constituted the core elements behind the reshaped

²⁴ Van Onselen, Charles, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886 – 1914*, Longmans, 1982.

²⁵ Bozzoli, Belinda (compiled by), *Labour, Townships and Protest. Studies in the social history of the Witwatersrand*, Ravan Press, (History Workshop), Johannesburg, 1979; Webster, Eddie (ed.), *Essays in Southern African Labour History*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1978.

²⁶ Lodge, Tom, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945*, Longman, London, 1983; Bradford, Helen, *A taste of freedom: the ICU in rural South Africa, 1924-30*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1987.

²⁷ O'Meara, Dan, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-48*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983.

Afrikaner nationalism. According to O'Meara, this handy, materially determined alliance, which was wrapped up in ethnic and ideological slogans, determined the expression of Afrikaner nationalism. Afrikanerdom should not be seen as a popular response to generations of English suppression but rather as a construction defined by specific class interests and formed through political perseverance. Some colleagues criticised O'Meara for being too simplistic and he took notice of that in his later works.²⁸

The freedom movement directly used the radical theories on colonialism.

Throughout the 1980s, there was a lively, academic debate on how to characterise the suppression in South Africa. The intensity of this scholarly discussion reflected the growing political struggle in the country during the last years of apartheid as well as the liberation movement's need for a precise theory that could also serve as a mobilising device in the freedom struggle. A central aspect of the debate was the theory of colonialism of a special type, which was developed and improved by radical historians with relations to the ANC.²⁹

The specific trait, which separates internal colonialism from "normal" colonialism, is simply that the colonial power (in the case of South Africa identified as the dominating, racially defined social group) is located within the same geographic territory as the colonised people. So, it is a theory with a universal background used on a specific national level, often by people founded in working class internationalism. The adherents of the model often emphasise that the underdevelopment of the exploited ethnic or racial groups within South Africa's boundaries was reproduced through mechanisms of cultural domination, political suppression and economic exploitation similar to the global mechanisms, which have apparently created welfare and prosperity in the highly developed western industrialised countries through the underdevelopment of their colonial satellites. Lines can easily be drawn from this theory to more modern theories on global apartheid under development today. The radical historians showed that during most of 20th century, this kind of internal extra-exploitation had been possible through the misuse of pre-capitalist forms of agricultural production in the reserves, bantustans and homelands.

This radical analysis also had implications for the international solidarity and anti-apartheid movement. It was precisely the colonial character of the apartheid regime, which made its lacking legitimacy unique and made it fundamentally inconsistent with international law.

The traditional liberal understanding of South Africa as an autonomous and legitimate state with unfortunate imperfections might have reduced the freedom struggle to an effort for human rights inside the limits of the existing social order and thus turned the regime into the main agent of lasting but insufficient reforms. Acceptance of the liberal position could have reduced the status of the freedom struggle to less than a fully evolved, national liberation struggle with all its potentials for popular mobilisation.³⁰

The nearly complete international isolation of the apartheid government was strengthened by the consciousness of the colonial character of the regime. The decision of the ANC to take up arms depended on the lacking legitimacy of colonialism, and at the same time the subordination of the armed struggle to the strategy of mass mobilisation, was due to the widespread support of national liberation. The radical academics helped to enhance this vision at a critical point in history.³¹

²⁸ O'Meara, Dan, *Forty lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948-1994*, Ravan Press / Ohio University Press, 1996.

²⁹ Wolpe, Harold, "The theory of internal colonialism: The South African Case". In Oxaal, I. / Barnett, T. / Booth, D. (eds.), *Beyond the Sociology of Development*, London, 1975; Slovo, Joe, "South Africa - No Middle Road". From Davidson/Wilkinson, *South Africa: The New Politics of Revolution*, London, 1976. Also Slovo, Joe, *Sør-Afrika - Ingen tredie vej*, Pax, Oslo, 1978.

³⁰ Malapo, Ben, "Marxism, South Africa and the Colonial Question 1-2", *African Communist*, No. 113 / 114, London, 1988.

³¹ Hind, Robert J., "The Internal Colonial Concept", *Comparative studies in Society and History*, 26/3, 1984; Wolpe, Harold, *Race, Class and the Apartheid State*, Paris, Unesco, 1988.

