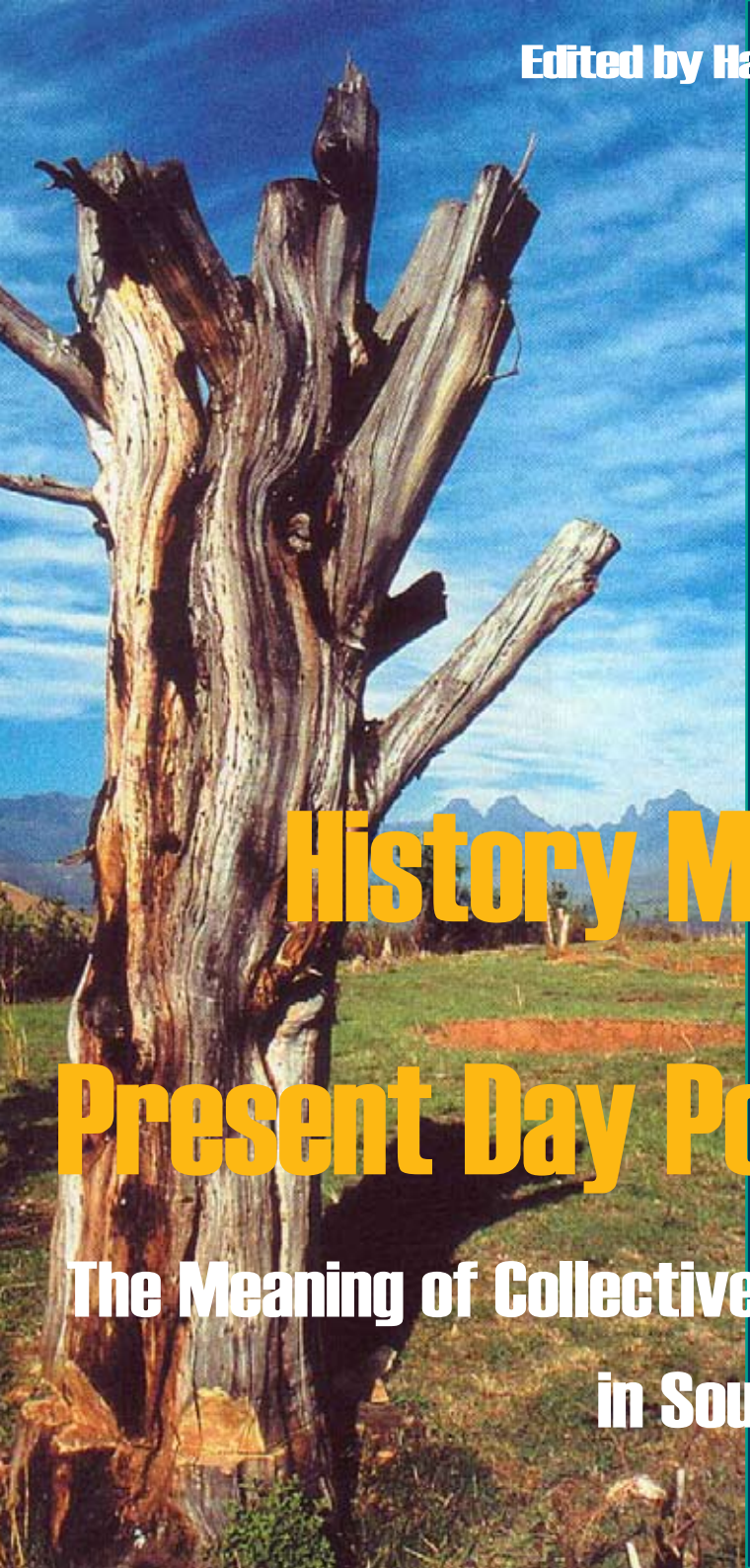
Edited by Hans Erik Stolten



History Making and Present Day Politics

The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa

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Edited by
Hans Erik Stolten

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INTERPRETATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY

— CHAPTER 1 —

History in the new South Africa

Hans Erik Stolten

South Africa is a country that continues to fascinate the rest of the world. In addition to being part of the Third World, the country is a micro-cosmos that serves to illustrate many of the global problems we all face. In a spirit of optimistic activism, through self-mobilising popular movements with ties to solidarity organisations in northern countries, the people of South Africa became master of their own destiny. For many years, the whole of southern Africa was dominated by South Africa. Its future course will have great impact on the region and its foreign relations could potentially develop into an exemplar of South-South co-operation. Seen from the North, South Africa has a growing middle class market for sophisticated products and the country could function as a gateway to the rest of Africa. It also has a competitive academic environment with highly qualified scholars engaged in structural and social studies.

More than ten years have now elapsed since the fall of apartheid and the dissolution of its last white minority government. During this time, South Africa has developed from Rainbowism to African Renaissance and New Patriotism.[1] Since 1994, South Africa has gone through different phases in the attempt to create a new kind of historical dynamic driven by the aspiration of equal rights and better living conditions.[2] Therefore, one might expect to find a profound interest in the historiography of that country, but the study

1. Mbeki, Thabo, *Africa Define Yourself*, Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2002; Roger Southall, "ANC and Black Capitalism in South Africa", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 31, No. 100, 2004, pp. 313–328.

2. Bond, Patrick, "From Racial to Class Apartheid: South Africa's Frustrating Decade of Freedom", *Monthly Review*, March 2004.

of history in South Africa has in fact experienced serious decline.[3] After 1994, the number of history students has decreased at most institutions. At many universities, history options were transformed into feeder courses for other subjects. Most universities had to cut the number of history lecturers or even to abolish entire departments. Mergers with neighbouring departments and the formation of multi-disciplinary "schools" have endangered the institutional independence of history as a discipline. In some provincial areas, history as an institutionally based discipline is threatened with extinction.[4] In the last few years, however, the situation seems to have stabilised and some history departments have succeeded in attracting students by broad introductory courses linking history to heritage or to film and art history.[5]

Several explanations for the local "crisis of history" have been suggested.[6] The many years of apartheid education discredited institutionalised history and even if liberal, radical, and nationalist groups used history in their struggle for democracy, many black South Africans came to see history as a type of knowledge with which they could not identify. A more controversial explanation could be that while the use of history at a certain stage helped people in an instrumental way to meet their most important need, that is, to get rid of apartheid, the main priority for most people today is to pursue an individual career in a free market.

Knowledge of history helps to shape qualities of imagination, sensitivity, balance, accuracy, and discriminating judgment and provides multiple perspectives on how various elements have come together to create a society or to build a nation. History writing is an important part of a nation state's

3. Kader Asmal (then Minister of Education) "Making hope and history rhyme" in Gurney, Christabel (ed.), *The Anti-Apartheid Movement: A 40-year Perspective*, Conference Report, London, AAM Archives Committee, 2000.

4. Patrick Harries, "Zero Hour and Beyond: History in a Time of Change", paper from ICS/SOAS Conference, University of London, 10–12 September 2004.

5. At Rhodes University and the University of Cape Town, for example. It should be noted, however, that many of these new students are not black South Africans, but overseas students.

6. See also Kros, Cynthia, "Curriculum 2005 and the end of History", History Curriculum Research Project, Report No. 3, Cambridge University Press & History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1998; Sieborger, Rob," History and the Emerging Nation: The South African Experience", *International Journal of Historical Learning Teaching and Research*, Vol. 1, No. 1, December 2000; papers from the South African History Project's conference of 2002 on "History, Memory and Human Progress – Know the Past, Anticipate the Future".

collective memory and history is not simply a product of the past, but often an answer to demands of the present.[7]

During segregation and apartheid, historical research was used extensively to seek solutions for problems of contemporary importance. Most of the great debates on South African history have had hidden agendas mirroring vital contemporary problems rather than the ones actually described. The discussion around the frontier theory outlining the self-identification of the Boers on the isolated border, the formulation by early liberals of "protective" segregation, the later liberal critique of dysfunctional elements in the apartheid policy, and the construction of a working class tradition by radical historians provide illustrative examples of history used for ideological mobilisation by some of the most distinguished South African and international scholars.[8]

How was the idea of a South African nation constructed? In what ways have racialised identities been ascribed to South Africans over time? From what concepts did the various schools of history assign different pasts to different South Africans? Can history help people regain their pride or give them back their land? Should understanding, critique, or guidance for action be prioritised in the practice of history?

This collection will deal with different patterns of use and abuse of history during the formation of group identity and national unity. The importance of history and historians for the transformation of the South African society will be discussed from several different angles.

In August 2002, The Nordic Africa Institute convened an extended workshop of historians, Africanists and development researchers at the Centre of African Studies, the University of Copenhagen. This Danish institute, situated in the old inner city, functioned as an efficient co-organiser of the event that gathered more than fifty participants under the heading: Collective Memory and Present Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries. The NAI/CAS workshop provided for an exchange of views between veteran historians involved in the international debate over many years, historians from the new South Africa, and concerned Nordic researchers, as well as

7. Hofstadter, Richard, *The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington*, New York, 1969, p. 3; Kader Asmal, "Speech by the Minister of Education", Department of Education, August 2001.

8. Beinart, William and Dubow, Saul, "The historiography of segregation and apartheid" in Beinart and Dubow (eds), *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth Century South Africa*, New York, Routledge, 1995.

NGOs and individuals from the aid sector.[9] The workshop also served as a conclusion of my research project at NAI.[10]

The passionate discussion about the use of history for freedom and democracy during the years of struggle was partly inspired by international solidarity and exiled academics. In this spirit, the leading thought behind the workshop was to make a transnational attempt to renew the debate over the most important concepts in South African historiography and to add to a revival of the once lively exchange of ideas between progressive academics and the surrounding society.

The tradition of progressive history writing

The changing patterns of research dealing with contemporary history in South Africa reflect deep conflicts external to academia. As a result of the unequal access to education, the historiographical tradition is characterised by the absence of black historians, and the education in and communication of history at the university level have been distinguished by the English liberal tradition's long-standing predominance, although this was challenged by Afrikanerdom during the creation of apartheid and by Marxist tendencies during late apartheid.

For at least 25 years, from the end of the 1960s to the early 1990s, there were in South African historiography two fairly clear, mutually diverging viewpoints on the relationship between capitalism and apartheid, and their presence can still be sensed in new influential works of history.[11] The radical-revisionist viewpoint claimed that apartheid was created by and served capitalist interests that, because of the system, enjoyed access to great quantities of forced, cheap labour and state subsidies. In the view of the radical historians, the rapid growth in the South African economy during most of last century showed that segregation and apartheid were intentional and rational forms

9. Unpublished papers from the conference can be viewed on this website: http://www.jakobsgaardstolten.dk. Choose the path: History Conference | Links to unpublished papers.

10. For a short description of my research, see my former website at NAI: http://www.nai.uu.se/research/areas/archive/historical_research.

11. For example, Neville Alexander, *An Ordinary Country: Issues in the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy in South Africa*, Approaches to Cultural History Series, New York, Berghahn Books, 2002; Louw, P. Eric, *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid*, Westport Connecticut, Praeger, 2004.

of government.[12] The liberal viewpoint has assumed that apartheid was the result of the racist sentiments of Afrikaner nationalists, who dominated political power at least after the Pact government of 1924, and that, contrary to the opinion of revisionists, the system has slowed down economic growth.[13]

The contrasting historical interpretations of the relationship between capitalism and apartheid raised questions about the relative importance of race and class in the development of the South African society, as well as questions about the nature of the relationship between business and government, including the extent to which the government ought to be viewed as a tool of capital, or as an autonomous actor depending only on more indeterminable group interests, such as those of a privileged electorate. These questions were not only of theoretical interest for South Africa, but also important for the development of political strategies. If fractions of capital were opposed to apartheid, they were potential allies in the battle against the system. If, on the other hand, separation of workers according to race supported capitalism, or was perhaps even a condition for the existence of capitalism in South Africa in a certain historical period, then the struggle against the prevailing form of capitalist exploitation might have been an important ingredient in the battle against racial discrimination.[14] As lessons of the struggle showed, these two strategic lines were not totally incompatible.[15]

The liberal-radical history debate which culminated in the late 1980s was on the whole very stimulating for both productivity and quality in South African historical research, and it would, as I see it, be a loss, if this discussion and the related interaction between academia and society should just fade away in favour of some kind of more or less static consensus in the area of basic approaches.

