

OSA Newsletter 4

November 2005

The Oromo Studies Association

Two Decades of Service and Scholarship

In this Issue:

- **A message from OSA president:
OSA on the killing of students**
- **2006 OSA annual conference**
- **Ad hoc committee and team updates**

A message from OSA president: OSA on the killing of students

The death of any child is a tragedy. Such a tragedy becomes shamefully dreadful when children die in the hands of the government, their own government.

The Ethiopian political landscape has been dominated by Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) which is dominated by the Tigrean Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF). The TPLF, which comes from the Tigray region of Ethiopia, representing less than 8% of the Ethiopian population, controls the large majority of the country by sheer force employing the old divide and rule policy. As a result TPLF's reaction to opposition has been atrocious. There have been grave violations of human rights in Oromia and other parts of Ethiopia. The TPLF's domination of the Ethiopian politics, its denial of basic human rights to other nationalities and ethnic groups, and years of popular dissatisfaction in the government's unwillingness to address the basic demands of the people have recently culminated into a serious political turmoil in Ethiopia.

For the past several days, there have been peaceful demonstrations by the people of Ethiopia, Oromo students in particular, protesting against basic human rights violations. The Ethiopian government's response to these peaceful demonstrations was the usual aggression, marked by brutality and unwarranted cruelty.

In several high schools including Ambo where at least three students were reported killed and many more wounded on November 18, the Federal police opened fire on protesters with live ammunitions. As a scholarly organization whose mission is deeply rooted inside Ethiopia, OSA strongly

condemns the killings of several students and the detention of hundreds of others by the Ethiopian government while peacefully protesting against violation of human rights and suppression of democratic principles that have swept the country under TPLF's rule.

We are also deeply saddened by the indefinite closure of schools as an apparent measure for purging political opposition from cities with large student populations. We view the continued closure of Addis Ababa University, the country's largest educational and research institute, as a highly irrational and harmful act. This short sighted measure hurts education, the single most important tool needed to move the country out of willful intolerance that has subjected it to perpetual war and abject poverty for decades. OSA condemns the inhuman measures that were taken against the students and the indefinite closure of schools, both of which reflect the little value that the TPLF dominated regime places on human lives, education, and public welfare.

OSA calls on the Government of the United States, other governments, and international human rights organizations to press the Ethiopian government to:

1. Stop killing students
2. Bring those who killed a number of students to justice
3. Release all detained students immediately and unconditionally
4. Reopen immediately all schools and colleges so that students will return to their education.

Nagaan,
Asfaw Beyene, Ph.D
OSA President
abeyene@rohan.sdsu.edu
<http://beyene.sdsu.edu>

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.

Note that all contributions are tax deductible.

2006 OSA annual conference

The 2006 OSA annual conference will be held around end of July in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Preparations for this conference are underway. The organizing committee will soon make its first meeting to design strategies and coordinate the venues.

Ad hoc committee updates

Dr. Bahiru Gamatchu, Scholarship project:

Report expected in the next newsletter

Dr. Bahiru Dhuguma, Fund-raising project:

It is my pleasure to let you know this committee has received commitment for 50% of target fund

Dr. Guluma Gemed, OSA by-law review:

Report expected in the next newsletter

Dr. Misgana Mul'ata, Membership project:

This team is doing well, it has already solicited about 15 new members which marks more than 50% target

Dr. Getahun Benti, External activities - OSA at ASA:

The ASA annual conference was held under a theme of "Health, Knowledge, and the Body/Politic in Africa and the African Diaspora" at Marriott Wardman Park Hotel from November 17-20, 2005. The OSA panel topic at ASA was "**Politics, Disease, and Public Health: The Case of the Oromo in Ethiopia**". Panelists were Guluma Gemed, U of Michigan - Flint, "Coping with Epidemic Diseases under Political Domination: the Case of the Oromo", Mohammed Hassen Ali, Georgia State U, "Menelik's Conquest and the Impact of the Great Ethiopian Famine of 1880s-1890s on the Oromo", Getahun Benti, Southern Illinois U, "Migration, Disease, and the State of Public Health Services in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), c.1941-1974", Ezekiel Gebissa, Kettering U, "Physical Health vs. Socioeconomic Well-Being: The Dilemma of Growing and Consuming Khat in Hararge, Eastern Ethiopia", Bichaka Fayissa, Middle Tennessee State U, "Internal and External Sources of Vulnerability against the HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia: the Case of the Oromo".

In addition to the above, Prof. Asafa Jalata of U. of Tennessee participated in another panel: "**The Political Economy of Sudan: Old and New**" in another panel. His presentation was on "State Terrorism and Globalization: The Cases of Ethiopia and Sudan".

Also, Bonnie Holcomb (Qabbanee) presented on "Indigenous Wisdom as a Remedy for Affliction in the Body/Politic: the Oromo Case Considered." OSA members also attended various other panels at ASA. OSA members also had a small get-together at the ASA meeting to discuss various issues including next year's participation of OSA at ASA. OSA encourages all Oromo scholars and researchers to participate in 2006 ASA annual conference next year in San Francisco. Thank you to all participants.

Dr. Asafa Jalata, Unity project:

The team has identified participating individuals and distributed questionnaires - expecting to receive comments this month.

Adde Qabanne, OSA Review:

Report will come in the next newsletter

Dr. Asfaw Beyene, OSA in Oromia

Individuals have been contacted in Finfinne to conduct feasibility study of expanding OSA into Oromia. Both legal and technical issues will be discussed and a complete report will be presented at OSA 2006.



It is to be recalled that OSA also initiated few other voluntary projects with the help of four OSA members (Dr. Gobana, Dr. Guluma, Adde Qabbanee, and Dr. Gudata.)

Dr. Gobana Huluqa, collecting papers for OSA Proceeding:

We have received only few manuscripts so far. **Dear authors:** Please send your manuscripts for OSA Proceedings to Dr. Gobana Huluqa, hulukgo@auburn.edu as an attachment. Microsoft Word is the preferred software, but you may use whatever software at your disposal. Please make sure you include the version and name of the software you used and provide your email, telephone, and mailing addresses.

Dr. Guluma Gameda, fund for JOS:

Report expected in the next newsletter

Adde Qabbane, Oromo Information Center project:

Report follows in the next newsletter

Dr. Gudata Hinika, Oromo Medical Association project:

We will update readers in the next newsletter.