Different kinds of NGO's were able to exploit radical labour history and popular history.

The many passionate interpretations add fascinating flavours to historical research on South Africa. Political grassroots activists across the entire spectrum have used history as a resource of political mobilising. Therefore, it is not surprising that popular history was widespread during the last 25 years of the anti-apartheid struggle.

At the University of Witwatersrand, academic involvement in popular history developed within the History Workshop, which explored and published "counter-histories". Committed social history and "history from below" distinguish these works, which moved the boundaries of historical materialism with the help of oral history and popular traditions.³²

Callinicos observed various lines inside popular history. While university employed authors were engaged in research-based creation of knowledge, activist-oriented historians were more interested in liberation strategies.³³ Critics of the former were not slow to point out that academics without organisational affiliation are frequently passive regarding popular participation in history writing out of fear of losing their monopoly on knowledge among other things. On the other hand, the university academics did help to curb a fixation on slogans and triumphalism inside the highly goal-oriented trade union history and workers education.

The interpretations of history around the ANC are history themselves.

As a significant national movement throughout 90 years, the ANC has attracted many different types of history writers. Tom Lodge has divided the literary, historical tradition of the ANC into four phases until 1990. They all hold a wide spectrum from biographies, historical fiction, social reporting, autobiographies, and works from the Fort Hare students of later exiled black academics.³⁴

The bulk of publications, which form the historical tradition of the ANC, are not the work of professional academics. However, this does not mean that the ANC lacks a historical identity. Speeches and statements of the ANC are loaded with historical references to traditions of pre-colonial communities, to early resistance struggles against colonisation and to previous, heroic campaigns.³⁵

In spite of the growing power of the ANC, many critical interpretations of the history of the liberation movement exists.³⁶ For example, there has been a critique, (also from inside the ANC) which is mainly preoccupied with tactical and strategic flaws.³⁷ Another critique deals with the organisational foundation of the Congress Alliance.³⁸ A more fundamental critique has perceived the mass-strategy of the 1950s as inadequate.³⁹ Yet another critique questions the special type of armed struggle, which the ANC adopted.⁴⁰ Finally, a line of critique focuses on class composition and class interests inside the Alliance. In its most simple form, the leadership is renounced as petite bourgeois.⁴¹

³² Callinicos, Luli, *Gold and Workers, 1886 - 1924. A Peoples History of South Africa, Vol. 1.*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981; Callinicos, Luli, *A People's History of South Africa, Vol. 2. Working Life 1886-1940. Factories, Townships and Popular Culture*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987.

³³ Callinicos, Luli, "Popular History in the Eighties", *Radical History Review*, 46/47, pp. 285-297, 1990.

³⁴ Lodge, Tom, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945*, Longman, London, 1983; Lodge, Tom, "Charters from the past: The African National Congress and its Historiographical Traditions", *Radical History Review*, 46/47, pp. 161-188, 1990.

³⁵ For example Suttner, Raymond / Cronin, Jeremy (eds.), *Thirty Years of the Freedom Charter*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1986.

³⁶ Marks, Shula / Trapido, Stanley (eds.), "Social history of resistance in South Africa", *Journal of Southern African studies*, 18, 1. Special issue, Oxford University Press, 1992.

³⁷ ANC, NEC, Draft report of the NEC of the ANC, submitted to the annual conference, Dec. 1950. From Karis/Carter, Vol. 2, Doc. 85, p. 452, 1973.

³⁸ Ntsebeza, Lungisile, "Divisions and unity in struggle: the ANC, ISL and the CP, 1910-28", BA, University of Cape Town, 1988.

³⁹ Hirson, Baruch, *Year of fire, Year of ash*, Zed Press, London, 1979.

⁴⁰ Davis, David / Fine, Bob, "Political Strategies and the State: Some historical observations", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12/1, Oxford University press, 1985.

⁴¹ Friedland, Elaine A., "The South African Freedom Movement: Factors influencing its ideological development, 1912-1980s", 13/3, pp. 337-54, *Journal of Black Studies*, 1983.

The historians' engagement for a better society continues in the new South Africa.

