

Report on SAHO Activities

Jan to Nov 2019

Overview

SA History Online is a non-partisan NGO, operating since 2001. It has a vast archive and collection of articles. We strive to produce popularly written material that is rigorously grounded. SAHO aims to advance the development of a People's History.

2019 was a very productive year in which SA History Online made substantial progress in the promotion of a Human Rights culture in line with our broad objectives of developing a People's History and making it accessible on a mass scale. While we grew our audience by 5%, to over 7 million we added over 1000 new archive items, articles and biographies. We were able to take in several interns from History to IT who we were able to train in the latest online history techniques.

In all, we achieved substantial progress in the following areas, which we report on below:

1. The history of the development of a Human Rights culture and the development of the concept of restorative justice, with reference also to the TRC;
2. The apartheid government and their use of law to suppress dissent ;
3. Developing a complete list of the banned and banished;
4. Developing a complete list of those imprisoned for political activity, those hanged and the deaths in detention;

5. Developing research into the impact of colonization on the rest of Africa as well as expanding on our work on the History of the rest of Africa
6. Integrating our new research into our Classroom section, the expansion of biographies on women and lives of courage.

Our site can be explored for further details. www.sahistory.org.za. Below is a summary of our 2019 activities:

The history of the development of a Human Rights culture

A. New additions on research into the history of the development of a Human rights culture.

We include a selection of some of the new research added to our site:

We added items on designing knowledge in post colonial societies; post election violence; black soldiers in the world wars; the 1957 bus boycott; History of the Botsotso; the 2019 election manifestoes of the leading parties; articles on state capture; attempts to build a national catering union; consciousness and migrant workers; the concentration camps in the Anglo Boer war; launching the Kora book, with sound clips on our site of an almost forgotten Khoi and San language; various articles on the land question; the 1949 Durban riots; Indian struggles and contributions to national liberation.

Special new articles included: A timeline of SA photographic books and exhibitions 1958-2003; Remembering and celebrating iconic LBGTQI+ women; Workshop 71; the state of Art in SA- conference.

B. Film screening of local films on women

We hosted a film screening in August, in partnership with UCT Film and Media department, of local films on gender issues. One of the directors was on hand to interact with the audience.

C. Insurrections Ensemble

The 1860's marked the start of the arrival of indentured Indians to South Africa. So began a fusion of culture as well as the culture of resistance. Since 2011 SAHO has hosted the unique fusion of South African and Indian Jazz. The 2019 edition was hosted in September 2019 in Cape Town. There is a wealth of research that has started on the history of such fusion. We have begun the process of constructing the biographies of the artists that are part of this Ensemble.



D. Mafika Gwala lecture

Our annual tribute to Mafika Gwala and the role of art and artists in the struggle for Human Rights, was held at UKZN in October, hosting youth from the university as well as youth from the Hammarsdale community just outside Pietermaritzburg. This year's lecture was presented by Fred Khumalo, titled: **'What the revolutionary Oracle taught me'**.



E. Preparing materials on xenophobia

We have done substantial groundwork on educational material on xenophobia, for Classrooms. We successfully trialed this in a local high school in November.

- Icebreaker: students sit in a circle. One starts off with naming an African country, the next mentioning anything about that country (cities, sports stars, historical or scientific event or discovery); the next student mentions another country with the one seated next to them mentions a fact on that country and so it goes on for 2 or 3 rounds. Facilitators are ready with interesting facts to help stimulate more discussion;
- Input on words that are common to Swahili, English, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Arabic, Afrikaans.
- Input on the origin of the species (Sterkfontein and Ethiopia)
- Minerals and their association with different African countries
- The 1884 Berlin conference, colonization and ongoing wars in Africa

- The role of other African countries in providing refuge for the liberation movements and exiles from South Africa
- Poster drawing exercise on African unity



F. *Preparing materials on Gender violence*

We have done substantial work on preparing educational material on gender violence, for Classrooms. Thus far we have:

- Literature compilation of articles on gender violence
- An interim timeline of gender violence in SA, which includes the suffragette movement, the struggle of women against the pass laws, the 1996 Bill of Rights, the 2018 Presidential conference on gender, the 2019 demonstrations against gender violence
- Gathering material on LBGTQI+ struggles in SA
- An interim list of possible educational films on gender

G. Oral History project on forced removals in Simon's Town

We are in a new partnership with the Simon's Town Museum, the Phoenix Committee as well as the Western Cape Museums Directorate, for an Oral History project on the history of forced removals from Simon's Town. Elements of this partnership includes:

- Developing a team of experienced researchers and cinematographers to oversee the project
- Training a group of 5 youth to conduct interviews, to be knowledgeable on the forced removals and the basics of maintaining and updating a website
- Digitise existing archival material and new interviews and documentary evidence
- Develop a new website for the Museum that they are able to maintain and update.

