

HISTORY AND THE PERSISTENT STRUGGLE: SOCIAL CHANGE, NATION-BUILDING, AND CONSTITUTION-MAKING IN POST-INDEPENDENCE AFRICA

A CONFERENCE IN HONOUR OF DR. SEGUN OSOBA

Conference Venue:

Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria

Conference Dates: December 18-19, 2023

OSOBA CONFERENCE: THE RATIONALE

Several years after his retirement from formal academic life, Dr. Segun Osoba, the avowed Marxist scholar, and teacher has remained a great mentor and exemplary personality for his former students, admirers, the global community of scholars, and the civil society. This is because many of those who have had the good fortune of coming in contact with his intellectual prowess and ideology of unrelenting struggles against injustice, tyranny, poverty, and conservatism—though each in their specific contexts—have now come to a more mature understanding of the life, scholarship and philosophy of this committed scholar who spent his most productive life as teacher, scholar, and mentor at the University of Ife, Nigeria. In Nigeria and beyond, scholars have examined and critiqued Dr. Osoba's work. Several attempts were made to question his views or subvert his ideological vision that had provided a complicated context for inspiring generations of Africans with his lifelong examples of struggle for a better society. Born on 9 January 1935, Dr. Osoba taught and researched at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) from 1967-1991. There is the need to examine and assess his accomplishments and contributions in broad new lights. This is because there is now a more subtle appreciation of his position than has been previously recognized.

This conference pays special attention to the discourses surrounding Dr. Osoba's intellectual engagements, most especially his ideas surrounding the Political Economy of nation-building, constitutionalism, human freedom, and the ways they are energized by intellectual and historical imaginations. These have become more profoundly embedded in contemporary discourses in political thought. After teaching social and intellectual history, and the much-dreaded Advanced Philosophy of History, to undergraduate and postgraduate students at Ife, several important historical prisms can be distilled from his scholarship and pedagogy which also informed his works on post-independence Africa. These are: What kind of leadership? What kind of scholarship? What manner of struggle? What kind of state? He wrote one of the earliest, if not the first, monograph on the history of foreign policy in Nigeria; he was a pioneer of what we now call social and economic history in Nigeria; his forte in the philosophy of history which was never popular among his colleagues back then and continues to be absent in contemporary African scholarship; his participation in the Constitution Drafting Committee in 1976 in the aftermath of which he and the late Dr. Yusufu Bala Usman issued a much-celebrated Minority Report in 1977; his belief that scholarship must be tied to something that stands to benefit the majority of the people, especially the poor and the downtrodden; his pathbreaking discussion of the role of corruption in our public life; and his original contribution on neocolonialism that present generation of students of decolonization might do well to revisit. Many people have also come to reconcile themselves to how the processes of nation-building have been subverted by the bourgeoisie and its collaborators—something that Dr. Osoba had seen and interrogated over time.

This conference provides a forum for discussions for both established and younger scholars, researchers, development experts, professionals, policy makers, postgraduate students, and others interested in re-engaging, reframing, and reassessing Dr. Osoba's intellectual legacy, which has now come to be seen by many as a more attractive radical alternative paradigm of critical social science, theory, and development. We invite scholars from all disciplines. Dr. Osoba's work is interdisciplinary as should the conference. Presentations are welcome from scholars and practitioners on history, political economy, constitutional law, historiography, contemporary movements, etc.

Call for Proposals (Deadline: July 1, 2023)

We invite proposals for papers, panel discussions, oral historical/biographical reminiscences and poster presentations on the themes and subthemes highlighted below. These papers and commentaries may focus on Dr. Osoba's works and their impact. They may also explore the concerns that motivated his work and related ideas while also interrogating Dr. Osoba's enduring intellectual influence and legacy. The deadline for submission is **July 1, 2023**. The abstracts will be peer-reviewed and those whose proposals are accepted will receive notice by **August 1, 2023**.

Themes and Subthemes

1. Teaching history: pedagogy, philosophy, methodology, perspectives
2. Segun Osoba: The man, his works, his times, his contemporaries
3. Social and political movements; labour and labour movements; demilitarisation, democratisation and governance
4. Struggle for freedom, equality, human rights, cultural rights
5. Minorities, women's movement, and social change
6. Power, power-sharing and power politics
7. Africa and the world: international politics, New International Economic Order revisited
8. End of the Cold War, new global realities, political and intellectual realignments
9. Constitutions, constitutional history, and nation building
10. Development and underdevelopment: social and economic history, power, coloniality, and decoloniality
11. Higher Education in Africa and African higher education
12. Globalization, old and new players
13. The Nigerian Left: historical perspectives, political radicalism, charting alternatives for the future
14. Diversity and Inclusion: Subaltern history and the struggle for minority rights and visibility
15. Other related and relevant themes, sub-themes and topics

We are accepting proposals for scholarly papers, panels, poster presentations, and workshop sessions. You may submit a proposal on an idea related to one of the themes of the conference (see above) or choose your own subject. Participants are encouraged to propose panels of a maximum of four presenters. Individual, stand-alone papers will be considered and, if accepted for presentation, will be grouped together with similar papers to form a panel. We invite academics, activists, policymakers, women's organizations, youth leaders, governmental and non-governmental organizations, labour unions, and other professionals to participate in the conference. Please follow the guidelines below to submit your proposals.

Guidelines for Proposal Submission

- a. Paper, workshop or panel title (limited to 75 characters in length).

- b. An abstract describing the proposed paper, panel, poster, or workshop and its relevance to the overall theme of the conference (250 words maximum), along with keywords (maximum ten keywords or phrases).
- c. Complete contact information of the person proposing the paper, panel, or poster.
- d. Complete contact information of all co-presenters and panellists.
- e. Required technology for the presentation (e.g., if presenter(s) will need a projector).

Submit all abstracts/proposals as an attachment and email to osobaconference@gmail.com

Important Notices

1. Registration: The organizers offer a reduced registration rate for paper, panel, and workshop presenters but are unable to provide presenters with travel, hotel accommodation, and related expenses. See the registration fees below:
 - a. Participants attending from Europe/America/Asia: \$100.00
 - b. Participants attending from African countries: \$50.00
 - c. Nigerian participants: N20,000.00
 - d. Nigerian graduate students: N10,000.00
2. Paper presenters are encouraged to email their papers as attachment to osobaconference@gmail.com by or before November 1, 2023. This will allow discussants ample time to read their papers and offer substantive comments at the conference.
3. After the conference, completed papers will be peer-reviewed for publication by a reputable publisher. That publication will be a festschrift to Dr. Segun Osoba. All papers should be formatted in APA Style, 7th Edition. For directions, see <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

Co-Conveners

Professor Akanmu Adebayo
 Professor Olutayo Adesina
 Professor Rasheed Ajetunmobi
 Professor Siyan Oyeweso
 Professor Kemi Rotimi
 Professor ('Malam') Olufemi Taiwo

Collaborating Institutions

1. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, NIGERIA
2. Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, NIGERIA
3. University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, NIGERIA
4. Yusufu Bala Usman Institute, Zaria, Kaduna State, NIGERIA
5. Center for Africana Studies, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia, USA

NB: The above lists of co-conveners and collaborating institutions are constantly being updated and expanded. Please direct all inquiries to osobaconference@gmail.com