Many liberals have regarded the policy of racial discrimination as the root cause of economic inequalities. Thus, their solution is still simply liberalising apartheid's institutions. The "economic realities" will then annihilate the racial distinctions almost automatically.

For the few remaining, stubborn, radical historians the situation is more complex. They are still attentive of the tight connections between capitalism and all kinds of discrimination. They still do not accept the argumentation that "capitalism killed apartheid," but seek the causes of apartheid's demise in the popular resistance, the international solidarity, the sanction policy and the rising maintenance-costs of the apartheid regime.

The enduring radical historians still assert that the economic basis has to be changed more fundamentally, if the social consequences of apartheid are to be overcome. This understanding has been somewhat muddled lately under the pressure of realpolitik though.

Just ten years ago Neville Alexander, a well known South African intellectual, said, "*We are not in the period of transition as passive spectators*"⁴² and he went further:

*"We are part of this transition - we can shape it. In shaping and fashioning the history curriculum we are ourselves making history. We are giving shape both to the history of the present and the future."*⁴³

It can still be debated to what extent the historians of the radical school have managed to put their original ideas through. The socialist expectations of the 1980s suffered severe setbacks in the 1990s and despite innumerable partial attempts, the radical revisionist school has never presented a complete alternative synthesis of South African history.

So far a new nationalist history writing has largely been avoided by post-apartheid SA.

A development in the new South Africa predicted by some, but not yet realised, was the elevation of the freedom movements' historiography, first and foremost the ANC's, to honour and dignity. Many expected that with the transfer of power to a majority government in 1994, a new nationalist history writing would emerge, but no large scale historiographical developments have occurred so far.

There could be several reasons for this. Martin Legassick and Gary Minkley point to the nature of the negotiated revolution.⁴⁴ Radical liberatory history for example became less relevant during social demobilisation.

The transfer of power in South Africa was somewhat different from the decolonisations of tropical Africa, as it was the result of a set of negotiations within the country between the ruling white minority, and the party, representing the majority, which accepted a liberal democratic constitution and at least in middle-long term agreed to work within a capitalist framework.

Saunders adds another possible and partly conflicting explanation: that the historiographical equivalent to the dramatic political change of 1994 already had taken place decades earlier: that South African history writing was decolonised long before.⁴⁵ He refers, I think, to the wave of liberal Africanism spearheaded by *Oxford History* around 1970.⁴⁶

The absence of a completely new historiographical approach, however, does not mean that there has been stagnation in the practical use of history.

Colin Bundy has proposed that there have already been three major over-arching attempts to re-shape the nation which are reflected in new history writing. In short, these could be described as the rainbow nation (or "*unity and diversity*"); the African Renaissance (or "*African hegemony in the context of a*

⁴²In 1992, three history curriculum conferences were held in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town. Alexander addressed an audience of some 150 history teachers and academics.

⁴³ History Education Group, *History Matters: Debates about a new history curriculum for South Africa*, Heinemann-Centaur, Johannesburg, 1993.

⁴⁴ M. Legassick and G. Minkley, "Current Trends in the Production of South African History", *Alternation*, 5/1, 1998.

⁴⁵ C. Saunders, "The Transitions from Apartheid to Democracy in Namibia and South Africa in the Context of Decolonization", *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 1/1, 2000.

⁴⁶ Wilson, Monica / Thompson, Leonard M. (eds.): *The Oxford History of South Africa*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969-71.

multi-cultural and non-racial society"); and (less important) ethnic particularism (or the assertion of sub-national identities as primary).⁴⁷

The discourse of the rainbow nation undoubtedly found a popular resonance in the mid-90s, but its appeal began to fade out; its optimistic multiculturalism gradually seemed a little naive. Sitas attributes the rainbow's fading to white indifference to the TRC. Some groups collective "*refusal to own the past*" disappointed Tutu, angered Mandela, outraged the African intelligentsia, and strengthened the hand of Africanists within the ANC. Many Black intellectuals and editors distanced themselves from the language of reconciliation and pluralism and adopted instead a notion of African Renaissance.

