The ANC between Home and Exile

Reflections on the Anti-Apartheid Struggle in Italy and Southern Africa

edited by

Arianna Lissoni and Antonio Pezzano

The ANC between Home and Exile

Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"
Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo

The ANC between Home and Exile is a collection of essays by South African and Italian scholars and activists originally presented at a conference held in Naples in November 2012 to commemorate the ANC centenary. One of its aims is to reflect historically on the different experiences of the ANC and the struggle against apartheid both in South Africa and in exile, particularly in the Italian context that has been under-represented in the historiography. This imbalance projects the erroneous impression that a country like Italy played only a marginal role in supporting the peoples of southern Africa in their connected struggles against colonialism, white minority rule and apartheid oppression and exploitation. The book thus seeks to accord a more central place to Italy, both as a site from where the ANC operated in exile, and as a key centre of international solidarity. The chapters in the book cover a number of themes in the history of the liberation struggle that span the Italian, South African and African contexts, the relationship between apartheid, exile and artistic creation, and some of the individual experiences of the Italian solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle. Rather than viewing these as discrete topics, the anthology attempts to bring these various contexts into dialogue by viewing them as part of the same continuum.

The book is directed at scholars of southern African history and politics, political commentators, and activists and a broader readership with an interest in South Africa's liberation struggle.

Twenty years after the end of apartheid in South Africa, scholars and activists in Italy remember the struggle and its different layers of meanings for participants.

ALESSANDRO TRIULZI, Professor of African History

While the complete story of the role of Italy's democratic forces in the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles still remains to be told, this book begins to highlight the critical role they played and the continuation of the ties of friendship between those very forces and the current ANC government. The various chapters in the book present the interconnectedness between the struggles of the ANC at home and abroad, and between the different pillars of struggle: mass action, the underground, the armed struggle and international solidarity, especially in the Italian context.

THENJIWE MTINTSO, Former South African Ambassador to Italy

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Preface

The publication of this book coincides with twenty-one years of democracy in South Africa since the end of apartheid and the first democratic elections of 1994. Three years earlier, another anniversary, the centenary of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the oldest African nationalist movement on the continent and, since 1994, South Africa's ruling party, prompted the calling of a conference in Naples, Italy, where this book has its origins.

The ANC centenary was marked by a year-long series of celebrations that kicked off on 8 January 2012 in Mangaung (Bloemfontein), where the ANC had been founded a hundred years earlier. While the majority of these events took place in South Africa, the centenary was also observed in many other countries across the world. These worldwide commemorations are, in part, a trace of what had once been the global anti-apartheid movement: possibly the largest and most successful international solidarity movement of all times.

Understandably, most of the initiatives around the ANC centenary were of a celebratory nature. But the occasion also provided a moment for more critical reflection on the ANC's historical trajectory over the last one hundred years. In particular, the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of Johannesburg and South African History Online organised a conference in Johannesburg in September 2011 with a view to framing some of the debates around the centenary.[1] Moved by a similar objective, in November 2012, the Centro Studi sull'Africa Contemporanea (CeSAC) at the University of Naples "L'Orientale" (UNO) and the Wits History Workshop[2] organised a joint international conference

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[1] See the publication that this conference produced: A. Lissoni, J. Soske, N. Erlank, N. Nieftagodien and O. Badsha (eds). *One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Liberation Histories Today.* Johannesburg: Wits Press and SAHO, 2012.

[2] The conference was organised under the auspices of a Memorandum of Understanding between University of the Witwatersrand and University of Naples "L'Orientale" to develop

titled "The African National Congress between Home and Exile", from which this publication takes its name. The conference was held in Naples on 19 and 20 November, and brought into close dialogue the Anglophone scholarship on the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa with Italian research as well as activists from both countries. One of its aims was to create intellectual synergy between the two contexts that are usually separated by language.

This volume draws directly on the panels and papers that were presented by the group of scholars and activists who participated in the Naples conference in 2012. Like the conference that gave rise to it, one of the aims of the book is to reflect historically on the different experiences of the ANC and the struggle against apartheid both in South Africa and in exile, particularly in the Italian context. Since the end of apartheid there has been a significant growth of the literature on the histories of liberation struggles in southern Africa. But, while the international solidarity movement in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and the Nordic countries has received a fair amount of scholarly attention, the development of solidarity networks and movements in other countries has so far been under-represented in the historiography.[3] This imbalance projects the erroneous impression that a country like Italy played only a marginal role in supporting the peoples of southern Africa in their connected struggles against colonialism, white minority rule and apartheid oppression and exploitation. Therefore, a second aim of this publication is to give a more central place to Italy, both as a site from where the ANC operated in exile, and as a key

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areas of cooperation between the two institutions. See http://www.unior.it/ateneo/3628/1/accordi-internazionali.html, accessed 3 November 2014.

[3] For example, see C. Gurney. "'A Great Cause': The Origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, June 1959 - March 1960". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26, 1, 2000, pp. 123-144; R. Fieldhouse. *Anti-Apartheid: The History of a Movement in Britain: A Study in Pressure Group Politics.* London: Merlin, 2005; D. Herbstein. *White Lies: Canon John Collins and the Secret War against Apartheid.* Oxford: James Currey, 2004; T. Sellström. *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, Vols 1 & 2. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999 and 2002; D.R. Culverson. *Contesting Apartheid: US Activism, 1960-1987.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999; F.N. Nesbitt. *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946-1994.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) (eds). *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, *Vol. 3: International Solidarity*, parts 1 & 2. Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2008, contains historical surveys of anti-apartheid movements in countries throughout the world, including Italy (see the chapter by C. Fiamingo, "Italy, 'Beneficiary' of the Apartheid Regime, and its Internal Opposition").

centre of international solidarity. The internal resistance and exile movements have also been treated as discrete experiences in much of the literature on the South African liberation struggle. A third aim of this anthology is thus to bring these different contexts into conversation by viewing them as part of the same continuum.

The book is divided into four parts, reflecting the themes of the panels around which the conference was organised. Part I, which opens with a framing chapter by Antonio Pezzano about the Italian literature on South Africa, considers the Italian context and experience. On the one hand, there is the Italian government's ambivalent relationship with the apartheid state (Maria Cristina Ercolessi's chapter), and on the other hand, the development of a solidarity movement in Italy through direct links with the ANC and other southern African liberation movements, particularly Frelimo (Cristiana Fiamingo's chapter). Cristiana Fiamingo raises the alarm that, with few exceptions, notably Reggio Emilia's Istoreco and the Benny Nato Centre (whose experiences are related in Part IV), the archives of the Italian anti-apartheid movement are under threat of being lost to posterity, and its history therefore under threat of being forgotten.

