

OSA Newsletter 11

June 2006

The Oromo Studies Association *Two Decades of Service and Scholarship*

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Reminder:

Did you:

1. Purchase your flight ticket? Check Expedia or any other site
2. Reserve a room? Check Conference venue below
3. Pay for your OSA registration? ... Send checks to OSA Treasurer, see OSA newsletter 5.

A message from OSA president:

Transforming OSA

As my presidency nears an end, I would like to share some thoughts with OSA members and supporters. OSA audience may have noticed that this year we set a number of goals to be accomplished. They include:

- Increasing membership by 25 new scholars,
- Inviting more speakers, particularly from Oromia, to inject new and field-oriented data in to OSA conference,
- Promoting critical thinking among OSA members by involving more non-Oromo scholars whose research and views may lie outside our comfort zone,
- Building a better understanding on unity of purpose by inviting scholars from neighboring nationalities, especially Ethiopia South,
- Creating an ad hoc committee to use OSA scholars to conduct a serious thinking and analyses on Oromo Unity, and present the views of these findings at OSA conference,
- Organize a mid-year conference on a specific research area – the viability of the economy of Oromia,
- Inquiring into establishing or expanding OSA into Oromia,
- Launching a feasibility study to establish Oromo Medical Association in North America
- Updating and expanding OSA list and also its web service,
- Establishing a team to review and suggest amendments to OSA bylaw,

- Use a Review Team to conduct a critical review of OSA's performance to improve its scholarly contributions

To accomplish these goals, we attempted to mobilize a larger scholarly capacity by creating ad hoc committees and also conduct a fund-raising effort. The results have been very satisfying. Of course there were failures that gave us ample experience.

These humble accomplishments are no reason to celebrate; we have no illusion that they constitute more than a small fraction of the needs and the capacities. We need to continue setting agendas and work towards higher goals. It takes a continuous transformation of OSA to match the growing dynamics and needs of our people.

In OSA Newsletter 6, I stated that OSA is an Oromo success story. Based on the rising determination and sense of professionalism I have been observing, I am convinced that OSA will rise in prominence and stature among scholarly organizations. As it so grows to be a viable international association of the Oromo on the Oromo, it will also face a number of challenges. For example, as OSA keeps attracting young scholars and membership increases, we must develop a strategy to accommodate such growing interest in OSA. This year, we received over 50 papers for presentations. The two days can conveniently accommodate only about 10 panels, i.e., about 40 papers, living insufficient time to present all papers in a fairly descriptive manner.

OSA will have many other challenges. For example, relatively, OSA conference is still dominated by political panels most of which are personal reflections and opinions on current or recent affairs. Such non-research outputs and debates are well-suited for political arenas and not a scholarly organization. Personal views and opinions that are not research subjects often tend to be emotional diatribes that corrupt OSA's mission. It is good and wise to have healthy debates, and OSA has a responsibility to promote such civil discourse. But OSA's usefulness and its scholarly tenet are best served with research materials. Consequently, OSA may need a review process to encourage research and improve the quality of its proceedings. Given the political polarization and

mistrust among constituencies, keeping OSA as a purely scholarly organization is probably the toughest of these challenges. But I am proud of OSA membership - capable of placing scholarly mission above and beyond political interest. It is the secret of OSA's survival for two decades; and it will so remain for decades and decades to come.

Nagaan,
 Asfaw Beyene, Ph. D.
 OSA President
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OSA 2006 Annual Conference

Papers: Over 50 papers were received for the 2006 annual conference. As it stands now it seems that we can accommodate about 40 presentations, i.e., we have about eight papers accepted tentatively and waiting in line. To have more papers than we can accommodate is a gratifying luxury and a sign of growth. At the same time, it is also disappointing to those who spent their time hoping to share their research outcomes. I apologize to all authors whose papers were rejected - it really was a difficult decision. Below is alphabetical tentative list of this year's OSA papers.