This African Renaissance is quite difficult to define. At its most rhetorical as expressed by Mbeki, it is a mix of pan-Africanism and asserted progressiveness. Often, it operates as politically inflected metaphor, as a rallying cry for advancement, solidarity and Africanism. During the second half of the 1990s, programmes of affirmative action and black economic empowerment ignited anxieties also among historians. The rainbow notion appeared to be toned down, because it failed to assist in the emergence of a New African Nation and New Patriotism. And just as in the European nations before the developed welfare systems, this kind of mobilisation seems to be necessary for social stability. Some of the present problems for history could partly be caused by the possibility that "shared past reconciliation history" might have been more useful for "rainbowism" than it is for the freshly invented patriotism.

The difficulty in coming up with a clear-cut answer to what sort of new history that was needed in the new nation was complicated by the fact that the political project of the government shifted quite rapidly in a direction that confused and disappointed left-of-centre academics.

Increasingly the overall course of post-1994 macro-economic policy abandoned the left social democratic approach of the RDP for the neo-liberal orthodoxies of GEAR. This was not an atmosphere satisfying for historians buried in "struggle scholarship".⁴⁸

The Truth Commission had less importance than expected for history.

The hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into human rights violations in the recent past were designed to support internal peace and stability through dismantling conflicts from the past. TRCs are meant to unburden the past or at least to spread some kind of satisfaction by uncovering truths. They are also well suited to establish a new ruling understanding of society which supports an upcoming regime. The South African TRC succeeded to a large degree in this.

On the other hand, professional historians were very reluctant to get involved in the process. The lessons from the individualised histories of violations could not be used to make any real structural changes in the socio-economic system which had caused many of the basic injustices. This of course made genuine reconciliation difficult.

The use of history in the schools reflects the shifting importance of narratives for the nation.

The great expectations for the role of history in nation building and identity creation also involved basic education. Especially between 1992 and 1994, there were lots of optimistic activity, involving academics, teachers, publishers and civil servants, seeking to deal with the history issue as a matter of pedagogic and political urgency.⁴⁹

The so-called New Model Textbook Approach seems to be a lasting result. In essence, while it remains concerned with the content and interpretation of South African history, its main emphasis is that the curriculum should "*reflect advances in the discipline of history*". That is: school texts should reflect recent and current debates about the past; the approach to the past should be inclusive and democratic; the approach to historical knowledge should be analytical and explanatory; skills and

⁴⁷ Bundy, Colin, "New Nation, New History? Constructing the past in post-apartheid South Africa", in Conference Book Publication: Hans Erik Stolten (ed.), *History-Making and Present Day Politics. The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, Forthcoming, NAI.

⁴⁸ Etherington, Norman, "Fissures in the Post-apartheid Academy", *South African Historical Journal*, 31, 1994, p. 207.

⁴⁹ History Education Group, *History Matters: Debates about a new history curriculum for South Africa*, Heinemann-Centaur, Johannesburg, 1993.

content should be inseparable so that the curriculum conveys a sense of how knowledge is produced and history not presented as a set of given facts. Historical education should develop “*empathetic understanding, emotional and moral commitment with the past*” and an awareness of the constant interrelationship of the past and the present. South African history should reflect the diversity of its population, while also accounting for processes that have created a single society; and should locate the country’s history within regional, continental and global events and processes.⁵⁰

The South African Democracy Education Trust can be seen as one of the few new flagships in official history writing.

Ben Magubane was asked to direct SADET (the South African Democracy Education Trust), a presidential project with the aim of researching the struggle for democracy between 1960 and 1994. The President launched SADET, to write the history of the liberation struggle in the interest of “*reconciliation and nation-building*”. The SADET project was initially imagined as merely the history of the ANC. It was later broadened to become the story of “*the road to democracy*”. Substructures of the project have involved professional historians from several universities. Some critics still worry that the product of this grand endeavour will be seen as constituting a new “official history” of the new nation.⁵¹

Alongside the crisis for history, popular and commercial interpretations of heritage and remembrance are booming.

The apparently diminished value placed from official side in the public sphere on history concerned with conflict occurred simultaneously with an upgrading of history as state-sponsored and commercial “heritage and legacy projects”.⁵²

The centenary of the Boer War, for instance, was promoted in KwaZulu-Natal as a “*Historical Carnival of Reconciliation*”. This development could be seen as an effort to position the country as “*an anti-war, anti-conflict society*”.⁵³

Heritage studies, or as Cobley puts it: “*..that ultimate commodification of history in pursuit of the tourist dollar*”⁵⁴ - has been a growth area also at South African universities, and in Guy’s words:

“*..the Heritage Industry invokes a sentimentalised past which makes bearable a sordid and painful present*”.⁵⁵

Applied History is another concept for useful contemporary historical research.