The chapters in Part II, by South Africa-based historians linked to the Wits History Workshop, span the South African and African contexts. Noor Nieftagodien reflects on the significance of the ANC centenary celebrations in South Africa in terms of the production of history, arguing that the ANC's own narrative of liberation occludes other experiences of resistance and memories. Tshepo Moloi reconsiders the relationship between the ANC in exile and the internal resistance movement, which much of the existing literature views as largely disconnected, claiming that the ANC had little influence on events in South Africa during the 1980s. By focusing on Thembisa as a case study, Moloi shows that the resurgence of confrontational politics in the township was closely linked with the underground network of the ANC and its armed wing (Umkhonto we Sizwe, or MK) in neighbouring Botswana. Arianna Lissoni and Maria Suriano's joint contribution moves further afield, considering the legacies and transformation of the ANC's transnational links with, and presence in, other African countries, specifically Tanzania, in the post-liberation period. Their chapter describes the experiences of the Tanzanian wives of South African exiles repatriated from Morogoro to South Africa, as well as the hardships suffered by Tanzanian women who were "left behind" by their partners.

The relationship between apartheid, exile and artistic creation, is the subject of Part III. Itala Vivan reviews the literary production of South

African writers whose lives were influenced by various forms of exile and displacement as a result of apartheid, from the 1950s onwards. Apartheid's dramas are represented in the art of William Kentridge, in particular in a series of animated short films titled *Drawings for Projection*, which is analysed in Maria De Vivo's chapter. South African writer Makhosazana Xaba, a former MK cadre, speaks of her own exile and involvement in the liberation movement as a woman, in a selection of her poetry accompanied by an introductory note.

The last part of the book bears testimony to the importance of Italian solidarity with South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle and to the continuing friendship between the two countries through two concrete experiences – those of the city of Reggio Emilia and of the Benny Nato Centre. Vincenzo Curatola is the president of the Benny Nato Centre in Rome, which is named after Henry Benny Nato de Bruyn, the ANC chief representative in Italy between 1985 and 1991. His contribution, co-authored by Raffaella Chiodo Karpinsky, is drawn from the catalogue of an exhibition on Italy's contribution to South Africa's liberation and provides an outline and chronology of the Italian anti-apartheid movement. The concluding chapter by Istoreco's former president, Mirco Carrattieri, and Gianluca Grassi bears testimony to the long and ongoing history of friendship between the ANC and the city of Reggio Emilia, whose antifascist tradition and practice of decentralised cooperation placed it at the forefront of Italian anti-colonial and anti-apartheid activism. Knowledge about this rich history has the potential of modelling new future ways of relating based on the principles of collaboration amongst equals and shared values that create possibilities for disrupting patterns where inequalities and oppression are reproduced.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the Department of Human and Social Sciences, the PhD programme in African Studies, and the Research and Education Centre "Women's Archives" at the University of Naples "L'Orientale", for their contribution along with CeSAC to the realisation of the conference that gave rise to this edited volume. We are particularly grateful to the Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies which contributed to the realisation of the conference and agreed to publish this book in the new series *Il porto delle idee*, and to the Wits History Workshop for their support in the production of the book.

Arianna Lissoni and Antonio Pezzano

Acronyms and abbreviations

AAM	anti-apartheid movement
Agip	Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli (General Italian Oil Company)
ANC	African National Congress
APTC	Alexandra People's Transport Committee
AREA	Archivio Reggio Emilia-Africa
AWEPAA	Association of West-European Parliamentarians for Action against Apartheid
Azapo	Azanian People's Organisation
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BLAs	Black Local Authorities
CeSAC	Centro Studi sull'Africa Contemporanea (Centre of Contemporary African Studies)
CeSPI	Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (Centre for International Political Studies)
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian General Confederation of Labour)
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (Italian Workers' Trade Unions Confederation)
Codesa	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
Cosas	Congress of South African Students

Cosatu	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
DC	Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democracy)
EC	European Community
EEC	European Economic Community
Enel	Ente Nazionale per l'Energia Elettrica (Italian National Electricity Board)
Erab	East Rand Administration Board
FIM	Federazione Italiana Metalmeccanici (Italian Metalworkers' Federation)
FIOM	Federazione Impiegati Operai Metallurgici (Federation of Metal Workers Employees)
FLS	Frontline States
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
GCC	Germiston City Council
Idoc	International Documentation and Communication Centre
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IISH	International Institute of Social History
ILO	International Labour Organization
Ipalmo	Istituto per le Relazioni tra l'Italia e i Paesi dell'Africa, America Latina, Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Institute for Relations between Italy and the Countries of Africa, Latin America, Far and Middle East)
Istoreco	Istituto per la Storia della Resistenza e della Società contemporanea in provincia di Reggio Emilia (Institute for the History of Resistance and Contemporary Society in the Province of Reggio Emilia)

KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MAIS	Movimento per l'Autosviluppo Internazionale nella Solidarietà (Movement for International Self-Development Based on Solidarity)
MDC	Movement for a Democracy of Content
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation)
MOLISV	Movimento Liberazione e Sviluppo (Movement for Liberation and Development)
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
NAT	Department of National Intelligence and Security
NiZA	Nederlands instituut voor Zuidelijk Afrika (Netherlands Institute on Southern Africa)
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PAIGC	Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party)
PdUP	Partito di Unità Proletaria (Proletarian Unity Party)
PSI	Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party)
PWV	Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging
Putco	Public Utility Transport Corporation
RAC	Residents Action Committee
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance)
RPMC	Regional Politico-Military Council
SACP	South African Communist Party

Sactu	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference
SADET	South African Democracy Education Trust
SAHA	South African History Archive
SO	Senior Organ
Somafco	Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College
SRB	Shipping Research Bureau
Swapo	South West Africa People's Organisation
TCA	Thembisa Civic Association
TRA	Thembisa Residents Association
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TTC	Thembisa Town Council
UDF	United Democratic Front
UIL	Unione Italiana del Lavoro (Italian Labour Union)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WLJ	Women's League of Justice

PART I

The ANC and the Struggle against Apartheid in Italy

CHAPTER 1
Studies on South Africa in Italy:
A Historiographical Survey

ANTONIO PEZZANO

This chapter reviews the Italian historiography on South Africa since the 1970s, following the evolution of the anti-apartheid movement. In Italy, unlike in the English-speaking academy, there was not a significant production of literature on South Africa before the end of apartheid. Italian scholars of African Studies, in particular the historians, did not focus their studies and research on this area of the continent; they were more interested in the Horn of Africa or northern Africa, because of the Italian colonial history.

