



OSA

OROMO STUDIES ASSOCIATION
WALDAA QORANNOO OROMOO

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**THE 29TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE OROMO STUDIES
ASSOCIATION (OSA)**

KORA 29^{FFAA} WALDAA QORANNOO OROMOO

Venue: *Howard University*

*Ballroom, Blackburn Center, Howard University
2397 Sixth Street NW, Washington, DC 20059*

Dates: *Saturday and Sunday, August 1st & 2nd, 2015*

Time: *9:00 AM – 9:00 PM*

Theme: Expanding the Frontiers of Oromo Studies: Pathways into the Future

The Oromo Studies Association's past conferences have focused on the crucial themes of human rights, democracy, and national liberation – all generating important theoretical and macro-level discussions. This year, the OSA annual conference will focus on *Expanding the Frontiers of Oromo Studies*. Given that OSA's mission is to create a platform for the exploration of all issues concerning Oromo life, we sought to include a range of Oromo voices from academia, the arts and the world of community organizing and activism in order to reveal themes and issues that had been previously under theorized or neglected. We anticipate that this focus will lead to intergenerational discussions on identity, culture and community. This year, our panels emphasize social media, youth leadership, diaspora/homeland connection and disconnection, climate and environmental issues, global political economy and development, trauma and

healing, the socio-political importance of the arts, Oromo activism, issues of gender and the complexities of faith/spirituality. Expanding Oromo studies to include a wider range of voices and issues has the potential to provide new data as well as fresh perspectives on the Oromo which may lead to more robust discussions and increased scholarship in the future.

OSA is on social media: www.facebook.com/oromostudiesassociation. Official conference hashtag: #OromoStudies2015 @OromoStudies on Twitter.

Keynote Speakers

Bekele Gerba



Bekele Gerba brings vast experience to the 2015 Annual OSA conference. He is currently a sought after speaker in Oromia, drawing large crowds to great acclaim. We are delighted that he will be joining as a featured speaker at OSA on August 2nd. Bekele was born in 1961 in West Wollega. He completed elementary and

secondary school in a small town called Biilaa/Bodji Dirmeji. He earned his first degree in Foreign Languages and Literature from Addis Ababa University AAU). For the next several years, he went on to teach at various secondary schools in Alem Teferi, Dambi Dolloo, and Najjoo. Gerba's interest in literature and language led him to pursue postgraduate studies at Addis Ababa University, from where he graduated with a Master of Arts Degree in Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL). Following his graduation, Gerba was employed at Adama College of Teacher Education, which was one of the pioneer Oromo-centered colleges. That College was dissolved in 2007 by the Ethiopian education agencies.

Bekele's post of lectureship from Adama College was terminated after three years of service along with 18 other lecturers under the allegation that they supported the student protest which surfaced in opposition to the incumbent regime's move to transfer the political capital of Oromia regional state from Finfinnee to Adama. In 2007, Gerba joined Addis Ababa University as a full-time Lecturer.

Bekele Gerba became officially engaged in politics in 2009, when he joined the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM). He was elected head of the Public Relations Department and became a member of the Executive Committee. In 2010, he ran for office in the parliamentary elections and lost in what the regime announced was a 99.6% landslide in favor of the government parties. Gerba was arrested and initially sentenced to eight years (later reduced to about 4 years) in prison on charges of belonging to the Oromo Liberation Front. Gerba was released in May of 2015.