Author	Paper Title
1. Abdi Samatar, Prof.	Ethnic Blinders Versus Civic Autonomy in Ethiopia
2. Abebe Adugna, Dr.	Viability of the Economy of Oromia
3. Adisu Tolesa, Dr.	Oromo Experience in Building Consensus
4. Apee Jobi	Agenda for Unity of Purpose
5. Asafa Jalata, Prof.	Leadership and Organizational Issues in the Oromo National Movement
6. Asfaw Beyene, Dr.	Student Movements Around the World, a Comparative Synopsis
7. Asafa Ragassa	Food-insecurity: A Real Threat to the Oromo people
8. Asmerom Legesse, Prof.	Update on the Study of the Gada System
9. Bahiru Dhuguma, Dr.	Perspectives on Strategic Challenges Facing the Oromo National Struggle for Political and Economic Freedom

10. Bahiru Dhuguma, Dr. The Impact of Globalization on the Oromo Economy under the Colonial Rule of the State of Ethiopia: the Interplay of Politics, Policies, and Economics
11. Belletech Dheressa, Dr. Abduction of Young Girls for Marriage or “Butii”: Girls’ Nightmare and Violation of Human Rights
12. Beyene Petros, Prof. Challenges and Opportunities in the Ethiopian Political Landscape
13. Bichaka Fayissa, Prof. Current Responses to the Political and Economic Crises in Oromia
14. Bulcha Dammaqsa Oromos Relationship to other Ethnic Nationalities in Ethiopia
15. Daniel Ayana, Dr. Do Societies Choose to Succeed or Fail? A Comparative Study of Oromo and Abyssinian Social Structures
16. Daraaraa Maati Og-barru Oromoo
17. David Shinn, Amb. U.S. Support for Democratization in Ethiopia
18. Donald Levine, Prof. Three Perspectives on the Past and Future of the Oromo People
19. Ed Keller, Prof. TBD
Oromo Verbal Types & The Place of Afaan Oromo in Afroasiatic Languages
20. Ephraim Isaac, Prof. Dealing with Ambiguities: History, Politics, and Future of Oromo Nationalism
21. Ezekiel Gebissa, Dr. Nationalism: A Regional Perspective
22. Fowsia Abdulkadir The Impact of Land Ownership on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability in Oromia
23. Gobana Huluka, Dr. The Viability of the Economy of Oromia: A Point of Departure
24. Harwood D. Schaffer, Rev. The state of Oromo struggle
25. Ibsa Gutama The Pen is mightier than the sword “: The role of Waldhaansso and Ejerssa Journals in promoting and propagating Oromo Struggle in North America
26. Jimma Tufa (DJ) Oromo Student Protests
27. Kulani Jalata No going back: language promotion in Oromiya Region
28. Lahra Smith, Dr. Political Economy of the Westphalian State Paradigm and Its Contradictions in the Horn: A Comparative Perspective on Sudan and Somalia
29. Lako Tongun, Prof. The role of social capital and civic culture in nation building
30. Leencoo Baatii The Challenges of Articulating Oromo National Liberation Struggle within Current Global Trends
31. Leencoo Lata Guddifachaa, Akka Sirna Gadaatti
32. Lube Birru Imagining Oromia and Ethiopia: Reflections on Political and Scholarly Discourse on Oromo and Ethiopian Identities
33. Makuria Bulcha, Dr. Some prospects for averting the looming human tragedy in Oromia: the way forward
34. Mekonnen Gelan The Ethiopian State and the Future of the Oromos: The Struggle for ‘Self-Rule and Shared-Rule’
35. Merera Gudina, Dr. Continued Human Rights Violations in Oromia and what we can do about it
36. Mohammed Hassen, Prof. Ethnic Boundaries, a Political Discourse
37. Said Samatar, Prof. The Oromo and the CUD
38. Siegfried Pausewang, Prof. The Role of the Oromo Intellectual in the National Liberation Struggle
39. T. E. Fido, Dr. Garasu the Tiger: Oromo Historical Poems During the Italian Occupation, 1936-1941
40. Tamene Bitima Human rights in post-Zenawi Ethiopia
41. Trevor Truman, Dr. Afaan Oromo, Hudhaan-qabaa Habashaa Harkaa Bayee Afaan Kabajamaa Ittiin Barreeffamu Ta'uu Isaa
42. Xilahun Gamta, Prof.



