



Currently hosted by the Department of History, Rhodes University, P.O. Box 94, Grahamstown, South Africa, 6194, Tel: +27 (o) 46 603 8812

Email: Enocent Msindo (President), e.msindo@ru.ac.za Website: www.sahs.org.za

27th Biennial Conference 24-26 June 2019

Trails, Traditions, Trajectories:
Rethinking Perspectives on Southern
African Histories

Hosted by the Department of History, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

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This 27th Biennial Conference of the Southern African Historical Society comes barely a year before the 200th anniversary of the 1820 English Settlers who occupied parts of the Eastern Cape including Grahamstown itself, dispossessing Xhosa and other groups. The histories of these settlers were pivotal to the colonisations of what later became Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia, as South Africa became a base for British colonialism regionally. The broader southern African region is rethinking the legacy of dispossession: for example, with resource nationalism in Mozambique and decades of radical land redistribution in Zimbabwe, both of which have had significant implications for the region's economic performance, leading to illegal goods and human traffic. The pronouncement – towards the end of the Zuma era in South Africa – of 'radical economic transformation' and 'expropriation of land without compensation' signals the need for historians to engage with these crucial issues. Another contemporary concern is the rise of China as a global economic player and its impact on Africa. How could historians of our time examine African economic histories?

This conference happens at a moment when university students in South Africa have made demands for curriculum transformation to reposition Africa in the global knowledge community. Moreover, with the passing of the first generation of post-independence nationalist leaders, historians are faced with the challenge of understanding the postcolonial moment. At this juncture, scholars have an opportunity to re-envision the future of southern Africa's past. This can be done by rethinking the current historiography and imagining an alternative canon. It is not enough to merely decentre the old, but to also reposition the histories of the vanquished, their environments, their technologies, their pre-existing knowledge systems, social norms and political values.

The SAHS, therefore, invites contributions from professional historians, post-graduate students, and cognate specialists such as archaeologists, archivists, documentary film-makers and heritage practitioners. As the professional body for historical studies in southern Africa, this conference, however, is not exclusive in terms of its focus. We strive to reflect the broad diversity of the discipline in this region and are therefore open to a wide range of themes, including (but not limited to):

- Legacies of dispossession in southern Africa: land, labour and language
- Political structures and institutional cultures
- Decolonisations and the rise of the neo-liberal order
- Archives, heritage and memory
- Disputed lands: histories and politics of land- alienation, redistribution and agrarianism
- Food security
- Hydro-politics, resource politics and the state
- Indigenous knowledge systems: technologies, economies, health, and society
- Medical histories: health, wellbeing and healing
- Leadership and the state: from precolonial, colonial and postcolonial Africa
- Transitional justice, memory and healing
- Human movements, borderlands and travel narratives
- Business, international capital and African elites
- Histories of the environment
- Politics beyond the big men the passing of the old guard
- The military: coups, wars and fractured transitions
- Labour and the Global South
- Trajectories of gender and Afro-feminism
- Historical studies and the contemporary University
- Changing historiographies

Proposals:

Proposals for the various sessions will be in the following formats: papers, panels and roundtable discussions. Please consider choosing a session format that will most effectively achieve your intellectual goals and facilitate lively interaction among presenters and the audience. Paper submissions should include an abstract (max 200 words) and a very short bio of about 100 words. Panel and roundtable submissions should include a minimum of three papers (each with a 200-word abstract and short bio), a proposed moderator/chair (if possible), and a 100-word abstract. Please email these to Enocent Msindo, @ e.msindo@ru.ac.za by 15 December 2018.

Conference Fees:

The conference registration fee includes the Welcome Cocktail Reception, conference materials, mid-morning and afternoon refreshments, daily lunches and the Conference Gala Dinner.

Conference registration commences 1 March 2019

Early-bird registration ends on 10 April 2019

Early-bird registration fee: R2300 / Regular fee after 10 April 2019: R2700

Post-doctoral fellows: Early-bird: R2000 / Regular fee after 10 April: R2200

Post-graduate students: Early-bird: R1600 / Regular fee after 10 April: R1800 There will be a limited number of post-graduate bursaries to assist with registration fees. Post-graduate students are welcome to apply to the Local Organising Committee for consideration.

Daily rate: R700 per person, excluding conference dinner

Further details regarding conference registration, student bursaries, accommodation and travel, conference logistics, the SAHS Vice-Presidential student essay prize, and the special conference issue of the *South African Historical Journal* will be published on the SAHS conference website in due course. Visit: http://www.sahs.org.za

For more information, please email **Enocent Msindo**: e.msindo@ru.ac.za or **Nomalanga Mkhize**, nalanga@gmail.com

The Southern African Historical Society is committed to fostering the development of young scholars in History and its allied disciplines.