Until recently, most writing about South Africa and southern Africa took the form of historical pamphlets penned by militants or journalists, rather than academics. Cristina Ercolessi has argued that there is insufficient continuity in scientific, educational, or thematic studies of southern Africa to create a field of research and produce a discourse.[1] Furthermore, the lack of fieldwork research and the major focus on studies of international relations which have characterised the Italian academy and historiography, particularly in the 1980s, resulted in an unbalanced analysis of internal and external factors involved in ending apartheid, in favour of the latter. Italian literature was scarcely linked to the international historiographical debate on southern Africa, with the exception of some articles by Ruth First: "Regimi coloniali dell'Africa australe", published in 1979 in volume IV of *Storia dell'Africa e del Vicino Oriente*, edited by Alessandro Triulzi, in the series *Il mondo contemporaneo* (pp. 159-189); and "L'apartheid e l'apporto dei capitali stranieri", in *Politica Internazionale*, 1, 1980. These articles were

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[1] M.C. Ercolessi. "L'Africa australe e la storiografia Italiana". In A. Giovagnoli, G. Del Zanna (eds). *Il mondo visto dall'Italia*. Milano: Guerini e Associati, 2004, pp. 161-172.

republished in a collection of her writings, translated into Italian after her brutal assassination: *Ruth First: alle radici dell'apartheid*, edited by Anna Maria Gentili, who was her colleague at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo.[2] In addition, some articles by Ruth First were also published in the political and cultural review of the Italian Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiano, PCI), *Rinascita*, in the 1960s and 1970s.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, given the predominance in Italy of non-academic works on southern Africa, the debate on South Africa was introduced by militants' pamphlets in the mid-1970s. As Cristiana Fiamingo and Cristina Ercolessi note in this volume, the first publications about the struggle against apartheid and the liberation movements in South Africa were originated by the Movimento Liberazione e Sviluppo (MOLISV) and other activist groups' initiatives.

The militant publications

In this context, one of the first publications worthy of mention is *Sud Africa. L'apartheid del capitale*, written by Mario Albano at the time of the independence of the former Portuguese colonies but published in 1976.[3] It introduced the Italian public to a Marxist approach in the interpretation of apartheid, which until then had been considered simply as a degeneration of system and an aberration of humanity. Again, it is interesting to point out that the input came from a militant and that it was not strictly an academic work.

Mario Albano was an example of political commitment to the liberation movements in southern Africa, particularly in the former Portuguese colonies (he was the translator of Cabral's, Neto's and Mondlane's works), and later in South Africa. He was the national secretary of the international committee of the Proletarian Unity Party (Partito di Unità Proletaria, PdUP). He was entrenched in the debate of the internationalist left which at the time supported most of the African liberation movements, particularly the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y Río de Oro, known as Polisario) in

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[2] A.M. Gentili (ed.). *Ruth First: alle radici dell'apartheid*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1984. The other articles published in the volume were: the translation of "The Gold of Migrant Labour" in *Africa South in Exile*, 5, 3, April-June 1961, pp. 7-31, then republished in *Review of African Political Economy*, 25, 1982, pp. 5-21; excerpts from the book *Black Gold. The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983.

[3] M. Albano. *Sud Africa. L'apartheid del capitale*. Milano: Mazzotta, 1976.

Western Sahara and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, MPLA) in Angola. In 1974 most of the representatives of Third World liberation movements, including the ANC, were present at the PdUP Congress in Florence.[4] This militant position was reflected in Albano's book and in the sources he used. Although he consulted and referenced most of the material on the contemporary international and South African debate, he did not cite the new radical revisionist literature by militant scholars such as Harold Wolpe[5] and Martin Legassick,[6] and historians such as Anthony Atmore, Shula Marks[7] and Stanley Trapido,[8] which was changing the course of South African historiography in those years, but he did cite the works of other communist activists previously published in the 1960s, such as Jack and Ray Simons' book[9] and Brian Bunting's analysis of the ideology of the apartheid regime and its links with Nazism and the Third Reich.[10]

Albano's book adopted a Marxist approach which denounced apartheid as a functional system of labour exploitation and political control that allowed capital to produce a large amount of surplus. The analysis of racial segregation was based on categories of discrimination and the regulation of wages. In this perspective, the founding element of the Union of South Africa became the homeland, where the interests of the two forms of capitalism – agrarian and mineral – merged, at the expense of the majority of

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[4] See M. Albano. "La fase attuale dell'imperialismo". *Unità Proletaria*, III, 14, Luglio 1974.

[5] H. Wolpe. "Capitalism and Cheap Labour-power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid". *Economy and Society*, 1, 4, 1972, pp. 425-456.

[6] M. Legassick. "Legislation, Ideology and Economy in Post-1948 South Africa". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1, 1974, pp. 5-35; M. Legassick. "South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence". *Economy and Society*, 3, 3, 1974, pp. 253-291; M. Legassick. "South Africa: Forced Labour, Industrialization, and Racial Differentiation". In R. Harris (ed.). *The Political Economy of Africa*. Boston: Schenkman and New York: John Wiley, 1975, pp. 227-270.

[7] A. Atmore and S. Marks. "The Imperial Factor in South Africa: Towards a Reassessment". *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 3, 1, 1974, pp. 105-139.

[8] S. Trapido. "South Africa in a Comparative Study of Industrialisation". *Journal of Development Studies*, 8, 3, 1971, pp. 309-320; S. Trapido. "South Africa and the Historians". *African Affairs*, 71, 285, 1972, pp. 444-448.

[9] H.J. Simons and R.A. Simons. *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950*. London: Penguin, 1969.

[10] Albano, *Sud Africa*. See the chapter "L'ideologia del regime", pp. 121-134. Although he did not cite Bunting in the footnotes of the chapter, he includes B. Bunting. *The Rise of the South African Reich*. London: Penguin Africa Library, 1969, in the bibliography.

Africans. Apartheid originated in the articulation of the industrialisation process at the beginning of the twentieth century, which systematically structured the power relations of class formation and buttressed corporate profitability by reducing the costs of black labour, which had been increasingly urbanising, to the lowest possible.[11] The other founding element of the apartheid regime was identified as the repressive military apparatus which was implemented after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, with the defence budget increased three and then six times in just a few years to underpin the ongoing integration and cooperation of South African with international capital. [12] In fact, industrial development did not allow independence from international trade, in terms of raw materials and in terms of the increased demand for consumer, producer and equipment goods. Fundamentally, Albano's discourse is inspired by the international anti-imperialist solidarity of the 1970s leftist movements.

Until the mid-1980s, Italian publications on South Africa were mainly the propagandistic material and documents of international solidarity movements and parties which supported the liberation movements. Unfortunately, this documentation did not become a corpus of historiographical literature, as occurred in some other countries, thanks to the work of scholars and academics. As Ercolessi[13] and Fiamingo[14] note, this fragmented documentation could be lost, so that the history of anti-apartheid activity in Italy is at risk of fading into oblivion.