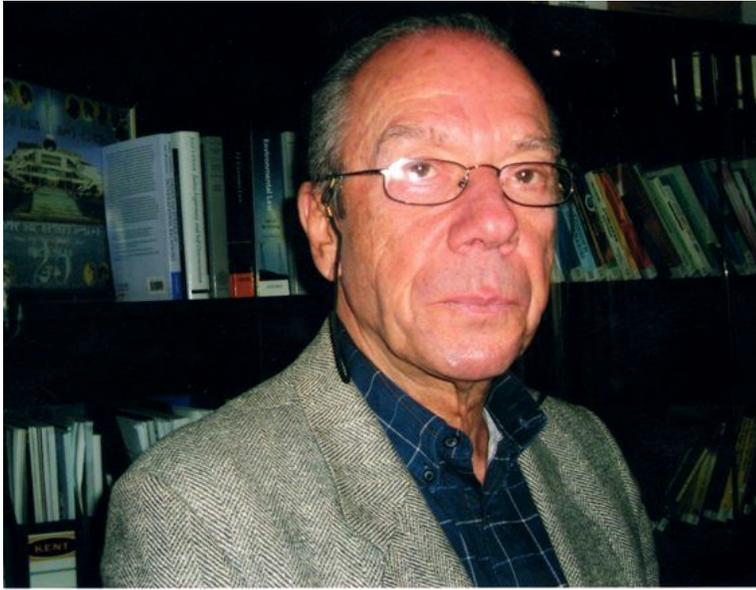
Gerba's life and testimony offers for Oromo and non-Oromo alike a rare look into the current political reality of the Oromo experience in Ethiopia. Through his example and his outspoken observations and analysis, he addresses the realities of resistance in the face of repression. He has earned the respect of many Oromo because he represents decency and dignity, peace and tolerance, harmony, hope, courage and bravery despite suffering in and outside of the prison for many years. This refreshes the lens through which Oromo and scholars of Africa can understand

a renewed and expanded form of authoritarian structures in place in the 21st century which impact and restrict Oromo development, growth and contribution to the world at large. His perspective grounded in dramatic experience combined with his eloquence will remind OSA's audience of the pressing need for expanded frontiers in examining and understanding the Oromo condition.

Gerba has assumed a compelling moral leadership among Oromo. He shows consistent commitment towards his own people's cause and also the cause of everyone under similar restrictions. This stand creates for him a distinct profile in the country. His personal demonstration of leadership and fearlessness in the face of State violence elevates him in the regard of many as one of the Oromo political giants. Gerba's famous statement -- uttered before Ethiopian judge who convicted him in what many believe was a sham court proceeding -- remains evidence of how the country's judiciary and justice system has become an extension of the political executive. Both have become complicit in hiding Oromo truth. Today, his powerful statement is widely regarded as evidence that the Ethiopian judiciary itself will not fare well as it stands trial under the watchful eye of history. Contemporary Oromo historiography and the Oromo public find it sadly lacking.

Bekele Gerba is willing to share and analyze his lived experience with the OSA audience in 2015. What he brings is significant to scholarship and highlights in broad strokes and in nuance the pressing need to mobilize intellectual capital represented in OSA, to increase the terrain of scientific analysis and to expand Oromo research frontiers.

John Markakis



Professor John Markakis brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Oromo Studies. He is a universally respected author and teacher, who was the first student to receive a PhD in Government and African Studies from Columbia University. Professor Markakis has taught at ten different universities in the United States, Europe and Africa, including at Addis Ababa University where he distinguished himself as a erudite thinker and much-loved professor because of his fairness, objectivity and popular,

challenging and progressive ideas. He served as a research fellow at six universities in Europe, Africa and Japan. His teaching and fellowship credentials demonstrate his outstanding global reputation in the academic world.

Professor Markakis is a distinguished and versatile scholar who has written extensively on the political economy of African states, with a particular focus on Ethiopia. He has published three famous books on Ethiopia and four others on the Horn of Africa. He has also edited five collections on the Horn of Africa and prepared scientific reports on issues concerning state building, national integration, ethnicity, regional, religious and ethnic conflict, pastoralism, crossborder trade, regional security, and the arms trade in the Horn of Africa.

Dr. Markakis's profound knowledge and intimate familiarity of the Ethiopian state over several decades is on display in his most recent volume titled, "Ethiopia The Last Two Frontiers" (Oxford: James Currey 2011). In it, he systematically analyzes how the Ethiopian state has treated the Oromo and other conquered peoples. He also focuses on the frontier areas of Ethiopia located in the arid lowlands on the margins of the state, where there is strong resistance among the people to the process of integration that is just reaching them.

