

# Historians in the new South Africa

Exposing conflicts or promoting reconciliation



# Changing principal history views

- English-imperial (imperialist, colonial)
- Settler (early nationalist, conservative)
- Afrikaner nationalist (republican, Afrikanerdom)
- Liberal (early segregationist / progressive / Africanist)
- Progressive (Communist, ANC, Black)
- Radical (neo-Marxist, revisionist, new school)
- Post structural (post-modern, post-colonial)
- Rainbowism (TRC-inspired, Mandelaism)
- New Patriotism (African Renaissance)



# Popular lines of history



- Political history
- Economic history
- Social history
- Africanist history
- Peoples history
- Urban history
- Workers history
- Populist history
- History of women, feminist history
- Cultural history
- Localism
- Rural history
- Resistance, struggle or liberatory history
- Black history writing
- Applied history
- Foreign relations and international solidarity
- Africanisation

# Some angles to SA historical analyses

- Correlations between race attitudes, class relations and culture
- Rationalities of growth, economic dysfunctions and criteria of success
- Transition from pre-capitalist to modern agriculture
- Processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and proletarianisation
- Everyday experiences, individual living conditions, identity, tradition and health
- Statutory, white, political domination. Official racial segregation in institutions, laws and procedures
- Backgrounds for popular protest and other forms of social expressions
- Identification of essential, underlying societal features (nation, gender, interests)
- Principal historical methods and bearings of theory (historiography)

History making and present day politics. The meaning of collective memory in South Africa **Part 1**

## History in the creation of the new South Africa

- Saul Dubow: Thoughts on South Africa
- Colin Bundy: New nation, new history
- Ann Langwadt: Healing history, narrating trauma
- Elaine Unterhalter: Truth rather than justice
- Anna Bohlin: Claiming land and making memory
- Martin Legassick: Practising applied history
- Thiven Reddy: A reading of dominant discourses

## Heritage in the new SA. Popularising memory

- Gary Baines: The politics of public history
- Chris Saunders: The transformation of heritage
- Albert Grundlingh: the centenary commemoration
- Georgi Verbeeck: Apartheid in museum
- Martin Murray: Urban space, and historical memory

## Conflicting interpretations of SA history

- Ben Magubane: Whose memory - whose history?
- Chris Saunders: Four decades of SA historical writing
- Vladimir Shubin: Historiography of the ANC
- HE Stolten: Capitalism and apartheid: Lipton's position
- Merle Lipton: The debate about business under apartheid
- Wessel Visser: Afrikaner anti-communist history production
- Allison Drew: "1922 and all that": facts and political history

## History in schools and higher education

- Yonah Seleti: the new school history curriculum
- June Bam: Making history the South African way
- M Oelofse and D du Bruyn: The need for oral history
- Catherine Burns: A useable past: “history in chords”
- Giulia Ray: Creating the future - history education



# Current national developments affecting history

- From RDP's collective enthusiasm to GEAR's individualised demobilisation
- From massification to mergers of departments
- Affirmative action, black empowerment and political correctness



# Some other reasons for the crisis in history

- Postmodern demoralising effects
- Focus on contemporary identity, ethnicity, race, citizenship and nationhood
- Limited official use of truth and reconciliation for deep structural changes



# Trends in post-apartheid historiography\*

- Rainbow Nation (or “unity and diversity”/TRC)
- African Renaissance (or African hegemony in a multi-cultural and non-racial society)
- Ethnic particularism (or the assertion of sub-national identities / localism)
- “The New Model Textbook Approach” in school didactics and Curriculum 2005
- South African Democracy Education Trust: continued struggle history attempted

❖ \* Bundy’s analysis elaborated



# Course of events inside post-apartheid history

- Crisis for academic history and for history in schools
- Adjustments and struggle for continued societal relevance
- Focus on heritage, remembrance, museums and tourism
- Outcome based school education in world history
- Scattered spectrum reflecting individual interests
- Applied history for land redistribution and forgotten claims
- History of solidarity, global social movements and aid politics

# Causes for the absence of a new national history

- The historiographical equivalent to political change of 1994 had already taken place
- African researchers have not entered into the profession or the history departments
- The nature of the negotiated “revolution”
- Radical liberatory history less relevant during the ANC-government’s social demobilisation
- Not yet full liberation from white structural control and neo-colonial domination

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