This scarcity of literature in Italy reflects the lack not only of a tradition of studies on South and southern Africa, but also of political and diplomatic interest in the region until more recently. It was because of liberation struggles in the 1970s and subsequent solidarity movements that some scholars started to become interested in South Africa.

The end of apartheid and the transition to a new democratic South Africa in the Italian literature

In fact, it was only in mid-1980s when the apartheid regime started to show obvious cracks that some publications on South Africa began to

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[11] Albano, *Sud Africa*. See the second chapter on the analysis of wages (pp. 58 ff.).

[12] *Ibid*. See the chapter "Gli strumenti della repressione", pp. 135-152.

[13] Ercolessi. "L'Africa australe", pp. 164-165.

[14] See Chapter 3, "The Anti-Apartheid Movement in Italy: Processes, Mechanisms and Heritage", in this volume.

appear, outlining possible future scenarios. The titles of these publications were meaningful, all inscribed in a semantic field of conflicting change: *South Africa at the Crossroads: Development and Conflict* by Emilio Biagini;[15] *After Apartheid: The Process of Change in South Africa* edited by Gian Paolo Calchi Novati[16] and *South Africa: The Conflict of Apartheid* by Emiliani, Ercolessi and Gentili.[17]

Biagini's voluminous book is the least significant of the three above-mentioned publications, although it was the outcome of fieldwork in the Cape, which was unusual for Italian scholars at that time. It is a systems analysis of the spatial dimensions of conflict and development which suffers from an excessive emphasis on cultural and religious features and stages of development. It is too centred on the white and Afrikaner community, probably as a result of the choice of the then Cape Province as a case study, while it does not pay enough attention to the agency of Africans, who are considered as subjected and exploited victims whose actions in the background range from resistance to apathy. The analysis focuses on the violent reactions of elites to the stress caused by the imbalances of the system. This conservative reaction of the elites, who tried to maintain and protect their identity, their position of power and their privileges against change, is considered as a social pathology.

The other two volumes were the products of two different institutes of research on international affairs: the Institute for Relations between Italy and the Countries of Africa, Latin America, Far and Middle East (Ipalmo) and the Centre for International Political Studies (Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale, CeSPI). Ipalmo initially aimed to investigate political and economic scenarios in Africa, Latin America as well as in the Middle East and the Far East, particularly in areas of strategic importance to Italian foreign policy. In the 1980s, Ipalmo shifted its focus to international aid policies and international development cooperation and it became an advisor to the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry on these matters. It also published *Politica Internazionale*, a journal of international relations and politics, with a focus on developing countries. CeSPI has been the research centre of the PCI, although it was an independent research centre on international relations at the time of the mentioned publication.

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[15] E. Biagini. *Sudafrica al bivio: sviluppo e conflitto*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1984.

[16] G. Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid. Il processo di cambio in Sud Africa*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1986.

[17] M. Emiliani, M.C. Ercolessi, A.M. Gentili (eds). *Sud Africa. I conflitti dell'apartheid*. Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1987.

These two books were not historical works or case studies but research-group political analyses on the crisis of the apartheid regime and the possible future scenarios of change, and they were not based on formal field research. Both stressed the role of political actors, such as the ANC and the United Democratic Front (UDF), in the struggle for liberation, and both pointed out the necessity to raise the "South African question" in international fora and councils like the United Nations, as well as to impose and strengthen sanctions and disinvestment against the apartheid regime.

In *Dopo l'apartheid*, Calchi Novati[18] related the "South African question" to decolonisation and to the broader struggle of liberation movements against white supremacy in southern Africa. The racist South African government presented itself as the last white bastion and had always been preventing the process of decolonisation. However, in the Durban strikes of 1973, and then in the Soweto uprisings of 1976, the agency of Africans played a significant role in radicalising the conflict.[19] Mannini's chapter[20] in the book illustrated the complexity and variety of the African liberation movements, but lacked a direct knowledge of actors and based the analysis only on secondary sources. Mannini therefore privileged the ANC's position as the only plausible counterpart in possible negotiations with the apartheid government, although he recognised the weakening of Umkhonto we Sizwe's (MK) guerrilla forces after the Nkomati Accord and the radicalisation of internal struggles, with their strategy of ungovernability. Nevertheless he had a cautious approach towards the newborn Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and he questioned the UDF's ability to control protests from below. He considered these spontaneous and anarchical, reproducing the simplified social dichotomy between the marginalised youth of the townships who protested, also violently, and the cadre of the African petty bourgeoisie who controlled the leadership of the movement (even in the Azanian People's Organisation [Azapo] and the UDF). Moreover, he highlighted the role of churches and the role of Inkatha, which was more popular than other movements in Italian and international public opinion at the time.

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[18] G. Calchi Novati. "Introduzione. Razzismo, riformismo, rivoluzione: verso lo scontro?". In Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid*, pp. 13-32.

[19] P. Valsecchi. "Le forze innovative entro il sistema di potere bianco". In Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid*, pp. 33-73.

[20] M. Mannini. "Il movimento di contestazione". In Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid*, pp. 74-115.

In the same volume, Fabio Tana's chapter[21] gives more importance to the external factors. The "South African question" is placed in the Cold War strategic scenario, which conditioned the conduct of Western countries, including Italy, towards the South African government. In effect, the vision of the author reflected US diplomatic action, moving between the use of threat and the Reaganian "constructive engagement". The chapter concludes that while the economic crisis weakened white supremacy and buttressed the logic of confrontation, sanctions might also have contributed to the isolation of the apartheid regime in favour of dialogue and change.

The third volume, edited by Marcella Emiliani, Maria Cristina Ercolessi and Anna Maria Gentili and titled *Sud Africa: i conflitti dell'apartheid*, presents a different view. The starting point of the analysis is the conflictive situation of the South African regime in the mid-1980s. The "reforms" of the Botha government opened up spaces where the liberation movements were able to articulate a united political agency. Their open defiance resulted in hard repression and the states of emergency that closed any possibility of dialogue and reform. This dramatic crisis of the system detonated the "South African question" across the world. However, in the international councils, Western countries and developing countries disagreed on the resolutions to be taken about sanctions and disinvestment.

Botha's "reforms" never called into question white supremacy, but instead, tried to modernise it according to the changes that had been occurring in the international context. Botha gave more space to the private sector and adopted a managerial and technocratic style of governance, using various committees of experts. But his core policy was inspired by his "total strategy" and all reforms were intended to rationalise the spatial planning of racial segregation. The new element in his strategy was the cooption of a segment of the black population (the urban middle classes, Indian and Coloured groups) combined with the repression of resistance, particularly in the townships, where parallel power structures were established. At the same time, the strategy aimed to destabilise the whole southern African region. Gentili's[22] chapter in the book focused on the Nkomati Accord. She read it as a tactic directed at maintaining the status quo, implementing reform policies that favoured big business and consolidating their regional supremacy. However, after negatively interpreting the agreement as an

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[21] F. Tana. "Il peso dei fattori esterni". In Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid*, pp. 116-195.

