

It should not come as a surprise that an oral history journal is launched in South Africa. The country has a proud history of oral history research, and an even more compelling future of retrieving the hidden and veiled voices from its past.

In summarising the history of oral history research in South Africa, reference should, first, be made to centres at universities where oral history research is done and where oral history training is taking place. The most prominent of these centres are the Centre of Popular Memory at the University of Cape Town, which has grown under the directorship of Sean Field during the past 12 years, and the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which was founded by Philippe Denis in 1996. Over two decades ago, in 1977 the year after the Soweto uprisings, the History Workshop was established at the University of the Witwatersrand. Under the leadership of Philip Bonner, oral history came to its own right in workshops and research projects in co-authorship with the previously voiceless people of South Africa.

A second space for oral history research has been provided locally by the Oral History Association of South Africa (Ohasa) that was established in 2002. For the past ten years, Ohasa, in collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture (National Archives of South Africa), has hosted an annual oral history conference, covering the nine provinces of South Africa. The conference proceedings of these national conferences have been published in three volumes under titles that represent the themes and contents of the conferences.<sup>1</sup> Volume 1 deals with *Culture, Memory and Trauma*; Volume 2 contains essays on *Representing the Hidden, the Untold and the Veiled*, while Volume 3 focuses on *Heritage and Identity*.

As a newly founded academic journal, the *Oral History Journal of South Africa* aims to publish articles on oral history methodologies as well as on the results of oral history research done in and on Africa. Although there is a special focus on African oral history, this first issue of the journal also hosts articles from oral historians of international standing. These include Helen Klæbe from Australia, Pavel Mücke from the Czech Republic and Bernardo Barque from Brazil. From South Africa contributions are made by Xolile Sigaji and Ilda Ladeira from the University of Cape Town in collaboration with Nicola Bidwell from the James Cook University of Australia, Noleen Turner from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Humbulani S. Tshamano and Theodore Nkadimeng Mahosi from the University of Venda, and Christina Landman from the University of South Africa. Philippe Denis from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, one of the founders of oral history research and training in South Africa, heads the articles as is proper to

1 Christina Landman, *Oral history: Proceedings from the Annual National Oral History Conferences* (3 vols.) (Pretoria: Research Institute for Theology and Religion 2013).

his position of prominence in the field. Stephen Muoki Joshua and Julius Gathogo are scholars from Kenya. The authors and their work cover large fields in terms of contents and geography.

The publication of the first issue of an academic oral history journal is a landmark in history research in South Africa, a country whose history is calling out to be heard and related. The *Oral History Journal of South Africa* intends to become the academic space for oral history researchers to publish, in co-authorship with the previously voiceless, the stories of the everyday experiences of living, loving, achieving and failing.

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