This complex of problems is, despite great societal changes, still relevant at a time when the South African government's policy for economic growth

12. Deacon, Roger, "Structure and Agency: The Historical Development and Theoretical Articulation of South African Marxist Historiography", B.A. Hons. Thesis, Political Science and History, University of Natal, 1986.

13. Thompson, Leonard M., *A History of South Africa*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990/2000.

14. Luckhardt, Ken and Wall, Brenda, *Working for Freedom. Black Trade Union Development in South Africa throughout the 1970s*, World Council of Churches, Geneva, ca. 1981.

15. Marx, Anthony W., *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960–1990*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992.

seems to include the reluctant acceptance of increasing social stratification and poverty.[16] The question of to what extent capitalism was the main reason for brutal social repression along race lines for most of last century, or to what extent capitalism in fact liberated South Africa from outdated political apartheid, still has implications for strategies for social struggle, economic policy choices, possibilities of reconciliation, etc., at least if the preferred course includes the deepening of democracy, the broadening of equality, and the revival of human solidarity.

The end of the Cold War has led to revisions of post-World War II history writing in many countries, also in the western world, in some cases with the purpose of relieving history of its ideological burdens, making it more "objective", or, as in other instances, with the intent to ascribe guilt and shame to old opponents in a continuation of the ideological strife.[17] In a comparative way, the time may have come for the South Africans to take another look at the images and myths of their era of repression in the new light of the fact that their liberation has turned out to be more of a neo-liberal victory than the national democratic revolution that many had expected.[18]

The fall of the Berlin Wall brought political freedom to the peoples of Eastern Europe, but it also resulted in changes in balances of social power worldwide. For many social movements, the outcome has had weakening effects, such as the loss of alternative power bases, organisational discipline, and political education.[19] With the withdrawal of the stakes deployed by the

16. *Economic and Social Rights Report*, 5th, 2002/2003, South African Human Rights Commission, http://www.sahrc.org.za/economic_and%20_social_rights.htm; David Everatt, "The politics of poverty", *Development Update*, 2004, http://www.polity.org.za/pdf/PoliticsOfPoverty.pdf.

17. In the case of my native country, Denmark, for instance, Steen Andersen, *Danmark i det tyske storrum. **Dansk økonomisk tilpasning til Tysklands nyordning af Europa***, Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2003; Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier, *Danmark under den kolde krig*, København, DIIS, 2005.

18. Friedman, Steven, "South Africa's reluctant transition", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 56–69, 1993; Ginsburg, David, "The Democratisation of South Africa: Transition Theory Tested", *Transformation, Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, No. 29, pp. 74–102, University of Natal, Durban, Dept. of Economic History, 1996; Bond, Patrick, *Elite Transformation: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa*, London, Pluto and University of Natal Press, 2000.

19. "Die Zukunft der Solidaritätsbewegung: Tema, Internationale Solidarität", *Blätter Des Izs*, No. 201, pp. 23–46, 1994; Noreena Hertz, *The silent takeover*, The Free Press, 2001; Eddy Maloka, *The South African Communist Party in Exile, 1965–1990*, The Africa Institute of South Africa, 2003, Ch. 6, 7. A Danish social democratic histo-

superpowers in their competition over Africa, most of the continent became more isolated from globalisation.[20] The dwindling faith in socialist solutions has also affected the ideological self-consciousness of left-wing intellectuals.[21] It could be argued that, simultaneously, the objective need for "social defence" has in fact been growing, partly due to the enforcement of neo-liberal policies.[22] Dominant groups, rather than those who are in subaltern positions, stand to gain, if people are conditioned to perceive the basic structures of their world as unchangeable.[23] Against this background, the historical dispute between liberal and Marxist-inspired views is surely still relevant,[24] unless history has in fact ended and social struggle inside nation states has become obsolete.[25]

The modern liberal tradition, sceptical of segregation, had its breakthrough in South Africa with the writings of William Macmillan, Professor of History at the University of the Witwatersrand and was developed further

rian, Søren Mørch, has expressed it this way: "The price of insurance against social upheavals has gone down". Mørch, Søren, *Den sidste Danmarkshistorie. 57 fortællinger af fædrelandets historie*, Cph., Gyldendal, 1996, pp. 434–435.

20. Mark Huband, *The Skull beneath the Skin: Africa after the Cold War*, Boulder, Westview Press, 2001, p. xi.

21. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Rethinking Africa's Globalization*, *Volume I: The Intellectual Challenges,* Trenton, NJ and Asmara, Eritrea, Africa World Press, 2003, p. 59.

22. Ashwin Desai, *We Are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Monthly Review Press, 2002.

23. Neville Alexander, *An Ordinary Country: Issues in the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy in South Africa*, Approaches to Cultural History Series, New York: Berghahn Books, 2002, p. 26.

24. On the question of the relevance of this debate, see Rich, Paul, "Is South African Radical Social History Becoming Irrelevant?", *South African Historical Journal,* Vol. 31, 1994, p. 191; Legassick, Martin (interviewed by Alex Lichtenstein), "The Past and Present of Marxist Historiography in South Africa", *Radical History Review*, Issue 82, 2002 pp. 111–130, 2002. Also Cobley, Alan, "Does Social History Have a Future? The Ending of Apartheid and Recent Trends in South African Historiography", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, September 2001.

25. For international debates on this topic, see Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and the Last Man*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992; Mark Poster, *Cultural History and Postmodernity: Disciplinary Readings and Challenges*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997, pp. 38, 59; Jean Comaroff, "The End of History Again? Pursuing the Past in the Postcolony", Lecture 29 March 2004, Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde, Gent.

by his student C.W. de Kiewiet among others.[26] Writing mainly in the 1920s and 1930s, their accounts of the history of white conquest and African dispossession were self-consciously critical of Theal's earlier settler version of South African history.[27] The development of black poverty alongside and in competition with white poverty, the resurgence of Afrikaner nationalism, and the gradual political awakening of blacks, became major foci of attention. The liberal school of historians was part of the wider community of liberal economists, anthropologists, and sociologists who came into prominence between the two world wars, and whose intellectual foundations were those of classical liberalism.[28] Their work dealt with social issues and economic unification processes and gave greater prominence to the role of blacks in South African history. They evinced a great concern for black welfare, but they did not do in-depth research on black societies themselves.[29]

From the early 1960s, a small group of English-speaking liberal scholars, influenced by the decolonisation of tropical Africa, the civil rights movement in America, and other tendencies, became engaged in professional studies of the history of the black majority in South Africa. For John Omer-Cooper, Leonard Thompson, and the anthropologist Monica Wilson, the history of African societies was "the forgotten factor" in South African history.[30] This new stream of liberal Africanist historical writing also had an anti-apartheid purpose behind it. Wilson and Thompson returned to the key idea in the writings of Macmillan and De Kiewiet: that interaction between all of South

26. Macmillan, William M., *The Cape Colour Question*, London, Faber and Gwyer, 1927; De Kiewiet, C.W., *The Anatomy of the South African Misery*, The Whidden Lectures, Oxford University Press, 1956. Some have retrospectively seen Macmillan as a social democrat, or simply as an economic historian, and no doubt, he was to the left of the main stream of liberals. Others have seen him and especially De Kiewiet more as British imperial historians and Theal as a more genuine South African historian.

27. Theal, George McCall, *Compendium of South African History and Geography*, Vol. 1–2, Lovedale, South Africa, Printed at the Institution Press, 1873, 2. ed. 1876, 3. ed. 1877.

28. Wessel Visser, "Trends in South African Historiography and the Present State of Historical Research", paper presented at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden, 23 September 2004.

29. Smith, Kenneth Wyndham, *The Changing Past: Trends in South African Historical Writing*, Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers, 1988, p. 86.

30. Du Bruyn, J., "The Forgotten Factor Sixteen Years Later: Some Trends in Historical Writing on Precolonial South Africa", *Kleio, Journal of the Department of History*, University of South Africa, Pretoria, Vol. 16, pp. 34–45, 1984.

Africa's people was the main theme in its history. This was a central assertion in their editing of the seminal *Oxford History of South Africa*,[31] a multi-disciplinary work which sought to show both that the history of blacks had to be integrated into the totality of South African history, and that besides conflict, there had been much inter-racial co-operation before the social engineers of the apartheid era took steps to end it.[32]

Nevertheless, the liberal school has been severely criticised. Some researchers have argued that the liberal way of historical thinking has included a built-in market determinism, which deliberately placed the political realisation of a predicted future on the agenda.[33] After disappointing results of early liberal efforts to make segregation work in an acceptable way,[34] main figures of the liberal school claimed from the late 1920s that race prejudice and race separation as such were outdated and irrelevant and were bound to be gradually weakened due to the logic of modern economic rationality. The free market was colour-blind and would, in time, help to liberate suppressed race-groups, so that the close connection between racial and class affiliation would be broken.[35] As it turned out however, the South African reality de-

31. Wilson, Monica and Thompson, Leonard M. (eds), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969–71.

32. Saunders, Christopher, "History Writing and Apartheid: Some Threads", in Prah, Kwesi Kwaa, *Knowledge in Black and White. The Impact of Apartheid on the Production and Reproduction of Knowledge*, Cape Town, Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), 1999.

33. Hirsch, Alan, "Capitalism and Apartheid: South Africa, 1910–1984", review of Merle Lipton's book, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 450–51, Cambridge University Press, 1987; Lundahl, Mats, *Apartheid in theory and practice: An economic analysis*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1992, p. 155.

34. Trapido, Stanley, "The friends of the natives: Merchants, peasants and the political and ideological structures of liberalism in Cape, 1854–1910" in Marks, Shula and Atmore, Anthony (eds), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, Longman, 1980/85, p. 247; Legassick, Martin C., "The frontier tradition in South African historiography", *Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa*, Vol. II, pp. 1–33, University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1971; Legassick, Martin C., *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. Neither Macmillan nor De Kiewiet were part of the liberal involvement in early segregation, which could be defined as segregation initiatives before the Pact government of 1924. Key liberal figures, like Rheinallt Jones, R.F. Alfred Hoernlé, Edgar H. Brookes, Charles T. Loram, and J.H. Pim, were however involved.

35. Frankel, Sally Herbert, "The Position of the Native as a Factor in the Economic

veloped in a somewhat different direction that included an all-embracing legislation meant to maintain racial divisions.

Many would probably argue that, seen in a long-term perspective, history proved the liberals right. However, in the South African situation, their unambiguous connection between economic growth and liberal reforms proved to be highly problematic. Throughout the period of segregation and at least for the first two decades of apartheid, race discrimination did not hamper growth at all.[36] Moreover, at the political level, the liberal thesis had pacifying effects. International solidarity and the activities of the national freedom movements could be considered less important, compared to market forces – if these were just allowed to work.[37]

The liberal doctrine that capitalism in all its stages played a progressive role in undermining racial discrimination seemed shameless to many in the light of the total suppression of the 1960s. Inspired by the growing domestic democratic movement and by international solidarity, radical historians started attacking the liberal view. Many radical academics felt it necessary to distance themselves from the relaxed evolutionary beliefs and more or less

Welfare of the European Population in South Africa", *Journal of the Economic Society of South Africa*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1928, p. 24; De Kiewiet, C.W., *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1941; O'Dowd, Michael C., "The stages of economic growth and the future of South Africa" in Schlemmer, Lawrence and Webster, Eddie (eds), *Chance, Reform, and Economic Growth in South Africa*, Johannesburg, Centre for Applied Social Sciences and Ravan Press, 1978. Based on original paper from 1966.