Known to be a most knowledgeable, objective and dispassionate scholar and analyst, Professor Markakis will bring a unique perspective about the Ethiopian state and his vision for democratic future for the Oromo and the other peoples in Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa. Professor John Markakis will add a broad dimension to the 2015 conference, which promises an unprecedented harvest of intellectual exchange on several crucial topics that will have huge impact on the future of the Oromo and other people in Northeast Africa.

Daily Conference Schedule

Day 1: Saturday, August 1, 2015

<i>Time & Venue</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Facilitator</i>	<i>Presenters/Speakers</i>
8:00am –9:00am Lobby	Registration	Local organizing committee	Local Hospitality & Registration Group
9:00am – 9:15am	Welcoming Ceremony		Mohammed Hassen Jawar Mohammed
9:15am –10:30am	Panel Lessons from the Field: a Look at Oromo Organizations	Moderator: Arfasse Gemedda	Toltu Tufa <i>'Speak Oromo!' Exploring a socio-psychological approach to intergenerational language maintenance</i> Steven Thomas <i>Film Education in Oromia and Sandscribe Communications</i> Tsehai Wodajo <i>Opportunities and Challenges of Running a Nonprofit Organization: The case of Resources for the Enrichment of African Lives</i> Jote Taddese <i>Partnership for Literacy: the Quest to Bring Knowledge and Capacity to Oromia</i>
10:35am - 11:50am			Henok G. Gabisa <i>Historical Injustices against the Oromo: Comparative Exploration of Primary (legislative) and Secondary forms (memory, truth-telling and reconciliation) of Remedies</i> Garoma B. Wakessa

	<p>Panel Crimes Against Humanity: Exploring Paths of Justice for the Oromo</p>	<p><i>Moderator:</i> <i>Mekuria Bulcha</i></p>	<p><i>Horn of Africa (Ethiopia): Gross Violations of Human Rights and an intractable conflict, past & present</i> Habtamu Dugo <i>Stealth Genocide by Government Policy: Famine and Forced Deportation in Oromia, Ethiopia</i> Tesfaye Deressa <i>Cultural genocide: the past and present cases of Oromia</i></p>
11:55am - 12:55pm	Keynote Speaker	<p><i>Introduced by:</i> <i>OSA</i> <i>President-Elect</i></p>	<i>Prof. Markakis</i>
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Lunch		
2:00pm - 3:15pm	<p>Panel Political Economy and Development</p>	<p><i>Moderator: Getahun Benti</i></p>	<p>Getahun Benti <i>A History of Mining and Mining Towns in Oromia: The Case of Yubdo</i> Bichaka Fayissa* & Bedassa Tadasse <i>Transnational Land Transactions in Developing Countries: Lessons for the Horn of Africa</i> Guluma Gemed <i>Developmental State, Economic Growth and Democracy in Ethiopia: Many Unanswered Questions</i> Taye Nadi <i>The territories surrounding Finfinnee and the evil master plan</i></p>
3:20pm - 4:35pm			<p>Lubee Birru <i>Gubaa and Irreecha: an In Depth Examination</i></p>

	<p align="center">Panel Exploring Cultural and Religious Practices in Oromo Society</p>	<p align="center"><i>Moderator:</i> Guluma Gameda</p>	<p>Chikage Oba-Smidlt <i>The Raaga, its social and historical roles among the Boorana in Southern Ethiopia</i></p> <p>Jennifer Lancaster <i>The Role of Religion in Creating Social Capital Networks: An Oromo Case</i></p> <p>Feyera Negera Sobokssa <i>A Story of a Legendary Wise Oromo Woman who Fought for Her Right to Get Equal Access to Land Ownership</i></p>
4:40pm - 5:40pm	<p align="center">Panel Human Rights of the Oromo: Shedding Light in Previously Hidden Areas of Concern</p>	<p align="center"><i>Moderator:</i> Bonnie Holcomb</p>	<p>Felix Horne <i>The impact on the Oromo of Conditions in Ethiopia Revealed in Recent Human Rights Watch Reports</i></p> <p>Habamu Dugo & Joanne Eisen* <i>Planned Sexual Atrocities as a Tactic of Slow Genocide: Inferring Intent</i></p> <p>Bonnie Holcomb <i>Amnesty International Report October 2014 "Because I Am Oromo": Implications for Research</i></p>
8:00pm - 12:00pm	<i>Oromo Cultural Event (ticketed) – Upstairs Ballroom</i>		
<i>Day 2: Sunday, August 2, 2015</i>			
9:30am – 9:40am	<i>Oromo Blessing</i>		<i>Blessing from Elders</i>