This approach shows enlightening examples of how ordinary people’s history connects to present day conflicts in administration and politics. Methodically this kind of applied history looks very interesting, involving a genuine multidisciplinary perspective proving the usefulness of history in present practical matters.⁵⁶

In the case of the handing back the land in the District Six area to its former residents for instance, Martin Legassick with a team of historians conducted during eight months more than 1400 interviews and verified almost 700 land claims.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Sieborger, Rob, “Reconceptualising South African School History Textbooks”, *South African Historical Journal*, 30, 1994, pp. 100-101.

⁵¹ Christopher Saunders, “History and the ‘Nation’: South African Aspects”, lexical article, 2001.

⁵² Nuttall, Tim and Wright, John, “Probing the Predicaments of Academic History in Contemporary South Africa” *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, May 2000, pp. 29, 30, 34.

⁵³ Grundlingh, Albert, “Reframing Remembrance: The Politics of the Centenary Commemoration of The South African War of 1899-1902”, In Conference Book Publication: Hans Erik Stolten (ed.): *History-Making and Present Day Politics. The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, Forthcoming, NAI.

⁵⁴ Cobley, Alan, “Does Social History Have a Future? The Ending of Apartheid and Recent Trends in South African Historiography”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 27/3, September 2001, p. 618.

⁵⁵ Guy, Jeff, “Battling with Banality”, *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, Vol. 18, pp. 156-193.

⁵⁶ Legassick, Martin (interviewed by Alex Lichtenstein), “The Past and Present of Marxist Historiography in South Africa”, *Radical History Review*, Issue 82, Winter 2002 pp. III—130, 2002, Website: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/radical_history_review/v082/82.1legassick.html.

⁵⁷ M. Legassick, “District Six tenants claims verification research”, UWC, August 2000.

However, nation building is a dubious task for historians.

Considering the extremely dissimilar and multi-cultural nature of South African society, with its abused history, and severe social gaps, it is not clear at all how a nation-building project, with its emphasis on a common pathway, can overcome the divisions and accommodate multi-culturalism. When President Mbeki links the building of a new nation to the idea of the “African Renaissance”, some will reject his views because they assume that he is talking in racial terms. By emphasising reconciliation, on the other hand, the state seems willing to paper over the cracks and downplaying the role of racial, ethnic and social divisions and conflicts in the past and maybe also in the present.

It seems that it has been easier for the ANC-government to construct a common ground in symbols which do not have direct links to the past, for example by choosing fairly abstract and “neutral” symbols of patriotism. History might still be highlighted as important in more or less official documents, but “new patriotism” is stressed more concretely.⁵⁸ So, a new national identity does not seem to have its base in a shared perception of the apartheid past, but instead in an elite view of a South Africa adjusted to “universal” values and the 21st century marketplace. As a result, history has been marginalised.⁵⁹

Some kind of ideological consensus has developed under the rainbow.

Everything seems to show that some of the more open-minded, radical historians are increasing their influence at the English-speaking universities in co-operation with undogmatic, political liberals and perhaps the future for South African historical research lays in a new, symbiotic hegemony consisting of all progressive streams from liberal Africanism and radical, social history to ANC-informed strategic thinking. This would certainly appear quite natural in an age with national compromises.

On the other hand, the severe social divisions, which South Africa will have to face in the years to come makes it difficult to believe that such a harmony between essentially different ideologies would endure for very long. The discussion about South Africa's controversial past and its significance for the choices of the new South Africa will most certainly arise and resemble earlier controversies between liberal and radical historians. The links between theories for change and the in reality existing world have been close in South Africa. The fundamental disagreements between historians will probably reverberate throughout the academic universe when the social realities recall them once again.

What can be observed throughout South African history is the merging of race and class. That underneath the racial tensions there are class conflicts.