[22] A.M. Gentili. "I rapporti tra Sud Africa e Mozambico: la parabola dell'accordo di Nkomati". In Emiliani *et al.* (eds). *Sud Africa. I conflitti dell'apartheid*, pp. 163-181.

unconditional capitulation, the ANC realised that the internal struggle could be enhanced, regardless of logistics based in Mozambique. This strategy worked, and in fact helped the ANC leadership of the forces opposed to apartheid to gain international recognition.

After all, apartheid, as a legal system of racial discrimination, was institutionally organised by the state to favour capitalist development. The entire legislative framework had to facilitate the recruitment of a cheap labour force, incapable of negotiating its work conditions. Notwithstanding the consolidation of the industrial sector and the interpenetration of Afrikaner and English fractions of capital, the South African economy still depended on the international system, namely on exports of the MEC (minerals-energy complex) and imports of capital goods or assets. That interpenetration was favoured by the massive repression designed to annihilate political opposition movements after the massacre of Sharpeville in 1960. However, the economic crisis in the 1970s soon became a social and political crisis of the apartheid regime, which reacted in an authoritarian way, with the Botha government wielding the power of big business and the military. Beyond the economic and social reforms in favour of the urban middle classes, Botha's government implemented drastic, tight mobility and influx control policies. So the advantages gained by a few sections of the black population were overshadowed by the intolerable, harsh repression of the majority.[23]

Apart from some works on the Italian community in South Africa in late 1980s,[24] a new wave of publications coincided with the end of apartheid and the transition to democracy. But, again, they did not become a systematic line of research on South African history and politics, nor of the relations between Italy and South Africa. This is explained by the fact that the Italian literature on South Africa, and more generally on Africa, conforms to mainstream research or, particularly in the past, to broad ideological frameworks rather than rigorous analyses of local politics, policies and issues of governance. The result was a focus on normative aspects and the

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[23] A.M. Gentili. "La Repubblica del Sud Africa: ideologia e politica dell'apartheid". In Emiliani *et al.*(eds). *Sud Africa. I conflitti dell'apartheid*, pp. 23-93.

[24] See G. Sani. *Storia degli Italiani in Sud Africa: 1489-1989*. Edenvale: Isando Press, 1989; M. Gazzini. *Zonderwater: i prigionieri in Sudafrica, 1941-1947*, Roma: Bonacci, 1987, on Italian war prisoners; T. Filesi. *Italia e Italiani nella Guerra Anglo-Boera, 1899-1902*. Quaderni della Rivista «Africa» 12, Roma: Istituto Italo-Africano, 1987, on the opposing positions of the Italian government and public opinion on the Anglo-Boer War. While the government declared its neutrality, public opinion, still imbued with the Risorgimento spirit, was sympathetic to the Boers and against the British imperialists.

selection of sources and voices of the elite or political leaders who led the struggle. This approach reduced the possibility of research based on the complexity of local debates and the participation of social actors, even after the emergence of public interest in topics such as the end of apartheid and the transition to democracy in South Africa.[25]

During the time of the transition and at its accomplishment in the new democratic system, three volumes tried to understand, in different ways, where this process was driving the new South Africa.[26]

The first publication, edited by Anna Maria Gentili, contains the proceedings of a conference held in Bologna in April 1992, during the time of Codesa (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) and after the referendum for the white electorate that de Klerk called to support the negotiation process. Numerous Italian scholars[27] discussed the negotiations and various perspectives of political and constitutional change in South Africa with their South African peers and activists.[28] The starting point of the conference and the book was the legacy of the apartheid regime, tracing the historical roots of inequalities at the time of the mineral-industrial revolution and the creation of the Union of South Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The papers, particularly Terreblanche's article,[29] warned against a normative approach which reduced the end of the apartheid to the abolition of the legislative framework without eradicating the structural inequalities that had deepened

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[25] Ercolessi. "L'Africa australe", pp. 167-168.

[26] A.M. Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento politico e costituzionale*. Proceedings of the conference held in Bologna 1-3 April 1992. Bologna: Maggioli Editore, 1993; C. Robertazzi. *Verso un nuovo Sudafrica. Dall'apartheid allo stato multietnico*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1995; I. Vivan (ed.). *Il Nuovo Sudafrica. Dalle strettoie dell'apartheid alle complessità della democrazia*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1996.

[27] Among them, it is worth mentioning those who had been contributing to the debate on the South African situation in the previous years: Anna Maria Gentili and Matilde Callari Galli from the University of Bologna, both on the Anti-Apartheid Committee of Bologna that co-organised the conference with the University of Bologna; Alessandro Triulzi from the University of Naples "L'Orientale"; Maria Cristina Ercolessi, researcher at CeSPI; and Gian Paolo Calchi Novati from the University of Urbino.

[28] Kader Asmal, Thozamile Botha, Robert Davies, Colin Bundy, Dullah Omar and Harold Wolpe from the University of Western Cape; Gerhard Erasmus and Sampie Terreblanche from the University of Stellenbosch; Blade Nzimande from the then University of Natal; Smangaliso Mkhatshwa from the Institute of Contextual Theology; and Viviene Taylor from the National Institute for Prevention of Crime and Rehabilitation of Offenders.

[29] S. Terreblanche. "A Perspective on South Africa's Social, Political and Economic History on the Threshold of the Transition to a Post-apartheid Society". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 81-104.

over at least 120 years. These inequalities could be classified as structural inequalities in the redistribution of power-property-control and racial inequalities of income-opportunity-consumption. His analysis highlighted how a consolidated power bloc of the apartheid regime tried to retain power after 1994 by virtue of its «experience and efficiency».[30]

The rest of this conference and publication examined the state, society and political democracy issues. In particular, the debate focused on the constitutional process and structure, which reflected the political nature of the negotiations, as Dullah Omar and Kader Asmal both argued. [31] Smangaliso Mkhatshwa's and Thozamile Botha's papers dwelled on the role that civics and trade unions played during the transition, which was evident with the creation of the UDF in 1983.[32] According to Mkhatshwa, in the new South Africa, civics should become the driving force at the local level for the democratisation of government and development. On the other hand, Botha denounced the role of development agencies created by industrial capital after the Soweto riots since they prevented a process of development from below and simply perpetuated inequalities.

All papers reflected a concern with the political violence that had erupted during the transition. If we were to summarise the analysis of this period, according to the vision expressed in the book, we would have to say that social disintegration after the abolition of the apartheid legislation made the political negotiations difficult; subversive thrusts were absorbed in an ambiguous political, social and economic context of dramatic change. Inkatha tried to create a low-intensity conflict to establish a conservative front and to undermine the credibility and power of the National Party government and the ANC. However, other social actors, including trade unions and civics who had been the protagonists of the 1980s struggles, helped to overcome the stalemate. The time factor was crucial for the success of the transition.

