

# Southern African Historical Society

Currently hosted by the National Heritage & Cultural Studies Centre, University of Fort Hare
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### 28 - 30 June 2022

## Hosted by the Department of History, and the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre, University of Fort Hare

## **Expanding Margins: New and Lingering Questions, and Debates on Southern African Histories**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the Southern African Historical Society (SAHS) is running a year later than its usual schedule because of the Covid-19 global pandemic, and, is being hosted at the University of Fort Hare (UFH)'s East London campus. The 2022 SAHS Conferences coincides with the 106<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the founding of the UFH. In addition, the UFH will be celebrating in 2022 the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year since it took custodianship of the rich archival material, which the major political organisations involved in the struggle against segregation and apartheid donated to the UFH. In the last 25 years or so, some scholars used this vital collection held at the UFH's National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS) to add to ongoing historiographical revisions, especially onto topics related to broader liberation processes in the Southern African region.

Present-day Southern Africa shares common history, and the colonial governments of the British, the Portuguese and the Germans from the late Nineteenth Century, largely shaped existing geo-political boundaries of the region. Such decisive European imposition in mapping out of what later became the Southern African national states, did not however necessarily denote first-time recording and presentation of this region's past. Nor did it infer immunity against reassessment of current Southern African historiography of conquest, and resultant liberation processes of the Twentieth Century. Even so, the dynamism of people's ideas in the region, their actions towards socioeconomic plights, and their challenges in pursuing forms of social justices have continued to test postcolonial and post-apartheid Southern African states. Likewise, there have been persistent political contests, readjustments of power institutions, albeit, against unending authoritarianism, and declining space for civil society. All of these trials have occurred not only in testing sociopolitical, but, also under severe natural environments, exhibited through climate and agrarian change, as well as swelling food insecurities. They have also been displayed in shapes of falling basic rights and rising hardships, such as diasporas, homelessness and job losses. Yet in spite of all these challenges, the scope has continued to widen for further historical research, and production of new historical knowledge.

It is thus envisaged that the 28<sup>th</sup> biennial SAHS conference will address key questions about the prospects and production of history and engage with complex old and new forces in the Southern

African region. This can be achieved by reconsidering and expanding existing historiography, and by representing as well as reporting on hidden histories of the marginalised. In also inviting newly emerging historical insights on intricate forces and the varied people of the region, it is imagined that the conference will provide platform for critical dialogue on Southern Africa's past, whilst similarly making sense of its present. In addition, the current Covid-19 pandemic poses delicate methodological questions concerning historical production as techniques that revolve solely on conventional use of primary sources are increasingly challenged.

The SAHS invites contributions from professional historians, postgraduate students and related specialists such as archaeologists, heritage practitioners, archivists, museum curators, and documentary film-makers. The SAHS 2022 Conference organisers endeavour to encompass and reflect the broad diversity of the discipline in the region and consequently wish that the participants at the conference encapsulate a broad range of topics, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Disputed principles: historical structures, and changing historiographies
- Historical Studies, past and contemporary University
- Archives, heritage and remembrance(s)
- Forms of history production: analog and digital
- Creative history: art, drama, imagination and expression(s)
- Governance and authority systems: from precolonial to colonial and postcolonial Africa
- Legacies of dispossession in Southern Africa: land, labour, migrancy and language
- Contested rights to land: histories and politics of land and agrarian reforms
- Histories and politics of displacement(s): borderlands and mutable human settlements
- Nationalism, identities and prejudice(s)
- The militia: insurrection, coups, war(s) and strident reformations
- Pathways of Gender and Afro-feminism
- Predicaments of development: international capital, debt and African elites
- Trade, employment and the Global South
- Sociopolitical formations and institutional values
- Indigenous (and Indigenised) knowledge systems: technologies, health and society
- Medical and medicinal histories: health, wellbeing and healing
- Unsettled settings: indigence, famine, epidemics and cataclysms
- Histories, politics and governance of control of water, and other natural resources

#### **Proposals**

We request proposals for sessions in three different formats: papers, panels and roundtable debates. Participants are kindly requested to consider selecting a session format within the suggested broad range of topics above and their own historical specialisations with the objective of enabling active interaction amongst presenters and respective audiences. Paper submissions should include an abstract (max 250 words) and short profile for each participant. Panel and roundtable submissions should include a minimum of three papers (each with a 250word abstract and short profile of each participant), a proposed moderator/chair (if it is possible) and a 250word abstract. Please email these to Luvuyo Wotshela, <a href="https://www.lwotshelas.html">lwotshelas.html</a> Heach conference 2022 @ufn.ac. za by 31 January 2022.

#### **Conference Fees**

The following conference fee structure is made on the assumption that the conference will be held in person. The SAHS Executive will review the situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and make any necessary adjustments to conference logistics if required.

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 on 1 February 2022

Early-bird registration ends on 8 April 2022

Early-bird registration fee: R2500. Regular fee after 8 April 2022 - R2900

Postdoctoral fellows: Early-bird R2200. Regular fee after 8 April 2022 – R2400

Postgraduate students: Early-bird: R1700. Regular fee after 8 April 2022 – R1900

A limited number of postgraduate bursaries to assist with registration fees are available. Postgraduate students are welcome to apply to the Local Organising Committee for consideration for these bursaries.

More details regarding conference registration, student bursaries, travel and accommodation, conference arrangement, the SAHS Vice-Presidential student essay prize, and the special conference edition of the South African Historical Journal will be published on the SAHS conference website in due course. Visit <a href="http://www.sahs.org.za">http://www.sahs.org.za</a>

Current members and prospective members can contact SAHS Treasurer Anton Ehlers on matters regarding new member applications or renewals at <a href="mailto:aehl@sun.ac.za">aehl@sun.ac.za</a>

For more information, please email Luvuyo Wotshela: <u>LWotshela@ufh.ac.za</u> or Nomalanga Mkhize <u>naledi.nomalanga@gmail.com</u>