36. Houghton, Hobart, D. and Dagut, Jenifer (eds), *Source Material on the South African Economy, 1860–1970*, Vol. 1–3, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1972–73; Wolpe, Harold, "Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid", *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 425–56, London, 1972; Moll, Terence, "From Booster to Brake? Apartheid and Economic Growth in Comparative Perspective", in Nattrass, Nicoli and Ardington, Elisabeth (eds), *The Political Economy of South Africa*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1990; Seekings, Jeremy and Nicoli Nattrass, "Apartheid Revisited: Analysing Apartheid as a Distributional Regime", Graduate School of Humanities with the Centre for African Studies Seminar, University of Cape Town, 2000.

37. Vale, Peter and Ungar. S., "South Africa: Why Constructive Engagement Failed", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 2, 1986; Rhoodie, N.J. and Couper, M.P., "South Africa's Perceptions of Political Reform", in Van Vuuren, Rhoodie, Wiehanh, and Wiechers (eds), *South Africa: The Challenge of Reform*, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1988; Merle, Lipton, "The Challenge of Sanctions", *The South African Journal of Economics*, Vol. 57, No. 2, 1989.

collaborative attitudes towards the apartheid state common to some liberals.[38]

The liberal tradition in South Africa contains many moral qualities, but also many unanswered questions, above all concerning the relationship between capitalism and racial discrimination. In a situation clouded by widening social gaps,[39] which could eventually lead African workers and unemployed to challenge fundamental economic assumptions and norms, proponents of liberalism in South Africa can hardly afford to leave these questions unanswered.[40]

An important condition for those radical and Marxist-inspired historical interpretations, which, from the beginning of the 1970s, challenged both the official apartheid ideology and liberal academic dominance, was the recurrence of popular political struggle in apartheid South Africa itself. After the Soweto Uprising in 1976, a growing respect for the militant black resistance influenced the historians. In the last half of the 1980s, the situation in South Africa was characterised by repeated waves of widespread popular protests and the brutal attempts to suppress them. At the same time, the economy moved into a real crisis.[41]

This situation affected the choice of subject matter researched by progressive historians, so that new issues were brought into focus. The process of pro-

38. For example, Houghton, Hobart D., *The South African Economy*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1964, accepting separate development in the last chapters, p. 212; Bromberger, Norman, "An Assessment of Change. Economic Growth and Political Changes in South Africa: A Reassessment" in Schlemmer, Lawrence and Webster, Eddie (eds), *Chance, Reform, and Economic Growth in South Africa*, Centre for Applied Social Sciences and Ravan Press, 1978, defending the system at p. 58. On the other hand as Merle Lipton has made me aware of during our discussions, many progressive political liberals like John Harris, Hugh Lewin, Eddie Daniels, and Patrick Duncan suffered as victims of apartheid.

39. Charles Simkins, "What happened to the distribution of income in South Africa between 1995 and 2001?", University of Witwatersrand, 2004. Published on the Internet by Southern Africa Poverty Reduction Network.

40. Some attempts have been made to keep the critical liberal tradition alive, even if the project of political liberalism has been less than convincing in the post-apartheid setting: Vigne, Randolph, *Liberals against Apartheid. A History of the Liberal Party of South Africa, 1953–68*, London, Macmillan, 1997; Adam, Heribert, Slabbert, Frederik van Zyl, and Moodley, Kogila, *Comrades in Business: Post-Liberation Politics in South Africa*, International Books, 1998.

41. Murray, Martin, *South Africa. Time of Agony, Time of Destiny*, Verso, London, 1987; Gelb, Stephen, *South Africa's Economic Crisis*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1991.

letarianisation, the social effects of industrialisation, the organisations and the culture of the black working class, the strength and flaws of the popular movements, the development of self-consciousness among blacks, and the forgotten struggles in rural areas, became popular fields of research.[42] The trade unions, the ANC, and the Communist Party, were now seen as key agents of radical change and the importance of their historical achievements for the identity of black South Africans grew correspondingly.[43] Studies of popular movements improved the understanding of structural conflicts in South African history. Tom Lodge's overview of black resistance after 1945 and Helen Bradford's comprehensive examination of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, ICU, represent this tendency.[44] Some studies looked into popular culture, such as music and dance, sports and literature. Studies like these broadened the understanding of everyday life for township residents and migrant workers.[45]

A feminist critique also emerged. Jacklyn Cock's *Maids and Madams* was an interview-based social history that revealed the conditions of domestic

42. For example, Van Onselen, Charles, "Worker Consciousness in Black Miners 1900–1920", *Journal of African History*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Cambridge University Press, 1973; Webster, Eddie (ed.), *Essays in Southern African Labour History*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1978; Bozzoli, Belinda (compiled by), *Labour, Townships and Protest. Studies in the social history of the Witwatersrand*, Ravan Press and History Workshop, Johannesburg, 1979; Beinart, William and Colin Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa. Politics & Popular Movements in the Transkei & Eastern Cape 1890–1930*, London, James Currey & University of California Press, 1987.

43. Karis, T., Carter, G.M. and Gerhart, G.M. (eds), *From Protest to Challenge. A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882–1964*, Standford University, 1972–1977; O'Meara, Dan, "The 1946 African Mineworkers Strike and the Political Economy of South Africa", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 2, London, 1975; Lodge, Tom, "The Creation of a Mass Movement: Strikes and Defiance 1950–52", in Hindson (ed.), *Working Papers in South African Studies*, Vol. 3, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1983; Bradford, Helen, *A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924–30*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1987.

44. 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. Also, Lodge, Tom and Nasson, Bill (Mufson, Shubane, Sithole), *All here, and now: Black politics in South Africa in the 1980s*, South Africa Update Series, London, Hurst and Cape Town, David Philip, 1992.

45. Coplan, David, *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and the Theatre*, London, Longman, 1979/85; Mutloatse, Mothobi (ed.), *Umhlaba Wethu*, Johannesburg, Skotaville Publishers 1987.

servants, who were subjected to the threefold suppression of race, class and gender. Cock became the object of both death threats and an attempted dynamite assassination after the publication of her book.[46] Walker, Bozzoli, Unterhalter, Marks and others, also made impressive feminist studies.[47]

Resistance to the ideology of Afrikanerdom became an important part of radical historical studies. Dan O'Meara's book, *Volkskapitalisme*, contributed to the dismantling of more than half a century's idealisation and romanticisation of Afrikaner history and struck a blow against apartheid dogma.[48] O'Meara's investigation persuasively challenged the Boer claim that Afrikanerdom represented an undifferentiated, timeless, ethnic-cultural "Volks unity". He argued that it was primarily economic processes and social interests, not ethnic conflicts, which formed the historical basis of Afrikaner nationalism. Even if some of the early structuralist analyses were quite schematic, this was largely rectified in later works from the radical school.[49]

It should be emphasised that the radical tradition did not come out of nothing. As Magubane demonstrates in his contribution to this collection, socialism and non-racialism have a long history in South Africa, even if some of the Neo-Marxists had difficulties committing to that legacy.[50]

The many passionate interpretations add fascinating dimensions to historical research on South Africa. Grassroots activists across the entire political spectrum have used history as a resource for political engagement. It is therefore not surprising that popular history was disseminated far and wide

46. Cock, Jacklyn, *Maids and Madams*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1980.

47. Walker, Cheryl, *Women and Resistance in South Africa*, London, Onyx Press, 1982; Bozzoli, Belinda, "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Oxford University Press, 1983; Unterhalter, Elaine, "Class, Race and Gender", from Lonsdale (ed.), *South Africa in Question*, London, 1988; Marks, Shula, *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, The Women's Press, London, 1988.

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

49. Dan O'Meara acknowledges this in his later book, *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948–1994*, Ravan Press / Ohio University Press, 1996.

50. Walker, Ivan L. and Weinbren, Ben, *2000 Casualties. A History of the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement in the Union of South Africa*, Johannesburg, 1961; Bunting, Brian, *The Rise of the South African Reich*, Penguin African Library, 1964; Simons, H.J. and Simons, R.E., *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850–1950*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969; La Guma, Alex (ed.), *Apartheid. A Collection of Writings on South African Racism by South Africans*, International Publishers, New York, 1971.

during the last 25 years of the anti-apartheid struggle. At the University of the Witwatersrand, academic engagement with popular history developed within the History Workshop, which explored and published "counter-histories". Committed "people's history" and "history from below" distinguish these works, which moved the boundaries of historical materialism.[51] Luli Callinicos' books, for example, can be seen as expressions of a development that many radical historians underwent during the 1980s. The first volume, *Gold and Workers*, is an undisguised, class-based counter-history. The second, *Working Life*, analyses social structures by means of an in-depth, experience-based methodology without forgetting the class point of view. These and later volumes were used as alternative teaching material by local union education committees, amateur history writers, and teachers in need of meaningful and relevant learning material in the classroom.[52]

Radical history changed considerably during late apartheid, partly because of the influence from modern social history. Social history, on the other hand, was transformed through the increased interest in the history of working class organisations, as Murray has established.[53] The fact, that South African labour history soon developed a broader understanding, can be seen as a realisation of the close relationship between economy and politics: the black trade unions were forced to operate within a broader social framework and were frequently organised outside the workplaces in order to survive. Social history, with its emphasis on popular culture and group solidarity across class and race barriers, was, in some ways, more in harmony with the growing political mobilisation.

It is still debatable to what extent the historians of the radical-revisionist school have managed to put over their original ideas successfully. It was Bozzoli's opinion that large scale syntheses, which, taken together, could constitute a new South African historiography, would require many in-depth,

51. Saunders, Christopher, "Radical History – the Wits Workshop Version – Reviewed", *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, 1991, pp. 160–166.

52. Callinicos, Luli, *Gold and Workers, 1886–1924. A People's 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; Callinicos, Luli, *A Place in the City. Rand on the eve of apartheid. A People's History of South Africa*, Vol. 3, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1993.

53. Murray, Martin, "The Triumph of Marxist Approaches in South African Social and Labor History", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 23, 1988.

detailed studies of the same type as van Onselen's.[54] That sort of thorough source study is extremely time-consuming and perhaps did not appeal much to the exile community of younger radical scholars or to the international solidarity community trying to achieve visible, practically applicable results in the 1980s.

Despite numerous well-defined analyses, the radical-revisionist school have never presented a complete alternative synthesis of South African history. Examples of partial syntheses can be found in the introductory chapters of the three collective works Shula Marks has edited together with Tony Atmore, Richard Rathbone and Stanley Trapido respectively.[55] Even though the radical school fulfilled a need for corrections to earlier historical writing, the call for a new synthesis, a general history, which, under a progressive government, could have the same potency as Walker's and Davenport's general history works had under prior liberal academic dominance,[56] has not disappeared.[57]

Developments in society, government changes of policy, and new global tendencies have challenged the ideological relevance of both Afrikaner nationalist and liberal historiography.[58] First and foremost, however, Marxist-

54. Bozzoli, Belinda and Delius, Peter, "Radical History and South African Society", *Radical History Review*, Vol. 46, No. 7, pp. 14–45, 1990. For example, Van Onselen, Charles, *Chibaro. African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900–1933*, London, 1976; Van Onselen, Charles, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886–1914*, *New Babylon,* Vol. 1, *New Nineveh,* Vol. 2, Longmans, 1982. As well as the more recent work: Van Onselen, Charles, *The Seed Is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, A South African Sharecropper, 1894–1985,* Johannesburg, David Philip, 1996.