There is a lot of emphasis being placed by the ANC-government on the elimination of white racism, as there should be of course. However, it is hardly possible to eliminate racism without eliminating the material conditions that underpin racism. Racism is not a question simply of politically correct language. It is solving the problems of poverty that is required in order to get rid of racism.

As South Africa becomes a more African country, this will appear also in the historiography.

As a result of unequal access to education, the historiographical tradition is marked by the almost total absence of black historians. Even if there have been some black history writers, they have been invincible in the institutional communication of history - and actually, to a large degree, they still are. History writing in South Africa is still a white male dominated field. Knowledge on African history as beyond the borders of South Africa remains wanting. Only a little more than 10% of the some 500 historians that registered with the South African History Project specialise in African history, as other than South African history.

With a political climate that did not exactly invite to critical intellectual questioning and a regime with an official ideology based on a view of history, which saw the superiority of the white man as

⁵⁸ *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy*. Department of Education, Tirisano Programme, Pretoria, August 2001.

⁵⁹ Ray, Giulia, “Creating the Future - Post-Apartheid Use of History Education for Nation Building Purposes”, in Conference Book Publication: Hans Erik Stolten (ed.): *History-Making and Present Day Politics. The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, Forthcoming, NAI.

destined, it should not be surprising that the great majority of South Africans, excluded from parliamentary political life, also were to be denied access to their own history.

The whites had colonised history and the restricted education did not give black people any feeling of a past they could identify with. Which has serious implications. Like someone who had long been struck with collective amnesia due to decades of falsification of history and begins to recover, a nation that does not know its past, nor cares to understand the past history of the men and women who sacrificed their personal security cannot understand the significance of the change in 1994.⁶⁰

A closer connection to the rest of black Africa will be added also to the agenda of South Africa's historians. During the first 20 years following the decolonisation, African nationalism, the traditions and roots of the independence movements and anti-imperialism were the main themes for African historians north of South Africa. They sought continuity between pre- and post-colonial phenomena to show that original African values had survived despite white supremacy, and could give the new states an African character in the form of "African socialism," for example.

The most recent historical research in Africa, which is not only a counter-reaction to European ideology, shows the Africans as partially responsible for their own fate in the sense that those who had the opportunity to do so, completely understood how to exploit the presence of foreigners to their own advantage. Under the influence of development research, anthropology, etc., African historians of the 1970s and onwards on the other hand showed that Africa had large old kingdoms, mining and trading centres and well-functioning infrastructures before the arrival of the Europeans. Some researchers have suggested that the real values in Africa's history have to be found in the stateless society based on local autonomy and cooperation, rather than disciplining and competition.⁶¹

Perhaps black South African historians could learn from this series of experiences without entirely renouncing universal, theoretical presentations.

Parallel with these developments inside South Africa, we have internationally seen the emergence and the use of solidarity history.

The history of the international anti-apartheid movement has by now been established as a recognised field of research, as can be seen from several conferences on the subject,⁶² and the exploit of the research results has shown to be almost as controversial as the former liberatory history writing.

After the victory over an evil and powerful regime, veterans engaged in the struggle through many years of hardship might feel a justified need for enjoying the sweetness of triumph, and it has to be said that some of the internal accounts of freedom struggle and solidarity history have been rather uncritical. Others on the other hand have had an artificial "objective" approach or have tried a purely empirical methodology. The development of a historiography of solidarity has just begun.

There is an extensive history to be written and it will not be a simple one, since there were divisions within the AAMs and within the African National Congress itself. On the international level for instance, the Nordic solidarity organisations were generally more independent in their relations with the ANC than for instance the British AAM was.

Paradoxically the international movement's success in isolating South Africa helped ease the process of transition. From 1990, as boycotts were lifted, white South Africans saw that they too had a stake in the success of negotiations. None wanted to go back to the times when to speak with a white South African accent overseas invited hostility and suspicion.

⁶⁰ Magubane, Bernhard: "Whose Memory - Whose History? The Illusion of Liberal and Radical Historical Debates", In Conference Book Publication: Hans Erik Stolten (ed.): *History-Making and Present Day Politics. The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, NAI, Fortcoming.

⁶¹ Curtin, P., "Recent trends in African historiography and their contribution to history in general". From Ki-Zerbo (ed.): *General history of Africa*, Vol. 1, Unesco, London, 1981, p. 58.

