



Oromo Studies Association Newsletter

Volume 1

October 2008

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Message from the President

Greetings to you all!

I hope that many of you have had the opportunity to attend the 2008 OSA conference in Minneapolis this past summer. If you were in attendance, I am sure you would agree with me that it was very well organized. The conference displayed a rich set of discussions and a number of renowned speakers on various issues of concern to the Oromo.

For those of you who did not have the opportunity to attend, here are a few highlights from the conference:

- The theme of the conference was “Oromo and the Horn of Africa: The Search for Freedom, Peace and Democracy”. Over thirty research papers were presented at the conference, organized into twelve concurrent sessions and roundtable discussions.
- Professor Ali Mazrui, a world-renowned African scholar, delivered the keynote address. In addition, Obbo Diribi Demissie Boku, President of Macha-Tulamma Association, delivered an equally rousing keynote address on the second day of the conference, where he gave an honest appraisal of the role that the Macha-Tulamma Association has played in the Oromo struggle and the progress that has been achieved over the last several decades. Several other prominent Ethiopian, Somali, European, American, and Canadian scholars also participated in the conference, demonstrating the growing international stature of OSA as a scholarly organization.
- A panel of prominent Oromo scholars and political figures shared the stage to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing Oromo political organizations and the way forward. While the panel did not address every issue, it kicked off an important dialogue that, if

sustained, will be instrumental in understanding and addressing the key political and organizational challenges faced by Oromo organizations.

- Obbo Dararaa Maatii was the recipient of 2008 OSA Award for his exemplary contributions to the development of Afaan Oromo literature, including the publication of *Burqaa*, a popular Afaan Oromo magazine with a wide circulation in the US; and more recently, the founding of the Oromo Publishing Company, a company whose mission is to work with Oromo artists and authors to publish Afaan Oromo literature, to bring the literature to the market for mass consumption, and in so doing contribute significantly to the development of our language. The University of Minnesota and Georgia State University received OSA institutional awards for their support to OSA over the years.
- During its business session, the OSA general assembly elected new officers. Haile Hirpa was elected as President-elect; Zakia Posey as Secretary; and Redwan Hamza as Treasurer of OSA. Ezekiel Gebissa was re-elected unanimously for another term as JOS Editor. And Mesfin Abdi and Melaku Mekonnen were elected as Board members of OSA.

Let me take this opportunity, therefore, to thank the outgoing officers of OSA—Melaku Mekonnen (President), Dunee Silgaa (Treasurer), and Ibsa Ahmed (Secretary)-- for organizing a very successful conference! It looked easy, but as we all know, it took several months of planning and execution and they deserve our most sincere appreciation for a job well done. Melaku, in particular, led OSA well during his tenure, and I am sure I speak for many in the team when I say it was a great pleasure to work with him. I would also like to welcome our new executive committee members.

As we look forward, I know that OSA faces a number of challenges, not least of which is strengthening its membership and financial base. I hope that, together, we can build on the successes of the outgoing team and strive to make OSA even better.

Abebe Adugna, Ph.D.
OSA President

Professor Ali Mazrui is now an OSA member!

Professor Ali Mazrui was our keynote speaker at the 2008 OSA conference. Following his participation at the conference, he wrote the following email to Dr Mohammed Hassen (on behalf of OSA):

"Mazrui, Ali" <amazrui@binghamton.edu> 08/15/08 3:29 PM >>>
Dr. Mohammed Hassen Ali and Dr. Mekonnen Melaku

My dear friends:

Very many thanks indeed for involving me in your truly memorable convention earlier this month. The assignment has indeed helped to educate me about one of Africa's most fascinating nationalities -- the Oromo.

I hope before long your organization will have enough overlapping membership with the African Studies Association to qualify for official affiliation with the ASA. If it helps towards that goal, please register me as a new member of the Oromo Studies Association. Seifudein Adem will help me fill the membership form, and send the appropriate membership fee. It would help me participate on your ASA panels when you have become affiliated.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ali A. Mazrui, D.Phil., (Oxon), C.B.S.

Director

Institute of Global Cultural Studies

AAM/sfa

OSA is honored that Professor Mazrui, one of the finest African scholars, has offered to become our member (and the EC is currently expediting his membership). His membership also speaks volumes about the significant progress OSA is making as a scholarly organization. Thank you Professor Mazrui for becoming OSA member! And thank you Dr. Seifudein, Dr. Mohammed, and Dr. Melaku for playing a key role in introducing Professor Mazrui to the OSA family as a keynote speaker, and subsequently as a member.

Your OSA Membership Renewal

It's that time again. Time to think about your membership renewal. Time for you to write out another check. Time for you to take the time to send it to us before your membership lapses.

The Executive Committee of OSA is in the process of updating the OSA group email database. We are planning to move to a new and updated database by the end of October 2008. For those of you who have not yet renewed your OSA membership for 2008-2009, this is a reminder to kindly do so before **October 31, 2008** so you will be added to our new database and continue to receive OSA messages as well complimentary copies of the *Journal of Oromo Studies*.

Please send your completed membership form alongside with your membership fee (\$75 regular, and \$25 for students), payable to Oromo Studies Association, at the following address by October 15:

Oromo Studies Association

P.O. Box 32391

Fridley, MN 55432

USA

A membership renewal form is available at romostudies.org, under the "membership" link. For those of you who renewed your OSA membership at the Minneapolis summer conference, you do NOT need to take any action at this time. Your email is already included in our new database. If you or someone you know (who is OSA member) is not getting email from OSA at present, please let us know.

New and Noteworthy

New OSA Guidelines

The OSA Board has just finalized the following guidelines, which we have posted on the OSA website:

- OSA Award Guidelines
- OSA Mailing List Guidelines
- OSA Website Guidelines

Please go to Oromostudies.org, and click under “Other Publications” to review them. Over the coming months, the Executive Committee will implement these guidelines, and we would appreciate your cooperation especially in terms of adhering to the guidelines on the use of OSA mailing list (where we have seen some issues recently).

New Publications

Dr. Gebissa, Ezekiel (ed.) (2009). *Contested Terrain: Essays in Oromo Studies, Ethiopianist Discourse, and Politically Engaged Scholarship*. Trenton, New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, Inc.

This book is coming out soon. It is an excellent read, and hope you would consider ordering your copy soon. And congratulations to Ezekiel for editing a very engaging book.

If you would like to contribute to OSA Newsletter...

Do you have any story or news that you think will be of interest (publications, events, etc.) to OSA members? Please send them to Abebe Adugna at aadugna@verizon.net. We welcome your participation in getting important news to our members.