55. Marks, Shula and Anthony Atmore (eds), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa,* Longman, 1980/85; Marks, Shula and Richard Rathbone (eds), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa. African class formation, culture and consciousness 1870–1930*, London, Longman, 1982/1985; Marks, Shula and Stanley Trapido (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, London, Longman, 1988.

56. Walker, Eric A., *A History of South Africa*, London, Longman, Green and Co., 1928; Davenport, T.R.H., *South Africa. A Modern History*, London, Macmillan, 1977. Later version with Chris Saunders: Davenport, Rodney and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa. A Modern History*, Fifth Edition, London, Macmillan, 2000.

57. Some attempts inspired by the progressive tradition have been published recently, for example, Glaser, Daryl, *Politics and Society in South Africa: A critical introduction*, SAGE Publications, 2001; Maylam, Paul, *South Africa's racial past the history and historiography of racism, segregation, and apartheid*, Research in migration and ethnic relations series, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001.

58. Mark Sanders, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*, Philosophy and Post-

inspired historians need to do some painful soul-searching, and while several of the radical-revisionists were engaged in that practice some years ago,[59] these attempts seem to have faded out. Left intellectuals will have to develop new convincing analyses to explain why popular black activism should focus on socialist oriented reforms. If capitalist exploitation and racist oppression are not inseparable in Africa, then South African socialism's most important rationale will have to be based on something other than basic anti-racism.

Growing historiographical consensus

The debate between historians has been quite heated at times and liberal allegations that engaged radicals have often adopted a warlike tone in their attempts to mobilise the anti-apartheid opinion are probably justified. To the extent that this hostility was directed against de facto supporters of apartheid, it is perhaps defensible, but in the light of the victory over apartheid, it is of course easier to acknowledge that this attitude was sometimes unfair to progressive political liberals. It is however interesting in this connection that only few liberal researchers have made an effort to distinguish between early liberal segregationists, well meaning political liberals (or social democrats), economic liberalists, etc. Actually, one could argue that the most enlightened liberals have been used to give credibility to liberalism as such.[60] Then again, left liberals were occasionally criticised heavily by right-wing liberals for not defending apartheid reforms.[61]

Was liberal pragmatism harmful? Some of the social conflicts in South Africa, which the liberals wanted to avoid during late apartheid, were clearly

coloniality Series, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2002.

59. Jewsiewicki, Bogumil, "African Historical Studies: Academic Knowledge as 'Usable Past' and Radical Scholarship", *African Studies Review*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 1989; Freund, Bill, "Radical History Writing and the South African Context", *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, pp. 154–160, 1990; Deacon, Roger A., "Hegemony, Essentialism and Radical History in South Africa", *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, pp. 166–184.

60. Adam, Heribert, "Predicaments and Options of Critical Intellectuals at South African Universities", in van den Berghe (ed.), *The Liberal Dilemma in South Africa*, New York, 1979; Rainer Erkens, F. van Zyl Slabbert, and Donald Woods, "South Africa, a Change for Liberalism?", papers presented during a seminar of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in December 1983, Liberal Verlag, Sankt Augustin, 1985.

61. Wentzel, Jill, *The Liberal Slideaway*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1995. Also, John Kane-Berman's late writings.

necessary and unavoidable. Moreover, some of them still are – which is exactly why this debate is still topical.

The socialist expectations of the 1980s suffered severe setbacks in the 1990s, despite the victory over apartheid. Over time, there has been a growing consensus between progressive liberals and compromising radicals, and it must be conceded that in the work of many post-radicals, one can trace developments of converging views, where, in the analyses, form of production or class is no longer regarded as decisive for human relations.[62]

Attempts to amalgamate liberal and radical views, concerning the relationship between racism and its social background, into broader and more generally formulated statements within South African historiography will however have a difficult time getting very far, as I see it. Racism always appears as part of a more extensive complex of motives and views,[63] and it will only be possible to agree on a common view on, for instance, the effects of socio-economic changes, if this view is based on a somewhat concordant analysis of the relationship between racism and the underlying interests of the various sections of the population. In the same manner, it is only possible to find common agreement on the effects of economic growth on income distribution, or similar central factors, if the analysis is based on shared understandings of the mechanisms that determine the division of income and welfare in society. This in itself presupposes a certain agreement on the role of the economy, government power, and ideology in communal or societal processes.[64] Any attempt to ignore the nature of the liberal-radical controversy will therefore run into some general problems.[65] The judgments of historians in cases of existing or past reality depend to a certain degree on their ideas of an alternative society. Despite a great deal of new thinking focused on general values, ethics, religion, culture and ecology, for example, new visions will probably in the final instance still have to relate to more or less clearly formulated liberal or socialist welfare-oriented, ideological models.[66]

62. Some saw this tendency very early. Lonsdale, John, "From Colony to Industrial State: South African Historiography as Seen from England", *Social Dynamics*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1983, p. 71.

63. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (eds), *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1999.

64. Simon Clarke, *Social Theory, Psychoanalysis and Racism*, Macmillan, 2003.

65. **Bobbio, Noberto,** *Destra e sinistra*, Danish version, *Højre og venstre. Årsager til og betydning af en politisk skelnen*, Hans Reitzels Forlag, 1995.

66. Bond, Patrick, "From Racial to Class Apartheid: South Africa's Frustrating Decade

Could it be that the disappearance of a concrete socialist developmental model, however incomplete, has made the radical intellectuals less radical and their ideology less conspicuous?[67] It seems that the places and forums where the more fundamental questions are left open and the debate has been focused on narrow historical problems, and pedagogical and practical solutions, are – unfortunately, as I see it – also the places where some kind of research debate has developed despite the less prominent role the history profession now plays.[68] Even where "values in education" are in the centre of discussions, the genuine ideological debate is often marginalised.[69] In some parts of the world, clashes over what, on the surface, appear to be religious and cultural issues have produced a backlash against rational social movements theory in public and expert discussions, but so far South African academics have largely avoided that development.

However, the present situation holds both contradictions and possibilities. There is evidence that undogmatic, post-structuralist historians are increasing their influence at the English-speaking universities in some kind of symbiosis with open-minded liberals and it can perhaps be argued that the practical influence of former radicals is actually greater now than in their celebrated heyday of the 1970s and '80s.[70] A parallel development can also be traced, however: a mounting liberal self-confidence increasing from a modest level in the late apartheid era, where some liberals adopted an almost socialist rhetoric.[71] Now, we are approaching an almost reversed situation where many post-radical intellectuals have apparently forgotten Marxist notions altogether. Concurrent with the consolidation of South Africa's democracy,

of Freedom", *Monthly Review*, March 2004.

67. Lazar, David, "Competing Economic Ideologies in South Africa's Economic Debate", *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 47, No. 4, 1996.

68. "History and Archaeology Report", Department of Education, updated version, 2002.

69. The Report of the Working Group on Values in Education, The Values in Education Initiative, Department of Education, 2001.

70. Through representation in institutions of history and heritage, work in government departments, and taking part in the regional network of SADET (www.sadet.co.za), for example.

71. Butler, Jeffrey, Richard Elphick and David Welsh (eds), *Democratic Liberalism in South Africa. Its History and Prospect*, Wesleyan University Press, Middeltown, Connecticut, 1987, pp. 188, 258, 399, 409; Villa-Vicencio, Charles, *Trapped in Apartheid: A Socio-Theological History of English-Speaking Churches*, New York, Orbis Books, 1988, p. 131.

there has been a growing disarticulation between progressive scholarship and social movements.[72]

Dogged radical scholarship, including what is now officially called the "ultra-left",[73] will still exist in university milieus, as will probably a few Afrikaner nationalist, hedgehog positions, but perhaps the immediate future for South African historical research will appear as a symbiotic hegemony consisting of all the progressive streams from liberal Africanism and radical social history to ANC-informed strategic thinking. This would certainly appear quite natural in the wake of the national compromises of the reconciliation period.

The severe social inequalities that South Africa faces makes it, nevertheless, difficult to believe that a paradigmatic harmony between essentially different ideologies can endure for very long. The discussion about South Africa's controversial past, and its significance for policy choices in the new South Africa, will most likely arise again in a way that resembles previous controversies between liberal and radical scholars.[74]

Black history writing

During segregation and apartheid, the writing of South African history was marked by the absence of black historians. With a political climate that did not exactly invite critical intellectual questioning and an official regime ideology based on a view of history, which saw the white man as destined to superiority, it is not surprising that the great majority of South Africans, already excluded from parliamentarian political life, were also denied access to their

72. Blade Nzimande, "Articulation and disarticulation between progressive intellectuals, the state and progressive mass and worker organizations: A case for 'Public Sociology?'", speech at the Congress of the American Sociological Association, 15 August 2004.

73. Thabo Mbeki, *Statement,* ANC Policy Conference, Kempton Park, 27 September 2002.

74. At this point in time, a limited number of historians are keeping the liberal-radical history debate alive with new works, including Hein Marais, *South Africa – Limits to Change: The Political Economy of Transition*, Zed Books, New York, 2001; Bond, Patrick, *Cities of Gold, Townships of Coal*, Africa World Press, 2000; Terry Bell and Dumisa Ntsebeza, *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth*, Verso, 2003; Seekings, Jeremy and Nattrass, Nicoli, *Class, race, and inequality in South Africa*, Yale University Press, 2006.

own history. The whites had colonised history and their restricted education did not give black people any feeling of a past they could identify with.[75]

It will be a problematic task for the historiographers to outline in greater detail in what way, and with what effects, white apartheid history was forced on black students and academics, but it goes without saying that the devaluated image of history has contributed to the fact that so few blacks have been attracted to the study of history at universities.

Even if there are examples of outstanding black history writers,[76] they have been almost invisible in the institutional communication of history, as they largely still are, despite governmental initiatives,[77] idealistic programmes in history departments,[78] and a rising interest from white authors of history.[79]

75. As stated by Majeke, Nosipho, *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest*, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Society of Young Africa, 1952, Introduction (according to Jay Naidoo, Majeke was a pseudonym for Dora Taylor); Wilson, Monica (ed.), *Freedom for My People. The Autobiography of Z.K. Matthews: Southern Africa 1901–1968*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1981.

76. Molema, S.M., *Chief Moroka. His Life, His Times, His Country and His People*, Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House and Book Depot, 1951; Luthuli, Albert, *Let My People Go: An Autobiography*, London, Collins, 1962; Mbeki, Govan, *South Africa: The Peasants Revolt*, England, Penguin, 1964; Mokgethi, Motlhabi, *The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid: A Social-Ethical Analysis*, Skotaville history series, Johannesburg, Skotaville Press, 1984; Gebhard, Wolfgang, *Shades of Reality: Black Perceptions on South African History*, Die Blaue Eule, Englishsprachige Litteraturen Afrika, 3, Essen, 1991; Modisane, Bloke, *Blame Me on History*, London, Penguin Books, 1990; Plaatje, Sol T. (Comaroff, Willan and Reed (eds), *Mafeking Diary: A Black Man's View of a White Man's War*, Cambridge, Meridor, 1990; February, Vernon, *The Afrikaners of South Africa*, Monographs from the African Studies Centre, Leiden, 1991; Mbeki, Govan, *The Struggle for Liberation in South Africa: A short history*, Mayibuye History and Literature Series, No. 13, Cape Town, David Philip, 1992.

77. For instance Rob Sieborger et al., *Turning Points in History*, Textbook series commissioned by the Department of Education, STE Publishers, 2004; several works from South African Democracy Education Trust, www.sadet.co.za and Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), www.hsrc.ac.za.

78. For example Guy, Jeff, *Creating History. An introduction to historical studies: A resource book,* Durban, University of Natal, 1996; History Department at UND http://www.history.und.ac.za; Department of History at UWC http://www.uwc.ac.za/arts/history/index.htm.

