

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Gary Kline

This issue of our journal marks a milestone, which is why I feel a need to address our readers and association members. For us, 2016 has been a time of reflection and change and expectancy. To some extent, our track may be said to mirror the general sense of uncertainty and anticipation with which many today look upon the future. The challenges that we humans face globally seem both daunting and full of opportunity. The headlines generally emphasize the events that inspire fear, sorrow, and revulsion. In such a climate, when people are hard-pressed, they often manifest the most awful and most sublime aspects of our species. However, challenges and change inspire innovations and adaptations that can lead us on a fresh path to a better world. More than ever, perhaps, our association and our journal are needed to help shine a light upon the path ahead. I will return to this point later.

First, let me note that the Association of Third World Studies, Inc. held its 34th Annual Conference from November 20-22, 2016 and officially emerged as the Association of Global South Studies (AGSS). By any measure, our meeting at Indiana University Southeast (IUS) in New Albany, Indiana (on the beautiful Ohio River and across from Louisville, Kentucky) was an unqualified success. For that, we can thank the many good hosts of IUS who made us feel so welcome. Foremost, we should thank the conference organizer, Dr. Doyin Coker-Kolo, Dean of the School of Education. Her months of hard work truly culminated in an inspiring event, with stimulating panels and intellectually rich discussions.

Participants from sixteen different countries attended the conference, which commenced with a warm welcome

reception with entertainment provided by the renowned jazz musician Jamey Aebesold and his incredible band. The Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at IUS, Dr. Uric Dufrene, gave a heartfelt greeting to the attendees and Dr. Michael Hall of Armstrong State University provided a brief overview of the history of our association. The food was excellent, the desserts were sinful, and everyone enjoyed an evening of great fellowship.

As Dr. Coker-Kolo will admit, however, her success would have been impossible but for the support and assistance of numerous others at her institution of higher learning. She was assisted by many of her colleagues in the School of Education, as well as folks in the Center for Cultural Resources, in Marketing and Communications, in the Office of International Programs, and others at IUS. There are too many people to name individually, so we must thank you collectively. I wish to mention, however, that support for our conference went all the way to the level of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. Uric Dufrene, and the Chancellor, Dr. Ray Wallace, who delivered the outstanding keynote address at our banquet. It was entitled “The 21st Century Irish Diaspora: A Personal Response,” and Dr. Wallace tied this topic into current events and into the work of our association brilliantly and with humor. He gave a truly excellent address. Evening entertainment during our banquet was provided by the fabulous IUS student band, The Cold Front.

As well, at this meeting Dr. Coker-Kolo assumed the mantle of President of AGSS and, consequently, President Jyotirmaya Tripathy became our Immediate Past President. It must be said that Dr. Tripathy served us as President during a critical and somewhat turbulent year and that we came

through our trials on firm ground largely due to his steady and wise leadership. We in AGSS owe him a great debt. He was rightly recognized at our banquet awards ceremony with the Leadership Award. Additionally, Dr. William (Bill) Head, a “founding father” of our association, took the President’s Award, which he so richly deserved.

Others were recognized at this ceremony for their works and achievements. The Toyin Falola Africa Book Award was conferred on Mohamed Zayani of Georgetown University for his book, *Networked Publics and Digital Contention*. The Cecil B. Currey Book Award went to James Pietz of the University of Arizona for *The Yellow River: The Problem of Water in Modern China*; and the Lawrence Dunbar Reddick Award was given to Ishmael I. Munene and Sara Ruto for their outstanding essay entitled “Pastoralist Education in Kenya.” We want to congratulate these fine scholars for their contributions.

As so many times in the past, I came away from the conference with a sense of renewal and, moreover, a feeling of greater optimism in that I had spent time with kindred spirits who are genuinely interested in promoting broader awareness and understanding of the diverse peoples with whom we share the planet. I venture to say that our members are more like a big family than a set of sterile academicians bent on padding their vitas. If you have never attended one of our conferences, I urge you to consider the next, which will be held in Marrakech, Morocco in December 2017.

As we move forward, though, I want the readers of our journal and members of our association to be cognizant of upcoming changes for the better. The spring 2017 issue of our journal – Volume XXXIV, No. 1 – will for the first

time be published by the University Press of Florida (UPF). Future issues of the *Journal of Global South Studies* will therefore have a fresh, new look. We will implement an electronic system for manuscripts to be submitted and monitored; and readers will be able to access our journal and get information about it through the UPF website: <http://upf.com/journals.asp>. I wish here to sincerely thank the fine people of UPF for working with us to make this development possible, most especially Lauren Phillips and Linda Bathgate.

Our guidelines for authors/contributors have been modified in important ways. The suggested length of essays has now been set at approximately 10,000 words; and the Chicago Manual of Style is the required documentary style. For details, please consult our guidelines at the end of this issue.

Over the past year and a half we have worked hard to produce a journal that would make our late founder, Dr. Harold Isaacs, proud. To the extent that we have succeeded, I must place the credit where it belongs, with my excellent group of associate editors and my editorial assistant. For Africa, my associate editor is Dr. Peter Dumbuya (Ft. Valley State University); for Asia, Dr. Yi Sun (University of San Diego); for Book Reviews, Dr. Michael Hall (Armstrong State University); for Latin America, Dr. Chaitram Singh recently stepped down and has been succeeded by Dr. Ryan Alexander (SUNY-Plattsburgh); and Dr. Jacek Lubecki (Georgia Southern University) is associate editor for the Middle East. Ms. Sara Abernathy is my excellent, hard-working, and under-paid editorial assistant. My warmest thanks to you all!

This scarcely exhausts the list of people to whom I

owe thanks for their support and encouragement. I won't try to enumerate them all, but you know who you are and you know that I am deeply grateful to you. Two of these people have worked on a brief "history" of the association, which is included in this volume. Dr. Bill Head (Chief Historian at Warner Robins Air Force Base) and Dr. Paul Rodell (History, Georgia Southern University) have written a great account of how the association originated and evolved over the past 30 plus years. I thought it would be appropriate to publish it in this last issue of the old-style version of the journal. Whether you are a member or not, I think that you will find our history fascinating. And it is not too late to join us and to start contributing to our future history.

It may sound trite to say this, but I am going to say it anyway: I believe that the best days of our association and our journal are ahead of us. Dr. Isaacs' original vision is still at the heart of our AGSS "family" and still motivates us. We want to throw a light on the diverse peoples and countries we study; we want to educate ourselves and others about the world's peoples; and thereby we want to foster greater understanding among peoples and improve the conditions of life globally. To me, it seems axiomatic that a more just and peaceful world is possible only if people understand others and celebrate, or at least accept, the diversity that characterizes peoples and cultures globally. As a corollary, I submit that we are less likely to inflict harm upon those we truly understand, than upon those we do not really understand. What we don't know or understand inspires fear, while the known is not as scary.

Put more bluntly, greater peace and justice will not emerge from a world in which people are ignorant and intolerant of others who are different. Our journal and our asso-

ciation – composed of members from various cultures, countries, races, and religions working together in mutual respect and good-will – can therefore play an important role in spreading knowledge and fostering greater understanding among ourselves and others. Given the apparent perils around us today, this mission is perhaps as critically important as it has ever been. As I suggested in my first paragraph, humans can be very ingenious, especially when circumstances demand that we find new ways to pursue our dreams and goals. To this end, a better world with more peace, justice, human welfare, and happiness, we devote ourselves.