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[31] A.M. Omar. "Democratic Majority Rule vs. Power Sharing". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 123-136; K. Asmal. "South Africa: The Constitutional Crossroads". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 227-240.

[32] S. Mkhatshwa. "Governing from Below". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 137-159; T. Botha. "Towards the Transformation of Traditional State and Private Sector Funded Development Agencies into Community Empowering Institutions: The Case of the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the Independent Development Trust". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 161-184.

The inevitability of the process, notwithstanding the violent climate of the early 1990s, was also the point of a monograph by Chiara Robertazzi. However, she questioned the challenge of the new South Africa as a "democratic and multi-ethnic State" and the sustainability of the balance of power that the figure of Mandela guaranteed. But she was more concerned with new possible forms of social exclusion than the endurance of democratic institutions. South Africa indeed had strong and independent intermediate institutions, such as universities, the media, and trade unions that prevented any autocratic drift. Robertazzi raised further doubts about the expectations of the new South Africa as a driving force for the whole continent. The analysis is, however, affected by the fact that the book is the outcome of research undertaken in US libraries rather than on the field in South Africa itself.[33]

In another volume, edited by Itala Vivan in 1996, the analysis on the perspectives of the new South Africa was entrusted to ten scholars, most of them South African.[34] The target of this book was also non-specialists, with the aim of widening the reading audience on South African issues. Vivan considered the new South Africa as a social, cultural and political laboratory. The vision of an innovative South Africa was substantiated in the multiple identities which had been segregated in "ethnic" and "racial" spaces but had persisted and had been waiting for liberation. All the contributions focused on the transition from apartheid to democracy. The chapter by Gian Paolo Calchi Novati[35] set South Africa within the African context and pointed out the need to decolonise and democratise South African history and historiography. On the whole, the volume presents a positive view on the future of South Africa and its transformation.[36]

In the last decade, Itala Vivan has edited two more volumes, which were collections of papers written by Italian, South African and international scholars that aimed to monitor the state and the evolution of the "rainbow

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[33] Robertazzi. *Verso un nuovo Sudafrica*.

[34] Besides the editor, Itala Vivan, and Gian Paolo Calchi Novati, all authors who wrote in the book were South African scholars. Most of them came from the University of Cape Town: Thomas William Bennett, Emile A. Boonzaier, Thandabantu Nhlapo, Nigel Worden; others, such as Steven Friedman and Caroline White, were from the Centre for Policy Studies in Johannesburg.

[35] G. Calchi Novati. "La storia perduta, la storia ritrovata". In Vivan (ed.). *Il Nuovo Sudafrica*, pp. 3-37.

[36] See also S. Friedman. "Quanto durerà il miracolo? Politica e nuova democrazia". In Vivan (ed.). *Il Nuovo Sudafrica,* pp. 69-109.

nation". One of these, which was the result of a conference held at the University of Milan in November 2004,[37] was published after ten years of democracy and was in many ways a continuation of the 1996 volume, either because almost the same group of scholars wrote in both (for example Thomas W. Bennett and Gian Paolo Calchi Novati) or in terms of the themes and issues dealt with in the chapters. The book emphasised that, notwithstanding the awareness of errors and failures during the transition process, South Africa still had strong institutions and a legal justice system that people believed in, partially thanks to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which contributed to the restructuring of a collective identity in a reframed social body. The last volume edited by Vivan *et al.*[38] was published in 2012, and, as the subtitle suggested (*The Rainbow Nation after Twenty Years of Liberation*), analysed the historical and social dynamics, the international role and the cultural transformations of the new South Africa. The book lies largely within the field of cultural and post-colonial studies, as most of the papers focus on literature and cultural aspects, while fewer papers than was the case in the previous collections provide a historical, political and socio-economic perspective.[39] Nonetheless, doubts and questions about the positive future of the rainbow nation are more evident, particularly regarding racial tensions and national identity, with alarming trends such as xenophobia and media restriction – South Africa is still perceived as an interesting "laboratory".

Following the growing interest in the democratic transition in South Africa, which marked a watershed in world history, other books[40] were published during those years. They focused particularly on two important and innovative features of the new democratic South Africa: the new constitution and the process of national reconciliation through the TRC.

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[37] I. Vivan (ed.). *Corpi liberati in cerca di storia, di storie. Il Nuovo Sudafrica dieci anni dopo l'apartheid*. Milano: Baldini Castoldi Dalai, 2005.

[38] L. de Michelis, C. Gualtieri, R. Pedretti and I. Vivan (eds). *Prisma Sudafrica. La nazione arcobaleno a vent'anni dalla liberazione (1990-2010)*. Firenze: Le Lettere, 2012.

[39] M. Flores d'Arcais. "Il peso del passato: l'immagine del Sudafrica tra storia e memoria", pp. 17-28; A. Pallotti. "Sudafrica e Africa dopo la fine dell'apartheid: rilancio dello sviluppo e gestione della sicurezza", pp. 29-45; C. Fiamingo. "La reintegrazione socio-economica degli ex-combattenti sudafricani", pp. 47-62, in De Michelis *et al.* (eds). *Prisma Sudafrica.*

[40] R. Orrù. *La Costituzione di tutti. Il Sudafrica dalla segregazione razziale alla democrazia della "rainbow nation"*. Torino: Giappichelli Editore, 1998; M. Flores (ed.). *Verità senza vendetta. L'esperienza della Commissione sudafricana per la Verità e la Riconciliazione*. Roma: Manifestolibri, 1999.

Romano Orrù, a professor in Constitutional Law, was driven to analyse the case of South Africa and to consider it a "constitutional laboratory" through the idea of the "rainbow nation", represented in the new constitution that repudiates apartheid and is based on the democratic principles of equality and freedom, non-racialism, non-sexism, the rule of law and fundamental human rights. It expressed interesting solutions not only for the country itself, but for all societies that had experienced profound divisions.

Although his analysis focused on the constitutional system and on reconciliation and reconstruction, Orrù was aware of the complex political, social and economic context and the conflictive history of South Africa. He recognised an advanced institutional framework that has been difficult to implement completely because of a problematic political and social environment. He also spoke of the "South African miracle" because of the agreement that the country was able to reach, especially if seen in the context of other realities in the continent and in the world. The new South Africa was born out of a negotiation process which respected the rules. This allowed the continuity of the state with a short-term government of national unity and allowed the general elections to be held with full universal suffrage. This process was assured by the figure of Nelson Mandela who embodied the ideals of reconciliation between oppressed and oppressors. The challenge posed to the constitutional framework would be to eradicate the social and economic legacies of apartheid without stopping the economic engine. In practice, this had to result in the fight against unemployment and poverty, the accomplishment of a land reform programme, the redistribution of national wealth, and service delivery in an environment of social peace and collaboration between political and economic power-holders.