79. Just to mention a few: Van Onselen, Charles, *The Seed Is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894–1985*, Johannesburg, David Philip, 1996; Jeff Guy, *The View across the River: Harriette Colenso and the Zulu Struggle against Imperialism*, Reconsiderations in Southern African History, University Press of Virginia, 2002;

White history writers have narrated the history of Africans in South Africa from the very first encounters.[80] There is nothing new in that and anything else would actually have been strange. Theal wrote more about Africans than most historians since have done.[81] Macmillan, De Kiewiet, Monica Wilson,[82] Marxist-inspired historians,[83] and ANC-friendly scholars,[84] have all shown a keen interest in "the native question" as it was called in the early days. The question remains, however: How many of these writings have been genuine "black" history serving the underprivileged majority of the population?[85] It has been said, for instance, that much of the social history produced in South Africa draws its strength from moving evocations of the pain and suffering

Karel Schoeman, *The Griqua Captaincy of Philippolis, 1826–1861*, Protea Book House, 2002; Maureen Rall, *Peaceable Warrior: The Life and Times of Sol T. Plaatje*, Kimberley, Sol Plaatje Educational Trust, 2003.

80. Gordon, Ruth E. and Talbot, Clive J. (compiled by), *From Dias to Vorster: Source Materials on South African History 1488–1975*, Goodwood, Nasou, 1977; 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.

81. Theal, George McCall, *The Yellow and Dark-Skinned People of Africa South of the Zambezi. A Description of the Bushmen, the Hottentots, and Particularly the Bantu, with Fifteen Plates and Numerous Folklore Tales of These Different People*, New York, Negro University Press, 1969, originally published 1910.

82. Macmillan, William Miller, *Bantu, Boer and Britton: The Making of the South African Native Problem*, London, Faber and Gwyer, 1929; Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, Oxford University Press, 1936; De Kiewiet, C.W., "Social and Economic Developments in Native Tribal Life", in Menians, E.A. (ed.), *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol. VIII, Cambridge University Press, 1959.

83. Innes, Duncan and O'Meara, Dan, "Class Formation and Ideology: The Transkei region", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 7, pp. 69–86,1976; Peires, J.B, "Suicide or Genocide? Xhosa Perceptions of the Nongqawuse Catastrophe", *Radical History Review*, Vol. 46, No. 7, 1990; Onselen, Charles van, "Race and Class in the South African Countryside: Cultural Relations in the Sharecropping Economy of Transvaal, 1900–1950", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 95, 1990, pp. 99–123.

84. Carter, Gwendolen M., Karis, T. and Stultz, N.M., *South Africa's Transkei: The Politics of Domestic Colonialism*, London, Heinemann, 1967; Marx, Anthony W., *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960–1990*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992.

85. "Black" in the inclusive meaning of the word expressed by Steve Biko in *I Write What I Like. A Selection of His Writings*, (Stubbs, Aelred (ed.)), London, Heinemann Educational, 1979, p. 48. See also Taylor, Rupert, "Is Radical History 'White'?" *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 27, 1992, in a discussion started by William Worger.

experienced by ordinary people, treating blacks mostly as victims.[86] What is needed is for African historians to write history arising from African agency on a scholarly level.[87] This is necessary if the research community under democratic majority rule is not to appear as an exclusive white island, a colonial remnant from the apartheid period. Such a situation would be an irony of fate considering that the English-speaking university communities over many years have advocated for racial integration in principle.

After more than 10 years of freedom, the situation in this field has changed less than expected.[88] Specialist literature written by black historians does not take up much space on the shelves of the university libraries. This is the most serious weakness of all in South African historiography, and a great responsibility rests on the institutionalised historical science as well as on the government and the popular movements. There are, however, positive signs of a new beginning,[89] even if neighbouring branches of social science seem to have come further than history.[90]

86. Elof, Callie, "'History from Below': 'n Oorsig, *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 25, p. 199; Eddy Maloka, "Haul the historians before the TRC", *The Sowetan*, 23 August 2003; some of the literature surrounding the TRC, including an interview with H.E. Stolten for the Danish weekly *Weekendavisen*, 30 October 1998. The French historian Alan Corbin calls this kind of social history "dolorisme".

87. Such as Magubane, Bernard M., *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1979; Nxumal, Jabulani 'Mzala', *The National Question in the Writing of South African History: A critical survey of some major tendencies,* DDP Working Technologies, No. 22, the Open University, 1992; Archie Sibeko (Zola Zembe) with Joyce Leeson, *Freedom in Our Lifetime,* Indicator Press, University of Natal, 1996.

88. Nico Cloete and Ian Bunting, *Higher Education Transformation*, Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), Cape Town, 2000; Jonathan Jansen, "The State of Higher Education in South Africa: From Massification to Mergers", in Adam Habib, John Daniel and Roger Southall (eds), *State of the Nation*, HSRC Press, 2003; Hans Erik Stolten, "History writing and history education in post-apartheid South Africa", in *Disseminating and Using Research Results from the South*, Report No. 3, 2004, edited by Greta Bjørk Gudmundsdottir, Institute for Educational Research, University of Oslo.

89. Switzer, Les and Mohamed Adhikari (eds.), *South Africa's Resistance Press. Alternative Voices in the Last Generation under Apartheid*, Ohio University Center for International Studies, Africa Series No. 74, 2000; Eddy Maloka, *Basotho and the Mines: A Social History of Labour Migrancy in Lesotho and South Africa, c.1890–1940*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 2004.

90. For example, Olufemi, Olusola, "Feminisation of poverty among the street homeless women in South Africa", *Development Southern Africa*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2000, pp. 221–

History on South Africa has great potential and, despite a complicated and paradoxical situation, there is sufficient information to sustain positive expectations. A significant tendency is that universities abroad are reaching out for collaboration with institutions in the new South Africa. South African based historians now write in greater numbers for international journals and participate in more international conferences than ever before. Some of the well-known universities attract considerable numbers of undergraduates from the best universities in the world. The isolation of the apartheid period is definitely over.

The articles

The editorial work on this collection has been an arduous task. However, it has also been extremely rewarding and entertaining, and a learning process in itself. Some of the contributions to this book are quite controversial. Social scientists are humans. They disagree. They become committed. They have different political attitudes. Many of them are activists in one form or another. At the conference in Copenhagen, and in this book, we have tried to make room for divergent views and temperaments to give a broad and inclusive picture of South African historiography.

The contributions on history and nation-building

Saul Dubow's article "Thoughts on South Africa" serves as a general introduction to South African historiography in this anthology. The problem of what the South African nation is and who the South Africans are, as defined by history, remains fundamental. The questions Dubow asks are central for our historical understanding: How was South Africa conceived and imagined? What form did ideas about South Africans and South African societies take, and how was the South African "problem" defined over time?

Dubow reminds us that the endeavour for national unification is not exactly new in South Africa. His article offers a concentrated overview with focus on the creation of national identity, which was of course not an obvious process for the native peoples of South Africa, since they were excluded from,

234; Sakhela Buhlungu, "The state of trade unionism in post-apartheid South Africa", in Adam Habib, John Daniel and Roger Southall (eds), *State of the Nation. South Africa 2003–2004*, Ch. 8, pp. 184–203, Human Sciences Research Council, 2003.

not included in, that nation.[91] He writes with impressive intuition about early black history-related writing and shows how social anthropology, from the beginning of the twentieth century, discovered the dynamics of African societies, but at the same time, developed a tendency to focus on particular tribal groups in a messy interplay with emerging concepts of segregation.

Dubow uncovers the extent to which the history of the black majority has been absent in the works of white historians. He outlines the emerging Africanism in early black historical literature and describes the 1940s as a point of intersection when it comes to blacks identifying themselves as South Africans. He also presents the dilemma of non-racialist denying of the existence of racial and ethnic groupings, on the one hand, and the de facto acceptance of multi-racialism as in the different branches of the Congress Alliance and in the "Rainbow Notion", on the other.

Dubow makes an important point when he demands more openness around the identity of the author and his/her motivation in the writing of history. His paper convincingly explains ideas and concepts of history and provokes the question whether Africanist views deserve more attention from historians.

Colin Bundy's contribution to the collection "New nation, new history" supports the view that history in the 1970s and 1980s became the master tool of intellectual resistance, partly because South African historians had sought a praxis extending beyond the university world, translating historical knowledge into popular, accessible expressions.[92]

Bundy traces the first post-apartheid warnings of inter-disciplinary anxiety to the very year of 1994.[93] The political project of the new ANC-led government shifted quite rapidly in a direction that confused left-of-centre academics. A growing gap between what the academy had to offer and what the state wanted is identified by Bundy. Apparently, many South African his-

91. Hamilton, Carolyn, "Historiography and the Politics of Identity in South Africa", paper presented at the conference on "Problematising History and Agency: From Nationalism to Subalternity", Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1997, pp. 17–18.

92. Also, Etherington, Norman, "Edward Palmer Thompson", *Southern African Review of Books*, Vol. 5, No. 6, 1993, p. 5.

93. Etherington, Norman, "Fissures in the Post-Apartheid Academy", *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 31, 1994, pp. 206–7; Freund, Bill, "The Art of Writing History", *Southern African Review of Books,* Sep/Oct 1994, p. 24; Maylam, Paul "Tensions within the Practice of History", *South African Historical Journal,* Vol. 33, 1995, pp. 3–12.

torians have been caught up in different types of "struggle history" and now remain stranded in some kind of limbo.

Bundy registers the demoralising effects of postmodern critiques in South Africa, as elsewhere, and the turn to issues like ethnicity, nationality and nationhood. He also has relevant reservations about individualised and narrow identity history. The primary enquiry in his analysis remains the "National Question" and he considers it a serious problem to find out what political, economic, or moral bridge can span the contradiction between a juridical assertion of common citizenship and the reality of difference, separateness, and inequality in the new South Africa.

Bundy discovers three major discursive attempts to narrate the new nation, namely the "Rainbow Nation", the "African Renaissance", and "Ethnic Particularism" and he observes the optimistic multiculturalism of the rainbow nation fading out from the mid-1990s, when many black intellectuals and editors began to distance themselves from the language of reconciliation and instead adopted notions of more or less outspoken African nationalism.

Elaine Unterhalter's article "Truth rather than justice" debates the craftsmanship of the historians in their work with gender relations and with the Truth Commission. The article points to the relatively low priority of women's human rights in the work of the TRC as well as in the history writing of the democratic movement in general. The author's equating of lifetime with political time and her focus on the concept of space represent refreshing new angles. From a literary perspective, Unterhalter seeks to distinguish between autobiographical writing, reflecting the meaning of history, and historical scholarship conducted by professional historians.

Her focus on mentality, changing identity, and personal experience as factors in the creation of historical consciousness adds new qualities to the debate and raises questions such as: How does identity become linked to ideas? How do you take on an identity?

The Swedish anthropologist Anna Bohlin's contribution "Claiming land and making memory" examines how the notion of heritage is employed within a specific political initiative: the Land Restitution Programme. Within this programme, dispossessed or displaced communities are encouraged to mobilise their local histories in order to obtain compensation for lost land. Bohlin explores the contradictory role of heritage as a political resource in a nation-building project, as well as a social, cultural, and economic resource for the local communities involved. While she was researching the memories of forced removals from a small community in Kalk Bay in the Western

Cape, Bohlin became directly involved in the land claim process. Partly as a result of her fieldwork, former residents, who had been forced to leave Kalk Bay after it was declared a white Group Area in 1967, decided to participate in the programme of land restitution and submit claims for the homes they left behind. The paper illustrates the extent to which people "on the ground" can engage with official projects, and thereby partly shape the outcome of the process.

