



THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR HISTORY TEACHING

Dear educator of History!

We need your involvement, support and contribution to help make a difference in the teaching of History on GET, FET and HET levels

Nutshell memories of the SASHT

In South Africa the growth in the education of History indicated a need for the development of an association in as early as 1913. However internal politics and a wide variety of external constraints delayed this need among educators up to 1956 when an enthusiastic Inspector of Schools during those days, Dr JJ van Tonder, took an initiative, through *Historia Junior* as mouthpiece, that lasted up to the late eighties but still no unity existed among history educators of different languages and institutions. So did divided perspectives and perceptions among the practitioners on the school History curriculum not contribute to set a healthy platform for History activities within a society structure. The unfortunate absence of open-minded, balanced and/or representative perspectives has kept the ideological argument between historians from tertiary institutions and History teachers alive, with no unity in sight. In 1981 the former Rand Afrikaans University (University of Johannesburg) took responsibility for publishing the first new initiative, named *Yesterday and Today*. This milestone happened under severe negative responses from some educators because of the *Y&T*'s apparent Afrikaans associations. For the majority of history educators however a mouthpiece for teachers was welcomed as educators then already regarded History as a declining subject. The need to serve the educational community with creative and practicable content were a focus from edition one. Tertiary academics, also involved in the *Yesterday and Today* publication, organised a conference for History practitioners (didactics) at Unisa in July 1985. During this conference the first strides were made to establish a society for History teacher training. In September 1985, the *Yesterday and Today* reported as follows:

Society for the training of History teachers almost a reality

There was widespread enthusiasm for the idea of a Society of this nature. It was felt that a closer interaction between the different institutions and groups should be established. Accordingly a pilot committee consisting of Prof. M.H. Trümpelmann (RAU), Dr F.J. Stuart (Unisa) and Mr J.M.L. Horn (GOK) was elected to proceed with the drafting of a concept constitution and the planning of administrative arrangements. It is hoped that the proposed society will be a reality in 1986.

This reality in 1986 allowed for the existence of the SASHT. In September 2011 the SASHT will celebrate its 25th year of existence.

WHAT you should know about the SASHT:

- The Society acts as a home, a mouthpiece and as a knowledge provider for history educators on all educational levels;
- The Society runs the new *Yesterday&Today* after the older version (*Gister en Vandag/Yesterday and Today*) ceased to exist from 1997 to 2005;
- The Society organises conferences on an annual basis during September in which themes of relevance to history educators are discussed and debated;
- In 2006 the Society became the first in History circles in South Africa to develop and run a website for History Educators under www.sashtw.org.za. This website covers a wide variety of information and also has a free access facility to the *Yesterday&Today* journal content from 2006.
- The Society aspires to continue its efforts to unite all history educators from all groupings because it regards educational practices of excellence as its main focus. These practices as key foci of intent are:
 - To improve the contacts between educators of history training at tertiary level with teachers in the broad educational field;
 - To renew a training in the methodology of education in History teaching;
 - To utilise the expertise of educators teaching History to assist with the training of future history teachers;
 - To continuously debate the content of basic and advanced educational programmes in the training of history teachers with the intention to continue to improve quality;
 - To make history educators and student teachers aware of the relationship between History as an academic discipline and the didactics and teaching of History at school level in order to keep abreast with development and academic debates;

- To encourage educators of History to strive towards achieving and sustaining high academic standards in the teaching methodology and in the general knowledge of History as a discipline;
- To make educators of History and student teachers in History aware of the relevance or “value” of History for the community and nation as such;
- To progress towards the needs of identifying and organising committees and regional representatives that can explore and develop certain fields in History to benefit all the educators of History in South Africa.
- Many Society members are involved in the writing of History textbooks for schools;

The vibrant SASHT of today and tomorrow:

Many vibrant activities are currently in process on which members and non-members will be informed on during the conference of 24-25 September 2011. Amongst others the:

- changing face of the website being more interactive in a variety of ways that educators and learners will appreciate!;
- The digitalising of the older editions of the Yesterday and Today (1981-1996) and add it to the website serve the beginnings of the Society way back in time and to support all history educators in exploring past thinking on methodology and trends of the time.
- Exploring of Blogs, Wiki and Facebook to communicate with History Educators and to pave ways to communicate with history educators abroad;
- Providing of information on a more frequent basis on opportunities and events that concerns history educators.
- Continuation of the SASHT quarterly e-newsletter in which some contemporary historical issues are debated.

Where do you as History Educator feature in the SASHT?

The SASHT can't exist without its History Educators. The SASHT provides much for very little in exchange. Currently an annual membership fee of only R140 (individual) and R150 (for Institutions/Schools) are required to be listed, to be informed and to have access to all SASHT information. Members also receive hard copies of the *Yesterday&Today* annually. The fee includes postage. The “what is there in it for me” is tremendous if calculated in terms of money, knowledge and quality in History teaching. Seriously think about it! Become a member. Become a voice in a discipline you have a passion for! **(see membership form on next page).**