Proposal for a historiographical review article.

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The Construction of Nordic Anti-Apartheid History - A Danish Historiographical Critique of Swedish Approaches.

Abstract:
This historiographical review article adds to the research debate on the role of the surrounding world in the liberation of Southern Africa from colonialism and apartheid. It analyses selected literature on the history of the Scandinavian anti-apartheid solidarity. Swedish and Danish texts are examined from a Danish grassroots point of view, as well as from a historical-critical perspective. Together with comparable contributions, Håkan Thörn's seminal article-chapter "Nordic Support to the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa" from 2014 serves as an illustrative example. Most of the texts under scrutiny here are some years old, but together they raise questions of principle and the examination of them sheds light on persistent foreign policy issues and widens research policy perspectives. The notion that the anti-apartheid support of the Scandinavian countries, and Sweden's in particular, was especially determined has been cultivated over the years, partly owing to uncritical history writing. Quite a few of these representations of history have focused disproportionally on positive government initiatives and less on the protracted, political pressure from popular, domestic solidarity movements. By investigating Thörn's and similar politically influential writings, I hope to contribute to a more nuanced view of the Scandinavian support. In various ways, the Nordic countries have used their anti-apartheid history for furthering agendas of a later day in areas such as export and small-state influence. The provision of government resources for such purposes has been most generous in Sweden and the commitment among Swedish researchers has been quite persistent - in some cases, almost intimidating. This article draws attention to certain worries regarding cooperation and competition, particularly between Denmark and Sweden, concerning Southern Africa, during and beyond the apartheid years. It also contains some thoughts on theories relevant for analysing the history of cross-border solidarity.

Key words: Sweden, Denmark, Scandinavia, South Africa, Southern Africa, African Studies, history of international solidarity, historiography, anti-apartheid movements, AAMs, global social movements, Nordic NGOs, globalisation, foreign relations, foreign policy, development aid.