⁶² Conference: 10 Years of Freedom. Venue Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London (http://www.southafricahouse.com/CelebSA_2.htm); Gurney, Christabel (ed.), *The Anti-Apartheid Movement: A 40-year Perspective*, Conference Report: South Africa House, London, 25-26 June 1999, London, AAM Archives Committee, 2000.

Globalisation and international social movements constitute part of the story.

One of the reasons that research in South African matters is so appealing can be found in the fact that the problems of this country in many ways resemble global problems. As mentioned this was the case with its special form of internal colonialism, and South Africa could also be illuminating in other ways in cases of protection of privileges on a global scale.

An issue which will predictably be part of the debate on international social movements in the future is the problems surrounding what one could call global apartheid. To which extent, in which way, and in what speed should rich (mostly white populated) countries share their opportunities and wealth with poor (mostly black, brown, or yellow) third world people? The solidarity with South Africa gave rise to that kind of questions.

The anti-apartheid movement of the 1970s and 1980s was a truly transnational social movement,⁶³ and its history illustrates well that transnational movements might put theorists under an obligation to rethink basic assumptions about identity, mobilization, resources, and the targets of collective action.⁶⁴ One question raised is, if was also the last of its kind.

Patrick Mac Manus has in a manuscript on the Danish AAM some provoking thoughts, which questions the relevance of future solidarity movements.⁶⁵ The relation where a solidarity movement could be seen as an external dimension of a liberation movement's national struggle might be outdated simply because that the possibilities of national liberation policies as such seems to have reached an end. The many adverse experiences in the area of postcolonial development policy, causes him to conclude that the potentials for autonomous nation state advance might have reached its limits. Global structures seems to be in the foreground as a condition for any kind of development, and without democratic reforms of these structures most national reform attempts seems to be without perspective. Therefore the solidarity movement of today is an international movement focused on the worldwide political and economic structures of neo-liberal globalisation and on what is more and more frequently named "global apartheid". In this clash between contrasting globalisation projects, the task of the oppositional movement is nevertheless essentially the same: To create empathy, to make people identify with others, to question the legitimacy of an established order under which people suffer. Or as some Germans have put it "*Solidarität ist die Zärtlichkeit der Völker*".⁶⁶

After 1990 and especially after 1994, political solidarity changed to other more official and direct forms of aid, but many of the former international anti-apartheid organisations continued their activities as private aid organisations, consultants, friendship societies, contact organs, or service providers.

The post-apartheid transitional aid of the Nordic countries is often portrayed as an official continuation of the solidarity.

From time to time official interest from the surrounding world in the matters of the new South Africa has in fact been rather high. From the side of the Nordic Countries, it has at times been marked by a turbid compound of philanthropic aid and business interests.

⁶³ Thörn, Håkan, "Solidarity Across Borders. Perspectives on Anti-Apartheid as a global social movement", Conference paper undergoing editorial work, in Henning Melber and Hans Erik Stolten (eds.), *Nordic Solidarity Revisited (working title)*, NAI, Forthcoming.

⁶⁴ Hans Erik Stolten, "Om Solidaritetshistorie", in Larney, Nielsen, Mac Manus, Gunnarsen (red.), *Aktivister mod apartheid*, København, SAK, 2004; David Lawrence, "The anti-apartheid movement in Britain", Thesis (M.Phil.), University of Oxford, 2000; Henning Melber und Reinhart Kössler, "The West German Solidarity Movement with the Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa. A (Self-) Critical Retrospective", in Ulf Engel/Robert Kappel (eds.), *Germany's Africa Policy Revisited*, pp. 103-126, Munster/Hamburg: LIT, 2002; Stefan de Boer, *From Sharpeville to Soweto: Dutch Government Policy towards Apartheid, 1960-1977*, Netherlands Archives Committee, 1999.

⁶⁵ Mac Manus, Patrick et al. (red.), "Mellem kreativitet og kriminalisering. Landskomiteen Sydafrika-Aktion 1986-1990", in Larney, Nielsen, Mac Manus, Gunnarsen (red.), *Aktivister mod apartheid*, København, SAK, 2004.

