

In the frame

30 years since Nelson Mandela's release from prison, marking the beginnings of the end of Apartheid, former student activists Pete Loewenstein (Psychology, 1969) and Kanu Patel (Civil Engineering, 1973) recall the anti-Apartheid movement in Nottingham.

Pete: This photograph is from an Anti-Apartheid Movement protest I helped organise and attended in the late 1980s with my wife and children. When I came to Nottingham to study in 1966, I joined the national Anti-Apartheid Movement. There wasn't an anti-Apartheid group at the University so I formed SPEAR - the Society for Peace and Equality Among Races. Having grown up in South Africa and Rhodesia, and been involved in the struggle against the Ian Smith regime, I was able to speak from first-hand experience of how the racist national laws of those two countries denied black people, the vast majority of the population, access to decent land, housing, education, jobs, justice and more.

SPEAR campaigned on race-related issues locally and nationally, including demonstrating at the Springboks' matches in the UK, taking part in TV debates on race relations and stopping the South African Ambassador from speaking to a Monday Club meeting in Nottingham. Within the student body at Nottingham there was a significant cohort who did care passionately about equality and injustice, and we campaigned hard for what we believed



in. I'm proud to have played a small part alongside many others in the struggle to counter racism in the UK and end Apartheid. However, the struggle for social justice and racial equality is ongoing. There have been some improvements since my time at University but racial inequalities are still obvious and remain a blight on our society.

Kanu: I arrived at Nottingham in 1970, having lived in Manchester since arriving from East Africa in 1966. In my second year at University a group of us formed Kwacha, a society to explore the impact of colonialism and neo-colonialism on the former colonies, and to champion the cause of liberation movements in Africa, Asia and the United States.

Kwacha became involved in anti-Apartheid activism on campus and in the city. We joined protests on campus and marches in London, and called an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Students' Union to pass a motion condemning the South African minority regime and the UK's role in prolonging the Apartheid regime in South Africa and Rhodesia.

50 years later and the struggle for Black liberation continues as exemplified by Black Lives Matter. It is indeed very sad that hundreds of years of colonial rule, propaganda and indoctrination has placed this curse on mankind, from which I hope we can escape quickly and restore equality and freedom.

Find out more about the University's research into the history of anti-Apartheid activism at:

nott.ac.uk/antiapartheid

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Pete Loewenstein



Kanu Patel