The other event of world significance in the post-apartheid transition which found a space in the Italian literature was the TRC. A book worthy of being quoted is *Verità senza vendetta* (Truth without revenge), edited by Marcello Flores. It is an anthology of the most significant proceedings of the TRC, translated into Italian with a long introduction by the editor entitled "Verità e giustizia nel Sudafrica democratico" (Truth and justice in democratic South Africa). Marcello Flores is a contemporary historian who specialises in the Cold War, communism and the subject of memory as new source in historiography. His analysis of the TRC is part of a wider critical analysis on the post-Cold War change that occurred after 1989. It is also part of debates over history and justice, where history and memory, and truth and punishment intertwine in complex situations, as was the case in Bosnia and Rwanda during the same period. However, the South African TRC emerged

as the most original way of coming to terms with a violent and divisive past. In addition to the 1976 youth uprising, Flores recognised the end of the Cold War as the historical landmark of rapid change in South Africa. In 1989 F.W. de Klerk became president, succeeding P.W. Botha who had prevented any substantial change under the states of emergency during the so-called reformist period of apartheid in the previous decade. The speech by de Klerk on 2 February 1990 was the starting point of the transition that ended with the elections in April 1994. The transition period was a dynamic but at the same time violent, unstable and contradictory period. The new constitution and the TRC concluded this process.

The TRC had the task of reconstructing the violations of human rights committed between 1960 and 1993 in order to prevent similar crimes in the future. Transparency and truth were requested for forgiveness within a political compromise. The full disclosure and public acknowledgement of abuse and suffering had to counterbalance amnesty. The TRC gave priority to the voices of victims over the applications for amnesty. At the heart of the issue there was the dilemma of "punishment or reconciliation". The political compromise that allowed for a successful transition, emphatically called a "negotiated revolution", pushed the legal process into the background. The historical experiences of post-war courts, such as Nuremberg, have not always resulted in justice and the punishment of crimes. Victims often seek the factual, followed by the moral and political truth, more than the mere legal truth. However, although the TRC was produced by a political compromise that enabled the entire constitutional process, it is not a direct political resolution. The TRC did not have to construct a new collective memory, but had to start a process, based on a common public ethic of shared values inspired by human rights, which the new government and institutions had to consolidate and make permanent. Memory was the outcome, not the objective. It could be achieved through the use and narration of the truth. The focus on truth more than justice meant that amnesty was not given priority. Reconciliation comes after the emergence of the truth, which should be not only factual, but also historical. The punishment was part of collective participation; it was the sanction of community. Nonetheless, Flores concludes that real reconciliation can only happen when the injustices and inequalities of apartheid have been eradicated.[41]

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[41] M. Flores. "Introduzione. Verità e giustizia nel Sudafrica democratico". In Flores (ed.). *Verità senza vendetta*, pp. 7-63.

The new generation of researchers

At the turn of the new millennium, Italian research on South Africa started to grow, thanks to a new generation of researchers affiliated to African Studies centres, notably at the University of Naples "L'Orientale" and in the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Bologna. The PhD programmes of the two universities gave some young researchers the opportunity to move to an international setting for their work, with long periods of research in South Africa, as well as providing the opportunity to focus on topics more integrated with and related to South African and international streams of research. Their approaches were more interdisciplinary, combining historical with social and political science research methodologies. This new wave of research partly resulted in a new journal on African, Mediterranean and Middle East Studies, *Afriche e Orienti*, created by a group of researchers and scholars mainly coming from the two above-mentioned universities. One of the first issues of the journal, published to coincide with the South African elections of 1999, dealt with the South African transition.[42] The papers, apart from the introductory paper by Maria Cristina Ercolessi[43] on the electoral results and their consequences for the political system, were written by young Italian scholars engaged in primary research in South Africa. They reflected an interest in the nature of the post-transition South African democratic state. In particular, Franco Barchiesi[44] looked at the role of Cosatu in the democratic government and in the social stabilisation of the country; Antonio Pezzano and Sebastiana Etzo [45] focused on local government reform and service delivery; and Massimiliano Giamprini [46] focused on the crime issue. All these young researchers got their degrees either at the Universities of Bologna (Barchiesi and Giamprini) or Naples (Etzo and Pezzano). We could add to this group two other young researchers from Bologna – Barbara Bompani, who dealt with identity and religious movements, and Arrigo Pallotti, who was more interested in the regional system and the role of the Southern African

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[42] See *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, Autumn 1999.

[43] M.C. Ercolessi. "Sudafrica, 1994-1999: elezioni e sistema dei partiti". *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, 1999, pp. 2-7.

[44] F. Barchiesi. "COSATU e governo democratico tra istituzionalizzazione politica e marginalizzazione sociale". *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, 1999, pp. 8-13.

[45] A. Pezzano and S. Etzo. "Sviluppo e riforma del governo locale". *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, 1999, pp. 14-19.

[46] M. Giamprini. "La criminalità in Sudafrica". *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, 1999, pp. 23-27.

Development Community (SADC) – to support the hypothesis that a school of southern African studies was being born in Italy.

It is interesting to note that this new research stream focuses on issues that are relevant not only to South Africa, but to the entire region and even the whole continent. The issue of citizenship and its definition – looking at it from the local, regional and transnational scales – and the idea of moving beyond the formal and normative approach of democracy – looking at crucial topics such as land reform, migration, the relationship between state and social movements, neo-liberal reforms and their impact on the state and its functions, and the mobilisation of identity – were at the core of these new studies.[47]

The new wave of interest in and research on South and southern Africa was undertaken by this group of scholars who, despite the difficulties created by funding cuts in Italian universities, particularly in African Studies, over the last decades, were able to gain co-funding from the Italian Department of Education, University and Research (MIUR) for two cycles of projects, one in the second half of the period 2000-2009 and another one in the first half of the 2010s. The first Project of National Interest (Prin) was coordinated by Anna Maria Gentili from the University of Bologna, its focus made clear in its title: "Governance and Institution Building, 'Virtuous Circle' of the Poverty Alleviation and Developmental Policies in Southern Africa?". Beyond the Universities of Bologna and "L'Orientale" of Naples, some scholars from the Universities of Turin and Rome were also involved in the project.

The research was a comparative multidisciplinary study on developmental processes and strategies to fight poverty and to empower citizens in the southern African region. It aimed to verify whether, and to what extent, the approach linking good governance with poverty reduction and social inclusion policies was able to affect the processes of forming both social equality (access to social citizenship and basic services, poverty alleviation, income redistribution, reduction of horizontal and spatial inequalities between urban and rural and in gender relations) and political inclusion (access to political citizenship, civic freedoms, political participation in decision-making processes at different levels, including decentralised government).

