



Centre for the Study of Equality and Multiculturalism

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Details

Time: 2011-02-11 1pm to 3pm

Place: KUA 27.1.47

Organizer: CESEM

CESEM Seminar: History and Ideology in South Africa - the intellectuals and the struggle for equality

During the past 15 years, the South African society has been normalized - at least in the eyes of the Western World. When this normalization-view is extended to South African history, it leads to easy rationalizations and misrepresentations of what really happened. South Africa has, several times in its history, been close to a revolutionary situation - and the way that intellectual expert-activists have treated these past rebellions, invite to comparative analysis. In my eyes, the intellectuals actively contributed to an accumulated, collective memory/experience, which was useful for the country's oppressed majority. Progressive history writers' reconstructions of former resistance struggles were actually a precondition for the tremendously broad and well-organized regime-resistance up to 1994. Both liberal and Marxist intellectuals had a share in what was then called the National Democratic Revolution.

My presentation deals with divergent schools in South African social science and with the significance of their views for the transformation from apartheid to democracy.

Simultaneously, I attempt to provide an understanding of the historical context by showing common features in origin and manifestation of popular resistance against ethnic injustice. I also try to highlight some characteristic structures of the political economy of South Africa, especially the inner-colonial exploitative form that - before 1990 - provoked a combination of struggles for democracy, national liberation, and social revolution - rather than the pursuit of reform. Finally, I demonstrate that the revolutionary tradition that ANC adopted in the 1960s still serves as part of the official rhetoric, even if the economic course has been neoliberal.

Compared to my project description (www.jakobsgaardstolten.dk | Research Projects | Monograph on South African historiography..) this presentation will begin with a broader introduction to South African history and historiography, but end up being more focussed, concentrating on the efforts of liberal and left intellectuals for justice and non-racialism.

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