This study also brings up the differences between the TRC and the Land Restitution Programme. In contrast to the TRC, the role of memory in the Land Commission was mainly instrumental. However, despite not being explicitly designed as such, the Land Restitution Programme can also be seen as a site of production of new collective memory. The nation-wide collection of land claims forms a unique memory bank of cases of displacement and dispossession. While the TRC was event-oriented, the land claim documents highlight structural injustices experienced by ordinary South Africans.[94] Bohlin argues that because the restitution programme was not explicitly designed to produce new histories, the memories that emerged out of the land claim process escaped some of the constraints posed by more institutionalised attempts at shaping history in present day South Africa.

In his article "Reflections on practising applied history", Martin Legassick outlines a concept for contemporary historical research, which he calls "applied history". This approach illustrates how ordinary people's history connects to present day conflicts in administration and politics. It is a kind of history that will bring historians out of the "ivory tower" of academia. In the cases mentioned by Legassick, historians have worked together with communities of "claimants", people with a specific and instrumental interest in history. In this way, research in historical injustices can be used practically to satisfy the wronged, proving the usefulness of history in present practical matters.

Legassick's emphasis on personal experiences relating to museum history, his inside description of the progressing work in the South African Democracy Education Trust and the South African History Project, together with his account of the problems surrounding the school history curriculum provide a vibrant picture of some of the most important South African historical

94. On the debate on the Truth Commission, see Ann Langwadt, "Healing history, narrating trauma. History and the TRC", paper presented at the conference "Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries", Copenhagen, 22–23 August 2002.

activities together with some principal considerations on how to use oneself as a historian.[95]

Thiven Reddy's contribution "From apartheid to democracy" presents a theoretical overview of the analytic discourses, parameters, categories, and criteria relevant for analysing the history of the transition process.

In some studies of democratic transition, the South African case is viewed as a primary example of a "transition by transplacement". Reddy's paper challenges this representation as one-sided and argues that the dominant discourse very often organises the story of the South African transition in a particular way by relying on a familiar narrative structure. Reddy criticises standard transitology theory for its narrow definition of democracy, its reliance on conventional metaphors to frame its study of democratisation, and its overemphasis on political institutions.[96] He also explores two notions that usually occupy a subordinate position in the dominant narrative of change: first the notion of "the masses", particularly its role in both regime and opposition elite discourses, and secondly the association between violence and elite negotiations.[97]

The chapters dealing with memory and heritage

Gary Baines' contribution "The politics of public history" forms a bridge between those chapters dealing with history and nation-building and those dealing with heritage. He views the recasting of history and public memory in post-apartheid South Africa as an explicitly political process. In his analysis,

95. On the curriculum debate, see also Seleti, Yonah, "Changing the Landscape of School History Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Prospects and Challenges, 2000–2002", paper presented at the conference "Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries", Copenhagen, 22–23 August 2002.

96. A discussion of Reddy's paper can be found in Strandsbjerg, Jeppe, "Criticism and Knowledge Production of the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy in South Africa – a Reaction to Thiven Reddy", paper presented at the conference "Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries", Copenhagen, 22–23 August 2002.

97. A different angle to this discussion can be found in Gunnarsen, Gorm, "Leaders or Organizers against Apartheid: Cape Town 1976–1984", a PhD thesis from University of Copenhagen, 2002, which was summarised in a paper for the NAI/CAS conference "Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries", Copenhagen 22–23 August, 2002: "The tricameral boycott of 1984 and the democratization of South Africa".

the shift in political power in 1994 has gradually been followed by attempts to renegotiate the meaning of the South African past, so that it will reflect both the experiences of the black majority and the new elite's demand for stability. The heritage industry has become particularly involved in the process of reconciliation as it often seeks to promote a common history, which glosses over struggles of a conflict-ridden past. At the same time, the emergence of new kinds of identity politics has nevertheless resulted in competing claims to the ownership of that past. Baines' article examines how certain heritage projects and museum displays reflect the tensions that exist between an official history that validates nation-building and the public memories of groups that seek to preserve their own identities. Through case studies on museums in Port Elizabeth and Denmark, Baines argues for the acknowledgment of a principal difference between history and memory.

Christopher Saunders' first article in this collection "The transformation of heritage" offers an overview of developments in the field of heritage sites and museums. This area has seen expansion in the use of history with the establishment of a number of new museums. This development could be viewed as an extension of progressive popular history or as an advance of New Patriotism. In some cases, it can also be interpreted more negatively as tourist propaganda or as the privatisation of history.

Saunders follows this process of restructuring from the time of the transfer of political power in 1994. The relations between historians and other heritage practitioners are discussed. Principled and political considerations around historical naming are problematised and disputes over exhibits of indigenous people are observed. The construction of new, and the removal of old, public monuments is debated. Saunders argues that historians provide a broad understanding of what happened in the past, while those involved with heritage are mostly concerned with specific aspects of that past. His critique of the Freedom Park project stands as a defence of pluralism and his appraisal of the District Six Museum challenges new national myth building. The dangers of streamlining official history are stressed in this article.

The South African War of 1899–1902 had a significant and enduring impact both on society and on history writing. It assumed a central place in Afrikaner historical consciousness and fed into the rise of Afrikaner nationalism during the first part of the last century.

With majority rule in the new South Africa, the cultural meaning of the war became more of a contested terrain than before. Several competing groups have tried to reshape the significance of the war along different lines

and the aim of Albert Grundlingh's article "Reframing remembrance" is to disaggregate these permutations and to elucidate their purpose.

It seems that at least in some areas, history in South Africa is very much alive. Heritage and various kinds of popular history arouse as much interest as ever, as can be seen from the great number of books published to mark the centenary of the Boer War. Heritage studies have also been a growth area at South African universities, and not only for antiquarian reasons.[98] "The Heritage Industry invokes a sentimentalised past which makes bearable a sordid and painful present", as Jeff Guy has put it.[99]

According to Grundlingh, the ANC-government had some problems developing its view on the historical conflict between Afrikaners and English-speaking whites in a direction that is relevant for blacks. As it turned out, some of the high profile events during the centenary celebration were actually used by black communities to address pressing issues of poverty alleviation. Grundlingh enumerates several different cases of present use and misuse of the history of the South African War, including the white fear that the counting of black war graves could make the Afrikaner history of suffering seem less important, and, as another case in contrast to this, how some Afrikaners have used the construction of a shared anti-imperialist past as a basis from where the old white elite could speak to the new black elite. Statements from President Mbeki show that he is open to this approach.[100] The use of battlefield tourism is also discussed. The killing fields of yesteryear are analysed as the potential money-spinners of today.

In his article "Apartheid in the museum", Georgi Verbeeck critically analyses the newly established Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg. This museum is destined to serve as a mirror for the new South Africa trying to come to terms with its past. It has provoked both admiration and criticism. To some degree, it meets the actual needs of the majority to identify with the past. Critics like Verbeeck, however, point at a growing tendency to create a new nationalistic discourse. In their eyes, the museum constitutes a controversial attempt to close the history dialogue by locking away the memory of apartheid. Verbeeck also draws attention to problematic connections between

98. Also 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.

99. Guy, Jeff, "Battling with Banality", *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, Vol. 18, pp. 156–193.

100. President Mbeki, "Address at the ceremony to hand over the garden of remembrance Freedom Park", 8 March 2004.

the funding of heritage sites and certain people from the business world in need of absolution for their earlier de facto apartheid support.

Martin Murray's article "Urban space, architectural design, and the disruption of historical memory" is a piece of penetrating research in present South African city architecture seen from a historical viewpoint.

In the aftermath of the 1994 change of power, propertied urban residents have in ever-increasing numbers retreated behind fortifications, barriers, and walls. Fortified enclaves of all sorts have resulted in the privatisation of public space. The creation of themed entertainment destinations, like heritage theme parks, has produced new kinds of congregating, social spaces that are, in the classical liberal sense, neither fully public nor private. Whereas the historical lines of cleavage during the apartheid era typically crystallised around the extremes of white affluence and black impoverishment, the new divisions go hand in hand with a post-apartheid rhetoric that in Murray's view has been transformed into a defence of privilege and social status despite the egalitarian discourses of non-racialist nation-building and rainbowism. Taken together, these practices have led to new forms of exclusion, and separation. Murray's paper reveals the social functions of enclosed institutions like the Waterfront that are made apparently inclusive by the use of cultural heritage. The article unmasks how the use of invented traditions in styled cocooned areas can disguise the meaning of class stratification.

Conflicting views of history

As the first contribution in Part Three of this book, dealing with differing interpretations of South African history, Bernhard Magubane's article "Whose memory – whose history" argues that colonial history writing was deliberately constructed to justify genocidal wars.[101] After 1910, when the fact of conquest had been firmly established, new methods were, in Magubane's view, used to reduce black people to objects. The crude racism of Theal was replaced by a liberal discourse that used much energy to explore whether the policies of segregation were compatible with capitalist growth.[102] After the Second World

101. This could be true for writings like: Theal, George M., *South Africa,* London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd; Theal, George McCall, *Records of the Cape Colony*, 36 vol., printed for the Government of the Cape Colony, London, 1897–1905.

102. Even if it is debatable if Macmillan was a classical liberal, his work should be viewed as important for this approach. Macmillan, William M., *Complex South Africa. An Economic Footnote to History*, London, Faber and Faber, 1930.

War, as the process of decolonisation swept the world, the early, partly segregationist, liberal view gave way to the renewed liberal Africanist discourse of the *Oxford History* and the subsequent Neo-Marxist historiography.[103]

What in Magubane's opinion is striking about even the two latter paradigms is the absence of the African as an active participant in history despite the long record of national struggles. In Magubane's view, very little of what has been written from both liberal and Neo-Marxist perspectives about the African experience has taken into full account the African memory. The author's central argument, therefore, is that any historical discourse in South Africa should of necessity focus on African agency.

The methodology that Magubane brings with him from historical anthropology attempts to raise the levels of abstraction and understanding through the use of historical parallels; a possibility often ignored by conventional historians in favour of the search for the unique and individual.[104] Magubane asks the important question: Did the events of 1994 make everything written by liberal historians nonsense? A question just as important seems to be where 1994 – or rather, global pragmatism towards neo-liberal solutions – has left the radical historians.

In some respects, Christopher Saunders' second contribution to this book "Four decades of South African historical writing" stands in contrast to Magubane's article. One of the key observations in Saunders' paper is that the transfer of power in South Africa in the 1990s was not accompanied by any major new trend in historical writing. He argues that a major reason for this is that South African historiography had already undergone a fundamental change since the 1960s, when the liberal Africanist work came into existence. In Saunders' view, previous interpretations of twentieth century South African historiography, including those in his own work,[105] have laid too much emphasis on the distinction between liberal and radical historiography. While he recognises that there were fierce battles between the two schools of thought, he argues that the more important historiographical development was the one in which both liberal and radical historians were involved: placing black Africans at the centre of the story of the South African past.

103. Wilson, Monica and Thompson, Leonard M. (eds), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969–71.

104. See also, Bernhard Magubane, *The Making of a Racist State: British Imperialism and the Union of South Africa 1875–1910*, Trenton, New Jersey, Africa World Press, 1996.

105. For instance, Saunders, Christopher C., *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1988.

Saunders conclusion is that the demands on the history profession as part of the nation-building process have been surprisingly mild.

Merle Lipton's article "Revisiting the debate about the role of business" aims to review and evaluate a debate central to the liberal-radical dispute inside South African historiography. She continues to explore the question whether or not business interests and pressures contributed to the erosion of apartheid.[106] Lipton's argument for a continued historical debate is built on the understanding that not all conflicts have disappeared and that the social structure behind the liberal/radical terminology still exists.