⁶⁶ "Die Zukunft der Solidaritätsbewegung: Tema, Internationale Solidarität", *Blätter Des Iz3w*, pp. 23-46, 1994.

During the transformation process under which the former liberation movement expanded its influence over society, the Nordic governments respectively succeeded in establishing their traditions of support by following up the popular solidarity with a continued transitional aid and by pointing out their own national merits in a favourable light and the proud traditions of earlier times have been used to complement the image of the donor countries.

In the case of solidarity history it has already shown possible to build the historical legend, that the anti-apartheid support of the Nordic countries was especially protracted, loyal and heroic.⁶⁷ Since there are strong material interests behind this view, it must be the task of the critical social scientist to scrutinize this myth. It might be that the historical reality was slightly different.

Despite that both Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark can call attention to particular areas where they came first with support to anti-apartheid activities, it was only after prolonged political pressure from domestic solidarity movements that the Nordic countries in the last years before 1990 became proper pioneers regarding sanctions policies against the apartheid regime. This change of policy, which domestic business opposed to the end, has, together with the transitional aid, shown to be an asset for Nordic export industries.⁶⁸

A critical history remains to be written. To which extent did Nordic anti-colonialism rest on the anticipation that small, export oriented, non-colonial states might gain from the breakaways of new nation states from former colonial powers and apartheid supporter countries? More disbelieving popular voices might claim that Nordic politicians needed to make friends with possible new leaders, but that these friendships for a long time seemed less important than the trade profitable for domestic companies, which implied a de facto support of apartheid South Africa.

Today virtually all visitors to Southern Africa from all parts of the globe say that they all equally and strongly supported the anti-apartheid struggle. One has to wonder why it took so long for these nations to become free from colonialism, when the whole world seemed to have been supporting them all the time. Imagine the confusion of the millions of southern people who have never been out of the area, and who had to live through the censorship and banning of publications.

The fact is that the international community, including the Nordic countries, did not give Lutuli and Tutu the whole range of boycott, isolation, and militant support they wanted, until victory was almost certain. It was mostly later, when the ANC-dominated government needed to secure continued support and investment, when the West wanted to gain unlimited access to the growing South African middle class market, and when the alternative of socialism did not exist any longer, that we could all agree in making South Africa the darling of the world.

⁶⁷ Sellström, Tor, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa: Volume 1: Formation of a Popular Opinion (1950-1970)*, Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, 1999.

Sellström, Tor, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa: Volume 2: Solidarity and Assistance 1970-1994*, Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, 2002.

Sellström, Tor (ed.), *Liberation in Southern Africa - Regional and Swedish Voices: Interviews from Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, the Frontline and Sweden*, Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, 1999.

Soiri and Pekka Peltola, *Finland and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, 1999.

Eriksen, Tore Linné (ed.), *Norway and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, Nordic Africa Institute, 2000. Morgenstjerne, Christopher Munthe, *National Liberation in Southern Africa: The Role of the Nordic Countries. Denmark, A Flexible Response - Humanitarian and Political*, Nordic Africa Institute, 2003.

⁶⁸ Danida, *Country strategy for South Africa: strategy for Danish-South African development co-operation*, 2002; Elling N. Tjønneland and Pundy Pillay, *A joint review of Norwegian - South African development cooperation 1995-2001*, CMI Report R 2003:1, 2003, <http://www.cmi.no/public/2003/R2003-01.htm>; Udenrigsministeriet (Danish Foreign Ministry), *Markedsorientering Sydafrika og Sydafrika Markedsprofil*, 1995, http://www.gripen.com/index_2.asp; Danida, *Evaluation-Business-to-Business Programme Denmark-South Africa*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000; Danida, *Business to Business programme for South Africa: Basic requirements for content of training programmes*, Copenhagen, 2000; Danida, *Evaluation: Danish Transitional Assistance to the Republic of South Africa*, Copenhagen, 1998; Danida, *Programme Document: Danish-South African Business-to Business Programme*, Copenhagen, 1995.

On this background there is a profound need for some kind of continuation of the international solidarity movement and for a continued engagement from the former activists in order to uphold the pressure for a fulfilment of the ideals of the liberation struggle – and for their efforts guarding South African contemporary history.