

South Africa is a country in celebration of its history. And since most of its history has not been written down, much is expected from oral historians to provide the basis for these celebrations.

Mainly the celebrations are not about what has happened in the past, because of South Africa's histories of abuse, exclusion, dispossession and apartheid. What is celebrated is how these "unholy" histories opened up into a future of change, equity and human dignity.

Thus, in 2013, the centenary of the notorious "Natives' Land Act" (No 27, 1913) was celebrated. Countrywide the stories of people whose land has been taken from them through this law, were retrieved through oral history interviewing, and stories of successful land claims were celebrated. One example is the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform that put money at the disposal of seasoned oral historians to train and empower learners from all the nine provinces of South Africa to retrieve these stories. The Executive Committee members of the Oral History Association of South Africa played a major role in this training.

This year, in 2014, local historians join the international remembrance of the outbreak of World War I in 1914, focusing on local themes on war and power. The Historical Association of South Africa (HASA) dedicates the theme of its biennial conference to "History Wars, Wars in History & Other Southern African Histories". This conference will be held in Durban, South Africa, from 26 to 28 June 2014. Also, the Church History Society of Southern Africa will hold its annual conference with the theme "Church, War and Peace". This takes place from 14 to 16 August 2014 at the University of South Africa in Pretoria.

Specifically in the field of Oral History, both locally and internationally the issue of democracy – that is, the times after the "wars" have been won – is subjected to historical scrutiny. The Oral History Association of South Africa celebrates the 20 years after democracy dawned on South Africa in 1994 with the following theme for their annual conference which will take place from 14 to 17 October 2014 in Gauteng, South Africa: "Reconsidering the post-apartheid moment: Oral History and the Politics of Transformation." The International Oral History Association, too, (re)considers democracy from an oral history point of view at their coming conference from 9 to 12 July 2014 in Barcelona, Spain, under the theme: "Power and Democracy: The many voices of Oral History".

Land dispossession and land restitution, as well as retrieving and archiving voices as part of the celebrating of democracy are also the themes dealt with in this second issue of the *Oral History Journal of South Africa*. Ndakaitei Makwanise and Mehluli Masuku investigate the dispossession of land from the Ndebeles in Southern Zimbabwe from a gender perspective. From the same university, that is, the National University of Science

and Technology in Zimbabwe, comes an article on the Malawians who benefited from the land reform in Zimbabwe since 2000, written by Calvin Phiri and Njabulo Bruce Khumalo. Still from the same university Sindiso Bhebhe and Anele Chirume describe the archiving of the oral traditions of the San people in Zimbabwe.

While the Zimbabweans make a substantial contribution to this issue by authoring three of the nine articles, Lauren Marx from Freedom Park in Pretoria investigates the present challenges of the people of Riemvasmaak in the Richtersveld of the Northern Cape Province after their land has been returned to them. Rowanne Sarojini Marie tells the untold stories of indentured South African Indian women, and from Kenyatta University in Kenya, Julius Gathogo reports on General Chiu wa Mararo, an important but neglected Mau-Mau fighter.

Furthermore, this issue of the OHJSA contains useful and enlightening methodological articles on archiving and the preservation of oral history sources, based on the practice of oral history. Ilda Ladeira, Nicola Bidwell and Xolile Sigaji focus on “digital storytelling design”, while Cynthia Phiri collects and documents stories through participatory community development.

Finally, this issue concludes with an essay on “orality”, which of course forms part of the business of oral history, written by Chris de Wet from the University of South Africa.

We are convinced that, with this issue too, the *Oral History Journal of South Africa* is making an important contribution to the body of knowledge related to Oral History. We invite you to enlarge this important field of investigation by sending academic articles based on oral history methodologies – to be doubly peer reviewed – to the editor by the end of June 2014.

Christina Landman
Editor: Oral History Journal of South Africa
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Email: landmc@unisa.ac.za