Certain parts of Lipton's paper draw on testimony presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She discusses the relevance of this material to the liberal-radical debate and to post-apartheid relations between the ANC, the business world, and white liberals in South Africa.[107] Lipton seeks to show that the Marxist argument has been continuously crumbling and that even the trade union movement now admits to the changing historical role of capital under late apartheid. She recognises that there are still disagreements between working class and liberal historical views, but now more over interpretations than over facts, it seems. Lipton denies that the "classical" phase of the debate on the relationship between capitalism and apartheid, which began around 1970, constitutes an exceptional intellectual breakthrough by the Neo-Marxists, as is often claimed. She argues that it was essentially a continuation of a longstanding debate in which many liberal, Marxist, Africanist, and conservative scholars were already engaged.

In the appendix to her article, Lipton defends herself against allegations about her work raised at earlier stages of this impassioned ideological debate.[108]

During the 20th century, a whole corpus of anti-communist literature was produced in South Africa, to a large degree by Afrikaners. Wessel Visser's article "Afrikaner anti-communist history production" investigates the rationale behind this part of Afrikanerdom.

106. A logical continuation of her work in Lipton, Merle, *Capitalism and Apartheid. South Africa, 1910–1984*, London, Gower, Temple Smith, 1985. Also as paperback: *Capitalism and Apartheid. South Africa, 1910–1986*, London, Wildwood House, 1986.

107. On this issue, see also Terry Bell and Dumisa Ntsebeza, *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth*, Verso, 2003.

108. For a comment on Lipton's work, see Stolten, Hans Erik, "The discussion of the relationship between capitalism and apartheid: Elaborations over Lipton's position", paper presented at the conference "Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries", Copenhagen, 22–23 August 2002.

Visser's analysis explains the tensions between proletarian and religious factors among poor Afrikaner workers and describes the ideological offensive of the Afrikaner churches against communism in the trade unions. Even liberalism was condemned by certain Afrikaner ideologists as a so-called "fifth column" of communism. With the establishment of the Institute for the Study of Marxism at the University of Stellenbosch in 1980, communism as a historical factor also drew serious academic interest.

Many Afrikaners are in the process of coming to terms with their past and Afrikaans-speaking historians are at present trying to assess the historical role of Afrikaners in South African history. Visser's account provides a unique insight into the creation of the ideology of apartheid throughout the twentieth century. The article concludes that Afrikaner anti-communism has come to a halt, but also suggests that a new kind of anti-Marxism could emerge from government and certain ANC leaders' critique of the so-called "ultra-left".

Allison Drew's contribution "1922 and all that" examines the construction of facts in history writing, while using the early history of the Communist Party of South Africa as a case study. Drew finds a paucity of political history writing in South Africa as compared to other types of history, and with an impressive source collecting work behind her,[109] she defends the importance of written sources.

As an expert in the history of the early communist party, CPSA, Drew is aware that the party, during the white workers' "Rand revolt" in 1922, had a problem recognising the position of the black workers, but she reasons that the CPSA was not responsible for the notorious slogan "Workers of the World Fight and Unite for a White S.A.", and that many communists argued strongly for the need to organise black workers. The aim of Drew's article is not so much to clear the early South African socialists of all accusations of racism. The focus is on the way a myth has been institutionalised by recognised historians.

Drew feels that the challenge in the post-apartheid era is to develop an intellectually autonomous practice of history. At the same time, her article can also be seen as a reaction to the subjectivism and relativism of certain postmodernists. She emphasises the need for more workers' history and feminist history, but how should this be furthered? In professional autonomy, by

109. Drew, Allison (ed.), *South Africa's Radical Tradition, A Documentary History*, Vol. 1–2, UCT Press / Buchu Books / Mayibuye Books, 1996–97; Drew, Allison, *Discordant Comrades. Identities and Loyalties on the South African Left*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000.

external popular pressure, or by a progressive governmental programme for the profession of history?

The last article in this collection, Catherine Burn's "A useable past", can be read as a critical engagement with the claim that South African historical research is suffering from a deep "post-crisis". Examining the demands and expectations being placed on history specialists by gender activists, educationalists, development specialists, and others, Burns' paper argues that historians are being called on with just as much urgency as in the 1980s, but to answer very different questions. Against this background, Burns explains why it could appear as if history as a genre is under siege. The optimistic argument of her paper is, however, that this appearance disguises important key openings and potentials for the profession.

Burns throws light on the importance of activist use of history inside the Aids Campaign and advocates for more focus on health related history. She predicts that "the study of desire, disease, delight and death" will provide new ground for historical research. Young South Africans face a world of global complexity and Burns identifies with their needs to communicate, be understood, and change. That is where she believes the teaching of history has its mission.

The historians' contribution to the construction of a new South Africa

The question of how to develop a practice that can enable a constructive combination of scholarly work and political engagement remains a central issue in South African historiography. Can, for instance, the traditions and ideals of the former national liberation movement continue to inspire professional historical research in a meaningful way? What significance could partiality resulting from this have, now that the movement's leading organisation constitutes the ruling party? To see the importance of this question, one just has to read a few examples from the new (more or less) official history writing.[110] Relationships between research and political priorities, sanctioned by decision-makers from the former freedom movement during the prolonged

110. Bam, June and Pippa Visser, *A New History for a New South Afric*a, Cape Town and Johannesburg, Kagiso Publishers, 1996; Rob Sieborger et al., *Turning Points in History*, Textbook series commissioned by SA Department of Education, STE Publishers, 2004; Michael Morris (Bill Nasson historical adviser), *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa*, HSRC Press and Ministry of Education, 2004.

transitional period, could influence the educational system for a long time to come.[111]

Even if the historian has an obligation to use a representative choice of sources in a fair and comprehensive way, to seek the truth, and construct an accurate picture of the historical reality based on facts, the nature of history writing remains essentially selective and often ideological. While most historians have largely abandoned Rankean aspirations,[112] there is still a widespread tendency for historical work to be written in a style that appears to remove the author's voice from the text, creating a false impression that he or she is a seemingly neutral observer presenting authoritative accounts and explanations. As Maylam has stated, the claims of historians to be objective are, however, always a mere pretence.[113] History writing, memories, and stories, can never be "free". They will always be laden with meaning.[114]

The intellectuals' self-defence against demands of socialisation, whether such demands have been expressed by an official authority or put forward by an alternative party, has often been the traditional, apparently unproblematic argument for autonomy. In this argument for legitimacy and respectability, research is often viewed as ethically and politically neutral, a value-free, objective practice that develops within its own rationale and logic.[115] Harold

111. Bam, June, "Making history the South African way: Allowing the pieces to fall together", paper written in connection with the NAI/CAS conference on "Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and The Nordic Countries", Copenhagen 22–23 August, 2002; Asmal, Kader and James Wilmot, *Spirit of the Nation, Reflections on South Africa's Educational Ethos*, NAE, HSRC, and the Department of Education, 2002.

112. Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell (eds), *Leopold von Ranke and the shaping of the historical discipline*, New York, Syracuse University Press, 1990.

113. Maylam, Paul, *South Africa's racial past: The history and historiography of racism, segregation, and apartheid*, Research in migration and ethnic relations series, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001, p. 3. See also Vincent L., "What's love got to do with it? The effect of affect in the academy", *Politikon, South African Journal of Political Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2004, pp. 105–115.

114. Sarah Nuttall, "Telling 'free stories'? Memory and democracy in South African autobiography since 1994" in Nuttall, Sarah and Carli Coetzee (eds), *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 88.

115. Norvick, Peter, *That noble dream: The 'objectivity question' and the American historical profession*, Cambridge University Press, 1988; Appleby, Joyce, Hunt, Lynn and Jacob, Margaret, *Telling the Truth about History*, W.W. Norton & Company Ltd, 1995; Dahl, Ottar, "Om 'sannhet' i historien", *Historisk Tidsskrift*, Vol. 3, pp. 365–73,

Wolpe articulated an alternative ideal. Deeply engaged in South African liberatory history, he maintained that the goal of progressive historians occupied with the creation of a more just future could best be achieved, if the priorities of the freedom movement were kept in mind, without this leading to a simple reliance on the ideology and policy of the movement. In his opinion, this would be the best compromise between the idealistic notion of complete research autonomy on the one hand and reduction of research to a purely ideological function on the other.[116] Norman Etherington applies a comparable approach, although from a different (some would say almost opposite) angle, when he promotes reconciliation history:

> What I am arguing here is that historians will tell their stories better if they hold the ideal of a shared history constantly in mind.[117]

In most modern societies, it has been the mission of state-funded history to provide people with a meaning of life in accordance with the interest of the state, serving as a substitute for the obsolete ideological use of religion, culture, and ethnocentrism; and in this, it differs at least in the degree of its directness from natural science.[118] The practice of history can almost never be fully autonomous. In reality, it is nearly impossible to disconnect education policy interests, professional values, and personal career improvement from research results. It is a fact of life that demands as much openness as possible about the interests behind the research, especially when this research deals with ideologically controversial matters.

For the average reader, there will always be hidden agendas, but it should be a priority for the responsible researcher to reveal them. Although many scholars might regard such a measure as rather ingenuous and unsophisticated, it might be an idea to establish in the ethical code of the profession

1999.

116. Wolpe, H., "The Liberation Struggle and Research", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 32, 1985, p. 74. Some of the same viewpoints can be found in Saul, S. John, *Socialist Ideology and the Struggle for Southern Africa*, Trenton, New Jersey, Africa World Press, 1990, p. 6. Wolpe's approach has been criticised by Belinda Bozzoli in, "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Oxford University Press, 1983.

117. Norman Etherington, *The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815–1854*, London and New York, Pearson Longman, 2001, p. xi, xii, xviii.

118. Ferro, Marc, *The Use and Abuse of History*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981; Tosh, John (ed.), *Historians on History: An Anthology*, Pearson Education, Harlow, Longman, 2000, Ch. 7, 8, 9.

the proviso that every history book ought to start with a paragraph openly revealing the author's background, present employment, organisational affiliation, networks, additional material interests, and ideological convictions, together with the priorities of the publishing house. These aspects may often be more important for the outcome of the research than the scientific methodology used. This could then be followed by a subsection loyally presenting alternative angles, together with relevant themes and events not discussed in the book. All source-critical historians are aware of this problematic, but even though it is a logical response to the impact of postmodernism, few authors take it seriously.

Some of the contributors to this book have noticed a narrowing of ideological differences between South African historians. There are several possible explanations for this beside the obvious ones: the crisis of socialism and the ANC's move to the right. Part of the reason might be ascribed to a general decline in present-day use of history for policymaking, or to white English-speaking historians' aversion to participating in President Mbeki's New Patriotism – an aversion shared by many of the old Neo-Marxists. Another possible explanation may actually lie in the opportunism inside the profession. Why should former left-wing academics stick to socialist ideals that, for the time being, seem to have no penetrating-power and could be counterproductive to their careers? It is perhaps typical, that only COSATU workers, still with few possibilities for individual career moves, find that assigning historical guilt to business will help their bargaining position, as Merle Lipton touches on in her analysis.

The tendency among historians to escape into individualised concerns and more or less exotic subjects may undermine the use of history to sustain progressive movements in favour of social reforms. Empathy and insight into the feelings and needs of ordinary people often arise directly from progressive political organisations. Structural analyses, on the other hand, do not come spontaneously and ought to be a priority for historians and other researchers, who wish to contribute to the continued process of social emancipation and democratic build-up in South Africa.

Of course, there are reasons to be cautious of the dangers of this route. Even the former liberation movement does not own its own history. New history projects, such as those included in the South African Democracy Education Trust, would certainly benefit from an overall inclusive approach. That does not mean, however, that the research evolving from such projects should necessarily be "neutral" or mainstream.

Writing the history of the South African nation

Several of the articles in this collection refer to government approaches to history making. Some of them also deal with "the national question" in one form or another.

