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JOURNAL PREFACE

This is another pandemic issue of the *Southern Journal for Contemporary History (SJCH)*. In the last issue, we carried an editorial essay on the forms that history-writing might take under the shadow of the global Covid-19 pandemic – new questions, new collaborations, new methodologies. In this issue, we have had to contend with the pandemic on another level. Varying regimes of lockdown, re-organising of academic calendars and online learning have imposed fresh demands on professional scholars from across the continent. These have impacted upon their ability to visit archives, undertake fieldwork, think, write, present seminars, edit and revise, some of the components of scholarly production. Accordingly, we are especially grateful to our authors, and also our reviewers, who have given of their time and consideration under trying circumstances.

All too often, histories of major metropolitan institutions (or departments within those institutions) are read as a kind of shorthand for the directions of the academy or the discipline as a whole. This is an error, as it presumes that other institutions or departments are simply lesser versions – less prominent, less successful, less productive – than their metropolitan counterparts. The lead essay in this issue, written by Luvuyo Wotshela takes on this commonsense and in so doing, represents a potent example of Southern history by challenging knowledge and assumptions forged in the metropole – in this case, South Africa's metropole. He shows how the history of the History Department at Fort Hare, a storied historically black university on South Africa's rural periphery, challenges us to think afresh about the discipline, its trajectories and genealogies and what questions these prompt for research, teaching and the notion of public scholarship.

We are publishing what we believe is a full, exciting and diverse issue. In addition to Wotshela's piece, we carry six other research essays and two book reviews. And we profile the accomplishments, achievements and directions of Adewumi Damilola Adebayo, a Cambridge-trained historian with a research interest in histories of infrastructure and technologies in Nigeria.

Sadly we note the demise of three major figures in the field: Bill Freund, Chengetai Zvobgo and Belinda Bozzoli. We publish an obituary to Chengetai Zvobgo. We expected to publish one to Bill Freund, considering aspects of his life in the context of shifting radical politics in Durban during the 1980s and 1990s but our author took ill. We wish him a speedy recovery and hope to publish his tribute as soon as he recovers and is able to complete it. Freund was an economic historian with an interest in labour and development, and over many decades, a prominent voice from the left in Durban and beyond.

He wrote on Nigerian tin mining, on Durban's Indian working class, and on development. His most well-known book, *The Making of Contemporary Africa*, which came out in three editions, was widely prescribed for African Studies courses across the world.¹ And too late to commission an obituary for this issue, we have learned of the passing of Belinda Bozzoli, a South African sociologist. Bozzoli was well-known for her work on Marxism, feminism and African Studies, as well as her account of a "patchwork of patriarchy".² She was also a leading figure in the Wits History Workshop which became known for its style of social history: Marxist-inspired, empirically oriented, theoretically iconoclastic and politically urgent. She edited three volumes of essays which came out of the Workshop, and her introductions to these volumes did much to synthesise what the Workshop stood for, and to convey its historiographic and insurgent spirit beyond Wits, beyond South Africa.³ A proper obituary will follow in the next issue. Rest in Peace, Professors Freund, Zvobgo and Bozzoli, and thank you for what you have all contributed to the African history, the discipline as a whole and idea of Southern history.

Since our last issue, we have commenced an *SJCH*-sponsored seminar series on Southern history. We have hosted four seminars, roughly one a month, and one of the papers is published in this issue of the *Journal*. The seminars have brought together scholars from various parts of the continent, and discussions have been lively. These seminars will soon be posted via a link on the *SJCH* Facebook page, and we hope too to see a blog, which will allow ongoing discussion around issues raised by respective papers. Joyline Kufandirori is the convener for this series, and if you would like to present a paper, please contact her.

Finally, we welcome Professor Samson Ndanyi to our editorial advisory board. Samson has a PhD from Indiana University and presently teaches at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. He is an East Africanist, and we hope that he will be able to advise us on trends in East African history and historiographies more generally.

Neil Roos
Professor of History
Editor-in-Chief

- 1 The most recent was B Freund, *The Making of Contemporary Africa: The Development of African Societies since 1800*, 3rd edition (London: Lynne Rienner Publisher 2016).
- 2 B Bozzoli, "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9 (2), 1983, pp.139-171; B Bozzoli and M Nkotshe, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1991).
- 3 See particularly, B Bozzoli (ed.), *Labour, Townships and Protest* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1978) ; B Bozzoli (ed.), *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg:Ravan, 1983) ; B Bozzoli (ed.), *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1994).