H. Developing partnership with UCT

In the past year we have worked with the Film and Media department, the History Dept as well as the College of Music at UCT. Our aim is to build on this partnership, which includes the sourcing of researchers as interns as well as joint research, such as the History of music in SA. We hope to expand on this partnership going forward.

I. Developing partnership with Stellenbosch University

SAHO assisted with a collective of researchers to objectively refute race-based research at Stellenbosch University on coloured women. This led to the retraction by an international journal of the offensive research. The University has responded very positively by putting in place a number of corrective measures. SAHO is currently in discussions with the University on possible synergies.

J. Art and Art History

We have incorporated a number of research pieces on Art and Art History, such as material on Black Culture, COSAW, Black literature and art, Jazz, David Koloane art collection, etc.

The apartheid government and their use of law to suppress dissent

We have managed to source, archive and produce numerous articles on the history of the use of law to crush dissent through various mechanisms such as banning, banishment, censorship, overt and covert operations by the apartheid regime as well as its precursors. We have also recorded more on the history of resistance to such measures.

Some of the material includes: Anton Fransch; Helen and Ben Kies, the laws of 1952; UDF rallies; the National Forum Manifesto; The Fagan report of 1946; apartheid stakeholders; Total strategy; countdown to 1994; Covert ops; Black Wednesday; Feature on Bishop Tutu; Cator Manor- restitution research; Incorruptible (Hani, Dulcie, Lobowski); UMSA on land; etc.

Developing a complete list of the banned and banished; Developing a complete list of those imprisoned for political activity, those hanged and the deaths in detention

We have obtained research and constructed and uploaded the most comprehensive list available of banned, banished, imprisoned, hanged and of deaths in detention.

The next challenge is to check through the entire list and identify those without biographies or who only have partial details. This process has started and is ongoing. This process, with adequate staffing should take us another 2 years to complete. (one researcher and one research assistant).

We have also obtained a comprehensive list of all those who receive special military pensions. These have extensive details which need to be extracted and written in accessible form and digitised. This would need one researcher and 2 assistants and should take 2 years to complete. This process has not started yet due to inadequate staffing.

Developing research into the impact of colonization on the rest of Africa as well as expanding on our work on the History of the rest of Africa

Our vision is to set up a separate site for African History Online. In the past reporting period we have developed a liaison with an Ethiopian University which will provide detailed contributions on Ethiopia. We have also researched some questions on Mozambique solidarity and the crisis in Zimbabwe.

We have also provided source material for a history series on slavery.

We have started a liaison with Cameroonian researchers through the refugee group, Whole World Women's Association.

We in the process of setting up a partnership with an Argentinian University that will assist us in advancing our research on African History.

Integrating our new research into our Classroom section, the expansion of biographies on women and lives of courage.

A. Classroom section

As new research items are added to our site, we have a process of linking them to the existing classroom material. This is ongoing and provides new visitors to our classroom with a greater variety of articles and material to support the teaching and learning of History in our schools. The top 50 most searched items on our site are mostly from the Classroom content. This shows that a huge part of our visitors are from students and teachers at schools.

This work is assessed annually and could be expanded should we be able to source a dedicated researcher tasked with overseeing the Classroom.

B. Biographies and lives of courage

Once again we have made quite substantial progress at recording and updating our biography and lives of courage sections. However it has not been possible to keep pace with all the new developments. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

Our biographies cover a wide range of the political spectrum from Winnie Mandela, Chris Hani, Dr Abdurahman, Biko, Prof Meer, Ma Sobukwe, IB Tabata, Robert McBride, Karrim Essack, Lucky Dube, Jennifer Davis, Coline Williams, Harry Gwala to Mmusi Maimane and Robert Mugabe.

C. This day in History

We have also substantially updated our work on daily events in history. This is integrated with our biographies, dates of birth and death as well as other historical events. More needs to be done to edit and update this section which is extensively used by radio stations and other media who host daily news on historical events.

D. History of Places

Having completed our first phase of this project, where we have initially linked 1500 places with historical events and roleplayers, the next phase is to deepen the content. We have added substantial new content over the past year. The next phase is to roll out more detailed content on smaller sub areas and locations and suburbs. We see this as going hand in hand with localised Oral History projects such as the one in Simon's Town. We offer localised initiatives the opportunity for training as well as assistance with the setting up of their own websites. This is an ongoing project.

E. Special project on the lives of the female, long term political prisoners.

Regrettably until now the lives of most of the female, long term political prisoners have not been adequately recorded. SAHO has started the process of compiling research and conducting interviews to begin to address this shortcoming. This is ongoing work and is expected, should adequate resources be available, to be completed within 12 - 18 months.

F. The silenced voices of women

SAHO has recently formed a partnership with the University of Glasgow to facilitate training and research into lives of marginalised, female political activists. One of the key components is the hosting of a mini conference in Cape Town of a wide range of roleplayers from various universities in South Africa who are active in research on marginalised women and women's rights.