The research unit of the University of Naples "L'Orientale", coordinated by Maria Cristina Ercolessi, focused on "Governance Reforms, Social

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[47] Ercolessi. "L'Africa australe", pp. 168-170.

Exclusion, and Fight against Poverty in Southern Africa: The Cases of South Africa and Angola". Sebastiana Etzo and Antonio Pezzano, who completed their PhD programmes with long periods of fieldwork,[48] focused on the South African case.

The research was based on the premise that strong social and economic imbalances and inequalities inherited by the former apartheid regime were largely unchanged after more than a decade since the first democratic elections. Despite the creation and growth of a black middle class and a rich elite, one third of the population was still classified as poor; the country was experiencing high levels of unemployment with limited opportunities for the younger generation, and the wide quality-of-life gap between urban and rural areas persisted. Social citizenship did not follow the achievement of civic and political rights, especially for the mass of African have-nots, the poor, unemployed or temporarily employed (mainly young) people. The laissez-faire choices set out by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme (GEAR), the macro-economic policy document adopted in 1996, prioritised the requirement for competitiveness as demanded by global markets through the search for investors' trust and foreign investment, over state intervention focused on redistribution. The latter was more serious in a country like South Africa, with high indexes of vertical and horizontal social inequality.

A further premise underpinning this body of research was that the different articulations of the "transition" from the apartheid regime to a democratic system in South Africa were not necessarily coherent. In most cases, political and social citizenship was not strengthened. The process of institution-building (local government reform and decentralisation) and the implementation of correlated policies (service delivery) at central as well as local level, circumscribed and limited the spaces for the political and social action of citizens, social movements and other local actors, reducing them to passive "beneficiaries" of top-down policies. Although the post-apartheid state "contracts out" some of its functions, particularly those related to welfare, it keeps a strong central executive power, strengthened by the undisputed dominant political position of the ANC. In this context, the local

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[48] Antonio Pezzano completed his PhD Programme in History of Africa at the University of Siena in 2004, with a thesis on *African Small and Micro Entrepreneurs in the Witwatersrand: A Historical Perspective*. Sebastiana Etzo completed her PhD Programme in African Studies at the University of Naples "L'Orientale" in 2004, with a thesis on *Local Government Restructuring and the Emergence of Urban Social Movements in Post-apartheid South Africa. The Case of Johannesburg*.

becomes an autonomous place of production and consumption and the local government a contracting authority responsible for services, but not committed to supply them (this process is known as corporatisation, that is, the separation and autonomy of the supply units from the municipal council).

The research also analysed urban governance, in particular the local government reforms and their policies aimed at fighting poverty and social exclusion. The city is understood as a political, jurisdictional, economic and social space and as a network of actors and interests participating in local-level dynamics and struggles. Major attention was thus given to new social actors, protagonists of complex political and social dynamics at the local level.

The research resulted in a publication, edited by Ercolessi,[49] on governance and development policies in southern Africa. The book has a first part on Angola and a second part on post-apartheid South Africa, which included the chapters by Pezzano and Etzo that focused respectively on governance, participation and urban poverty, and on housing policies and informal settlements in Durban.[50] This field of research was followed up by Antonio Pezzano who then focused on informal trading policies in the City of Johannesburg. The research is still in progress as part of a new national research project: "State, Plurality, and Change in Africa".[51]

During 2009 and 2010, when the spotlight was on South Africa because of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, a mass of popular newspaper articles and non-academic monographs were published about South Africa, but they had no scientific value. (An exception might be the special issue that *Limes*, the Italian journal of geopolitics, dedicated to South Africa.)[52]

Instead, it is worth mentioning, in concluding this review of Italian historiography on South Africa, a couple of paperbacks published by two important Italian academic publishers in 2009. The first one is a historical review written by Mario Zamponi, researcher at the University of Bologna

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[49] M.C. Ercolessi (ed.). *Governance e politiche di sviluppo in Africa australe*. Roma: Carocci, 2009.

[50] A. Pezzano. "Politiche di sviluppo o strategie di lotta alla povertà?". In Ercolessi (ed.). *Governance e politiche,* pp. 69-73; A. Pezzano. "*Governance*, partecipazione e povertà urbana". In Ercolessi (ed.). *Governance e politiche,* pp. 75-99; S. Etzo. "Le politiche sulla casa e la rivolta degli insediamenti informali a eThekwini/Durban". In Ercolessi (ed.). *Governance e politiche,* pp. 101-119.

[51] This is a broader research project in which most of the Italian scholars on African Studies are involved. The Naples unit, coordinated by Professor M.C. Ercolessi, focuses on North and southern Africa.

[52] "Il Sudafrica in nero e bianco". *Limes*, 3, 2010.

and editor of *Afriche e Orienti*;[53] the second was written by Veronica Federico, a young scholar of Public and Constitutional Law, who spent some years as a PhD student and research fellow at the University of the Witwatersrand, and focused on institution-building and the new constitutional framework of South Africa.[54]

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the Italian historiography of South Africa produced at the time the anti-apartheid movement developed. As pointed out in the chapter, the first approach to South and southern African studies in Italy was almost militant, rather than formally academic. Particularly in the 1970s, the publications were inspired by the international solidarity leftist movements and parties and were published in their journals/reviews or propagandistic documents. This documentation did not become a corpus of historiographical literature and is getting lost over time.

In the mid-1980s, the obvious crisis of the apartheid regime led some Italian scholars and researchers to focus their work on South Africa. But the most significant publications were political analyses of the crisis of the apartheid regime and the possible future scenarios of change, rather than historical works.

Publications were more numerous in the 1990s because of the historical transition from apartheid to democracy. Most of these were published around the turning point of the democratic elections in 1994 and examined the challenges of the future for the "rainbow nation". Some publications focused particularly on innovative features of the new democratic South Africa, such as the new constitution and the process of national reconciliation through the TRC. They were mostly written by scholars of other disciplines, attracted by the particular and exceptional nature of the events. Despite all those new publications, a body of historiographical literature on South Africa had not yet been created in Italy. Nevertheless, at the turn of the new millennium, a young generation of scholars, particularly in the Universities of Naples and Bologna, spent long periods of fieldwork as visiting researchers at South African universities, focusing on topics more integrated with and related to

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[53] M. Zamponi. *Breve storia del Sudafrica. Dalla segregazione alla democrazia*. Roma: Carocci, 2009.

[54] V. Federico. *Sudafrica*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009.

South African and international streams of research, and more concerned with the nature of democracy in terms of citizenship and social and economic transformation. Their approaches were also more interdisciplinary, combining historical with social and political science research methodologies. Although they have not yet created a real critical mass or a new school of studies, these new researchers have certainly contributed to the development of Italian literature on South Africa.