<p>9:45am – 11:00am</p>	<p>Panel Climate Change and Public Health</p>	<p><i>Moderator:</i> Yeshi Tolessa</p>	<p>Begna F. Dugassa <i>Understanding the Public Health Impacts of Climate Change and Fostering the Capacity of Oromo People to Mitigate those Problems</i></p> <p>Oli Bachie <i>Enhancing Food Security and Sustainability of Oromia through Integrated Cropping Systems</i></p> <p>Alemayehu Fayera Darima <i>The Role Oromo Indigenous Institutions of Environmental Rehabilitation</i></p> <p>Fantahun Diba <i>The Fate of Future of Pastoral Farming in a Changing Climate: The Case in Oromia Regional State</i></p>
<p>11:05am - 12:20pm</p>	<p>Panel Oromo Art: Sites of Cultural and Political Resistance</p>	<p><i>Moderator:</i> Zakia Posey</p>	<p>Shawn Mollenhauer <i>Millions on the Margins: Music, Ethnicity, and Censorship among the Oromo of Ethiopia</i></p> <p>Demitu Argo <i>Tribute to Nadhi Gammadaa: the life and lessons from his speech on Anole in 1991</i></p> <p>Yadesa Bojia <i>Oromo Art: The Next Frontier</i></p> <p>Soreti Kadir <i>The politics of poetry</i></p>
<p>12:25pm - 1:25pm</p>	<p>Keynote Speaker - Bekele Gerba</p>		

<p>1:25pm - 2:40pm</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch and OSA Business Meeting <i>General Assembly Meeting: OSA members in Good Standing, Executive Committee and Board of Directors Reports, Election of Officers 2015-2016 Proposal by President-Elect</i></p>		
<p>2:45pm - 3:00pm</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Awards Ceremony and Recognition of Guests and Sponsors</p>		
<p>3:00pm – 4:15pm</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel Being and Becoming Oromo: Contemporary Narratives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Moderator:</i> Ayantu Tibeso</p>	<p>Zakia Posey <i>Oromummaa 2.0: The Contours of Transnational Oromo Identity among the Second Generation</i></p> <p>Soreti Kadir <i>The repositioning of the Oromo: who are we today and where do we stand tomorrow?</i></p> <p>Siyade Gemechisa <i>The Oromo Identity in Diaspora and the Necessity for Multiple Narratives</i></p> <p>Hawi Tilahun <i>“I am an Oromo:” The Discourse of Diasporic Agency and the Politics of Emplacement in the Netherlands</i></p>

<p>4:20pm – 5:35pm</p>	<p>Panel Education, Technology and Leadership</p>	<p><i>Moderator: Henok Gebissa</i></p>	<p>Asafa Jalata <i>Theorizing oromummaa</i> Cherer Shaffo <i>The role of Universities and Colleges in Oromia in expanding Oromo scholarship</i> Naa'ol Dhugaa <i>Gadaa: The Next Generation</i> Dibaba Amele <i>The need for building Social Solidarity and the vital roles the Oromo intellectuals can play</i></p>
<p>5:40pm – 7:20pm</p>	<p>Round Table The Future of Oromo Studies</p>	<p><i>Facilitator: Ezekiel Gebissa</i></p>	<p>Mohammed Hassen Mekuria Bulcha Bonnie Holcomb Asafa Jalata Henok Gabissa Ayantu Tibeso</p>
<p>7:25pm - 7:45pm</p>	<p><i>OSA Executive Committee Meeting</i></p>		