

CODESRIA's 30th Anniversary Celebrations

Southern Africa Sub-Regional Conference

Gaborone, 18 – 19 October, 2003

Call for Abstracts

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. It will be recalled that the Council was established in 1973 out of the collective will of African social researchers to create a viable forum in Africa through which they could strive to transcend all barriers to knowledge production and, in so doing, play a critical role in the democratic development of the continent. As part of the series of events planned to mark the anniversary, five sub-regional conferences are being organised in Central, East, North, Southern and West Africa. These sub-regional conferences will be followed by a grand finale conference to be held at the Council's headquarters in Dakar, Senegal, in December 2003. The Southern Africa sub-regional conference is scheduled for **Gaborone, Botswana, on 18 and 19 October, 2003**. Its theme will be: **Southern Africa: From National Liberation to Democratic Renaissance**.

Southern Africa as a region has known some of the most interesting political developments in the history of Africa. In the period prior to the onset of formal colonial domination, the area was host to major projects of state formation, dissolution and recomposition characterised by interesting and well-documented experiments in statecraft. Home to some of the most prolonged and vicious forms of settler colonial rule, the sub-region was also the site for the most systematic, institutionalised system of racism, racial domination, and racially-based exclusion known in recent human history. Partly on account of the racial structuring of opportunities integral to the establishment and consolidation of colonial domination, the sub-region witnessed an intense intra-regional flow of labour to the key mining and agro-business centres mainly located in South Africa. The demographic outcomes associated with widespread labour migration and the racially-based systems of labour control established in the colonial mines and plantations had consequences not only on the organisation of state power and rural society but also on that of the family and citizenship; furthermore, they established the foundations for the pattern of urbanisation that developed, including the violence associated with it.

Given the violent history of the establishment of colonial rule and white racial domination in the sub-region, it is not surprising that Southern Africa was also one of the earliest sites of resistance to foreign and minority rule in Africa. The African National Congress (ANC) has the distinction of being the oldest liberation political party in Africa; once adopted, its Freedom Charter fed into the pan-African quest for the liberation of the continent from colonial oppression. The example of the ANC and its Freedom Charter was to inspire virtually all the other key nationalist politicians of the sub-region in their campaign for national liberation. Several of these countries, such as Zambia, Botswana, and Malawi, were able to achieve independence relatively earlier than others; for most of the others, the struggle for liberation became a long-drawn-out and increasingly violent affair which the East-West Cold War did a great deal to complicate in the light of the strategic geo-political advantages and mineral resources which the sub-region holds. Not surprisingly, armed struggle became an important and almost ubiquitous instrument in the quest for the termination of settler colonialism and institutionalised racism; it was to play a major role in delivering liberation first to the former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique and then to Zimbabwe and Namibia, and finally to South Africa, with the inauguration of Nelson Mandela in 1994 as the first president to be elected by South Africans of all races and the first person from among the black majority to rule the country.

The achievement of national liberation and installation of majority rule in Southern Africa was always considered as an important

project of the pan-African movement within the continent and in the Diaspora. Not only were the key leaders of the sub-region active participants in the pan-African meetings convened to discuss the future of the continent and the black race from 1945 onwards; the first set of African countries to attain their independence and all the others that subsequently joined them were to offer solidarity and material support to the Southern Africa liberation project. Indeed, the mandate of the Organization of African Unity, at its foundation, consisted in promoting continental unity and liberation; for the latter purpose, the OAU set up a Liberation Committee which was a key player in the struggle for independence and majority rule in Southern Africa. Following the end of apartheid in South Africa and the installation of a black majority government, Southern Africa has been pre-occupied with efforts at democratisation, regional co-operation and integration, and continental renaissance. The processes of democratisation, regionalism and renaissance point to a determination to create more open, inclusive and fair societies built on representative governance, the inventive energies of the peoples and a shared pan-African community. But it is a project confronted by a host of historical and contemporary difficulties, including the challenges of managing the complex equation of race, rights and justice; the problem of post-liberation xenophobia; the persistent, ever deepening problems of social exclusion; unresolved problems of historical dispossession and present-day challenges of representation; the structure of labour migration in the sub-region and the unidirectional conquest of new economic terrains in the sub-region by South African capital.

Participants in the proposed conference are invited to re-open reflections on the Southern African component of the pan-African ideal through the entry points offered by the sub-region's struggle for national liberation and the on-going quest for a democratic renaissance which includes a greater investment of efforts in regional co-operation and integration. In this connection, papers are invited from scholars interested in re-visiting the theories, historiographies and experiences of national liberation; the various ideological currents and contestations which underpinned the struggle for liberation in the period before and after the publication of the Freedom Charter, including the Black Consciousness Movement; the key actors and factors in the Southern African liberation project; the labour processes that defined the colonial labour economy, the political policies and responses which they elicited, and the consequences which they had; the dynamics of post-liberation statecraft, including the pursuit of truth and reconciliation, affirmative action, black economic empowerment, and various policies of social inclusion; the negotiation of post-liberation identity and citizenship; the place of land in the political economy of national liberation; the rise of post-liberation xenophobic tendencies, the forces and factors that account for them and the responses they have elicited; the problems and prospects of democratic renewal in Southern Africa, including the change and renewal in Southern African civil society; post-liberation economics and economic policy-making as read from the point of view of a national liberation project; the search for regional co-operation and integration; the quest for an African renaissance project and its connections to the pan-African ideal; Southern Africa and the NEPAD initiative; Africa in the foreign policies of the countries of Southern Africa; and Southern Africa's Diaspora linkages.

Researchers interested in participating in the conference are invited to submit abstracts of their papers to the CODESRIA Secretariat by **15 August, 2003**. The authors of abstracts selected will be notified by **22 August, 2003** and they will be expected to send in their full papers by **15 September, 2003**. All abstracts and full papers should be addressed by post, e-mail or fax to:

Ms. Chifaou Amzat

CODESRIA 30th Anniversary
Southern Africa Conference,
P.O. Box 3304, Dakar, Senegal.

Tel: +221-8259822/23 / Fax: +221-8241289
E-mail: chifaou.amzat@codesria.sn