OSA 2006 Annual Conference - Update

CONFERENCE SITE: the conference will be held at:

The University of Minnesota
Coffman Memorial Union
Great Hall
300 Washington Ave. S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0110



ACCOMODATIONS: you may choose either a hotel or a dormitory:

Hotel:

Holiday Inn Metrodome
1500 Washington Ave S.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454

A block of rooms are available to the conference participants. Please call 1800 448-3663 and reserve before July 4, 2006. The hotel rate is \$105.00 + tax.

To get this reduced rate one must request for the "Oromo Studies Association Conference rate". This hotel is a short walking distance from the conference site.

Dormitory:

The dorm is located at:
Centennial Hall
614 Delaware Street SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

The dormitory rate is \$32.00/night/person, breakfast included. To reserve a dorm room, you can call Kim Araya at 612-624-0656 48 hrs before arrival. However, to guarantee availability it is recommended that reservation be made as early as possible. The Centennial Hall is adjacent to the conference hall.



Amendments to OSA Bylaw

OSA members may submit suggestions to Dr Guluma Gemedra



Important: Paper submission for OSA 2006 Annual Conference is now closed and no more panels or papers will be accepted. Apologies for those who received rejection letters, it was a difficult decision.



New Books

Prof. Asmerom Legesse has a new edition of his book. Details will follow in OSA Newsletter 12. It is also my pleasure to announce that Prof. Asmerom Legesse will have a feature presentation at OSA 2006 - entitled: "Summation: Gada and Oromo Democracy, Retrospect and Prospect."



Letters

To: The President of Mekele University
From: Mekele University Oromo Students
Subject: Our precarious current situation

Dear Mr. President

We Oromo students studying in the various faculties of the University of Mekele are in a very dangerous and life threatening situation. As there is no guarantee for our lives let alone to continue our studies, we are forced to write you this letter to request to guarantee our security and pursue our education as per the legal right of any citizen of Ethiopia.

We came to Tigray Region expecting that our constitutional and democratic rights as citizens of Ethiopia will be respected and rule of law will prevail. We thought that Tigray is part of Ethiopia in which any citizen has the right to live, work and follow any career of his/her choice. As anybody can live and work in other parts of Ethiopia without fear, we thought the same is true for Tigray region. Contrary to our expectation and belief, we have come to understand that the situation in Tigray is different for Oromo nationals.

We have firm belief that the current situation in Tigray is not a spontaneous and sporadic development. There are interconnected and systematic encroachments that led to the current climax. In 2001, Sime Terrefa, an Oromo student, was killed for no crime other being ‘a wrong person at a wrong place’. Proper investigation was not carried out nor did any culprit bring to justice. Again in 2003 an Oromo student named Nedhi Chewaka was severely beaten and left presumed dead. Recently a book, that used fabricated data and derogatory terms, was prepared and published and put in the library for the public to read, to emotionally damage and provoke Oromo students. An agent provocateur threw hand grenade at Eshetu Neguse an Oromo student. Ironically it was the innocent Oromo student who was accused of trying to detonate the device and was imprisoned for several days without being treated for his wounds. Now, we Oromo students are under attack by Tigrean students in collaboration with some town dwellers. We are totally insecure. We don’t know when they will kill us.

We came to Mekele thinking it is a peaceful place where everyone from any part of Ethiopia enjoys equal protection of law irrespective his or her national origin. However, it is becoming clear that we Oromos are not wanted nor allowed to study in Tigray. Therefore, we appeal to the honorable President of the University to secure proper protection for our lives and appropriate

environment to peacefully continue our studies or facilitate our transfer to another university where our rights as citizens will be respected and can continue our studies in peaceful environment. We also demand the unconditional release of fellow Oromo students who are detained and kidnapped.

Sincerely
Mekele University Oromo Students

cc:
Prime Minister Office
Oromia Regional Government
Ministry of Education
The House of Representatives
Counsel of Students



Please email your views and opinions to OSA president:

abeyene@rohan.sdsu.edu

for inclusion in this section of the newsletter. Texts may be edited for space and format consistency.



Donations and membership dues: Those who want to pay OSA dues, join as new members, or want to donate to OSA, please send your pledge to:

OSA

P. O. Box 7508

Silver Spring, MD 20907

Please note that all contributions are tax deductible.



Please, visit our web site:

<http://www.omostudies.org>

for more information.