Immediately after 1994, many initial post-apartheid efforts were aimed at using the past to mobilise collective enthusiasm for fundamental changes.[119] Concentrating on the common future of all South Africans, however, was the way the South African government chose early in Nelson Mandela's presidency.[120] Mandela actually called on South Africans to "forget the past".[121] As social inequalities continued to develop,[122] this picture changed slightly. Under Thabo Mbeki's leadership, the past has been used to unify and regain pride for the black majority, but more in the shape of heritage projects than in the form of history writing.[123] As in many European nations in the era before the developed welfare state, some kind of patriotic mobilisation seems to be desirable for social stability.[124] In this scenario, full of contradictions, the notion of the "Rainbow Nation" may have been toned down, because it failed to assist in the emergence of a "New African Nation" and "New Patriotism".[125]

119. Freund, William M., "The Weight of History and the Prospect for Democratisation in the Republic of South Africa", *Afrika Zamani*, Camerun, 1994. Greenstein, Ran, "The Study of South African Society: Towards a New Agenda for Comparative Historical Inquiry", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 641–652, 1994; Maharaj, Gitanjali, "The limit of historical knowledge: The subaltern and South African historiography", *Current Writing*, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 1–12, 1996.

120. Kiguwa, S.N.W., "National Reconciliation and Nation Building: Reflections on the TRC in Post-Apartheid South Africa", paper presented at the conference "The TRC: Commissioning the Past", University of the Witwatersrand, June 1999.

121. Among other events: October 6 1994, Online News Hour, Public Broadcasting Service. It could be said though that Mandela has expressed the opposite view on other occasions.

122. Hendricks, Fred, *Fault-Lines in South African Democracy. Continuing Crisis of Inequality and Injustice,* Discussion Paper, No. 22, The Nordic Africa Institute, 2003; Leibbrandt, Murray, "Incomes in South Africa since the fall of apartheid", *NBER working paper series*, 11384, Cambridge, Mass., 2005.

123. See for instance, Thabo Mbeki, "Address at the occasion of the launch of Freedom Park", 16 June 2002.

124. Lettre d'un Franc, à son ami, "Upon the necessity of patriotism and unity for the public welfare", Paris, 1789, (BL: R.187.15.); Toyin, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, University of Rochester Press, 2001.

125. On these notions: Closing Address by President Nelson Mandela, Debate on State of

Notwithstanding this, the present nation-building exercise is increasingly carried out by cultivating the skills needed in an economic and market-based context as well as in an ever more globalised environment as Ray observes.[126] A present-minded generation, interested mostly in the market and its utilitarian values, demonstrates an impatience with history.[127] As a result, history is often seen as peripheral. Even if official South African rhetoric still promotes the idea that the past has to be dealt with in order to cope with the present, the real interest in this past seems to be limited.[128] The overall development since 1994 has been characterised by a growing "non-use" of history as well as by the declining prestige of the discipline.[129]

Even if President Mbeki's claim, that historians have ignored Africans in their writings, might not be very accurate, it is too easy for the historians just to blame the South African government for their situation. Some historians still seem to be relatively unconcerned with the legitimate feelings of black communities and their need for counter-histories of the freedom struggle, even if it is necessary to recognise that there were in fact victims and heroes in that struggle. It was hardly possible to avoid the emergence of identity politics in post-apartheid South Africa, and the idea of a common past that all South Africans can gather around is probably something of an illusion. The question may rather be *how* group identities and a plurality of histories are defined and used in this new situation.[130]

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the Nation Address, Cape Town, 15 February 1996; "New Patriotism Must Cut across Class and Colour", statement issued by the African National Congress 18 August 1997.

126. Giulia Ray, "Creating the Future – Post-Apartheid Use of History Education for Nation Building Purposes", paper presented at the NAI/CAS conference "Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries", Copenhagen, 22–23 August 2002.

127. Address by Professor Kader Asmal, (then) Minister of Education for South Africa, to the Closing Session of the symposium organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives Committee to mark the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, South Africa House, London, 26 June 1999.

128. Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, on the occasion of the Heritage Day celebrations, Taung, North West Province, 24 September 2005.

129. The notion of "non-use" of history has been defined by Johanna Åfreds in *History and Nation-Building – The Political Uses of History in Post-Colonial Namibia*, MFS-reports 2000, 2, Department of Economic History, Uppsala University, 2000.

130. Glaser, Daryl, *Politics and Society in South Africa: A critical introduction*, SAGE Publications, 2001, p. 156.

The majority of South Africans may have a past they can at least partly identify with; namely, the resistance against colonisation and the freedom struggle, but that is not the past of most whites, and having conflicting pasts is not necessarily very conducive to the building of a common, harmonious nation. Kadar Asmal has expressed it this way:

> We need to build an inclusive memory where the heroes and heroines of the past belong not only to certain sectors, but to us all … Memory is identity and we cannot have a divided identity.[131]

An analogous explanation for the limited official interest in contemporary history may lie in the fact that social protests were an important part of the liberation struggle.[132] To stress that today, however, could lead to the realisation that, at least from a structural point of view, the historical conflict is not over. That might help explain why neutral, present-day symbolism is often preferred to signify shared citizenship.

The future of African historiography

During the first 20 years following the decolonisation of tropical Africa, 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 that these values could provide the new states with an African character, for instance in the form of "African socialism".[133]

131. Kader Asmal in his speech at the launch of the series, *Turning Points*, quoted from *Daily News*, April 2, 2004.

132. Marks, Shula and Trapido, Stanley (eds), "Social History of Resistance in South Africa", special issue of *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Oxford University Press, 1992.

133. William H. Friedland and Carl G. Rosberg, Jr. (eds), *African Socialism*, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University Press, 1964/65/67; Langley, J. Ayo, *Ideologies of Liberation in Black Africa, 1856–1970: Documents on modern African political thought from colonial times to present*, London, 1979; McCracken, Scott (ed.), *After Fanon: A Journal of Culture, Theory and Politics*, No. 47, Lawrence & Wishart, 2002, containing four articles which examine the intellectual legacy of Franz Fanon.

African historians have shown that Africa had old kingdoms, mining and trading centres, and a well-functioning infrastructure before the arrival of the Europeans.[134] Some researchers have even suggested that the genuine values in Africa's history are to be found in stateless societies based on local autonomy, cooperation and cooptation, rather than on discipline and competition.[135] Perhaps a new generation of black South African historians could learn from these experiences without entirely renouncing universal, theoretical understandings.[136]

A growing demand for a closer connection to the rest of Africa is about to be added to the agenda of the South African historians. If South Africa wants to become a genuine African country, a stronger engagement with general African history will prove to be necessary.[137] The South African government recognises that such a change of mentality is required, but so far, only approximately 10 per cent of South Africa's university researchers concentrate a significant part of their work on other African countries.[138] As a minor, but not unimportant, initiative, the former Minister of Education secured copyright permission to UNESCO's General History of Africa, so it can be distributed to schools.

It is not easy to predict what direction black South African historiography will take in the years to come. Even if South African society develops in the best way possible, towards a reasonably stable, pluralistic system, the black population will have to continue its struggle for rights and opportunities. This also applies to the academic world.

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134. Falola, Toyin (ed.), *African Historiography. Essays in Honour of Jacob Ade Ajayi*, Harlow, Longman, 1993.

135. 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.

136. Newbury, David (ed.), "African History Research Trends and Perspectives on the Future", *The African Studies Review*, Vol. 30, No. 2, The African Studies Association, Emory University, Atlanta, 1987; in same volume, Felix Ekechi, "The Future of the History of Ideas in Africa", p. 67; Mkandawire, Thandika (ed.), *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development*, Zed Books, 2005.

137. On this debate, see works of John Illiffe, John Lonsdale, and Mahmood Mamdani among others.

138. Bam, June, "Making history the South African way: Allowing the pieces to fall together", paper written in connection with the NAI/CAS conference "Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries", Copenhagen 22–23 August, 2002.

A development foreseen by some, which has not fully materialised, was the elevation of the history of the liberation movement to honour and dignity. Even if the history of the ANC has been advanced lately,[139] it is hardly possible to interpret this as the emergence of a new nationalist history writing, in line with what occurred in other African countries in the aftermath of decolonisation. It could be argued that if South Africa really had been liberated from white supremacy and unchained from neo-colonial dominance, it would have been only natural if a school of Africanist history writing had matured and prevailed. However, after more than 10 years of democracy, there are only weak tendencies in this direction. A few African intellectuals have raised the demand that African values be given priority in African universities,[140] but the transfer of political power has not yet been matched by any significant transformation of the content of historical research. The fears of Afrocentrism and state centralism, expressed by some white academics as a response to affirmative action and student demands,[141] have not really materialised and the traditional values of the historically white universities have not been seriously threatened.

There are a number of possible reasons for this. Some researchers have pointed to the nature of the negotiated settlement, which, in the eyes of many, diminished the victory.[142] Liberal historians have given a partly con-

139. For instance in Dubow, Saul, *The African National Congress*, UK: Sutton Publ., 2000; Shubin, Vladimir, "Historiography of the ANC: Conflicting views", paper written in connection with the conference "Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries", Copenhagen 22–23 August 2002; Ray Alexander Simons (Raymond Suttner (ed.)), *All my life and all my strength*, STE publishers, 2004; Ben Turok, *Nothing but the Truth: Behind the ANC's Struggle Politics*, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2003; Luli Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeni Mountains*, David Philip, 2005.

140. Makgoba, W., "Africanise or Perish", *Frontiers of Freedom*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1996, pp. 17–18; Murove, M.F., "The Dominance of the Spirit of Neo-Liberal Capitalism in Contemporary Higher Education Practices in Post-Colonial Africa: A Reconstruction of an African Ethic of Indigenisation", paper from the confereence "The African University in the 21st Century", June 27th–June 29th 2005, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban http://www.interaction.nu.ac.za/SAARDHE2005/.

141. Hugo, Pierre, "Transformation: The Changing Context of Academia in Post-Apartheid South Africa", *African Affairs: The Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 97, No. 386, January 1998, p. 19, 22, 26.

142. Adam, Heribert and Kogila Moodley, *The Negotiated Revolution: Society and Politics in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1993; M. Legassick and G. Minkley, "Current Trends in the Production of South African History", *Alterna-*

flicting explanation to account for the absence of a new direction in South African historiography: that South African history writing was decolonised long before the political decolonisation of 1994 – referring to the wave of liberal Africanism spearheaded by the *Oxford History* around 1970.[143] In 1976, Belinda Bozzoli, nevertheless, called for the decolonisation of South African history; a task that she considered had largely been achieved, when she wrote, fourteen years later, that radical historians had rewritten the history of South Africa.[144] A couple of other rather obvious reasons for the current shortage of dynamism may be suggested: first, that so few African researchers have entered into the profession; second, that radical liberatory history became less relevant during what many saw as the ANC-government's social demobilisation. There is no "wave to ride" as Nuttall and Wright have expressed it.[145] For a non-South African researcher, who was involved in anti-apartheid solidarity for many years, it feels appropriate to ask: To what extent was South African historical writing actually liberated with the fall of apartheid?[146]

tion: International Journal for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1998.

143. Saunders Christopher, "History and the 'Nation': South African Aspects", draft overview article, University of Cape Town, 2001.

144. Bozzoli, Belinda, "Intellectuals, Audiences and Histories: South African Experiences 1978–1988", *Radical History Review*, No. 46/7, pp. 237–263, 1990.

145. Nuttall, Tim and John Wright, "Probing the Predicaments of Academic History in Contemporary South Africa", *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, p. 47.

146. For a post-modernist discussion of mental aspects of the apartheid legacy, see Norval, Aletta J., "Social Ambiguity and the Crisis of Apartheid", in Laclau, Ernesto (ed.), *The Making of Political Identities*, pp. 115–34, London, Verso, 1994.

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